

## **HABITUS AND FOOD LIFESTYLE: In-destination Activity Participation of Slow Food Members**

### **ABSTRACT**

A common theme in the tourism literature is that tourists are motivated to travel to escape from ordinariness. This may lead to the assumption that the activities tourists choose to undertake in a region are motivated by the same desire for the extraordinary. On the other hand, some studies have found travellers who are highly involved in a particular recreational activity are likely to participate in it both at home and while on holidays. This study examines the travel motivations of, and destination activities undertaken by, Slow Food members and finds that they undertake similar cooking and food related activities while away as they do at home. A theoretical explanation for this behaviour is taken from the concept of lifestyle and Bourdieu's *habitus*.

**Keywords:** destination activity; habitus; lifestyle; Slow Food; travel motivation

### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the main themes in tourism research is investigating why people travel (Cohen, 1979). Early formative studies, conducted at a time when travel was a relatively new mass phenomenon, emphasise motivations such as to escape from an ordinary life (Iso-Ahola, 1982). Tourists are seen to search for sensation and adventure (Malkin & Rabinowitz, 1998; Swarbrooke, 2003), and stimulation and novelty (Lee & Crompton, 1992) while they are travelling. Tourism studies discuss women from developed countries who travel to the Caribbean to meet beach boys as part of an adventurous trip (Herold, Garcia, & DeMoya, 2001). Students are found to travel for fun and outdoor adventure (Xu, Morgan, & Song, 2009). Thus, numerous tourism studies have explained motivation to travel to a particular destination in terms of a desire to participate in destination activities that are new or novel (Jang & Cai, 2002; Wamwara-Mbugua & Cornwell, 2009).

With the rapid development of transportation systems, people today travel between destinations much more conveniently, faster, and with lower cost than thirty years ago and so the number of destinations that people visit and revisit nowadays is much higher. As a result, today's travellers may make decisions on which destination activities to undertake upon arrival (McKercher & Chan, 2005). Further, the motivation to undertake these activities may be unrelated to those for visiting the destination and instead be related to the personal, inter-personal, and situational factors at the

moment of decision-making; including lifestyle, personality, and past experiences (Chen, Huang, & Cheng, 2009; Decrop, 2006; Wahlers & Etzel, 1985).

It therefore appears that the relationship between tourists' activity preferences in a destination and their daily life activities requires further research. Brey and Lehto (2007) investigated vacation and daily activities of tourists and found that involvement in activities in a home environment can lead to similar actions in a destination. Further, Smith, Pitts, and Litvin (2012) noted that tourists often undertake the same recreational activities when on vacation as at home and suggested that tourists' primary travel decisions of where to go is mainly destination-driven, not activity-driven. LaMondia and Bhat (2012) found that individuals sometimes travelled long distances to participate in leisure activities that they could undertake closer to home due to their loyalty to this particular activity. This study further examines this issue suggesting other concepts such as lifestyle and *habitus* as well as involvement may help to explain the phenomenon.

Sirakaya and Woodside (2005) analysed travel decision-making models, and suggested that future studies should focus on underlying variables that affect choice behaviour such as lifestyle. The concept of lifestyle has been used in the study of decision making and characterises an individual's way of living. It has been used as a basis for psychographic market segmentation (Mayo & Jarvis, 1981; Scott & Parfitt, 2004). Bourdieu (1984, 1990) elaborated the notion of habitus as being related to lifestyle and taste. From Bourdieu's point of view, consumers operate according to a logic of distinction, with economics and cultural capital playing a fundamental role, and embody this distinction according to their own taste. The notion of habitus is written in the body through past experience and manifests through lifestyle (Sassatelli, 2007). The body carries and accumulates past memories and displays this lifestyle through choice; hence, model of car, brand of clothing, type of food are all examples of ways that lifestyle can be manifested. Habitus can explain the interactions and activities of the individual in a social environment (Reay, 2004). An individual's choices are influenced by habitus, that is, in the moment of decision making, the individual depends on prior social and historical forces that shape his/her experience (Allen, 2002).

The aim of this study is to examine the travel motivations and destination activities of members of the Slow Food movement to see if they undertake similar activities when travelling as they usually do at home. The Slow Food movement is a non-profit foundation with over twenty years of history, and with over 100,000 members in 150 countries around the world. The philosophy of Slow Food is based on acquiring *good, clean, and fair* food. Good food is defined as being tasty and diverse, and produced in such a way as to maximise its flavour and connections to a geographic and cultural

