

Hikers, What's to Eat in Your Backpack?  
Extraordinary Eating in Extraordinary Experiences

Marie Le Bouthillier

A Thesis

in the

John Molson School Of Business

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Master of Science (Marketing) at  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

April 2019

© Marie Le Bouthillier, 2019

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

School of Graduate Studies

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Marie Le Bouthillier

Entitled: Hikers, What's To Eat In Your Backpack? Extraordinary Eating In  
Extraordinary Experiences

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Master of Science (Marketing)**

and complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards  
with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final Examining Committee:

\_\_\_\_\_ Chair

Mehdi Farashahi, PhD

\_\_\_\_\_ Examiner

Caroline Roux, PhD

\_\_\_\_\_ Examiner

Kamila Sobol, PhD

\_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor

Zeynep Arsel, PhD

Jordan Le Bel, PhD

Approved by \_\_\_\_\_

Zeynep Arsel, PhD. Graduate Program Director

\_\_\_\_\_ 2019 \_\_\_\_\_

Anne-Marie Croteau, Dean

ABSTRACT

Hikers, what's to eat in your backpack?  
Extraordinary eating in extraordinary experiences

Marie Le Bouthillier

Instant mashed potatoes, dehydrated meals, *snickers* bars and beef jerky; why do some hikers eat these foods –which are very different from their normal life, while backpacking? Simply, hiking trips present conditions to hikers, which draw them into special eating practices. Drawing on hiker-generated photos of food, eating experiences, and fieldwork conducted at four popular hiking locations in the United States, this thesis documents and analyzes extraordinary food consumption, defined as food consumption different than everyday life. Examples of such eating practices, from 50 short and long-distance backpackers, are examined in detail. What leads hikers into extraordinary eating? Certain in situ conditions foster its adoption. Specifically, hikers must be under the difficulties of the hiking trips and be socialized to these practices, making extraordinary eating the only possible avenue to eat. Notably, this thesis speaks of socialization during adulthood, by strangers, as an influencer of food choices. For academics, this underscores the importance of contexts in eaters' decisions and its place in a food decision-making process. Notably, compartmentalization is discussed as a strategy allowing hikers to cognitively separate their behavior based on the context in which they appear, and justify their unhealthy extraordinary consumption on the trails. For practitioners, the findings reported in this thesis speak about hiker food and provide managerial insights to understand their needs. For both practitioners and academics, this thesis provides in depth accounts of eating during hiking trips, an extraordinary activity rarely discussed in marketing.

A big accomplishment requires hard work, but becomes much easier when surrounded by great people.

To the *hikers* that have crossed my path, thank you for your generosity and kindness.

To my *supervisors* and *committee members*, thank you for being examples of dedication, excellence, and resilience.

To my amazing *family and friends*, thank you for your endless support, encouragement, and love.

To *Marco*, thank you for being such an extraordinary man.

## TABLE OF CONTENT

INTRODUCTION .....	1
THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	7
Food Choices and Their Complexity.....	7
Extraordinary Experiences .....	11
Compartmentalization and Outdoor Food Choices .....	13
RESEARCH CONTEXT .....	16
The Evolution of Hiking; from the Past to Today’s Literature .....	16
Hiking Today.....	18
Food and Hiking in the Literature .....	21
Hiker Hunger .....	22
RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	25
METHODS .....	26
Preliminary Data Collection.....	26
Main Data Collection .....	27
Autoethnographic Data.....	28
Data Analysis .....	29
FINDINGS .....	31
The Phenomenon.....	32
Definition .....	32
Examples of Extraordinary Eating in Hiking Trips .....	34
Fostering Conditions .....	41
Limits From the Environment.....	42
Physiological needs.....	47
Socialization:.....	49
Psychological Consequences.....	52
Signs of Compartmentalization.....	54
Signs of Integration.....	56

Effects of Time .....	57
Summary of Findings .....	60
DISCUSSION .....	62
Interpretative Summary.....	62
Theoretical Contributions.....	64
Practical Implications .....	67
Limitations and Opportunities.....	68
CONCLUSION.....	73
ENDNOTES .....	74
REFERENCES .....	75
Appendix A .....	85
Appendix B.....	86
Appendix C.....	90
Appendix D .....	94
Appendix E.....	96

## LISTS OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 1.</i> What backpackers typically carry as food for weeks of hiking .....	2
<i>Figure 2.</i> The food choice model.....	8
<i>Figure 3.</i> Adaptation of Sobal et al.'s model.....	9
<i>Figure 4.</i> A hiker planning his food for the next hiking days.....	23
<i>Figure 5.</i> Ramen bomb; a classic to relieve hiker hunger .....	24
<i>Figure 6.</i> Transcribing while camping and travelling between trails .....	29
<i>Figure 7.</i> Autoethnographic data from a dinner I had .....	33
<i>Figure 8.</i> A group interviewed when snacking; unconventional position and time .....	34
<i>Figure 9.</i> Common backpacker food .....	35
<i>Figure 10.</i> Sodas are popular on the trail; quick calories and sugar .....	37
<i>Figure 11.</i> Bread's meal; elaborate preparation for better quality.....	38
<i>Figure 12.</i> A dehydrated meal in a pouch, with a JetBoil (in blue).....	39
<i>Figure 13.</i> A meal I had in the backcountry. A meal I had in my normal life. ....	40
<i>Figure 14.</i> A bear canister (in blue).....	43
<i>Figure 15.</i> Keven's food for four months .....	45
<i>Figure 16.</i> A hiker's food for four days.....	47
<i>Figure 17.</i> Chili with coconut oil.....	48
<i>Figure 18.</i> Summary of the findings in the context of hiking trips .....	61
<i>Figure 19.</i> The direction is set, the hiker only needs to follow the path. ....	73

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	85
Table 2.	94



## INTRODUCTION

I mean, when you're on the trail, you don't have all the thoughts and the problems of real life. It's just a completely different microcosmos [...] so is the food! It's completely different. I mean, not completely different, but it's nothing that compares to real life. (Midway, personal communication, September 26, 2018)

Picture yourself during your last trip away from home or during your last summer vacation –how did your food consumption vary? Most likely, you did not have customary eating practices. Extraordinary experiences, such as these, are infrequent and special compared to ordinary life. By the circumstances they create, they influence people's normal food consumption.

In academic literature, the context where a meal is consumed is known to influence its acceptability (Meiselman et al., 2000, Edwards et al., 2003). For example, you'll not accept the same food on a hiking trip versus in a fancy restaurant. However, little is known about the reasons for these differences and how people psychologically organize these different consumption. In line with this, my aim is to explore eaters' food experience under the context of extraordinary experiences. Notably, I discuss fostering conditions leading to extraordinary eating behavior in hiking trips and how individuals mentally organize with these behavior. As suggested above, food consumption within extraordinary experiences is most likely different than everyday life. I have purposely named this type of food consumption *extraordinary eating*, given that academic literature has not yet a term to describe this special food consumption. Important to realize, not all food consumption within extraordinary experiences is extraordinary: only a totally different food consumption compared to someone's normal life is *extraordinary*. In other words, not all special events or occasions lead to extraordinary eating: only special conditions emerging from unique contexts foster its emergence. Special circumstances lead consumers to this way of eating. Considering this, extraordinary eating could happen in any sort of experience, but the scope of this paper is on conditions, within the

extraordinary experience of hiking trips, that foster its emergence. That is to say, in this thesis, I demonstrate how eaters are influenced by extraordinary contexts and how this in turn change their eating practices to extraordinary ones. I also discuss how they cognitively organize their behavior, by either compartmentalizing or integrating them.

In simple terms, this thesis talks about what hikers have to eat in their backpacks, why they commit to eating what they have brought and how they do it (Figure 1).



*Figure 1.* What backpackers typically carry as food for weeks of hiking (Le Bouthillier, 2018).

The general leading research questions are:

- What do hikers eat on a backpacking trip?
- Why do they eat this way? What are the fostering conditions?
- How do they cognitively deal with these eating behavior?

I point at the importance of contexts and the presence of fostering conditions as the reasons allowing extraordinary eating. I also discuss how hikers separate their identities between home and the trail, as a strategy allowing extraordinary eating behavior.

In literature describing experiences, a number of studies conclude that consumption behavior varies between ordinary and extraordinary experiences (e.g., Sussman and Alter, 2012; Minton and Liu, 2018, Bhattacharjee and Mogilner, 2018). Apart from this, there are few complete descriptions or explanations of consumption, and more specifically of dietary practices. Importantly, researchers have studied what makes an extraordinary culinary experience for consumers (e.g., Hanefors and Mossberg, 2003; Taar, 2014) but, they have not studied how a meal is consumed in the settings of an extraordinary experience (i.e., it is a different aim). Extraordinary experiences are a context entailing different food consumption (i.e., extraordinary eating), where useful insights can surely be gleaned.

I focus my analysis on food prepared away from home and consumed outdoors. Specifically, the extraordinary experience under scrutiny is multi-day non-professional hiking trips. As a member of the outdoor community, my hiking curriculum has grown throughout the years, as has my casual observations of hikers' food consumption behavior. Notably, there are many anecdotal stories about the *hiker hunger*: hiker's insatiable and raging hunger while on trails. Hikers do not eat the same food at home and on the trail; the two are completely different. These observations have led to and articulated the path for this current thesis. A search in the academic literature and available market data has revealed only small insights about the actual food consumption hikers experience on their trail journeys. This underscores the need and value of my approach and the originality of this research. To gather data, I have engaged in extensive fieldwork at four popular trails, emerging myself deeply into various contexts and camping at those locations. This work has led to unique photos of food and rich interviews with hikers; all of which are key elements to my thesis.

In terms of this research's findings, I discuss in detail how hiking trips, with its environmental, physiological and social circumstances, and the use of cognitive strategies from eaters (compartmentalization or integration), lead to extraordinary eating. I confirm

previous observations suggesting a shift in consumers' food behavior between ordinary and extraordinary experiences. More specifically, I show that eating practices follow the dichotomy of the extraordinary and ordinary, with a distinction between food for extraordinary experiences versus food for normal, everyday life. To demonstrate this phenomenon, I provide examples of extraordinary eating practices, specific to my study's context. In particular, I discuss how most hikers eat less healthy and fresh food, compared to their normal life. An analysis based on healthiness and freshness is only one way, among many other, that portray how eating practices on the trail differ from normal hikers' behavior.

Then, I discuss how manifestations of extraordinary eating are in reaction to conditions from the extraordinary environment of hiking trips. In other words, the extraordinary experience presents circumstances that influence hikers' consumption on the trail, which then leads them into extraordinary eating. With this in mind, I highlight three key conditions favouring the adoption of extraordinary eating in hiking trips: constraints from the environment, physiological needs and socialization among hikers. First, constraints from the environment arise from the physical demand of the activity, the nature of the food and the difficult acquisition of food on the trail. Second, physical needs of eaters are under the form of a desire to avoid hiker hunger. Last, socialization is about how hikers learn and normalize these practices. The third condition, socialization determines what form of extraordinary eating they're likely to engage in (e.g., unhealthy or healthy).

How consumers cognitively approach extraordinary eating behavior depends on the impact these conditions have on hikers' eating practices. On one side, if conditions really influence hikers' normal eating behaviour, they use compartmentalization as a strategy and are justified by the circumstances: they separate eating behavior based on the context in which they appear. In particular, if hikers have been socialized into unhealthy extraordinary eating practices, that are likely to be different from their normal behavior, they use compartmentalization. It is the case of most hikers, since unhealthy and less fresh food is the most observable form of extraordinary eating during hiking trips. By using this tool, hikers separate their identity as a way to justify their very different eating practices. In other words, compartmentalization helps them accept extraordinary eating,

since they only eat like this on hikes. This represents a convenient strategy allowing for extraordinary eating. On the other hand, other hikers, who are usually better prepared and more involved in food preparation, have fewer eating behaviours to justify because they do not eat very differently during a hike. In that case, they can integrate their eating behavior on the trail, as part of their normal self. In particular, if hikers have been socialized to adopt healthy extraordinary eating practices on the trail, that are likely to be similar to their normal behavior, hikers integrate them. That is to say, they still engage in extraordinary eating behavior, but not as intensively as other hikers who need to compartmentalize, because they've engaged in a better preparation and/or planification. In that case, they can adopt a more integrated view of their overall eating behavior on the trail and they don't need the compartmentalization strategy. However, they are in the minority, since eating healthy is not very common on backpacking trips. In sum, my findings all speak to the what, why and how of extraordinary eating.

On a broader level, my thesis contributes to the academic and managerial understanding of how eaters eat in a process influenced by contexts. In particular, I provide additional examples and insights for the food choice process model (Furst et al., 1996; Sobal et al., 2006). This model, detailed in the next section titled "Food Choices and Their Complexity," explains how eaters are influenced by many dimensions while making food choices decisions. In particular, I emphasize how context and certain conditions are primordial when trying to understand someone's eating behavior (Meiselman et al., 2000; Edwards et al., 2003). As an original contribution, I not only describe a certain food consumption, but I highlight key conditions and consequences, emerging from contexts, that lead to different eating practices. I emphasize how food choice cannot be only explained by availability (limits) and physiological needs, since eating is deeply socially influenced (Rozin, 1988). Notably, I look at the influence of socialization during adulthood, by strangers, on food choices made outside of home. Prior studies have mostly look how childhood (mostly family or kindergarten contexts) influence food choice (Rozin and Shiller, 1980; Ochs and Shohet, 2006; Ayadi and Bree, 2010; Alm and Olsen, 2015), which make my thesis interesting for both marketing, nutrition or food psychology literature since it discusses another source of socialization. Additionally, my conclusions speak to how contextualized eating norms can create specific acceptable eating practices:

How extraordinary eating practices are *normal* in the present moment. Also, I discuss two forms of extraordinary eating, based on the freshness and the healthiness, which portray a heterogeneity of consumption within a communal (Lindberg and Mossberg, 2019): hikers doing the same activity might not have exact similar eating practices. Finally, also as an original contribution, I demonstrate that hikers use compartmentalization not to allow themselves to indulge, but to cope with the context's conditions. Traditionally, compartmentalization is used to explain non-prosocial behavior or licensing behavior (Amiot et al., 2017a; Amiot et al., 2017b; Touré-Tillery and Light, 2018), so using it to explain extraordinary eating behavior provides interesting findings. It is also original since it is a food strategy that does not aim to maintain healthy behavior (Falk et al., 2001; Quintiliani et al., 2010), but aim to achieve a different food consumption –for most hikers, unhealthy. The conclusions of this thesis aim to add to limited descriptions of hiking food, in academic marketing literature, and further provides many managerially relevant insights for the outdoor and recreation market.

In the following sections, I present this study's theoretical foundations by providing a review of the literature about the food choices and their complexity, the nature of extraordinary experiences, and compartmentalization theory. I also aim to describe the research's context (i.e., hiking trips) in greater detail. Following this thesis methodology, I present my findings, which include a definition of extraordinary eating and examples of hiking trips, three conditions favouring its emergence, and the psychological consequences of such consumption. Afterward, this thesis discusses the broader meanings of these findings, namely the importance of circumstances in eaters' experiences. Finally, this thesis will discuss this research's theoretical and practical implications, along with its limitations and opportunities for future research.

## THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In this section, I present my theoretical foundations, including a review of food choice process models, extraordinary experiences, and compartmentalization. When possible, I also give practical examples of these theories.

### **Food Choices and Their Complexity**

This section is meant as an introduction to the complexity of food choices, and present my theoretical model of reference, which we'll be discussed in the "Findings" section.

In the literature of eating behavior, it is generally accepted that eaters do eat differently depending on the context (Meiselman et al., 2000; Edwards et al., 2003). As such, Meiselman et al. (2000) find that individuals have different acceptability ratings depending on the eating location where a meal is consumed. Similarly, Edwards et al. (2003) discuss how it's food, individuals and situations that influence food acceptability. These later authors find that the location where the food is consumed has a major impact on how the food will be rated (Edwards et al., 2003).

In the literature about food choices, Furst et al. (1996) propose a model highlighting the subjectivity of food choices, which includes a broad definition of context as a determinant. The model suggests that three main dimensions are responsible for an individual's food choices: life courses, influences, and an individual's personal system. At the broader level, the life course of the individual represents where the eater is in their life (Furst et al., 1996). This life course generates influences, such as "ideals, personal factors, resources, social framework and food context[s]" (Furst et al., 1996, p. 250). These influences, furthermore, shape an individual's personal system, that is, a mix of values, among which are "sensory perception, quality, managing relationship, health and nutrition, convenience, and monetary considerations" (Furst et al., 1996, p. 250). The individual negotiates and weighs these values, to come up with a food selection (Furst et al., 1996). In sum, these three dimensions shape an individual's food choice, either directly or indirectly and include context as a determinant.

Later, Sobal et al. (2006) add details and clarifications on Furst et al.'s model (1996). This second model (Figure 2) has similarities, along with differences with Furst et al.'s model (1996). In detail, the life course and experiences, are now described by “trajectories, transitions, turning points, timing and *contexts* within the life of individuals” (Sobal et al., 2006, p. 41). Contexts are more defined, a new addition to Furst et al.'s model (1996), and are subsequently detailed as *present contexts*: contexts in the lived experience. They, among other influences, shape an individual's personal food system: “guidelines that people can easily call upon” (Sobal et al., 2006, p. 43). This model is similar to Furst et al.'s (1996) model, with the same kind of trajectory from life courses to food choices, but with a focus on the eater's experience and the role of contexts.

