AN EVALUATION OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN GOLFER CHARACTERISTICS, GOLFER BEHAVIOURS AND DESTINATION SELECTION.

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Thesis submitted to the University of Kent for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2013
ABSTRACT

Sports tourism has received growing attention in academic research over the past two decades but limited focus has been given to understanding the consumer and factors influencing decisions to include sport as part of the trip. This research provides, through a focus on the sport of golf, insight into the characteristics of the sports tourist, how participation is included in trips, how the emotional rewards gained from participation can influence sports tourist behaviours, and thus influence the selection of locations deemed suitable for sports participation. Specifically the aim of this thesis is to evaluate the relationships between golfer characteristics, golfer behaviours and destination choice.

The research employs a grounded theory methodology, underpinned by a constructivist epistemology. This informed the process used to gather and analyse data as well as the presentation of this thesis. Three iterations of data (presented as discrete chapters) provide a robust analysis of literature and the twenty-seven interviews with UK-based golf tourists.

Analysis elucidated the golfer characteristics, concluding with the development of a golf tourism participation spectrum. This understanding of the golf tourist informed the development of a substantive theory explaining the relationship between golf tourist behaviours and destination selection. A model detailing that the relationship is constructed through six conceptual strands (construction of the golf holiday, emotional rewards of participation, total trip spend, amenities and support facilities, course characteristics and influences of reputation). The first four of these strands directly influences golfer behaviour, with the latter two strands combining with behaviour to determine destination selection. Significant to the substantive theory is the identification of four spheres of influence (group dynamics, the role of competitions and ability, golfing capital and the role of intermediaries) which interact with the conceptual strands to govern destination selection.

This thesis concludes by proposing a model which considers the findings in relation to the wider sport tourism sector.
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## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Agence France Presse</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGM</td>
<td>Annual General Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>BBC</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAQDAS</td>
<td>Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>Conceptual Clarification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMU</td>
<td>Decision making Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELCGA</td>
<td>Essex Ladies County Golf Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAGTO</td>
<td>International Association of Golf Tour Operators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGU</td>
<td>Ladies Golf Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPGA</td>
<td>Ladies Professional Golf Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NR</td>
<td>National Ranking (see appendix 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGA</td>
<td>Professional Golfers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QE</td>
<td>Question for further Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;A</td>
<td>The R&amp;A (origins of name from The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews)</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAs</td>
<td>Travel Agents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TCP</td>
<td>Travel Career Pattern</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIA</td>
<td>Travel Industry Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOs</td>
<td>Tour Operators</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNWTO</td>
<td>United Nations World Tourism Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UR</td>
<td>Unrated (see appendix 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USGA</td>
<td>United States Golf Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VFR</td>
<td>Visiting Friends and Relatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>WR</td>
<td>World Ranking (see appendix 1)</td>
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Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank the twenty-five golfers who participated in this research by offering their views and opinions in interview. Their forthright and comprehensive discussions have provided this thesis with rich data. I have felt privileged to hear their experiences and I wish them all well on the fairways.

I would like to thank to my PhD advisors, Dr Chris Bull and Professor Mike Weed. Chris has been an enthusiastic and consistent supporter of this research, offering insightful and thoughtful comments to direct progression of this work. Mike has shown extensive patience with my demands and questions, challenging me to develop this research to its fullest potential. I am grateful to have experienced such wonderful supervision. I also thank my Chair of Studies, Professor Peter Vujakovic for the confidence he has shown in the work as it progressed.

Throughout the period of study I have been gainfully employed at the University of Westminster and I thank this organisation for their final support, provided through my department under the guidance of Jane Wright. I must also offer my grateful thanks to my colleagues at the university, particularly the tourism team who were supportive and generous with their time, knowledge, experiences.

Finally, and without reservation, I wish to thank my husband and family, for their patience when work and this research were completing for my time. I also appreciate their support and understanding, and tolerance when I was chattering incessantly about exciting concepts and conclusions - and I am confident they now fully appreciate my passion for both education and golf!
PART ONE - OUTLINING THE THESIS

This research project examines the sporting activity of golf, with a specific focus on playing while travelling away from home. There is a growing body of literature on sports tourism generally and over the past decade significant attention has been paid to different aspects of golf tourism (Correia and Pintassilgo, 2006, Geissler, 2005, Gibson and Pennington-Gray, 2005, Hennessey et al., 2008, Hudson and Hudson, 2010, Hutchinson et al., 2009, Kim et al., 2005, Kim et al., 2008, Petrick and Backman, 2002b, Tassiopoulos and Haydam, 2008).

Part One outlines the aim and objectives of this thesis, justifying this focus on one particular sporting activity. This is followed by discussion of the ontology and epistemology underpinning this research which validates the methodology selected - grounded theory. As a consequence of employing this methodological approach literature is considered to be data and is thus presented alongside the primary research in Part Two. However grounded theory does demand that theoretical sensitivity is established prior to primary data collection and thus Part One concludes with an initial examination of relevant literature.
Chapter 1: The aim of this research

For over half a century there has been a steady growth in the tourism market (UNWTO, 2006) but since the 1980’s the traditional mass tourism market has moved its attention from passive forms of recreation to more active holidays (Priestley, 1995, Hinch and Higham, 2011, Bramwell, 2004). Post-modern travel enthusiasms have led to more demanding customers (Bouchet et al., 2004) seeking greater variety of product offer which, matched with supply, has led to an increased growth in sports tourism generally.

In the UK both the sport and the tourism industries are a significant part of our society, justifying the increased attention within academic literature (Gibson, 2003), and the combination of these two realms has occurred as more people travel with sporting interests in mind, both as passive spectators and as active participants. Gammon and Robinson (2003) initially debated these nuances as sport tourism and tourism sport, more recently refining this framework to recognise that some participants are driven by competitive desires, whilst others see their participation as purely recreational (Robinson and Gammon, 2011, Robinson and Gammon, 2004). However, this framework has several limitations, including inadequate appreciation of the diversity of motivations for each traveller, which is important in understanding factors influencing destination selection.

Gibson (1998b) continued the debate about the sports tourist, concluding that alongside active participants are those for whom sports tourism is about spectating and a group of travellers who visit sport locations which carry nostalgic associations. Understanding the motivations of the sports tourist has been of interest to many authors (Robinson and Gammon, 2004, Mansfield, 1992, Kurtzman and Zauhar, 2005, Holden, 1999, McDonald et al., 2002) while the implication this has on destinations has been further examined (Hennessey et al., 2008, Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005, Petrick and Backman, 2002b, Mansfield, 1992, Geissler, 2005).
1.1 Why golf tourism?

The significance of focusing on the golf tourism market can be understood when consideration is given to the scale of this segment. With an estimated market worth in excess of $20 billion (Hudson and Hudson, 2010), golf tourism is said to be the largest sports travel market. Saito (2010) investigated provision to conclude that there are over 35,000 golf courses worldwide, with the USA, UK, Japan, Canada and Australia accounting for 76%. In terms of UK participation, an estimated 1.2 million members belonged to 2,630 clubs in Great Britain in 2008 (Mintel, 2009), with many more unregistered golfers playing on a casual basis (KPMG Golf Business Community, 2013a). A recent survey by KPMG Golf Business Community (2012a) indicated that economic pressures led to a fall in registered members of golf clubs across Europe with a particularly pronounced decline in the UK but that golf tour operators were reporting increases in the number of trips booked (KPMG Golf Business Community, 2012b).

Williams and Fidgeon (2000) comment that participation in sporting activities can provide meaning and purpose to the travel experience, and this, coupled with increased demand for a leisure lifestyle, has encouraged expansion of the sports tourism market generally. This is evidenced in the case of golf tourism with the International Association of Golf Tour Operators (IAGTO) estimating that there are 56 million golfers worldwide - with 5-10% travelling internationally specifically to play golf (Gauteng Tourism Authority, 2013). In terms of European golf the UK and Ireland "provides 29% of all players and 44% of all golf courses" (KPMG Golf Business Community, 2013a, p3), with Spain and Portugal the most popular overseas destinations for UK golfers. Research (Sports Marketing Surveys Inc., 2011) also suggests that half of trips (51%) are booked at least 6 months in advance of departure date and that many UK outbound golf trips are taken as packages, with travel and tee-times pre-booked for convenience (Mintel, 2003a). The most common length of trip is 4-7 nights (56%) with only one fifth of trips lasting 1-3 nights (KPMG Golf Business Community, 2013b). Furthermore, Geissler (2005) notes that golf travellers take an average 2.8 golf trips per year while 10% take 6 or more trips a year (TIA, 2006). This is supported by more recent research by Mintel (2010, p1) which asserts that "Golfers like to travel. Their socio-economic profile tends to show them with an income level that is above average, and golf is a game that can continue to be played into retirement when more leisure time is available".
Selecting golf as the focal point of this study is further justified by the existence of two key characteristics which may play an influential role on destination selection. Firstly, the existence of a handicap system ensures that the skill level of players is regularly monitored. In addition to this frequently players count their score for every game they play (including non-competitive games) and therefore it is possible to discuss their skill level for games played while on vacation to their skill on courses at their home environment. Secondly, extensive information exists regarding golf course provision. Course quality can be assessed using guide books and online ratings which can provide further detail of the golfing destination. There also exists a range of elite courses considered 'championship' having hosted professional tournaments.

1.2 Aim
The aim of this thesis is to evaluate the relationships between golfer characteristics, golfer behaviours and destination choice.

1.3 Objectives
To clarify the how golfer characteristics and behaviours influence destination selection four objectives have been determined:

1. What are the socio-demographic, lifestyle, and life course characteristics of golf tourists?
2. To what extent do the above characteristics influence destination choice and golf tourist behaviour?
3. To what extent does ability and golfing capital (as defined in section 1.4 below) interact with the above characteristics to influence the behaviour of the golf tourist?
4. How far is it possible to develop a model of behaviour that explains the relationship between the golfer and destination choice?
1.4 Background to the study and approach employed

The factors which influence the destination selection process are, as expected, extensive. Literature on destination choice has included the influence of motivational factors (Clift and Ryan, 2002, Mansfield, 1992), and, specifically for golf, weather, course availability, perceived value, hospitality and time constraints (Geissler, 2005). However limited consideration has been given to the influence of player and group characteristics shaped by aspects of golfing capital. The term 'golfing capital' has been developed specifically for this study (and conceptually is explained fully in section 3.5.3) to refer to the assets and benefits which are an outcome of being part of the golfing realm. It is acknowledged that golfing subculture is not homogenous but is shaped by the members within groups (Green, 2001, Bryan, 2000) (Humphreys, 2011). Therefore recognising the nuances that link individuals with cultural groups will, in turn, influence the nature and intensity of relationships and associations within that group.

Relationships between the individual, the travel group, golfing capital assets and destination are complex and diverse. It is therefore essential that the approach employed in the research allows for such complexity to surface as well as enabling the construction of ideas to explain these relationships. Goulding (1998, p52) suggests that “theory is a set of relationships which offer a plausible explanation of a phenomenon” and it is with such as view that this research seeks to identify whether there is a plausible relationship between specific golfing factors (for example skill) and the golf traveller’s selection of destinations.

Undertaking investigation of influential factors in decision making requires detailed in-depth exploration of the views of golfing tourists themselves. However it should be noted that the research confronts an immediate issue, that the tourist may not be openly aware of all the factors influencing their decision to select one destination over another (Robinson and Gammon, 2004). Furthermore even if they are aware of such influences, they may not state these overtly. Consequently the research approach employed must provide an environment in which the individual will be able (and prepared) to examine and reveal their feelings in regard to their influences. In addition while situations may not be accurately explained, the meanings that people attribute to particular situations can be reflective of their perception of the situation (Green and Chalip, 1998), and therefore can highlight how such factors influence their decision making.
Furthermore, relationships between influential characteristics are likely to change according to alterations in the circumstances of the individual (for instance level of disposable income available for the trip, available free time, growing older, prior experience) hence the research approach employed should allow for reflection on the active nature of the relationships. This has led to the choice of a grounded theory approach for this thesis.

1.4.1 How does grounded theory help to address these issues?

The very complexity of this research requires that diverse socio-cultural factors which may influence destination choice need to be included in the evaluation. Grounded theory, originally presented as a methodology by Glaser and Strauss (1967), is well-suited to explaining complex social phenomenon (Jaruwan et al., 2006) and such an approach is likely to provide greater depth of understanding, as opposed to testing a pre-existing or proposed hypothesis (Layder, 1993c). There is debate regarding the philosophical perspective of grounded theory, linking it with several different approaches. For example, it has been connected with symbolic interactionism as a philosophy (Charmaz, 2006, Starks and Brown Trinidad, 2007, Reed and Runquist, 2007), which acknowledges the complexities of an individual’s interaction with society and that individuals think about their actions within a societal context, to the extent that “symbolic interactionism is a predominant ingredient in grounded theory” (Seldén, 2005, p115). However, Prasad contends that grounded theory draws on a post positive epistemology, “believing in a more concrete reality from which basic social processes emerge” (Prasad in Reed and Runquist, 2007, p119). Therefore debates regarding the philosophical position of grounded theory have not limited its use in many disciplines including tourism (Jaruwan et al., 2006) and the desire for this research to construct an understanding of the relationships means that grounded theory (underpinned by a constructivist perspective) is an appropriate methodological approach. The ontology, epistemology and grounded theory methodology used in this thesis is fully explained in chapter two.
Employing a grounded theory approach allows issues relevant and important to research participants to come to the fore because it provides a view of the social world as they see it rather than from the view of the researcher (Charmaz, 2006, Pidgeon, 1996, Glaser, 1999). This means research participants are given free rein to determine the factors they see as relevant or significant, rather than being directed by the researcher. Thus core factors are given greater attention while less significant factors move lower on the agenda. Furthermore this methodological approach ensures that the concepts inherent in explaining relationships are identified. Developing theory from data is advantageous as the interpretation is based on the situation under investigation adding richness; theory which is not grounded can lack relevance and is said to be impoverished (Pidgeon, 1996).

Recognition that participants may not be clearly aware of underlying influences on their decision making (Kurtzman and Zauhar, 2005) can lead to a supposition that individuals make subjective choices (not based on rational logical argument) thus research should consider the perspective of research participants. In order to achieve this the direction of the research is determined from the data rather than from any pre-conceived expectations. Furthermore the use of the initial analysis of data to focus the direction of further research, employing theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), can ensure that the selection of sources of data are relevant to the specific study, rather than employing a pre-planned approach which may turn out to be less relevant to the area under investigation.

While it is acknowledged that there is the potential for relationships to be immensely complex between golfing characteristics and destination selection, the use of grounded theory allows these complexities to be unpicked through the coding process and subsequent analysis (Jaruwan et al., 2006). In areas of research that are relatively uncharted or where complex relationships exist, it is helpful to undertake a grounded theory approach, which allows for flexibility and creativity. This can ensure that theoretical ideas are constructed from the data, rather than being directed into areas comfortable for the researcher, therefore such an approach can expand the horizons of ideas to explain the phenomenon (Seldén, 2005).
While scientific research has historically considered a deductive approach to provide understanding of situations, undertaking a hypothesis-testing approach to research may well conclude with refutation, ultimately meaning little advancement in knowledge has been gained. Undertaking a grounded theory approach increases the likelihood that theory will be built to explain the phenomenon, thus providing a greater step forward. Charmaz (2006) comments that the origins of grounded theory lie in the desire to develop explanatory theoretical frameworks which would help to develop conceptual understanding.

1.4.2 Considerations of using grounded theory

The connection between the micro social world of the research participants as well as the wider world may be more difficult to consider using a grounded theory approach, which has closeness to the individual but may not offer appreciation of the wider contextual setting (Layder, 1993c). While Weed (2005, p359) comments that “selves cannot be easily separated from the social situations in which they are routinely embedded” there is acknowledgement that the wider setting may operate independently from the individual. Consideration of the societal context must be made when employing a grounded theory methodology to address this.

At this point it is helpful to acknowledge that grounded theory methodology is itself contested on many levels (Charmaz and Bryant, 2011), not just the philosophical perspectives noted in section 1.4.1. For example, there is debate regarding the detail necessary within the coding process. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that word by word and then line by line coding is necessary to achieve detailed analysis of the data from different perspectives. However Seldén (2005) questions whether in such cases data becomes disconnected from the context, leading to examination “of the notes but not the melody” (p126). Furthermore there is some debate regarding the point at which data gathering and analysis ceases. For the researcher it can be challenging to clearly identify when theoretical saturation has occurred (Allan, 2003), and while prolonged investigation can lead to delayed reporting of the findings, premature closure is also of concern (Goulding, 1998).
Another area of debate surrounding grounded theory regards the discussion of pre-existing knowledge. The use of literature to inform the researcher's knowledge is contested as Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that prior reading can help to identify areas which can focus the initial research questions although they recognise that once data is gathered and analysed the direction of the research is then led by these initial findings. Furthermore they suggest that the use of literature can help to highlight discrepancies between the findings and existing views on similar areas (thus encouraging the researcher to ask 'why' in order to establish the nuances within the research). However, Glaser (1992, p22) writes that the grounded theory researcher should come into the field with “the abstract wonderment of what is going on that is an issue”, which can itself be rather daunting for the researcher. Moreover, Glaser (1992) suggests that using literature at the commencement of the study can contaminate the research and should not be used initially but only to add density to concepts as they are discovered and developed. He specifically suggests that reading should be outside the topic area, to gain sensitivity to other frameworks and concepts. However this is contested (Bryman and Bell, 2007), recognizing that researchers often need to examine literature early in the process to prepare research applications (for example to enter PhD study or compete for research grants) and suspending awareness of relevant theory is difficult in practice.

With balance, Charmaz (2006) highlights that existing wisdom has an influence when analysing data and selecting categories which cannot be ignored. Furthermore Pidgeon (1996, p82) argues that it is not possible to come to a research area devoid of information but this orientation can aid the researcher in "making sense of and organising an unstructured and often initially meaningless corpus of data". Seldén (2005) questions whether little knowledge truly would provide better results, advocating that prior knowledge is a effective asset to guard against misdirection through ignorance or limited understanding. Therefore prior knowledge can provide a level of theoretical sensitivity which can help to ensure that the process avoids misdirection and that the analysis can benefit from wider levels of awareness.
1.5 Structure of the thesis
Grounded theory methodology requires iterations of data gathering and analysis, each informing the next cycle of research (Pidgeon and Henwood, 1996). There is no expectation that a comprehensive literature review is undertaken prior to data collection, instead theoretical sensitivity is a continual development (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) - at each iteration the literature is further examined to support the concepts emerging from the data. Latter cycles of data collection clarify these concepts into theories which explain the phenomenon under investigation, until saturation is reached, at which stage conclusions are presented.