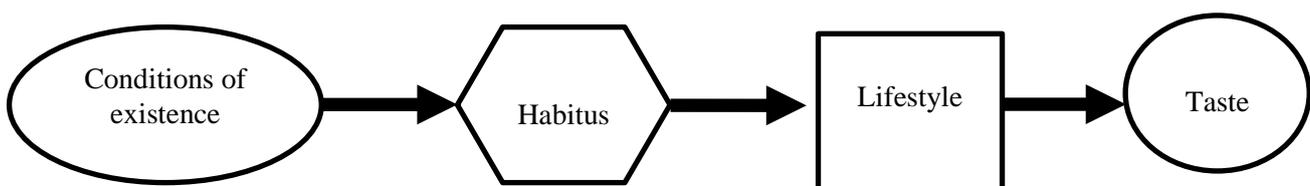
region. Clean food is sustainable, and helps to preserve rather than destroy the environment. Fair food is produced in socially sustainable ways, with an emphasis on social justice and fair wages (Schneider, 2008). In the movement's view, individuals have a responsibility to know about and participate in their own regional food systems in order to confront their unique issues. The Slow Food movement has evolved from a marginal political system to one that is increasingly respected and which is influential in its recognition of food related norms, rituals and networking as important (Miroso, Wooliscroft, & Lawson, 2011). Slow Food members acknowledge that the pleasure one finds in good food is a source of connection to others and to the condition of the environment (Labelle, 2004; Pollan, 2003).

## LITERATURE

### *Lifestyle and Habitus*

The concept of lifestyle and its relationship with marketing was first introduced by Lazer (1963). Lazer defined lifestyle as, "...a systems concept. It refers to the distinctive mode of living, in its aggregative or broadest sense.... It embodies the patterns that develop and emerge from the dynamics of living in a society" (Lawson & Todd, 2002, p. 296). Lifestyle is therefore something that a person develops and coexists with over his/her entire life. The word *lifestyle* is one of the most commonly used terms in modern English with more than thirty different definitions (Veal, 1991, 1993), with descriptions of this concept found in the disciplines of psychology, sociology, health, economics, marketing, consumer behaviour, leisure and tourism. Lifestyle is defined by Veal (1991, p. 19) as: "the pattern of individual and social behaviour characteristic of an individual or a group". More simply, lifestyle is: "a distinctive, hence recognisable, mode of living" (Sobel, 1981, p. 28). Lifestyle is considered to influence *choice*. In most societies with freedom of behaviour, lifestyle influences the choices that people make over time, while a lack of choice relates to lack of power (Veal, 1993). With the power of choice, people can decide which lifestyle they want, and pursue it. Many of the choices that people make while travelling, then, involve the expression of their lifestyle. In decision making, individual behaviour is influenced by both micro and macro environment (Bronfenbrenner, 1977), and the lifestyle of a person is one of the key elements in a decision. The concept of lifestyle first appeared in *The theory of the leisure class* (Veblen, 1899). In this treatise, Veblen stated that human beings are constantly in search of honour, prestige and status, and when an individual is perceived to have more wealth, more leisure time, and more possibility to consume goods, they have a higher degree of personal satisfaction.

Sociologist Max Weber used the term lifestyle with a meaning similar to that of ‘subculture’ (Baruth & Eckstein, 1981) and related it to ‘class’, ‘status’, and ‘power’. These factors help to define a particular lifestyle (Sobel, 1981). This term was later used in consumer culture studies where lifestyle is defined as an expression of consumption (Featherstone, 1987). Bourdieu (1990) associated lifestyle with habitus and suggested lifestyle reflects the habitus of a person and becomes the systematic product of that habitus (Figure 1). Habitus is defined as follows: “...a product of history, produces individual and collective practices – more history – in accordance with the schemes generated by history. It ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the ‘correctness’ of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 54). Taste, therefore, is the generative formula of lifestyle, where lifestyle can be reflected symbolically in different dimensions such as furniture, food, clothing, language, or body *hexis* (Bourdieu, 1984). We display our taste through consuming, and taste is not a personal whim but is socially structured (Slater, 1997). In other words, the display of our taste is closely related to the social class to which we belong or aspire to belong to. From Bourdieu’s point of view, each individual accumulates stocks of cultural and economic capital through a process of learning, and manifests this capital through consumption (Trigg, 2008). Given this, each individual’s consumption choice is manifested in the consumption routine, including in the choice of destination activities. Thus, each individual’s destination activity choice is influenced by habitus (Allen, 2002).



**Figure 1. The sequence of habitus, lifestyle, and taste**

***Involvement with Slow Food***

Individuals engage in a variety of lifestyles and the extent to which any individual is connected to a particular lifestyle can be explained through the concept of involvement (Gross & Brown, 2006). Involvement theory has been extensively used in consumer research in the past two decades. It was first introduced by Sherif and Cantril (1947) through the concept of ego-involvement that linked an individual’s values with an issue or object (Mitchell, 1979). Ego-involvement can be defined as “the state of identification existing between an individual and an activity, at one point in time,

characterised by some level of enjoyment and self-expression being achieved through the activity” (Selin & Howard, 1988, p. 237). Ego-involvement is initiated by a stimulus that the individual perceives to be important, is questioned by, in conflict with, or relevant to the individual’s awareness. This stimulus must be at the centre of the value system and perceived as important by an individual (Selin & Howard, 1988). In order to assess involvement, components and antecedents of involvement have been discussed in the literature (Backman & Crompton, 1991; Green & Chalip, 1998; Havitz, Dimanche, & Bogle, 1994; Laurent & Kapferer, 1985; Mittal & Lee, 1989; Selin & Howard, 1988). The cognitive approach to involvement positions it as an interactive mediating variable affecting the predisposition to respond (Laaksonen, 1994). Given that individuals have different lifestyles, the extent to which any individual is connected to a chosen lifestyle can be explained through the concept of involvement, which shows the direction and expresses the intensity that the individual is embodied in this lifestyle (Gross & Brown, 2006; Iwasaki & Havitz, 1998). This shows that involvement is an antecedent to consumer’s response.