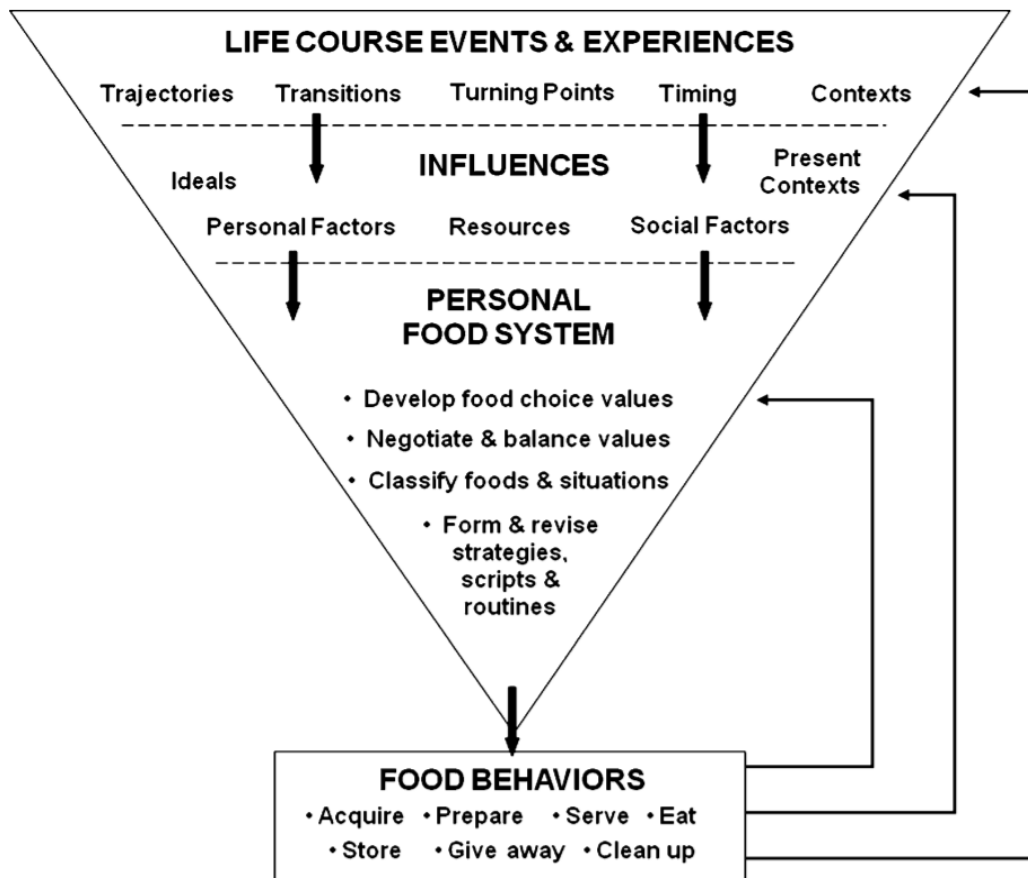
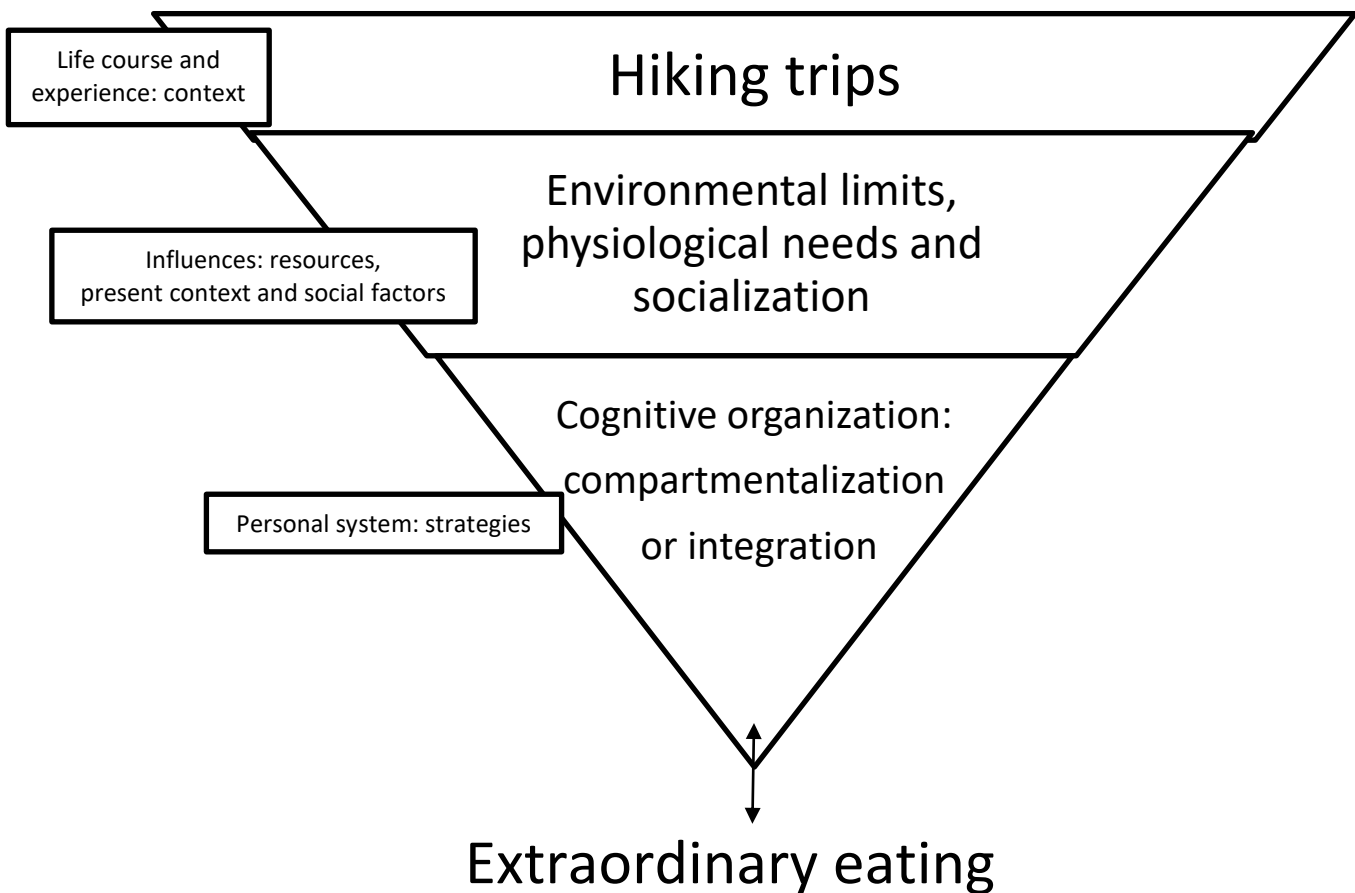


Figure 2. The food choice model (Sobal et al., 2006, p. 41)



For my thesis, the use of a model, specifically Sobal et al.'s (2006), helps to situate my findings within a defined frame. In this research, I especially focus on the life course and experience (the context), its influence on resources, present context and social factors, and the use of strategies, as key aspects which determines food choice. In my findings, I discuss in detail how hiking trips, with its environmental, physiological and social circumstances, and the use of cognitive strategy from eaters (compartmentalization or integration), lead to extraordinary eating (Figure 3).



*Figure 3.* Adaptation of Sobal et al.'s model (2006), based on the context of extraordinary eating of hiking trips.

In the literature, Rozin (1988) argue that food choices can be explained biologically, culturally and individually. Notably, that is why my three conditions refer to at least one of these three dimensions. However, Rozin (1988) emphasize the importance of social influences. As such, he states that the best factor for human food choice is a cultural or ethnic group (Rozin, 1988). On this, socialization, one of the three conditions leading to extraordinary eating, as a special role in determining what form of extraordinary eating the hiker will engage in. In prior literature, authors find that family (the relation between parent and child) influence food learning (Ayadi and Bree, 2010), and that eating is not only biologically significant, but has also social ramifications (Ochs and Shoheit, 2006). Also, how food preferences can be influenced by other people, but mostly at a young age, notably to increase chili pepper (Rozin and Schiller, 1980) or seafood acceptance (Alm and Olsen, 2015). In my thesis, I investigate socialization during adulthood by strangers outside of home, which is an original contribution since little to no attention has been paid to this social influence.

Furthermore, I also discuss strategies leading to certain eating behavior (i.e., compartmentalization or integration). In the literature, individuals usually use strategies to keep healthier habits (Falk et al., 2001; Quintiliani et al., 2010) or to introduce a variety of food to children (Nicklaus, 2009). Thus, in my thesis, discussing eating strategies allowing for different –mostly unhealthy, eating behavior during adulthood is an original contribution. Of interest, the double-headed arrow in Figure 3 speaks to the fact that food choices, once made, iteratively change the dimensions that lead to its adoption (Furst et al., 1996, Sobal et al., 2006). In other words, food choices, once made, change how the context, the conditions and the strategies are consequently lived. Once a choice is made, this creates a scenario ultimately influencing other food choices. Notably, being socialized to extraordinary eating practices (i.e., one condition that will be highlighted in my findings), and consequently engaging in these practices, influence upcoming food choices: it normalizes these food choices (i.e., influence dimensions of food choices), thus influencing future food choice. This figure is the core of this thesis and is detailed in the “Findings” section.

## Extraordinary Experiences

This section provides an introduction to the literature on extraordinary experiences, and I explain how its dichotomous nature is reflected in my research context.

In the literature about sports experiences, leisure activities and their consumption is often described by academics with the traditional output of consumption (e.g., purpose, result) as well as with three different experiential aspects: fantasy; feeling; and fun (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982). In simple terms, sports are considered consumption experiences. For example, a hiking trip is a consumptive experience, complete with an itinerary and the expectation of a pleasant adventure. Notably, hikers purchase gear, food, access to trails, and they consume nature. Such consumption is not necessarily orchestrated within market boundaries, but they are also arranged within locations, households, or communal contexts (Carù and Cova, 2003): hiking trips aren't limited to a specific geography or time. Thus, a consumption experience, such as hiking trips, has subjectivity and an effect on individuals, and can take place in a variety of places. In this thesis, I use the term "experience" to refer to a consumption experience, and I consider hiking trips to be such an experience.

Experiences are further described in the literature as either ordinary or extraordinary. Arnould and Price define extraordinary experiences as new and transformative, with themes such as "personal growth, self-renewal and communitas" (1993, p. 24). On the other hand, Bhattacharjee and Mogilner suggest that extraordinary experiences are "uncommon, infrequent, and go beyond the realm of everyday life" (2013, p. 2). Although hiking may be a transformative and an interpersonal experience (Tumbat and Belk, 2011), it is a simplification to speak of all hiking trip as "communitas" (Arnould and Price, 1993) and state that a "group experience that [is] an end in [and of] itself" (Celsi, Rose, and Leight, 1993, p. 44, as cited by Tumbat and Belk, 2010). In my own hiking practice, I have noticed that many hiking trips, particularly those that involving non-professional hikers, do not obligatorily involve a dimension of belongingness or "communitas". Similarly, Arnould and Price's (1993) definition is also criticized as being romanticized and overlooking the possible negative outcomes of extraordinary experiences (e.g., Lindberd and Østergaard, 2015; Lindberg and Eide, 2016), such as role

conflict and tensions in the group. For these reasons, I use Bhattacharjee and Mogilner's (2013) definition in this study (i.e., extraordinary experience as uncommon experiences) to define hiking trips as extraordinary experiences<sup>iii</sup>.

Within this definition, the literature is relatively new and points to the dichotomic nature of the extraordinary experience (versus the ordinary experience) and its distinctive influence on the individual. As such, Cooney et al. (2014) investigate the unforeseen costs of extraordinary experiences and find that extraordinary experiences might separate a person from those who do not experience similar events. For example, a hiker might feel separated from his friends who do not hike. Similarly, Lindberg and Østergaard (2015) suggest a similar negative consequence: a role conflict between the different identities needed to live an extraordinary experience. They argue that consumers use their resources (e.g., knowledge and skill) to immerse themselves into the experience but challenges and negative feelings can emerge if those resources are not enough (Lindberg and Østergaard, 2015). In this case, many types of challenges can influence one's consumption of an extraordinary experience. It may challenge an individual's unrealistic expectations, experiences with tension, learning practices, sense of community, and the ability to connect with others (Lindberg and Eide, 2016). Lately, Minton and Liu have shown that "self-regulation is much higher for ordinary experiences in comparison to extraordinary experiences" (2018, p. 28). Practically, people tend to indulge more in their food consumption (e.g., indulge in candy) when it is an extraordinary experience compared to an ordinary experience (Minton and Liu, 2018). The literature suggests a possible cognitive conflict within the individual, specifically with respect to the different perspectives one might have in varying situations. In sum, hiking trips are not solely experience of fun and fantasy but also include role-conflict, tensions between different behavior and negative emotions.

As a theoretical standpoint for my thesis, these studies confirm a dichotomization between everyday life and an individual's extraordinary experiences. Moreover, these studies highlight the richness and possible meanings of extraordinary context: out of the ordinary, substantially different from the everyday. This review of extraordinary experiences suggests, interestingly, that individuals have two different selves, depending

on their situation, and how it can create cognitive conflicts. In my thesis, I do highlight tension between how people want to eat, and how they *need* to eat, because of the context's conditions. This points to compartmentalization theory (discussed in the next section), as a possible cognitive organization allowing for such a variance. These two conclusions reinforce my choice to only focus on one context and to provide a lengthy description of it, rather than to do an undetailed poll or survey of multiple contexts.

### **Compartmentalization and Outdoor Food Choices**

This section discusses compartmentalization and how it can serve as a strategy explaining extraordinary eating behavior.

Compartmentalization provides a theoretical lens to explain, at least in part, why consumers' behavior varies within individuals, across experiences; for example, why behavior varies between ordinary and extraordinary experiences. Compartmentalization, as a psychological theory, refers to organizing the self into categories (Showers and Zeigler-Hill, 2003, Thomas et al., 2013). The categorization can be integrative, with a mix of positive and negative attributes in each category, or it can be polarized, with either a positive or a negative valence for each category (Showers and Zeigler-Hill, 2003, Thomas et al., 2013). For example, a hiker can see herself as a good climber (positive compartment) and as a bad fast walker (negative compartment) or, she can see herself as a good and bad climber, and as a good and bad fast walker (integrated compartments). Such compartments of multiple selves, so to speak, are meant to "regulate a person's self-evaluation" (Showers and Zeigler-Hill, 2003, p. 54), and allow one to make accessible knowledge about the self. When a situation triggers a positive compartment, the person "is flooded with positive self-knowledge and is likely to feel quite good," and vice versa (Showers and Zeigler-Hill, 2003, p. 54). These compartments help to deal with negative feelings because people have a natural tendency to either have positive compartments or integrated compartments (Showers and Zeigler-Hill, 2003). Thomas et al. (2013) argue that people with integrated compartments might be more stable, compared to people who have polarized compartments. Moreover, Amiot et al. suggest that compartmentalization is a step in integrating a social identity into the self, meaning that multiple compartments are "important to one's self-concept" (2017b, p. 383). In short, compartmentalization is

an organization of self-beliefs that is dependent on and influenced by contexts and situations. Individuals can rapidly access either positive, negative, or integrated compartments or attributes. As Thomas et al. further suggests, this model offers to “an explanation as to why people typically feel good or bad about themselves” in certain contexts versus others (2013, p. 722).

Individuals have the ability to compartmentalize their attributes and behavior. Amiot et al. define compartmentalized behavior as that which “emerge[s] in a particular context and [is] restricted to this context, without considering them [one’s attributes and behaviours] as representative of one’s overall self” (2017a, p. 706). The act of compartmentalizing behavior restricts certain acts in specific contexts, thus preserving one’s integrity from dissonant acts (Amiot et al., 2017a). For example, a hiker could compartmentalize their poor and hard climbs to the mountain’s context, and not let that influence their overall self-evaluation as an athlete; their hiking behavior does not represent their overall athletic skills. Of interest, compartmentalization might explain why people follow harmful group behavior, even if it creates an intra-individual conflict (Amiot et al., 2017a). Similarly, individuals compartmentalize acts that are perceived as illegitimate versus legitimate (Amiot et al. 2017b). Notably, this self-organization does not take place if the behavior followed is prosocial (Amiot et al. 2017a). Touré-Tillery and Light (2018) argue that if individuals compartmentalize their identities and behavior to a lesser degree, they are more likely to act morally and have the ability to see their actions as “self-diagnostic” (p. 48). These studies all suggest that compartmentalization may serve as a “psychological buffer” (Amiot et al. 2017b, p. 60) so that one’s derogatory acts do not reflect one’s overall self-conceptualization.

As previously stated, individuals already use a classification to sort their experiences as either extraordinary (infrequent) or ordinary (frequent), and their consumption varies based on the nature of the experience. On the other hand, people compartmentalize their behavior in certain contexts and, to an extent, during certain experiences. Thus, this means that each experience comes with a particular set of behavior; those appearing in the context of extraordinary experiences are secluded in this context, and not representative of the normal life (i.e., life outside the extraordinary experience).

Moreover, if behavior committed within the extraordinary experience are damaging for one's self-conceptualization, they are even more likely to be compartmentalized to this context. This cognitive organization is the reason how individuals can engage in different behavior, such as extraordinary eating.

For my thesis, these conclusions point to compartmentalization as a strong theoretical avenue for the explanation of extraordinary eating. Hikers justify their extraordinary eating behavior because of the context's circumstances. Notably, this is an original contribution since compartmentalization is usually used to explain licensing of non-prosocial behavior. Eaters use compartmentalization to cope with the context's conditions, and not, for example, to cheat or lie. In terms of compartmentalization in the food choice process model, it seems logical that the compartmentalization be seen as a strategy and a tool. Compartmentalization is a cognitive *process* allowing the separation of behavior based on the context in which they appear. Practically, in my thesis, I suggest that compartmentalization allows hikers to engage in various eating behavior, since it helps them to justify their extraordinary eating behavior. Simply said, hikers can eat way different things, because they're on a hiking trip, and not at home.

## RESEARCH CONTEXT

Walk away quietly in any direction and taste the freedom of the mountaineer. Camp out among the grasses and gentians of glacial meadows, in craggy garden nooks full of nature's darlings. Climb the mountains and get their good tidings, Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves. As age comes on, one source of enjoyment after another is closed, but nature's sources never fail. (John Muir, 1901, p. 56)

In this section, I discuss the evolution of hiking in general and its academic and market literature. I then discuss food within hiking trips, with the same approach in mind. Finally, I introduce the term *hiker hunger*.

### **The Evolution of Hiking; from the Past to Today's Literature**

To understand what hiking is today, let us take a look at its evolution in time. The following section will help the non-hiker reader, and also the initiated, to situate hiking, as a modern-day phenomenon, in the academic and market literature.

Early popular hikers, i.e., those who enjoyed long walks in the countryside (Collins, 2018) (e.g., Ralph Waldo Emerson [1803–1882], Henry David Thoreau [1817–1862] and John Muir [1838–1914]) are primarily nature advocates that have fought to keep nature untouched and pure. Their work, from a substantial body of writing about nature as a romantic gift from God, to their role in the establishment of some National Parks and outdoor clubs, has made an impact today. Hikers nowadays are still inspired by their legacy, buying branded goods with quotes from their essays or, hiking trails named after them (e.g., John Muir Trail in California).