The structure of the thesis reflects this use of grounded theory, with chapters presented as a timeline of the iterations, to ensure clear and transparent presentation of the theories developed from the data. This results in a format unlike that of a conventional thesis with an explanation of the methodology employed presented ahead of any examination of relevant literature. A key supporter of grounded theory, Kathy Charmaz (2006), asserted the importance of adapting prescribed formats for presenting research results rather than compromising clarity of ideas informing the analysis. In summary chapter two details the methodological approach employed and the implications for the structure of this thesis. Chapter three then presents only a preliminary examination of literature - as required by a grounded theory methodology - to establish initial theoretical sensitivity. Theoretical sensitivity is designed to guide initial data collection rather than provide an exhaustive examination because additional literature is embedded in each iteration of data analysis. The data, constructed concepts and supporting literature are presented in chapters four to six. Chapter seven presents a grounded theory of the relationship between golfer characteristics, behaviours and destination selection to reveal a fuller understanding of destination selection while chapter eight offers conclusions detailing the wider relevance of this research.
1.6 Summary
The realm of sports tourism is well recognised and literature exists on the motivations for participation. Golf tourism is widely reported in literature although much of this work has drawn on statistical surveys to identify demand characteristics rather than examining the complex factors which influence destination selection. This thesis addresses a topic with complexity, requiring an approach that allows the construction of theory which reflects this. Therefore a grounded theory approach is deemed suitable as its design inherently ensures that the theory builds from the data. While grounded theory has become more extensively used by researchers of the social sciences a clear understanding of the implications and approaches which must be employed is required if this method is to be used robustly. This is presented in chapter two.
Chapter 2 : Methodological principles

Before discussing the nuances of grounded theory as a methodology it is necessary to firstly acknowledge the debate that has surrounded the acquisition of knowledge within the social sciences. Vidich and Lyman (1994, p23) state that “social research entails an attitude of detachment toward society that permits the sociologist to observe the conduct of self and others, to understand the mechanisms of social processes, and to comprehend and explain why both actors and processes are as they are”. This suggests that the researcher needs to be aware of the influence of their own position within the research.

Furthermore every researcher brings with them an inherent philosophical position which influences the approach employed. Collier (1994) confirms that everyone has a philosophy, whether explicit or unconscious, which they apply in their understanding of the world. Thus consideration of methods should be secondary to consideration of the research paradigm that “guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways” (Guba and Lincoln, 2000, p105). Understanding the inherent positions of philosophical perspectives can enlighten the researcher of the implications of such an outlook.

“Deciding whether our philosophical commitments are best understood as logically necessary, empirically grounded, ethically, socially inherited, habitual or otherwise inevitably requires philosophical reflection and debate” (Holstein and Gubrium, 2008, p14).

When focusing specifically on tourism research Hollinshead (2004, p65) argues that limited consideration has been given to the “ontological identifications which exist between population and place” which has limited the rigour underpinning much research in this field. Thus giving consideration to these ontological dimensions ensures the context of the research is fully acknowledged. The ontological perspectives inform the epistemological world, which in turn inform decisions relating to methodology and the methods selected for the research. Henn et al (2006, p18) comment that “ontological perspectives are at the foundation of our approach to research, with our methods being arrived at after...a consideration of our epistemological position and our chosen methodology” (figure 2.1)
Figure 2.1: The relationship between philosophical perspectives and method

Therefore the approach employed within qualitative research must consider the ontological positions embedded in each approach as well as the epistemological debates, which consider whether the method selected offers the researcher a privileged place to fully understand the situation they investigate. This is reflected in Vydich and Lyman’s (1994) concern questioning whether it is possible to fully understand the perspective of the research participant when the researcher does not always hold the same values and experiences. The answer to such a question is derived from the belief the researcher holds in regard to their ontological and epistemological perspective.

2.1 Ontological and epistemological positions for social science research

While discussions of the realms of ontology and epistemology have taken place there is a lack of clarity in the terminology selected, with expressions being used by some authors to debate ontological perspectives, while other writers will use identical expressions to refer to different epistemological positions. Therefore the following sections explain these terms and their conceptual positions as applied to this thesis.

Social science research explores the behaviour of humans and their relationships with other people and organisations. It is generally held as being distinct from the natural sciences (although many areas of overlap are acknowledged) and extensive debate has surrounded concerns regarding the use of scientific research traditions to evaluate the social world (Mirowski, 2004). The scientific method broadly employs a realist perspective, which proposes the existence of one real (material) world, which can be measured to establish true facts (regardless of the view of people observing the world). However, the twentieth century saw extensive refutation of this position, suggesting that there is an imbalance between ‘rational’
science and an ‘irrational’ society (Mirowski, 2004). This leads to the contention that human behaviour does not occur within a rational world and cannot be studied by an impartial observer but is a creation of the individuals within and researching the world under investigation.

“Because sociologists are human too, we can put ourselves in the place of others, appreciate the structural circumstances in which they find themselves, take account of their goals and thereby understand their actions. This is what distinguishes a social science from a natural science. Daffodils don’t choose to open their leaves and apples don’t decide to fall from trees. Natural scientists therefore don’t have to be like daffodils or apples to explain their behaviour”. (Jones, 1993 cited in Henn et al., 2006, p14)

Thus a counter position is posited, that of relativism, which asserts that the world is a creation of the mind, that individuals are not neutral observers, that they bring their own perceptions, beliefs and influences to the environment under investigation.

These perspectives on 'knowing the world' provide clarification of the ontological position. Ontology considers the stance taken by different research approaches towards the nature of reality and considers the nature of ‘being’ and existence, while questioning assumptions about social reality (Phillimore and Goodson, 2004). Gittler (1951, p358) looked to the writings of Aristotle when commenting that ontology can be “described as ‘first philosophy’, the study of the ultimate nature of reality”. The broad dichotomy of ontology can be considered in terms of the divergent positions of materialism and idealism.

Materialism asserts that the world is made of material elements, which can be physically measured to be assessed. Such a material element exists in a reality outside of the mind, it exists independent of a human’s consideration of it (Crotty, 1998) and is driven by laws and mechanisms (often of cause and effect) (Guba and Lincoln, 2000). This perspective is realist in nature, making the assumption that there exists a reality to be discovered. This perspective suggests that the nature of reality can be understood through investigation (and testing) of theories relating to the structures and process existing in the real world.

However, there is criticism of this position, suggesting that the reality of the world is conceptualised by humans. Therefore juxtaposed to the concept of materialism is the notion of idealism. This is the philosophical perspective of ‘ideas’; that reality lies in the human mind (Crotty, 1998). This proposes that it is humans who attribute meaning to objects and it is this act which clarifies its reality. Idealism asserts that it is the consciousness of humans to ascribe meaning to the world that shapes its existence.
However, idealism is not without its critics (Putnam, 1981, Moore, 1903) and one central position between these extremes is the ontological perspective of critical realism. This asserts that as humans we have the ability to perceive the material reality of objects but we must counter this with recognition that human senses can also deceive (for example with perceptual illusions) thus there exists a knowable reality understood within the influence of human perception. This accepts a belief that “there is a ‘real’ reality but only imperfectly and probabilistically apprehendable” (Guba and Lincoln, 2000, p109). This compromise allows the researcher the opportunity to adopt a perspective which acknowledges the material nature of the world alongside the fallibility and influence of human interpretation of this world. This is supported by Bhaskar (1998) - a champion of critical realism - who perceived science not as supreme but as one among many values which provide different slants on understanding the nature of reality.

To summarise the ontological approaches and their links to epistemological positions it is possible to broadly depict the positions (figure 2.2).

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**Figure 2.2: Summary of ontological and epistemological positions**
Epistemology considers the nature of knowledge and places attention on the ways in which it is possible to know something. Traditional scientific method has largely employed a positive perspective, which supposes that the objectivity of the researcher is key; that dispassionate observations and measurements are the only way to identify true knowledge. This approach posits that knowledge can be established by systematic observation to create laws which can be empirically tested. This has a basis in scientific method and draws on a sense of objectivity, that the researcher sits outside of the research as an impartial observer. A major advocate of the positivist perspective was August Compte (1848), who encouraged the use of scientific method to develop an understanding of the sociological world.

However, the positivist agenda is countered by many social scientists who argue that knowledge of the world is altered by an experience of it and therefore is subjective, influenced by the researcher. Holstein and Gubrium (2008) provide criticism of the positivist perspective, suggesting that it encourages a fixed definition of the current position rather than challenging current conceptualisations, leading to a fatalistic acceptance of the status quo. Therefore moving towards an interpretive perspective acknowledges that interpretations of the world can be culturally derived (Crotty, 1998). At this end of the spectrum (figure 2.2) research aims to provide an understanding of the topic under study, rather than the positivist aim of prediction. Guba and Lincoln (2000, p112) contrast these two positions, suggesting that from the positivist perspective knowledge is “verified hypotheses established as facts or laws” while interpretivist (constructivist) research focuses on “individual reconstructions coalescing around consensus”.

There has been exploration of a central ground between these two perspectives. Macionis and Plummer (2005, p37) draw on the writings of Max Weber to suggest that while researchers construct knowledge there is also a need to be objective.

“Weber expected personal beliefs to play a part in a sociologist’s selection of research topic. But Weber warned that even though sociologists select topics that are value-relevant they should conduct research that is value-free in their pursuit of conclusions. Only by being dispassionate in their work can researchers study the world as it is rather than telling others how they think it should be”.

This supposes an appreciation of the need to be value-free or unbiased in research, which must be set against an acknowledgement that researchers are affected by their own social experiences and backgrounds (Guba, 1990). However this position, often seen to be
postpositivism (figure 2.2), acknowledges that such a dualist position is often difficult to truly achieve. Charmaz (2006, p15) comments that as researchers “we are not scientific observers who can dismiss scrutiny of our values by claiming scientific neutrality and authority”. Furthermore, Weinberg (2008, p29) draws on the work of German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey to argue that social life can be understood only through an interpretive understanding (verstehen) of “the variety and complexity of lived experience”. Therefore the principles inherent in this research project suggest benefits from looking towards an interpretative epistemology.

Constructivism assumes the perspective that knowledge, and thus meaningful reality, is constructed through the interaction between human beings and their world, and is developed within its social context (Crotty, 1998, p42). This is supported by Alexander and Winne (2006, p336) who state that “constructivism emphasises that understanding comes from constructing and transforming knowledge, rather than merely acquiring it”. However in exploring this concept it must noted that the term constructivism is often interchanged with the term constructionism, which is said to be underpinned by the ideas from constructivism. The use of the terminology is further blurred by different perspectives of constructivism, both as a cognitive theory and as an educational philosophy.

Historically constructivism is ontologically linked to relativism because it supposes that there are multiple interpretations of realities (Guba, 1990, Hollinshead, 2004) constructed in locales (Guba and Lincoln, 2000) which therefore allow different realities to exist as they are constructed by different cultures. “Historical and cross-cultural comparisons should make us very aware that, at different times and in different places there have been and are very divergent interpretations of the same phenomena” (Crotty, 1998, p64). Therefore such a paradigm encourages the researcher to seek out an understanding of the constructions that people hold (or have developed) in order to move towards a consensus, providing an opportunity for greater understanding of the constructed world. Weinberg (2008) argues that such research encourages respect of a world that individuals perceive and that human ability to evaluate evidence gathered by our senses ensures a reflective interrogation of this created world. Best (2008, p57) furthers this point to assert that:
“people constantly make choices based on how they understand alternatives; they must account for the choices they have made, and those choices and accounts then constrain what they will do next. Many of these choices are soon lost from sight and an edifice of taken-for-granted assumptions about the world emerges and evolves”.

However, while constructivism has historically been grounded in the traditional of relativism more recent discussion (Newton et al., 2011) of the compatibilities between constructivism and critical realism assert that if reality is apprehensible and inferable then constructivism research offers "an invaluable way to limit existing theories and make them more effective within their confined sphere of influence" (Mir and Watson, 2001, p1172). Critical realism's affinity with constructivism is achieved through an acceptance of epistemological relativism, which recognises the fallibility of knowledge and its "meaningfulness and value relative to the time, place, and position of the knower" (Al-Amoudi and Willmott, 2011, p30).

Examining this research project with a constructivist stance permits the researcher to penetrate assumptions made by individuals and to recognise and study processes which inform the construction of knowledge. However, acknowledging that human perspectives can be fallible, has meant that underlying this research is a critical realist-constructivist perspective (figure 2.3), which ensures that the underlying inherent meanings which go to create the views of the golfing world are appreciated as underpinning the ‘truth’ - determined as a consensus, which provides a best approximation of the underlying reality - as perceived within a golfing realm.

Figure 2.3: Ontological, epistemological and methodological approach of this research
Grounded theory as a methodology (briefly introduced in section1.4.1) is suited to this ontological and epistemological perspective because it encourages an understanding of the reasons why a phenomena or belief is held, while still preserving the complexity of social life.

2.2 Methodological approach - grounded theory

In the late Sixties publication of research by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) introduced the concept of grounded theory to the academic world. Having undertaken research on the awareness of dying, these authors recognised the need for a different approach to research which would develop theory that fit more closely to the real world. This was at a time where research was dominated by a 'scientific' approach with origins in a realist-objectivist stance. This desire to achieve a greater applicability of findings from research encouraged them to identify and clarify a research process that is inductive in its approach and which ultimately sought to close the gap between grand theories and empirical research (Layder, 1993a, Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

2.2.1 Divergent approaches to grounded theory

Since its inception there has been debate regarding the epistemology that underpins grounded theory. Partly this can be attributed to the divergent approaches which emerged as a result of the publication of Strauss and Corbin’s book on grounded theory (1990). This text presented guidelines on procedures for completing grounded theory research, and resulted in revealing the contrasting views between the co-originators (Urquhart, 2013). Strauss and Corbin's evolvement of the methodology emphasised procedures which could structure the research process but Glaser (1992) countered that such a prescriptive approach could lead to the 'forcing' of data into categories, rather than allowing emergence of theories. Despite the objections from Glaser, the methods detailed by Strauss and Corbin have been used by many researchers. This debate is largely unresolved and Charmaz (2006, p18) argues that “what might stand as a viable means of gathering data to one grounded theorist could be defined as forcing the data into a preconceived framework by another”.

What is clear is that the writings of Glaser (1992) highlight his objectivist perspective in the original conception of grounded theory - whereby theory emerges from the data - while in their overview of grounded theory methodology Strauss and Corbin (1994, p279) reject the tenet of a pre-existing reality instead aligning to the position that "theories are interpretations made from given perspectives as adopted by researchers". In contrast to Glaser's researcher who allows
only the data to shape theory, Strauss and Corbin assume a more interventionist researcher interrogating the data (Jones and Noble, 2007). Thus two distinct strands of grounded theory developed, separated by epistemological underpinnings.

Supporters of the Glaserian approach (Urquhart, 2013) have argued that Strauss and Corbin modified their claims to accommodate the demands of different research projects. Furthermore some users of grounded theory research have moved grounded theory away from the perspectives inherent in both Glaser’s and Strauss and Corbin’s approaches, to adopt the principal guidelines to structure the research process while allowing a constructivist perspective to pervade (Annells, 1996, Mills et al., 2006, Williams and Keady, 2012). This third approach was championed in the research work of Kathy Charmaz (2008, p402) who asserts that grounded theory strategies are a means to analysing data, and therefore do not have to rely on objective realities, thus her approach to grounded theory assumes that:

“reality is multiple, processual and constructed – but constructed under particular conditions; the research process emerges from interaction; it takes into account the researchers positionality as well as that of the research participants and the researcher and researched co-construct the data – data are a product of the research process, not simply observed objects of it”

Such a perspective shifts grounded theory from objectivist origins to align with a constructivist epistemology, while retaining the valuable and flexible strategies to achieve effective research. Mills et al (2006, p31 ) argue that constructivist grounded theory "reshapes the interaction between researcher and participants in the research process" allowing data to be produced as an outcome of the interaction (Charmaz, 1995).

In summary since its inception there has been debate regarding the epistemology that underpins grounded theory. Pidgeon (1996, p81) comments that grounded theory “often appeals to both the inductivist-empiricist and the phenomenological-constructionist” as it seeks to draw theory from an understanding of our experience of the world. He goes on to suggest that some elements of grounded theory support the positivist perspective (highlighted by the view that theory exists waiting to be discovered) but this position is countered by the constructivist approach supported by Charmaz (2006, p128) who suggests that “the fundamental contribution of grounded theory methods resides in offering a guide to interpretive theoretical practice not in a blueprint for theoretical products”. Since its inception grounded theory has been adopted (and adapted) by different schools of thought, with emphasis differing according to overarching perspectives on theory. While those with an
objectivist persuasion consider that knowledge exists independent of our consciousness, and is therefore waiting to be discovered (Layder, 1993a), constructivists suggest that knowledge and meaning develop as researchers engage with the world under consideration (therefore constructing and attributing meaning to a situation).

Finally, in one important regard it is helpful to return to the co-originators of grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss (1967) emphasized that the role of theory is to anticipate behaviour, enhance understanding and guide future research and that good theory has a logical consistency, parsimony, clarity (to be an understandable reflection by those to whom it refers (Pidgeon, 1996)), and that it fits and works in its application. It should be based in reality rather than a vacuum (Bringer et al., 2006). Therefore regardless of the strand of grounded theory followed, any theories proposed as an outcome of this thesis should adhere to these characteristics.

2.2.2 Constructivist principles of grounded theory

The key principle underlying the constructivist grounded theory approach is that theory generation endeavours "to construct the reality of the participants (own) lives using their symbols and life language " (Williams and Keady, 2012, p221). This ensures that the theory crafted is appropriate and suited to its uses because it is grounded in the data and context that produced it.

Inherent in the design of grounded theory is that data collection and analysis occurs concurrently through an iterative process which employs comparative analysis (Charmaz and Bryant, 2011). This constant comparison means that as data is constructed (as a product of the research process) so it is analysed for properties and labelled using codes. As more data is analysed - including the examination of literature as data - additional properties are determined allowing categories to be identified. Through these categories theoretical concepts are identified which direct the further gathering of data, using theoretical sampling. This requires that sources are chosen for their relevance to the theoretical concepts rather than convenience or as part of a predetermined plan. Newly acquired data is analysed to strengthen or challenge the theoretical concept being constructed. In addition new categories may be developed leading to further data gathering and analysis. Thus a grounded theory approach allows comparisons to be made from the earliest stages of the research with decisions on data gathering influenced by the theoretical concepts being constructed (Charmaz, 2006, Bringer et al., 2006). The process
encourages a comprehensive view of the issues to be developed through analysis of the data and its interplay with literature. As mentioned previously (section 1.4), this does not mean that all literature should be ignored prior to the research being undertaken; in fact some theoretical sensitivity and understanding of the topic is necessary in order to assist with the initial data gathering and analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) but it is fundamental that the direction of the research is led by the emerging conceptions and not prior expectations or hypothesis.

