

Entertained to Excess: The Contemporary Practices of Boredom

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Boredom has rarely been discussed within the social sciences or in the field of consumer research. Therefore this study performs an ethnography of *how boredom becomes negotiated in contemporary consumer culture* and *how does coping with boredom become emergently embodied in spatiotemporal surroundings* by researching everyday routines and rituals, consumption of time, and boredom in the context of social consumption practices such as traveling, music business and sports like snowboarding and football.

The study aims to research consumers' consumption of boredom as a negotiation of the consumption of one's time. Especially the use and significance of different media as ways to cope with boredom in people's mundane everyday life are investigated in the context of both business and recreational traveling.

Because of the abstract nature and characterization of the concept of boredom, this study draws from the work of the continental philosopher Martin Heidegger who provides us with a rich phenomenological description of different forms of boredom (Heidegger 1993, 1995; Anderson 2004; Chia & Holt 2006; Mansikka 2009). In this study I approach Heidegger's conceptions of *situative* and *existential boredom* (Heidegger 1993, 1995; Anderson 2004; Chia & Holt 2006; Mansikka 2009) from consumer cultural point of view. I am suggesting that the experience of boredom and coping with it has substantial transformative potentialities that can inform both consumer culture theory and also the marketing and media industry by furthering the understanding of social consumption practices.

Today's digital revolution in video technology has affected everyone (De Valck et al. 2009), but still the visual aspect of consumer experience has been largely ignored by research

representations, teaching and presenting traditions of today's academic and business worlds (Belk & Kozinets 2006). Due to the abstract and philosophical nature of the concept of boredom, it is extremely hard to study by using traditional research methods. Therefore this study will be carried out as an ethnographic research by using videographic methods (Videographic Master's Thesis: <http://vimeo.com/34453747>). Furthermore, it is possible to represent more realistically the different material arrangements in social consumption practices by means of videography.

In order to address the research questions, I will develop and present a framework of three central perspectives of practices to coping with boredom in the contemporary society. The study then explores some perspectives to what the construction of my framework on boredom could mean from a sociocultural perspective.

The findings of my videographic research (Videographic Master's Thesis: <http://vimeo.com/34453747>) will show how the contemporary consumer culture has a fetish of doing and not standing still. We are involved in a constant activity of consuming entertainment and throttling every opportunity to do something radically new in order to strive away boredom, but because of this we are, in fact, falling more deeply into the boredom and enforcing the experience of boredom and emptiness.

Keywords: Boredom, Videography, Consumer culture theory, Practice theory, Consumer Behavior, Consumers' interpretative strategies, Theory of social practices, Rituals, Routines, Everyday life, Heidegger, Ethnography.

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1 INTRODUCTION:

Boredom has rarely been discussed within the social sciences or in the field of consumer research. Therefore this study performs an ethnography of *how boredom becomes negotiated in contemporary consumer culture* and *how does coping with boredom become emergently embodied in spatiotemporal surroundings* by researching everyday routines and rituals, consumption of time, and boredom in the context of social consumption practices such as traveling, music business and sports like snowboarding and football.

The study aims to research consumers' consumption of boredom as a negotiation of the consumption of one's time. Especially the use and significance of different practices and media as ways to cope with boredom in people's mundane everyday life are investigated in the context of both business and recreational traveling.

Boredom as a concept demands particular ways of interpretation and emotional levels, in order for people to feel it and comprehend it as we collectively do (Anderson 2004). It demands for some basic knowledge of culture, society and humanity (Anderson 2004; Mansikka 2009) and is thus studied here in the light of consumer culture theory (Arnould & Thompson 2005). Boredom as a concept also demands for consciousness of one's own personality and one's own self (Chia & Holt 2006) so the routines, rituals and everyday life of the consumers are under investigation in the light of practice theory (see e.g. Reckwitz 2002b; Warde 2005; Arnould et al. 2009; Halkier et al. 2011), in order to understand boredom better. Because of the abstract nature and characterization of the concept of boredom, this study draws from the work of the continental philosopher Martin Heidegger who provides us with a rich phenomenological description of different forms of boredom (Anderson 2004; Chia & Holt 2006; Mansikka 2009).

In this study I approach Heidegger's conceptions of *situative* and *existential boredom* (Heidegger 1993, 1995; Anderson 2004; Chia & Holt 2006; Mansikka 2009) from consumer cultural point of view. I am suggesting that the experience of boredom and coping with it has substantial transformative potentialities that can be useful information from the point of view of both consumer culture theory and also the marketing and media industry by furthering the understanding of social consumption practices. Heidegger's third level of boredom the abstract and difficult concept of Profound Boredom (Heidegger 1993, 1995; Anderson 2004; Chia & Holt 2006; Mansikka 2009) will be left out from the study due to the explorative nature of this

research. In the given context, a considerably more profound ethnographic research would be needed in order to study boredom from the point of view of Heidegger's profound boredom.

The greater goal for the research is to respond to the increasing demands of marketing practitioners and media industry constituents to understand consumers better. The study especially aims to understand consumer behavior, emotions and feelings in social context. But at the same time, the study is researching the mundane everyday life of consumers. The routines and rituals as well as the use and significance of different media as ways to cope with boredom in everyday life are investigated, because in the discourse of consumer culture theory (CCT), mundane every day life has so far received very little attention (Holt 2004) and boredom has been rarely discussed within the social sciences (Anderson 2004). Also especially from the perspective of practice theory boredom has gained virtually non-attention.

I am suggesting that the experience of boredom and coping with it has substantial transformative potentialities that can also illuminate and shed some light to our consumer cultural and behavioral situations and create opportunities for marketing and media industries to understand the social practices of consumption better. But also one of the main reasons for conducting this research is to showcase the advantages and power of the new and innovative research methods like videography in the field of consumer research and also highlight the advantages it brings to academic studying and especially presenting research in the future (see e.g. Snow & Anderson 1987; Sunderland et al. 2003; Belk & Kozinets 2005; Kozinets & Belk 2006; Moisander & Valtonen 2006; De Valck et al. 2009).

I will first introduce the research questions, problems and focus phenomenon. In the next chapter I will present some relevant definitions, theories and practices for better understanding of *Consumer Culture Theory* (CCT) (see e.g. Arnould & Thompson 2005), *Practice Theory*, (see e.g. Reckwitz 2002b; Warde 2005; Arnould et al. 2009; Halkier et al. 2011) as well as *rituals*, *routines* and *everyday life* of consumers better (see e.g. Erickson 1977; Wright & Snow 1980; Rook 1985; Stanfield & Kleine 1990). Further, the definitions, history and different underpinnings of the concept of *boredom* will be also presented along with the theoretical framework of the study.

After conceptualizing boredom and other key concepts in the theoretical background of the study I will introduce the research methodology and present ethnographic data production

approaches, which are operationalized through videographic reproduction of research findings. I will also provide a consideration of possible criteria for good videography, some advantages as well as challenges of the methodology, but also information about the research settings and justification of the methods used.

In the following chapter I will introduce the case study and findings. I will showcase some of consumers' most common boredom coping practices in the contemporary world, explain how boredom is actually stillness of body and time and demonstrate the Heidegger's two different types of boredom with illustrative examples. At the end of the chapter I will create and present a framework for the main findings of my research and explain what they could mean from a sociocultural point of view.

In the last section of the research I will discuss the whole research generally. I will discuss the relevance, impact and limitations of the study and in addition I will introduce some managerial implications that can be drawn from the study.

1.1 FRAGMENTED WORLD AND CHANGING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

The business world is becoming more and more fragmented and turbulent every day and the fields of marketing and consumer research are constantly changing along with it (Arnould & Wallendorf 1994; Firat et al. 1995; Kozinets 2002). Competition in the field of entertainment- and media production is also tightening every day. Because of the enormous amounts of media supply and today's quickly changing consumer preferences, it becomes continuously more difficult to gain the consumers interest and keep them satisfied (Kozinets 2002).

The explosion of choices in media and entertainment products and channels, dynamic and evolving ways of expressing popular culture, masses of marketing messages, coupled with increasingly discerning and well-informed consumers pose a challenge in terms of influencing people and gaining competitive advantage in the markets. (Arnould & Wallendorf 1994; Kozinets 2002; Wohlfeil & Whelan 2006)

Massive growth in the amount of marketing messages and media channels during the past 20-30 years has forced marketers and media producers to think "outside the box" and come up with new innovative strategies to entertain consumers on increasingly high levels. According to

Väänänen (2008), consumers in Finland encounter over 3600 marketing messages and proposals in a day and this amount does not include the volume of other entertainment or media options constantly pushed to consumers. If the trend stays the same, we can assume the amount of entertainment and marketing messages is not going to decrease during the next years.

In today's fragmented and turbulent business world, good and successful marketing or media usually requires that people get interested, involved and engaged (Arnould & Wallendorf 1994; Kozinets 2002). In sociological literature there is a well-studied concept of "flow" for a mental state when a person is fully immersed in some activity and feels full involvement and wholeness (Csikszentmihalyi 1990). But the opposite of flow – "the uneasy feeling of boredom and emptiness that overwhelms us when things turn out to be uninspired" (Mansikka 2009: 255) – has remained virtually uninvestigated when studying consumers, consumer cultures and everyday life. The majority of contemporary consumer research pays little attention to negative feelings and does not fully appreciate how they affect consumers' behavior in social settings.

Consumers and users of media are also moving outside the typical consuming and behavioral models as well as changing the way they research, evaluate, use and buy products from the markets (Pine & Gilmore 1998; Grewal 2009). In order to respond to these new needs and conditions, marketers and media producers need to understand their customers holistically, including also the negative feelings and stages of consuming, if they want to improve and remain profitable.

1.2 THE BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

I have been closely witnessing the resent seemingly incessant increase and quick development of different technological solutions and media options around us in contemporary world. I have worked in the field of consumer marketing since 2005 and always wondered how consumer's routines, rituals, emotions and feelings could be studied in more detail within marketing approaches.

Also many of the traditional or even old-fashioned ways of parting knowledge in the schools and presenting ideas or concepts in companies have bothered me considerably during these years of studying and working. Lecturing, presentations and even research should be as

interesting, stimulating, convenient and entertaining as are the other modern media and marketing solutions of today.

Thus, this study is trying to break the conventions and to present an alternative way of conducting and especially presenting academic inquiries by using more fascinating, inspiring and more up to date forms of media than many of the traditional approaches. That is why this study is conducted and presented by using the methods of videography (Snow & Anderson 1987; Sunderland et al. 2003; Belk & Kozinets 2005; Kozinets & Belk 2006; Moisander & Valtonen 2006; De Valck et al. 2009). The whole videographic research can be found from: <http://vimeo.com/34453747>.

Concurrently with trying to update the traditional research and study methods the objective of this research is to provide a fresh perspective of consumer culture. This is done by means of studying the consumers' consumption of boredom as a negotiation of the consumption of one's time and also the practices of using different media as a way to cope with boredom in the mundane everyday life.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEMS AND FOCUS PHENOMENON

Due to the novel nature of this research, the videographic data led this study into a thorough examination of *how boredom becomes negotiated in contemporary consumer culture* and *how does coping with boredom become emergently embodied through social practices in spatiotemporal surroundings*. This led to the question: how it could be useful for both consumer culture theory and also the marketing and media industry and further the understanding of consumption? The study is also trying to invoke discussion, give suggestions and ideas as well as lead with its example and thus presents a new approach for modern researching, studying, presentation and even teaching methods. Videography is a tool for conducting the ethnographic research but also a postmodern way of presenting research and sharing the knowledge through both social and traditional media alike.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions are:

- 1) How people get bored and how is boredom negotiated and embodied in social practices of everyday life?
- 2) How do people cope with boredom?
- 3) What media/other practices people use during/to cope with boredom and how does the use of different media alleviate and reproduce boredom?

1.5 THE RESEARCH GAP AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Most of the previous studies of boredom from the business perspective are constructed by using mainly quantitative research methods. The majority of other boredom studies come from the field of philosophy, and boredom seems to have been somewhat discussed within the social sciences and especially in the field of consumer research. The perspective of this study is quite novel since it aims to shed some light to the boredom studies from a completely new point of view. By being the first videographic or even the first qualitative ethnographic study about the practices of boredom in consumer research, the study might have many practical and theoretical uses.

The extensive amounts of consumers' ritual and practice involvements challenge the researchers to conceptualize and investigate market behavior and practices in new ways. One way to investigate this subject further is to study some of the undiscovered or less researched areas of consumer behavior like mundane everyday life and boredom. This study is an attempt towards responding to that challenge. I will try to broaden the perspective of consumers by using a fresh perspective of consumer research and try to shed some light to some of the specific research gaps that will be identified later. Specifically, much market and consumer research target only subjects' retrospective cognitions; consequently, there are large gaps in information about consumers' actual behavior (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982). Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) also suggest that researchers need to investigate the experiential aspects of consumption practices more thoroughly. As I will demonstrate later, the ritual expression is body language

and involves both mental and physical practices. As such, it invites more direct observational studies of consumers' emergent experience in choosing, buying and using various rituals and boredom related material arrangements and medias for which videography is an especially useful tool.

Psychologist Erik Erikson (1977) interprets ritualistic practices as drawing from superstition and belief in magic and, at times, from feelings of shame, guilt, inferiority, confusion, and isolation. This also supports the study of rituals from the practice theory perspective when researching the feelings and experiences of boredom. "As we recapitulate that these phenomenal components are inexorably linked, we maintain that the exploration of consumption ritual should ideally be approached using methods of inquiry subsumed within the holistic, interpretive, hermeneutic paradigm(s) of ethnography" (Stanfield et al. 1990: 36). So, studying consumers' ritualistic behaviors challenges the researchers and the whole research community to try more holistic, interpretative approaches. By its very nature much ritual practices invite field observation and thus videography serves it well when studying boredom and everyday routines and rituals in mundane life.

2 DEFINITIONS, THEORIES AND PRACTICES:

In this section of the study I will clarify the main concepts used in the study. I will start with presenting the theories used in the study. These include *Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)* and especially *Consumers' Interpretive Strategies* (Arnould & Thompson 2005). *Practice theory* and more specifically *Theory of social practices* (Reckwitz 2002a) will be the main theories used in the study, which will be used in the light of rituals, routines, and study of everyday life. Based on these theories, I will also introduce the focal concept of *boredom*. I will start the investigation of boredom from its history and roots and proceed to what boredom means in consumers' contemporary lives based on the work of the continental philosopher Martin Heidegger. Thereafter I will construct and present a theoretical framework for the whole study.

2.1 CONSUMER CULTURE THEORY:

The *Consumer Culture Theory (CCT)* is a big umbrella concept under which the whole study lies. The Consumer Culture Theory addresses the sociocultural, experiential, symbolic and

ideological aspects of consumption (Arnould & Thompson 2005). According to Arnould and Thompson (2005), CCT has not been considered as “a unified, grand theory”, but “rather it refers to a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationship between consumer actions, the market place, and cultural meaning” (p. 868). CCT has its historical roots in demand for consumer researchers to broaden their focus to investigate the neglected experiential, social, and cultural dimensions of consumption in context (Belk 1987) and that is why the field became better and more natural context for CCT than laboratory. Even though the CCT researchers all have their own plural and distinct theoretical approaches and research goals, they all share a common theoretical orientation toward the study of “cultural complexity that programmatically links their respective research efforts” (Arnould & Thompson 2005: 868).

CCT “explores the heterogeneous distribution of meaning and the multiplicity of overlapping cultural groupings that exist within the broader socio historic frame of globalization and market capitalism” (ibid: 869). This is also the perspective of this study on boredom. The notion that one could say that consumer culture describes and expresses “a social arrangement in which the relations between lived culture and social resources, and between meaningful ways of life and the symbolic and material resources on which they depend, are mediated through markets” (ibid: 869) supports the point of view taken in this research. Also the notion that “the consumption of market-made commodities and desire-inducing marketing symbols is central to consumer culture, and yet the perpetuation and reproduction of this system is largely dependent upon the exercise of free personal choice in the private sphere of everyday life” (Holt 2002: 224) encapsulates the mundane standpoint of my study. The central focus of CCT has always been qualitative research approaches and different interpretive analysis techniques (Arnould & Wallendorf 1994; Kozinets 2002). CCT uses multimethod investigations of consumption phenomenas in their natural settings and focuses on the experiential and sociocultural dimensions of consumption that are not plainly accessible through experiments, surveys, or database modeling (Sherry & Kozinets 1991). This also includes concepts like ritualistic routinized practices and the symbolic boundaries that structure personal and communal consumer identities, lot of which are relevant in this study as well.

2.1.1 CONSUMERS’ INTERPRETIVE STRATEGIES

Of the interrelated research domains of CCT research program, this study is most aligned with *Consumers’ Interpretive Strategies (CIS)*. This branch of CCT investigates consumer ideology

and more precisely the systems of meaning that tend to channel and reproduce consumers' thoughts, feelings, emotions and actions (Hirschman 1993). The guiding questions of this research program, according to rise from much critical media theory outside typical consumer research. (Hall 1993; Craig 1997; Hirschman & Thompson 1997) According to Arnould and Thompson (2005) they include questions like: "What normative messages do commercial media transmit about consumption" (p. 874) and "how do consumers make sense of these messages and formulate critical responses" (p. 874). This approach is very eligible for studying boredom because it conceives consumers as interpretive agents. Their meaning-creating activities are seen as ranging from those that "tacitly embrace the dominant representations of consumer identity and life-style ideas portrayed in advertising and mass media" (Arnould & Thompson 2005) to those that "consciously deviate from these ideological instructions" (ibid: 874). This research tradition of *Consumers' Interpretive Strategies* gives rise to various forms of identity play but it is also sometimes shaded by strident criticism of corporate capitalism and marketing as a social institution (Holt 2002; Kozinets 2002; Arnould & Thompson 2005). In terms of studying boredom, CIS seem to consist of a suitable approach, because it focuses on "the influences that economic and cultural globalization exert upon consumer identity projects and identity-defining patterns of social interaction in distinctive social contexts" (Arnould & Thompson 2005: 874). In this research program, CCT scholars have also explored how particular cultural production systems, such as marketing communication and media industry systematically predispose consumers towards certain kinds of identity projects (Arnould & Thompson 2005) and this applies for music-, snowboarding, traveling and football industries too, which are the main contexts of this study.

2.2 PRACTICE THEORY:

As a separation to CCT, Reckwitz (2002b) explains that *Practice Theory* is "a tautology to state that for practice theory the place of the social is neither in the mind nor discourses nor symbolic interactions, but in 'social practices'" (p. 18).

For examining and observing boredom, *Practice Theory* will provide the most appropriate grounding, because it places considerable interest in mundane and routinized aspects of consumption and everyday life (Reckwitz 2002a; Warde 2005; Halkier et al. 2011). Even though the practice theory has only recently gained interest among the broader and more studied research topics of consumer culture (a practice theoretical paper in fact received an award in the

North American conference of the Association for Consumer Research [ACR2011]), it has a deeply rooted history in the philosophy of Heidegger and Wittgenstein and social scientific roots in the work of early Bourdieu and Giddens, as well as late Foucault and Butler (Halkier et al. 2011). But Reckwitz (2002a) extends the previous list to include Garfinkel and Latour, as well as notes Taylor and Schatzki as important contributors as well. In this study, especially the Heidegger's perspective and philosophy are used in order to study boredom.