In today's academic literature, studies of hikers are usually found under the topics of wilderness medicine or social sciences; it is not a common topic in marketing journals. Magazines about wilderness and health (e.g., *Wilderness & Environmental Medicine*)



sometimes publish studies about hiker health and related topics. Similarly, journals of social sciences with a focus on understanding outdoor activities (e.g., *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership*) sporadically publish papers on hiking and psychology, among other outdoor activities. Such publications have been useful to indicate that hikers engage in hiking trips (on one or multiple days) with motives such as to get away (den Breejen, 2007). Outdoor enthusiasts also hike in order to disconnect and reflect (Crust et al., 2011). Both conclusions have led me to think that hiking trips are meaningful and exceptional in people's lives. On the other hand, major marketing journals (e.g., *Journal of Marketing, Journal of Consumer Research*) do not regularly publish work mentioning outdoor activities. Among the few articles, outdoors activities are used as a proxy to other marketing themes. For example, Tumbat and Belk (2010), discuss marketplace tensions during extraordinary experiences, using the case of Mount Everest base camp and mountaineering. Other than that, publications about hiking in the marketing field are rare.

More than just divided by their field, research is also separated as being part of the benefits movement (Allen and Cooper, 2003), which refers to “the ongoing process of leisure services providers to identify desirable individual, social, economic and environmental benefits derived from recreational experiences” (Hill et al., 2014, p. 30). It is generally accepted that hiking is beneficial for one's physical and mental health (Thomsen, Powell and Monz, 2018). Social science literature has also investigated the benefits of hiking with positive conclusions (e.g., Loewenstein, 1999; Goldenberg et al., 2004; Hill et al., 2009; Yun and Peden, 2018). On the other hand, some authors have investigated the negative aspects of hiking trips: hikers' calorie deficit (Hill et al., 2008), fatalities (e.g., Myers and Hoffman, 2015), unpreparedness (Mason et al., 2013), fear (Coble et al., 2003), solitude (Hall, 2001), and adjustment to life after a long hike (Turley, 2011). Although mostly positive and related to the benefits movement (Allen and Cooper, 2003), the overall literature about hiking shows that there still exists negative mental and physical consequences.

For this thesis in particular, these conclusions mean that the activity of hiking, in the academic field of social science, and especially marketing, has not yet been completely

understood. There are only a few papers that discuss in depth meanings of hiking trips. This highlights the originality of my research context in the field of marketing; many insights are to be gained with the findings of this present thesis.

In the practitioner literature and in industry reports, it is hard to find a mention of hiking activities. I think that these data do exist somewhere, but they are hard to find and are probably due to the lack of cohesion between terms used to name hikers. For example, long-distance walker, mountaineers, outdoors enthusiasts, campers, etc., are all term to describe a hiker. The most practical source of information that I found are reports directed by the tourism industry. For example, a recent report from the “Chaire de tourisme Transat” identified six profiles of outdoor recreationists from the more than 970,000 Quebecers practising hiking, walking, and other outdoor activities (UQAM, 2015). Additionally, quantitative analysis shows that the outdoor sports and recreation industry is growing in Canada (Barry, 2017). Both articles point to the growing popularity of hiking as an outdoor activity and the needs of more understanding concerning it.

All things considered, this thesis adopts a realistic and neutral approach to the narratives in my data. Although early popular hikers and authors within the benefits movements have idealized nature, recent academic literature suggests not to romanticize the hiking experience. With this in mind, I have tried to deglamorize hiking trips as much as possible and adopt a scientific approach, one that is skeptical and careful about my own interpretations.

### **Hiking Today**

Now that the evolution of hiking and its presence in academic and industry literature has been discussed, what is hiking really about in today’s world? In present day, hiking is not only about connecting with nature but, is also about serious leisure and is defined as “an activity that does not accrue to non-participative, spectator activities” (Littlefield and Siudzinski, 2011, p. 465). The tourism, outdoor, and recreation market (Volunteer association, national parks, and forests, etc.) offer a managed nature, maintained trails,

and other outdoor experiences as products/services to hikers. At some places, hikers must pay fees to use the area and/or campground, and in some other places, hiking grounds are free and managed by donations and volunteers. Adding to this structure and to those fees, eager outdoor enthusiasts can also purchase organized adventure trips. This way of experiencing the outdoors portrays signs of commodification: nature with an economic value (Loynes, 2013). Even if hikers are physically in nature, far away from advertisements, shops, and the visible market's boundary, they still live a consumptive experience. Similar to Kozinets' (2002) observations at Burning Man events, consumers are still under the influence of the market's norms and logic even if they want to escape the market. In this way, hikers still support the economy with (sometimes expensive) gear, clothes, cellphone apps, food, and fees, and are not emancipating themselves from the market.

There is a set of social norms observable across trails. Hikers usually follow the same behavioral principles, guided by Leave No Trace™, a national organization that promotes outdoor ethics. It proposes seven principles meant to respect nature, minimize human impact and be considerate of other visitors<sup>ii</sup>. Moreover, there is also a general sense of ethics, named the "Hiking Etiquette" (American Hiking Society, 2018). It provides some ground rules when encountering other people on the trail. For example, it states that hikers going uphill have priority, whereas downhill hikers must let them pass first (American Hiking Society, 2018). The term *hiker trash* best describes when hikers behave in dirty or unmannered ways. For examples, dirty hikers spending hours using a superstore's Wi-Fi or washing in public bathrooms are both examples of this. Moreover, this term can generally describe the casual style of some hikers; dirty, rugged, and wild. This suggests that even though hikers may believe that nature is untamed, a certain set of social rules still exist. In particular, this had led me to think that there might also be some eating norm intrinsic to hiking trips.

Of interest, long-distance hikers (i.e., thru-hikers) often use nicknames while on the trails and interact with one another under these names. Their real names are not used and are kept secret. These nicknames are either decided by hikers themselves or given by fellow adventure companions. This is a common practice and as will be seen throughout this

thesis, I have decided to keep this tradition. This will mean that some of the interviewees in this thesis are cited by their *trailnames* rather than their common names (e.g., in Figure 4, the hiker is named “Earlobes”). Others are cited by fictitious common names, pseudonyms. Of interest, the fact that individuals use trail names -a different identity, has tipped me off to the compartmentalization theory: hikers are likely to separate their identity between their normal life and the trail. This will be discussed later in the findings, under “Psychological Consequences.”

Hikers generally walk in groups, since it’s more secure to do so: if there’s a danger, somebody’s going to be able to react and reach for help. However, there are still some hikers walking alone but, on popular trails, they are likely to encounter other hikers nearby. Moreover, since campsites along trails are usually predetermined, hikers are likely to gather and meet people there at night, at least, when they’re having breakfast or dinner at their tent site. Considering this, the consumption of food is definitely influenced by others: many hikers learn *what to eat on a hike* by looking at what is consumed by fellow hikers. This can be done either on the trails or prior to the trip, online or via magazines or advice at outdoor shops. This creates a kind of etiquette of what’s normal to eat, and what’s not, since hikers are influenced by others’ presence. This will be discussed further in the findings, under the title “Socialization.”

In addition to the market’s omnipresence and these particular social norms and influences, hiking comes with singular environmental constraints. No matter what trail you hike (at least in North America), you are more than likely to be confronted with nature’s will: unpredictable weather; rough terrain; and changing temperature. Adding to this, a hiker probably be isolated from services (i.e., water, food supplies, electricity) and will carry everything they need in a backpack. There is a certain universality to hiking trips environments, even though motives can differ depending on the length and locations of the trails (Hill et al., 2014; Yun and Peden, 2018). Nevertheless, technical aspects such as average kilometres walked, average weight carried in the backpack, and overall schedule are similar among hikers. This will also be discussed in the findings section in relation to the fact that while each hiker experiences his or her hike in very personal and idiosyncratic ways, all hikers share a form of common on universal experience when it

comes to the limits imposed by the environment and the impact of physiological needs and limitations.

All of this is relevant because it speaks to a certain set of rules and principles that hikers must follow. It means that hiking trips are not disorganized and out of any social order: the extraordinary experience has certain intrinsic norms to it and some conditions inherent to all hiking trips. These insights have led me to be aware of the differences between eating norms, and the importance of socialization, during an extraordinary experience versus an everyday one. Moreover, this information provides an introduction to some of the constraints that will be discussed later in the findings. Notably, how the limits of the environments (some detailed above) and physiological needs lead to extraordinary eating, and how socialization plays an important role.

### **Food and Hiking in the Literature**

In academic literature, very little attention has been paid to food choices and consumption behavior within hiking trips and outdoor activities. Of interest, Boutroy and Vignal (2018) describe the products and eating techniques of hikers, with a focus on food preservation. From planning to waste management, they identify two subcultures of consumption: minimalist and consumerist. In terms of eating behavior, minimalist hikers have a focus on lightweight food products that are simple and that allow autonomy (simple cooking), whereas consumerist hikers have heavier gear, often with Sherpas carrying food and supplies through pre-determinate camps (Boutroy and Vignal, 2018). In most North American trails, a location's technicalities (i.e., length, elevation, and remoteness) do not call for extravagance or consumerism, but rather for minimalism. Moreover, for the most part, outdoor retailers in Canada and the United States promote and sell only minimalist gear, which indirectly encourages this style versus the consumerist style. This latter style is more common for hikers engaging in himalayanism, mountaineering, or the alpine trek, where conditions require high tech and heavy gear. In that case, it is the country's traditions or the mountains difficulty that calls for such style. In this study, I'll focus on the minimalist style, simply because the trails in Canada and in

the United States are typically completed by minimalist hikers. Additionally, the interviewees of this thesis also fall into the minimalist camp.

Although detailed, Boutroy and Vignal's (2018) paper does not discuss the how or the why of this behavior: it focuses on the technicality of practices. The authors examine food choices, not consumption experience. Elsewhere, there are only anecdotal mentions of a hiker's food behavior. For example, Lowenstein (1999) recalls a story of an injured hiker who, upon his return to his tent, ate a frozen spaghetti directly from a pot in the snow: "To Colby, the congealed spaghetti was delicious, one of the best meals he had ever eaten" (p. 328). The conclusion is the same as with hiking literature in general: there is not a lot we know about food within hiking trips in the academic literature.

In the business literature, the conclusion is similar: surprisingly few scholars have examined outdoor food consumption. This lack of information appears to be due to a problem of designation; there is no agreement on precise terms to use for such food. This problem is similar to the difficulty of finding market articles about hiking in general. There is a lack of comprehensive sales data and sales figures because of unclear categories (e.g., hiking foods, outdoor foods, camping foods) that intersect or crossover with other known food categories used by stores (e.g., canned food, energy bars, etc.). Considering this, in this thesis, I do not use market data, since I do not succeed in finding-precise figures and interesting analysis on outdoor food for hikers.

### **Hiker Hunger**

But, out here, it's you know, it's just your favourite thing to think about! You think about food all day. And, if you're thinking about food, you know ... how you want it, you want it just like this... Yeah, I want it... Yeah, I think I crave (food) about the same as I did at home, but I fantasize about it a lot more out here.

(Great Start, personal communication, 2018)

Hikers often think about food while hiking long-distance. They have a lot of time ahead of them and are easily hungry after exerting physical work. Often, planning for meals

takes a large amount of time, money, and ingenuity, since hikers must deal with limited access to food supplies, with food preservation issues, and with the goal of packing to lightest possible (Figure 4, Earlobes, 2018). All of this planning and dedication as a key goal is meant to avoid hunger.



*Figure 4.* A hiker planning his food for the next hiking days, while doing his laundry (Earlobes, 2018)

*Hiker hunger*, a popular slang used in the hiking community describes hiker's insatiable and raging hunger while on trails. This hunger is not experienced during everyday life. A quick search of hiker hunger on Instagram or Google Images portrays easily what it is all about: big meals, oversized portions, and creative snacks packed with calories. Hikers even share online classics of what to eat along with pictures of what they have eaten, this speaking of how hiker hunger is socially shared. For example, a *ramen bomb* is a recipe that is pretty popular on trails. It is a mix of ramen and instant mashed potatoes (Figure 5). This term will be discussed again in the findings but, keep in mind that it speaks about a reality that hikers do not want to be confronted with. Hikers are even willing to eat ramen bomb to avoid it, and that's a recipe they often learn from other hikers.



*Figure 5.* Ramen bomb; a classic to relieve hiker hunger (Le Bouthillier, 2018)

Importantly, the research context of hiking trips is simple and twofold. First, hiking is a leisure rich activity and has been throughout history, and is consequently full of meaning. Secondly, hiking is rich in description, full of crazy recipes, with its own slang too. Nevertheless, there's still a lot not yet explained about this phenomenon, especially food matters.



## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Despite a noted difference between consumers' behavior within ordinary and extraordinary experiences, several questions remain unanswered. In particular, food consumption varies between extraordinary experiences and everyday life, but not much is known about this phenomenon. In particular, the consumption of food for hiking trips, an extraordinary experience, is not well known and detailed in both academic and managerial literature. This research aims to describe this complex food consumption from the point of view of the eater. It seeks to understand how hikers can engage in extraordinary food consumption, and what psychological consequences it has on them. In lay terms: what is the extraordinary eating in hiking trips, what motivates hikers to engage in these behavior, and how do they cognitively deal with them?

## METHODS

I use three sources of data: preliminary interviews; field interviews; and autoethnographic data (personal journals, photos, and audio recordings of self-memos).

### **Preliminary Data Collection**

To articulate this research topic and research questions, I have met with two experts and I have also conducted four in-depth interviews, via Skype, with hikers (Appendix A for a table of participants). First, I have conducted two unstandardized interviews with experts in the month of April 2018. I have been introduced to them by mutual acquaintances. In the first place, I met a dietician. I asked questions about her clientele and her thoughts about what hikers might need as proper nutrition. I have gained insights into the products usually used by outdoor enthusiasts. Later, I met with the owner of a food company producing products for outdoor trips. I asked questions about her clientele's needs and what she thought hikers wanted as food products. In that case, I have gained insights into hikers' needs. Both interviews lasted approximately an hour.

Secondly, I've conducted four semi-standardized interviews with female hikers in the month of April–May 2018. All participants were sent an ethics form and orally accepted to the terms of the form (Appendix B for the form). I found these hikers by convenience sampling among my acquaintances. The goal of these interviews has been to add to experts' interviews, described above, and gather primary data about hiker diets (see Appendix C for this research's interview grid). Interviews lasted from 45 minutes to an hour. The preliminary data allowed me to get familiar with the topic, to identify key themes of hikers' eating behavior, and to develop questions for the field interviews. The type of hikers, short or long-distance, was assessed by questions during the interview. I considered a short-distance backpacker to be one who generally participated in trips under 10 days, and long-distance hikers those who participated in trips for longer than 10 days.

## Main Data Collection

The field interviews are the core data of this research. They have represented 24 interviews in the field, lasting approximately 10 minutes, with a total of 50 hikers interviewed (15 women and 35 men, all considered in the final analysis) (see Appendix D for a table of participants). The age of the participants ranged from 18 to 65 years old. Mostly, these hikers were interviewed in groups of two to five but I also did one-to-one interviews with solo hikers. Groups facilitated exchanges between participants and elicited more detailed answers. In terms of ethics consent, an official version was sent to them as a copy via email, because no hiker wanted to carry a printed version. The interviews were semi-standardized, and the questions focused on the food they had in their backpack, their immediate experience with the food they ate, and how the food consumed compares with the food they ate at home (see Appendix for the interview grid). I used the phenomenological approach, as explained by Thompson et al. (1989), with questions that focused on the “life world of individuals [...] always situated in their current experiential context and coherently related to their ongoing life projects” (as cited by Belk, Fischer and Kozinets, 2012, p. 21). In most cases, when participants were not in a hurry, I asked questions about the hiking trip at the beginning of the interview, the reasons behind their trip, and their overall feelings about their experience (see Appendix E for the interview grid).

These interviews took place at four different trails: Pacific Crest Trail (E.C Manning Park, Canada); Continental Divide Trail (Glacier NP, USA); Teton Crest Trail (Teton NP, USA); and Appalachian Trail (Baxter State Park, USA) (see Appendix F for a map of these locations). These trails spread between the East and the West Coast, near the borders of USA and Canada, whereby I minimized homogeneity by sampling hikers from different locations. I have recruited participants through convenience sampling. I have hiked in the backcountry and camped at each location and have interviewed people that camped near my tent site or people that crossed my path on the trails. The interviews were audio-recorded and filmed, and photos of participants’ food were taken, in order to triangulate the findings. Out of the field, interviews were transcribed and then analyzed. When possible, the interview took place during dinner time or lunch time, in order to observe hikers’ eating practices.

I selected these parks because of their popularity in the month of August and September. Notably, many thru-hikers (i.e., hikers of long-distance trails), finish their trips to these parks at this precise time of the year. Thru-hikers are interesting participants since they have been hiking for months. On the other hand, people hiking for only a few days also hike trails. In these cases, furthermore, these locations have allowed for maximum variation sampling. Out of the 50 hikers interviewed in total, I have interviewed 20 thru-hikers (length of trips more than 10 days) and 30 short-distance hikers (length of trips between two and 10 days); these interviews translate into 12 interviews conducted with thru-hikers and 12 with short-distance hikers. Since this study has an exploratory aim, I did not want to discriminate interviewees based on long or short distance hiking length: I wanted to catch as much meaning and as many descriptions as possible.

I have decided to engage in fieldwork because, consistent with the literature, I assumed that food choices are made at a non-conscious level, meaning that individuals don't always understand and are able to explain all their own motives for acting (Köster, 2009). Also individuals can be subject to impression management (Vartanian, 2015) and social desirability (Fisher, 1993) when asked directly about their eating behavior. Thus, the goal of this data collection has been to use "indirect and observational methods that allow people to deal with the food in a natural way" (Köster, 2009, p. 77) and to "reduce retrospective bias by having participants report on events with minimal delay" (Vartanian, 2015, p. 78). In addition, the field interviews were the ideal way to take into account the influence among hikers (influence of others). This method has never been used before with respect to hiking and has thus underscored the pertinence of this approach.

### **Autoethnographic Data**

In this study, I have used autoethnographic data from personal journals, photos, and audio recordings to triangulate the findings. The goal has been to provide a hindsight analysis of some practices. More precisely, personal journals recall my summer job in June, July, and August 2018, where I have guided hiking trips in the Canadian Rockies (just before the main data collection). I have also collected observations of other hiking experiences,

outside of work, during these months. Audio recordings of personal thoughts were collected in the months of August–September 2018, while being emerged in the field during the main data collection. This data has allowed for “thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experience” (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 277), and are in addition to the interviews of the main data collection. Notably, I am a registered dietician and current member of the “Ordre Professionnel des Diététistes du Québec”: I used this knowledge to detail and push my analysis further.

### **Data Analysis**

The volume of text analyzed from the interviews in the field is approximately 39,000 words. I transcribed and open coded interviews gradually, as I was travelling between the trails or camping at some tent sites (Figure 6).