The definition of involvement by Zaichkowsky (1985, p. 342) is: “a person’s perceived relevance of the object based on inherent needs, values, and interests”. Mitchell (1979, p. 195) viewed involvement as “an individual level, internal state variable that indicates the amount of arousal, interest or drive evoked by a particular stimulus or situation”. Havitz and Dimanche (1990, p. 184) proposed the following definition of involvement: “a psychological state of motivation, arousal, or interest between an individual and recreational activities, tourist destinations, or related equipment, at one point in time, characterised by the perception of the following elements: importance, pleasure value, sign value, risk probability, and risk consequences”. The core of the above definitions relies on the internal facets of an individual. Involvement has proven to be engaged with the decision making of the individual (Selin & Howard, 1988; Suh, Lee, Park, & Shin, 1997; Vaughn, 1980). This study selected as participants committed Slow Food members who embodied and practiced relevant values on a daily basis and who executed Slow Food philosophy in their lifestyles.

### ***Food and Slow Food Members***

Food is an essential element of the human experience, vital for human survival and also having a meaning and significance for individuals and societies beyond pure sustenance. The meaning of food is connected both to the body and to the land. There are considerations of beauty and health aspects related to the consumption of food (Cooks, 2009; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore, & Lai, 2013). The tastes, ways of eating, and access to different foods indicate an individual’s social position. Because of its meaning, food has behavioural and cognitive, psychological and cultural, individual and collective impacts on people (Fischler, 1988). Food, therefore, has both tangible and intangible

meanings for human beings and this is evidenced by the culinary systems and cultures that societies invent.

Every tourist needs to consume food in a destination, with spending on food accounting for as much as one third of the total expenditure of a tourist in the destination (Hipwell, 2007; Kivela & Crofts, 2005). Food has also become a major attractive factor in tourists' travel experiences (Hall & Sharples, 2003; Henderson, 2009; Quan & Wang, 2004). Although it was once considered to occupy a secondary role in a tourist's visit to a destination, the importance of food in tourism has increased in significance over the past decades (Ignatov & Smith, 2006). Studies on travel to culinary destinations show that there is a significant relationship between the food image of a place and intention to visit, as well as the increasing importance of food in the promotion of local destinations (Ab Karim & Chi, 2010; du Rand & Heath, 2006).

Studies on aspects of tourists' vacation travel have mainly concentrated on travel behaviour, destination choice, and motivation to travel, with only a few studies focused on the relationship between vacation activity preferences and individual stimulation needs (Litvin, Smith, & Pitts, 2013; Smith et al., 2012). This paper explores the ways in which tourists' destination activities are associated with their lifestyles. Activities chosen by the tourist in the destination are often decided on the perceived stimulation level of one's work, social life, and leisure time activities (Wahlers & Etzel, 1985). In a vacation destination, each individual has an optimal or ideal level of stimulation that could be manifested through the activities they choose. Vacation consumption preferences are influenced by the relative difference between optimal stimulation and actual lifestyle stimulation. Few studies have addressed the relationship between tourists' activities at home and in the destination.

## **METHODS**

A qualitative research approach was adopted in this exploratory study to uncover insights into the food lifestyle and destination activity preferences of Slow Food members. Respondents were chosen from Slow Food *convivia* (chapters) in Argentina, Australia, Italy, Taiwan and Hong Kong. These locations were preselected by the authors on the basis of the importance to Slow Food (Italy), proximity to the researchers' location (Australia), and understanding of the cultures and languages (Argentina, Taiwan, and Hong Kong). Slow Food members share similar values summarised as consumption of 'good', 'clean' and 'fair' food. Members value the knowledge of traditional

producers and variety of places where food is produced, local recipes, and flavours (Biodiversity, 2009). Members embrace and execute the Slow Food philosophy in their daily food consumption and purchasing behaviour. A Slow Food convivium (chapter) located in each country/region was first contacted and an interview arranged. Snowball sampling was used after the first interview in each region to contact other members. The researcher spent approximately one month in each location conducting the interviews. Interviews were audio-recorded with permission from the interviewees. Each interview ranged from 20 to 50 minutes. Interviews continued until the data ‘saturation’ was reached (after 41 interviews) when no further categories or relevant themes emerge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

Members were asked to describe their daily food consumption lifestyle, Slow Food experience, travel motivation and their destination activity preferences. A total of 41 interviews were conducted with Slow Food members. Two of the interviews were conducted with married couples who were both members of Slow Food. Eleven members were interviewed in Australia, eleven in Italy, ten in Argentina, and eleven in Taiwan and Hong Kong. A total of twenty-two females and twenty-one males were interviewed. Most respondents had been Slow Food members for over three years, and were mostly over 40 years old. Seventeen members were professionally employed in the food sectors; eleven were working in non-food related sectors; six were working for the Slow Food organisation; and nine members were retired. The list of members is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. List of interviewees**