Strauss and Corbin (1990, p41) suggest that theoretical sensitivity ensures the research has “an awareness of the subtleties of meaning of data”. They suggest that researchers gain such sensitivity through their personal and professional experiences as well as through their directed examination of literature. However Glaser (1992, p27) contests this, suggesting that while the researcher may have some sensitivity relating to their own areas of knowledge and experience it is actually theoretical sensitivity - "an ability to generate concepts [or theory] from data" - which is important. In constructivist terms gaining theoretical sensitivity requires that multiple vantage points are used to build on ideas (Charmaz, 2006). Furthermore literature is considered a source of data "providing information, in particular about the context" (Mills et al., 2006, p29) thus contributing to the analysis.

The iterative data gathering and analysing process ceases once theoretical saturation is reached, when no new information is appearing from the data. This means that as much data is produced as needed to provide a comprehensive view of the situation under investigation (Chen, 2006, Charmaz, 2006). The structure of the grounded theory process aims to ensure that the development of theory is possible (and most likely) thus its very nature helps to increase the ‘luck’ of finding something out (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Dominant in the use of grounded theory is the assumption that research will be qualitative in nature because it is suited to the evolving nature of such a research approach (Layder, 1993b) but this does not exclude the use of quantitative data (which can be useful in both generating and verifying theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). However the overriding focus on qualitative research does often mean that attention is given to establishing the theoretical concepts rather than on understanding the magnitude of particular issues.
2.2.3 A grounded theory approach to gathering and analysing the data

The use of grounded theory allows a variety of methods to be employed, both primary and secondary, in order to gather the data. Commonly unstructured or semi structured interviews are used (Pidgeon and Henwood, 1996), although it is also possible to undertake participant observation, where the researcher becomes enmeshed within the group (Layder, 1993a). Secondary sources such as collections of letters, sermons and conference debates may also be used to provide a view or perspective on the issue (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This thesis uses research interviews to form the basis of primary data collection.

2.2.3.1 Codes, Categories and Concepts

The process of coding in part highlighted the divergence between the Glaserian and the Straussian approach to grounded theory. Strauss and Corbin (1990) posited an especially structured approach which included word-by word, line-by-line and incident-by-incident coding, which was contested by Glaser (1992) in favour of a focus on the use of coding families. Charmaz (2006), in her support of a constructivist approach to grounded theory, proposed the use of initial, focused and theoretical coding (Urquhart, 2013) and is the method applied in this research project. Codes summarise the salient attributes or essence of the data (Saldana, 2013) and are employed throughout the process. Coding does not aim to ‘quantify’ data but allow comparison of the nuances within that data. It requires that any codes established and developed must be closely linked to the data and these “do not stand on their own in a robust grounded theory; these codes need to be integrated into the theory” (Charmaz, 2006, p55).

In order to construct theories the initial stage of analysis is to code the data. Following initial coding comparisons (with other codes, data and literature) are made to clarify the phenomena allowing categories to be developed. Further analysis uses focused coding to examine the data, identifying properties of each category to clarify inherent characteristics and provide analytic direction (Charmaz, 2006). Some categories may be considered more significant or dominant than others but all are relevant and it is essential that categories are analytic. Using constant comparative methods (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, Charmaz, 2006) to make distinctions in the analysis leads on to theoretical coding which places emphasis not just on the categories themselves but on how these categories relate to each other (Goulding, 1998, Urquhart, 2013). These higher-order concepts inform the development of substantive theory (Charmaz, 2006).
In order to achieve analytic credibility a robust coding method is necessary. Following up on terms, definitions and explanations of situations or processes ensures that density is inherent in the theory developed (Charmaz, 2006). Effective coding ensures that both the context of the processes and actions under scrutiny are identified as well as analysis of the more generalisable statements which can be developed.

2.2.3.2 Memo-writing
As the coding and analysis progresses memo-writing, to record the development of ideas, becomes an informative step, as it “captures the comparisons and connections” made within the analytical process (Charmaz, 2006, p72). Recording the process of analysis helps to ensure transparency - that others would find the conclusions reached reasonable given the same set of data (Pidgeon, 1996). Charmaz (2006) suggests that memo-writing encourages the researcher to think about the data, advancing analysis of the categories, which can identify areas for further exploration in the next iteration of data gathering. In this sense memo-writing aids the development of theoretical sampling (Oktay, 2012). Furthermore memo-writing encourages analytical thinking about the concepts and helps to narrate the development of theory (Bringer et al., 2006). In this thesis examples of memos are not directly quoted in the text. However the concepts identified and clarified through the process of memo-writing directly inform each of the chapters presented in Part Two (data gathering and analysis).

2.2.3.3 Establishing theory
Categories and concepts are compared in order to help build substantive theory, applicable directly to the topic under investigation. These conceptual ideas should develop from the data through a continuous comparison between the categories and with literature. (Bringer et al., 2006, Webb, 1999). At this stage it may be possible to draw on existing models and ideas to help clarify the theory but there should be no attempt to “force data into conceptual clothes that do not fit” (Layder, 1993b, p63).
In addition formal theory, which is generalisable across situations, might also be developed (Urquhart, 2013). This may be directly from data analysis but more commonly is developed from exploring substantive theory (singular or multiple) and determining its value in a wider context (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). A key function of grounded theory research is to ensure that theoretical categories are used to develop formal theory by academics (Glaser, 1992) in order to enhance comprehension of the social world (and to establish understanding across contexts). However Glaser and Strauss (1967) comment that this is often hard to do and therefore the attention of many academics remain within the substantive theory realm. In regard to sports tourism both Gibson (2005a) and Weed (2006) made a plea for the greater development of such (formal) theoretical frameworks to support the body of knowledge. Therefore this research project endeavours to develop a robust theoretical framework which extends understanding of sports tourist behaviours.

2.2.3.4 Reporting
To be of value the results of the research need to be disseminated in a wide domain. This can encourage development of the determined theory in a diverse range of contexts. Significantly the explanation of concepts and their use to identify emerging theory is the interpretation of the researcher (and that this may not be the only interpretation possible). However it can be argued that immersion into the topic has provided the researcher an informed depth and thus interpretation is guided by this involvement (Glaser and Strauss, 1967).

2.3 The decision to use a grounded theory approach
Section 1.4.2 identified some debates about this methodological approach but this is expanded here in light of the ontological and epistemological perspectives inherent in this work. The identification of categories, theoretical concepts and thus substantive theory is developed through the researcher's engagement with the data which can lead to concerns regarding the replicability of the research. However in adopting a constructivist perspective, which seeks to understand the social reality as it is constructed by society, and through transparent reporting of the data from which the theory is built, it is possible to address these criticisms. It is also asserted that the enthusiasm for identifying concepts (and their properties) should not distract from the overriding aim to generate substantive and formal theory (Pidgeon, 1996).
Grounded theory seeks to ensure that theory is driven by the comparative analysis of the data set and therefore is developed from the entire data. Furthermore data is considered from a range of perspectives (and theoretical sampling determines diversity here) rather than a narrow framework (Layder, 1993b). It is designed to examine the connections between concepts to construct the substantive theory.

One consideration is that travel plans may be determined without the participant ever being fully aware of the factors shaping those decisions (Kurtzman and Zauhar, 2005). Therefore understanding the complex factors influencing destination selection can best be achieved by allowing the research participants to drive the direction of the research (using theoretical sampling to develop insightful views and thus concepts). Zaltman (2003), in his research on metaphor elicitation, commented that to explore beyond the surface level views of people requires an approach which reaches into their subconscious and draws on an understanding that may be hidden. Therefore, it is necessary to use an approach which flexibly allows the direction of the research to be developed through an analysis of the data; grounded theory achieves this.

In conclusion grounded theory provides both a structured approach to gathering data and sampling guidance, encouraging an understanding of the relationships which exist within a social realm. Therefore it is ideally suited to address this complex research topic.

2.4 The use of computer software to aid qualitative data analysis

There is substantial literature (Miles and Weitzman, 1994, Wickham and Woods, 2005, Bringer et al., 2006) on the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), which acknowledges both the benefits and the limitations, although Macmillan and Koenig (2004) suggest that there is inadequate critical appraisal because assumptions are made that the very existence of the software justifies its methodological validity. A decision to use CAQDAS should be based on the methodological principles of each piece of research, rather than from habit (Lee and Esterhuizen, 2000). Atherton and Elsmore (2007) debate the issues of decontextualisation and bias while commenting that an informed researcher who has established an epistemological position should be able to overcome any bias. They further acknowledge that purpose-designed qualitative analysis software allows transparency and assists in “dealing with the ‘mess’ of qualitative research” (p75), an issue also highlighted by Catterall (1996) in her suggestion that coding involves both an intellectual and a clerical process, with computer software managing
the clerical tasks required allowing the intellectual elements to flourish. Hinchliffe et al (1997) further this point noting that many qualitative research styles:

“...share the characteristics of needing to deal with mountains of paper, wanting to develop and access complex coding schemes at a number of levels and share the desire to develop links between sometimes disparate materials (notes, interview transcripts, diary entries, newspaper cuttings)”. While CAQDAS has been slighted in the past, being seen only as a data-management tool, this very characteristics can make the recoding process of coding swifter (Catterall, 1996), and text manipulation more convenient (Kelle, 2000) thus leaving more time for analysis (Lee and Esterhuizen, 2000).

Historically CAQDAS software offered only ‘code-and retrieve’ capabilities but now technological development has led to the incorporation of analytical tools which provide greater value in its use (Hinchliffe et al., 1997, Fielding and Lee, 2002). The capability of CAQDAS enables complex searches to be undertaken and, as the results of such searches can be coded in their own right, allows complex, rigorous and complete analysis of data to take place (Atherton and Elsmore, 2007). Furthermore the coding, memo-writing and search functions provide an audit trail which can provide a transparent and systematic analysis of the data (Atherton and Elsmore, 2007, Bringer et al., 2006, Webb, 1999). Grounded theory proponents suggest that extensive memo-writing encourages greater density to the analysis and the capability of CAQDAS to allow links between memos and codes can enhance this process (Bringer et al., 2006). However it is not possible to “achieve greater complexity without some further investment of concentration and imagination” (Coffey et al., 1996) and thus there is always the need for interpretation by the researcher (Webb, 1999, Quinn Patton, 2002, Kelle, 2000). Tesch (in Denscombe, 2007, p304) further warns that “the computer does not make conceptual decisions, such as which words or themes are important to focus on, or which analytic step to take next”.

One criticism made of the use of software to analyse qualitative data is that it can distance the researcher from the data (Lee and Esterhuizen, 2000, Catterall, 1996, Webb, 1999) although Bringer et al (2006), recounting experiences using the software package Nvivo, suggest that the visual modeller allowed convenient switching between the overview and each code, thus facilitating a closeness to the data. Whether CAQDAS is used at all, and in cases where it is selected the variety of tools and the extent of use, should be determined by the project’s demands (MacMillan and Koenig, 2004, Bringer et al., 2006). A further concern of the use of CAQDAS is that it can influence the direction of the research, as the software creates boundaries
due to inherent technical capabilities, as well as in the abilities of the user to understand the tools. Users of CAQDAS must therefore ensure that the data and the creativity of the researcher directs the study (Atherton and Elsmore, 2007). Furthermore creativity in analysis may be lost if the researcher becomes bogged-down by a mechanistic coding process (Catterall, 1996, Webb, 1999).

As many CAQDAS systems provide analysis through a process of coding, conceptualisation and categorisation there are obvious links with grounded theory (MacMillan and Koenig, 2004) although Lee and Esterhuizen (2000) suggest that, while this may seem to be a convenient choice for researchers with limited appreciation of their ontological and epistemological positions, evidence suggests that grounded theory is commonly used but is by no means ubiquitous in studies using computer software to assist analysis. A reason for the link to grounded theory may lie in the design of the software, which has incorporated functions which tackle tasks set out by Strauss and Corbin (1990) in their guidelines for grounded theory (Coffey et al., 1996, Webb, 1999).

Occasionally the selection of a particular CAQDAS program is made based on convenience (recommendation by a friend, access to the program or training courses, etc) rather than on its suitability for the research (Fielding and Lee, 2002). However this can be addressed by examining the tools provided by different software programs and acknowledging suitability to the selected methodology. Packages may be evaluated based on many factors including convenience of data entry, coding methods and data-comparison approaches (Denscombe, 2007). Miles and Weitzman (1994) usefully compared 22 CAQDAS software packages according to a range of functions including: search/retrieval, database management, memoing, data linking, matrix building, theory building and user friendliness, highlighting that packages vary in their strengths and weaknesses and selection of a package should ensure strengths lie in areas key to the research process. The package selected should also be suited to the epistemological approach employed in the research.
For this research the software package Nvivo was selected. While there are several computer packages widely available (such as ATLAS.ti and MAXqda), offering many similar functions, this was selected as it was seen to be suited to a grounded-theory approach. It includes a variety of tools designed to assist in the coding, memo-writing, conceptualisation and diagramming process for this thesis. Once this was decided training was undertaken to ensure effective use of these tools. Its use for this thesis is further explained in Part Two.

A single comprehensive database was created for all of the materials for this research. Thus, along with the transcribed interviews, PDF versions of academic articles (selected because they provided supporting conceptual literature) were also uploaded to Nvivo. Furthermore as chapters of this thesis were drafted so these were also added to the database. This meant that as the interview data was interrogated so too was the academic articles and draft thesis text. This ensured that as new ideas were developed so a full and robust examination of all sources was possible.

The software package also provides a convenient modelling tool, of particular use in the early stages of the research (see figure 4.1). Specifically when identifying conceptual labels the system made it possible to click on any part of the diagram to reveal the underpinning data, which aided accuracy of interpretation.

This is not to suggest that this has not been without issues. In the early stages of the project the software package (using version 7) lacked stability, perhaps in part due to this version amalgamating two systems (NVivo and NUD*IST). However, more recent versions (currently Nvivo 10) have greatly improved stability and enhanced multi-media tools, which allow for analysis of images as well as linking audio transcriptions to codes.
2.5 Summary

The ontological and epistemological stances taken in this research align with the use of a grounded theory methodology. While there are divergent opinions in the development of this methodology, it is seen as an approach which encourages the development of parsimonious, clear and consistent theory. The decision to use grounded theory impacts the presentation of this thesis (explained in section 1.5) and requires the researcher to establish an initial level of theoretical sensitivity before progressing to iterations of data collection and analysis. Literature establishing this theoretical sensitivity is presented in chapter three.
Chapter 3: Towards theoretical sensitivity

In their development of grounded theory as a methodology Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued that the researcher must be theoretically sensitive to the literature, whilst remaining open-minded as to the direction of the research. With practicality, Charmaz (2006, p17) comments that:

“professional researchers and many graduate students already have a sound footing in their disciplines before they begin a research project and often have an intimate familiarity with the research topic and the literature about it. All provide vantage points that can intensify looking at certain aspects of the empirical world but may ignore others. We may begin our studies from these vantage points but need to remain as open as possible to whatever we see and sense in the early stages of the research.”

Therefore it is necessary to undertake an initial examination of relevant literature in order to establish some ‘vantage points’ from which to direct the earliest stages of the data gathering. The aim and objectives of this research highlight the need to consider golfer characteristics, their motivations and behaviours, player ability and golfing capital (introduced in section 1.3) to appreciate influences on destination selection.

3.1 Golf tourist characteristics and their influence

Identifying the different characteristics of the sports tourist is a complex task. Research (Gibson, 1994 in Douvis et al., 1998, Gibson, 2005b) identified that males are more likely than females to participate in sport oriented vacations and that an individual’s demand for sports related vacations is affected by lifestage, social class, gender, race, ethnicity and religion (Standeven and DeKnop, 1999). These areas explored more fully in the following sections.

3.1.1 Socio-demographic, lifestyle, and life course characteristics

Day (2001, p9) comments that “status and class are intimately related” and thus examining social class can provide insight into social structures, which have an influential role on the status, behaviours and responses of individuals. The concept of class as a means of categorising individuals did not have its origins in sociological meanings and it was only in the twentieth century that this was linked in sociological terms to income, expenditure and occupation (Gunn, 2005). In the context of golf, the sport has often been reported as being elitist, with higher ‘social classes’ contributing to the bulk of participation. However, Howkins and Lowerson (1979, p42 in Horne et al., 1999) reported that the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw greater diversification, with increased participation in the golfing realm by the middle classes,
ultimately contributing to “the reinforcement of a complex series of overlaps within social elites”. Although golf participation has spread across classes there remains a perception that this is a white, middle class, male sport. In 2003 research recorded that 90% of regular golfers were men, with 30% classed as AB and a further 27.5% classed as C1 (Mintel, 2003b). While trends suggest a slight gender balancing (in 2008 77% of golfers were male) there is a noticeable gender difference between the regular player and the casual player; in 2008 15% of regular players were female but double the percentage of casual players (30%) were female (Mintel, 2009). While past research has recognised that the golfers worldwide tend to come from a narrow market (AB social groups, often aged over 50, males), it should be noted that changing participation patterns among females and youth segments is altering this assumption. Recently the Golf Business Forum reported that more than one-quarter of registered golfers in 16 European countries are women (Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey. Furthermore juniors make up more than one-fifth of registers golfers in 6 European Countries (Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Serbia and Turkey) (KPMG Golf Business Community, 2013a).

Traditionally sport participation is seen to decline with age although golf participation does not fit this profile; participation has been reported to be at its highest with the middle-age (35-64) segment (Mintel, 2003b, Doyle, 1987), and nearly double the participation rate in the 55+ group compared to 16-34 age group (Sport England, 2011). Furthermore lifestage has an impact on golf participation, as time and family obligations can impede opportunities to play recreationally and while vacationing. Research into UK golfers recorded that 16% of the population who were at pre/no family lifestage were current golfers (those playing at least once a year), double the percentage of golfers at family lifestage (Mintel, 2003b).

The participation of women in golf has been influenced over the years by restrictions on access to courses. For example, the Augusta National golf club, in Georgia USA, home to the Masters golf tournament, (considered to be one of the golfing ‘majors’), received significant press attention in 2012 because it admitted two women members, for the first time in its 80 year history (Crouse, 2012). Muirfield, Scotland, also experienced extensive press coverage prior to its hosting of the 2002 Open tournament because of its policy to restrict women from holding membership. While attention is given to elite course examples there are many golf clubs across the globe which currently discriminate against women not just in terms of membership but in
other areas also, for example by restricting tee-times and clubhouse access (Martin, 2008). Such
discriminatory attitudes can reach across into golf tourism, thus questioning whether the travel
experiences (and influences) of women golfers differ from the experiences of men and also
whether the inclusion of women in golf trips has an impact on golf tourism behaviours and
decisions.