*Figure 6.* Transcribing while camping and travelling between trails (Le Bouthillier, 2018)

The texts were open coded and axial coded iteratively. In the open coding, the data was coded with emic codes, with themes such as “not an everyday behavior” or “food as fuel”

and so on. These descriptive codes were inspired by the data, the interviewees, and the orientation of the research questions. The transcripts were then read multiple times to axial code them with higher levels of constructs, relating to extraordinary eating and the theoretical foundations. Such codes were, for example, included “contradictions about the self” or “extraordinary eating example.” After this process, the themes were linked together and analyzed side by side by creating tables with different themes. The quotes were then organized into the what, why, and how of the extraordinary eating. Afterward, these sections were reanalyzed and linked together under the following mentions: the phenomenon; the conditions; and the psychological consequences. During this latter process, the theoretical foundations (presented above) were revisited as needed to allow for rigorous analysis. The food process model (Furst et al., 1996, Sobal et al., 2006) was then added into the theoretical foundations as a way to tie in the findings to a model of reference.

As for the autoethnographic data and the preliminary interviews, they were used to triangulate the findings from the field interviews. They were mostly analyzed at the end of the process, to confirm my conclusions. I did not actively cite this data simply because the interviews and photos from participants hold much better insights and richness. I preferred to let my work speak for the colourful and very interesting hikers I had the pleasure to work with and interview during my fieldwork.

In addition, during the writing of this thesis, I have tried to stay open to new interpretations: I stayed an active member of the outdoor community and engaged, as a native, in hiking trips. By doing so, I stayed open-minded towards behavior that would not have fit into my findings.

## FINDINGS

In this section, I discuss extraordinary eating and its complexity. First, I dig into the definition of the phenomenon, by providing a description and giving examples. I give two specific examples of how extraordinary eating translates into different eating practices on the trail, compared to everyday life. I choose healthiness and freshness as the two variable portraying this difference, but other analyses could reveal other differentiated variables. Important to realize, these forms are in response to conditions from the environment. Notably, I highlight three conditions, emerging from the extraordinary context, fostering the emergence of extraordinary eating, and its aforementioned examples. First, the presence of situational constraints that propose extraordinary eating as the only avenue to eat. Secondly, the presence of strong willingness, under the form of hiker hunger, that pushes hikers into extraordinary eating. With this in mind, I discuss how food is used as fuel first, and then how it is experiential. Third, socialization among hikers that leads to a normalization of practices and that determines extraordinary eating practices. In particular, socialization explains what forms of extraordinary eating hikers are likely to engage in. Finally, I show that, in order to deal with the psychological consequences of such different eating behavior, hikers use the psychological buffer of compartmentalization or integration. These are convenient strategies allowing them to engage in extraordinary eating. Whether they use compartmentalization or integration depends on the influence of the conditions on hikers' eating behavior. The phenomenon of extraordinary eating, the conditions fostering its existence, and its psychological consequences are the core of this research's findings. This suggests that the eater is largely influenced by the context and the conditions it imposes on participants (or hikers). Within the text, I will tie and compare my findings to the food choice process model of Sobal et al. (2006), presented in the theoretical foundations, as a way to facilitate understanding.

## The Phenomenon

Here, I define the extraordinary eating in hiking trips. I also provide two concrete examples of how it contrasts from everyday life, by being of a different healthiness and freshness. As we mentioned earlier, these are two of the many different variables on which we can say that it is different from home. In particular, the most popular extraordinary eating on the trail is the unhealthy and less fresh form.

### Definition

Extraordinary eating behavior are those different from everyday food choices and they emerge in special contexts. The forms it can take are various. Two forms will be discussed later, but before I describe what I mean by saying that extraordinary eating is different from home: eating differently behaviourally translates into different product evaluations, practices, and eating environment for the eater, compared to everyday life.

A lot of the products consumed by hikers are limited to the trail; dehydrated meals, granola bars, electrolytes, candies, etc. The same food product receives two different evaluation, depending on the context in which it is evaluated. Precisely, a product not normally consumed during everyday life becomes an option for the hiking trip, and vice versa. For example, Evy explained how she never eats oatmeal at home but, on the trail, this product becomes acceptable:

It's just so mushy... But, I mean, it's good on the trail because it's tasty and hot. But, at home it's not (...) Well, because, when you're really hungry, everything tastes good. But, at home, there's a lot more options. So ... yes, oatmeal is lightweight and it's not terrible. But it's definitely not the best!

The same was said for certain eating practices. Hikers engage in certain eating practices on the trail, but would not, however, at home. For example, Jason would not eat raw cookie dough at home but, on the trail, he has different criteria for hygiene and engages in different practices:

I've taken cookie dough out because I saw someone do that, so I've done that maybe two or three times, where you just buy the premade cookie dough, which



you're supposed to keep cold or whatever... So, I guess traditional health standard, you're not supposed to do that. But it tasted good and I was fine [...]

Hikers not only put up with different foods and practices but also with a different eating environment. Often, breakfast and dinner require boiling hot water and are eaten near the campsite (Figure 7), whereas lunch is typically on the go, eaten on the trail.



*Figure 7.* Autoethnographic data from a dinner I had (Le Bouthillier, 2018)

For most hikers, lunch isn't a meal per se but rather a mix of snacks eaten on the go throughout the afternoon. No matter the meal, hikers usually sit down on the floor or on a rock. A nice view is looked for but, not necessarily. For example, I've interviewed hikers while they were taking a break to eat their snacks/lunch; Julie, Thomas, Audrey, Vincent, and Simon (Figure 8). They were all pretty relaxed and sat on the ground or on rocks. In front of them, they had a view of the mountains. That is a wholly different way of eating lunch than say sitting down at a table, browsing through one's cellphone, or watching TV while eating.



*Figure 8.* A group interviewed when snacking; unconventional position and time (Le Bouthillier, 2018)

The point to make here is that these are practices specific to the context of hiking trips. In everyday life, people do not eat in such ways. In sum, the general idea of extraordinary eating behavior is that product evaluation, practices, and environments are not common in a hiker's life, but rather, are specific to the trail. The eater is engaging in uncommon food behavior, compared to his everyday life, because they are in a different context. The fact that it is different at home is the essence of extraordinary eating.

### **Examples of Extraordinary Eating in Hiking Trips**

By definition, since extraordinary eating is simply a food consumption different than everyday life, there's no defined version of it –there's a multitude of consumption forms. It all depends on the context under scrutiny; each hiker is likely to have its own kind of extraordinary eating (Figure 9 for some hiking extraordinary eating).



*Figure 9.* Common backpacker food; Dehydrated meals, oatmeal, candy, beef jerky, bars, and cookies (Le Bouthillier, 2018)

There are many standpoints on which we can contrast hiker's eating behavior from their everyday consumption. Hikers experience many forms of extraordinary eating, although more or less healthier and fresher are the two most obvious and will be discussed in this section. I first discuss how it is subjectively healthy or unhealthy, versus hikers' normal food consumption. Secondly, how fresh it is, compared to what they normally consume. Comparing food consumption based on these provide the greatest instance of extraordinary eating on hiking trips. With these examples, I am capable of describing precisely in which ways extraordinary eating differs from home. This section is not meant to be exhaustive but rather provide two concrete examples in order to grasp what extraordinary eating is really about. Important to point out, the most popular way to eat on the trail is unhealthy and less fresh than home. What it implies will be discussed later in the section, "Psychological consequences".

#### *Comparison Based on Healthiness<sup>iv</sup>*

Within this angle of comparison, some hikers report eating healthier on the trail than in their everyday life. However, they are in the minority and that happens because they have cut indulgences, or they have improved the overall quality of what they ordinarily eat.

For example, Eleanor explains how being on the trail makes her eat on a very regular basis in healthy ways. Eleanor spoke of making sacrifices with what she would normally indulge in.

That's actually one of the good sides [effects] of being on the trail for three to four weeks. I eat in a very regular way and I don't drink any alcohol [...] I don't eat any fried food obviously. Any candy, chocolate [...] chocolate is my downfall. [...] It's difficult to carry unhealthy stuff!

In other cases, and I have to say that is the majority of the hikers, they eat unhealthier on the trail compared to their everyday life. Food products high in sugar, fat, and salt are easily available near the trails and are shelf-stable, which is convenient when refrigerating food is not an option. Plus, they have a lot of calories per weight and are also very cheap. These circumstances make junk and processed food a very accessible choice for hikers, more than healthy food options. John explains his food choices on the trail, for example, with the following:

[I've eaten] food that was really high in calories, but low in nutrition. For the most part. You try to get a balanced diet, but in general, you go for [processed food]. I went for honeybuns. Protein bars. Anything that was high in protein and calories. Tuna packets.

When asked if the food at home was different than the food on the hike, Tommy answers:

Yes... I don't sit there and choke down candy and stuff at home!



In terms of unhealthy staples that are popular on the trail, there are candies, sodas, chips and beef jerky (Figure 10).



*Figure 10.* Sodas are popular on the trail; quick calories and sugar (Le Bouthillier, 2018)

Of interest, even if some hikers looked like they were eating very healthily on the trail, they report eating unhealthily compared to their everyday life. This speaks to the subjectivity of this comparison; it is different from the eater's experience and not from the observer's assessment. For example, Bread is a thru-hiker, makes a statement to eat as healthy as she can on the trail. In order to do so, she takes great care in acquiring precise ingredients, cooks meals from created recipes, and vacuum seals months before her trips (Figure 11).



*Figure 11.* Bread's meal; elaborate preparation for better quality (Le Bouthillier, 2018)

However, she still has to make some concessions and sometimes eats unhealthy on the trail. In her case, even though she eats quite healthily on the trail, her food is unhealthier compared to home:

I am really interested in nutrition and how the body uses the food [along with] what's good for me and what's not. I read about it and at home I eat quite [healthily]. I try to carry that onto the trail food. I expand my diet more when I am on the trail because I feel I need so many calories.

The point to remember here is that in all scenarios (i.e., hikers eating healthier or unhealthier compared to their habits), it's different from how they normally eat in their normal life. The eater is the one assessing the extraordinariness of food consumption. Extraordinary eating is about eating differently from the eater's perspective and, in this example, it is about being either being more or less healthy than their everyday life.

#### *Comparisons Based on Freshness*

Another comparison from everyday life can be made from the standpoint of the freshness of what hikers eat. For this variable: all hikers eat less fresh than in their everyday life. Dehydrated food is often sold as the perfect food for outdoor enthusiasts because it is

quick to prepare, lasts a long time, and is lightweight. Bernard explains the convenience of choosing dehydrated meals for his five-day backpacking trip.

The dehydrated food is about the only way to carry enough food for five days, especially since you need to carry the bear canister.



*Figure 12.* A dehydrated meal in a pouch, with a JetBoil (in blue): a cooking pot and stove popular because of its small size and efficiency (Le Bouthillier, 2018).

Some premade dehydrated food products are proposed by outdoor companies (Figure 12). However, hikers usually simply buy dehydrated food from grocery stores. These alternatives are usually available more easily near trails and are cheaper. For examples, instant rice, instant mashed potatoes, tortillas, packets of oatmeal, peanut butter, packets of tuna, couscous, and even quinoa are usually carried by hikers. They can also prepare their own dehydrated meals. As discussed, it often happens when people eat healthier on the trail; they cook their own meal prior to hiking.

No matter the provenance of this dehydrated food, it is less fresh than what is consumed during everyday life. Often, hikers complained about how processed their food was. For example, Chuckle explains:

Yeah, we usually try to stay away from like processed food and stuff back home. Like, I eat pretty much [...] Just eat like fruits and vegetables and cook every night. And then, out here, it's just like only eating processed food. And I don't really drink soda back home. But here, it's like anytime that we come across a store or a town and like, we need a soda [...] So, you know [...] A lot more sugar. And a lot of ramen noodles, and just like other types of processed things that I would never eat back home.

The longer hikers stay on the trail, the more painful this difference becomes. Chuckle, who has been hiking for approximately five months when I spoke to her, speaks to this:

I am ready to just get home and cook real food and vegetables and fruits. Especially the fruits, that I am craving right now. But, yeah, I am so done with it.

Overall, all hikers sacrifice freshness for dehydrated options, which they believe are more convenient on trails. By buying products made by the industries, or alternatives, they are not eating as fresh as the products they consume at home. I also personally acknowledged this difference, comparing what I had on the trail to sushi at home (Figure 13 for a comparison).



*Figure 13.* Left: A meal I had in the backcountry. Right: A meal I had in my normal life.

(Le Bouthillier, 2018)



Overall, this section describes the phenomenon and speaks to what it is about: different foods compared to everyday life. In this section, I have chosen to express this difference based on two characteristics that are different from the eater's everyday life: healthiness and freshness. It is important to realize that the extraordinariness is not in the nature of the food per se. As repeated throughout this section, it is the fact that it is different from home that makes it extraordinary. Notably, other analyses could reveal other additional standpoints of comparison, depending on the lenses taken. As such, extraordinary eating is about various forms of different eating behavior; there's a heterogeneity of consumption in extraordinary eating practices. These two forms are only two ways hikers negotiate conditions from the environment, these conditions are the core of the next section. Important to remember, the most popular way to eat on the trail is unhealthily and less fresh than at home. Hikers eating healthier and fresher on the trail are in the minority.

### **Fostering Conditions**

In this section, I present three conditions, emerging from the context of hiking trips, that fosters the emergence of extraordinary eating. What leads the eater into extraordinary eating? Conditions created by the context. First, limits must be emerging from the environment. Second, individuals must feel the physiological need to engage in behavior and overcome these limits. Third, eaters must socialize to learn these uncommon practices and normalize them. Notably, socialization explains what form of extraordinary eating behavior hikers are likely to engage in. The two other conditions point out at extraordinary eating practices in general and are pretty much lived in the same way by all hikers, but socialization really explains what precise practices they'll engage in. Moreover, this condition is lived differently for each hiker. When people live one experience under these three conditions, they are likely to engage in extraordinary eating as a way to eat and thrive in the experience. As conditions become more detailed, the reader is likely to understand why unhealthy extraordinary behavior are popular on trails: they are easier to engage in.

Below, I give examples of these constraints and the hiker's needs. I also mention some exceptions, highlighting the fact that these conditions are favouring, not causal, of extraordinary eating. In the food choice model (Furst et al., 1996; Sobal et al., 2006), these conditions are basically the effect of the context (i.e., extraordinary experience) on the resources, present context and social factors of eaters. Without the hiking trip constraints, there is no need for extraordinary eating: people would normally eat.

### **Limits From the Environment**

The hiking trip reduces individuals' choice in terms of what food product they can carry, bring, and acquire. These constraints indirectly influence the type of food people eat (unhealthy, healthy, and dehydrated). This condition, among with the two others, point to the extraordinary as the only solution to eat. This condition, limits from the environment, is universal to all hikers.

#### *Hiking trip limitations*

The physical demands of the activity, the nature of the food, and the particular acquisition on the trail push people into extraordinary eating.

#### *The physical demands of the activity.*

In terms of weight, since hikers carry everything they need in their backpack (i.e., a volume around 50L), their food needs to be small and lightweight. Moreover, if hikers carry a bear canister (i.e., a box strong enough against bear attacks, Figure 14), all their smelly stuff needs to fit in it (food, cooking ware, and personal hygiene items).



*Figure 14.* A bear canister (in blue), required for the trails where there are grizzly or bear (Le Bouthillier, 2018)

Therefore, hikers select food products with the highest ratio of calories per weight and choose items that can be easily carried. In terms of weight, there is no universal norm of how much they can carry: it is subjectively assessed by the hiker. Usually, hikers do not carry more than the third of their weight. Combined with the backpack's capacities, it often translates to approximately 40 lb carried. Very minimalist hikers can take this weight down to around 20 lbs. It all depends on their gear, the terrain and the weather, and the time before their next resupply of food (if there is one at all). Simply said by Alexandra:

On my hiking trips, I am carrying all of my food. So, different issues come with that. Like, my food must be light enough, because I am carrying it. I usually carry ten days of food on me. So, yeah, my food has to be very packed with calories and as light as possible.

#### *The nature of the food.*

The food must not spoil easily since hikers are carrying it for a long period of time with limited refrigeration capabilities. When the temperature is cold, hikers can take advantage of this weather and carry some perishable foods (e.g., vegetables, cheese) for a couple of days. Most of the time, they carry shelf-stable products. With that, come inquiries about how processed food is and how many chemicals their food contains. Most hikers have

concerns about the naturalness and healthiness of their food, even the unhealthy ones. For example, Great Start, a thru-hiker of the AT, talks about what she wishes she could eat:

[I would eat] healthier. Stuff that's not in packages and chemicals and preservatives. Pretty much what I eat now won't go wrong and I just don't think that it can be that good for me. If I had a better option, I would take it. But, you know, at one point you can't carry the weight or places you go to, you don't [...] This isn't a place that has avocado or fresh apples [along the trail].

Hikers buy quick and easy food to prepare because they are tired once it comes to preparation. In terms of material required, a stove and a bottle of fuel are needed to cook, and these add up weight. This means that the longer the cooking time is, the heaviest the bottle of fuel needs to be. Thus, the preparation time of the food is an important variable to consider. So much so, that for Keven and Jason, they have decided to only bring, for their four-month trip, products that do not require cooking (Figure 15).

It takes extra weight. I guess there is the argument that if you take enough dehydrated food, you might make up for the weight of the stove you're taking. But then you also have to manage gas, depending on which towns you're going through. [There's also the] speed factor. I don't really want to have to wait constantly to boil water or have that food cooked or do anything.



Figure 15. Keven's food for four months: nothing that needs hot water or to be cooked. (Le Bouthillier, 2018)<sup>v</sup>

### *Acquisition on the Trail*

Getting a hands-on food can be difficult on the trails, due to the remoteness of some trails. There are two ways they go about this: either prior organization or acquisition on the fly. These methods require extra time or openness to new products. Wool explains how she prepares her meals beforehand and sends them as mail packages at mail drops along the trail.

I actually pre-dehydrated most of my own food. And then, I am hiking with a dog, who just, left. He just left, right this morning, because he's not allowed in the park. So, I just send his food out and I decided to dehydrate my own food and send it out. But there were gaps where I couldn't have my boxes sent. Like, maybe I messed up on logistics, so I had to shop like gas station or grocery stores or whatever. So, I would eat the kind of the same thing as them [talks about her hiking companions].

Preparing in advance, although requiring more effort, usually translates into better meals that are more customized and usually a little bit healthier. For those resupplying on the fly, they're usually buying what's cheap, appropriate, and available at convenient stores or groceries near the trail. They are forced to have what is there. Daniel, thru-hiker, explains this in detail:

I think there are a lot of different places on the trail where you have a lot of access to good food or grocery stores, but then there are many different places where you're essentially in a food desert. Like here, they know they've got you<sup>vi</sup>. And, whatever they have, is whatever you're going to have.