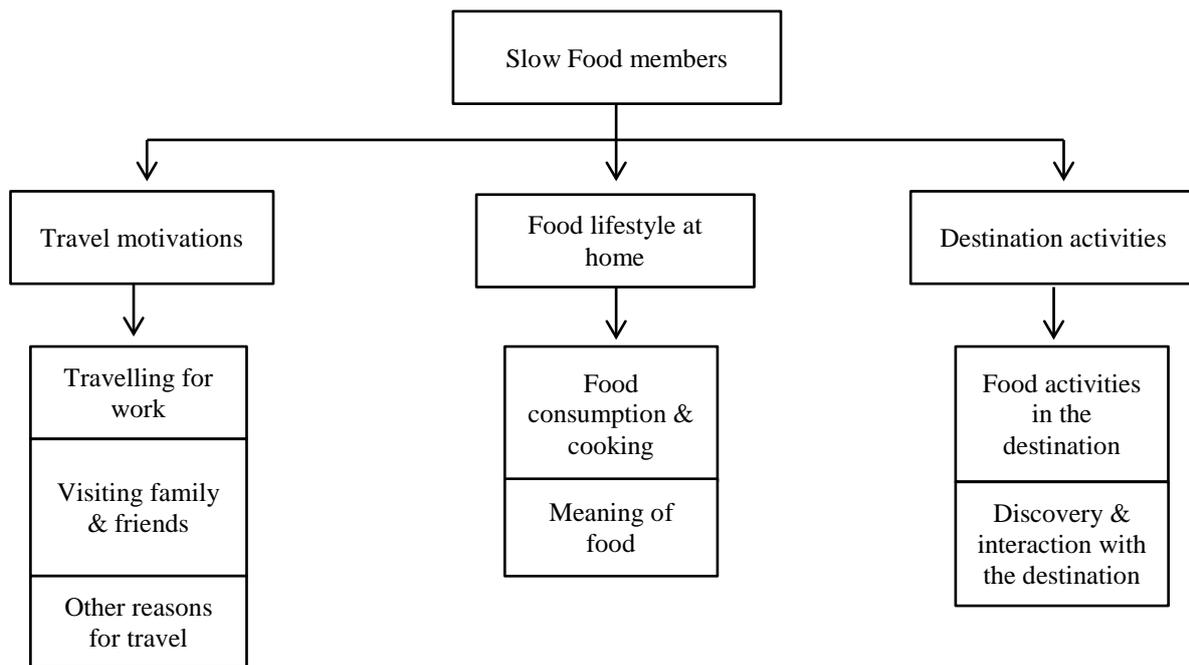
No.	Gender	Age	Occupation	No. of Year in Slow Food	Location of Slow Food Convivium	Food Activities at Home	Destination Activities
A1	F	Over 60	Retired	1	Australia	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
A2	M	Over 60	Retired	13	Australia	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ◊ # ●
A3	F	Over 60	Retired	3	Australia	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
A4	M	Mid-50s	Banker	11	Australia	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ◊ # ●
A5	F	Mid-50s	Teacher (primary)	11	Australia	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ◊ # ●
A6	M	Early-50s	Tax agent	10	Australia	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
A7	F	Mid-40s	Chef	6	Australia	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ◊ # ●
A8	F	Early-40s	Farmer	4	Australia	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ◊ # ●
A9	M	Over 60	Retired	9	Australia	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
A10	M	Over 60	Writer/food critic	5	Australia	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
A11	F	Over 60	Retired	3	Australia	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ◊ # ●
I1	F	Early-50s	Social worker	6	Italy	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
I2	M	Over 60	Retired	25	Italy	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ◊ # ●
I3	M	Early-30s	Slow Food staff	6	Italy	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
I4	F	Late-20s	Slow Food staff	5	Italy	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
I5	M	Early-30s	Slow Food staff	4	Italy	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
I6	F	Early-30s	Slow Food staff	1	Italy	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
I7	F	Mid-50s	Dentist	10	Italy	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ◊ # ●
I8	M	Over 60	Farmer	4	Italy	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
I9	F	Late-20s	Slow Food staff	2	Italy	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
I10	M	Over 60	B&B owner	10	Italy	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ◊ # ●
I11	F	Late-20s	Slow Food staff	2	Italy	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
R1	M	Over 60	Academic	12	Argentina	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ◊ ●
R2	F	Over 60	Chef	8	Argentina	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ◊ # ●
R3	F	Early-50s	Food business owner	4	Argentina	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●