3.1.2 Gender
The leisure realm is an area where women’s behaviour is monitored as well as regulated by
social norms (Thompson, 1990) thus gender influences need to be considered when exploring
destination choice for golf tourists. Historically sports have been seen as a male preserve
(Theberge, 2000), excluding females through rules and governance structures, particularly at the
highest levels. For example, in her discussion of sex, power and the Olympics Woodward (2012)
recounts the exclusion of women from both the Ancient and Modern Olympic Games,
suggesting that it is only the latter part of the twentieth century which saw substantive efforts
to increase women's opportunities for participation as well as involvement in governance
(through the IOC committee). Significant though, is that with only a few exceptions (primarily
show-jumping) Olympic competitions are sex-specific and golf, when it is reinstated in the
Summer 2016 Olympics, will operate two separate events, the men's and women's individual
competition. There is an argument that separatism, originating in nineteenth century ideals for
‘feminine-appropriate’ sporting activity (Hargreaves, 1994) can create versions of sports which
better fit the needs of women. It can also allow some control of the sport to be in the hands of
women. For example the Ladies Golf Union (LGU) was established 120 years ago to support
amateur golf for ladies and girls and its current Council Board comprises only of women (Ladies
Golf Union, 2013). Significantly the LGU now includes a specific objective to "actively influence
and drive equality in golf" which highlights a debate that such separatism may not be considere
d as equality in the sense of shared participation and shared rewards (Hargreaves, 1994).
While the binary view of sex (male-female) may provide regulatory distinctions for sports participation it is gender, as a construction of society which can determine acceptability and engagement with particular activities. Thus sporting images of masculinity and femininity are linked to socially constructed gender identities (Hargreaves, 1994). Shaw (1999) suggests that sports are gendered (masculine and feminine) raising an issue regarding golf because historically participation has been dominated by men while women have often been inhibited from participation by club regulations as well as social expectation (Campbell, 2007). Even as more clubs offer equal rights to women players this may not be reflected in a wider social attitude, meaning that women golfers may not be placed on an equal footing with male players (figure 3.1 humorously indicates social stereotypes around this issue).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equal Privileges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“A country club didn’t allow women on the golf course. Eventually, there was enough pressure that they decided to allow women on the course during the week. The ladies were satisfied with this arrangement, formed a women’s club, and became active. After about six months, the club board received a letter from the women’s club complaining about the men urinating on the golf course. Naturally, they just ignored the matter. After another six months, they received another letter reminding them of the previous letter and demanding action. After due deliberation they sent the women a letter advising them that they had been granted equal privileges! “ (Golfjokes, 2008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.1: Women Golfers - Equal Privileges

The "myth of female frailty", originating in Victorian views of women has continued to shape society perceptions of women, gender and physical activity (Theberge, 2000, p322). Concerns over lack of strength, skill or ability may influence the level of participation by women in some sporting activities but Roster (2007, p443) comments that “women who manage to successfully deal with personal competency issues and conquer social stereotypes can achieve a sense of empowerment that extends beyond the intrinsic pleasure they receive from engaging in the activity”. This also acknowledges the influence of stereotypical roles in some sports realms and constraints that women especially experience (Bialeschki and Henderson, 1986).

Although levels of women’s participation is seeing growth for many sports, there remains a concern that women are not a homogenous group thus "it is important not to underestimate the ways in which cultural patterns and economic, political and ideological orders specific to the totality of social relations affects the participation of women in sport" (Hargreaves, 1994, p12). Furthermore, Hargreaves argues that although closed spaces (available exclusively to women) can reduce the likelihood of harassment and ridicule, they can create divisions in groups of
women with different cultural backgrounds, religious beliefs or sexual orientation. Significant to this debate is that empowerment through sport is not achieved for all males; for some the experience of attempting to participate in some sports can be frustrating and exclusionary and, as with women, men participating in sport are not a homogenous group. Wellard (2002, p239) asserts that in sport "the physical assertion of one's masculinity is put to the test and for the gay sports player there can be a conflicting sense of identity". Thus societal perspectives of the sport's participant can be exclusionary by gender, sexual orientation, class as well as other factors.

Research also acknowledges gender-related differences when considering leisure motivation concluding, for instance, that men gain greater satisfaction from competence mastery, competitiveness and adventure factors while women find greater satisfaction in social interaction, mental stimulation and psychological independence (Lounsbury and Polik, 1992, Lee et al., 2007). Furthermore destination selection based on specific attributes may also be influenced by gender (Lee et al., 2007).

3.1.3 Golf-specific characteristics
Understanding the characteristics of golfers can be approached by grouping players according to frequency of participation. Weed and Bull (2004) noted, when examining sports tourism demand, that participation can range from incidental through sporadic, occasional, regular and committed to driven, where, at this end of the scale participation is often the main reason for travel. For golf specifically Hennessey et al (2008) established three groupings - infrequent, moderate and dedicated - where infrequent golfers play five or less rounds per annum while dedicated golfers are deemed to be those who have played over 25 rounds per year and are considered devoted to the game. They concluded that demographic and environmental influences differ for these golfing categories. Therefore considering the level of involvement with the game assists in understanding the influential factors affecting participation in golf while on vacation.
Focusing specifically on golf tourism Petrick (2002) proposed a set of ‘golfographic’ variables which can further segment participants. These recognise four key influences: score, the number of rounds played each year, the number of holidays taken annually and the number of years playing the sport. These are of interest because they can inform understanding. Awareness of a player’s score can establish skill level while identifying the number of rounds played and number of holidays taken can provide insight into the level and intensity of participation. Finally, knowing how long a participant has been playing the sport can give insight into the level of experience. Golfographic characteristics were further examined by Hennessey et al (2008) to understand golf markets. They proposed that influential factors included:

- Demographics
- First / repeat visit
- Travel party size
- Length of stay
- Information / data search
- Handicap
- Golf membership
- Years of play
- Golf trips taken

The latter four factors consider golf-specific dimensions which may reflect the unique characteristics of the golfer which influence their decision making. Hennessey et al’s (2008) framework further proposed that decisions were influenced by motivations as well as golfographic factors which included consideration of:

- The number of courses played while on vacation
- Ability (to play to handicap while on vacation)
- Frequency and variety of courses played on vacation

It is useful to state that both Hennessey et al (2008) and Petrick (2002) concluded that golfographic variables were not good predictors of novelty rewards (thrill, change from routine, boredom alleviation and surprise) thus were poor predictors of golfer satisfaction. Therefore, while this research is not focused on golfer satisfaction but on destination selection, it should be recognised that golfographic categorisations should be used with caution. Their use may offer some appreciation of the type of golfer but behaviours determining destination selection are complex, being influenced by a variety of factors, underpinned by travel motivations and constraints.
3.2 Motivation, constraints and tourist behaviour

Standeven and De Knop (1999), through their examination of the relationship between sport and tourism, suggested that in some cases the sports activity is the dominant experience while in other cases the tourism experience may be dominant. This is supported by research of the US golf market which reported that 16% of players researched stated that golf was the primary reason for travel while 55% said that golf was not primary or secondary to the reason for their trip (just an activity undertaken during the trip) (TIA, 2006). This is supported by literature which asserts that multiple motivations influence consumer behaviour for tourism (Robinson and Gammon, 2004, Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007) and sport participation (Gill et al., 1996). Therefore this has to be considered when balancing golf resources with the tourism resources sought at the destination.

Understanding motives for participation in sports tourism informs how tourists experience destinations (Moital and Dias, 2012) thus informing the design of such destinations (Green and Chalip, 1998). However, some travellers do not directly acknowledge their true motivations for travel (Bouchet et al., 2004). Kurtzman and Zauhar (2005, p21) comment that “at times, participants and/or spectators make sports tourism decisions without truly being aware of the subtle or hidden forces shaping or attracting their sport destination selection”. Furthermore tourists may renegotiate their positions (in regard to their perceived motivations) during a vacation to maximise their satisfaction – when elements of travel do not meet their original expectations new motivations can be considered. For example a tourist on an educational holiday may find that their motivation for self-development is not being met as the teaching quality is poor. However the tourist’s opportunity to relax and socialise may then be considered as a motivation, thus giving a sense of reward. Holden (1999) picks up on this point, asserting that individuals frequently change their motivations in response to changes in other extrinsic and intrinsic factors.

Such complexity and changeability means it is important that research participants are encouraged to explore in depth their golf travel motivations, to bring to the surface any hidden factors influencing their behaviour and expectations. Burns (1999) acknowledges that although many anthropologists have attempted to categorise tourists according to motivation using survey research, this has not proved highly successful as motives can often be too complex to explore in depth without one-to-one discussions.
3.2.1 Understanding motivation and tourist behaviour

There are many different approaches developed to understand the motivation of tourists, although no widely agreed conceptual framework has been established (World Tourism Organisation, 1999 cited in Pearce, 2005). Dann (1977) explored the reasons why tourists travel, focusing on the socio-psychological concepts of anomie and ego-enhancement which led him to propose that motivation can be considered in terms of push factors (desire to escape; addressing internal imbalances) and pull factors (seeking; focusing on the appeal of the destination). Thus push factors can influence golf tourist behaviour and pull factors can directly influence destination choice. Crompton (1979, p409) argued that studying motivation is critical because “it is the impelling and compelling force behind all behaviour” and he concluded that a state of disequilibrium led to a need to break from routine, which manifested itself as motives to travel. He categorised these motives, identifying seven considered push factors and two concerned with the destination, although he conjectured that the push factors would also influence destination-related decisions (Crompton, 1979). These factors are:

- **Push factors**
  - Escape from a perceived mundane environment
  - Exploration and evaluation of self
  - Relaxation
  - Prestige
  - Regression
  - Enhancement of kinship relationships
  - Facilitation of social interaction

- **Destination factors (cultural motives)**
  - Novelty
  - Education

While this approach formed the basis of early investigations into tourist motivations additional perspectives were added by the work of both Iso-Ahola and Pearce. Iso-Ahola (1983, p258) argued that the:

“satisfaction that individuals expect to derive from involvement in a leisure activity is linked to two motivational forces: approach (seeking) and avoidance (escape). In other words, individuals perceive a leisure activity as a potential satisfaction-producer for two major reasons: it provides certain intrinsic rewards, such as feelings of mastery and competence, and helps them leave the routine environment behind themselves”.
Acknowledgement that individuals seek a sense of mastery as a motivation for leisure participation and a desire to leave the routine environment is naturally extended to the concept of sports tourism, which combines opportunities to achieve both intrinsic rewards and escape. Iso-Ahola (1981) confirmed in his research that both components are present in leisure motivation generally and tourism motivation specifically.

As he developed his model of tourism motivation, Iso-Ahola (1983) acknowledged that the tourist must first be aware that travel has the potential to satisfy before these factors become motivating forces. Once that awareness has developed the motivation for intrinsic rewards and for escape becomes influential to achieve optimum arousal. In exploring these two realms, Iso-Ahola (1983) identified both a psychological (personal) dimension and a social (interpersonal) dimension for each, thus creating four perspectives – personal seeking, personal escape, interpersonal seeking and interpersonal escape (figure 3.2). He clarified that each tourist doesn’t always fall into the same quadrant as motives for travel will change for each trip.

![Diagram](image)

**Figure 3.2: Social Psychological Model of Tourism Motivation**

The awareness that motivation varied by trip was also acknowledged by Pearce (2005) who worked to combine an understanding of motivation and lifecycle in order to appreciate tourism behaviour, ultimately conceptualising the ‘travel career ladder’. Developed in the 1980’s this drew on the ideas of Maslow’s (1970) hierarchy of needs to establish five levels of tourist motivation:

- Relaxation needs
- Safety/security needs
- Relationship needs
- Self-esteem and development needs
- Self-actualisation and fulfilment needs
However, this model received limited support from the academic community (Ryan, 1998) and Pearce sought to clarify this approach as a Travel Career Pattern (TCP), moving away from the idea of a ladder (which was often perceived to suggest that the tourist would move up the steps, one travel rung at a time), to suggest that previous travel experiences and life-stages influence motivation. His research to support the TCP concept proposed layers of motives (figure 3.3) (Pearce, 2005). However, while this approach highlights that some motives may explain tourist behaviour more than others not all motives may be evidenced in each individual.

![Figure 3.3: Travel Career Patterns](image)

In focusing attention on leisure tourism (as opposed to business tourism) it is helpful to explore motivations to participate in leisure activities. During the 1970’s some studies focused on leisure needs (Tinsley et al., 1977, London et al., 1977) concluding that stimulus seeking, stimulus avoidance, relaxation and competence-effectance were common themes. Beard and Ragheb (1983) used these to form the basis of their research exploring leisure motivations, the outcome of which identified four subsets:

- Intellectual component
- Social component
- Competence-Mastery component
- Stimulus-Avoidance component
Each of these components contained a sub-scale of eight factors (reduced from twelve initial factors) which specifically identified key leisure motivations (summarised in the top-left box of figure 3.4). The outcome of this research was to try to establish a tool which could be used to measuring leisure motivations and this provided a basis for future investigation into the field.

There is acknowledgement that the “factors that have emerged from different investigations often have similar meanings, despite varying labels” (Lounsbury and Polik, 1992, p107). Figure 3.4 summarises the areas of commonality between these four approaches, in order to assist in understanding the main motivations influencing tourist behaviours. This concludes nine areas of commonality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Intellectual Motives</td>
<td>• Novelty (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning, exploring, discovering, imagining (1)</td>
<td>• Socialisation (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social Motives</td>
<td>• Prestige / status (9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need for friendship (8), interpersonal</td>
<td>• Rest and relaxation (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relationships (5), esteem (9)</td>
<td>• Educational value / Intellectual enrichment (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Competence Mastery</td>
<td>• Enhancing kinship and relations / family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Achieve and master (1), challenge and compete (7)</td>
<td>togetherness (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stimulus Avoidance</td>
<td>• Regression (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Escape (3), seek solitude (4), calm, rest (6)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Personal Seeking</td>
<td>• Novelty (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feel good about myself (7)</td>
<td>• Escape (3) and relaxation (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tell others of my experiences (9)</td>
<td>• Relationships (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal Escape</td>
<td>• Nature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get away from normal environment (3)</td>
<td>• Self-actualisation (7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Change of pace in life (6)</td>
<td>• Self-development (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interpersonal Seeking</td>
<td>• Host-site involvement (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be with others who have similar interests (1)</td>
<td>• Isolation (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meet new people (8)</td>
<td>• Nostalgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interpersonal Escape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Avoid interactions with others (4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Get away from people who are disliked (3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Areas of Commonality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) Education &amp; intellectual stimulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) Excitement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) Escape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4) Isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5) Relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(6) Rest, Calm and Relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7) Self</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(8) Social interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(9) Status and Prestige</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3.4: Factors considered influential on tourist motivation
Other authors examine these themes to further discussions of motivation. Mansfield (1992) recognised the breadth of factors influencing motivation and was critical of the perception that tourists made rational decisions when selecting destinations. Furthermore he recognised singular or multi-motive influences on tourists. He also noted that family and group members influence motivation to a point where more subjective individual motivations are often balanced with social considerations. This highlights that the travel group is influential on trip behaviours. Reilly (1989 in Kurtzman and Zauhar, 2005) explored motivations in terms of the incentives to travel (such as change of climate, education, social relations) while Ryan (2003 in Robinson and Gammon, 2004) specifically drew on the research of Beard and Ragheb to discuss the perspective that leisure motivators aid understanding of tourism motivations, and in testing the application of this model to tourism Ryan and Glendon (1998) concluded that there were eleven clusters of holidaymakers who had varying degrees of motivation towards relaxation (item 6 in figure 3.4), social interaction (item 8 in figure 3.4), intellectual development (item 1 in figure 3.4) and competence mastery (item 1 in figure 3.4). The degrees of motivation for these eleven clusters of holidaymakers are summarised in figure 3.5) (Ryan and Glendon, 1998). The research concluded that the motivations proposed by Beard and Ragheb offer the potential for analysis of tourists, while highlighting that motivations can exist to differing levels of intensity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cluster</th>
<th>Motivations</th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>Social</td>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>Mastery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unimaginative Relaxers</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxing Moderates</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>MEDIUM-HIGH</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxed Discoverers</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>LOW-MEDIUM</td>
<td>MEDIUM-HIGH</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Holiday makers</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>LOW-MEDIUM</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual Active Isolates</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent Intellectuals</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Relaxers</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Relaxers</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noisy Socialisers</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friendly Discoverers</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>MEDIUM-HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Relaxers</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>MEDIUM</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 3.5: Ryan and Glendon’s motivations of holidaymakers*
For sports tourism motivation it is possible to look to the work of Gibson, who draws directly on the ideas of Crompton (1979 in Gibson, 2004), to suggest that key socio-psychological motives (such as escape, relaxation and prestige) can impact destination selection. Gibson (2005b) also discussed the significance of uncertainty of result (a characteristic which can be linked to sporting activity) when exploring the motivation for participating in sports tourism. Within golf tourism the likelihood of uncertainty of result is often set by player, with the possibility that the competitive element can be targeted towards the course as well as between players. This acknowledges the challenge of the course (as a perceived opponent) which may influence the courses (and thus destinations) selected.

3.2.2 Constraints

Participation in leisure activities, such as golf, may be influenced by the ability to address constraints. These are factors “...perceived or experienced by individuals to limit the formation of leisure preferences and/or inhibit or prohibit participation and enjoyment in leisure” (Jackson, 2000a, p62) and can provide insight into the behaviour of sports tourists (Hinch et al., 2005). Jackson et al (cited in Hubbard and Mannell, 2001, p146) report that participation is “dependent not on the absence of constraints but on negotiation through them” and leisure constraints are located in the personal, situational, structural, social and cultural worlds of the individual (Little, 2007). Therefore both the type of constraints and the negotiation tactics employed influence the level of participation in golf generally and golf tourism specifically. Carroll and Alexandris (1997) suggested that there is a balance between motivation and constraints, where highly motivated participants perceive less constraints likely to restrict participation. However, this was contested (Hubbard and Mannell, 2001) as an unproved assumption, with Son et al (2008) furthering this debate, concluding from their research that constraints and negotiation may act independently to influence participation behaviours, while suggesting that motivation may positively induce negotiation which then affects participation. These intertwined areas were noted by Jackson and Scott (1999), who concluded that research into leisure constraints can shed light on participation, motivation and satisfaction aspects of leisure. Furthermore research by Scott, which explored the world of bridge players, provided insight into how “group processes (gatekeeping mechanisms, the coordination of schedules, group disbandment) made participation problematic” (Scott, 1991 in Jackson and Scott, 1999, p313).
Three categories of leisure constraints have been established (Crawford et al., 1991, Scott, 1991) - interpersonal, intrapersonal and structural constraints - where interpersonal factors give consideration to the influence of friends and acquaintances, intrapersonal factors consider issues such as lack of energy or shyness in participating in front of others, and structural factors highlight concerns such as taking on additional commitments and having appropriate equipment (Hubbard and Mannell, 2001). A hierarchical model of leisure constraints was developed which suggested that leisure preferences were influenced by intrapersonal constraints and motivation, the outcome being interpersonal compatibility and coordination which, in turn, was influenced by motivation and structural constraints (Crawford et al, 1991 in Jackson and Scott, 1999). While interpersonal and intrapersonal constraints were suggested to have more significant influences on leisure it is also worth noting that constraints may be embedded in the physical or competitive nature of the sport or in the rules of participation and can be affected by prior experience (Hinch et al., 2005).