Other hikers will either pack everything with them right away (if the hiking trip is short) or they will resupply on the fly. If they prepare everything at home beforehand, they get their food products at their usual grocery stores, at an outdoor retailer or online. If the trip is short and the hike is simple, there is no need to make special purchases; they take what is convenient from home. For longer hikes, special purchases are made (e.g., dehydrated meals, energy shots, electrolytes, granola bars, etc.).

For example, Thomas explains how he packed food for the trail of random food from his house. He still looks for lightweight and good meals, but they're not a lot of preparation for his short hike of three days:

So, we've been like, living in this trailer. We just left a week a half ago or so and we brought a bunch of food from our houses. So we just kind of headed out. So, it's a lot of that random stuff. That is just the kind of lightweight, but good meals.

These three constraints, i.e., the physical demands of the activity, the nature of the food, and food acquisition on the trail, represent one condition from the extraordinary context. Hikers considered the limitations of eating from the context and they adapt their eating behavior to this environment. Some hikers plan in advance while others did not. Likewise, some eat healthily while others ate unhealthily. Some (usually short-distance hikers) buy dehydrated food, some (usually thru-hikers) go for similar alternatives but, less expensive options. There are situations in which hikers do not experience the described limitations, and therefore they are less likely to engage in extraordinary eating.

For example, if a hiker pays somebody to carry his bag and supplies, but that is very rare. However, the majority live under these constraints and this translates into one condition favouring extraordinary eating behavior.

### **Physiological needs**

#### *Food as Fuel and Hiker Hunger as a Signal of Alarm*

Being under constraints is one thing but, engaging in a solution (i.e., extraordinary eating) to overcome these limitations is another thing. What motivates them to engage in extraordinary eating? Their view of food as fuel and as hunger as a signal of alarm. Similar to the limits of the environment, the hunger is universal to all hikers and presents itself as a second condition needed to engage in extraordinary eating practices.

Hikers eat differently because they want to keep hiking. Food is fuel. The food is a tool for hikers to be able to carry on with the hiking trip. Earlobes' food portrays this idea of functionality: each row (from top to bottom) is a day and in each day there are staples that a hiker knows work for them and provides them with energy (Figure 16).



*Figure 16.* A hiker's food for four days. While not varied in terms of choice, these foods provide hikers with function and convenience (Earlobes, 2018)



Ultimately, hunger is the manifestation of a lack of fuel. It is the manifestation that food has not fulfilled its role of fuel. When a hiker feels hunger, it means that his hike is in jeopardy; his body does not have enough energy to carry on the hike. Since hikers are enthusiasts to continue their hike and must avoid hunger. Hunger warns hikers that they need to eat in order to continue hiking, thus acting as a need for the extraordinary eating. The adventure is physically demanding, and hikers need to answer their body's needs with whatever caloric sources are available. If they hike the long term, they also need to avoid weight loss if they want to continue hiking. As George states,

You're so damn hungry you could eat everything out here.

A common practice is to carry butter, oil, or coconut oil on the trail, and add some to meals. For examples, Jolene adds coconut oil to her chili (Figure 17).



*Figure 17.* Chili with coconut oil (Le Bouthillier, 2018)



When there is no hunger, hikers simply use food as fuel, as a tool to continue the extraordinary experience. The food serves a higher purpose: enjoying the experience. As Coralie explains, her goal is to have a good time on a hike which is why she's willing to sometimes pay more for extraordinary food on the trail:

Hiking for me doesn't happen that often. So, when I go, I really want to enjoy it. A good parallel would be if you go to the movies every three weeks and you splurge on a movie and on the popcorn and on the candies and you know [...] like, it is going to cost you a lot, but, who cares?

In summary, the food has a primary functional role of filling up with calories. However, when this role is fulfilled, it serves an experiential role: it helps to enjoy the experience. The fact that hikers need to eat in extraordinary ways is the second conditions leading to extraordinary eating practices.

### **Socialization**

Socialization explains, among with the two other conditions mentioned above, why eaters engage in extraordinary eating. Socialization represents implicit or explicit learning of eating practices through society (Block et al., 2011). However, this condition is not universal to all hikers, compared to the two others mentioned earlier. Notably, this socialization happens during adulthood, outside of home and by strangers; they learn how to eat on a hiking trip as they engage more and more and observe others, or look for what to eat on the internet or in books and magazines. As such, this is why it's not universally lived among hikers: not all hikers learn how to eat on a hike the same way and by the same sources. By its influences, socialization determines how hikers will eat (e.i., the different example of extraordinary eating given earlier: healthy, unhealthy, less fresh) because the hiker will eat the way he learned was best to. This explains why there are various forms among extraordinary eating practices, but that the unhealthy form is the most popular: it's the form that is the most observable and learned by hikers.

People compare themselves and observe what other people do. Jam speaks about one of those moments when he observed another hiker's unhealthy habits.

Yeah, and actually we saw some other hikers, some thru-hikers, they took a peanut butter jar and stuffed it with butter sticks and they were just carrying pure butter. And one guy had just one glass jar of coconut oil.

For example, Jason tells how he had the idea to bring cheese without proper refrigeration while backpacking, looking at what people were doing on the internet:

I think I was looking on the internet and I came across people packing up cheese.

They can also learn healthy behavior, but that is less the case since these behavior are the exception. Roger and his friends tell how they had the idea to bring fresh fruits to eat on the first day of the trail, by observing others:

We've learned that it's an idea to do next time. Because we've learned it from them [other hikers they're hiking with].

Thus, socialization not only allows hikers to gain ideas from others and define the normal practices within the hiking trip context, but it's also an explanation for who eats healthy or less healthy, fresh or less fresh: it determines which form of extraordinary eating the hiker is likely to engage in. The type of extraordinary eating the hiker will adopt comes down to the individual's socialization to what's supposed to be eaten on the trail. It is about what the person has been socialized to think is best for them to eat, considering the limits of the environment and their needs. Thus, hikers who eat healthy are likely to have been socialized into a healthy way of eating on the trail, and vice versa.

For example, Christian explains how he ended eating a Cliff shot, something he would never eat at home, because he's been told it's appropriate for the trail by a salesperson at the outdoor store.

Interviewer: Do you eat some stuff [on the trail] that you would never eat at home?

Christian: this ... [pointing at his cliff shot].

Interviewer: What is it?

Christian: It's a cliff shot. I bought it down in Jackson's hole, in an outdoor shop, and she said it was going to give me an energy boost, So, I trusted her.

Similarly, Jack tells how he prepared for his Appalachian thru-hike, looking for other people's opinion:

I did some pretty extensive research, googling and see what the best for this was, best for that, and I kind of narrowed my choices based on what people's comments and things like that. I didn't skip on quality.

Jack, who eats healthily on the trail, learned this way by doing extensive research and comparing his nutritional needs. That is how he came up with a healthy version of extraordinary eating:

I actually got scientific about this, 30 years ago when I hiked the Pacific Crest Trail, because I knew backpackers or anybody doing strenuous athletic work everyday kind of has the opposite needs of many people who don't get that kind of exercise.

To summarize, it is the context's limits, in combination with (or as well as) hikers' physiological needs and socialization that leads to extraordinary eating. First, they are under the constraints imposed by the hiking trip context and see extraordinary eating as the only possible avenue of eating. Then, they are enthusiasts to eat in extraordinary ways because they want to succeed in their trip. They eat food out of necessity and functionality and when this role is fulfilled, they eat food to enjoy the overall experience. These two conditions are universal to all hikers. Last, socialization allows hikers to learn about these practices and perpetuate/normalize them. This last condition is not universal to all hikers. Important to point out, how they've been socialized to eating on the trail defines what forms they're likely to engage in. Notably, socialization explains why one food choice made reinforce other food choices to be made (i.e., double arrow in my theoretical model). Engaging in extraordinary eating iteratively change the hiking trip dimensions and, consequently, other food choices. The two other conditions suggest extraordinary eating practices in general, but socialization really defines what forms

they'll engage in; what they have learned to do. It is important to stress that unhealthy eating is therefore the easiest form for hikers to adopt because of the context's conditions.

Notably, if eaters were not to engage in extraordinary eating, chances are that they would not succeed and thrive in the adventure. Of importance, these conditions are *fostering* the adoption of extraordinary eating: other unpredictable conditions, however uncommon, can lead to its non-adoption (for example, if hikers pay to get their bag carried, that cancels the limits of the environment and the physical exertion: there's no need to engage in extraordinary eating). However, this represents a minority: all hikers are under the extraordinary experience's conditions mentioned in this section.

### **Psychological Consequences**

In this section, I talk about the psychological consequences of extraordinary eating: how hikers psychologically deal with extraordinary eating, either by compartmentalizing or integrating.

The extraordinary eating represents, by definition, behavior that are different than at home. Individuals are likely to engage in extraordinary eating when faced with the context's conditions. From this nature, it creates contradictions about the self. As Sobal et al. (2009) point out, a food choice entails negotiations, balanced values, and strategies. How do hikers cognitively deal with this behavior depends on the impact of the context's conditions on their eating behavior. In other words, it depends on how the conditions influence the hiker's eating behavior. Notably, if they have been socialized to engage in unhealthy behavior on the trail, they are likely to use compartmentalization as a tool helping them engaging in such eating. Notably, this is the case for most hikers, since the unhealthy and less fresh form is the most observable form of extraordinary eating. In the food choice model (Furst et al., 1996; Sobal et al., 2006), compartmentalization stands as a cognitive strategy used to engage and justify extraordinary food behavior, especially when they are different from home. When hikers don't need justification of their extraordinary eating, because their behavior aren't that different after all, integration is possible. Notably, if socialization has influenced them to eat an extraordinary eating form

not so different from their normal behavior, there is no need to compartmentalize. In particular, integration happens when hikers eat healthily on the trail.

In lay terms, compartmentalization helps hikers believe that they can eat different things than in their normal life, because they're on a hiking trip and that is what the context requires. If there's no need to justify their eating behavior, because they're not that different, hikers integrate their eating behaviors. Of importance, hikers integrating their eating behavior still engage in a form of extraordinary eating. It is simply not as different as what they do at home, so it can be integrated, compared to hikers who need to compartmentalize because their eating behavior is slightly different from their normal one. It is all about the intensity of extraordinary eating.

Time has the biggest influence on which style the individual is going to adopt: thru-hikers tend to compartmentalize more than backpackers on short trips. Notably, thru-hikers are more socialized into the unhealthier form of extraordinary eating because it is the most frequently observable on the trail: it normalizes this form. Consequently, they engage more in it and need to compartmentalize even more their extraordinary eating in the context of hiking. They are also more under the two other conditions (limits from the environments and physiological needs), which also increase their tendency to engage in very different eating behavior, increasing their need to compartmentalize.

In general, hiking trips call for two different selves; one of the trails and one at home. For example, the use of trail names speaks of this separation. As mentioned earlier, most thru-hikers use other names when hiking, as if they were different individual from their normal life (Appendix D for the table of participants' name). Moreover, hiking trips are usually a time for hikers to mark a pause and to rejuvenate themselves. As Martin tells, he uses the trip as a pause in his life:

[I am going into the woods because] sometimes you just have to press the reset button.

This already visible cognitive separation has tipped me off to the compartmentalization theory for eating behavior that were as well separated.

In the next section, I will present the signs of compartmentalization, integration, and the effects of time in regard to extraordinary eating behavior.

### **Signs of Compartmentalization**

Hikers who show signs of compartmentalization divide their behavior based on the environment in which they take place. Their eating behavior on the trail is not representative of who they are as eaters, but they still must engage in it, because of the context's conditions. Most hikers use compartmentalization, since most eat unhealthy and less fresh food on hiking trips (as mentioned earlier as one of the most popular forms of extraordinary eating observed on trails). Usually, their eating behavior is not desirable and is thus not representative of their expected self, i.e., the image they would like others to see for themselves. However, hikers primarily justify their eating behaviors because of the context's conditions: limits on the environment, their hiker hunger and the fact that everybody around eats the same way. They are strongly motivated by what they've been socialized to do (this has been discussed in the section, "Socialization"), even though it contrasts with their normal eating behavior. When talking about their food consumption, hikers make a clear distinction about their eating behavior at home and on the trail. It is convenient for them to do so because it separates them from their eating behavior. For example, Chuckle talks distinctively of her normal behavior versus her behavior on the trail:

I eat a lot of fresh vegetables, salad, smoothies, and a ton of fruit at home. So, it's completely different. I don't eat donuts or pasta, processed food [...] Like a Knorr rice side is something that I would have never ever, ever, ever bought at home that's mostly on the trail. So, it's completely different from my normal life.

Similarly, Max tells us how the way he eats on the trail is only for the trail. At home, his eating habits are different.

I am not that way at home [while] cooking meals, I want to prepare something good at home. So, I don't care at home if it's fast most of the time. Up here, when I am exhausted, yes. Faster is best.

One thing that seems to facilitate hikers' compartmentalization is thinking about what they will eat after the hiking trip. When asked about their future eating behavior, they usually make a point and state that they will eat radically different than how they eat on the trail. They want to compensate for their incongruent behavior and strengthen their normal compartment, and reconcile contradictory behavior and values. For example, Tweezer explain:

I've already decided I am going to try to go on a pretty strict [regiment], like staying away from any sort of processed food and sugar and stuff. We have so much hunger out here, just because we're burning so [many] calories and that [do not] really go away the minute you stop hiking. So, I just want to try to avoid losing or like gaining a bunch of weight and stuff. Just kind of sticking to a strict whole food kind of diet.

Similarly, Midway will totally reject hiking food in his future life.

Well, half of the things I've eaten, I would never eat again in my whole life. Like cliff bars... I am just done with them! It's terrible. Peanut butter; I am done with peanut butter. I can't see [it or] smell [it] anymore.

When asked explicitly why they eat this way, they often cite the conditions mentioned earlier. For example, High Blaze says:

As a hiker, you do big miles and you're looking for a lot of calories in items. So, the things you would normally want to stay away from, if you're living a healthy lifestyle, then, as a thru-hiker, you might reach for that. Very high sugar, very high calorie food for energy on the trail.

Thus, compartmentalization helps them deal with the fact that they have to face the context's condition, and that they have to modify their eating behaviors. In particular, socialization is the strongest influence causing their eating behavior to be compartmentalized. Similar to Amiot et al.'s (2017) observations, this behavior does not represent the person and only appears in specific contexts, because of certain fostering conditions. Compartmentalizing allows eaters to engage with more ease in extraordinary eating, since they must adhere to the context's conditions. Important to realize, this

creates a tension within hikers. As such, they do not want to eat in an extraordinary way, usually with the unhealthy way as being rejected but still engaged in. They do so per necessity. It's not licensing happening there; it's eating junk food because of the context requires it.

### **Signs of Integration**

At the opposite end of the spectrum, hikers who show signs of integration are more nuanced when it comes to their eating behavior. They view their food consumption on the trail less in contrast with their eating behavior at home and tend to integrate the two eating behavior. Usually, this can happen because they're eating in a healthier way; there's less under the context's conditions (limits and physiological needs), and/or socialization has pushed them not to eat so differently than home. In other words, they have less eating behavior to justify from their extraordinary eating practices. However, they are the minority. Usually, they've planned ahead or they put extra effort into their food preparation: they're less prone to the limits and physiological need conditions. The biggest sign of integration is the fact that they see a resemblance between themselves at home and themselves on the trail: the two are not wholly separate compartments.

For example, Jolene does not make a difference between her eating behavior at home and on the trail.

If you read the back of prepared foods, it's pretty gross. I eat organic at home, so I try to eat good out here.

Similarly, Theodore says:

I am a vegetarian mostly, so you know, I try to eat the same on the trail as I do at home. I only bought freeze-dried [foods] that didn't have meat. Having my dinner and a cup of tea [is all I need].

Nevertheless, they cannot completely escape the context's conditions. In that sense, Jolene speaks of how she's willing to make an exception, when faced with the context's conditions.



I would eat something from a convenient store on a hike if I had to. I eat more sugary food on a hike, just for quick calories. Other than that, [I would] not much [eat these kinds of food].

Similarly, Theodore needs to cut down on the weight of his pack, and consequently on the food he wishes he had brought.

Because these guys told me about to keep the weight down. Because, I normally I'll bring cheese, you know, I might bring some nice bread, I might bring some things to cook, But, this trip, because we have been doing so much, we needed to keep the weight down. And they made me throw out my tamari sauce and my tabasco [laugh], which I like in my food.

Similarly, Wool explains how she sees her behavior at home and on the trail as equal, and how she puts the extra effort to reduce differences between the two, when faced with the context's conditions.

In my real life, I really prioritize healthy eating. So, in advance, I knew that it was something that would weigh and wear on my motivation if I felt that I was eating honey buns all day. I felt that mentally, it would wear on me, as well as physically. So, this is why I've chosen to put so much work and money in advance, to make sure that it wasn't an issue for my mental longevity.

In summary, integrated hikers see their extraordinary eating as less different than their normal behavior. Yet, they do not eat exactly like that at home, since it is impossible to completely escape the conditions of the context, but these behavior do not need a justification: they have managed to better face the conditions of the context. They've usually planned well their food, prior the trip, so their extraordinary eating isn't in urgent need of justification and compartmentalization.

### **Effects of Time**

Time spent on the trail is very important when considering if someone will have a stronger tendency to either compartmentalize or integrate. Time exacerbates extraordinary eating. As thru-hikers spend more time on the trail than short-trip backpackers, they engage in extraordinary eating for longer periods of time. As time goes

by, furthermore, they more under the influence of the two limits, physiological needs and conditions. Thus, the extraordinary eating becomes intensified. In addition, thru-hikers are more socialized into extraordinary eating practices; these behaviors become more and more normal because of an intensified contact. Since the unhealthy form is usually the one mostly observed on the trail, thru-hikers are more socialized to engage into this form.

In other terms, hikers engaging in shorter hikes are less prone to compartmentalizing. The constraints are not worsened by time and they are less socialized into extraordinary eating. Thus, short-distance hikers usually take an integrative style without any difficulty; there is nothing to hide from the self. If there are some contradictions, they are committed only short-term, versus long-term, which seems to be easier to integrate.

For example, a young couple (Betina and Rick) are staying only for the night in the backcountry explain that they brought fresh butter in their backpack. The fact that it is short-term seems to ease their mind:

It's only one night, so we figured it should be OK.

On the other hand, thru-hikers live the extraordinary eating for a longer period and show more signs of compartmentalization. In general, thru-hikers speak more in terms of their normal versus trail life and about their town versus hiking food. They speak more about how they will eat drastically different once back home. For example, John explains how he craves something different and how he will change his eating habits after his thru-hike:

The first thing I want to eat is a big stir-fry with chicken and zucchini and onions... Just so many vegetables. [I'm] really looking forward to that. I am hoping in general that my food habits just change, because of this trip, because I've been constantly thinking about food. I am hoping that I am going to be more nutritious when I get back. Instead of less.