According to Halkier et al. (2011), practice theory is considered as a set of cultural and philosophical accounts that focus on the conditions surrounding the practical carrying out of social life. The practice theory can be seen as a part of cultural theories, which explain and understand people's practices and actions in routinized and mundane everyday life. For studying boredom these views provide a suitable and fruitful approach, especially when bearing in mind the subjective, philosophical and abstract nature of the subject of boredom. In practice theory, the ordinary consumption but also boredom can be understood through mundane concepts like habits, routines, rituals, constraints and everyday life, and can also be summed up as a recognition of the conventional nature of consumption (Randeles & Warde 2006). Consumption, on the other hand, can be understood as a "process whereby agents engage in appropriation and appreciation, whether for utilitarian, expressive or contemplative purposes, of goods, services, performances, information or ambience, whether purchased or not, over which the agent has some degree of discretion" (Randeles & Warde 2006: 226). In this view, consumption itself is not seen as a practice but is, rather, a moment in almost every practice. From the point of view of theory of practice one could say the "consumption occurs within and for the sake of practices" (Reckwitz 2002: 249).

Reckwitz (2002a) defines practices (Praktik) as a "routinized type of behavior which consists of several elements interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, 'things' or material arrangements and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge" (p. 249). But he also makes a clear distinction between practice and practices: Practice (Praxis) in the singular represents merely an emphatic term to describe the whole of human action (Reckwitz 2002a). Reckwitz (2002a) also continues that: "A practice is thus a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described and the world is understood. A practice is social as it is a 'type' of behaving that appears at different locales and at different points of time and is carried out by different bodies/minds" (p. 249). In my study of boredom the forms of mental activities are the main subjects under investigation. Also the Videographic Master's Thesis:

practices of how subjects are treated and how the world is understood are key perspectives when boredom is under investigation in my research.

According to Warde (2005), the key sociological questions concerning practices are why people do what they do, and how do they do those things in the way that they do? These questions also relate to the key research questions of my study of boredom (see chapter 1.4.). Schatzki (1996) presents two central states of practices, which should also be considered when studying boredom through the practice theory: practice as coordinated entities or practice as a performance.

When observing practice as a coordinated entity, a practice is seen as a "temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings and *sayings*" (Schatzki 1996: 89). They constitute a nexus and are linked to each other through understandings, explicit rules and 'teleoaffective' structure, which are embracing ends, projects, tasks, purposes, beliefs, emotions and moods (Schatzki 1996: 89). This suggests that analysis of practices of boredom must be concerned with both the emergence of practical activity and its representations. When looking at a practice as a performance, attention is only paid to the actual execution or carrying out of the practices. When observing a practice as a coordinated entity the focus is on "the performing of the doings and sayings which actualizes and sustains practices in the sense of nexuses" (Schatzki 1996: 89).

Practices are tied to other practices and material arrangements, but they are also continuously overlapping each other through same and orchestrated temporalities, and further by virtue of sayings and doings belonging to more than one practice (Schatzki 2009). One can also find many elements impacting each practice and they are linked together by 'nexus' - the means through which doings and sayings interconnect and are coordinated (ibid.). According to Schatzki (2010), the nexus can be referred to consist of three components: understandings, procedures and engagements. This means that for example when bored, we all feel and experience it in different ways and people has different kinds of routines or practices to cope with it. Practices are created, evolved and personalized through time and however common they are, this makes practices very individual (Warde 2005).

Arnould, Muñiz and Schau (2009) have problematized the value of practices in their article *How Brand Community Practices Create Value*. They noticed that practices have an "anatomy" (p. 30) consisting of general procedural understandings and rules (explicit, discursive knowledge); skills, abilities, and culturally appropriate consumption projects (tacit, embedded knowledge or

how-to); and emotional commitments expressed through actions and representations (p. 30). They (Arnould et al. 2009) also find that practices have a “physiology” (p. 30). Practices interact with one another, function like apprenticeships, endow participants with cultural capital, produce a repertoire for insider sharing, generate consumption opportunities and create value. Thus, there can be found common practices through which consumers realize value beyond that which the firm creates or anticipates. By researching boredom in the light of practice theory can hopefully uncover new methods and insights for managers in order to realize this value.

2.2.1 THEORY OF SOCIAL PRACTICES

Schatzki (1996) develops in his book *Social Practices: A Wittgensteinian Approach to Human Activity and the Social*, “a detailed account of the philosophically sophisticated ideas of a theory of social practices, which in its systematic character surpasses the accounts of the other relevant authors” (Reckwitz 2002b: 18).

In his study of *Theory of Social Practices*, Reckwitz (2002a) divides the practice theory into a seven different aspects: body, mind, things or material arrangements, knowledge, discourse, structure/process and agent/individual. This division into categories also serves as a good connection between the theory of social practices and the practices of boredom as seen into following.

The different ways of seeing *the body* lies at the core of practice theory. Practices are defined as routinized bodily activities (Reckwitz 2002a) or interconnected complexes of behavioral acts, which project as movements of the body. Thus, the social practices can be seen as a product of training the body to work in a certain way. But a practice can also be understood along with the performance of human body, as intellectual activities such talking, reading or writing. “*The body is thus not a mere ‘instrument’ which ‘the agent’ must ‘use’ in order to ‘act’, but the routinized actions are themselves bodily performances*” (Reckwitz 2002: 250). The bodily activities also include routinized or ritualistic mental and emotional practices, which are at some level bodily as well. This study of boredom will be primarily focused on these mental and emotional practices of the body when examining boredom.

Simultaneously, along with the sets of routinized bodily performances and the mental and emotional practices, necessarily imply certain routinized ways of understanding the world, of

desiring something, and of knowing how to do something (Reckwitz 2002a). This state could be referred as *the mind* and mixing the body and the mind. At first glance it might seem like an invitation to major conceptual conflict, but for the point of view of practice theory it is not. For example, the practice of snowboarding consists of sets of bodily performances, but also these bodily practices are connected with certain know-how knowledge, particular ways of interpretation, certain aims and goals, embodiment as well as material arrangements. But along with these it also consists of emotional levels, which the agents or the carriers of the practice make use of, and which are ritualized or routinized as well. The same applies to the boredom: boredom can arise from bodily practices, for example from repetitive work. In addition people feeling bored might consider boredom as physically and bodily annoying and frustrating but also mentally exhausting and consuming. Like stated before, boredom as a concept demands for some basic knowledge of culture, society and humanity as well as consciousness of one's own personality and one's own self. It also demands particular ways of interpretation and emotional levels, in order for people to feel it and comprehend it as we collectively do. On the other hand, boredom can be also coped with and prevented by means of bodily performances or mental activation.

In practice theory, a social practice needs *the agent(s)*, which refers to the individual in the practice, only as a part of the practice Reckwitz (2002a). The agents are bodies/minds who carry out social practices. According to Reckwitz (2002a), the agent is neither autonomous nor judgemental dope who conforms to norms but rather someone who understands the surrounding world, but also his/herself, uses know-how and motivational knowledge, in order to perform particular practice. Reckwitz (2002a) also notes that in theories of practice the social world is first and foremost populated by diverse practices, which are carried by agents. In the context of boredom, the agent could be referred to as the person who is experiencing the annoying, frustrating and uneasy feeling of boredom and is trying to prevent or cope with it.

Things/material arrangements are just as indispensable and important for practice theory as the body, the mind and the agent are (Reckwitz 2002a). Carrying out practices often requires the use of particular material arrangements, which are further used in particular ways. The material arrangements enable and limit certain bodily and mental activities, certain knowledge and understanding as elements of practices. For example the extreme sport of snowboarding requires a board, bindings, snowboarding boots, the setting, and the weather as indispensable resources (Latour 1991; Shove & Pantzar 2005; Reckwitz 2002a, 2002b). These material arrangements are also one of the biggest reasons for using videography as the mean for conducting the study of

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boredom, hence it is the only way to thoroughly present all the material arrangements associated and also even created by the difficult and philosophical concept of boredom, when people are trying to prevent or cope with it. I will come back and examine material arrangements more thoroughly later in the study.

According to Reckwitz (2002a), for practice theory the *knowledge* is more complex than mental activities. A special practice contains specific forms of knowledge. This knowledge embraces ways of understanding, knowing how and further wanting and feeling which are linked in the practice. The practice of knowledge refers to a certain way of understanding the world, understanding the objects and understanding humans as well as oneself. This way of understanding is largely implicit and historically-culturally specific, just like understanding the boredom is. For example, boredom as a culturally understandable practice consists of a pattern of routinized (bodily/mindly) practices and of a certain way of understanding (oneself, others and the world). What is thus interesting is that feelings and emotions do not actually belong to the individuals but in the form of knowledge to the practices executed (Reckwitz 2002a).

In contrast to the other cultural theories *discourse and language* are not considered vital elements in practice theory, but they are rather seen as a part of practice among other things. Discursive practices embrace different forms of languages and sign-systems as a way of meaningfully constructing the world. The discursive practice also includes bodily routines, routinized mental activities, like forms of understanding, know-how and motivation, and also the objects, that are linked to each other. Practice theory does not consider discourse and language to be omnipotent as such, but stresses that actually they only exist in their routinized use in order to understand other objects and other people (Reckwitz 2002a).

The social *structure and process*, according to practice theory, are considered to consist in routinization and can be found in the routines of the actions. Thus, they are also considered to be in the practices itself. Social practices are routines like moving the body, understanding, wanting and using material arrangements interconnected in a practice. However, the structure is temporal and not solely existing as the routinized social practices constantly occur and change in the sequences of time, in repetition. So in the practice theory, from the perspective of social order, the nature of structure and process can be seen as social reproducing (Reckwitz 2002a).

At this point it's important to look at the earlier mentioned '*things/material arrangements*' more closely. For the beginning I must emphasize that the idea of 'materiality' does not have a

common meaning among consumer culture theorists, and that it occupies the place of the 'non-cultural', which is conceptualized in very diverse ways (Reckwitz 2002b).

But, especially for videography the material arrangements create a fruitful ground and are source of major advantages compared to more traditional research methods. We can learn a great deal about theories of consumer culture by seeking to reconstruct the place where they localize 'non-cultural' elements, which can be generally described as 'material arrangements' (Reckwitz 2002b).

According to Latour (1991) the material arrangements are grasped not as a social structure or as symbolic objects, but as '*artefacts*', as 'things', which are necessary components of social practices (Reckwitz 2002b). Material arrangements are acquired and used in the course of accomplishing social practices but the relation between materials and practices remains under-theorized (Shove & Pantzar 2005).

I present here how Reckwitz (2002b) embed Latour's ideas concerning the status of the material into theory of social practices in the sense of Schatzki and in the historical tradition of Wittgenstein's late and Heidegger's early social philosophy (Reckwitz 2002b). I notice that when choosing as difficult and broad point of departure for practice theory in this sense, I arrive at a version of practice theory, which would require much more further elaboration to be extensively discussed here.

Latour's (1991) basic assumption was that "cultural theory *does* have an alternative to culturalism and its understanding of materiality as 'objects of knowledge', without having to fall back into the materialist-idealist double (for metaphor of a 'double' see e.g. Foucault 1966: 329) of the sociology of knowledge" (Reckwitz 2002b: 14). According to Reckwitz (2002b), "this semantic and practical purification contradicts and at the same time enables the fact that in particular modern times are witnessing an unprecedented expansion of hybrids, 'quasi-objects'" (p. 14), which range from the ozone hole to HIV, from computers to genes, all the non-human creatures that are "neither pure nature nor cultural projections, but indispensable (by now, innumerable) components of social practices" (p. 14).

Reckwitz (2002b) continues that in his work, Latour (1991) also insists that the material world must not be seen as a basic structure at the foundation of any culture and knowledge, nor as a matrix of symbolic objects on the screen of the respective culture, but rather, it should be

understood as material arrangements, artefacts or things that necessarily participate in social practices just as human beings do. And like mentioned before, also these things are interpreted by the human agents in certain ways, but at the same time they are applied, used, and must be handled within in their materiality. As material arrangements, they are not arbitrarily interchangeable (Reckwitz 2002b). So, the social practices could be seen as consisting of human beings and their intersubjective relationships, but also simultaneously of non-human 'actants', material arrangements that are necessary and are so-to-speak equal components of a social practice (Reckwitz 2002b). Latour (1992) refers the significance of non-human actors for the consumers with whom they share their lives to calling them as the 'missing masses' of social theory. It must also be noted that with the presence of the explosion of technical material arrangements in contemporary societies, it becomes more and more difficult to overlook this constitutive status of material arrangements for social practices (Reckwitz 2002b). Further, what is also interesting is that the previous observations of Reckwitz suggest that analyses of the ways in which material arrangements are acquired, appropriated and used routinely fail to capture the extent of what is involved (Shove & Pantzar 2005). To continue with the snowboarding example, snowboarders are not simply 'using' or appropriating the body, knowledge or material arrangements in the process of snowboarding, they are actively involved in reproducing the sport itself. So when we are to take these ideas forward and applying them with the theory of social practice or with boredom we need to conceptualize consumers not as users but as active and creative practitioners and appropriation as but one dimension of the reproduction of practice (Shove & Pantzar 2005). Here also Latour's idea becomes more comprehensive once it is embedded in the broader theoretical frame of a theory of social practices. Reckwitz (2002b) explains that the central issue then is that certain material arrangements provide more than just objects of knowledge, but necessary, irreplaceable components of certain social practices, that their social significance does not only consist in their being interpreted in certain ways, but also in their being handled in certain ways and in being constitutive, effective elements of social practices" (p. 18). Also when examined within the mundane daily life, Shove and Pantzar (2005) notices that many material arrangements are quite directly implicated in the conduct and reproduction of daily life.

According to Reckwitz (2002b) material arrangements also have the status of earlier mentioned 'hybrids': "On the one hand, they are definitively not a physical world as such, within practices they are socially and culturally interpreted and handled. On the other hand, these quasi-objects are definitively more than the content of cultural representations: they are used and have effects in their materiality" (p. 16).

Even though Schatzki (1996) developed his detailed account of the theory of social practices, which is based to considerable degree on elements of Wittgenstein's and of Heidegger's works, the material arrangements received less interest in his studies. In only one passage he mentions that "places are anchored in objects which are combined into settings" (Schatzki 1996: 189). Thus, according to Reckwitz (2002b) material arrangements are presented there as symbolic markers, which establish certain settings for certain practices. However, in accordance with the common culturalist marginalization of the practical relevance of material arrangements, "this position does not take full advantage of the conceptual chances offered by practice theory" (p. 19).

If Schatzki emphasizes that practices are a nexus of '*doings* and sayings' and that they are not identical with constellations of intersubjectivity, then these doings must almost necessarily be '*doings with material arrangements*' (Reckwitz 2002b). It is possible that not all practices are doings with material arrangements, but most practices are. So according to Reckwitz (2002b), here we can integrate Latour's position in Schatzki's: "not only human beings participate in practices, but also non-human artifacts form components of practices. The material arrangements handled in a social practice must be treated as necessary components for a practice to be 'practiced'" (p. 19). In fact, one could say that both the human bodies/minds and the material arrangements provide requirements or components necessary to a practice. Certain things act, so to speak, as resources, which enable and constrain the specificity of a practice (Reckwitz 2002b).

Some studies on communicative media (see e.g. Kittler 1985) show how communicative practices change with the development of new media in their technical materiality (writing, printing, audiovisual media, computer and Internet). These media are not mere instruments to transmit messages, but mould forms of perception and communication (Reckwitz 2002b). Yet technical equipment cannot determine certain activities in a strict causal way. In order to have effects, material arrangements must be used (by *the body* or *the agent(s)*); and to be used, they must be treated with understanding (*the mind* and *the knowledge*) and within the parameters of cultural codes - they must become an integral part of a social practice. Thus, from the point of view of practice theory, the relationship between human agents and non-human things in the network of a practice is a relationship of practical understanding. Simultaneously, in such a relationship the material arrangements do not allow any arbitrary practical use and understanding, they are not suitable for arbitrary practices (Reckwitz 2002b).

So Andreas Reckwitz (2002b) concludes that if Schatzki and practice theory emphasize that practices are organized by a certain way of understanding and knowing, primarily but not exclusively through practical knowhow, and if practices are not only routinized forms of saying, but also routinized forms of doing, then the relationship between human agents and material arrangements to be handled presupposes a practical understanding. When human agents have developed certain forms of know-how concerning certain material arrangements, they materialize or incorporate this knowledge *within the practice* (Reckwitz 2002b). “Material arrangements are 'materialized understanding', and only as materialized understanding can they act as resources” (Reckwitz 2002b: 20). Practice theory in the most sophisticated version offered by Schatzki (1996) stresses the *bodily* basis of all practices on the part of human beings. In a very basic sense, all social practices are collective and routinized movements of bodies. Thus, Reckwitz (2002b) thinks that bodies are the site of understanding, of 'embodied understanding' and continues that “within practices not only *bodies* but also *material arrangements* are sites of understanding, in the form of materialized understanding” (p. 20). So, if the body/mind that incorporates and embodies a certain understanding disappears it makes impossible for a social practice to be reproduced, and also if the material arrangements that incorporate a certain materialized understanding disappears, for example certain communication media, or if it had *never* appeared in the first place, we would observe the same result: the impossibility of maintaining a certain social practice (Reckwitz 2002b).

2.3 ROUTINES, RITUALS AND EVERYDAY LIFE

In mundane daily life, people constantly participate in various ritualized practices at home, at work, at school, when traveling, and playing, both as individuals but also as members of a larger community. Individual ritual practices are very common in everyday life and also in boredom. Every action in our everyday life which happens frequently, repeatedly, and is embodied approximately in similar ways, can be considered as ritual practice in mundane life. Also every activity which associate with some of the distinctive ritual types such as media, patriotism, households, grooming, religiosity, gift giving, business, eating, rites of passage, holidays, romance, athletics and even bedtime, can be considered as ritual practice. These practices provide structure and meaning to the most mundane of activities. When studied from the viewpoint of the practice theory, the ritual construct offers a great potential for interpreting many aspects of consumption phenomena such as the consumers' consumption of boredom as a negotiation of the consumption of one's time. Ritual expression is body language and involves

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both mental and physical behavior just as the *Theory of Social Practices* suggests. Everyday rituals, and especially those associated with personal emotions and feelings like boredom, involve deep-seated emotions. So rituals can stimulate very intense emotions among people and in order to understand these in the context of consumer cultures, we need to research them from the social practices point of view.

The concept of consumption in general has been interpreted as the essential ritual of modern life (Wright & Snow 1980). 'Rituals' were originally introduced into consumer research as a psychoanalytic concept (Rook 1985) and numerous consumer researchers have stated that "the ritual construct affords great potential for conceptualizing and interpreting many aspects of consumption practices contribution to our discipline's understanding of the ritual construct as a conceptual framework offers rich insights into the real, experiential lives of consumer and the types of symbolic meanings that they invest in the use of consumer products" (Stanfield & Kleine 1990: 31). This same applies with the theory of (social) practices and thus rituals and boredom have been studied hand in hand with the practice theory. Also it has to be noted that previously consumer research has largely failed to recognize the extensive practical domain of rituals and thus what is a prominent dimension of consumer experience remained virtually uncharted territory (Rook 1985). The present study introduces and elaborates the ritual practices as a one vehicle for interpreting consumer behavior in the context of boredom. In the other worlds the ritualistic practices, routines, habits and material arrangements in people's mundane everyday life are under investigation and examined in the context of (social) practices of boredom and boredom coping in order to understand them better.