R4	F	Mid-40s	Chef	9	Argentina	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ○ # ●
R5	M	Mid-30s	Chef	10	Argentina	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ○ # ●
R6	M	Over 60	Architect	10	Argentina	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ○ # ●
R7	M	Mid-40s	Accountant	4	Argentina	* # Δ ●	◊ ○ # ●
R8	F	Early-50s	Food dealer	5	Argentina	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
R9	M	Mid-50s	Lawyer	13	Argentina	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
R10	F	Early-30s	PhD student and Lecturer	5	Argentina	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
T1	M	Over 60	Retired	10	Taiwan	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
T2	F	Over 60	Retired	10	Taiwan	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
T3	F	Mid-40s	Food critic	12	Hong Kong	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ○ # ●
T4	F	Over 60	Food business owner	8	Taiwan	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ○ # ●
T5	F	Early-40s	Director of a Food Foundation	3	Taiwan	* # Δ ●	Δ # ●
T6	F	Over 60	Academic	8	Taiwan	* # Δ ●	Δ # ●
T7	M	Mid-50s	Gastronomic consultant	5	Taiwan	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ○ # ●
T8	M	Early-50s	Restaurant owner	9	Taiwan	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ # ●
T9	M	Over 60	Retired	8	Taiwan	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ○ # ●
T10	M	Mid-40s	Chef	3	Taiwan	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ○ # ●
T11	M	Mid-30s	Chef	10	Taiwan	* # Δ ●	Δ ◊ ○ # ●
*Cooking at home		Δ Avoid fast food chains		○ Join cooking courses/buy cook books			
# Buy from small-producers		◊ Cooking on holidays		● Visit local markets			

A total of 130 pages of text were available after the interviews were transcribed. The first author translated each interview into English immediately after the transcription. All data were managed using NVivo software. From the raw data, codes were applied and then major themes were identified using a thematic approach. Data was first analysed by region (Italy, Australia, Argentina, Taiwan and Hong Kong) and then merged together into similar themes and sub-themes. Verbatim quotes from the transcriptions are used to support and illustrate these themes in the presentation of the results.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Three main themes were identified and labelled as: (1) travel motivations, (2) food lifestyle at home and (3) destination activities. Sub-themes were identified under each main theme, the complete themes and sub-themes are listed in Figure 2. Quotes are identified by participant numbers as shown in Table 1. Some food activities of members at home and in the destination are also presented in Table 1.



**Figure 2. Slow Food Members' Travel Motivations, Food Lifestyle and Activity Preferences**

### ***Theme 1. Travel motivations***

***Travelling for work.*** Fifteen out of 43 members across the 41 interviews said their main travel motivation to a destination was job-driven. Some of them combined these working trips with their holiday trips. Eight of them mentioned they were not travelling purely for vacation due to time, jobs or financial reasons. Although these members did not take purely vacation trips, they were able to include in their working trips a few days of free time to enjoy the destination.

*My vacations are joined with my academic trips. Since I need to travel very often for this reason, the last trip was to Shanghai with the President of the college visiting a sister college there. The trip was organised by the college in Shanghai, I did not have much choice but to follow the schedule of the program...I usually go with colleague friends and we try to stay longer and go out for sightseeing. For example in Switzerland we went out to the lake one evening and enjoyed food by the lake (T6).*

*I haven't had a long trip holiday for long time. In fact I haven't had a long trip holiday since about 2002 to Spain - I have been back to Spain for you know short periods of time. I love Spain...I am very fond of Spain... I have been there several times in the last 10 years for business trips (A13).*

**Visiting family and friends.** Over twenty members planned most of their trips according to where their relatives and friends lived, visiting them in passing, or even staying for the whole holiday. By joining the Slow Food movement, many members were expanding their circle of friendship to include other members living overseas and would travel to these destinations to visit these new friends.

*When I go to travel, more often I would stay with friends and often because of my values and my lifestyle, these friends are food producers so I go and stay with friends and we would eat food from their farms and definitely from their regions. To me, I like to go where I know the food is going to be good. I find it very difficult to go somewhere where I cannot find good food, because especially for my son, I really don't want him eating unhealthy food (A8).*

*More often I choose to visit my friends. All my last holidays but one I have been visiting friends away from Sydney [where the interviewee lives] or overseas in Europe (A11).*

**Other reasons for travel.** Members also chose to travel to a destination in order to participate in Slow Food events as a country representative, and for activities such as camping, trekking, biking, or learning a new language. Seven members were fond of sports such as trekking and biking and travelled to new destinations for these activities. Five members travelled to practice a specific language they were learning such as Russian, Spanish, or Arabic.

*I spent four vacations bicycling, for example I did Croatia and Slovenia by bicycle, I did Trieste to Istanbul by bicycle. Last year I went to the Czech Republic. Sometimes it's three weeks' time in total. The trip to California, it is around 15 days, the trip to Czech Republic is around one week, it all depends how long you plan to ride...we send our bicycles to all these places (I3).*

*I study foreign languages, I studied English and Arabic, that's why I want to spend some time there [Syria], I found a university course, it was a language course of Arabic, it was a 3 week course - after that course I spent the rest of the time travelling around Syria mostly, but I went also to Lebanon, and Jordan... Petra... where there are archaeological sites. I spent most of the time travelling around, we went all the way East to the border with Iraq, in the desert ....we spent two days there (I4).*

Slow Food members' travel decisions were often related to their life circumstances, their job, profession, social interactions, and self-development. Although some members travelled for specific activities (sport or language learning), most decided on their travel destinations independent of the activities they would undertake while there. Vacation decision making is a complex process that has different stages (Smallman & Moore, 2010). In the present study, members referred to two different stages of decision making. In the first stage, Slow Food members decided on their vacation destinations independently of the activities to undertake in a destination. In the second stage, upon arrival at the destination, Slow Food members decided on their destination activities. As suggested by McKercher and Chen (2005), mostly the activities to be undertaken in the destination were

chosen after arrival at the destination. While Smith et al. (2012) found that tourists' motivations to travel were mainly destination-driven rather than activity-driven, this study found that most members selected their destination to travel without thinking about the activities in the destination.