It is important to realize that this thought pattern can also happen within the length of a smaller backpacking trip. The separation between compartmentalization for thru-hikers and integration for short-distance hikers is not clear. For example, I have interviewed the

same group at the beginning and the end of a five-day backpacking trip. At the beginning Roger seemed satisfied with the dehydrated meals, he had brought for the trip:

Oh no, they're awesome! At the end of the day, you relax, you pack off [...] You need something hot. They kind of taste like food. It's awesome.

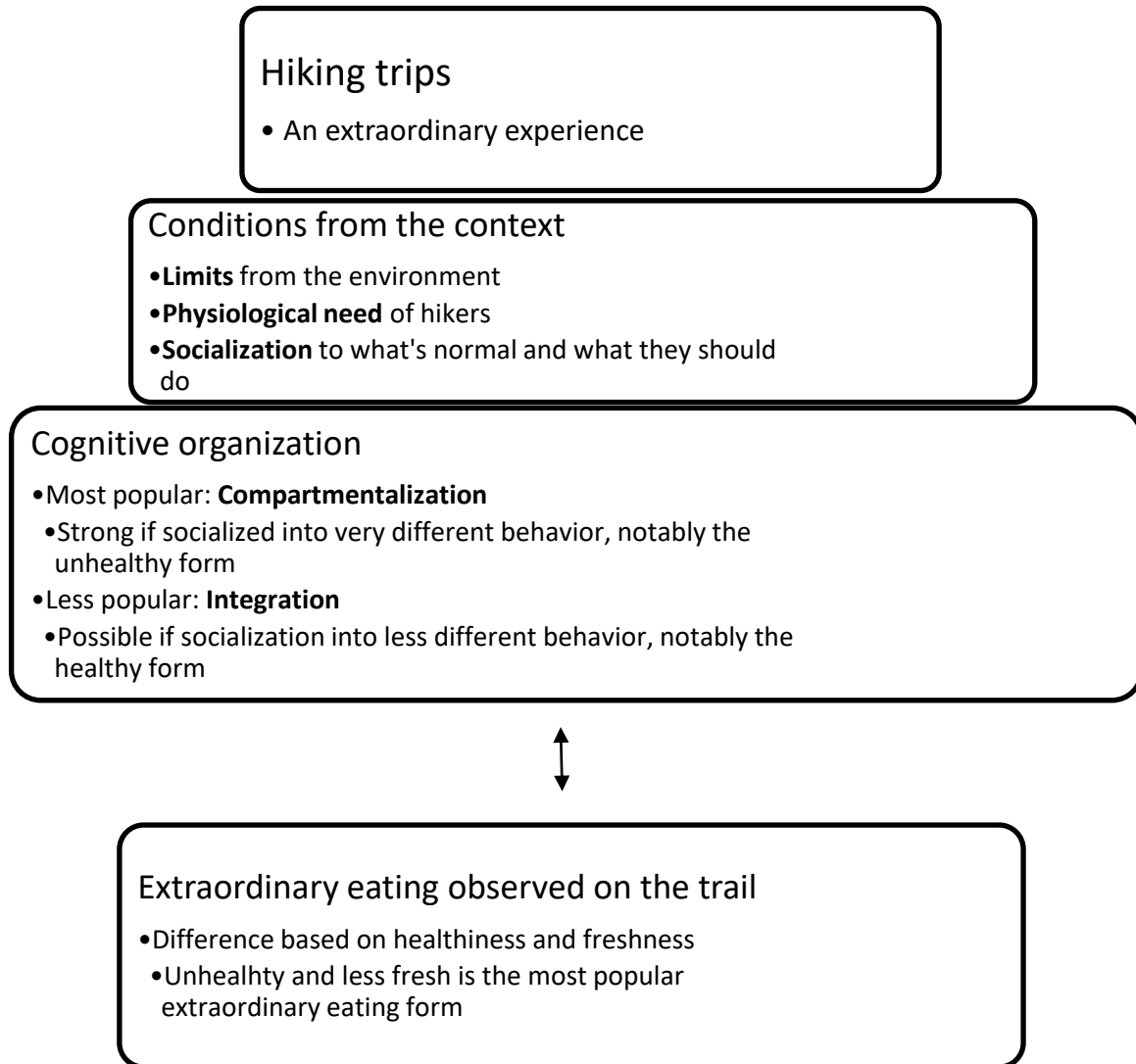
In the end, however, Roger was looking forward to a home-cooked meal, because he ate the same dehydrated meal for days, he now negatively and briefly described the dehydrated food as a "poor substitute for food." In that case, satiation is happening: Roger derives less pleasure as he consumes the same food over and over again. Notably, satiation is happening with more time spend on the trails: as you eat more and more of the same food, you derive less pleasure from it. By deriving less pleasure, you blame the context's conditions as reasons why you engage in such eating behaviors. All these excerpts show the particular role that time has. It exacerbates the extraordinary eating and hikers are more prone to compartmentalize it. When extraordinary eating is lived for a shorter period, hikers can easily integrate it.

In sum, hikers either compartmentalize or integrate their behavior as a strategy allowing for extraordinary eating. Compartmentalization is the most popular cognitive organization, since the majority of hikers need to justify their eating behavior on the trails, particularly because unhealthy extraordinary eating practices are common. Integration of extraordinary eating behavior is possible when there's not much to justify. In particular, it happens when hikers engage in a better preparation and are consequently less under the context's condition. Usually, these are hikers having a healthy form of extraordinary eating. Important to realize, in this analysis, I have only discussed the manifestation of compartmentalization or integration. What I portray in the excerpts is only a proxy for their suspected cognitive separation. As outsiders, we acknowledge their discourse about what they feel about extraordinary eating. Then, consequently, how it speaks to a strategy that allows for extraordinary eating behavior.

## Summary of Findings

Hikers' eating behavior are different than everyday life in terms of practices and products, along with the environment where food is consumed. For example, some hikers eat healthier or unhealthier compared to home and all hikers eat less fresh food than their everyday life. These examples of singular eating behavior are examples of extraordinary eating; food consumption that is different than everyday life. This division is determined by the eater's perspective. Notably, eating unhealthily and less fresh is the most popular form of extraordinary eating in hiking trips. Hikers eat in such manners because extraordinary experiences present conditions favouring the adoption of such eating. In the case of hiking trips, three conditions justify extraordinary eating. First, environmental limits in the context of hiking trips. Second, physiological needs under the form of hiker hunger, to finish the trip. Third, socialization among hikers, that share and normalize these practices. In particular, socialization explains what forms of extraordinary eating hikers are likely to engage in: it depends on what they've been socialized to do. In sum, food in extraordinary eating is first to fuel for the adventure and then experiential. Hikers have to engage in extraordinary eating in order to succeed and thrive on the trip. Since this way of eating is different from a hiker's normal behavior, it requires a special strategy of cognitive organization. How hikers cope with extraordinary eating depends on the impact that contextual conditions have on their eating behaviours. On the one hand, if eating behaviors are very different than from home, hikers justify themselves by the context. This creates a tension for hikers; they don't want to unhealthy food, but they have to because of the context. On the other hand, if eating behavior aren't that different, hikers integrate these as representative: there's not much to justify. Usually, these latter hikers have a better planned their food and put extra effort to reduce their need for compartmentalizing. This explains, why thru-hikers tend to eat more unhealthily on the trail and compartments more their eating behavior, compared to short-trip hikers: they are more under the conditions of the hiking trip and their behaviors are consequently more different –extraordinary, than their normal ones. In particular, a double arrow between extraordinary eating and the three dimensions indicates an iterative relationship: the more hikers engage in extraordinary eating, the more iteratively it will change the dimensions leading to its adoption. For example, the more socialized hikers are to extraordinary

practices, the more likely they are to make similar food choices later on. The more they make these food choices, the more they are socialized. See Figure 18 below for a summary of the findings. The reader is also welcome to refer back to Figure 3, an adaptation of the food choice process, to visually situation the findings of this thesis within Sobal et al, 2006's model.



*Figure 18. Summary of the findings in the context of hiking trips*

## DISCUSSION

### **Interpretative Summary**

Drawing on field interviews at four different popular hiking locations, and autoethnographic data from my experiences, this study reveals the phenomenon, the conditions, and the psychological consequences of extraordinary eating behavior in the context of an extraordinary experience: it presents a process with conditions and consequences.

In this thesis, I have found that eaters separate their food consumption between eating practices for everyday life versus in extraordinary experiences. In the literature, Dubé, Le Bel, and Lu (2005) have shown that people classify food experiences with regard to the type of pleasure they involve. Similarly, Blake et al. (2007) demonstrate that adults categorize food based on personal experiences. As such, they find that eaters categorize their food consumption based on its routineness or uncommonness (Blake et al., 2007). The extraordinary eating is a food consumption out of the ordinary, similar to Blake et al. (2007) eater's classification of eating episodes. It is also similar, in nature, to the consumer's separation of experiences in either ordinary or extraordinary ones (Bhattacharjee and Mogilner, 2013).

Moreover, I've found that different forms of extraordinary eating exist, this portraying that consumers aren't only "socially linked through a consumption activity (Cova 1997) but, rather, through consumption regime" (Lindberg and Mossberg, 2019, p. 128). On that, Lindberg and Mossberg (2019) find that climbers experience disputes and they have in-within consumption regime heterogeneity within their community; in my thesis, I've found that there are many forms of extraordinary eating (healthy, unhealthy, etc.), also creating an heterogeneity of consumption. Analyzing eaters' experience within the extraordinary experience remains singular and new and notably reveals rich and meaningful descriptions of how food is eaten and consumed.

To dig more into the phenomenon, I highlight three conditions fostering its emergence within extraordinary experiences: limits on the environment, willingness from eaters and

socialization among hikers. These conditions speak to the presence of influencers in the eater's present environment, as previously observed by other authors (Meiselman et al., 2000; Edwards et al., 2003, Sobal et al., 2009). Limits on the environment influence directly food consumption, by imposing physical limitations: it acts as a clear demonstration of how contexts influence food consumption. On the other hand, the desire to avoid hunger acts as a driver to engage in extraordinary experience. This condition speaks to the fact that food is fuel for hikers. Food is a tool to thrive in the extraordinary experience. As such, Rozin (1988) highlights that availability and price are two "powerful determinants of food choice" (p. 168), something that I also observe in my data. However, arguing that food is only a source of energy is too simplistic (Rozin, 1988), social factors explain how food choice varies. As such, culture or ethnic group is argued to be the best determinant of food choice (Rozin, 1988). As so, socialization is mentioned as a third condition leading to extraordinary eating: it helps to normalize practices, share and educate hikers on how to eat on the trails. This thesis portrays that socialization is not only happening at a young age and by the family (Rozin, 1988; Nicklaus, 2016), but also during adulthood and by strangers. As such, humans can have a variety of feeding system learned through enculturation primary via family (Rozin, 1988; Nicklaus, 2016), but also via other social sources as portrayed in this thesis. Similarly to my findings, other authors have found that cultural exposure, notably familiarity with food, helps individuals determine what they accept as food (Wansink, 2004; Tan et al., 2015). If certain foods aren't familiar, certain variables, such as preparation (Tan et al., 2015) can increase its acceptability. In my thesis, I've found that influencers conditions in the context are influencing hiker's eating experiences. They represent the context's link with the eater, and have a strong influence on their food acceptability: extraordinary eating for extraordinary experiences' conditions.

In terms of how eaters cognitively organize this food consumption, I find they use compartmentalization and integration as cognitive strategies that allow for extraordinary food consumption: eating behavior are separated based on the context in which they appear. Eaters cope with the context's conditions with the strategy of compartmentalization. Such a strategy is based on convenience, as I highlight, a value previously observed in other academic work (e.g., Shepherd and Raats, 2006). They eat

like this because of a tension between what they want to eat and what they have to eat. Such tension between different role has also been discussed in prior literature (Lindberg and Østergaard, 2015; Lindberg and Eide, 2016). To facilitate their food choice process, eaters focus on a physiological need (e.g., avoiding hiker hunger) and adjust their food consumption to achieve it. They do what is convenient to succeed and thrive in the experience they live. However, compartmentalization is a new addition to past literature about food choice strategies; compartmentalization and integration have not been previously discussed directly in relation to being a food consumption strategy. Usually, compartmentalization is used in relation to licensing (e.g., somebody that allows themselves a candy and then compartmentalize this behavior). In my thesis, I find that eaters compartmentalize because of necessity (e.g., they need to engage in extraordinary eating because of the conditions), not per choice.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

This study develops our understanding of extraordinary experiences and establishes a new border to its influence, by encompassing extraordinary eating behavior. Previous authors have described extraordinary experiences in general, but this study specifies the eating consumption occurring within its boundaries, and its antecedents and predecessors. It explains the why and how of its practices and answers Minto and Liu's (2018) concerns about the lack of research on consumers' behavior within extraordinary experiences. Notably, my thesis strengthens previous observations from authors (e.g., Meiselman et al., 2000, Edwards et al., 200) about different acceptability ratings of food, based on where it is consumed. On this, it presents different accepted eating behaviors in different contexts and highlights conditions that increase familiarity and acceptability with foods. First, it clearly presents how the context is influencing consumption through environmental limits and will from eaters. Also, how socialization during adulthood and by strangers is influencing food consumption. This contrast with the literature proposing that the major determinant of food choice is the early learned socialization during childhood (e.g., Nicklaus, 2016). In my thesis, I find that context, especially conditions including socialization at adult age, strongly influence eating behavior. This adds



examples and enriches the food choice process model (Furst et al., 1996; Sobal et al., 2009) and theories about how food choices are deeply influenced by social factors (Rozin, 1988, Wansink, 2004, Block et al., 2011). Finding conditions and consequences to a certain type of eating behavior is an original and impactful contribution to the literature about extraordinary experiences but, also in the literature concerning eating behavior. My findings also show that a community can have different consumption within its culture, a consumption heterogeneity, a topic being overlooked in academic research, as points out Lindberg and Mossberg (2019). Now we can understand food consumption within an extraordinary experience that has special fostering conditions albeit with a name: extraordinary eating.

The findings also add to the compartmentalization theory, an emerging theoretical standpoint for consumers' different behavior. Like prior research about role conflicts in extraordinary experience (Lindberg and Østergaard, 2015) my study shines a light on conflicts between ordinary and extraordinary eating behavior, resulting in compartmentalization. Notably, in the field of eating behaviors, it is an original contribution to find that compartmentalization is used because of a necessity and a tension, and not per choice. Since the compartmentalization theory is usually used to explain non-prosocial or licensing behavior, such as stealing or cheating (e.g., Amiot et al. 2017a, Amiot et al. 2017b, Touré-Tillery and Light, 2018), it is an original contribution to the field to discuss compartmentalization as a tool used per necessity, and not for licensing eaters. Also, since eating strategies are usually used by eaters in order to reach healthy eating (Falk et al., 2001; Quintiliani et al., 2010), it's original to propose extraordinary eating as a strategy to reach unhealthy eating. Researchers interested in extraordinary experiences or eating behavior should consider the compartmentalization theory as a promising theoretical standpoint to investigate contradictions and justification in consumer behavior.

Important to point out, this research uses an original and singular way to gather data, i.e., fieldwork at hiking trip locations. Without this method, rich insights on how contexts influence food consumption would not have been possible. However, new techniques are still needed to understand food consumption and its relation to the environment (Stelick

and Dando, 2018). Thus, this study suggests that field studies remain an efficient way to discover insights about eating situations. Gathering data on the field with a qualitative approach allows in-depth descriptions and rich insights of complex contexts and has been proven to be very efficient in this present study.

My thesis also provides insights into outdoor activities with hiking trips as its focus. Considering the lack of literature, in academia and in the market regarding this topic, my findings aim to fill this gap. Notably, my analysis discuss possible negative consequences of hiking trips, such as negative feeling about the self, similarly argued by other authors (e.g., Hall, 2001; Coble et al., 2003; Hill et al., 2008; Turley, 2011; Mason et al., 2013; Myers and Hoffman, 2015). Although usually discussed in positive terms, hiking trips can also have negative consequences that include a cognitive contradiction when the individual is faced with behavior that need to be justified. This is a very good and new insight about outdoor activities and how different behavior might be dealt with.

Finally, these findings are promising in the field of eating norms. Research usually tries to establish patterns of food consumption in relation to demographic variables (e.g., demographics, social norms, etc.) (e.g., Robinson, 2015, Kant, 2018). In contrast, this study focuses on the consumers' subjective experiences, their evaluation of the context whether it be ordinary or extraordinary, as the variable influencing their eating norms. Notably, socialization plays a major role in establishing what's normal and not in the context of hiking trips. The context and its conditions define the appropriate eating behavior; extraordinary behavior for extraordinary experiences. This approach takes an inside-out view of the influencers of eating norms, by looking at the variables intrinsic to the individual (and its experience), rather than the variables extrinsic to the individual. Thus, this study suggests that eating norms can be established on the basis of the individual's evaluation of context (precisely the social context) and not only on the basis of factual characteristics concerning the consumer. In other terms, the same individual can have different eating norms, depending on the context.

## **Practical Implications**

This study benefits product development efforts and food technology professionals developing outdoor food, including dieticians working on improving the nutritional quality of such food. As Steenkamp suggests, food consumption behavior should be studied for “new product development as it links marketing, R&D, and food technology [together]” (1994, p. 6). Considering the lack of market data on hikers and hiking trips, professionals from the outdoor industry are likely to appreciate the unique photos and rich citations from hikers.

Precisely, this study provides a lot of rich descriptions of trail food but, also strongly suggests that new food products be tested directly on the field. The consumption experience of hikers differs from normal life. Since eating behavior varies between ordinary and extraordinary experience, it would be a mistake to investigate the acceptability or the popularity of a product within laboratories or at home. As this study suggests, food should be investigated where it is consumed, while new outdoor food products ought to be tested in the outdoors with hikers/enthusiasts of all levels.

Secondly, this study portrays that there is an open door to new and revolutionary product ideas. Hikers often say that they have no other choice than to engage in extraordinary eating behavior: they experience a tension. This means that companies that are clever have a lot of room for new products development to solve this tension, outside of what is usually sold. As can be noticed with the many examples and photos used in this study, not all the food took on a trail is designed to be trail food. Most of the food taken by hikers are inspired by their normal eating behavior at home, though the variety is cut down because of the environment’s constraints. There is a need for ameliorated food products, more congruent with the normal food consumed by hikers. The company that will create food products reducing consumers need to compartmentalize their eating behavior will surely thrive and sell a lot. As can be portrayed in this study, the extraordinary eating is not positively lived for all hikers. Future food products standing out in terms of availability, convenience, and desirability for one self-image will surely have popular products.