Rook (1985) defines ritual phenomena as highly varied types of expressive practices that occur in quite diverse settings. Stanfield and Kleine (1990) distinguish the rituals and the ritualized practices by noting that "ritual is most closely linked to the maintenance of and/or change within systems of society, knowledge, and nature, when on the other hand ritualized practices are more likely to be associated with the maintenance and/or change in one's self-perception" (p. 32). Rituals are also sharing common features with behavioral habits and in fact, some rituals are performed more or less habitually. Rituals and behavioral habits represent overlapping sets, which means that not all habits involve rituals, nor do all rituals necessarily represent habitual activity (Erickson 1977). The typical separation between rituals and habits is that a ritual is a larger, plural experience, while habits tend to be singular practices such as constant messaging with cell phone, tapping fingers, or snacking something while bored. Although some habits are

complex and highly involving (addictions), they are often less personally meaningful than rituals, and would depreciate a ritual to describe it as merely habitual (Erickson 1977).

Another definition for the rituals is provided by Stanfield and Kleine (1990). They define rituals as “an analytical class of purposive, socially standardized practice sequences” (p. 33). They note that ritual is designed to maintain and transmit both social and moral order and is thus tying it with the concept of social practices. Stanfield and Kleine (1990) also continue that “ritualistic meanings are conveyed through the use of symbolic or metaphorical material arrangements as objects, language, actors, and practices, that are orchestrated into a structured, dramatic, complex episode or script often repeated over time” (p. 33). There are multiple definitions for ritual, but because of the nature of individuals’ ritual experiences, which are so extensive, varied, complex, and meaningful, it is reasonable to raise a question whether it is either possible or even useful to derive a single definition of ritual that encompasses such considerable diversity (Rook 1985).

The definitions given by Stanfield and Kleine (1990) and Rook (1985) vary only in terms of a few dimensions, but from the viewpoint of practice theory these dimensions have important theoretical and methodological implications. The definition of Stanfield and Kleine (1990) highlights very extensively the critical points of the rituals. They state that a ritual is an analytic category, purposive practice, socially standardized, evokes and communicates more than one specific meaning, occurs in bracketed social time and/or place and along with these, it is important to note that the socially standardized rules for ritual practice consist of both explicit and implicit conventional requirements.

Like the theory of social practices suggests, many of the everyday rituals regulate social interaction. These are for example waiting, queuing, traveling, and greeting rituals or practices, and these also prescribe the ‘right’ way to do something (linking them to *the knowledge* and *the structure/process* aspects of the theory of social practice) (Rook 1985). Ideas about what is right and wrong are reiterated through ritual practices that highlight the normative aspects of buying, consuming and also even mental or philosophical concepts like boredom (linking them to *the mind*, *the knowledge* and *the structure/process* aspects of the theory of social practice). Ritual experience also illuminates the psychological depth, conflict, extreme and fantasy components of everyday behavior along with boredom (Rook 1985).

According to Rook (1985) the power of ritual as an analytical category for consumer research is two-fold: it describes a system of which consumption practice is an important component. As such, ritual provides an analytically tractable microcosm within which the consumption systems of the larger culture are condensed and brought into relief and thus facilitating their identification and analysis. But also ritual emphasizes the integrated nature of psychological and social structural phenomena. (Wright & Snow 1980; Rook 1985)

On a smaller group level, many diverse ritual practices pervade daily living, for example everything from the Elks' Pancake Day to formal office luncheons or to business negotiation rituals (Rook 1985). Even a visit to a Pizza Hut or a birthday party at McDonald's can be interpreted as a contemporary social ritual. According to Rook (1985) the family in its context is a nexus of numerous and highly variable rituals that animate mealtime, bedtime, holiday, traveling or celebrations. Further, almost any household activity has the capacity to become ritualized. In the context of my study, the extensive buying and consuming that characterize many contemporary family rituals can be seen as major forces that bind households together. Rook 1985 continues that in addition to these external forces, that give rise to various ritual phenomena, there is the individual human psyche, which is also a very rich primary source of ritual practice. "Dynamic psychological interpretations tend to depict ritual practices as providing a defense against impulsiveness by demanding the renunciation of socially harmful instincts" (Rook 1985: 255).

Rook (1985) also explains that the elements of the rituals rely on four material arrangements: *ritual artifacts*, *a ritual script*, *ritual performance role(s)* and *a ritual audience*. On the other hand, Levy (1978) continues that despite the enormous variety of ritual experiences, it is still possible to classify rituals in terms of their practical origins and to observe common elements among very different ritual types. Levy (1978) identifies five primary sources of behavior (practices) and meaning: *human biology*, *individual aims and emotions*, *group learning*, *cultural values*, and *cosmological beliefs*. My study of boredom will mainly concentrate on the consumer's affective negotiation of time while bearing in mind Levy's sources of behavior and meaning.

As a conclusion, for the practice theory, the nature of social *structure and process* consists in routinization, can be found in the routines of the actions, and are considered to be in the practices itself (Reckwitz 2002a). In a very basic sense, all social practices are ritualized and routinized forms of doings and sayings. Social practices are routines and rituals like moving the Videographic Master's Thesis:

body, understanding, wanting and using objects interconnected in a practice. So, from the other perspective the routines, rituals and the theory of social practices links together because almost all the practices consist of, or include routinized or ritualistic practices. And just like practices, also routines and rituals are tied to other routinized or ritualized practices but are at the same time continuously overlapping each other through same and orchestrated temporalities and they are belonging to more than one practice. Shove and Pantzar (2005) notice that practices are “emphasizing routines, shared habits, technique and competence” (p. 44). They also continue that “the crucial point is that practices, as recognizable entities, are made by and through their routine reproduction” (p. 44).

2.4 THE CONCEPT OF BOREDOM

How can the feeling of boredom be described? How do people experience it and what happens to us when we become bored? Mansikka (2008) describes boredom as an experience where we become indifferent and lack interest. Mansikka (2008) continues that, “to be bored seems to imply a kind of detachment where things appear as detached and meaningless to us whereas the experience of intense motivation rather refers to a passionate unity with the object of our attention”. In this respect it seems that both boredom and interest are like *coincidentia oppositorum* that play an important role in the description of our attitudes toward our everyday practices (Mansikka 2008: 255). They describe, in an evaluative way, how things “matter to us” (p. 255); how we respond to certain situations, events or activities. In our everyday dealings we might, for instance, find washing up extremely boring while reading a book both interesting and stimulating. “Every activity we take part in can be judged through this axis” – not the least the everyday situations (Mansikka 2008: 255).

2.4.1 THE ORIGIN OF THE CONCEPT OF BOREDOM

In order to understand anything conceptually in a useful way, the origin and development of the concept of boredom needs to be taken into account. In this chapter, I investigate how concept of boredom has been historically shaped and developed.

Boredom as a concept is thoroughly generated and created by human beings, and it has naturally not been understood in the same way over times. Boredom has a conceptual history: it is created by humans, shaped by culture and history over time and also it is only experienced by human

beings. No one really knows the exact origin of the world boredom, but according to Professor Patricia Spacks (1995) the word was not used in the English language until after 1750 like is presented below.

“The first occurrence cited comes from a private letter of 1768, Earl Carlisle announcing his pity for Newmarket friends, who are to be bored by those Frenchmen.” Bore, meaning “a thing which bores”, comes along in 1778; the bore as tiresome person is assigned to 1812 and the first citation of the noun boredom belongs 1864” (Spacks 1995: 13).

According to Winter (2002) boredom seems to have entered the English language from the French thinkers of the seventeenth century who wrote about “ennui”, which is referred as annoy, wearisomeness or tiredness of life. Back in the 1670’s Blaise Pascal referred to “man’s condition as that of inconstancy, boredom (ennui), and anxiety” and wrote “no matter how happy a man may be, if he lacks distraction and has no absorbing passion or pastime to keep boredom away, he will soon get depressed and unhappy” (Winter 2002: 17). Also Jacques Bossuet (1662), Charles Baudelaire, Seán Healy (1984) and even Shakespeare have written about Ennui and boredom (Winter 2002).

If tracking back boredom even further in history, the modern conception of boredom has an antecedent in the medieval concept of *acedia*, as one of the “seven deadly sins” (Mansikka 2008: 256), in the Christian tradition. According to Mansikka (2008) *acedia* is perceived to consist of a certain kind of joylessness, of appetite and a lack of interest in spiritual goods. That is why *acedia* was a serious matter for the medieval theologians, representing a spiritual disorder. It was a state that arose as a consequence of “too little love” (Mansikka 2008: 256, cit. Raposa 1999: 11) of incapacity to love deeply. In this tradition human beings are doomed to a certain form of boredom and alienation without a life in God, Raposa (1999) notes.

The modern concept of boredom has also been defined in relation to the thinking of romanticism and boredom became an often discussed phenomenon in the romantic literature. Even William Shakespeare (1564-1616) uses the word weary to describe the experience of boredom (Winter 2002).

2.4.2 BOREDOM TODAY

In today's world, we don't regard the concept of boredom primarily as a moral concept or romantic thinking anymore. Boredom, in contemporary life is seen as an existential response but, in the first place, "as a psychological or physiological condition" (Mansikka 2008: 257). Mansikka (2008) also notes that, it is not unusual to regard boredom (lack of interest) as a symptom of an individual disorder that can be cured by proper medical treatment.

On the other hand, from the philosophical point of view, it is questionable if it is possible to define moods like boredom as something that takes place 'inside' human beings. One could ask if are we not then overlooking the fact that boredom is intimately related to the experience of the world or is it rather something in the world that makes up for the feeling of boredom. If this is the case then we must consider boredom as a social phenomenon as well and not just something that strikes an individual (Mansikka 2008).

Boredom is a relational concept. According to Raposa (1999) the adjective 'boring' might mislead us to think that it is a characteristic or quality of some thing, person, event or activity. But boredom is boring *to* or *for* someone, and under certain specific conditions. To pronounce oneself bored is to describe one's relationship to some thing or activity, in a given situation or environment. It is a matter of interpretation. Therefore we cannot speak about intrinsically boring situations (Raposa 1999) and from this perspective it would be difficult to defend a quantitative perspective to boredom. One could say that somehow it seems that boredom has to do with our ability to experience meaningfulness, either in relation to a particular situation or our life as a whole. It is a question of meaning, or more precisely, it is question of lack of relational meaning.

2.4.3 BEING-IN-THE-WORLD

According to Heidegger's (1993; 1995) philosophy: boredom can be seen as an example of how our *Dasein* or 'Being-in-the-world' is predisposed. Heidegger's philosophy is based on an existential analytic approach on fundamental interrelatedness between human beings and the world. According to him (Heidegger 1995), we cannot speak about human beings without speaking about their world as well as we cannot speak about the world without speaking about it from a human perspective. Heidegger (1995) sees that we are always, in a fundamental way,

related to the world as a whole. We never encounter the different aspects of our world in isolation but always in relation to our being in the world “as a whole” (see e.g. Heidegger 1995: 5; Mansikka 2008: 258) and therefore “the whole is something we depart from but also something that is guiding us” (Heidegger 1995: 5). Heidegger’s concept of the world, as a whole, is not a sum of the objects in the world. It stretches beyond the distinction between subject and object and thus it can be related to practice theory. As seen before, practice theory also is a flux of elements impacting the routines of practices linked together by ‘nexus’ the means through which doings and sayings interconnect and are coordinated. And just as in the Heidegger’s concept of the world as a whole also in practice theory all the routines are tied to other routines, practices and arrangements, continuously overlapping each other through same and orchestrated spatial settings and temporal orientations (Schatzki 2009). It is a world that is “the object of an experience, but that experience is not pertual, it is that of an inhibiting” (Mansikka 2008: 258).

2.4.4 THE CONCEPT OF MOOD

The concept of ‘mood’ or *stimmung* has also a central position in Heidegger’s philosophy. Moods and feelings, alongside with colors, taste and other qualities have usually been treated as ‘subjective’ traits and they have not been considered to be part of the ‘real’ world because they are not encountered in the same ways as physical objects. Also, we are never without moods; we cannot reach a complete indifferent stance towards the world. Moods are not something that are later on ‘added’ to our experiences but something that makes our experience possible (Mansikka 2008). According to Heidegger, a mood (*Stimmung*) is something that assails us. “It comes neither from ‘outside’ nor from ‘inside’ but arises out of Being-in-the-world” (Heidegger 1995: 176; Mansikka 2008: 258). Heidegger (1995) continues, that it is an ‘existential’ of our being which, in every case, already has disclosed our Being-in-the-world as a whole (p. 175).

2.4.5 HEIDEGGER’S SITUATIVE BOREDOM

Heidegger’s (see e.g. 1993; 1995; Anderson 2003; Mansikka 2008) phenomenological analysis of the concept of boredom is based on a distinction of three different levels through which boredom, as an experience, progressively is intensified. According to him these three levels are: *situative boredom*, *existential boredom* and *profound boredom*. Due the very abstract and philosophical nature of the last one, but also because of the explorative nature of this research

the profound boredom will be left out from this study allowing to concentrate mainly on the first two concepts here. In the given context, a considerably more profound ethnographic research would be needed in order to study boredom from the point of view of Heidegger's profound boredom.

According to Heidegger (1995), boredom is "a special fundamental mood because it leads to the experience of the relationship between *being* and *time*" (Mansikka 2008: 259). Our fundamental relation to time is not one that follows the objective *length* of time but our experience of time. The German language word for boredom, "*langeweile*", as well as the Swedish language word for it, "*långtråkighet*", (tiresomeness or long-windedness) toward the way in which we stand with respect to time Mansikka (2008) explains.

We pass the time, in order to master it, because time becomes 'long' and sluggish in boredom and we try to 'kill time' in order to overcome this slowness. Boredom is thus itself "a form of heightened awareness of the passing of time" (Mansikka 2008: 259). When a bored person lacks any immediate object of interest or enjoyment he is left alone with time.

Boredom seems to become something that can arise at any time but which we tend to suppress and not wish arise. The inclination to drive boredom away by passing the time constitutes the perhaps the most common experience of boredom for people. When people experience boredom, their attempts to pass the time are, in fact, an attempt to overcome the feeling of emptiness that this situation provokes for them. It is not a question of a particular thing or the time, in itself, that is boring but rather the whole contextual situation we are embedded in. The situation has really nothing to offer us and therefore leaves us empty, explains Mansikka (2008).

It is important to understand this situative form of boredom. It could be referred to as the experience of the 'long time' due to a situation that we find boring, for example waiting. And in this situation the only way out is passing the time, looking for something that would divert our attention from time toward more interesting things. If we are successful in this attempt we forge time and our boredom dissolves. It should be also noted that boredom does not leave us completely indifferent toward the situation. According to Heidegger (1995: 107-124) we are rather present in the actual situation but the situation both holds us in delay by time and at the same time leave us empty. Heidegger (1993; 1995; Mansikka 2008) makes a distinction between two structural moments or characteristics that are related to our being and to the experience of time in 'situative' boredom (Mansikka 2008: 260).

Being left empty-----situative boredom-----holds us in delay

2.4.6 HEIDEGGER'S EXISTENTIAL BOREDOM

Martin Heidegger (1993; 1995; Mansikka 2008) also finds more subtle and philosophical forms of boredom. According to him (Heidegger 1995), boredom can take more original and deeper forms. It can be even more existential in nature (Mansikka 2008). In contrast to the *situative boredom* Heidegger (1995) says that “boredom becomes more and more concentrated on us, on our situation as such, whereby the individual details of the situation are of no consequence; they are only coincidentally that with which we ourselves are bored, they are not that which bores us” (Mansikka 2008: 260; Heidegger 1995: 113). From the point of view of *existential boredom* it is not the matter that time is sluggish and the situation is therefore leaving us empty. Rather, we are indeed left empty but in a way where “there arises a slipping away, away from ourselves toward whatever is happening” (Mansikka 2008: 260, cit. Heidegger 1995).

Here, the emptiness is of a different kind than what was encountered in the situative boredom. By abandoning ourselves into whatever is going on we also leave ourselves behind in a way, which severs our relation to our own past and future. We are placed in a ‘now’ that fills the whole horizon of time. One can say that in this second form of boredom we both *spend* and *lose* time (Mansikka 2008). According to Heidegger we therefore also make time *stand* (Heidegger 1995). The two structural moments or characteristics that Heidegger pointed to in the first form of boredom have now been transformed: the emptiness that emerged from the situation, as a whole has now become something of a ‘self-forming emptiness’. The phenomenological experience of time is not something that capture us in delay; it is according to Heidegger (1995; 1993) rather “a stretched ‘now’” without a past and future (Mansikka 2008, cit. Heidegger 1995).

Self-forming emptiness-----slipping away from ourselves-----stretching ‘now’

2.5 THE FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The framework of the study will follow the interpretive approaches of *Consumer Culture Theory* by adopting views from *Practice Theory* and more specifically from the *Theory of Social Practices* which has its interest in mundane and routinized aspects of consumption, everyday life, materials, rituals and habits. The concept of boredom itself will be studied by adopting two of Heidegger's different levels through which boredom, as an experience, progressively is intensified.