## ***Theme 2. Food lifestyle at home***

***Food consumption and cooking.*** Members were very concerned about getting the right and fresh ingredients for their everyday dishes, and most shopped at traditional markets. One reason was that members were aware of the relationship between health and food and most of the members purchased organic products as much as possible. Members would support small-scale producers regularly to secure the supply of acceptable food. Members liked cooking for family and friends. Almost all participants cooked regularly at home: some of them alternate food preparation with their partners. They planned different dishes ahead of time and enjoyed cooking for themselves and their family. When members cook, most prefer using fresh ingredients and avoid using precooked packages or canned foods.

*I am very oriented toward eco-gastronomy, I particularly devalue everything related to fast food, the consumption chain, waste of products, waste of packaging, plastic containers. I am against the unification or globalisation of food, custom and culture (R6).*

*We are both very busy, but we still try to do as much cooking as possible, so we never ever get takeaway food (A6).*

*We cook, we don't open cans, we don't buy frozen food, we freeze our own things, we make our own things, our own marmalades, fruit in syrups, we work hard in the summer to prepare, we make our own tomato sauce, put tomato in jars, that is part of the tradition but it is a very smart way to add quality food even through the winter season (I10).*

Most Slow Food members interviewed cultivated an orchard or fruit garden at home, especially in Italy and Australia, where almost all members had access to home-grown fruit or vegetables.

*I have a garden with pumpkin, and passion fruit, herbs, potatoes... I work in the garden, not my husband. I like to work in the garden (A3).*

Taiwan and Hong Kong members also liked to cook at home, but ate out more than members in other regions due to the easy accessibility and convenience of ready-to-go food. As one member in Hong Kong said, she was too busy to cook every day although she loved to cook:

*I write cook books. Absolutely, I like to cook... but I am too busy to cook every day (T3).*

**Meaning of food.** Members appreciated eating as one of the pleasures in life. Food is considered a medium to transmit love from parents to children. For members, food is also an important medium of communication and can influence people in a positive or negative way depending on the kind of food one eats. Food is the adhesive that brings together friendships and relationships. Over half of the interviewees had dinner with family members every day and visited their parents or grandparents for food gatherings on weekends.

*Also I believe that food can be a very positive means of communication, it is a positive way to communicate things, because most of the times the communication is toward the worst side of the things, so things are always presented in a bad light, or you always hear about catastrophes or problems. I think that food can somehow communicate and influence people in a positive way, because everyone enjoys being at a table and eating food together, this could be an informal way to pass the messages and communication (I4).*

*To me it [food] is a metaphor for love, if we don't have our food right, then we have a sick society, if we don't have the food right, we have a sick family, so to me it is very important to understand and to be aware and to be always inquiring about what is the best food that I can feed myself and my family, and where it is that food comes from and how it is produced and why it is the best, what can I do to maintain its value and its nutrients density (A8).*

*You should have something good every time you sit down. It doesn't need to be something expensive, but it needs to be fresh and good (A9).*

Members were quite knowledgeable about different food cultures and the history of food from different places. Members cared about this issue, and read and searched for new information related to food and culture.

*I think food is a vehicle to culture and pleasure, this is the key. The sharing of food is something enjoyable in life (R9).*

Regardless of their culture background, gender, and age, Slow Food members shared similar values toward food and were aware of seeking the right ingredients for their meals. All members were highly involved with Slow Food; they had strong Slow Food values and practiced these values on a daily basis. These values were based on acquiring 'good', 'clean' and 'fair' food (Petrini, 2007). Members considered their food supplier as a co-producer who formed part of the food production cycle (Labelle, 2004). Members liked to cook regularly. They share a similar food lifestyle in which it is important to use natural and fresh ingredients, they often bought these ingredients from small-scale producers and they were aware of environmental issues related to food production (Bourdieu, 1990). Members displayed their food lifestyle through their choices regarding food consumption (Featherstone, 1987). Slow Food members adopted a food lifestyle related to the values of Slow Food and displayed these in their daily consumption and taste preferences.

Across different regions, members prized the intrinsic aspects of food. Food was considered a representation of love, and eating together enhanced relationships between family members and friends. By preparing and eating food, one could acquire knowledge about other cultures which was very difficult to learn just from reading. The selection of food was linked to each person's values and provided experiences that could help to differentiate them from others in a globalised world (Bell, 2000; Germann Molz, 2007).

### ***Theme 3. Destination activities***

***Food activities in the destination.*** All Slow Food members enjoyed undertaking food-related activities in their travel destination. Activities such as visiting local food markets and savouring local food were preferred. Members cooked every day both at home and during their holidays and they enjoyed cooking on vacation. Members often liked to read restaurant menus in the vacation destination. For lodging, members preferred to rent houses with kitchen appliances in natural areas or stay in family-owned hostels. Around ten interviewees mentioned a preference to join food tours or cooking courses in the destination.