In application to golf, a particular area of interest lies in an appreciation that many golfers travel with others to participate and therefore negotiation of group constraints may be influential. It is thus acknowledged that an understanding of the factors influencing participation and the constraints which may be negotiated in order to participate will, in balance with an appreciation of motivation, assist in providing greater insight into why players select particular destinations for their participation in golf tourism.

### 3.3 Experience

The extent of experience, both in terms of the participation in golf and in taking golf-related trips also needs to be explored. Prior experience is “accumulated through familiarity, expertise and past experience” (Kerstetter and Cho, 2004, p963) and may have an influence on expectation (Lehto et al., 2004). Past experience can be accumulated in several ways. Firstly it may be through prior visits to the destination to participate in the same activities (in this case golf). Secondly it may be to a destination previously visited, but acknowledging that the activity may never have been undertaken at that destination. Thirdly past experience may be earned through taking many similar trips (to play golf) but acknowledging that the destination has not been previously visited. Finally it is possible to consider prior experience gained in participating in the activity in the home environment, although the concept of taking a vacation, which includes such participation may be new for the tourist (in this case taking a golf trip for the first time).
The concept of Experience Use History was developed by Schreyer, Lime and Williams (Schreyer et al., 1984) to aid their understanding of participation by river recreationists. Categories based on prior experience in general and specific experience with the river under study was used to segment behaviours. This approach was more recently used to examine Experience Use History in relation to golf (Petrick et al., 2001), creating six segments based on total rounds played, number of courses played and experience of the study course. This concluded that Experience Use History can aid segmentation of golf participants into homogenous groups, with motivations to play golf being "uniquely different by group" (p67). Therefore understanding prior experience can aid segmentation of the golf tourism market.

Research has also highlighted that as participation experience increases so a sports participant moves to become a greater specialist, becoming “more focused on specific types of activities and places, and participation is in more depth” (Lehto et al., 2004, p813). Furthermore the level of experience can affect behaviour of participants (Dolnicar and Fluker, 2003). Prior experience, along with skill level, equipment owned and choice of setting are said to reflect the level of recreational specialisation of participants, especially helpful in identifying those driven towards a serious-leisure career (Tsiotsou, 2006). Thus considering these dimensions aids understanding of the golf tourist and their destination selection.

3.4 Skill and ability, competence-mastery and the challenge of the golf course
The importance of skill as an influential factor in the selection of a golf tourism destination is to be specifically examined in this research. Leisure research into skill acquisition outlined the possibility that highly-skilled sports participants are able to analyse their domain more accurately than participants of lower skill level (Mano and Oliver, 1993, Alba and Hutchinson, 1987, Tsiotsou, 2006). Couple this with the recognition that prior experience is said to influence product evaluation and this confirms the need to examine whether the skill level of the golfer (section 1.1 explained that this can be measured using the golf handicap system) and extent of golf tourism experience is influential on golf tourist behaviours and choices made regarding destinations. Ryan and Glendon (1998) draw on the work of Csikszentimihalyi to argue that skill can influence the behaviour of tourists, specifically contending that skill can be a reflection of education and experience as well as individual ability. This point is supported by Holden (1999, p437) who asserted, through his research focusing on skiers in Scotland, that the chance to “challenge as well as develop ones abilities” was an important factor for all ability of skiers, but
that advanced skiers and snowboarders rated the need for thrills more highly than beginners. This followed research by Richards (1996), which recognised that advanced skiers generally take more ski holidays and tend to holiday in larger groups while beginners tended to select destinations with less sophisticated ski facilities. Therefore the choice of vacation may be influenced by the ability of trip participants. Furthermore skill level and commitment can also lead to different patterns of participation (Gibson, 2004). This can lend a starting point for exploring whether a similar link between skill/ability and the choice of destination (selected due to the range of facilities) is pertinent to the golf tourist.

Buckley (2007) links outdoor recreation participation to tourism remarking that purchase of short-term holiday experiences are predominant rather than lifetime acquired skills, suggesting that vacation time offers opportunities for fast-track skill enhancement. Research into skiing evidenced this point noting that ‘improvement in technique’ as well as the opportunity to ‘show off ski skills’ was considered part of the fun nature of participation (Williams and Fidgeon, 2000). For golf the opportunity for improvement can come through increased opportunities for practice as well as through taking lessons with a golf professional. Consideration should also be given to an individual’s desire to improve their own level of skill. Literature does highlight that “individuals who start off a task with relatively good performance have smaller distance to travel on a learning or skills acquisition curve” (Boyle and Ackerman, 2004, p86) thus the opportunity for greater skills improvement (mastery) may rest with higher handicap golfers. Competence mastery is suggested to be a key motivational driver and an influential factor in encouraging participants to take a vacation (Gibson, 1998a) as well as impacting on destination choice. However this may have to be tempered with the needs of any others in the travel group.

While research has generally suggested that “recreationists are more tolerant of individuals engaged in the same activity as themselves than they are with people engaged in a different activity” (Vaske et al., 2004, p217) the desire to improve skill level and expectations held by an individual seeking to test their ability, may lead to conflict between those participants who have differing skill levels. This may be witnessed within the golf tourism realm when expert players are delayed in their game by slower-playing novices or when erratic players may need to utilise areas of the course out of turn. These different user groups may conflict when competing for resources, ultimately impacting individual experiences (Vaske et al., 2004). In examining the world of fishing Bryan (2000) noted the diverse demands on resources by different groups of anglers and concluded that it was influenced by level of experience and involvement in the
sport. Thus it is necessary to investigate whether the different skill levels and experience of golf tourists may impact destination selection. This is reinforced in literature considering serious leisure, which advocates that some sports participants find their chosen activity so engaging that they “launch themselves on a career centred on acquiring and expressing its special skills knowledge and experience” (Stebbins, 1992, p3 cited in Kane and Zink, 2004). This suggests a social world develops for participants in serious leisure, allowing the development of shared norms, values and beliefs (Stebbins, 1999). This links with Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of habitus, fields and thus symbolic capital, which is discussed more fully in the following section.

### 3.5 Explaining the concept of golfing capital

It is useful to consider whether the golfing realm influences destination selection. To clarify this a discussion of golfing capital is provided, deriving its perspective from literature relating to both social and cultural capital.

The seminal work of Pierre Bourdieu (1984, 1986) provides a starting point for an understanding of the concept of social and cultural capital. The term arose in the 1979 translation of his text, Les Heritiers (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979), which encouraged researchers to consider not social anthropological perspectives on culture but sociolinguistic models of explanation (Robbins, 2005). A sociolinguistic perspective appreciates how language differs between groups with different social variables and how adherence to this can categorise individuals into social classes. McKibbin (1998) argued that it is only since the First World War that class has become linked or interpreted in terms of income, education and occupation and that its elaboration prior to that was not primarily a social construct but also considered cultural, moral, political and economic components (Gunn, 2005, Holt, 1998). Rather than using the terminology of ‘classes’ Bourdieu (1984) identified ‘fields’ as social arenas where individuals compete for resources. Thus the ideas emanating from Bourdieu proposed that:

> “the social world consists of various, semi-autonomous fields (such as the field of politics, arts, education or religion) in which actors draw on a range of resources as a way of competing for status (symbolic capital). These resources may be economic, social or cultural” (Turner and Edmunds, 2002, p220).
Thus symbolic capital (which affords status and prestige) is achieved through drawing on resources deemed economic, social or cultural capital (Holt, 1998). The term capital has significance in that it denotes transferable value, in a similar sense to money. For example educational qualifications (cultural capital) and social networks (social capital) may be drawn upon to provide access to a particular job, from which can be derived income (economic capital). Combined these may give opportunity for status and prestige to the individual (symbolic capital).

While Bourdieu’s work has been contested within academia (Silva, 2006, Holt, 1998), concerned with its validity in a post-modern society, this does offer a helpful approach to considering conceptually the power of exchange relationships in understanding golfing influences (considered as golfing capital).

3.5.1 Social Capital

The term social capital is widely used and given a diversity of meanings which can lead to misunderstandings. Having debated this issue Robison et al (2002, p6) critically argue that social capital is:

“a person’s or group’s sympathy toward another person or group that may produce a potential benefit, advantage or preferential treatment for another person or group of persons beyond that in an exchange relationship”

This definition gives consideration to both the concept and role of social capital while Tonts (2005) suggests that social capital refers to the networks that seek to enhance the social lives of its members. Interacting with likeminded individuals (and being a part of the subculture) is a key motivating factor (Costa and Chalip, 2005) therefore increasing the likelihood that people would spend their leisure (and vacation) time with such groups.
The norms created within networks can help establish trust and reciprocity. Gaining entry to such networks may act as a buffer to negate stresses experienced by individuals and help provide a support system (Phongsaven et al., 2006). Often existing norms are communicated to new members as they become more involved within the network. In the case of sport, understanding the rules of behaviour (beyond the rules of the game) can help members become involved within the social group with such involvement leading to increased effort to achieve collective benefit (Donovan et al., 2004). Furthermore, it is possible that sharing personal travel experiences can be perceived as a way of increasing social status and position within the social group (Iso-Ahola, 1983).

However belonging to a sub-cultural group does not automatically infer on the individual a social advantage or benefit (gaining social capital). Choices may be made by the individual to avoid joining the network because they do not agree with the established norms. Thus counter-cultures surface which may offer contrary positions to the dominant sporting culture (Lentell, 1997, Donnelly, 1993, Humphreys, 2011). Furthermore, exclusion from the group may occur when the individual does not abide by the norms of behaviour or where their profile is different from other members, for instance prejudices such as racism can reinforce such exclusion (Tonts, 2005). In such cases the ability to obtain, and transfer, capital may be restricted.

3.5.2 Cultural Capital

Cultural capital refers to the indicators of an individual’s awareness of different fields and may provide indicators of an individual’s class. This capital may be inherited from family, who pass on the skills and contacts needed to interpret cultural resources, thus offering societal privilege and advantage (Wells, 2008). Three forms of cultural capital have been proposed; embodied (denoted by skills and practical knowledge within the individual), objectified (reflected in cultural objects such as art), and institutionalised (such as recognised educational qualifications) (Holt, 1998). There is no one ‘culture’ to be acquired but individuals struggle to acquire cultural judgement which can be used in an exchange with others to gain social, economic or further cultural capital (Robbins, 2005). Therefore cultural capital reflects the knowledge obtained which can help to react to cultural situations, with those holding higher levels of capital perhaps better positioned to understand more complex demands on their behaviour.
3.5.3 Golfing Capital

Donovan (2004) questioned whether the norms often held to be significant to sports communities (such as fair play and integrity) can span other areas of an individual’s life (further shaping behavioural patterns). Golf has been suggested to be an elitist sport, where membership of clubs can act as a social network, encouraging entry for some and exclusion to others (Tonts, 2005). However as greater variety in the characteristics of participants occurs so increased cultural diversity can be established within subcultures of networks.

Drawing conceptually on social and cultural capital provides the opportunity to consider the capital value attained through participation in golf and specifically that gained in travelling to play golf. Golfing capital therefore asserts that a range of benefits may be experienced through being part of the ‘golfing realm’ and that such individuals may participate in travel to:

- enhance their standing within golf-related social networks as well as enjoy the benefits of these networks more extensively,
- to extend their own knowledge and skills of the sport of golf,
- to gain experience of golf-related cultural resources in order to expand their own capital assets
- to gain accreditation for the skills developed (perhaps recognition of improved skills through the use of a nationally recognised handicap system).

In its broadest sense therefore golfing capital must be considered when exploring the choices made in selecting golf destinations as the capital achieved through participation in golf tourism may be extensive.

3.6 Decision making and its influence on destination selection

The decision making process for travel is complex and literature has explored a diversity of issues believed to influence the consumer (Geissler, 2005, Mansfield, 1992, Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). Decision making models often assume that the consumer is rational and efficient, using information to ensure choice provide them with the best option (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). However, there is little evidence to suggest this is the case. Thus while decision making literature often considers consumer behaviour it is also helpful to consider the impact of the choice sets established in the consumer’s perception through marketing and other informational sources (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005).
Furthermore decision making can be influenced by other individuals who are expecting to be involved or who are affected by the choices made (Mansfield, 1992, Humphreys and Weed, 2012). Zalatan (1998) comments that wives are influential regarding some elements of travel choice while their husbands take greater control in other areas. However this should be tempered by acknowledging that levels of education as well as employment influence behaviours related to choice. In addition decisions can be influenced by prior experience and word-of-mouth advice. Recommendations can be helpful in reducing the risk level of the decision. Reliance on the experience of others also means that some members of the travel group will not participate directly in the decision making process for destination selection (Geissler, 2005). The complexity of the decision making process can lead to difficulty in achieving a fuller understanding of the factors that influence destination selection.

The decision making process is influenced by a range of external factors as well as constraints which have to be negotiated (Humphreys and Weed, 2012). As previously noted (section 3.2.2) structural constraints, such as time for holidays and disposable income, will impact preferences and therefore ultimately affect the decision to participate in travel (Hinch et al., 2005, Gibson and Pennington-Gray, 2005), while the ability and resources needed to negotiate around constraints will impact the level of participation. Techniques may include time management, skill acquisition, interpersonal coordination (finding others with similar interests) and financial management (Hubbard and Mannell, 2001).

### 3.6.1 Deciding on a golf destination

The individual has many factors influencing their decision to select one destination over another, Geissler (2005) noted that influential factors include consideration of the likely climate, course availability, perceived value for money, entertainment and an individual’s own vacation time constraints. Geissler (2005) also concluded in his research of male golfers that loyalty to return to the same golfing destination is high. However there is a need to consider the increased competition in the market, as more regions organise and promote themselves as golfing destinations. Furthermore it is unclear whether perceived quality and value for money of the destination will influence the likelihood that customers will remain loyal. It is useful to consider whether some destinations - perhaps including Alabama as the focus of Geissler’s research and destinations such as Myrtle Beach, South Carolina - appeal to psychocentric mass-organised (Plog, 1974, Cohen, 1974) golf tourists while destinations that are newly promoting
themselves to the golf market are perhaps more likely to attract allocentric golf tourists (Plog, 1974).

One distinct advantage when examining golf destination selection is that all golf courses are rated. These ratings may take several forms including official ratings of complexity, golf course guide books or online user-ratings. Official ratings are provided by the national golf association, working either on a Standard Scratch system or a Slope Rating. The Standard Scratch system provides a rating based on the number of shots a scratch golfer (a player with a handicap of zero) would take to complete the course. These ratings tend to fall between 68 and 74 shots, with 71 or 72 being common. This is separate to the par of the course – a par score is the number of shots allocated for each hole - and it is possible to find a course which may be a par 72 but which has a standard scratch of 69 (denoting that scratch golfers should find it easier to play to the 72 shots allocated by the par). The Slope Rating system is predominantly used in the USA, although more countries are now moving towards this approach. This provides a course rating which denotes the difficulty of the course for players who have handicaps above zero. The course rating is “the evaluation of the playing difficulty of a course for scratch golfers under normal course and weather conditions. It is expressed as the number of strokes taken to one decimal place, and is based on yardage and other obstacles to the extent that they affect the scoring difficulty of the scratch golfer” (USGA, 2008a). The slope rating measures the relative level of difficulty for a non-scratch (handicap) golfer as compared to a scratch golfer when playing the course, providing a rating within a band from 55 to 155, with the standard difficulty allocated a rating at 113 (USGA, 2008b). Therefore, the higher the slope rating the greater the difficulty of the course, when being played by a handicap golfer.

Ratings by golf guides also provide assistance in understanding course quality. These often rate the other facilities used by golfers as well as the course. For example, the Peugeot Golf Guide(2008), which is a multi-language publication, reports what it considers to be the top 1000 golf courses in Europe. It ranks each course on seven factors (the site, maintenance, relief, water in play, exposure to wind and trees in play and an advised minimum level of golf ability needed to play the course). It also ranks the supporting golf facilities (pro-shop and driving range) and the hotel and restaurant facilities in the area. Using these assessments, along with other minor factors for each category, each course is thus allocated three grades: course score (out of 20); clubhouse score (out of 10); and local facilities score (out of 10). Thus scores are used to determine the top 1000 European courses.
Course ratings are also provided by many golf-related websites (some of which are related to golf publications such as popular monthly magazines). These are often tied in with customer reviews, allowing the playing public to post their comments about the courses they have played. One website (top100golfcourses.co.uk) aims to combine the rankings of many other sources, balancing this with reviews by their own representatives, to create a hierarchical list of courses. In addition they ask their website members to review and rate the courses to provide an additional score. Few of these reviews and rankings consider the attached facilities (such as clubhouse and driving range), while even fewer consider the non-course factors (such as accommodation). However they do provide a current assessment based on customer experiences.

The ratings of courses referenced in this research have been listed in appendix one. Within the text course rankings are presented (based on top100golfcourses rankings) using ‘WR’ to denote world ranking and ‘NR’ to denote national ranking where no world ranking exists (so NR3 would denote a course ranked 3rd placed nationally while WR3 would denote a course ranked 3rd in the world).

Course rankings are helpful considering that golf tourists may select courses perceived as ‘elite’ in order to enhance their personal status or golfing capital. Research of surf-tourists noted that some sought to have travel patterns which would allow them to experience-gather (Dolnicar and Fluker, 2003), where the obtaining of experiences can add to their capital assets. Elite courses may be those with high rankings but may also include those courses where professional, televised tournaments have been held.

3.7 Summary
The chapter has examined how trip choices and behaviours are influenced by individual tourist characteristics, noting that this can be ameliorated by pressures asserted by other trip participants. Motivational models are evaluated to identify common motivational factors and these are tempered by constraints which must be negotiated if participation is to occur. The concept of golfing capital is explained, and is considered alongside experience and ability to provide an understanding of golf tourist behaviours and decision making linked to destination selection.
The areas outlined in the literature are vast areas of study and may have relevance in examining factors influencing the selection of a golf tourism destination. In line with grounded theory methodology, this examination of literature has not sought to provide an exhaustive review but is designed to provide initial theoretical sensitively to the research topic. Further literature is examined as concepts are constructed from the data, and is therefore presented alongside the data in the following three chapters, which comprise Part Two.
PART TWO – DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

Having determined a methodological approach for this research (chapter two) and explored literature in order to establish theoretical sensitivity (chapter three) this research moves to a detailed examination of the views of golfers. Part Two examines the data constructed from a series of interviews. Grounded theory requires that each iteration of data gathering and analysis provides critical insight, which in turn directs further investigation. This continues until a position of saturation is reached, where no new insights are offered as a result of further data gathering. At each stage the data was managed and manipulated using the computer software program NVivo.