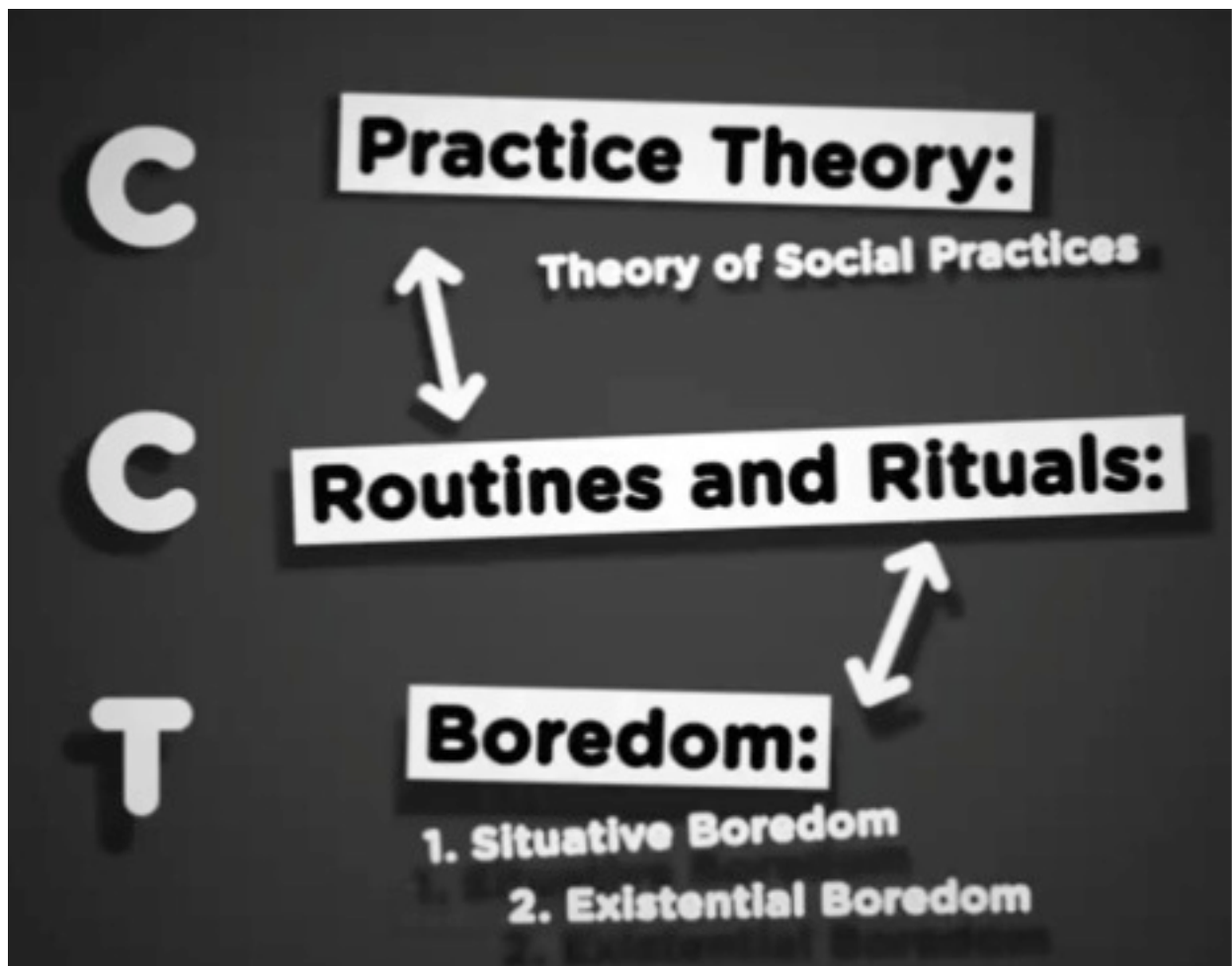


Figure 1. The theoretical framework of the study

3 METHODOLOGY AND DATA

In the following chapter I will first briefly discuss ethnography as a research method, and then account for videography as an ethnographic method in more detail. I will take closer look at different approaches to videographic methods, the criteria of good videography, present some Videographic Master's Thesis:

advantages and challenges of the method as well as present the research settings and methods used in this study.

3.1 ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

According to researchers (e.g. Schouten McAlexander 1995; Moisander & Valtonen 2006) ethnography is first and foremost a study of social phenomena. The history of ethnography stretches out to anthropologists interested in studying and understanding ‘strange’ non-western cultures. Over time, the ethnographic research has moved from studying foreign cultures to the investigation of cultural phenomena, wherever it becomes actualized.

Nowadays ethnographic research is understood as a method for trying to understand how people make sense of their lives as well as to simply rationalize why people do what they do. Thus, ethnography is a research process, in which the researcher or ‘ethnographer’ engages in, closely observes and records the practices and routines of daily life of another culture. This process or experience is labeled as the “fieldwork method” (see e.g. Schouten & McAlexander 1995; Marcus & Fisher 1998; Moisander & Valtonen 2006;). After the fieldwork the ethnographer writes accounts of this cultural, emphasizing descriptive detail (Marcus & Fisher 1998).

Pink (2007) describes ethnography to be a process of creating and representing knowledge, about society, culture and individuals that is based on ethnographers’ own experiences rather a method for the collection of data. According to her, it does not claim to produce an objective or truthful account of reality but instead, it aims to offer versions of ethnographers’ experiences of reality that are as loyal as possible to the context, negotiations, and intersubjectivities through which knowledge was produced (Pink 2007). So it can be said that ethnography is firmly rooted in the first hand study of a particular social and cultural setting (Atkinson et al. 2001).

Ethnography can be divided into two fundamental parts: fieldwork and a textual or visual presentation (Moisander & Valtonen 2006). Also in its broadest sense, a visual ethnography can be referred as paying particular attention to the visual aspects of culture (Pink 2007).

Within the fieldwork, participation and observation are at the two core elements of ethnography. *Participation* refers to a method where the researcher takes part in the research in such a way that he or her ultimately becomes an ‘insider’ over time (Moisander & Valtonen 2006). By

participating in the events and activities the ethnographer is trying to understand how our informants think or act, and according to ethnographic research orientation this can best be accomplished through participation. Further, *observation* means that the ethnographer observes particular social phenomena, which take place at the particular moment, instead of only conducting interviews about happenings at a later date. The power and advantage of observation is in the fact that through them, researchers are able to notice things that we could not otherwise detect or discover. This is relevant especially because people perform several things and activities unconsciously. Thus, without observation these practices and routines would stay veiled because the informants are not able to describe or even discuss them through traditional interviews. This is especially true for the emergence of social practices and material arrangements, as it seems we even lack much of the vocabulary (through language) to explicate such transcendent matters (Moisander &Valtonen 2006).

On the other hand, according to Moisander and Valtonen (2006) the observation can be further divided into two parts: participant and non-participant observation. When performing participant observation for example during a snowboarding event, the researcher is actually participating in the event and all the activities in it, but also interacting with people and artifacts in the event while doing observations. On the other hand, if we are performing non-participant observation, we are simply doing natural observations of what the people are doing from outside while not taking part in what the informants are doing (Moisander & Valtonen 2006).

According to Richardson (2000) ethnography is always situated in human activity, bearing both the strengths and limitation of human perceptions and feelings. Ethnography is always created through research practices. She continues that postmodern approaches free ethnographers to represent their findings in different ways (see also e.g. Arnould & Wallendorf 1994; Firat et al. 1995; Kozinets 2002). This of course has evoked discussion about criteria for judging such work. According to Richardson (2000) the world can be seen through two lenses: creative arts and analytical/science. Ethnography in its best is when world is seen through the both lenses and thus she has created a criteria for evaluating ethnography. The first criterion is *substantive contribution*, which evaluates “does this piece contribute to our understanding of social-life, does the writer demonstrate a deeply grounded (if embedded) human-world understanding and perspective, and how has this perspective informed the construction of the text?” (p. 253). The second criterion is *aesthetic merit* which examines “does this piece succeed aesthetically, does the use of creative analytical practices open up the text, invite interpretive responses and is the text artistically shaped, satisfying, complex, and not boring?” (p. 253). The third criterion is

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reflexivity and it observes “how did the author come to write this text, how was the information gathered, is there any ethical issues, how has the author’s subjectivity been both a producer and a product of this text, is there adequate self-awareness and self-exposure for the reader to make judgments about the point of view, and do authors hold themselves accountable to the standards of knowing and telling of the people they have studied?” (p. 253). The forth criterion is *impact* or “does this affect me emotionally, intellectually or generate new questions, move me to write, move me to try new research practices or move me to action?” (p. 253). The last criterion is that does the ethnography *expresses a reality*? In other words it is evaluating “does this text embody a fleshed out, embodied sense of lived-experience or does it seem “true”—a credible account of a cultural, social, individual, or communal sense of the ‘real’?” (p. 253). In this study the human perceptions and feelings such as boredom are studied ethnographically and presented from postmodern point of view by using videography.

3.2 VIDEOGRAPHY

As the old adage puts it: ‘A picture is worth a thousand words’. In videography, images are easier to remember, they speak a universal language and further convey things that are hard to capture in words (De Valck et al. 2009). Images also have an immerse power to grab attention and evoke emotions (De Valck et al. 2009). Today’s digital revolution in video technology has affected everyone from the home photographer documenting the everyday life to the state of the art film producing. In the past decade, the cost of being able to produce broadcast quality video has plummeted while the amount of technological possibilities has increased considerably. Digital video equipments are becoming everyday substantially smaller, better, more powerful, affordable and user-friendly (Belk & Kozinets 2005: 128). Our lives as consumers are distinguished not merely by thoughts, attitudes and concepts, but by the colors, shapes, noises, motions and sounds of people and things in constant interaction. As Kozinets and Belk (2006) state: “consumer culture is bright and noisy!” (p. 335). It is an aspect of life that we tend to experience primarily audiovisually by using our eyes and our ears. It is thus important that we learn and use this new language of videos that enables us to discuss audiovisual text meaningfully (De Valck et al. 2009).

But still the visual aspect of consumer experience has been largely ignored in research representations, as well as by the teaching and presenting traditions of today’s academic and business worlds (Kozinets & Belk 2006). In the past, consumer research has had a tendency to

play down or ignore the importance of visual and audio literacy and thus has underrepresented the lived visual and auditory aspects of the experience of living within a consumer culture. This is a loss not only in terms of representing the world of consumers, but also in terms of conveying the vision and melodies that comprise the researcher's potential conceptual contribution (Kozinets & Belk 2006).

"We live in a mass-mediated world where rich, colorful, multilayered, sound effects laden, quick-moving, quick-cutting, audio-visual information is increasingly the norm" (Kozinets & Belk 2006: 335). Also the hunger for videographic work is increasing constantly, and requests for videographic presentations are now commonplace (Kozinets & Belk 2006). In the boardroom as well as the classroom, those who wish to make a powerful impact on an audience are, or should be, learning to rely on the vivid power and detail of screened audiovisual materials rather than blackboards, whiteboards and staid slideshows.

The concept of boredom is extremely hard to study using traditional methods due to its abstract and philosophical nature. Therefore, in this research a combination of natural observations and interviews with informants accompanied with other impressionistic videographic methods like autovideography, collaborative techniques and secondary data materials from already gathered and filmed materials are used. A combination of different methods and techniques are often found superior to simply choosing one of the videographic methods (Kozinets 2001; Belk & Kozinets 2005).

Even though videography has only recently become a much discussed research method, it has been present for almost one hundred years:

"When Robert J. Flaherty left to film the first videographic classic, "Nanook of the North" in June 1920, he and his team carried 75,000 feet of film, a Haulberg electric light plant and projector, two Akeley cameras, and a printing machine on a journey that required six weeks of travel by rail, canoe, schooner and dog sled. Today's digital revolution in video technology would have significantly lightened Flaherty's load" (Belk & Kozinets 2005: 128)

Like the example of Robert J. Flaherty shows us, it is not that videography would not have been a possible, suitable or relevant research method throughout this period, but rather that the amount of equipment and work needed was so extensive that only few people dared, bothered or

quite simply could afford to attempt it.

According to Snow and Anderson (1987), when put simply, the qualitative research methods can be split into two categories: perspectives of action and perspectives in action. The *perspectives of action* portray people talking about behavior, or in other words, it lets the informant describe the phenomena as one sees it (Belk & Kozinets 2005). On the other hand, the *perspectives in action* aim to record the phenomena of interest while it is happening. This separation between these two concepts by Snow and Anderson (1987) is also useful when looking at different videographic methods and the research of practices. Videographic methods make a good match with practice research and are essential tools when closely studying, observing and recording what happens in consumers' daily lives because videography can deliver 'real', intuitive and empathic understanding of participants, as the researcher is actually participating their lives. Moreover, when using videographic research methods, researchers are able to take the interpretation of mundane daily life to the proverbial 'next level' as they can leave much of the conclusions to be made by the viewers themselves. People interpret what they see, hear and experience in different ways. The researcher will draw his own conclusions, but the viewer of videography does not have to settle with this, as is often the case with more traditional research methods. In addition, when comparing videography to taking field notes for example, the differences are substantial. When the researchers take field notes, they interpret what is happening in the moment and they have to rely on this conclusion at later points of the research. Moreover, the audience of the research has to accept and trust on the interpretations of the researcher. But on the other hand, videography records a vivid perspective into what happens, and thus conclusions do not have to be made on site and can be left for the audience to make. Naturally what is shot and later cut in our studio for final edit are certainly matters of interpretation, not far from text – rather, what we can perhaps more profoundly reproduce through video is the spatiotemporal emergence of practices as time and movement itself seems to be the primary constituent of the video medium. The illustrations of spatiotemporal emergence of practices as well as material arrangements intertwined in the practice are the main reasons why my study on boredom is conducted as a videography. Presenting all the practice-based material arrangements of boredom by the means of more traditional research methods would be extremely difficult. When the practices are considered as a nexus of '*doings* and sayings' and doings are considered as '*doings with material arrangements*' the challenge is how to present the nexus thoroughly without overlooking any relevant and vital aspects of the practices.

When looking at the different videographic methods and techniques, according to Kozinets and Belk (2006) these can be constructed into a six category typology: *individual and group interviews*, *naturalistic observations*, *autobiographical*, or *autovideographic techniques*, *collaborative techniques*, *retrospective applications*, and *impressionistic techniques*. But it should be noted that these six formats are neither mutually exclusive nor exhaustive (Kozinets & Belk 2006).

The most commonly used and the simplest methods within videography are *individual and group interviews* (Belk & Kozinets 2005) where the researcher or “videographer” is directing and filming interviews with informants (Kozinets & Belk 2006). However, one has to remember that most of the time these interviews, contain much more information than just the story of informants, in the form of body language, proxemics, kinesics and several other aspects of human behavior that communicate meaning (Kozinets & Belk 2006).

Another very commonly used videographic method is the recording of *naturalistic observations* (Belk & Kozinets 2005), resulting in an observational videography (Kozinets & Belk 2006). In this videographic method, the researcher is present when the research phenomenon is happening and observing the phenomenon, instead of just discussing about it at a later point with the informants. Observations can be made and dealt with in two ways: in an *obtrusive manner*, where the researcher participates in the practice, or in an *unobtrusive manner*, where the consumers are simply observed without the researcher present (Moisander & Valtonen 2006). The unobtrusive videography can also be executed in two ways, either so that the informants are aware that they are filmed or so that the informants are secretly observed (Kozinets & Belk 2006) bringing about obvious ethical problems.

In videography, the researchers also have the possibility to try to understand the participant’s point of view by capturing it on video by using *autobiographical*, or *autovideographic techniques*, which are based on autoethnographic techniques (Belk & Kozinets 2005). Autoethnography is an autobiographical method in which the informant analyzes how he/she him/herself conducts cultural practices (Moisander & Valtonen 2006). From the point of view of this form of videographic research methods the informants themselves operate the camera without the presence of the researcher. In fact, in autoethnography, it is also possible for the researcher to be the participant. Sunderland et al. (2003) gives a good example of autovideography in their article: *Why drink or drive? Consumer video diary excerpts*, where they gave students camcorders and had them record themselves when they were going out in

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order to be able to analyze their drinking behavior. In my study some of the participants filmed themselves when they were traveling for their particular passionate practices and recorded their feelings and thoughts while bored. According to Kozinets and Belk (2006) the autovideography is also less intrusive, more active and less directed by researcher motives than the other videographic methods.

Collaborative techniques are also possible. In this form of videography the researcher and informant produce the piece together. These approaches include both filming, editing and making decisions about the final content (Kozinets & Belk 2006).

The retrospective applications of the videography take advantage of already gathered and existing material combined with verbal data acquired from informants. The impressionistic techniques, on the other hand are combinations of all the above-mentioned techniques with also the possibility of adding to the piece animations, screen shots or almost anything within reasonable creative boundaries (Kozinets & Belk 2006).

3.3 THE CRITERIA FOR GOOD VIDEOGRAPHY

I will first take a look at the videographic criteria explained by Belk and Kozinets (2005) and further extend the criteria for good videography with additional ones created by Hietanen (forthcoming) PhD work: Videography in Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) – An Account of Essence(s) and Production. An important notion to consider when looking at these criteria is that not only do they all have to be taken into consideration; they should be in a healthy balance with each other in order to conduct good and potentially evocative videography.

Kozinets and Belk (2006) have divided the criteria of a good videography in consumer research into four components: topical criterion, theoreticality criterion, theatrical criterion and technical criterion which are studied here in more detail.

The *topical criterion* mainly deals with videography's topic and whether it is of interest to consumer research. It also calls into consideration whether the filming site of the videography is of good choice and whether it has produced good data. If there is too much topicality, it can make the research very narrow and thus resulting in it being interesting only to few.

According to Kozinets and Belk (2006) the *theoretical criterion* concerns “whether the videography contributes in a compelling way to our understanding of consumption phenomenon it treats” (p. 340). In this case ‘the videographer’ must be able to produce a research instead of a documentary. Often, this is the biggest challenge for the videographer as there is a constant discussion of how theoretical accounts can be portrayed through videographic methods and also how much theory should be portrayed in videography in the first place. If the theoretical side of the videography is overdone, the end result can become obscure or inaccessible even, yet if it is too weak the result is a ‘BBC documentary’ of the happenings or even simply reality TV.

Then again, the *theatricality criterion* discusses if the videography is dramatic enough. Theatricality can be seen to address matters opposite to theoreticality because even though we are talking about research the end product should be cinematic and appealing. If theatricality of the videography is taken too far, it may compromise the very point of the work, which is an academic research. Therefore, videography’s theatricality and theoreticality should be balanced in order for videography to have an impact on the viewer but also to deliver a solid theoretical consideration.

Lastly, the *technicality criterion* looks/examines at whether the production level of the videography is sufficient or whether the methods, techniques, technical solutions of filming as well as the editing and post production are on sufficient level. Similar to an author of a good text, a videographer must master the art of a moving picture, in filming but also editing, at least to a certain degree. Whether it be lighting, good audio quality, steady shooting, good editing or overall postproduction, they should all be balanced and in a good order in a solid videography work. Even though the technical side of videography is extremely important, it should not be over emphasized. According to Belk and Kozinets (2005; Kozinets and Belk 2006) the content of the videography should always come first – the viewer should not be too focused on technical elements of the work but rather the actual research findings.