*I try to eat every local food where I go, this is the experience of life that one tries to find in a trip, the gastronomy is also one experience of life. We are living in this globalised world; gastronomy is one of the few things that we have differences. Everything is too homogeneous in this world; you just find diversity in these small things (R9).*

*Most days we will go to a market, and that will be our morning. We will go around the local market, we will shop and we will get the things we need for that day. And then in the afternoon, often we would go to do the tourist things, and then we will come back at night, we will sit and have a drink together with our friends, and something to eat and then we will cook a lovely dinner while we drink some wine and then we go to bed (A9).*

*...the house is quite small equipped with a kitchen, a BBQ, firewood...since we know so many people around, we always have parties with local people and my friends in Uruguay (R9).*

Wherever members travelled for their holidays they visited local markets in the destination and ate at local restaurants. They shopped at traditional markets and enjoyed visiting local markets. Most members were open-minded in trying new ingredients, like kangaroo meat or unfamiliar street food. Food was often not the main reason for them to travel, but it became important when they arrived at the destination and their food search and consumption behaviour were very similar to that at home.

*I eat what local people are eating...I always stay a weekend and visit the local market, where producers show their fresh products ....cheese...I love it (R2).*

*We shop in the village. There are still little shops, it is still an old style village where you can find a little bit of everything in the village. There are also big supermarkets, but we prefer going into the small shops (I10).*

*Every time I travel I try local food, particularly street food (A2).*

*We were eating and cooking. One thing we knew we were in an area of kangaroos...possible aboriginal ingredients, we were curious to see if we could have a meal that included that (kangaroo)...and try things we haven't tried before (A11).*

**Discovery and interaction with the destination.** When travelling, members liked to interact with local people, and enjoyed talking to shop owners, producers, fishermen, and waiters as one way of integrating and connecting with the place that they were visiting. They tried to become part of the environment in the destination. Members not only interacted with local people but they wanted to live like a local person. All 43 interviewees expressed strong interest in observing and interacting with local people so they could understand different ways of living and to feel like a local.

*When I travel I try to live the same way that a local lives (R10).*

*That is what we like. We shop as local do, and we get to know them, and when you go to the same place often the shop keeper gets to know you and they give you better things, or something special or they put extra in, they give you better advice when you are buying cheese and that sort of thing, 'cause they know you (A9).*

*I spent four months in Italy this year. I went on March 2011; I spent two months in the cooking school and two months working in a local restaurant. I learned how to make a true Italian dish. During these four months, I learned about the culture of the place, I found out that Italians are more relaxed, less serious than Asians (T10).*

Although most members enjoyed having freedom in scheduling their own itinerary, some members in Taiwan used package tours to travel abroad, travelling in large groups. In other cases they only travelled for job purposes. Over half of the members' trips were independently organised; with flights and accommodation booked by themselves through the Internet. When in their destination, members preferred to have control of their activities and to experience the destination slowly, without rushing from one place to another. They usually stayed in one destination long enough to interact with local people, thereby obtaining a sense of the environment, the food, and culture of the area. Members liked to experience a place in depth, preferred small towns, and slow cities, where they could relax and enjoy their surroundings in tranquillity. They planned itineraries day by day, and actively avoided destinations that they felt were too crowded. By visiting natural places and open spaces, they could recover reenergise themselves.

*When I travel I like to sense the place. I will never go on package tours or cruises, they are not in my list of priorities (R10).*

*I get an air ticket from a travel agent and I book everything else online, all the accommodation, houses, everything online. We go usually for a month...We don't move around much, we like to stay in each place at least a couple of nights. You don't have to change hotels so much, and also if you are moving quickly you don't see anything (A9).*

*I like to bike in this area [East Coast of Taiwan], I sleep in my camper van, I drive to a natural place and take the bike to ride around the area. I don't have an exact destination, I just stop where I feel good. I always take three week-days to go, from Tuesday to Friday when you don't see many tourists (T8).*

*The place, the people, if there is something interesting we waited to see it, for example the return of blue penguins [at night], we waited a little bit longer to see the penguins. We were looking basically for nature, we talked with local people, how they live, there were small communities, people were very nice and accessible, they were happy to talk to us (I7).*

Slow Food members preferred their vacation destinations to have a natural environment (Hall, 2006). They practised slow tourism by staying in one place long enough to interact with local people (Murayama & Parker, 2012). Members considered that the concept of 'slow' went beyond food and this belief was manifested in the activities they undertook in the destination (Nevison, 2008).

Slow Food members advocate food as a medium to understand other cultures. Chang, Kivela, and Mak (2010) have found that Chinese tourists relate eating local food in a foreign destination with having an authentic travel experience and exploring local culture. The action of eating fulfils physiological needs of an individual and also psychological or intrinsic needs (Cherry, Ellis, & DeSoucey, 2011; Germann Molz, 2007). Slow Food members perceived that everyone has the right to choose what to eat every day; in effect a political action that it is linked a person's basic values. They had extensive knowledge of food and food cultures around the world, and when travelling liked to read local recipes. In this way, their food consumption behaviour when travelling was similar to their behaviour at home.