This study also benefits retailers, who distribute and promote hiking food products in outdoor stores (e.g., MEC, La Cordée, etc.). Hikers usually buy what is easy to find and convenient for their extraordinary eating. As portrayed in this study, they do not regularly shop at outdoor stores for their food products but rather go to groceries or convenience stores near their neighbourhood or along trails (the section “Limits from the environment” speak of this reality). Thus, retailers must rethink their distribution in order to reach the right consumers at the right time because that is not the case with the participants sampled in this study.

Managers will also enjoy being presented with three *types* of hikers: those who are unhealthy eaters, those who are healthy eaters, and those in between :hikers who want to be healthy eaters, but who are under the circumstance of the hiking trip (i.e., most hikers). This form of broad typology, although not exhaustive of every type of hikers, can suggest insights. For example, marketers might want to highlight nutritional property of certain products, because they wish to target the healthy group -or the *wannabe* healthy group. Notably, companies who will create products reducing the impact of the context of consumers’ eating behavior will surely succeed to target the type in between. All this suggests that hikers might not be better addressed as a group sharing similar characteristics but, as different segments having different needs.

### **Limitations and Opportunities**

The main limitation of this study stems from the data collection. First, participants were not interviewed multiple times, but only once in the field, which could have introduced bias. For example, a participant could have had a very bad or positive day when interviewed, so it is this negative halo that influences the answer. The interview did not represent his general or truest thoughts. More interviews at home, out of the intensity of the field, or multiple interviews at different moments on the field could have provided for better data. Future research can follow hikers along their trips and gather longitudinal data. Interviewing the same hikers in the field and out of the field is also a good idea, in order to better understand extraordinary eating, and also in order to reduce desirability bias. Secondly, the limited time for the data collection of the field interviews (i.e., two

months; August, September), allowed only a little time for modification to the interview questionnaire. In the month of October (out of the field), after the identification of some key themes, I wish I had asked additional questions to some participants. For example, future research could try to investigate if the person has a natural tendency to compartmentalize/integrate at home, or this tendency only comes up in the extraordinary eating. As such, compartmentalization theory would suggest they do it in other domains. Third, considering the unequal number of men and women interviewed (35 versus 15), other future research could investigate if there exists any differences between the sexes when it comes to eating habits. For example, are men and women dealing with the extraordinary eating the same way? For the compartmentalization theory, this would be interesting to see if there are differences. In a similar way, does hiking with a loved one (couple) change one's extraordinary eating behavior? Finally, since most of my participants are Caucasian Americans, it's safe to say that they pretty much only represent one cultural group. They constitute a fairly homogeneous sample in terms of nationality, skin colour and level of education. Since eating behaviours are influenced by social factors, further analysis with other cultural groups may reveal other perspectives. All these questions stem from opportunities to improve data collection.

Another limitation concerns the compartmentalization theory argued. I propose that compartmentalization is a consequence of extraordinary eating: the behavior is committed and acts then compartmentalized. That is how they deal with the consequences. It can be argued that the compartmentalization of the overall hiking trip is committed beforehand, and extraordinary eating is the consequence. Thus, the compartmentalization is not the how, but the why of extraordinary eating. Nevertheless, I have decided to propose the compartmentalization theory as the mechanism that allows for extraordinary eating and not as the why. Notably, hikers going on longer trips show more signs of compartmentalization, compared to backpackers who undergo short trips. This suggests that it is the circumstance that influences the cognitive model, and that it is not a pre-acquired state of mind. Although it seems logical when explained, additional data could focus on restating that difference and confirm that proposition. Moreover, I've presented a vision of compartmentalization and integration that is exhaustive and exclusive; hikers either compartmentalizes or integrates. Nevertheless, both self-

organization might happen at the same time and other styles of self-organization might exist. I suspect more nuances than what I have presented. More data and finer questions are needed in order to shine a light on this tension and the compartmentalization argued.

Also, the conditions and consequences presented are not meant to be exhaustive. Many factors influence food choices, and my thesis doesn't aim to explain them all. There are probably other conditions and consequences that are left to be discovered by other researchers. For example, I do notice a slight difference of extraordinary eating based on age: older people tend to eat less different than their normal eating behavior. Does being young is an additional condition for compartmentalization tendencies? I think this question is worth investigating since my observations were short and my interviews remained restricted. In the same way, I only focus my analysis on a specific dimension of the food choice process, the influence of contexts (Furst et al., 1996 and Sobal et al., 2006). Based on my data, authors with different focus might find additional conclusions concerning other characteristics of this model, such as the influence of turning points, related to age, as mentioned earlier. However, I made sure I had enough observation and reached saturation for what I have presented in the findings.

In addition, I did not control whether my interviews took place after a meal or after a demanding climb, which influences the perception of hunger. Timing (especially time since the last meal) can influence perceptions of hunger which in turn can influence how hikers perceive their eating behaviour (i.e., you are more focused on food when you are hungry than when you are not hungry), controlling the timing of the interview could improve future research on the subject. In this regard, it is important to mention that my work has not focused on how hiking trips, hunger and extraordinary experiences are perceived by individuals. In future work, considering different perceptions of the same experience could provide more nuanced findings. I have rather assumed that the same experience is perceived in the same way by hikers, and provided an overall understanding. Similar to this, I've argued that engaging in food choices iteratively change dimensions leading to its adoptions. This has been similarly argued by past authors (Furst et al. (1996), Sobal et al., (2006)), but other works could reinforce this conclusion. In particular, I only talk about how socialization therefore influences the

dimensions of food, but other dimensions could be taken into account. Thus, this work therefore serves as an introduction to the notion of extraordinary eating and provides solid evidence in its favour, but it is possible to add to this theory.

The last limitation concerns the use of the term “extraordinary experience.” As can be portrayed in the literature review, there is no consensus about the exact definition of an extraordinary experience. For the purposes of this study, I have chosen Bhattacharjee and Mogilner’s (2013) definition. Nevertheless, the lack of agreement between authors calls for an exploration of the characteristic of the extraordinary experience. As suggested by Roux (2018), the context in this study might be more “out of the ordinary,” rather than extraordinary. Future research could seek to understand and precisely define the term extraordinary experience. In addition, extraordinary eating is not limited to extraordinary experience and other conditions are yet to be discovered. By extension, since I based my definition of extraordinary eating on this, my own terminology is yet to be challenged. Notably, I’ve mentioned that extraordinary eating can occur in ordinary experiences, given the right conditions. Thus, I argue that eating extraordinarily is the result of special circumstances. Given these unusual circumstances, is the experience still considered ordinary? The lack of agreement on the definition of *extraordinary* suggests that experiences be more described with a continuum or extraordinariness, rather than with a dichotomy with ordinary experiences. It also suggests that experiences are highly subjective. In that case, could extraordinary eating stem from various different experiences, from the extraordinary to out of the ordinary ones. On this, Marshall (2005) mentions: “One could argue that food is extraordinary in its ordinariness, exceptional in the extent to which we treat it as mundane, and outstanding as a focus for the study of consumption” (p. 69). In summary, this limitation will only be resolved when a clear definition of extraordinary experience is found and the authors agree.

My contributions notwithstanding, as there is rather little existing research on outdoor food consumption in extraordinary settings, many questions remain unanswered. Extraordinary eating is after all a complex phenomenon. Here are some possible questions for future researchers interested in hiking trips:

- Many hikers recall missing cooking at home when being on the trail. As such, are hikers in need of more control over their eating behavior, thus wanting to cook and craft what they eat? Would that be a similar strategy, analogous to compartmentalization; hikers who could cook their extraordinary eating would feel that it is less different and more acceptable. Is cooked food more *normal* because they are more in control?
- Extraordinary eating is not the only behavior that is not like home. For example, hikers do not have the same hygiene, do not wear the same clothes, and sometimes do not use the same name on the trail versus when they are home. Are all such extraordinary behaviors part of a process (similar to the food choice process), allowing its making? Does it help compartmentalize the whole experience?
- While being nature lovers, hikers carry and use a LOT of plastic. They often buy prepackaged food, unpack it, and then pack it again in Ziploc bags. Is this practice also cognitively separated and part of what is needed to fuel the adventure? Is this a practice that hikers also justify, because of the context?
- How does eating (and the pleasure one obtains from it) during or within an extraordinary experience influence the evaluation or assessment of the entire experience? What is the weight or contribution of eating and food-focused pleasures to the overall pleasure or utility produced from a hike? Are trend effects and behavioural choices (such as delayed gratification) taking place while on a hike? As hikes typically unfold over time and involve many eating experiences, they are a fruitful terrain to test previous findings pertaining to the sequencing and unfolding of episodes that extend over time.



## CONCLUSION

The key takeaway of this study is the acknowledgement of extraordinary eating and the importance of contexts in eater's life. Interestingly, certain food consumption can be in reaction to extraordinary conditions. Often, researchers study the extraordinary experience itself as the focus (e.g., for hiking trips: walking in nature and summiting mountains). Nevertheless, behavior within such experience are in desperate need of understanding. This study highlights how singular they can be and how conditions can trigger them. Moreover, this thesis show what cognitive strategies eaters can use to justify their consumption. However, efforts are still needed to understand other consumption experiences within extraordinary experiences. Individuals are using food products as a tool to live extraordinary experiences to the fullest. To this end, what other resources are used by hikers? What other behavior does the extraordinary experience beget? What other behavior are they compartmentalizing? Like a hiker following trail blazes, the direction is set, the path is formed, and future researchers only need to follow the direction of future insights (Figure 19).



*Figure 19.* The direction is set, the hiker only needs to follow the path (Le Bouthillier, 2018).

## ENDNOTES

i. Bhattacharjee and Mogilner's (2013) usage of the word "extraordinary," for extraordinary experiences, has inspired me to expand its conceptualization and similar use the term *extraordinary* as a characteristic of this aforementioned food consumption. Bhattacharjee and Mogilner's definition will be discussed later, in a section titled "Extraordinary experiences."

ii. "1. Plan Ahead and Prepare, 2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces, 3. Dispose of Waste Properly, 4. Leave What You Find, 5. Minimize Campfire Impacts, 6. Respect Wildlife and 7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors"(Leave No Trace, 2018)

iii. In terms of participants, this means that I only include individuals that aren't hiking regularly as part of their normal life. For example, I don't include outdoor guides, since hiking is part of their daily lifestyle and job description. However, I do include thru-hikers (i.e., hikers that hike long-distance trails during months) because, although they hike regularly each day for months, they don't frequently engage in thru-hikes and it doesn't represent their normal life. Ultimately, this study includes hikers that will return to a lifestyle that doesn't include hiking. As such, for the participants retained in my study, hiking trips are extraordinary, since infrequent in their normal life, according to Bhattacharjee and Mogilner's (2013) definition.

iv. his comparison is based on the eater own opinion of his food habits, and is not my own assessment.

v. If you look closer at Figure 15, you can notice that there are mashed potatoes, oatmeal, and a rice side. Even though these foods traditionally require rehydration with hot water, the hikers simply pour ambient water and eat it this way: they don't use hot water. It saves them time and fuel.

vi. Daniel was referring to a small convenience store near Baxter State Park.

## REFERENCES

- Abrahams, R. D. (1986). Ordinary and extraordinary experience. In Turner, V. W., & Bruner, E. M. (Eds.), *The Anthropology of Experience* (45–72). Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Allen, L. R., & Cooper, N. L. (2003). *Benefits based programming curriculum manual*. Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.
- Alm, S., & Olsen, S. O. (2015). Exploring seafood socialization in the kindergarten: an intervention's influence on children's attitudes. *Young Consumers*, 16(1), 36–49.
- Amiot, C. E., de la Sablonnière, R., Terry, D. J., & Smith, J. R. (2017b). Integration of social identities in the self: Toward a cognitive-developmental model. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, 11(4), 364–388. doi:10.1177/1088868307304091.
- Amiot, C. E., Louis, W. R., Bourdeau, S., & Maalouf, O. (2017a). Can harmful intergroup behavior truly represent the self? : The impact of harmful and prosocial normative behavior on intra-individual conflict and compartmentalization. *Self & Identity*, 16(6), 703–731.
- Arnould, E. J., & Price, L. L. (1993). River magic: Extraordinary experience and the extended service encounter. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20(1), 24–45.
- Ayadi, K., & Bree, J. (2010). An ethnography of the transfer of food learning within the family. *Young Consumers*, 11(1), 67–76.

- Belk, R. W. (1975). Situational variables and consumer behavior. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 2(3), 157–164.
- Bhattacharjee, A., Mogilner, & C. (2013). Happiness from ordinary and extraordinary experiences. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41(1), 1–17. doi:10.1086/674724.
- Blake, C. E., Bisogni, C. A., Sobal, J., Devine, C. M., & Jastran, M. (2007). Classifying foods in contexts: How adults categorize foods for different eating settings. *Appetite*, 49(2), 500–510. doi:10.1016/j.appet.2007.03.009.
- Block, L. G., Grier, S. A., Childers, T. L., Davis, B., Ebert, J. E., Kumanyika, S., ... & Pettigrew, S. (2011). From nutrients to nurturance: A conceptual introduction to food well-being. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 30(1), 5–13.
- Borrie, W., & Roggenbuck, J. (2001). The dynamic, emergent, and multi-phasic nature of on-site wilderness experiences. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 33(2), 202–228.
- Boutroy, E., & Vignal, B. (2018). Conserver mieux pour consommer loin. *Techniques & Culture*, 1, 202–205.
- Carù, A., & Cova, B. (2003). Revisiting consumption experience: A more humble but complete view of the concept. *Marketing Theory*, 3(2), 267. doi:10.1177/14705931030032004.

- Celsi, R. L., Rose, R. L., & Leigh, T. W. (1993). An exploration of high-risk leisure consumption through skydiving. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 20(1), 1–23.
- Coble, T. G., Selin, S. W., & Erickson, B. B. (2003). Hiking alone: Understanding fear, negotiation strategies and leisure experience. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 35(1), 1–22.
- Cooney, G., Gilbert, D. T., & Wilson, T. D. (2014). The unforeseen costs of extraordinary experience. *Psychological Science*, 25(12), 2259.  
doi:10.1177/0956797614551372.
- Cova, B. (1997). Community and consumption: Towards a definition of the “linking value” of product or services. *European journal of marketing*, 31 (3/4), 297–316.
- Crust, L., Keegan, R., Piggott, D., & Swann, C. (2011). Walking the walk: A phenomenological study of long distance walking. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 23(3), 243–263.
- Breejen, L. D. (2007). The experiences of long distance walking: A case study of the West Highland Way in Scotland. *Tourism Management*, 28(6), 1417–1427.  
doi:10.1016/j.tourman.2006.12.004.
- Dube, L., LeBel, J., & Lu, J. (2005). Affect asymmetry and comfort food consumption. *Physiology & Behavior*, 86(4), 559–567. doi:10.1016/j.physbeh.2005.08.023.

- Edwards, J. S. A., Meiselman, H. L., Edwards, A., & Lesher, L. (2003). The influence of eating location on the acceptability of identically prepared foods. *Food Quality and Preference, 14*(8), 647–652. doi:10.1016/S0950-3293 (02)00189-1.
- Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). *Autoethnography: An overview. Astrolabio: Nueva Época*, Vol 0, Iss 14, Pp 249–273 (2015), (14), 249–280.
- Falk, L. W., Sobal, J., Bisogni, C. A., Connors, M., & Devine, C. M. (2001). Managing healthy eating: definitions, classifications, and strategies. *Health education & behavior, 28*(4), 425–439.
- Fisher, R. J. (1993). Social desirability bias and the validity of indirect questioning. *Journal of consumer research, 20*(2), 303–315.
- Furst T, Connors M, Bisogni CA, Sobal J, & Falk LW. (1996). Food choice: A conceptual model of the process. *Appetite, 26*(3), 247.
- Goldenberg, M., Hill, E., & Freidt, B. (2007). Why individuals hike the appalachian trail: A qualitative approach to benefits. *Journal of Experiential Education, 30*(3), 277–281.
- Hall, T. E. (2001). Hikers' perspectives on solitude and wilderness. *International Journal of Wilderness, 7*(2), 20–24.
- Hanefors, M., & Mossberg, L. (2003). Searching for the extraordinary meal experience. *Journal of Business & Management, 9*(3), 249–270.

Hill, E., Goldenberg, M., & Freidt, B. (2009). Benefits of hiking: A means-end approach on the appalachian trail. *Journal of Unconventional Parks, Tourism & Recreation Research*, 2(1), 19.

Hill, L. C., Swain, D. P., & Hill, E. L. (2008). Energy balance during backpacking. *International Journal of Sports Medicine*, 29(11), 883–887.

Hiking Etiquette. (2018, August 09). Retrieved from <https://americanhiking.org/resources/hiking-etiquette/>.

Holbrook, M. B., & Hirschman, E. C. (1982). The experiential aspects of consumption: Consumer fantasies, feelings, and fun. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 9(2), 132–140.

Kant, A. K. (2018). Eating patterns of US adults: Meals, snacks, and time of eating. *Physiology & Behavior*, 193, 270–278. doi:10.1016/j.physbeh.2018.03.022.

King, S. C., Meiselman, H. L., Hottenstein, A. W., Work, T. M., & Cronk, V. (2007). The effects of contextual variables on food acceptability: A confirmatory study. *Food Quality and Preference*, 18(1), 58–65. doi:10.1016/j.foodqual.2005.07.014

Köster, E. P. (2009). Diversity in the determinants of food choice: A psychological perspective. *Food Quality and Preference*, 20(2), 70–82. doi:10.1016/j.foodqual.2007.11.002

Kozinets, R. V. (2002). Can consumers escape the market? emancipatory illuminations from burning man. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29(1), 20–38.

Leave No Trace Canada - Outdoor Ethics [Build Awareness, Appreciation & Respect for our Wildlands]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.leavenotrace.ca/principles>.

Lindberg, F., & Eide, D. (2016). Challenges of extraordinary experiences in the arctic. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *15*(1), 15–27. doi:10.1002/cb.1527

Lindberg, F., & Mossberg, L. (2019). Competing orders of worth in extraordinary consumption community. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, *22*(2), 109–130.

Lindberg, F., & Østergaard, P. (2015). Extraordinary consumer experiences: Why immersion and transformation cause trouble. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, *14*(4), 248–260. doi:10.1002/cb.1516

Littlefield, J., & Siudzinski, R. A. (2012). “Hike your own hike”: Equipment and serious leisure along the appalachian trail. *Leisure Studies*, *31*(4), 465–486.

Locke, K., & Golden-Biddle, K. (1997). Constructing opportunities for contribution: Structuring intertextual coherence and “problematizing” in organizational studies. *Academy of Management Journal*, *40*(5), 1023–1062. doi:10.2307/256926.