Even though the ‘4T’ criteria of good videography presented by Kozinets and Belk (2006) have served the field of consumer research and videography well, and have been almost considered as ‘bible’ of how to make good videography, it leaves much room for interpretation and that is why Hietanen (forthcoming) have created new more comprehensive criterion in his up-and-coming PhD work. Hietanen (forthcoming) adds “deleuzean ontology of relation” (p. 36) into the criteria of Kozinets and Belk (2006) in order to inspire and open new discussion and thoughts for different interpretations and “thus actualize relations of new series and events” (p. 36). These

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new criteria called ‘3R’ are: *relations between all the participants* (human and nonhumans as with people and spatiotemporal settings) *of the research as reproduced by the videography*, *relations between the aesthetics, visual and sounds reproduced by the montage sequence* and *relations that come about between the videography, its viewers, and how the viewers thus come to become inspired to actualize further relations* (Hietanen forthcoming). Hietanen (forthcoming) explains that the first relation has to do with explication of a Deleuzean ontology of relation, practice theory and non-representational theory as a transcendent flux of ephemeral relations that resonate nonlinearly throughout infinite series. This means that it examines the internal emergence of relations by people-objects and is compelling as it depicts of the world and beyond itself. Hietanen (forthcoming) continues that the second relation has to do with explication of the philosophy of moving images and time as they are reproduced through simulation. This means that the videography’s reproduction of aesthetically compelling is under investigation as well as how its simulation of ‘reality’ and the lack thereof reproduce relations within and beyond the videography. The third relation, according to Hietanen (forthcoming) has to do with explication of the visceral nature of experiencing a video. In other words, it is looking what is the videos efficacy in creating events and new series between itself, its viewers and beyond. This is illustrated in as follows:

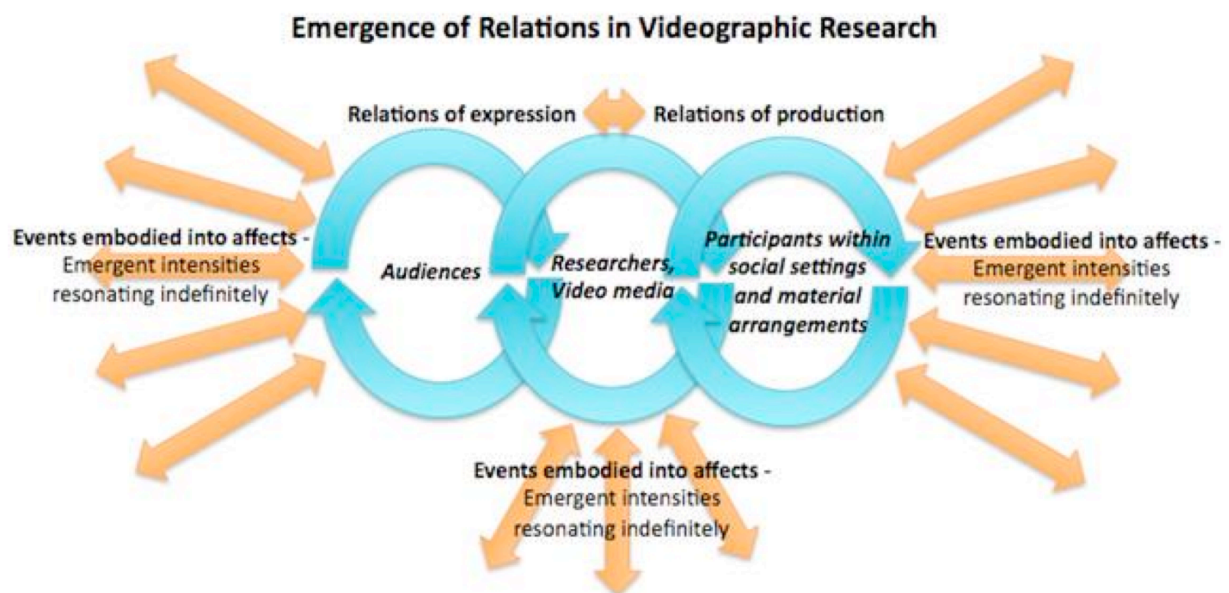


Figure 2. Hietanen’s (forthcoming) ‘3R’ emergence of relations in producing videographic research.

From a methodological point of view videography seemed the only relevant and possible option in order to study, capture and gain new information about phenomenon of boredom – a concept so abstractive and philosophically ambiguous in contemporary consumer culture. Videography seemed also suitable for actualizing and presenting the theories of boredom in a realistic, coherent and illustrative manner. It also gave appropriate tools for expressing the participants' feelings and experiences of boredom to audiences in a potentially convincing and evocative manner.

Videography as a research method for studying boredom emphasizes the analytical side of the study but also the artistic and aesthetic aspects as well. It also emphasizes the collaborative effort of executing and presenting consumer research over more traditional research methods making it more appropriate for all possible audiences (academic/non-academic) than the conventional writing and reading of textual studies. The experiences in the field provided materials supportive of the power of videography to convey complex ideas in an approachable manner that is both meaningful and memorable. Further, the oral, visual and kinesthetic communication modalities of the videography adds to the dynamic nature of the research report, bringing the market research into life for many and varied audiences. The modern way of presenting inquiries in the video form, enables also the use of traditional and social media in order to share the information of the study for example by using Youtube, Vimeo, TV or DVD instead of the traditional written versions of the studies.

In my opinion it is good not to let criterions to overtly limit the production of videographic research too much because videography follows contemporary postmodern production of academic knowledge where one cannot separate off academic and artistry visions from each others by philosophically defendable arguments or principles (Bochner & Ellis 2003; Belk & Kozinets 2005; Kozinets & Belk 2006).

3.4 ADVANTAGES AND CHALLENGES OF VIDEOGRAPHY

In general, videography is inherently at a disadvantage to text because of its problematic nature in representing existing literature and theory. In fact, one of the greatest strengths of videographic work, its accessibility, is turned into a weakness by stating that the medium is so

comprehensible and grounded in commonplace experience that it is difficult to construct 'scientifically' except at the level of description (Kozinets & Belk 2006; Penaloza & Cayla 2006). But then again, in line with postmodern frameworks, does one need to undertake such missions in the first place? On the other hand, Kozinets and Belk (2006) say that as a grounded reality, videography could be thought to be much more like the 'real' world, and less like the theoretical system that floats, as it were, above the plane of observation and is anchored to it by roles of interpretation (Kozinets & Belk 2006, cit. Hempel 1952) but here arises the philosophical problem of the videography, because it could be also seen as constructing of constructing of 'bits' and it is always the interpretation of the videographer of what to film and what to present. The problem often seems to be that videography is seen to portray 'reality'. Even though the video represents a 'reality' and real practices, the videographer has the primary effect on the outcome. What is filmed, who is filmed, how is filmed, where is filmed, how is edited, which music is added and how the video is narrated all effects the outcome and moulds the 'reality' presented. Just like when writing a text, we provide constructed representations.

Another main challenge of videography is that it always partially depends on illusion (Belk & Kozinets 2005) meaning that the researcher is always presenting a story to the audience. This is exactly where the researcher has to pay special attention when conducting a videographic research. Viewers are often less critical towards a video than written material so the viewer must be respected and thus the researcher shall not take any undue liberties with the audiovisual data (Belk & Kozinets 2005). However, it could be argued that a written text is just as much an illusion as videography. It is a story created by the author.

Videographic methods also have several additional advantages. Belk and Kozinets (2005) says that even though individual and group interviews, which are the least depictive forms of videography, fail to provide real-time observations, the data is far richer than the traditional audio recorded interview, as it captures spatiotemporal surroundings and body language, which is often considered a communications mean just as important as oral language. Via videography also the relationships and tensions between people and between environments can be captured.

Furthermore, videography can deliver real, intuitive and empathic understanding of informants, as the researcher is actually participating in the lives of the informants and is able to analyze the data accurately afterwards. Martin et al. (2001) consider that the deepest way of understanding customers is by bringing segments to life by, for example, finding the 'archetype' of the

segments. In addition, they find that a documentary style video is one of the best ways of presenting a segment-to-life research (Martin et al. 2001).

But on the other hand, because videography closely follows people's lives, it is very difficult to include large amounts of informants in the research. However, according to Miles and Huberman (1994) large casts are actually not required as a purposive and a well selected sample is sufficient to present the differences that nuance the research participants (see also e.g. Martin et al. 2001).

From an ethical point of view, there are many questions that have to be discussed when conducting observational videography. For example, when conducting unobtrusive observations where the participants are unaware that they are filmed, many ethical problems should be considered (Kozinets & Belk 2006). Overall, the researcher should bear in mind that when making natural observations, the researcher is entering peoples' private lives and should respect this, even though the informants are willing to participate in the research.

While it might seem trivial, one of the greatest challenges of videography is the camera itself. Quite simply many people do not feel comfortable or natural in the presence of a camera (Kozinets & Belk 2006). Even though we have grown up in a world filled with reality television programming, entertainment and advertising, we are still not prepared in having a camera constantly present in our lives. Even those who can handle the presence of a camera need time to adjust to it in order to act perfectly natural in front of the camera. Kozinets and Belk (2006) describe the situation by saying that during traditional videographic interviews having the camera present, right in front of the informants face, can be found very uncomfortable and unnatural (p. 342), and therefore based on my experience, the use of tri-pods and stands or even hiding, covering or camouflaging the camera is highly advised. Autovideographic methods on the other hand provide very 'real' data, but they also often provide immense amounts of it. Again, the unraveling of this data requires substantial amounts of time and can often be very hard to accomplish.

In this research the main challenge was to film the annoying, frustrating and uneasy spatiotemporally emergent practices of boredom. Trying to 'capture' people's feelings requires constant filming, participation and observation of the mundane everyday life of the participants on the behalf of the researcher as well as continuous interaction with the participants. In this

study the time used to observe every single participant ended up to be very long in order to provide convincing expressions of the experiences of these people.

The participants of this study did not find the presence of a camera especially problematic and only some uneasiness was noticeable. This was probably because most of the participants were familiar with filming and the presence of a camera since in the field of snowboarding filming tricks and other activities or practices is very typical. It seemed very natural for them to have cameras in their lives and after while, they did not even seem to notice it anymore. Even during the interviews the participants seemed to be able to ignore the presence of cameras and other filming equipments. Nevertheless, in some cases, even though the camera did not visibly bother them, some covering and camouflaging of the cameras needed to be done, and tripods as well as stands were used in order for the participants to feel more comfortable and natural. For example, the red recording-lights were removed from cameras so that they would not see when the camera is on or off and be affected by it. Also, the participants seemed to take filming and the research very seriously, the fact that researcher knew most of the informants beforehand had its pros and cons. The familiar researcher sometimes made it possible for participants to become even too friendly, as well as to do and say things that were not relevant to the study, which sometimes made the observations and analyzing the material more difficult.

However, filming abstract feelings and experiences like boredom is a challenging endeavor, and it required a lot of filming. At the final stages of the research, the amount of film material was indeed substantial, making the analyzing, processing, researching and editing of the material a difficult and time consuming task. Although the processing of the material robbed me of considerable amounts of time, analyzing the materials and editing the research was very interesting learning experience which expanded my knowledge and understanding of boredom but also of social sciences and consumer research.

3.5 RESEARCH SETTINGS

The central construct of the research is an ethnographic study of the everyday life of 17 participants, 9 of which were male and 8 were female. They were all young urban adults, aged from 18 to 30, they all shared the same passion towards traveling, the extreme sport of snowboarding and all living in the same capital city of Helsinki, Finland. The participants of the research were selected because they all were considered highly passionate about their particular

practices of interest and consumption practices and routines around them but also because of the researcher's great accessibility into their everyday lives.

The videography was conducted during six months in 7 different countries including Finland, USA, Japan, Canada, Indonesia, New Zealand and South Africa. I filmed the mundane everyday life of the participants as well as traveled with them, and participated in their particular passionate practices and routines in the context of sports, music or traveling. The study investigates why people get bored and how is boredom made sense of and embodied in mundane social practices of everyday life, how do people cope with boredom and what media/other practices people use during/to cope with boredom, and how does the use of different media alleviate and reproduce boredom?

Among participants were professional athletes and artists who travel often for their work, but also of non-professional athletes, people who work or study for their living and travel mainly for recreational purposes. All the participants came from different backgrounds and had different interests, desires and likings as well as different job histories and studies in diverging fields. So one could say that the participant group is something of a cross-section of the 'young urban adults of the present-day'. But one of the limitations of the study is the fact that all the participants come from the same country and live in the same capital city.

In the actual fieldwork, I used wide compilation of videographic methods like observations, interviews, autovideography and collaborative techniques when observing the participants while they participated in and interacted with the activities of their mundane everyday life. I followed every participant in his or her everyday routines and practices for three (3) days but also traveled with them in more occasional setting from two (2) to fourteen (14) days. Also five (5) of the participants were given cameras with them and asked them to film the boring parts of their lives when they traveled for their businesses. Two (2) of the participants were asked to keep video diary and tell about the feelings of boredom during their trips among other things. One participant was also filmed continuously and uninterrupted for 12 hours when he was experiencing the boredom at his home. The video diaries were kept by two participants who travel extensively alone and the five participants who were autovideographing themselves were also much traveling professional athletes and artist. The concept of boredom was not defined for any of the participants nor hardly any instructions of filming were given. The participants were only asked to film the aspects of their lives, which they consider mundane and boring.

The videography was augmented by secondary data materials like ‘behind the scenes’ materials of snowboarding documentaries, movies, interviews and commercials filmed during the past 2 years. The secondary material supported the forming of an immersive picture of boredom the participants experienced in their everyday lives. These materials also helped to further illustrate the feelings of boredom and the high contrasts between passionate practices and boredom in contemporary life.

Altogether more than 80 hours of video material in different forms was collected, processed, researched and edited. This material of wide range gave a rich and in-depth illustration of practices of boredom in the mundane everyday life of frequently traveling professional athletes and artists but also of more occasional travelers. Thus, I was able to interpret glimpses of their experiences and coping with boredom during their trips while emphasizing purposive actions and practices of everyday day life.

The results and findings of the study are presented in the form of 49 minutes long videographic documentation of the research (Videographic Master’s Thesis: <http://vimeo.com/34453747>), which highlights and demonstrated the main points of the practices of boredom in consumers’ contemporary everyday life.

4 THE CASE AND FINDINGS

In this chapter I will present interpretive findings from my ethnographic data (Videographic Master’s Thesis: <http://vimeo.com/34453747>), the development of a framework of three practices in *coping* with boredom, as well as the findings of the study in order to reach the goals and objectives of the research. First, based on the material, I present some initial reflections of boredom, how the situative and existential boredom are experienced in the everyday life, how the boredom can be actually referred as stillness of body and time. Furthermore, I will showcase some contemporary boredom coping practices of the mundane everyday life of the participants. I will further discuss the main findings of my research with regards to contemporary practices of boredom that raised a more profound notion of what the findings could mean from a sociocultural perspective.

4.1 INITIAL REFLECTIONS OF BOREDOM

The presentation of the study starts by reviewing some initial reflections of *situative* and *existential* boredom as well as some contemporary boredom coping practices to illustrate how feelings of boredom involve the negotiation of the stillness of body and time.

4.1.1 CONTEMPORARY BOREDOM COPING PRACTICES

During the past few years the technological solutions, media applications and different marketing solutions have advanced and developed exponentially. At the same time the practices for coping with boredom have also developed rapidly and the amount of entertainment demanded by people, but also pushed towards the consumers by marketing and media industry has increased dramatically. Some of the most typical and commonly used contemporary boredom coping practices, methods and applications found when conducting this research are presented below.

The most popular practice for coping with boredom seems to be the use of social medias and especially the use of Facebook. Most of my participants used Facebook almost every time they felt bored, whenever it was possible to log in. It is the most commonly used method in order to cope with boredom and people almost obsessively turned into it. Also other social media, like Twitter, blogs, Youtube and Vimeo seems to be very popular in order to pass or 'kill' the time. Other commonly used internet based applications were different news portals, internet sites linked to the participant's subject of interest, Skype, iChat, emailing, messengers, and video- and internet games. Another form of boredom coping practices included the use of mobile devices like mobile phones, game consoles, cameras and videocameras, entertainment like listening music, watching TV or movies, listening to radio or reading news papers, magazines and books, physical activities like exercising, house hold activities, cleaning, cooking, eating, shopping as well as marketing practices like advertisements and commercials.

People seem to have an urgent desire to do something meaningful and beneficial when they are bored, but most of the time they seem to fail in that attempt and end up doing something meaningless but more entertaining. According to my study, many people also multitask between different media at the same time, and often fail to concentrate well in any of them.

4.1.2 BOREDOM IS STILLNESS OF BODY AND TIME

As my theoretical background implied, experiencing boredom is a distinct human way of being and it seems to involve the negotiation of the ‘stillness of body and time’. This can be clearly seen from the case some ways of coping with and successfully reducing the negative experience of boredom seem to consist of bodily activities, not artificially constructed entertainment. This can be clearly seen from the study:

Eero Ettala, a professional snowboarder, X-Game gold medalist and a skate boarder, uses a lot of different media tools, like computer, smart phone, and especially different means of social media in order to cope with boredom. But when he realizes that he is bored, he usually gets up from his couch and takes his dogs out or engages in some other bodily activities. He says that “usually when I’m bored I hang out on my sofa and I use computer as long as it starts boring me and then I realize that I have to do something meaningful and I take my dogs out”.



Figure 3. Eero Ettala feeling bored before taking his dogs out in order to cope with boredom.

Senni Hyypä, a professional snowboarder and a student of economics, states how she starts cleaning up the house, knitting or sewing when she is bored and considers these bodily activities

as ‘pointless’ or insignificant activities, but still engages in them when bored enough. She says “I just cannot stand to be inactive anymore, and then I start cleaning up or doing something totally insignificant or meaningless like knitting or sewing in order to cope with boredom”



Figure 4. Senni Hyypä feeling bored before engaging in meaningless practices in order to cope with boredom.

Brandon Bauer, a professional rap artist, a snowboarder and economics student illustrates how boredom is actually stillness of body and time by noting how boredom is sometimes just an excuse for not doing something else. He considers practices for coping with boredom to be only physical activities by saying that “every time you are bored you can do something else. You can always get up and do something creative or exercising”.

4.1.3 TWO TYPES OF BOREDOM: HEIDEGGER’S PERSPECTIVE

In this study, the concept of boredom is studied through Heideggers two levels or perspectives of boredom, as an experience: *situative boredom* and *existential boredom*.

Katerine Stauffer, an economics student and an amateur snowboarder and surfer, illustrates the situative boredom by explaining how she can almost physically feel the boredom and how “time

slows” when she is waiting for something, for example a subway or a pick up for a snowboarding trip. She is forced into, or finds herself in the situation, which provokes boredom. “Concretely it feels like time is slowing down when I have to wait for subway it feels that there is the same amount of minutes till the train comes the whole time, and sometimes I even have to check my own watch that is the time really running that slow”, she explains, and continues that “when we were leaving for a snowboarding trip I had all my things already packed up and I was waiting for my friends to pick me up. I was just waiting and waiting and waiting, I did not have anything to do at home, there was nothing coming from TV, I had already check everything from my computer, I had cleaned up the house and I had absolutely nothing to do, so I was just walking circle in my apartment”.

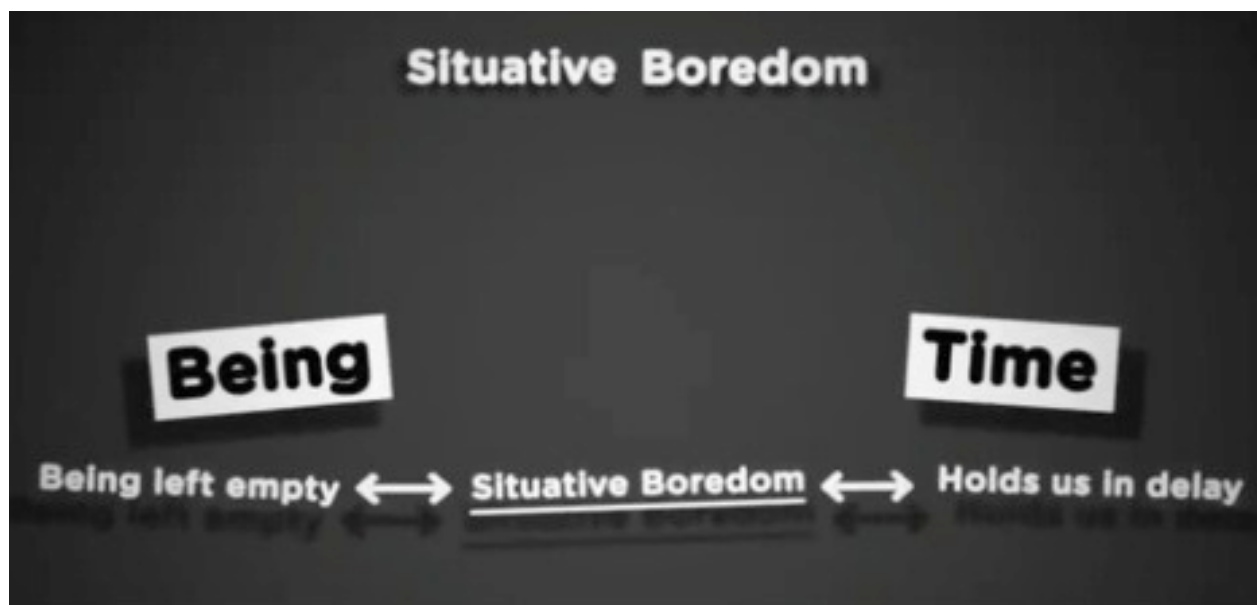


Figure 5. Heidegger’s perspective of *situative boredom*.