There were more similarities than dissimilarities among the 43 international Slow Food members in their food lifestyle and destination activity choices. Across different cultures, ages, professions, and genders, all members expressed their strong commitment toward the values of Slow Food and practiced these daily. In the lifestyle literature, when a person's practices become a long lasting habitus, the person carries this behaviour wherever he or she goes (Bourdieu, 1990; Reay, 2004). Cooking was something most of the members enjoyed and practised daily, with this activity part of members' daily lifestyle. They were very particular in the selection of dishes but differed in cooking

styles, with some more sophisticated than others. A few members liked to learn new ways of cooking and joined cooking classes in different countries they visited. The first author was able to, in a few cases visit a member's home when conducting an interview. Most of the interviewees visited at home had very spacious and equipped kitchens that they used frequently demonstrating a love for cooking. This love for cooking, a search for fresh ingredients, and preference to buy from small-scale producers was translated into activity preferences and choices in the destination. Members were strongly and constantly evinced Slow Food values. Regardless of the reason they had for travelling or with whom they travelled, they practiced these values when they arrived at the destination. This food consumption behaviour in the destination coincided with their habitus and showed consistency while at-home and travelling.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Given the scarcity of research on the relationship between tourists' destination activity preferences and activities at home, this study explored the preferences of a group of tourists with a specific involvement in Slow Food. Despite the diverse background of Slow Food members, this study demonstrated that group members had a food lifestyle that they shared and prized. The results suggest that members were strongly and constantly linked with Slow Food values and whatever reason they had for travelling, when they arrived at the destination, they practiced these values. This food consumption in the destination coincided with their habitus and showed consistency between their at-home and travel behaviour. Slow Food members bought food from small-scale producers, they ate local food and visited local markets. When possible, members liked to have flexible travel schedules and stay a long time in one destination to interact with the local community. They preferred to stay in apartments with kitchen facilities, buy cookbooks, and attend cooking classes in the destination.

Decision making about travel and destination activities is a process with different stages, and each decision is related to the individual's lifestyle, personality, and past experiences (Chen, Huang, & Cheng, 2009; Sönmez & Graefe, 1998). Despite different travel motivations, age differences, culture backgrounds, and professions, when members arrived at a destination, they remained faithful to Slow Food values of good, fair and clean food, eco-gastronomy, and slow tourism; these values were manifested through their choices of destination activities. The results suggest that Slow

Food members' travel motivations were mostly independent of their activity preferences in the destination. This supports Smith et al.'s (2012) finding that the decision to travel to a destination is not activity-driven but destination-driven. Slow Food members decided first *where* to go and when they arrived to the destination, they decided *what* to do. The involvement with Slow Food influenced the decision of what to do in the destination. Members decided to undertake many destination activities after arrival and they were similar to those activities usually done at home (Brey & Lehto, 2007; McKercher & Chan, 2005).

The findings of this study provide a new perspective on tourists' destination activities. Instead of considering that tourists are traveling to 'escape' from the ordinary, Slow Food members travelled for a variety of reasons but undertook similar activities to those they usually did at home. Tourists with a particular interest at home may carry this interest as part of their habitus to wherever they go. In this study, Slow Food members showed consistency in their food behaviour at home and in the destination. Other studies have found that tourists who develop 'leisure activity loyalty' are much less sensitive to changes in costs and policies associated with those leisure activities (LaMondia & Bhat, 2012). Future research may further investigate the 'home and away' activities of individuals with a high involvement in a particular interest. When investigating tourists' activities in a destination, researchers may therefore wish to investigate both 'exotic adventurous activities' and 'similar activities to those at home'.

These results assist destination marketers and hospitality businesses in the development of food products and events to attract tourists, given that decisions regarding destination activities are influenced by a tourist's involvement and lifestyle. If an individual is highly involved in biking, running, or golfing at home, they are likely to engage in the same activity in a destination, although they travel for other motives. This may be applied to other activities where some have a high involvement, such as religion (Buddhist, Muslim), sport (triathlon, marathon, trekking, motorcycling, or bicycling), and other hobbies (antique collection, bird watching, or philately). The relationship of lifestyles and destination activities may help to better understand what tourists do while travelling.

This exploratory study of international Slow Food members does not provide findings that can be generalised to other groups. The results describe only one specific group with high involvement in food. Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted in four countries/regions. Convenience sampling was used in the recruitment of Slow Food members due to distance, budget, and issues in understanding of the language and culture. However, the results of this study suggest

that Slow Food members were not necessarily motivated to travel in order to 'escape'. Instead this study supports two previous studies by Brey and Lehto (2007) and Smith et al. (2012) that found travel motivation was independent of destination activity preferences and that activity choices in the destination were similar to those activities the respondent was highly involved with at home. The reason that tourists choose to undertake similar activities in the destination as they do at home may be explained by the concept of habitus and manifested in the travellers' lifestyles (Bourdieu, 1990).

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