The use of Nvivo software for data analysis

Following full transcription of the interviews open coding was completed. This approach fractured the data into segments with shared meanings (Catterall, 1996) and rather than employing a word-by-word or line-by-line approach (Strauss and Corbin, 1998), it took an incident by incident approach (Glaser, 2008, Charmaz, 2006). This identified the key categories as well as establishing the properties of each category. As each interview was coded so comparisons were made with previously identified codes and categories, to identify commonalities as well as areas of conflict or negation (Goulding, 1998). The software allowed convenient recording of the relationships between concepts, supported through a process of memo-writing, to ensure a full and transparent record of the analytical process was achieved (Lewins and Silver, 2007). These memos were linked to the data and conveniently stored and retrieved for analysis and cross-comparison using Nvivo.

The software codes using 'nodes’ with a variety of types, each serving different roles. Nvivo nodes can be ‘free’ (which represents those categories as yet unlinked to other concepts); ‘tree nodes’ (which represent a hierarchy of nodes, and encourage related categories to be considered as concepts), and ‘case nodes’ which record attributes for a particular case - such as an individual (Gibbs, 2002). Relationships are highlighted using 'relationship' nodes as well as through the use of hyperlinks (allowing associated ideas to be cross-referenced) (Kelle, 2000). In addition ‘matrix’ nodes can be established as the results of queries on the data. For example, in this project matrix coding was used to examine the nodes in relation to individual golfer attributes such as skill level (based on handicaps), golfing experience, trip frequency and gender. Such tools encourage frequent comparison between data, crucial in developing a robust grounded theory.
The key concepts constructed through the coding process are used to guide the next research cycle, thus are revisited as the research progresses. One advantage of using Nvivo is the convenience of data interrogation, which allows data to be re-examined fully and expediently as concepts are developed (Kelle, 2000).

The presentation of the data
When presenting the analysed data in the following chapters, through the use of nodes, many colours have been used. These colours are used to distinguish between each themed group. There is no sense that these colours represent anything directly, or across the entire chart that nodes of similar colours may be interrelated (i.e. there is no direct link between nodes which are pictured in different shades of red).

Connecting lines have been added to the model to highlight nodes which may potentially be associated. This is provided to assist the reader and these prospective links are discussed further towards the end of the following chapter (section 4.3).
Chapter 4: Cycle one

4.1 Gathering Data

The first cycle of research drew on the theoretical sensitivity, established as part of the demands of a grounded theory approach, to identify suitable research participants for interview. This included a diversity of players (varying according to ability, gender and golf membership as well as demographic, lifestyle and lifecycle characteristics). To find golf tourists to interview, a small email database of sports participants was used to contact golfers. The database was originally created to contact people wishing to participate in sports activities in London (although contacts did not have to live in London many worked in the capital). While this led to a geographic focus on London and the south-east of England, the forwarding of emails meant that two respondents came from outside this region. In total, 107 email addresses were contacted and a snowball technique expanded the search for suitable contributors for interview. In total six men and one woman were identified for interview.

To address the imbalance in gender and ensure the views and opinions of women golfers were included, the Essex Ladies County Golf Association (ELCGA) was contacted and they reported the search for research participants in their minutes distributed to all ladies sections in their region. Two golfers affiliated to the ELCGA were selected for interview.

Respondents were selected for interview if they had taken at least one golf trip in the previous year. This was to ensure that during interview research participants drew on actual experiences of trips, rather than notional averages of their previous trips or hypothetical ideals. In total, nine interviews, lasting between 30 and 90 min took place, two over the telephone (as the interviewee lived outside the London / south-east region) and the other seven being face-to-face meetings. Both telephone and face-to-face interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, providing the primary data for analysis. Although three respondents had taken only one trip in the preceding year all had played golf more than a dozen times in that period. This is significant in ensuring that those interviewed have a golf-oriented habitus.
An interview guide (appendix two) of open-ended questions was devised (Layder, 1993c), based on the initial findings from the literature examined to gain theoretical sensitivity (chapter three). “Creating open ended, non-judgemental questions...encourage unanticipated statements and stories to emerge” (Charmaz, 2006, p26) and these stimulated each research participant to consider their views on behaviour and destination selection. Semi-structured interviews can generate rich accounts of experiences while ensuring that a free rein remains, to allow additional relevant points to be presented (Goulding, 2002). Although the first iteration is acknowledged as an initial stage of the research, designed to outline areas for further investigation, interviews still must have depth to ensure that rich data is used to identify initial categories (Charmaz, 2006). Furthermore any data developed through interview is contextual, in that it reflects a reality constructed for the interview by the interviewee often in response to the probes of the interviewer (Charmaz, 2006). A constructivist approach inspired the nature of the interview, with a focus on the participant’s construction and definition of the situation under examination.

To clarify golfer characteristics (providing opportunities for more detailed analysis of findings) the demographic and golfing characteristics of the research participants was obtained (appendix three). Definitions of demographic characteristics set by the UK government (Office of National Statistics) were used when collecting details on family status, household income, employment and education. In addition golfing characteristics were gathered in relation to skill (handicap, actual playing level), experience (playing frequency and history) and golfing trip characteristics.

4.1.1 Characteristics of the interview participants
The nine interviews took place in locations suited to the research participant, and included office meeting rooms, golf clubhouses, and local coffee shops. All participants declared that they had taken at least one golf vacation in the preceding 12 month period. Participant provided details about their golfing characteristics and these are presented in table 4.1.
Table 4.1: Research participants: cycle one

Note: The names of the research participants have been changed (and are shown in capitals throughout the text). N/A denotes information not provided by the research participant.

Table 4.1 shows the majority of golfers have been playing the sport for many years. Both MARGARET and DEBBIE took up golf in mid-life as their husbands were playing and they wanted to join them. Subsequently both ladies achieved handicaps lower than their husbands. REX also took up golf late in life, stating that he was in his fifties and working overseas which provided the opportunity to play at a local country club.

CHARLES, MICHAEL, RYAN and JEREMY started playing as children, with family members introducing them to the game. MICHAEL commented that playing golf was 'compulsory' rather than optional in his family and that as soon as he was tall enough to swing a club he started to play. Thus these players have been involved with the golfing realm for much of their lives.

Friends and family also influenced PAMELA and STEVEN learning to play. PAMELA’s daughter purchased lessons for her to join a class. She was then encouraged to join a club by a friend who was an existing member. Similarly STEVEN was encouraged to try the game by a friend organising a golfing trip and, following this, he also then took lessons.

Overall this group of golfers have had a variety of experiences within golfing communities; some hold full membership of a golf club - including one who is still a member of the same club joined as a child - while a few have little or no link with a golf club at this time.
4.2 Exploring the initial codes established from cycle one

Examination of the nine interviews led to the identification of more than 100 initial codes (or Nvivo nodes). Using a constant comparison process these codes were appraised to identify areas of duplication, resulting in the reduction of total nodes. After initial coding each node was re-evaluated to allow clarification of the properties and any relationships evident. Analysis of the data demonstrates many useful insights but in some cases the evaluation shows aspects which need more detailed exploration. In such cases Questions for further Examination (QE's) were identified to guide the second research iteration.

At this stage overarching parent nodes were introduced to act as an organisational mechanism. This allowed areas of similar relevance to be managed together within the software rather than as a conscious statement of a direct relationship between the initial nodes and the parent node.

The parent nodes were labelled:

1. The player
2. The influence of gender
3. Golfing culture
4. Destination factors
5. The holiday in action
6. The golf tourism industry

The 102 nodes have been presented in their entirety in figure 4.1, and clearly portrays the complexity of this topic. It also considers links within, as well as across, groups. Each of these six areas is discussed in turn and then an overview of the links between these areas is presented (section 4.3).
Figure 4.1: Overview of tree nodes and possible links between nodes

Note: This figure is designed to provide an overview thus the text for each node is reduced in size. Each group is presented in the subsections of this chapter, where the text for each node is presented using a larger font.
4.2.1 The player

Each research participant discussed their attitudes to golf and analysis allowed commonalities to be highlighted. The themes developed in relation to the player were grouped into fifteen nodes (figure 4.2) which are considered in three, possibly interlinked, dimensions:

1. Role of golf in the player’s life
2. Skill-related factors
3. Emotional expectations

![Figure 4.2: Attitude of the player](image)

4.2.1.1 Role of golf in the player’s life

The first dimension focuses on the role that golf takes in the player’s life and how it shapes participation. This may be impacted by the time available (often heavily influenced by work demands) and influential pressures from friends and family (Lee and Bhargava, 2004, Nomaguchi and Bianchi, 2004, Goff and Fick, 1997). In cases where other family members play golf then the time available to participate and the inclusion of golf-specific vacations may be increased. Specifically MICHAEL intimated that being married put an end to longer golf trips as...
work holiday allocation was saved for the main family holiday. Some research participants reported that their wife/husband played golf and in these cases there was little discussion of restrictions on taking golf vacations. REX remarked that his children had grown up now and he had retired so there were few restrictions on his time to play golf. However he did recall family holidays in which he managed to find time to play golf suggesting it was possible for him to fit golf into family vacations. Both DEBBIE and MARGARET spoke of their respective husband playing golf (MAUREEN is now a widow) and recounted golfing vacations as couples and with friends while RYAN said that:

“my wife plays golf so we would play together on holiday - we don’t say ‘alright let’s go on a golf holiday’, but we do sometimes go to places that have golf courses. And it’s an active part of our decision to go to that place.”

Thus family involvement in golf can ease pressures on the player’s decision to take a golf vacation. This is supported by literature (Kay, 2000, Belch and Willis, 2002, Goff and Fick, 1997, Lee and Bhargava, 2004) which suggests that sport participation can impact family activity patterns and relationships. However in cases where the family of adult golfers are not involved in the sport then decisions to take a golf vacation (or include golf while on holiday) may be tempered by the need to appease partners and children. CHARLES concludes:

“That is why golf trips just tends to be a bunch of lads that play golf going to a golf-based destination and hanging out doing that because my wife does not play and has got no interest in playing so we couldn’t go to Quinta do Lago [NR11] or La Manga [NR37] and have me play golf every day because that’s not a great family holiday.”

This issue was substantiated through observations made by JEREMY, who concluded that golfers are often “...pushing your luck with the other half, unless they have got a date at a spa or something like that...” and while he recalled a time when he was dating a golf-playing girlfriend (when as a couple they took a few golfing breaks) he suggested that “...for the most part if golf is involved then you’re having to find something for the other halves to do.”. Furthermore it was implied that if children were included in the holiday then the amount of golf played was likely to be lower than if only adults made up the vacation group. Passion and enthusiasm to participate in a specific leisure activity can lead to conflict with family and friends (Goff and Fick, 1997, Baldwin et al., 1999, Holman and Jacquart, 1988, Kang and Hsu, 2004) while players can perceive that time spent pursuing their leisure activity can take away from meeting family needs (Stalp, 2006).
Some research participants mentioned their obsession with the game and its importance in their lives although a few also spoke of the need to restrict playing golf:

“I tend to only play once in a weekend and sometimes weekends not at all - just because we need to balance our life in general.” (CHARLES)

Therefore the influence of non-golfing friends and family may restrict opportunities to take golf vacations or to play while on vacation. However, the player’s attitude towards golf may combat restrictions or pressures which inhibit participation. Taking golf ‘seriously’ was a common thread amongst research participants. Balancing the desire to have fun and gain enjoyment from the holiday with the need to play with purpose and focus was seen to be crucial. This links with literature on serious leisure introduced in section 3.4 (Anderson and Taylor, 2010, Stebbins, 1992a, Stebbins, 1982, Stebbins, 2006, Higham and Hinch, 2009a). Yet further clarification as to how this influences course and destination choice is needed and thus is a Question for further Examination (QE).

QE1: What is meant by being serious about golf and how does this impact choices made about golfing vacations?

4.2.1.2 Skill related factors

The second dimension focuses on skill related issues. Skill can be defined as “the learned ability to bring about pre-determined results with maximum certainty, often with the minimum outlay of time, energy or both” (Knapp, 1963 (p4) cited in Jarvis, 1999). One judgement of the skill of golfers is through their handicaps (see section 3.4). This cycle of interviews included golfers with a range of handicaps; the lowest being 5 and the highest male being 25 and highest female being 33 (maximum handicap is 28 for men and 36 for women). Five research participants fell in a range between 10 and 19 and could be considered mid-handicaps. The golfers were asked for the score of the last round of golf they played and three declared that they had played under or to their handicap. Others declared their score to be up to 6 shots over their handicap. It is not unusual to play marginally under or over a handicap so handicaps may be considered to be generally reflective of their skill level.
In some instances self-judgement of the skill of the player appeared also to be linked with the skill of others in the group – with an intimation that groups formed according to similar levels of ability.

“I will go with friends whoever they are, but you tend to play with people who are of a similar standard, most of the time.” (CHARLES)

“In terms of ability it tends to be very varied, tends not to have anyone who is too bad, no one north of 24, but there are definitely some people who are excellent – that’s the beauty of golf, if you’ve got a handicap you can play anyone.” (RYAN)

While this may not be an intentional decision it does indicate subconscious forces may be at work creating groups of similar abilities. This ties in with literature examined when developing theoretical sensitivity (section 3.4), which emphasized that advanced players may seek thrills and challenges more than lower-skilled players (Holden, 1999, Richards, 1996). RYAN summed this up by proposing that:

“better players tend to be more driven to go to better courses probably because they appreciate them more, because they play better, keep the ball on the fairway more. Have to hit the shots that the designers were thinking of. So I think if you are in a group with better players there will be a bit more drive to go to nice courses.”

Further insight into this issue was given by a higher-handicap player who initially observed that having a group with mixed skilled players would not affect the choice of courses played but then added:

“...the golf is important but is not as important as enjoying yourself. So I think if you have got a reasonable wide range of handicaps I think you want to add at least a couple of courses which aren’t too testing.” (STEVEN)

Therefore it is critical to understand what pressures may cause this grouping of players by skill level and its implications on course and destination selection.

**QE2: Is there a likelihood that groups of similar ability will choose to play together and what influences this? What are the implications?**

In exploring golf as a test of skill the challenge was noted as an essential element for some players. In cases where the course was considered ‘easy’ there was concern over the lack of challenge. DEBBIE stated that “I enjoy a challenging course. If I find it a bit open and easy I am not so enamoured with it”. However, overly complex courses were also a concern.
“If you are playing a course where it’s not particularly challenging, you don’t feel like you are challenging your skills, or if [it is] not such a difficult test then it's less compelling for you – that’s part of the challenge of golf, playing against the set up of the course. So a lot of the courses you go to, the other factor is how challenging or how difficult they are. You don’t want them to be too difficult because then it becomes not fun, in that you can’t play the course properly.” (CHARLES)

The issue of a challenge may be linked to the individual’s assessment of their own ability. PAMELA is a more recent recruit to golf and has a high handicap. When asked about her feelings if she played a difficult course she replied:

“I would need to improve my golf, possibly! It would be challenging, I mean there are some courses you obviously like and others you don’t.

Course choice may be linked to associating time and cost investment with ability to play the course successfully. REX (who declared that he regularly expected to play to exactly his handicap) offered:

“Sometimes you will have a championship course where the green fees are very expensive and I don’t have any particular desire to play on these top championship courses, because very often - I don’t have a particularly low handicap - these championship courses are much more demanding often whereas the less demanding ones are more to my style.”

Therefore judgements on the suitability of the course may be made in relation to judgements of abilities of players within the group.

Finally in relation to skill the desire for improvement was noted. Jarvis (1999, p174) reports a generally agreed principle “that practice forms an essential part of skill acquisition”. Motivation to practice a task is a critical factor in developing learning and thus skill (Williams and Hodges, 2004, Ward et al., 2004) with playing (outside of competitions) often seen as practice in order to achieve competence mastery (Gibson, 1998a, Elliot, 2005, Papaioannou et al., 2006).

“I don’t think we ever wandered around golf courses with no overall purpose to it. We were always trying to better yourself, to play the best that you can but you still wanted something at the end of it.” (MARGARET)

“it is specifically wanting go away for two or three days and just play a lot of golf to hopeful improve.” (JEREMY)

Improvements achieved through professional coaching may play a role in taking a golfing vacation. While some players may take the time to have a lesson from the local golf professional there are also opportunities to attend golf-schools, some of which are operated by internationally renowned golfers or golf coaches to the stars (e.g. Nick Faldo Golf Institute and David Leadbetter Golf Academy)(Richards, 2007).
“On one occasion my wife wanted to go to a particular place in Florida for a week which I did not want to go to, because it was a sort of nutrient study place, so I am thinking what am I going to do for the week and I ended up actually going to the PGA golf centre in Florida because it was nearby, they had lessons they could give you, plenty of golf courses and I thought that’s fine I can do that for a week and then we went somewhere else for a week together.” (RYAN)

The inclusion of education and practice to encourage skill development may influence holiday decisions. Educational tourism has seen increased research in recent years, with some authors focusing on the Grand Tours of Europe as providing its dominant historical origins (Ritchie et al., 2003). Travel incorporating an educational focus can range on a continuum from general-interest to purposeful learning (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2001) and while experiencing new courses and destinations may support the general-interest end of the spectrum purposeful educational tourism should also be considered. This will need to be explored further.

_QE3: Is skill development an important factor and if so then in what ways is this developed?_

### 4.2.1.3 Emotive factors

The third dimension considers the emotive associations linked with playing golf. A common theme was related to the players expectation of their round of golf, which has close affinity to skill levels. The players recounted their expectations of playing to their handicaps while on vacation. For several players there was no expectation to play to their handicap and several reasons for this were offered:

“Usually you shoot over your handicap away from home. Most people play courses that are easier than the destination courses. Say there are 2000, 3000 golf courses in Britain, a 100 of them are of championship standard, all the rest aren’t which means most people will play on the 2,900 other courses which are not as hard.” (CHARLES)

“I think, it very hard to play a course well the first time you play it, as you play it more often you learn, think about [it] and would expect to get better.” (RYAN)

“I always expect to play well, I always let myself down. Because of the combination of [being] on holiday so you are probably eating too much and drinking too much anyway, and invariably you have got hire clubs, you are invariably playing in a temperature that you are not used to, so when you put all those things together plus you turn up and play a course you have never seen before, [it] contributes to you playing not as well as you would like.” (JEREMY)
Several causes for lower golfing performance levels while on vacation are offered and these can be attributed to either the course or to the player. Whether these impact the choice of destination or course is less clear.