So one could say that our attempts to pass the time are, in fact, attempts to overcome the feelings of emptiness that this situation provokes in us. It is not a question of any particular thing or time in itself that is boring, but rather the whole situation we are embedded in. The situation has really nothing to offer us and therefore leaves us empty. On the other hand, boredom has not left us completely indifferent toward the *situation*. We are present in the actual situation but the situation both *holds us in delay* and at the same time leave us empty (Mansikka 2008). This also raises a question that why is that so? The answer could be that because it is necessary to come across a certain situation in its specific time; the ideal time to come for example to an airport is before the plane departs. Perhaps one could say that places like airports

are for leaving. They do not function as places where we are supposed to spend our time (Heidegger 1995).

Brandon Bauer gives an example of existential boredom by describing the feelings of reluctance to participate in any activities. These feelings of boredom well up deep inside of human beings and are very hard to overcome. He explains that “there is also kind of boredom what is caused by myself, by my own feelings. I have days when I’m just not interested of doing anything. I just find myself from the situation where nothing is interesting for me and that is caused by my own mood. And I cannot do anything about it and that is boring. You can even realize that you are in this mood, and think that you should snap out of it. But sometimes it is just too much to overcome the feeling that nothing is interesting. I honestly have days when I only eat and sleep, and lay on a bed. Especially during the winter when it’s dark. I just simply don’t have enthusiasm or interest to be in contact with other people or use any devices and then I just lay on a bed, or try to sleep, but I cannot even sleep then so I just ‘be’ and that is boring”.

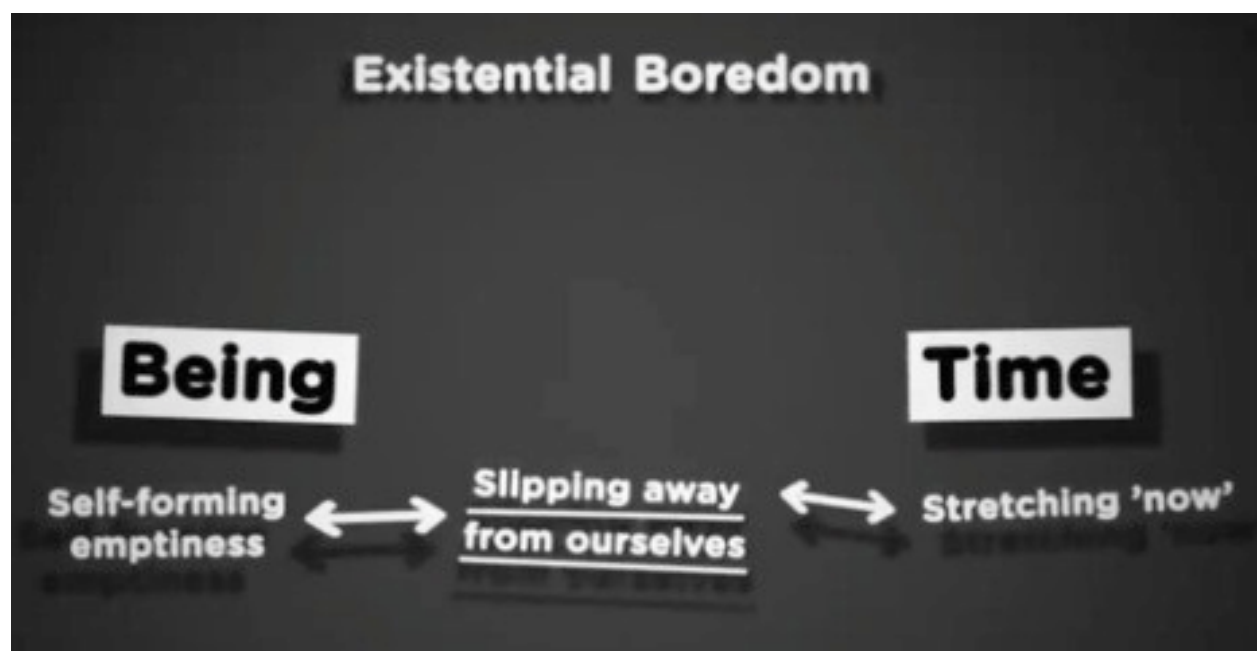


Figure 6. Heidegger’s perspective of *existential boredom*.

So the boredom can also take more original and deeper forms and be more existential of nature. When boredom is existential the boredom itself becomes more and more concentrated on us, on our situation as such, whereby the individual details of the situation are of no consequence; they are only coincidentally that *with* which we *ourselves* are bored, they are not *that which* bores us. It is not the fact that time is sluggish nor is it about the situation itself leaving us empty. We are,

however, left empty but in a way where there arises a *slipping away*, away from *ourselves* toward whatever is happening. We are placed in a “now” that fills the whole horizon of time and we both spend and lose time. Therefore we also make time stand still. The emptiness that emerges from the situation as a whole, becomes something of a self-forming emptiness. The phenomenological experience of time is not something that captures us in delay. It is rather “a stretched now” without a past and future (Mansikka 2008, cit. Heidegger 1995).

As a contrast, another good example or illustration of the *existential boredom* can be found in a situation where a participant Jaakko Paloheimo, an engineer, an amateur snowboarder and a surfer, was invited to a house party for the evening to watch an ice hockey game. The company and food was nice and he enjoyed the evening. But when Paloheimo left the party to go home and had a look at the work he interrupted for the evening out, as well as looking ahead at the next day, he could not feel the enjoyment anymore. After all, he was bored that evening. He did not seek anything further at all by going out this evening but just went along for spending an evening. But, according to Heidegger (1993; 1995), precisely in this “seeking nothing more” something is also obstructed in us. An emptiness form itself that consist in the absence of fullness. “Even if the evening was enjoyable and we filled the time we, nevertheless, were left with an emptiness where what we were doing did not “fill us” – one could perhaps say that the situation was not really meaning-filled, i.e. meaningful” (Mansikka 2008: 260).

Senni Hyyppä also describes the experience of existential boredom by describing the situations when she has a lot of fun, for example while traveling and participating in snowboarding trips and events with friends. During those events, she is constantly surrounded by company, new and exiting people and things as well as good atmosphere and feeling, accompanied maybe also with alcohol. There avoiding boredom is taken to the extremes and boredom is hard to find. But it is afterwards when existential boredom takes place. When one comes back home, back to ‘reality’ and to the mundane everyday life, where everything isn’t so exiting and fun anymore, boredom kicks in. Because of the extraordinary events of the trip, our daily round of mundane lives seems more boring.

4.2 BOREDOM COPING ROUTINES

In this chapter I will introduce the three central perspectives of practices to *coping* with boredom in the contemporary society, which are based on the findings of my study. I will uncover how

routines, rituals and practices affect the lives of my informants when they participate in activities of their mundane everyday life and how their particular passionate consumption practices and routines become actualized in their everyday lives.

4.2.1 ROUTINES OF PASSION

All the participants of the research are highly passionate about their particular consumption practices and routines. Therefore, it is relevant to study how these routines are negotiated and embodied by the participants in their everyday lives.

Anton Lindfors, a professional boarder-cross rider and a student, made an interesting statement about boredom in routines of passion by saying that “boredom is not that one does not have anything to do, rather it is not being able to do what you really want. If one can choose his or her own practices of boredom by him- or herself, it immediately makes the practice less boring”. By being able to participate in practices, which the person is passionate about prevents boredom.



Figure 7. Anton Lindfors participating in his particular passionate practice.

Eero Ettala, one of the best professional snowboarders in the world, explains how the constant routines and repetition of his profession has made skateboarding, which is only hobby for him, more passionate practice than snowboarding. High expectations, constant repetition and all the routines he needs to involve in his work as professional snowboarder has made snowboarding boring. According to Ettala, he would definitely be more passionate about snowboarding

without the “must” of practicing the sport. When he is snowboarding, there are high expectations involved for him to perform the practice always on a high level. Ettala states that: “I go skateboarding just because I like to do it. I have nothing to prove to anyone. I can be as bad as I am in it, but when I go snowboarding, there is always these people who are expecting all these crazy tricks from me all the time, because I am a professional”. Ettala also notes that if he had not become a professional, he would definitely be more enthusiastic and devoted snowboarder nowadays. This example shows from one angle how even the most passionate practices can also infuse boredom.



Figure 8. Eero Ettala participating in his particular passionate practice.

From a slightly different perspective, Janne Lehtinen, a college football player and amateur snowboarder tells how he is ready to withstand the enormous amount of repetition and all the boring routines in order to become a professional football player in the future. He manages to repeat same practices, training drills and body movements, from day to day, from week to week and from year to year because of the greater goal and objective to become a professional athlete. Football is among many other skills or practices that are required to be learned through habitual repetition until the movements become good habits that allow the freedom to be increasingly more creative. Like Eero Ettala, Janne also experiences the repetition when doing the same things over and over again both mentally and physically challenging and boring. Despite this, he is still willing to tolerate and suffer this type of boredom when it serves the greater goal. Indeed, the ability to delay gratification can be seen as part of one’s emotional maturity.

Understanding why repetition and even boredom sometimes is necessary helps to make it less uncomfortable and even allows it to be enjoyable.



Figure 9. Janne Lehtinen participating in his particular passionate practice.

A major paradox can be found between passionate routines and boredom from the practices, which has a big amount of repetition. Brandon Bauer, a professional rap artist and an amateur snowboarder explains how the music business can bring heightened states of exhilaration, adrenalin rush and excitement for him but can also contain considerable amounts of boredom at the same time. Brandon enjoys creating music and listening to new beats, new songs or searching for inspiration. But at the same time, listening the same tapes and beats over and over again, can be extremely boring. He also loves performing and traveling for the concerts, but still he finds traveling, long flights and waiting to be frustrating and “incredibly boring”. Boredom is present even in performing and rapping in front of big crowds of people. At first he finds performing the new songs to be exciting and bringing great adrenalin rushes. But when repeated constantly from concert to concert, it becomes boring as well. He explains how “music has been the passion or the thing I have loved to do in my life for many years” and continues about

boredom in the music business by telling that “when I wake up in a morning, open my laptop and start listening new beats and new songs I realize at some point when I see the counter of the iTunes that how many times I have been listening the same beats. At the beginning I enjoy and get great ‘kicks’ out of listening the new songs and beats while trying to get into the creative mood. And at this point I feel confident and think that this is exactly what I love to do, but when I repeatedly hear the same songs and beats over and over again, at some point it starts to become boring and I start feel insecure. The songs start sounding lame and I start questioning my own lyrics, texts and beats that are they good after all? And this is extremely boring for me and the only way out of it is to shut the computer and wait for the next creative flow or the next morning to start the same process over again and just hope that I can also create something new along with this battle against boredom”. Sometimes, Brandon also experiences the boredom while performing in the concerts too. He explains that “on a gig it is always nice when I have been able to create a song which I’m very proud of and I want to perform it. Performing the songs I like to the crowds gives me a great rush of adrenaline and good feeling. But when I perform the same song several hundred times it is funny how this same activity which brought me first the good feelings and adrenalin rush now turns out to be extremely boring. I have noticed on the stage how our DJ and me are using nonverbal communication and asking that do we have to do this AGAIN”.



Figure 10. Brandon Bauer participating in his particular passionate practice.

As can be seen from the previous demonstrations and analysis, whatever the particular passionate ritualistic practice, there seems to be an emergent negotiation between two poles to either heightened states of exhilaration and routinized repetition. There is a constant intensity of looming boredom even in the most passion-filled moments.

4.2.2 ROUTINES OF SUPPORT

However, routines of passion require many ritualistic supporting practices as well, in order to become actualized. For example traveling to the location of the actualization of the practice could be considered as supporting ritual. In this chapter I will discuss how these routines of support become negotiated as ritualistic practices alongside the passionate experiences.

A good example of a supporting practice is given by Anton Lindfors who tells about a snowboarding trip from Finland to Italy where he first traveled 30 hours by a boat and then 12 hours by car just to get to a competition. According to him, this travel time is like “poison” when the only things you are able to do is just sitting or lying down. But still he feels great satisfaction, excitement and joy when he gets to the destination and is able to participate the passionate ritualistic practice of snowboarding. Yet even then, he might feel bored and at least acknowledging the possibility of experiencing boredom on the trip back home shadows the whole practice. But all these supporting activities are considered to be worth the suffer in order to be able to exercise a practice he is passionate about. Lindfors demonstrates the boredom and frustration of supporting practices by telling how “we traveled first 30 hours by boat and then we drove 12 hours, so you can think that sitting in a same place or laying down that long time is not that much fun. Even when you arrive to the destination and you still get the going back home in front of you, and that is like swallowing the same poison again. Also when you have arrived to the destination, you can find boredom there as well but the feeling when you get to the slopes, you get to ride your snowboard and get to the competitions is worth it to suffer the boredom”. This example showcases how kinetic relationships between boredom and routines of support become negotiated as ritualistic practices alongside the passionate experiences.

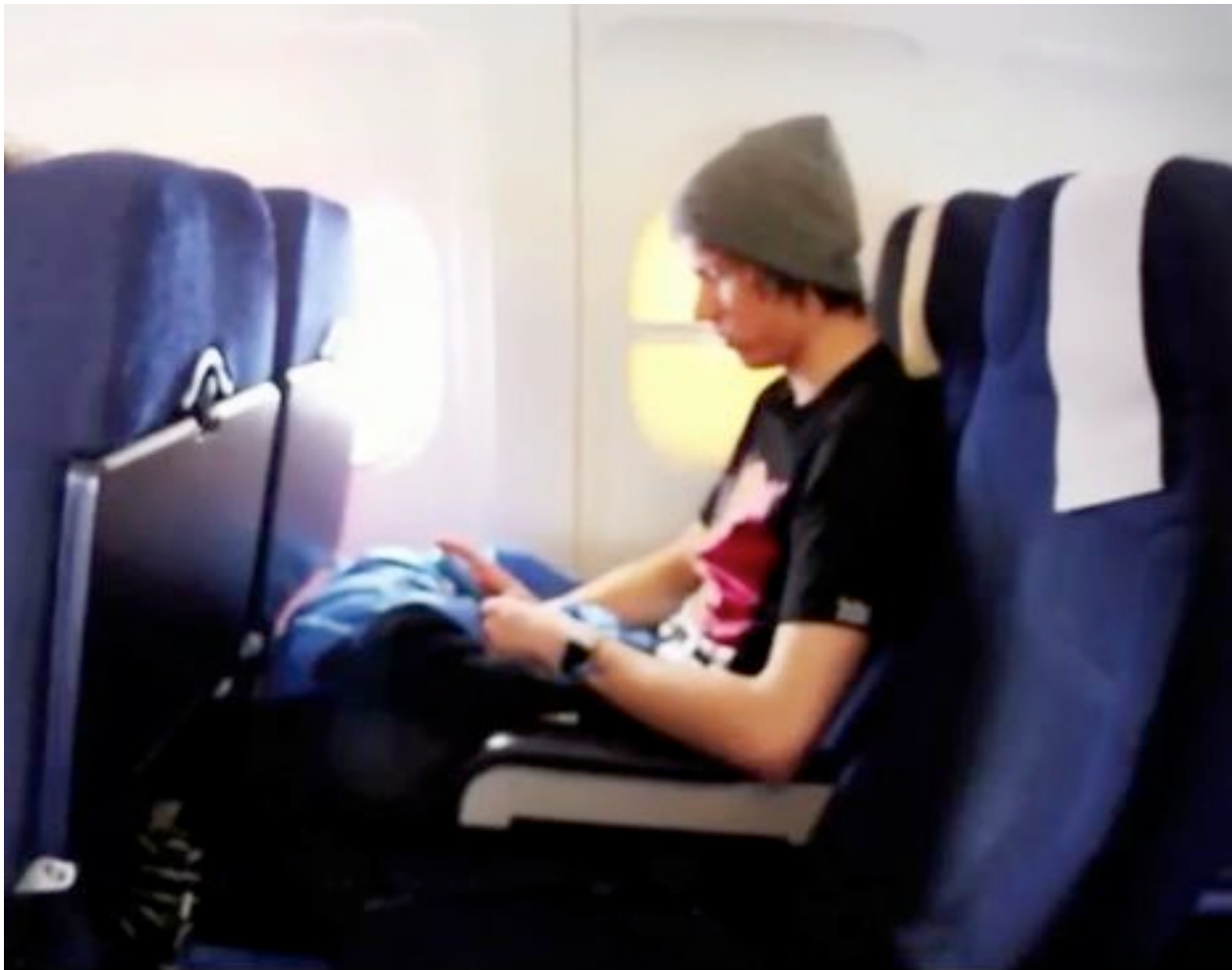


Figure 11. Anton Lindfors during supportive practice of traveling.

Eero Ettala, clearly showcases similar supporting routines, which one needs to go through in order to be able to participate a practice he is passionate about. Ettala considers all snowboarding trips to have two sides: the actual snowboarding side (routine of passion), which has “the feeling and all the excitement”, and the other side being the boring “hotel life” (routine of support) when one is in a new place alone, and is “forced” to live in hotels. There, according to Ettala, the only exciting thing is the bed. Snowboarders even select hotels on basis of their Internet connections in order to be able to pass the time. Ettala also think that sometimes these supporting practices, like for example traveling, waiting or maintenance of equipment or body, are very boring, but sometimes they are a convenient break between the tough and hard days of snowboarding.



Figure 12. Eero Ettala during supportive practice of traveling.

Supporting routines can also be closely related to the actual passionate practices. Senni Hyypä describes how she prepares for her next passionate practices every time she finds herself bored. “In the evenings if I don’t have anything to do and I feel bored, I usually start planning and preparing for the next day. I plan what I’m going to wear, I check the schedules, and I go mentally through the next days events or competitions” she says.

An interesting fact about the supporting practices, according to my research material, is that it seemed to be relatively rare for my participants to being able to participate in any practices, which were considered as constructive, useful or meaningful during the times of supporting practices or boredom. When bored, the most of my participants engaged in practices related to their passionate routines in order to cope with boredom, but still considered these practices to be meaningless. For Brandon Bauer it meant making a new song while waiting at the airport and for Ville Uotila, a professional snowboarder and student, it meant studying or reading in the airplane when bored. They both considered these activities they engaged in to be ‘meaningful’ or ‘constructive’ in the light of their particular passionate practice, but they still experienced

boredom while participating in the activities because they felt, in their words that “the practice felt like it is too much work related”.