Loewenstein, G. (1999). Because it is there: The challenge of mountaineering ... for utility theory. *Kyklos*, *52*(3), 315–343.

Loynes, C. (2013). *Globalization, the market and outdoor adventure*. In Pike, E. C., & Beames, S. (Ed.), *Outdoor adventure and social theory*. 138–139. Routledge.



- Marshall, D. (2005). Food as ritual, routine or convention. *Consumption Markets & Culture*, 8(1), 69–85.
- Mason, R. C., Suner, S., & Williams, K. A. (2013). An analysis of hiker preparedness: A survey of hiker habits in new hampshire. *Wilderness and Environmental Medicine*, 24(3), 221.  
doi:10.1016/j.wem.2013.02.002
- Meiselman, H. L., Johnson, J. L., Reeve, W., & Crouch, J. E. (2000). Demonstrations of the influence of the eating environment on food acceptance. *Appetite*, 35(3), 231–237.
- Minton, E. A., & Liu, R. L. (2018). It's only once, so let's indulge: Testing ordinary vs. extraordinary experience within marketing messaging, temporal distance, and consumer indulgence. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, doi:10.1111/joca.12219.
- Muir, J. (1901). *Our national parks*. Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith.
- Myers, T. M., & Hoffman, M. D. (2015). Hiker fatality from severe hyponatremia in grand canyon national park. *Wilderness & Environmental Medicine*, 26(3), 371–374.
- Nicklaus, S. (2009). Development of food variety in children. *Appetite*, 52(1), 253–255.
- Ochs, E., & Shohet, M. (2006). The cultural structuring of mealtime socialization. *New directions for child and adolescent development*, 2006(111), 35–49.
- Quintiliani, L., Poulsen, S., & Sorensen, G. (2010). Healthy eating strategies in the workplace. *International journal of workplace health management*, 3(3), 182–196.

- Robinson, E. (2015). Perceived social norms and eating behaviour: An evaluation of studies and future directions. *Physiology & Behavior, 152*, 397–401.  
doi:10.1016/j.physbeh.2015.06.010.
- Rozin, P. (1988). Social learning about food by humans. *Social learning: Psychological and biological perspectives*, 165–187.
- Rozin, P., & Schiller, D. (1980). The nature and acquisition of a preference for chili pepper by humans. *Motivation and emotion, 4*(1), 77–101.
- Shepherd, R., Raats, M., & Nutrition Society. (2006). *The psychology of food choice*. Wallingford, Oxfordshire, UK; Cambridge, MA: CABI in association with the Nutrition Society.
- Sobal, J., & Bisogni, C. A. (2009). Constructing food choice decisions. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine, 38*, S37. doi:10.1007/s12160-009-9124-5.
- Steenkamp, J. B. E. (1993). *ACR European Advances*.
- Stelick, A., & Dando, R. (2018). Thinking outside the booth—the eating environment, context and ecological validity in sensory and consumer research. *Current Opinion in Food Science, 21*, 26–31. doi:10.1016/j.cofs.2018.05.005.
- Sussman, A., & Alter, A. (2012). The exception is the rule: Underestimating and overspending on exceptional expenses. *Journal of Consumer Research, S123*.  
doi:10.1086/665833

- Taar, J. (2014). The best culinary experience. factors that create extraordinary eating episodes. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 122, 145–151.  
doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.1317
- Thomas, J. S., Ditzfeld, C. P., & Showers, C. J. (2013). Compartmentalization: A window on the defensive self. *Social & Personality Psychology Compass*, 7(10), 719–731.  
doi:10.1111/spc3.12061
- Thompson, C. J., Locander, W. B., & Pollio, H. R. (1989). Putting consumer experience back into consumer research: The philosophy and method of existential-phenomenology. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16(2), 133–146.
- Thomsen, J. M., Powell, R. B., & Monz, C. A systematic review of the physical and mental health benefits of wildland recreation. *Journal of Park & Recreation Administration*, 36(1), 123–148.
- Touré-Tillery, M., & Light, A. E. (2018). No self to spare: How the cognitive structure of the self influences moral behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 147, 48–64. doi:10.1016/j.obhdp.2018.05.002
- Tumbat, G., & Belk, R. W. (2011). Marketplace tensions in extraordinary experiences. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38(1), 42–61. doi:10.1086/658220
- Turley, B. (2011). *Assessment of readjusting to life after completing a thru-hike of the appalachian trail*. (Unpublished Bachelor of Science). California Polytechnic state University, San Luis Obispo, California.

- Vartanian, L. R. (2015). Impression management and food intake. Current directions in research. *Appetite*, 86, 74–80. doi:10.1016/j.appet.2014.08.021.
- Wansink, B. (2004). Environmental factors that increase the food intake and consumption volume of unknowing consumers. *Annual Review of Nutrition*, 24(1), 455–479.
- Young, A., Costley, C., Elliott, G., & Gibbs, P. (2010). Review of doing work based research: Approaches to enquiry for insider researchers. *Management Learning*, 41(5), 593–596. doi:10.1177/1350507610382594.
- Yun, J., & Peden, J. G. (2018). Situational influences on experiences of long-distance hikers. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education & Leadership*, 10(3), 226–237.
- Zeigler-Hill, V., & Showers, C. J. (2007). Self-structure and self-esteem stability: The hidden vulnerability of compartmentalization. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 33(2), 143–159. doi:10.1177/0146167206294872.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

Table 1.

Participants in the preliminary interviews

Name	Location of interview	Age estimated	Gender	Type
Expert 1- Nutritionist	At her office	N/D	F	N/D
Expert 2- Manager and owner of outdoor food company	At her office	N/D	F	N/D
Coralie	Skype	20–30	F	Short-distance backpacker
Stephanie	Skype	20–30	F	Short-distance backpacker
Alexandra	Skype	20–30	F	Short-distance backpacker and thru-hiker
Rosalie	Skype	20–30	F	Short-distance packager

## Appendix B



### INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM

**Study Title:** What's in your backpack? An investigation of food choices and eating habits of hikers

**Researcher:** Marie Le Bouthillier, Dt.p, M.Sc. Candidate (Marketing, JMSB)

**Researcher's Contact Information:** marie.lebou@gmail.com, 1450 Guy street, Montréal, QC H3H 0A1.

#### Faculty Supervisors:

Jordan LeBel, Associate professor, Marketing.

Zeynep Arsel, Associate professor, Marketing

#### Faculty Supervisor's Contact Information:

Jordan LeBel, 1450 Guy, S-MB 14305 Montreal, Quebec H3H 0A1	Zeynep Arsel 1450 Guy, S-MB 11,109 Montreal, Quebec H3H 0A1
--	--

**Source of funding for the study:** Canada Graduate Scholarships-Master's Program

You are being invited to participate in the research study mentioned above. This form provides information about what participating would mean. Please read it carefully before deciding if you want to participate or not. If there is anything you do not understand, or if you want more information, please ask the researcher.

## **A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this research is to understand your consumption of outdoor food as a hiker of long or short distances. This information will be useful to better understand food consumption when it occurs as part of an outdoor activity.

## **B. PROCEDURES**

If you participate, you will complete an interview (face-to-face or via the internet) with the researcher. The main researcher will audio-record or take a video and some photos of this interview which will be later transcribed in an audio file to ensure accuracy in data collection. If applicable, she will also write down some observations about your meal or snack preparation.

You will be told which data collection method will be used between audio or video recording. This interview will be about your experience with outdoor food and food in general and guided by questions by the researcher. Moreover, you will be asked about other information such as your outdoor habits and lifestyle.

If the interview is taking place while you are cooking and/or eating a meal/snack, you'll be asked questions about the preparation and the consumption of this food.

In total, participating in this study will take approximately 90 minutes, including time to read and sign this consent form.

As a research participant, your responsibilities would be to answer each question as honestly as possible and share your experiences about outdoor food with the researcher.

## **C. RISKS AND BENEFITS**

There are no anticipated risks in this study since the topic is about an everyday non-controversial issue. Still, some people might feel uncomfortable talking about food; in that case you are free to discontinue any time or refuse to participate.

While the research is not intended to benefit you personally, you may find it beneficial and informative to share your experiences with us and examine your own outdoor food consumption habits.

## **D. CONFIDENTIALITY**

We might gather the following information as part of this research:

demographic information: your age, education level, etc.

contact information: email and phone number (only shared with the research team)

responses to the questions in the interview

photos or videos of the outdoor food that you'd like to share with us

opinions on particular topics related to the research project that you may feel like sharing

**Audio interview and observational data:**

We will not allow anyone to access the information (interview audio files, transcripts or field notes from observations), except people directly involved in conducting the research. The information will be stored in a secure computer. We will only use the information for the purposes of the research described in this form.

The information gathered will be coded. That means that the information will be identified by a code. The researcher will have a list that links the code to your name but other people will not know your real name. We will protect the information by changing your name and any other information that could identify you.

We intend to publish the results of the research. However, it will not be possible to identify you in the published results. We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.

**Photos or videos interview:**

If applicable, please indicate below the level of disclosure you wish for any photos or video that could be taken:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<b>Indirectly identified, coded.</b>	Videos and photos could be used in the final article. The research team will know the participant's real identity but, in the final article, the information provided will not associated with direct identifiers (such as the participant's name or face), but it will be associated with information that can reasonably be expected to identify an individual through a combination of indirect identifiers (such as a place of residence, or unique personal characteristics). We will code most of the identifiers; change names or any other information. We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Anonymous	Photos and videos will not be used in the final article; they will only be used during the analytical process. The research team will know the participants' real identity, but it will not be disclosed. They could still be mentioned in the final paper, but the information provided will never have identifiers associated with it, and the risk



		of identification of individuals is low or very low. We will destroy the information five years after the end of the study.
<input type="checkbox"/>	No photos or video recording, only an audio recording	No photos or videos will be taken, please refer to the section audio interview (above) for the level of disclosure.

## F. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You do not have to participate in this research. It is purely your decision. If you do participate, you can stop at any time. You can also ask that the information you provided not be used, and your choice will be respected. **If you decide that you don't want us to use your information, you must tell the researcher before December 15, 2018.**

There are no negative consequences for not participating, stopping in the middle, or asking us not to use your information.

## G. PARTICIPANT'S DECLARATION

I have read and understood this form. I have had the chance to ask questions and my questions have been answered. I agree to participate in this research under the conditions described above.

NAME (please print)

\_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE

\_\_\_\_\_

DATE

\_\_\_\_\_

If you have questions about the scientific or scholarly aspects of this research, please contact the researcher. Their contact information is on page 1. You may also contact their faculty supervisor.

If you have concerns about ethical issues in this research, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics, Concordia University, 514.848.2424 ex. 7481 or [oor.ethics@com](mailto:oor.ethics@com)

## Appendix C

### Interview grid – Preliminary interviews

#### **Theme 1: General identity**

1. Can you tell me more about yourself?
  - a. Tell me more about your studies/job?
2. What is your culture or ethnic group?
3. What is your lifestyle?
  - a. How might you describe your lifestyle? What are your hobbies?
  - b. Tell me more about your level of fitness/physical activity?
4. Tell me about your family.
  - a. Tell me about your family situation during your childhood and teen years.
  - b. Do you hike with your family?
5. Tell me about your friends.
6. Do you hike with them?
7. How would you describe your financial situation?
  - a. What do you mean? (Probing...)
8. How does your financial situation influence your eating habits
9. How is your financial situation influencing your hobbies?
10. How does it influence your hiking trips?

#### **Theme 2: Hiker identity**

1. How do you feel when you are doing a hike?
2. What benefits are you seeking when you are hiking?
  - a. What are some negatives aspect of hiking?
3. If you had to use only one word to describe yourself as a hiker, what would you use?
  - a. What words would you use to describe other types of hiker?
4. Where do you usually hike?
  - a. What are the reasons behind these places?
  - b. At what frequency?

- i. What are the reasons behind this frequency?
  - c. What is the usual length of your hiking trips?
    - i. What are the reasons behind this?
  - d. What is the level of difficult of the trails you usually hike?
- 5. What is your idea of a perfect hike?
  - a. What does “nature” means to you?
- 6. Please describe your preparation of a hiking trip?
  - a. What’s the importance of food for you when you are hiking?
- 7. Are you practising hiking alone or with somebody else?
  - a. What are your motivations for doing so?
- 8. What are some other outdoor activities, other than hiking, you practice?
  - a. At what frequency?
  - b. How this/these activity/ies is/are different from hiking?

**Theme 3: Food (home versus hiking trip)**

- 1. Describe your relationship with food?
  - a. Are you following a special diet at home?
  - b. Are you following a special when hiking?
  - c. How would you describe your cooking skills?
    - i. What is your attitude toward cooking?
- 2. What do you generally eat at home?
  - a. How important is variety?
  - b. How important is quality?
    - i. How would you define quality?
- 3. Tell me about a typical meal or snack when hiking
  - a. How does this food/meals compares from food at home?
    - i. Freshness?
    - ii. Texture?
    - iii. Portion?
- 4. What do you think of dehydrated meals?
- 5. What is your favourite meal when hiking?
  - a. Why so?

6. What is your least favourite meal/snack when hiking?
  - a. How come do you sometime eat this?
7. How important are nutrition and healthy eating to you when you're
  - a. at home?
  - b. when you hike?
    - i. What are the particular criteria you are looking for?
8. What is your definition of comfort food
  - a. At home?
  - b. In a hiking trip?
    - i. If different, how come?
9. How important is taste of your food?
  - a. At home?
  - b. On a hiking trip?
    - i. If different, why so?
10. How does the presence of other influence your eating behavior on the trail?
11. How important is the appearance of your food?
  - a. At home?
  - b. In a hiking trip?
    - i. If different, why so?
12. How important is the price of your food
  - a. At home?
  - b. For a hiking trip?
    - i. If different, why so?
13. How important packaging is important for you?
  - a. At home
  - b. For the food you'll bring while hiking?
14. How much time, in average, does a meal last?
  - a. At home
  - b. In a hiking trip
    - i. If different from home, why so?
15. How do you know you ate enough?

- a. At home
  - b. In a hiking trip?
16. What is the most important criteria on which you base your purchase of food
- a. At home?
    - i. What inspired this criteria?
  - b. For a hike?
    - i. What inspired this criteria?
17. What is the least important aspect when you are buying food
- a. For home?
    - i. What inspired this criteria?
  - b. For a hiking trip?
    - i. What inspired this criteria?
18. What are your shopping habits when you are doing grocery for
- a. Home?
  - b. Hiking trip?
    - i. What inspired you to shop like this?
19. What are your favourite brands/product?
- a. Food at home?
  - b. Hiking food?
    - i. What do you like about this brand/product?
    - ii. If different, why so?
20. What are your least favourite brands/product?
- a. Food at home?
  - b. Hiking food?
    - i. What do you don't like about this brand/product?
    - ii. If different, why so?

#### **Theme 4: Conclusion**

1. Do you think there is anything I need to know that you didn't mention about your consumption of food on a hike?
2. Do you have questions?

## Appendix D

Table 2.

Participants from the field interviews.

Name/trail name	Location of the interview	Estimated age	Gender	Type of hiker
Jam	Continental divide trail	50–70	M	Thru-hiker
Theodore	Continental divide trail	50–70	M	Thru-hiker
Bread	Continental Divide Trail	50–70	F	Thru-hiker
Jack	Continental Divide Trail	50–70	M	Thru-hiker
Eleanore	Pacific Crest Trail	60–80	F	Thru-hiker
Jolene	Pacific Crest Trail	40–50	F	Thru-hiker
Keven	Pacific Crest Trail	30–40	M	Thru-hiker
Jason	Pacific Crest Trail	30–40	M	Thru-hiker
Chuckle	Appalachian Trail	20–30	F	Thru-hiker
Brian	Appalachian Trail	20–30	M	Thru-hiker
Wool	Appalachian Trail	20–30	F	Thru-hiker
	Appalachian Trail	20–30	M	Thru-hiker
John	Appalachian Trail	20–30	M	Thru-hiker
Hey Blaze	Appalachian Trail	20–30	F	Thru-hiker
Earlobes	Appalachian Trail	20–30	M	Thru-hiker
Midway	Appalachian Trail	20–30	M	Thru-hiker
Great Start	Appalachian Trail	20–30	F	Thru-hiker
Red Hair	Appalachian Trail	20–30	F	Thru-hiker
Tweezer	Appalachian Trail	20–30	M	Thru-hiker
Macaroni	Appalachian Trail	20–30	F	Thru-hiker
Jonathan	Teton Crest Trail	40–50	M	Short-distance
Tom	Teton Crest Trail	30–40	M	Short-distance
Oliver	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	M	Short-distance

Stephan	Teton Crest Trail	30–50	M	Short-distance
Evy	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	F	Short-distance
Ben	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	M	Short-Distance
Matthew	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	M	Short-Distance
Thomas	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	M	Short-Distance
Gabriel	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	M	Short-Distance
Anthony	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	M	Short-Distance
Justin	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	M	Short-Distance
Max	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	M	Short-Distance
Andrea	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	F	Sort-Distance
Bernard	Teton Crest Trail	50–60	M	Short-Distance
Georges	Teton Crest Trail	50–60	M	Short-Distance
Roger	Teton Crest Trail	50–60	M	Short-Distance
David	Teton Crest Trail	50–60	M	Short-Distance
Christian	Teton Crest Trail	50–60	M	Short-Distance
Charles	Teton Crest Trail	50–60	M	Short-Distance
Martin	Teton Crest Trail	50–60	M	Short-Distance
Tommy	Teton Crest Trail	30–40	M	Short-Distance
Bettina	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	F	Short-Distance
Rick	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	F	Short-Distance
Julie	Teton Crest Trail	18–25	F	Short-Distance
Thomas	Teton Crest Trail	18–25	M	Short-Distance
Audrey	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	F	Short-Distance
Vincent	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	M	Short-Distance
Simon	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	M	Short-Distance
Leila	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	F	Short-Distance
Bob	Teton Crest Trail	20–30	M	Short-Distance

## Appendix E

Interview grid for field interview

1. How does it feel today?
2. [If applicable] What's your trail name?
3. For how long have you been hiking?
  - a. How's the trip so far?
4. What did you eat today/ What are you eating right now?
  - a. How does it feel?
5. How come do you eat this way?
  - a. How do you feel about that?
6. How does it differ from home?
7. What are your thoughts about the food you brought?
  - a. What will you eat when you'll leave the trail?
8. What do you wish you would have brought?
  - a. How come you didn't bring it?
9. Where did you buy your food? / Where and a what frequency do you resupply?
  - a. How come did you buy these products?



## Appendix F

In yellow, places where I collected data. From left to right: E.C Manning pack, Glacier NP, Teton NP and Baxter State park.