In addition to the issues of performance are other emotive pressures. Boredom and frustration can both play a role in the selection of the courses to be played. Variety seems to be significant and STEVEN explained that “You don’t want to play a tough course every single day because I think everybody gets a bit bored with that”. This issue was acknowledged by Jafari (2003, p232) who observed that “boredom is entertained when skill exceeds challenge”. Furthermore Perkins and Hill (1985) proposed that boredom can be linked with perceived monotony and in further work (Hill and Perkins, 1985) they associate boredom with frustration when a perception of a lack of time or challenge exists, limiting opportunity of a satisfying experience. JEREMY recalled his frustration with some courses:

“I think the courses that I get frustrated with are the ones where the rough is so dense that you can’t find your balls, Okay you expect to make mistakes, you know you are going to make mistakes, that’s why you have got a handicap that is in the teens or higher. Okay, you can play a slightly errant shot but you know you are going to find your ball. We played Celtic Manor for the first time seven years ago now, and I teed off on the second hole having parred the first, so I was pleased. I teed off, I topped my tee shot it went maybe a yard in front of me and slightly to the left. I didn’t find the ball – the rough was that dense! Which sounds impossible but that, we spent 10 to 15 minutes (because it was a quiet course, at that time) and that was very frustrating.”

There is an intimation that selecting the right course to avoid frustration is significant. MICHAEL mentioned that when playing with a higher-handicap group it was still necessary to choose a suitable course to ensure that the weaker golfers enjoyed playing too and that a course which was considered too hard would be frustrating for those golfers. This has implications on golfing groups as it was felt that:

“We don’t want people getting frustrated, and having an argument on the golf course and end up not talking to each other for the evening.” (JEREMY)

Therefore course selection has to balance the need for a challenge with the desire to avoid frustrating players. It seems that there is an expectation towards enjoyment and frustration and boredom can obviously inhibit this. Several research participants remarked on the search for enjoyment, though often linking this with the people around them rather than the course played or the destination.
“What I want from a golf course is a pleasant experience, that is my number one thing, and I want to be with friends, people I like, socializing, talking, being outside, so that’s fine wherever you are.” (RYAN)

“You know, you are not on the golf course all the time are you, so the people around you are very important.” (MARGARET)

“The groups that I go with want to have quite a time and the golf is important but is not as important as enjoying yourself.” (STEVEN)

Therefore the factors influencing course and destination selection may be tempered by the desire to spend time enjoyably with friends.

QE4: To what extent is course and destination selection influenced by desires for an enjoyable vacation?

4.2.2 The influence of gender

There has been significant research into gender differences in leisure participation (Shaw, 1999, Wiley et al., 2000, Thorpe, 2005), overcoming a concern that historically women were ignored in conventional research in the social sciences. Literature argued that such omissions led to sexism within subcultures (Harris, 2005, Giulianotti, 2004, Hargreaves, 1990) while omission related to the attention given to women in sport influences attitudes to women’s participation (Bryson, 1987, Costa and Guthrie, 1994). Specifically, there is “evidence that women face sexist attitudes and discrimination at golf courses” (McGinnis et al., 2009, p20) which was introduced in section 3.1.2. Men often belittle other male players by insinuating they play like women, demasculizing men and intimating that women are weak, requiring shorter courses (Hundley, 2004, Arthur et al., 2009). Therefore attitudes towards other golfers may have gendered connotations.

The themes constructed in relation to gender were grouped into nine nodes (figure 4.3) and considered in four dimensions:

1. Mixed-sex groups
2. Single-sex groups
3. Influence of other players
4. Gendered demand for golf facilities
4.2.2.1 Mixed-sex groups

While some research participants initially proposed that it wouldn’t present a problem to play in mixed-sex groups many then included statements indicating that there may be an issue in practice. Two male interviewees attributed the dominance of single-sex groups to issues they felt women must confront:

“Tends to be single-sex, no particularly reason why it should be –just tends to be because far more blokes that I know play golf than women I know play golf. In fact my wife is one of the very few women I know well enough to go on holiday with that plays golf.” (RYAN)

“I think most of the girls that we all know are ...how can I put this... not adequate enough, they play golf but are not adequate - they don’t feel themselves adequate enough to spend money on a golf holiday... ...I don’t think we know enough ladies that play golf at a standard where they feel comfortable.” (STEVEN)

It has been suggested that the leisure realm is an area where women’s behaviour is monitored as well as regulated by social norms (Thompson, 1990). Concerns over lack of skill or ability may influence the level of participation by women in some sporting activities but Roster (2007, p443) comments that “women who manage to successfully deal with personal competency issues and conquer social stereotypes can achieve a sense of empowerment that extends beyond the intrinsic pleasure they receive from engaging in the activity”. This acknowledges the influence of stereotypical roles in some sports realms and constraints that women especially experience (Bialeschki and Henderson, 1986).
This dimension has been debated in recent years in the world of professional golf as female players have been invited to compete in men’s competitions. This was seen both positively (Hyman, 2003, Rude, 1995, Anon, 2005, Steward, 2003) and negatively (AFP, 1999, Robinson, 2003). Between 2003 and 2005 discussions rose to prominence in the media as women golfers such as Laura Davies, Annika Sorenstam and Michelle Wie (at that time a young amateur) took the opportunity of sponsors invites to play in men’s competitions on both the USA and European tour, while Suzy Whaley earned her place at a PGA tour event through a qualifying event (Gillespie, 2002). They were not the first women golfers to play on the men’s tour – in 1945 Sadie Zaharias competed in three PGA tour events, entering two through qualification events and one through a sponsor’s invite. Unlike the recent attempts, Zaharias made it past the ‘cut’ to complete on the final days of the competitions. Much of the discussion against women on the men’s tour surrounds the concern that other male players will be unable to gain sponsor exceptions if these are given to women players. However greater support for women playing on the men’s tour comes in cases where women have earned their places through official qualifying events. South African golfer Ernie Els reportedly said that “if they go through tour school, they must be good enough to play” (ESPN.com, 2005). A few comments were raised (the most high-profile players in this camp were Greg Norman and Jean Van de Velde) that men cannot play on the LPGA tour (whose bylaws specifically exclude men) thus creating unequal opportunities. The limited success of women in men’s competitions has meant that few sponsors’ exceptions have been offered to high-profile female players in the past five years.

Within this research commercially organised competition golf was discussion as two players (one man and one women) had regularly participated in tournament play. For CHARLES the exclusion of women on his golf trips was attributed to the fact that:

“these are men’s tournaments [so] it’s not really particularly feasible for girls to go along”.

Yet he did not question why women were not allowed to participate in the tournaments or why a tournament for women did not co-exist alongside this event. Thorpe’s (2005) research of snowboarding culture highlighted efforts towards equal opportunity in competitions through the inclusion of women in events and competitions, although she acknowledges that there is some way to go in order to achieve equality across the powerbase of the sport.
While the inclusion of women at men’s events has often been seen as a marketing ploy to gain media attention of events and their sponsors, the limited success of those women who have played has indicated that current women players are not yet able to compete successfully on the men’s professional golfing circuit. Bryson (1987, p350) argues that a negative evaluation of the capability of women to compete promotes “male solidarity through the exclusion process which provides support and fuel for negative male attitudes towards women”. However, awareness of the ability of female golfers may provide evidence which overcomes this stereotype. In considering the relative ability between a couple, MARGARET stated that she held a lower handicap than her husband but she commented that this did not seem problematic:

“[My husband] seemed to be very proud of me, and the fact that I had achieved that. And I don’t think he was as fanatical as I was. He liked to play but he wasn’t looking to improve in the way that I was”.

Furthermore literature has examined perspectives asserting that the physical demands of sports can lead to a socially constructed male superiority (Bryson, 1987, Schacht, 1996, Hargreaves, 2001) with Thorpe (2005) observing that traditional competitive sport reaffirms masculine identities and the exclusion and control of women. Therefore such public discussion of the competitive equality of men and women can in turn sway attitudes of amateur golfers towards the ability of women to complete alongside men. There are cases when women compete alongside men (for example showjumping) but often this is less highly publicised - media coverage of women’s sports is said to be limited and haphazard (Bryson, 1987, Billings et al., 2005, Adams and Tuggle, 2004). As an example it is possible to look to the extensive publicity given to Jacqui Oatley, in 2007, as she entered the men’s world of professional soccer – albeit as a commentator on BBC television’s Match of the Day. Frequently the debate focused on the loss of the male preserve and an intimation that a successful commentator needed to have an appreciation of the game and its tactics which could be gained only from playing the game (Barlow, 2007), The ‘novelty’ of a female commentator served only to stress the difficulties faced by women entering realms considered to be male territory (Bryson, 1987, Cahn, 1995, Messner, 2002) and that equality can only be achieved if there is a shift in the male perspective (Thorpe, 2005). Women who challenge traditional male territories and expectations can be stigmatised unless there is support for this through structural changes (McGinnis et al., 2009).
Whannel (1999) explored the work of Vinnai in his examination of masculinity in sport and concluded that the socialisation in sport for men required muscles, a lack of sentimentality and an ability to withstand pain as well as capacity to consume alcohol, while women seek environments which emphasise enjoyment and fun (Wiley et al., 2000). It raises the question then if women are to enter this perceived male territory, to socialise with male golfers, do they have to adopt male traits? Evidence from interviews hinted that this may be the case. The interview with MICHAEL included a statement that while the majority of his golf trips were single-sex groups there had been one trip which included females. His experience was that this "worked as the women drank alongside the men". However, the need for such behaviour can be contested as women may not need to exhibit masculine traits in order experience golf vacations more equitably. The work of McGinnis et al (2009) underlined three response approaches by women confronted with male rituals that dominate golf; one approach was to try to conform and maintain a feminine identity while the second response was to reject the masculine rituals unapologetically, claiming their entitlement to play golf. The third response was to play without calling attention to these gendered issues. McGinnis et al (2009) conclude that changing attitudes of the ‘powerful’ will be more successful in encouraging equality rather than encouraging women to become more like men which can reinforce a system that places value on what is male. These attitudes and responses must be further examined.

QE5: How do individuals respond when there are mixed-sex golf groups? How do they feel towards the ‘other’ gender when playing golf on vacation?

However, in the case of golf tourism the opportunity to encourage a shift towards greater equality in the opinions and attitudes of those in control of the golfing realm (such as golf club managers, club committees and golf participants) is likely to be exceptionally difficult as this will require significant cultural shifts. While some countries may be striving towards greater equality others are not, which will mean that golfing destinations have differing views towards women’s golf participation and the experience of female golf tourists will vary across the globe.
4.2.2.2 Single-sex groups

The second dimension considered attitudes that lead to single-sex groups taking golf vacations. Swim and Surra (1999) claim that, on average, women and men identify with their own gender more than the other gender, which may impact choice towards single-sex groups. MICHAEL mentioned that the golf based tour operator that employs him (Golfbreaks.com) originally drew their custom from ‘blokes stag weekend’ style of breaks but he recognised that now there are more women-only groups using the company (which he attributed to the increase in lady captains at golf clubs taking overnight ‘away-days’ which use their services). Single-sex groups dwarf the mixed-sex business (estimated to be only 10-15%). This was corroborated by remarks that golf trips have a:

“traditional image of being a bit of an escape for the lads from the wife and from family life, that sort of thing and you can do what boys do, talk about football and drinking.” (CHARLES)

When asked about his golf trips STEVEN recalled that the people he travelled with were:

"Mostly single-sexed groups, yeh, it tends to be a boy’s holiday more than anything else.”

This idea is endorsed by Bryson (1987) in her acknowledgment that sport can have a masculine ritualistic dimension while Thorpe (2005) noted the importance of male-bonding as an exclusionary practice allowing men time to differentiate themselves from women. Furthermore Thompson, in her examination of the research by Summers (1976 in Thompson, 1990), emphasised that male solidarity and mateship is considered a result of male sports team behaviour. While golf is not a team sport, group participation on vacation can draw on dynamics that enhance kinship between the players. Specifically for golf, in his discussion of men’s reticence to play with women Christianson (2004) asserted that men often enjoy the camaraderie of being with other men and golf is a way to achieve that. He further argued that

"Men, rightly or (most likely) wrongly spend most of their lives trying to look good for women. We work out, we watch what we say, and above all else, we try not to look stupid. Any above-scratch golfer can tell you that during any given round of golf, you’re bound to look stupid plenty of times. Between the flubbed chips, banana-slices, and Tourette-like outbursts of profanity, stupidity abounds on the links" (Christianson, 2004).
There is evidence in the data that female single-sex groups also encounter positives. Wiley et al (2000, p28) drew on literature (Henderson and Bialeschki, 1994, Glyptis, 1985) and their own data to assert that “female sports environments tend to place more emphasis on enjoyment and fun, and less emphasis on competition and individual achievement” (introduced in section 3.1.2). Thorpe (2005) reported similar experiences in her review of the gender order in snowboarding, reporting that female riders provided camaraderie and a supportive network for each other. In her consideration of other players DEBBIE remarked that:

“With the girls I think you don’t have to worry about keeping them happy, you can just go out, play your game of golf.

However, this is not to suggest that within a female group the focus is only on fun. In her discussion of playing with other women DEBBIE suggested that she balanced the desire for fun with a competitive element:

“With the girls you just have a laugh and a joke and get on with it. You have competition between yourselves, don’t you, like put up a couple of quid”.

Thus, in summary individual golfers may feel there is an advantage in playing with others of the same sex rather than in mixed-sex groups, although these ‘advantages’ may differ by gender. This will need to be further examined.

**QE6: To what extent is there an advantage in playing in same-sex groups?**

### 4.2.2.3 Influence of other players in the group

The third dimension considers the influence of the playing partner, specifically when they are not playing well or not enjoying the golfing experience. Later in this thesis (section 4.2.5.3) a discussion of the impact of other players on the course is offered so specifically here the focus is on players within the same group. Mixed-sex groups can have a variety of constructions. STEVEN explored this when asked about the inclusion of women in his group:

“It questions, do you go with your girlfriend? Do you go with your wife? That’s a different group to a mixed group of men and women who all know each other. If it was all couples I think you would all do different things [than if] you were just a mixed group of people.”

The influence of other players was also highlighted by MARGARET, who recalled vacations which included a commercially organised competition to note that:

“there were always competitions, and you are influenced by who you are drawn with or who you are going to play with, because you usually couldn’t choose who you played with.”
Furthermore, the influence of other players may be particularly significant when playing with a partner with whom there is an emotional relationship – henceforth termed ‘relationship partner’ to distinguish it from playing partners (who may be friends but amongst whom there is no sexual relationship). Existing research into leisure participation by couples has been completed but in most cases this has assumed that the data collected from one partner is assumed to describe the couple (Berg et al., 2001). Therefore to achieve greater understanding of the effect of future cycles of data gathering explore separately the views of golfing couples.

Research by Madrigal et al (1992) stressed that couples which have greater levels of companionship in their marriage may find spending time together on vacation more pleasurable. Berg et al (2001) examined literature to conclude that married couples who undertake joint leisure activities often have greater levels of marital satisfaction, although they acknowledge that levels of satisfaction may be uneven, as one member of a couple may draw their satisfaction from the enjoyment their partner derives from participation rather than their own participation directly. Literature indicates that the well-being of an individual is linked to the wellbeing of their partner and that greater enjoyment is achieved when relationship partners participate in leisure activities together (Sullivan, 1996, Swim and Surra, 1999, Crawford et al., 2002). The interview data suggests that this may be the case for golf, as players balance the desire for their relationship partners to have a good time with the desire for their own game to be enjoyable. RYAN stated that although he might like to play one course when visiting an area he may choose an alternative when playing with his golfing wife to ensure that it “would be easier for her to feel fulfilled going round”. Similarly, when asked about her reaction if her husband was having a bad round of golf, MARGARET observed:

“I would find that more difficult to deal with... because it would matter to me that he had a good time.”

However MARGARET then considered if she was playing with someone other than her husband and offered a thought that:

“It’s much easier to play mixed foursomes with someone you don’t sleep with ... because I don’t mind, if they are having a bad day. I mean I mind that we are not going to win, but I am not too worried. I am not feeling the same way - I mean I am always sorry if anybody is having a bad day and I know people are sorry when I’m having a bad day because nobody goes out there to make a fool of themselves.”
Sullivan (1996, p88) observes that “the most important predictor of individual well-being... is in fact the well-being of their partner” and that individuals are aware of the impact of their conduct on their partner (Crawford et al., 2002). Literature (Berg et al., 2001, Swim and Surra, 1999) confirms that couples can gain self-satisfaction as well as express their love for each other through compromise, by participating in leisure activities preferred by their partner. However other authors (Crawford et al., 2002, Walker, 1996) have proposed that often heterosexual women sacrifice their own preferences in order to ensure the happiness of the man in their life. A couple’s leisure satisfaction can manipulate their relationship satisfaction (Berg et al., 2001) although Walker (1996) questions the strength of the link between these two areas. Furthermore, in the case of golf it should be acknowledged that both partners may participate in the sport but rarely play together – perhaps holidays providing the only opportunity.

QE7: In cases where both members of a relationship couple play golf to what extent does playing together on golfing vacation differ from their normal playing behaviour?

### 4.2.2.4 Gendered demand for golf facilities

The fourth dimension examines the effect that gender has on the demand for golfing facilities, with gender differences in golf introduced in section 3.1.2. Mottiar and Quinn (2004) suggest that couples share the decision on where to go on vacation, acknowledging that in households with children family dynamics may sway this. Moreover while Fodness (1992) proposed that husbands may dominate the decision when it is a family holiday, Mottiar and Quinn (2004) assert that women often take the role in collecting brochures thus acting as gatekeepers, narrowing the destination choice sets (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). While this may be the case there is evidence for golf that word-of-mouth recommendations can impact choice (section 4.2.4.1.1) thus destination selection may not be based on traditional information sources such as holiday brochures. Understanding this will help to evaluate the selection of golfing vacation destination.

The golf industry has expanded its provision for women (providing specially designed clubs and balls) which can enhance the ability of women players. However, Thorpe (2005) mentioned that such industry attention can be driven by commercial desires to expand markets rather than any desire to enhance the capability of women. The golf industry, alongside the tourism industry, is dominated (organised and run) by men (Bryson, 1987).
The research participants hinted at a gender difference in the facilities sought. MICHAEL confirmed that other facilities (such as accommodation, catering and tourist attractions) were not central for him as he would rather spend his money on playing superior courses but he remarked that his awareness of the Golfbreaks.com market led him to believe that women especially seem to care about the quality of the accommodation, the food and other facilities, to ensure the overall experience is pleasant and relaxing. MARGARET stated that “I am more worried about where I am staying than where I am playing”. However, several male players interviewed also mentioned the importance of accommodation. JEREMY specifically stated that he considered a destination nice if:

“it has got some really good facilities outside of the golf course, so accommodation, and the rooms being of a decent standard, so you are looking at a three or four star place, that level. A nice restaurant, a nice bar, either a golf bar and a main bar or a combination, if it’s got a pool or a gym, and a spa, that’s excellent as well.”