Figure 13. Brandon Bauer experiencing boredom during supportive practice of traveling.

According to the research material, other common supporting practices for the particular passionate practices include mental activities like thinking and meditation while bored but also physical activities like exercising, going to the gym or stretching. Especially for the female participants, the combinations of physical practices combined with media/marketing practices were very common. A good example of the mental activities are given by Ville Uotila who explains how he uses the excessive time during long flights or traveling for meditation and thinking about things he normally “does not have time to think about”. Satu Leppämäki, an accounting student, an amateur snowboarder and a surfer gives an illustrative example of the combinations of physical practices and media practices by telling how she goes shopping or “hangs out” in stores when she has extra time on her hands or when she is bored. She added that when this happens she almost subconsciously also buys products or services from the stores and

this is really interesting in the light of consumer research.



Figure 14. Satu Leppämäki shopping while bored.

Anton Lindfors notes that during these supportive practices, “people are often trying to cope with boredom by participating in any practice which is not seen as boring as the first one and this actually makes the second boring practice to be more interesting”. For example in order to cope with boredom during his trips (supporting practices) Eero Ettala usually contacts also the people he would normally would not been speaking to or hanging out with. Ettala says that “if there are many days in a row that I don’t have nothing to do during my trips, it starts annoying me and I have to force myself to do at least something like even contacting the people I would not normally talk to in order to get at least something to do”.

As the case illustrates, due to their more inherently felt boring nature, all these supporting practices involve negotiation and coping. Yet similarly to the rituals of passion it can be seen how the practices of supports become a locus of nonlinear emergent negotiation between two

poles of non-boredom and more intensively extreme boredom that verges on the existential or even depressive.

4.2.3 ROUTINES OF ESCAPE

Thirdly, in addition to previous routines, much negotiation takes place to find emergent states of escape from the routines of everyday life altogether.

For example, Anton Lindfors explains how he loves snowboarding, competing and success, but yet he thinks that traveling, as a supportive practice, is also a way to escape the routines of the everyday life. He explains that “in my opinion, in the end traveling is not that cool after all. Of course there are a lot of cool things why I do it, and without them I would just quit. I have a thirst of success and I love competing, but at the same time I realize this lifestyle is kind of a way to escape the reality and real life. Me and most of my buddies travel because we doesn’t want to participate the ordinary school or work life”.



Figure 15. Anton Lindfors escaping the “real life” by snowboarding.

When looking slightly from another perspective, Eero Ettala considers coming home and participating the routines and practices of everyday life at home as a way to escape the traveling or working life. "I have the feeling that I'm on holiday when I get to be at home, because I'm traveling so much. I escape the work and the traveling by being at home and I enjoy of hanging out with my girlfriend, my dogs and snowboarding and skateboarding with my friends" he tells. Nevertheless, he also thinks that the adrenalin seeking tricks and all the extreme "stuff" he does while snowboarding are also in a way, a way to escape the everyday ritualistic practices and the boredom of "real life".

Janne Lehtinen also explains how he escapes the routines of everyday life. When he practices and plays football everyday, he does not want to take the sport 'with him' when he goes home. He does not like to play electronic football games or watch football from the TV. He prefers to escape the practice in order to keep the enjoyment and interest in his profession and to avoid getting bored with the game. Lehtinen escapes the boring repetition of football and everyday life by doing something completely different like seeing family and hanging out with friends. But his ultimate way of escaping boredom is snowboarding. According to him, snowboarding trips does not have the practices or routines of everyday life and then life is just about living the moment. "I'm that kind of a person that when I play football every single day, several hours, I don't want to play football video games or watch football from TV. I want to escape that in order to keep my interest in it so it doesn't become boring to me. So I have to escape somewhere like snowboarding or doing something else. And for me snowboarding is a lot of fun and a good way the escape the routines of the everyday life. I don't have all the basic routines or rituals of everyday life during the snowboarding trips. Life over there is just about living in the moment" he explains.

Boredom is also associated with depression, loneliness, hopelessness, anxiety and hostility (Winter 2001). Coping with boredom and especially escaping it as well as escaping the boring rituals and practices of everyday life, according to studies, can even have extreme forms like violence, fantasies, gambling, substance abuse like drugs and alcohol. Boredom is also associated with eating disorder (Ganley 1986; Johnston & O'Malley 1986; Blaszczynski et al. 1990). Ironically, some people seem to delight in boredom as an escape from the frenetic pace of contemporary urban life (Winter 2002).

The participants gave some examples of these extreme forms of the practices or routines of escape. Some of the examples are not their personal experiences but rather their own perceptions

Videographic Master's Thesis: 64 <http://vimeo.com/34453747>

of these practices and still relevant for the actual study. Also when combined with theoretical background, they provide interesting and illustrative examples of such practices.

Janne Lehtinen who lives, studies and plays football in the United States has come across and heard about situations where, especially people living in poor neighborhoods have started doing crimes, even such as murders, just because they are bored. Also in the paper “The Intrinsic Appeal of Evil: Sadism, Sensational Thrills and Threatened Egotism”, Baumeister and Campbell (1999) suggest that for high-sensation-seeking people, the intrinsic appeal of and satisfaction from performing violent acts is the quest for thrilling sensations to escape boredom. The thrill of illegal activity, rather than any deliberate intention to cause harm, marks this behavior (Katz 1988; Winter 2002).

Another example of practices of escape appeared when I was doing an interview in the downtown of Helsinki Finland. In front of us roller skates a man wearing white tight ladies top, white tight 80’s style micro-shorts and sunglasses as well as a fanny pack full of different kinds of items. The man is known for roller skating everyday in Helsinki city in funny outfits. He is called “LaserSkater” and he flies by on roller skates in nocturnal Helsinki. He has also made public announcements that he is Finland's first and only known superhero in real life. His main task is to help people with everyday problems and serve as an example (LaserSkater 2011).

Seeing the man, an interesting discussion about fantasies when coping with boredom came about. Jaakko Paloheimo, an engineer, an amateur snowboarder and a surfer says that by fantasizing or even by trying to make fantasies real, one is looking for thrill and excitement in their daily lives. Iiro Oravisjärvi, a manager of motorcycle shop and an amateur snowboarder continues by saying that one is trying to find something else to his or her real life. People are fantasizing about things they feel they are not able to seize but what they would rather have. And the Laserskater is a good example of somebody who actually turns his fantasy into real life.



Figure 16. LaserSkater escaping the “real life” into his fantasies.

Winter notes in his book *still bored in a culture of entertainment: rediscovering passion & wonder* (2002), that there is a clear relationship between people who seek high sensation and novelty and a proneness to boredom. There are also many studies that have demonstrated the association between sensation-seeking tendencies and a wide variety of risky behaviors including drug use, alcohol consumption, smoking, use of pornography and even risky sex (Greene et al. 2000). In my study, Mika Roiha, an event marketing producer, a student, an amateur snowboarder and a surfer, makes an interesting note about a documentary movie “*Reindeer Spotting: Escape from Santaland*” (Reindeerspotting 2010) which is a real documentation of the everyday life of a Finnish drug addicts living in a town called Rovaniemi in the northern part of Finland. In the document, the main character “Janne”, describes his drug use similarly as the informants in my research explains their passion for snowboarding, surfing, football, music or traveling. From the use of drugs, Janne gets a feeling that “comes from anywhere else”, and that drives him to use more. This same seems to apply to my informants which are seeking for an experience which is not possible to gain from anywhere else than from their particular passionate practices. “Like in that movie *Reindeerspotting* where the guys use

drugs they explain their use of drugs by the same reasons why we snowboard, surf or play football. From using drugs, they get the feeling which you cannot get from anywhere else, just like we the same feeling from extreme sports”, Roiha comments.



Figure 17. Movie poster of Reideerspotting – Escape from Santaland.

None of my informants openly use drugs, but they all consume alcohol for different reasons. Jaakko Paloheimo has one answer for casual drinking. He thinks that people get accustomed to routines of everyday life at some point in their lives, but when one starts drinking it is something different than routines and rituals of mundane daily life. From a different perspective, Iiro Oravisjärvi highlights how drinking is a way to release boring inhibitions of human beings. It is one means for catharsis in order to act recklessly and irresponsibly or try something different from our everyday lives.



Figure 18. Janne Lehtinen and the researcher escaping routines of everyday life by gambling in Las Vegas, USA.

Like mentioned earlier, according to many studies boredom has been shown to contribute also to pathological gambling and other risk taking behavior (Blaszczynski et al. 1990; Baumeister & Campbell 1999; Greene et al. 2000; Winter 2002). Jaakko Paloheimo explains the thrill of gambling by describing the feelings of risk taking, danger and excitement when one puts his or her money in gambling. According to him, it is the thrill of not knowing whether he is going to win or lose. He cannot control the situation and that exactly is the difference between mundane everyday life, where he can control most of the situations. Normally people have their routines, rituals and practices of their mundane everyday lives planned long ahead in the future and they rarely have any big surprises in their daily lives. “You usually know what is going to happen during the next three hours and you know approximately what will be happening next day, but in gambling you get to the stage where you hope for winning but nothing is certain, the outcome is not in your hands anymore, and you can end up losing as well”, Oravisjärvi says. “It is the excitement and thrill what you are seeking for your life”, he continues, and explains how “one does not usually stress if he or her is able to make coffee in the morning but in gambling one has the excitement of not controlling the situation”. Jaakko Paloheimo clarifies how one usually plan his or hers days beforehand. “If one works from eight to four, and then goes to the gym, the day is already planned till six o’clock and there isn’t exactly anything to look for, but if one starts drinking you can never know what is going to happen”, Paloheimo says. He thinks that

when he goes out drinking and partying the life is “unpredictable” and he is able to switch his thoughts and mind to somewhere else than the routines, rituals and practices of mundane daily life. It is escaping the routines of everyday life, which are driven by the fear for accustomization, but it is not escaping the real life itself.

Ville Uotila, a professional snowboarder and an amateur surfer, makes an interesting comment about how he feels and experiences boredom when he has a hangover. Ville explains that every time after having a lot of fun, and when having the hangover next day, he cannot get anything out of himself, he goes into “overdrive mode” and he feels bored even if there is something interesting to do. “One situation where I experience boredom is when I have a hangover. When I have had a lot of fun, and next day when I have that feeling, I cannot get anything out of anything. I kind of like running on overdrive, and I cannot do anything even if there would be something interesting to do”, he tells.



Figure 19. Ville Uotila experiencing boredom when hangovered after having a fun night.

The research data shows that even in these more extreme social practices there can be seen the two-directionality of intensities and their negotiation. Escaping the everyday ritualistic practice, whether passionate or supporting, seems to involve the attempt to break down the potential for repetition or predictability. And again, there can be seen a similar negotiation – from the adrenalin or drug-induced hopes for catharsis to the intense feelings of boredom-filled misery if

such emergent practices fail or when they become further actualized in the painful sobriety of the following morning. We can see a further dialectic as well, as the routines of escape seem to emerge into further repetitive routines themselves.

Moreover, it is very interesting how, the particular passionate practices and routines may also be juxtaposed with all the consumption situations and practices where the particular passionate practice demands for any 'extreme' or 'adrenaline rushing' activities. These activities and practices are also commonly characterized by waiting, routines and boredom at least at some point of the activity. These activities could be, for example, anything between sky diving, benji-jumping, snowboarding, singing, performing or even casual sex. In most cases, any of these activities or experiences which are so exciting that participating in the activity causes feeling emptiness, melancholy and even boredom afterwards.

This concept is wider known as *Post-coital tristesse*. Usually this is more common in men than in women. Many PCT sufferers may also exhibit strong feelings of anxiety, anywhere from five minutes, to two hours after coitus. The phenomenon is referred to by the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza in his *Tractatus de Intellectus* or "*Treatise on the Improvement of the Understanding*" (Spinoza 1677), when he said "For as far as sensual pleasure is concerned, the mind is so caught up in it, as if at peace in a (true) good, that it is quite prevented from thinking of anything else. But after the enjoyment of sensual pleasure is past, the greatest sadness follows. If this does not completely engross, still it thoroughly confuses and dulls the mind." English comedian Russell Brand (2008) describes the phenomenon in his stand-up: "After I cum, it's like 'Oh my God, what have I done?' A sense of profound existential angst, a sense of loss, a sense that somehow I've let my mum down" (Brand 2008). Also, just as a drug user develops a tolerance and needs larger doses to achieve the same effect, so too have we developed a tolerance to amazing events (Winters 2002). So, interestingly according to my findings, the PCT is also very common especially among the professional extreme athletes but it is also encountered among much more common consumption practices too.

4.3 FRAMEWORK FOR FINDINGS

To address the research questions, I will first develop and present a framework of the three central perspectives of practices to *coping* with boredom in the contemporary society.

4.3.1 FRAMEWORK OF NEXUS:

When observing practices of boredom as coordinated ritualistic practices, they could be seen as temporally unfolding and spatially dispersed nexus of doings, sayings and their spatial performing, where the coping practices consist of three categories of practice nexuses: *routines of 'passion'*, *routines of support* and *routines of escape*. These categories are linked to each other through understandings, explicit rules and 'teleoaffective' structures, which are embracing ends, projects, tasks, purposes, beliefs, emotions and moods.

Every perspective also contains and discloses the immanent presence of different movements - from and -to whereby the intensities that on-go and occur alongside boredom cross over thresholds of indeterminacy to momentarily re-configure time-space even as boredom stills and slows it.

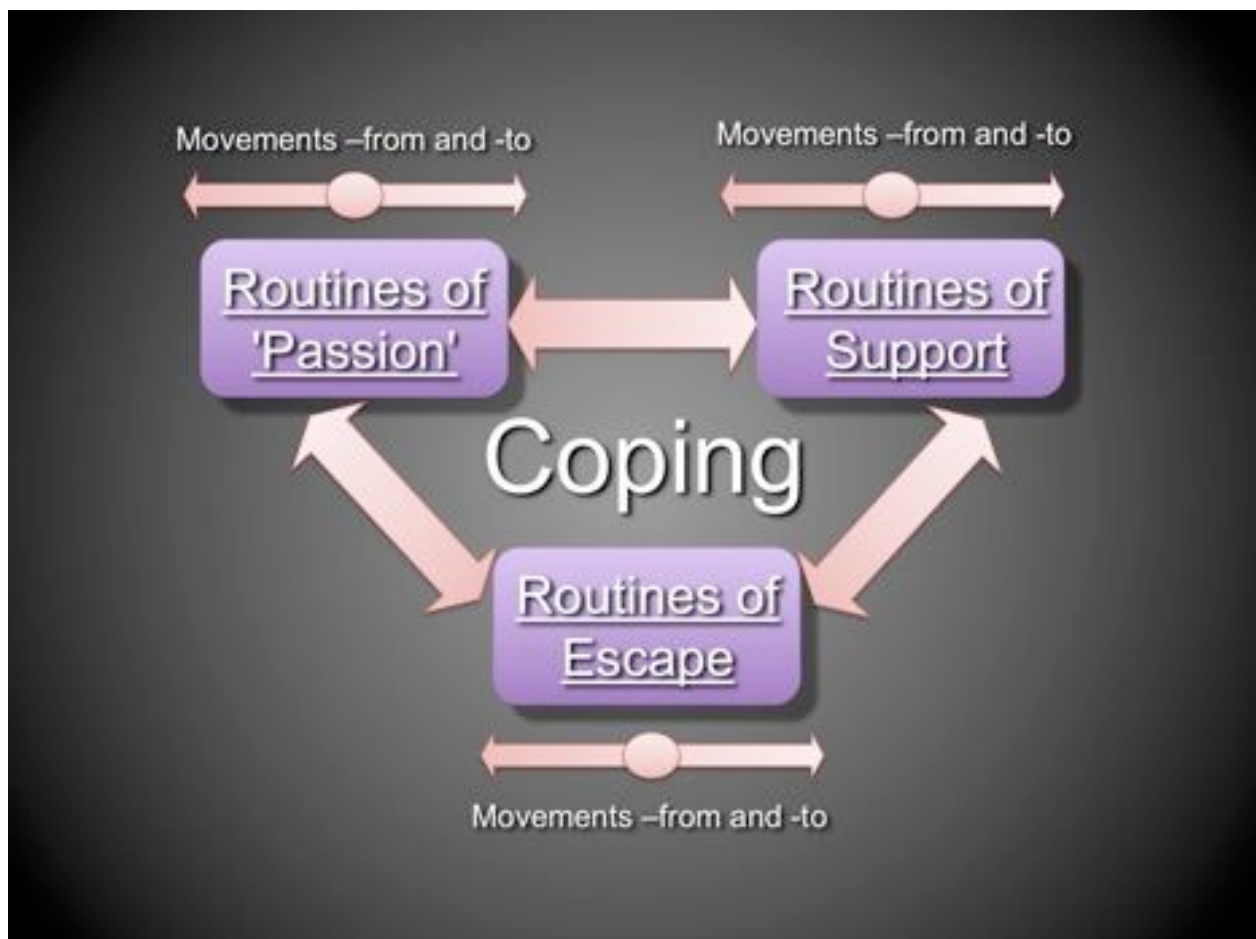


Figure 20. The framework of nexus for coping with boredom.

As can be seen from the research materials, there seem to be a flux of elements impacting the routines of practices linked together by coping ‘nexus’ the means through which doings and sayings interconnect and are coordinated. All these routines are tied to other routines, practices and arrangements, but are also continuously overlapping each other through same and orchestrated spatial settings and temporal orientations (Schatzki 2009).

In the context of a contemporary perspective on boredom I am suggesting that analysis of practices of boredom must be concerned with both meaning-makings and its representations and with the actual execution or carrying out of the practices under the limiting agent of material arrangements, which actualizes and sustains practices as depicted by my framework of practice nexuses.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS FROM SOCIOCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

In this chapter I will explore and discuss some perspectives to what the construction of my framework on boredom could mean from the sociocultural perspective.

4.4.1 BOREDOM IN THE LIGHT OF THEORY OF SOCIAL PRACTICES

Theories of practice have rarely been applied systematically to the study of consumption (Warde 2005). There has also been very little reflection on the methodological or managerial implications of adopting a practice theoretical perspective in research and virtually no one has used it in boredom research. In order to study subjects like consumption or even boredom, more philosophical approaches should be developed for the practice theory and at the same time the embeddedness in empirical social and cultural analysis should be furthered. The applications of practice theory presented in this study extend the most mundane aspects of everyday life to cover very little researched aspects of boredom, in the context of mental practices in personalized settings with attention given to, both momentary actions and emotions as well as long-term meaning-makings.

The particular contribution of practice theory to consumer culture studies and study of consumption and boredom, is the way in which it helps us to focus on the performative but also

on the mental activities of social life, which by necessity involve at least some consumption activities, while not diminishing the importance of either the cultural conditioning of consumption and boredom, or the consumption and boredom of practitioners.

4.4.2 ENTERTAINED TO EXCESS

One seems to find more boredom from the society than ever before, but it is undetected because of enormous mass of entertainment and other stimuli pushed to us by media and marketing. Overstimulation is felt most in relation to the entertainment and advertizing industries (Winter 2002).

One informant, Jaakko Paloheimo, describes how there should be a “balance of life” in everything what people do. If one has something more in some thing, it is less on some other thing. Satu Leppämäki demonstrates this thinking by explaining how we could think that “boredom is a center, from which we move to one way where we find positive, happy, good, interesting, reactive and meaningful things, and if we move to the other direction we find similarly meaningful things but they are of negative in their nature, but which are still not boring”. Boring things are the ones in the middle, and boredom happens when everything lacks meaning. When moving away from either the positive or the negative things or in other words when ‘decreasing’ the positive or the negative things we become bored.

Boredom exists as an index of mild dissatisfaction or satisfaction that provides, first and foremost, the impetus to enter into different relations or if put it differently, it takes place as a form of affectively based imperative to something-else where that movement is possible. (Anderson 2004). There are different movements -from and -to presence in boredom, such as joy, hope and despair which occur, like Satu Leppämäki demonstrated before, alongside boredom cross over thresholds of indeterminacy to momentarily re-configure time-space or in other words, effect the affective quality of “life in all its sticky and slack human/nonhuman, inorganic, incorporeal, phenomenal/epiphenomenal, and banal/intense everydayness” (Seigworth 2000: 246). Heidegger further explains this by noting that “when attuning to the movement-from that always accompanies boredom discloses the immanent presence of intensities that on-go even as boredom stills and slows time-space” (Anderson 2004: 739).

Based on the research material, it seems that Heidegger’s perspectives of boredom also contains

a critique which is more topical now than in his own time, due to the constantly growing industry of media, entertainment and amusement that people turn to in their everyday life. It seems evident that the entertainment products and services are ubiquitous in contemporary western society. There is no way for people to escape or keep a distance to them and many of them seem to manifest in an anti-social character.

Jaakko Paloheimo, gives an example of how entertainment is used excessively in order to drive away boredom from our normal commerce with the surrounding world by telling how “when I walk in the city, I find endless amount of different stimulations and entertainment around me. It is a good thing if I am for example looking for a specific item to buy. Then I might be interested in all the marketing and I sometimes could be even pulling the advertising to me and searching for the item through different medias. If I just walk in the city or even go to my home, I am still surrounded by music coming from everywhere, I can see entertainment everywhere, there are colors, advertisements and so on. But if I want to get away from all that entertainment and stimuli, there is no place to escape it in contemporary world”.

Satu Leppämäki questions that do we always have to have some external entertainment in order to flee from or repel the boredom. Do people not have any other options for coping with boredom than the external stimulation? Do all the moments without this external stimulation have to be “boring”? What has happened to the entertainment created internally in the minds of the people?

Jaakko Paloheimo has one possible answer for this. People in contemporary Western societies born and grow up in a world where we learn to have and get used to having all the entertainment around us. “If one would born to the time before all the modern amusements, entertainment or media stimuli, he or she would grow up to experience and cope with boredom differently” he notes and continues that “now modern people have optimized their selves to expect that they automatically have some entertainment around them”. Satu Leppämäki also notes that “it is culturally given to us that we have all this amusement and entertainment on our hands, and boredom becomes actualized when all this stimuli is taken away from us for some reason”. This is also supported by Spacks (1995) when she argues that the recognition of a right not to be bored, and obligation not to bore, only came about in the nineteenth century at the same time as a concern with the quality of inner experience and notion of individual rights.



Figure 21. Jaakko Paloheimo trying to cope with boredom by using Facebooking with iPhone, while shopping.

All this amusement, media, entertainment and diversion such as advertising, computers, electronic games, TV, radio, Internet, social media and Web 2.0, or ordinary entertainment like endless shopping malls, restaurants, fitness clubs, gambling casinos, porn shops, strip clubs or movie theaters are so infiltrated in our everyday world that we constantly drive boredom away from our lives.

Even though the function of entertainment is precisely to provide an alternative to the more 'serious' matters in life, the easiness in turning to it has become a problem and ironically, because of the media's ability to communicate extraordinary events in such dramatic ways, the daily sequences of our mundane lives seem increasingly boring. We are now so used to and saturated with entertainment and advertizing that only in certain unusual and unexpected circumstances does our addiction to entertainment and thus a certain subjugation of our inner resources become noticeable.

According to Winter (2002) when stimulation comes at us from every side, we reach a point where we cannot respond with much depth to anything. He continues that when, bombarded with so much that is exciting and demands our attention, we tend to become unable to discriminate and choose from among the many options. The result is that we shut down our attention to everything. The boredom that people feel today is probably more likely to come from an overload than an 'underload'. When we are surrounded with so much information, it is hard to sort out what is relevant and important and to find meaning in anything (Winter 2002).

Furthermore, instead of coming up with our own ways of entertaining ourselves, many people nowadays rely on radio, television and movies for entertainment. Each day people have to face information and entertainment via mail, e-mail, voice mail, telephone, Internet, radio, mobile, television, street billboards, and even different kinds of monitors around us. Of course entertainment in moderation is sometimes a good and necessary thing, but we are surrounded by constant stimulation. Also, people do not put much effort into getting the entertainment. This allows us to be 'passive couch potatoes' who expect and let it all come to us (Winter 2002). Winter (2002) adds that what comes to us is designed to grab our attention and get high ratings or reviews by being exciting, stimulating and entertaining. One of the most interesting fact of all is that we take all this for granted, because we have been born and raised to be a part of this society and culture of entertainment and most of us do not have the ability or will to question it. On the other hand, entertainment has also become the primary measure of value: every experience has to be highly entertaining (Winter 2002). The mass culture created by the entertainment industry has created a fantasy world in which we seem aspired to live and experience. The media create expectations making ordinary life seem increasingly boring and thus we grow evermore dissatisfied, in order to crave just one more round of the medias' sensational entertainment (Winter 2002).

4.4.3 BOREDOM AS CREATIVE AND MOTIVATION FORCE

Jaakko Paloheimo thinks that most of the people has strive to flee boredom, on the way or another. Because of this, he actually sees boredom as a motivation power to creating and doing stimulating things. When people are bored they start thinking the things they could do. In a way, boredom motivates people to use their internal abilities to entertain themselves when they lack the external stimuli.

When following and studying creative or passionate people, I found that they often have less boring moments in their lives because they use most of these boring times for thinking or planning their particular passionate practices. On the other hand, people are often under the influence of different external stimuli and thus also exposed and vulnerable for experiencing boredom when the external amusement is taken away. Jaakko Paloheimo comments how the excessive entertainment and stimulation flow kills the creativity of human mind. Jaakko Paloheimo also continues by saying that all these external stimuli are nowadays doing the creative work for the people but when the excessive stimulus ends they wonder who will do the entertaining for them?

When I followed Rasmus Tikkanen, a creative artist, a professional snowboarder and a professional videographer and an editor, he had one day when he really had nothing important to do. Still he never stood still. He used the time by photo shopping a funny logo for not yet existing websites for his art painting. He did not know why he started to do the logo but it ended up to as a main logo for his websites. When he was working the logo he explained how he does creative things like that when he feels bored. He does it mainly for his own amusement, but at the same time also for finding an inspiration for the next beneficial thing like next artwork or video. He thinks that creative work is always like that; trying to find inspiration for the next work and thus it is also always considered as work. All the boring “down time” too, can be considered as work for the next inspiration and the next artwork.

Eero Ettala provides a similar insight from the passionate practices. He explains how every time he has nothing to do or he feels bored, he is trying to think what kind of trick would he do next time when he gets to the slopes, what kind of videos and clips he wants for he websites or which countries he would he like to travel to shoot his next snowboarding movie. He is trying to imagine and develop in his head the passionate practices he does, in order to get a vision and ideas for the next time he has all the necessary elements to execute them. Ettala also thinks that when one is passionate for his or hers particular practice, also boring times are avoided by thinking and developing the passionate practice.

4.4.4 LACK OF INITIATIVE AND INTERNAL STIMULATION

According to Paloheimo, our whole society has a distorted view of world, where people are artificially and forcibly trying to fill up the world as well as their lives, with external stimulation

and entertainment. People's creative abilities have decreased as well as they lack initiative to use their internal or mental recourses in order to keep oneself entertained. But if all this amusement would be taken away, according to Jaakko, then people would be forced to use their internal abilities again. He raises the question of why people are filling their lives by all this artificial or man-made entertainment? Are we not able to entertain ourselves anymore?

Satu Leppämäki continues by noting that when entertainment provides tremendous, wonderful and exciting things to our lives, and especially when we get used to the level of excitement provided by the entertainment, the ordinary and mundane things in life are not exciting enough and they are considered as boring. Everyday practices feel boring because they are not on the same level, or as exciting as the "normal" entertainment we are used to have. She says that "when we get more and more exciting and entertaining things, then the little things in life feel boring. For example when people go to summer cabin, all the normal things to do over there, such as cutting grass or washing dishes, feels boring because it is not as exiting and entertaining as people are used to in their every day life when all the entertainment is present".

When we are involved in a constant activity of consuming entertainment we seem to lunge to every opportunity to do something radically novel. By turning away from everything that does not give us immediate pleasure, could it be that we are turning away from our innermost possibilities?

4.4.5 THE CONTEMPORARY CONSUMER CULTURE OF PLEASURE OBSESSED AGE

Boredom could be seen as chronic symptom of a pleasure-obsessed age. When pleasure becomes one's number one priority, the result is boredom. Ironically, it seems that media and entertainment in the contemporary world are usually conceived as emancipatory and democratizing forces. Yet, the contemporary consumer culture seems to have a fetish for doing and not standing still. In a certain sense we are caught up in certain understanding that is not open for interruptions. Our being in the world has been taken for granted and attempts to strive away from boredom by using media and entertainments are constructed deeply in our culture.

On the other hand, it seems that when people are desperately trying to cope with boredom by using different media to entertain and amuse themselves, they are falling more deeply into the boredom and enforcing the experience of boredom and emptiness. Coping with boredom by

using different medias and entertainment has made it too easy for people to turn into them. So, I am suggesting that the excessive entertainment flood of contemporary everyday life is only feeding boredom and making coping with it more difficult.

Brandon Bauer illustrates the topic by telling how he is very active in using different medias during the day, but more passive in other things in life such as physical exercising, studying or household tasks. He notes that “if there is a nice day out side, I like to go out, but usually it is just for an hour or two and then I am again back in front of the TV and computer”. He considers himself as very active media user but more passive in doing anything mundane work. He also notes that when he feels bored, for him a very easy temporal solution for coping with it is to open the TV, to go to the Internet or to use social media and mobile phone. But what is interesting is that nevertheless he also says that it is extremely boring and frustrating to stay on the computer the whole day, use the Internet and follow what other people do in the social media. It is frustrating and boring not being able to get anything constructing or meaningful done.



Figure 22. Brandon Bauer trying to cope with boredom by using social media at his home.

The excess amount of entertainment has also led to us in the situation where we have a illusion of ‘loss of meaning’ if the external stimuli has been taken away. The illusion of ‘loss of meaning’ where life feels meaningless and empty when the external stimuli have been taken

away and the flow of constant external entertainment is blocked. This has led us into a situation where we ritually cope of boredom in everyday life and are not able to use our inner creativity to stimulate ourselves. There finds more boredom from the society than ever before, but it is not clearly even detected because of enormous mass of entertainment and other stimuli pushed to us by media.

One of the main findings of the study is how the excessive entertainment and media stimulation along with our everyday social practices saturate and empty the potential for creativity or what I will call 'internal stimulation'. We live in a society or culture of mass media and entertainment where people are not passive, but they are rather *passionless* and have learned not to use their own creativity to cope with and negotiate boredom in order to keep themselves entertained. Creative intensities and the ability to keep oneself entertained are hindered by over-stimulation of media and marketing industries as well as the passionless consumption routines and practices we have come accustomed to. This is also feeding and increasing the negative experience of boredom in peoples' mundane everyday life. Could we also come up with non-oppressive ways to improve the creative intensities while reigniting some of the ways when the society still lacked the notion of boredom and the need to anxiously escape from it in a race for rats to run?

Jaakko Paloheimo encapsulates one of the main findings of the study by giving his own description of boredom. He describes boredom as "a materialistic agriculture of contemporary society, where one seeds stimulus, irritants and entertainment. And if we are not able to harvest the wanted crop from these, what remains is boredom". He continues by elaborating that in materialistic, modern and contemporary society we seed the fields by different stimulus like in the old times one sowed potato fields by seeds. And if we are not able to grow and harvest the wanted crop from the stimulus, like if the people in the old days were not able to grow and harvest potato, end up with boredom. When one starts to enrich, enhance and nurture the crops in order for them to grow, and when the fields of entertainment and stimulus are booming and blossoming boredom disappears.



Figure 23. Jaakko Paloheimo giving his description of boredom.

Since the Industrial Revolution there has been an increasing separation between work and leisure (Winter 2002). Prior to that time, these activities were often intermingled. Before the mass media, such as television, movies, radio or Internet, people for example sat together talking or making music. They seem to have escaped the real life into their own stories, but these settings usually involved contact and communication with people rather than escaping into the isolating fantasy world of movie, Internet or television, like people do these days. Most of us no longer talk with each other in a similar sense, nor tell each other stories. The stories that now entertain us are made up for us by marketing or media industry (Winter 2002).

Also the increased leisure time of people living in contemporary world, can be very enjoyable if one has many interests, but on the other hand, it also gives one more time during which to be bored, and because most of us have trouble to entertain ourselves people rely on the eager entertainment industry to provide it for us. And the entertainment industry has responded to this need to the point of overstimulation (Winter 2002).

Boredom can also be a catalyst that spurs us to activity and interest in new things, but unfortunately, for most people who encounter boredom the tendency is to slide into negative things. We live in a time when people do not often complain openly about boredom, yet they are

obviously experiencing it as they move restlessly from one form of entertainment to another, searching for new stimulation and for something more than they have already (Winter 2002).

5 CONCLUSION

Although the results of the study could have been forecasted and expected to some extent, it is crucial with ethnographic research not to predict the outcome. The research itself, in the best case, should reveal and discover something unexpected and extraordinary about the subject. And this is what happened with my study of boredom too. Although the preliminary results and the most self-explanatory findings were easy to predict the study yet revealed some really unexpected outcomes of how the excessive entertainment flood of contemporary everyday life is only feeding boredom and making coping with it more difficult, how the media's ability to communicate extraordinary events in such dramatic ways causes the daily round of peoples mundane lives seeming more boring, how the contemporary consumer culture can be seen as having a fetish for doing and not standing still which is also increasing the negative experience of boredom as well as how boredom could be seen as chronic symptom of a pleasure-obsessed age because when pleasure becomes one's number one priority, the result is boredom. Also one of the main findings of the study was how the excessive entertainment and media stimulation along with our everyday social practices saturate and empty the potential for creativity. Creative intensities and the ability to keep oneself entertained are hindered by over-stimulation of media and marketing industries as well as the passionless consumption routines and practices and this is also feeding and increasing the experience of boredom in peoples' mundane everyday life.

The findings presented here are not intended as generalizations about the young urban adult population but rather, they offer a one possible illustrations of the nature and depth of sentiment that distinguish ritual behavior, and as suggested methodological alternatives for investigating such phenomena.

In this study I concentrated only on urban city people, who live in the biggest city of Finland. I realize that among urbanities boredom is also a problem of small towns, rural backwaters and traditional societies outside the mainstream of progress and that the experiencing boredom might vary a much between big city dwellers and people of the country side. Also for some people, escaping from an overload of information and entertainment is a subconscious experience; for others, it seems more deliberate and conscious choice within a practice

constellation nevertheless.

Because of the abstract and philosophical nature of the concept of boredom, it became evident when conducting this study, that my analysis on boredom is only a scratch of an extensive subject that could be studied further from different points of view as well. Studying and presenting boredom comprehensively would require tremendously more work than regular master's thesis project.

In the end, the outcome of the research feels at least adequate. I managed capture glimpses of the feelings and experiences of boredom on tape, researched, processed and edited the massive amount of research material, combined the material with appropriate theoretical background as well as managed to find interesting and relevant findings from data.

I am suggesting that my research on boredom and its findings are coherent and truthful glimpses of presentations of how boredom becomes negotiated in contemporary consumer culture as well as how coping with boredom becomes emergently embodied in spatiotemporal surroundings, and may be useful in understanding the consumers better as a whole. The results and findings of the research can be seen as reliable and consistent illustrations of the contemporary practices of boredom and could be used in order to gain new insights to the consumption practices and routines of all business and recreational travelers.

The results and findings of this research will hopefully enable researchers and marketers to gain better understanding of boredom and implications to the ways of contemporary boredom coping and media practices. Most of all it hopefully illustrates the power of videographic research methods in qualitative marketing research and present the study of consumers and especially boredom in new, interesting, stimulating and (post) modern way.

This research of practices of boredom also clearly demonstrates how the good use of video and media with the type of knowledge produced in here can be more experiential and emotional, than we often attempt with our written work. In the future the social sciences and especially the field of consumer research will benefit from the videographic research tradition. According to my research it is possible to study and present even the more abstract and philosophical aspects of consumer culture, by using video imaging. This research method could be used to study other aspects of the consumer behavior as well in order to gain even better picture of consumption and consumers as a whole.

For the further research of boredom or social consumption practices, the Heidegger's third level of boredom, *The Profound Boredom* could serve as a basis for another independent research, per se. Also because all my participants came from one country and from one city only, although the research was conducted in several countries, further research could cover wider social system and study informants living in different countries as well as study boredom in the context of different social consumption practices.

5.1 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

From the managerial point of view, by knowing the consumers behavior better companies could gain major competitive advantages in the markets. Understanding the consumers better as a whole could help companies to separate and stand out from the others in the challenging, fragmented and turbulence market fields and improve their business and profitability. For example preventing or alleviating boredom is one way for an individual to attempt to control his or her environment. Thus, practices such as shopping or use of media could be seen as means to alleviate negative affective states like boredom, and further change them to positive affective states such as interest or excitement.

In order for marketers and media producers to fulfill the negative moments such as boredom, with their media or marketing efforts in consumers' mundane everyday life they should invest in knowing also the negative routines, rituals and feelings of consumers better. This would help marketers and media producers to understand what effects to consumers' emotional states, which ultimately impact sales. This would also aid them to come up with new and innovative methods and applications for fulfilling these negative moments like boredom in customers' lives. The results of practical boredom coping practices have the potential to produce unexpected and even strategically important knowledge and outcomes.

One example could be a creation of the way systems of technology and media co-developed with social structures to form the contexts in which individuals participate, interact with, appropriate and domesticate technologies and entertainment in everyday life instead of only receiving them but also work towards development of new media, entertainment or marketing applications where the consumer is challenged to participate, engage and be involved in the

creation of the content. Gram-Hanssen (2010) discusses such way systems, co-development and contents in the light of practice theory. For example the creator of the phenomenally popular *CSI* franchise on TV, Anthony E. Zuiker launched in 2009 an interactive “digi novel” entitled Level 26, which combines a print thriller with multimedia stories, videos, internet and social media in order to bridge the action. Here the reader takes part in creating the story and not only receive it.

Another implications for marketers and media producers could be ideas that cultivate wonders of everyday life, develop enthusiasm, interest and passion towards something else than media stimuli, persuade active engagement with the world, but at the same time, are so interesting and exciting that they hinder boredom and in the best case lead to flow experience.

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