In balance to this DEBBIE suggested that the gender of the people she was travelling with would not impact choice of destination:

“If it’s a nice place, it’s a nice place and I would go with [my husband] or I would go with the girls if it was organised.”

Thus for golf destinations considering whether the vacation is truly chosen jointly or whether particular elements are selected (or weighted with greater importance) by men or women in the group is necessary. While there appears to be some suggestion in the interviews that this may be the case this seems to be a little simplistic in its assumption. It may be the case that other factors, such as avidness towards playing golf or ability level may be influential.

QE8: Is there a link between choice of support facilities and gender? Does ability or avidness have a role to play?
4.2.3 Golfing culture

The third parent-node topic is that of golfing culture. Literature into social and cultural capital and the specific focus of this research to explore golfing capital highlights the importance of these nodes. In total 11 nodes were identified (figure 4.4) and grouped into five dimensions:

1. Linking with other people
2. Verbal exchanges
3. Discussion of golfing holidays
4. Golfing capital
5. Importance of golfing rules

![Diagram of golfing culture]

Figure 4.4: Golfing culture

4.2.3.1 Linking with other people

Dimension one considers golf vacations as a social opportunity to meet with like-minded people and develop friendships. It has been posited that “many activities only take on meaning when shared with others” (Harvey and Taylor, 2000, p59). CHARLES remarks that “there is a lot of time for talking and catching up on a golf trip, and it’s a pretty social game”. Others also note this view:

“Golf is a very social game. I don’t think that can really be denied and it’s the reason why a lot of people play. Its good exercise... but the companionship and the social side of it is for me one of the most important things.” (REX)

There is a huge amount of comradeship with the people you go with. It’s a bit like ‘boys or girls on tour’ type mentality, but it’s never like a stag do, it’s a bit like a half way between the two. So yeah, there is quite a big comradeship there. With other golfers that you don’t know, a reasonable amount, but there again, it depends on the type of course and who’s there, you have a chat to people in the bar or whilst you are waiting to tee-off.” (STEVEN)
The social opportunity appears to be significant. Literature on travel motivation (Iso-Ahola, 1983, Pearce, 2005, Crompton, 1979) identified a social interaction dimension (see figure 3.4 in section 3.2.1) which can influence the decision to take a golf vacation. Being away from the constraints of home-life can encourage groups to develop a sense of solidarity and communitas, in spaces conducive to socialising with friends as well as making initial contacts that can develop into life-long associations (Yarnal and Kerstetter, 2005, Kelly, 1981, Turner, 1974). Therefore social opportunities may lie with the time spent with friends (and friends of friends) but in the case of repeat visits can also provide an opportunity to meet up with the same people year after year. MARGARET mentioned that she and her husband had returned to the same golf festival for many years. When asked why she responded:

“Well, you met the same people often and made lots of friends, people we had kept in touch with for years and years. And you met up there and you just had really good times. You know, you are not on the golf course all the time, are you, so the people around you are very important.”

This infers that attending this golfing festival allowed her to develop friendships with other players and henceforward meet up, knowing they would be attending at the same time. Spending time with others was also essential to DEBBIE who felt that “it is no fun, if you are not with like-minded people”. However, this raises a question regarding like-mindedness which needs to be further examined.

QE9: What is the idea of “like-minded” people? What criteria are used to establish if they are like-minded?

The idea of a common interest (golf) is a factor that can bring a group of disparate people together. It can help overcome differences between the group members as CHARLES intimates:

“It might be only thing that you do together, so it is an important factor that you all want to play the course and you all dedicated the time and the money and the effort to do it. In [terms of] the cohesion of the group does everyone need to ‘get on’? Broadly but you can get away with a few that you don’t because you only play with one or two people at a time – you don’t have to spend a lot of time with one person of the group if you don’t want to.”

One way of meeting ‘like-minded’ people may be through joining a golf club. Six of the nine research participants were members of local clubs although involvement in club activities and organisation varied. It is possible that such clubs can develop bonding social capital (see section 3.5.1), through networks “based on strong social ties between similar people” (Coalter, 2007, p59). JEREMY, who does not belong to a golf club, noted the benefits of being a member (the camaraderie and a bigger group of people you know who play) but said that cost (versus the amount of times he played) meant that it was not “a cost-effective venture”. Furthermore
RYAN, REX and PAMELA (all club members) mentioned that they played socially with their friends rather than other members of their club. RYAN explained his decision:

“I am not particularly interested in playing golf with random people, who I am sure are really nice, but I don’t have enough time to see all my friends, so to me going and playing golf for 4 hours is a great opportunity to catch up with 3 mates, I wouldn’t roll up on a Sunday to play with whoever else turns up for the stableford because I would rather see my friends.”

So despite club membership offering the possibility to expand the circle of golfing friends, and thus enhance social networks (Portes, 1998, Tonts, 2005), this may be limited for some players, often through their own choices.

4.2.3.2 Verbal exchanges

The second dimension discusses the verbal exchanges between players on and off the course. Verbal banter and sledging are often part of sports games. Giulianotti’s (2004, p297) discussion of the conversations between Scottish football supporters concluded that “banter is by definition informal, engaging, entertaining and frequently joking…it functions to assist in binding those engaged in social interaction, but on the pleasurable surface banter is an end in itself that requires no external legitimation”. Verbal interchange may enhance individual and group experiences. While banter is generally considered to be humorous, some interchanges take the form of sledging, focusing on negative aspects of a player’s game. “Sledging is probably as old as sport itself. Players and athletes sledge in order to psyche out their opponents and put them off their game. The aim of sledging is to intimidate and distract the opposition” (Martin, 2007). Such exchanges can be part of the cultural scene surrounding the sport and stresses when parts of the populace are included or excluded from the culture (Field, 2003, Tonts, 2005). Accepting such exchanges - moreover participating in such exchanges - may be necessary if an individual wishes to enter the cultural group. JEREMY links the banter to bets/competitions agreed between the group members and recalls that it can be used to put players off.

“So there is the banter when you’re stood over a putt that is only maybe two or three inches away from a hole and yet you know that if you miss it you haven’t won the skin [hole]. And the other three guys you are playing with are all stood there giving you a little bit “oh I bet you are worried about missing that” and “oh you missed one like that five minutes ago didn’t you”, all of that. In other forms of golf they would probably give you that putt.”
He also discusses off-course banter which seeks to belittle a player’s general ability:

“If you take the guys from the Bermuda trip - when we played that first time the three of them were playing off 18, I had just taken it up again and was playing off 28. The three of them are now married; two of them have now got two kids each. One of them is now about 30 - 36 in our unofficial handicaps, I have come down to 17. The guy whose married, but without family yet, is on 16 and the guy in Bermuda is probably off about 22 – 23 so there is a lot of banter about getting married being a bad thing for winning this competition and having kids being a very bad thing for winning this competition.

MICHAEL also comments that banter focuses on how well a course had been played, whether particular members of the group played poorly and other things that may have happened while on the golf trip. Therefore the banter and sledging can illustrate insights into membership of the golfing culture.

4.2.3.3 Discussion of golfing holidays

The third dimension focuses on the discussion of golfing trips and experiences of courses played. Debating with others their views on a topic of shared interest provides both social and cultural capital (Bennett and Savage, 2004, Putnam, 1995, Portes, 1998). MICHAEL recalled that he talked to other golfers frequently about golfing trips. Significantly though, he confirmed that this did not occur with non-golfers. He used the analogy that talking to a non-golfer would be like someone talking to him about ‘showjumping’, a topic which holds no interest for him. STEVEN acknowledged that other golfers are always “eager to feed off information on where was good”. Knowledge of other destinations and courses may enhance the social standing of the golfer (and in turn their golfing capital). CHARLES confirmed that talking about the well-known courses played was common:

“A lot of them [courses] will have one or two signature holes or signature features which everyone wants to have a go at, it’s a bit like, again a bit like skiing, you want to do the Olympic run at a certain resort so, if people go to St Andrews [WR9], say, you want to play the road hole at St Andrews, nobody knows most of the rest of the holes but they all want to have a crack at the 17th because it’s famous, and it’s difficult and everyone will always ask you “what did you get on the 17th?” when you have been to St. Andrews.”

This indicates that kudos can be gained from talking about golfing experiences as well as the success of playing these courses – all of which can add to an individual’s ‘golfing assets’ in turn enhancing their golfing capital (introduced in section 3.5.3 and discussed in section 4.2.3.4). The value of golfing capital gained from playing other courses may be moderated by the level of assets of others. Blackshaw and Long (2005, p255), in their critique of the concept of social capital, explained “that being somebody today is about finding ones value in the eyes of others”
and thus status and prestige may be endowed on the individual. Therefore whether experiences are valued by others within the cultural group is a critical issue and whether players feel it can help them enter the golfing culture needs to be explored.

QE10: Do experiences of playing well-known courses influence entry to the ‘golfing culture’ and add to golfing capital?

4.2.3.4 Golfing capital
Golf is often seen to be a business skill (Campbell, 2007), providing time and space to meet with business associates and discuss trade opportunities. This is corroborated by STEVEN:

“Work-wise it’s quite useful thing to be able to play golf, as you get more senior [...] you get invited to lots of golf functions, and clients wanting to go and play golf with you. If you don’t play it’s a bit of a weakness, [so you play] no matter how good or bad you are.”

Enhancing skills useful to employment can help to expand golfing capital. Bourdieu (1986) argues that developing social and cultural capital is predicated on the expectation that this will offer a profitable return. Profits can be material or symbolic but requires effort to obtain and maintain these (Heimtun, 2007). Thus the return will be influenced by the individual’s ability to draw on this asset at a later point, including converting this to economic capital. For example, in their examination of gender issue in golf McGinnis et al (2009, p20) underlines that this potentially can “help women in corporate environments through critical informal social connections to higher status network members”. Therefore the ability to obtain economic capital can be determined through the development of capital gained and held within the golfing context.

4.2.3.5 Importance of golfing rules
The final dimension linked to golfing culture is tied to the rules of golf, and abiding by those rules. Rules can help to ensure fairness, predictability, stability and safety (Schauer, 1993, Wilson, 1994) and they "matter because they can reflect the sporting and possibly social visions of the rule-makers, demonstrating their attitudes towards violence, equality, gambling, winning and losing and even race and gender" (Vamplew, 2007, p844).
The official golf body in the UK (The R&A) identifies 34 rules to govern the game, although many of these rules have sub-sections which clarify the situations under which each of these rules applies (R&A, 2007). As a consequence these rules can be complex, affected by the type of competition being played (match-play, stableford, stroke-play) and the person involved (players, their team-mates, caddies or others on the course) as well as other conditions. Thus understanding and playing to the rules requires extensive knowledge of all rules in all contexts.

Perspectives of research participants varied in relation to playing strictly to the rules of golf. Some felt that adhering to the rules of golf was imperative, while others reported that this was less significant in their enjoyment of the game. Perhaps the most fervent towards adherence was MARGARET, who used the term ‘fanatical’ to describe her attitude, remarking that she had captained a team competing in a regionally organised golf-rules quiz. Another supporter of playing strictly by the rules was JEREMY who justified this in relation to measuring his own skill:

“I always play to the rules because I want to know what my score was. I remember playing in Portugal once, just getting a round in on holiday, and it was only me that was playing - my girlfriend did not want to play, and this other guy was playing and his girlfriend was there as well, again not playing, so we were both driving around and he would play a shot and he would pick the ball up or move it or pick-and-place; if it was in the rough he would put it on the fairway and play, and I am thinking 'well, I don’t see the benefit of that’. If I have hit a bad shot then I should be practicing getting out of the trouble I put myself in. If I lose a ball and I have to drop another one well I had better put three down on the card for that combination as opposed to going, oh well if I hadn’t lost a ball I would have scored par - I would walk off and see a brilliant score, but it’s a complete falsehood so I always play completely to the rules.”

However, some players gave less importance to the rules, intimating that they are over-complex for a fun game. RYAN said that:

“I don’t really have any time for golf rules particularly, I mean it’s just too complicated, If I am playing in a competition, obviously you play to the rules and that’s fine but when I am playing with my friends, other than ‘play as it lies’, count the number of shots you took and write down the right number, I don’t care. I mean, whether or not you can move an apple core in a bunker or not I don’t even know what the rule is, I would just move it, I wouldn’t care less ‘cos life’s too short.”

STEVEN also inferred that ‘time was too short’ to worry about the rules but expanded this to suggest that there was a pragmatism which balanced speed and convenience when playing with fairness and equity across the group. An extensive debate on cheating (Green, 2004, McFee, 2003, Loland, 2005, Sheridan, 2003) concluded that there are varieties of cheating and that to be considered cheating it requires the rule-breaking to have an intent to gain competitive
advantage over the competition; if there is no intent by a golfer to enhance their position to the detriment of others then it cannot be considered cheating. Therefore choosing to forego playing precisely to the rules may not be considered cheating if all players within the group are extended the same opportunity giving perceived equity. However the very decision to participate in a game could be suggested to infer a non-cheating commitment (McFee, 2003).

When specifically probed about one rule often ignored (replaying a shot when the ball is out-of-bounds) some research participants acknowledged that they would probably not adhere to the rule (which would require them to return to the place they last hit a shot from) as this may involve walking back down the course which would slow up play. It seems that practicalities may outweigh adherence. For example DEBBIE remarked:

“I wouldn’t go so far as to pull up every single thing, you got to be a bit lenient, you can’t be that strict, not actually to the letter no. And you can be magnanimous if you are in the lead!”

Yet novice player PAMELA was adamant that she would always play to the rules (and she recounted an example where her group of players had debated the rules in a particular scenario). This indicates that the decision to adhere or ignore the rules may be determined by the group as a whole or by an individual, who perhaps may hold greater ‘power’ as a result of higher perceived levels of golfing capital. Therefore the golfing culture of any group can influence whether rules are adhered to.

4.2.4 Destination factors

The range and quality of resources found at a destination can vary and this may be influential when selecting a place to vacation. It is helpful to appreciate the underpinning influences on the location of sports resources (Bale, 2003) and in some cases the uniqueness of the resources plays an essential role in attracting users from beyond the local catchment area.

This is an exceptionally large area of the analysis and included 42 nodes, across seven parent nodes. However, there is close affinity between the role of the course and the clubhouse so these themes been discussed as one section (22 nodes shown in figure 4.5). Similarly the role of food, drink and accommodation has been considered alongside other facilities in the area (10 nodes shown in figure 4.6) and the remaining areas (choice of destination, travel for golf and cost) are considered in the final group (10 nodes shown in figure 4.7). This means there are three sections:
1. The course and the clubhouse
2. Food, drink, accommodation and facilities in the area
3. Choice of destination, travel for competitive golf and cost

4.2.4.1 The course and clubhouse

There are a range of issues linked to the golf course selected (figure 4.5) which includes price, type of course, number of holes and location (Brown et al., 2006). For instance STEVEN noted that when he evaluated a course he had played:

“It really does boil down to how friendly it is. How friendly [and] how well kept it is. I mean you don’t want to pay £45 and play something that’s not particularly well kept. There are three criteria. For me, there’s the value, there’s the condition of the course and the challenge of the course, to an extent, relative to what you are expecting, and how friendly it is. Three big things.”

There is a need to examine these in detail and therefore these nodes have been grouped under three sub-sections:

1. Reputation
2. Role of the clubhouse
3. Role of the course

Figure 4.5: The role of the course and the clubhouse
4.2.4.1.1 Reputation

The reputation of the course can be linked to golfing culture through issues such as bragging rights and etiquette. A course may have an excellent reputation with a player through their own experience of playing the course previously. STEVEN recounted that an annual golf trip to the South-West had allowed his group to try several courses thus creating their own list of recommended courses to play when they returned the following year. RYAN also used his own experience of a course to aid selection:

“Well my last trip was with my wife, we went to Portugal, Quinta do Lago [NR11]. We have been there several times before [and] we know the golf courses we like.”

Word-of-mouth recommendations that courses are worth playing can enhance reputation (Humphreys, 2011) and several research participants relied on recommendations from other golfers to help them select courses to play. DEBBIE recalled that she played a course on holiday which was chosen because it was the closest to their accommodation. While at that course she talked with other golfers who then recommended courses to play in the area which formed the basis of her course selection for the rest of the trip. She mentioned that she used such an approach rather than examining golf guide books. CHARLES proffered that selecting courses for his recent golf trip to Cornwall was completed by choosing either ‘big named’ courses (confirmed perhaps by course rankings), word-of-mouth recommendations (from other golfers he spoke to) or from internet-based recommendation of courses (which he also considered to be a form of word-of-mouth recommendation from players). RYAN recognised that recommendations came while playing courses, with associates recounting their golfing experiences.

“Inevitably when you’re certainly on a golf course with people playing golf you would say ‘oh have you played RCD [Royal County Down] [WR3] in Ireland? God, it’s amazing, it’s a fantastic place to go and play. You should really try it’. And if other people say that to you that’s certainly an influence.”

RYAN makes reference here to a highly ranked course as an example to assist in justifying the value of this recommendation. MICHAEL asserted that for him word-of-mouth recommendation was significant and that many of the destinations he had played were due to recommendations given to him or indirectly to others he played with. He observed that he listens to those recommendations which come from golfers with a similar mindset – those who are also focused on course quality rather than from others who have different primary desires for their golf trips.
Several courses are globally renowned, perhaps for their historical tradition or because they have hosted major televised competitions and demand for such courses is often higher than for standard courses (Priestley, 2006). Reputation is linked to perception of someone or something (Dowling, 2001, Amis, 2003) and “the conferring of repute is an attestation of worth or value whereby ... uniqueness is recognized” (Rodden, 2006), and thus reputation can play a crucial role in buyer decision making. When investigating the value of reputation on auction site eBay Resnick et al (2006) reported that reputation can inform purchasers about the seller, their trustworthiness and honesty about product descriptions. In the case of golf, reputation can be influential when choosing where to play. MICHAEL specifically sought ‘championship courses’ with a superior reputation and when asked what he looked for when choosing a course to play CHARLES stated that:

“there’s a list of courses that you would love to play because they hosted big tournaments that have been around for a long time and they have a reputation for being a good challenge and interesting to play at. Those are the sorts of places that you would try and gravitate towards most of the time.”

CHARLES attributes the reputation of courses to longevity and the existence of signature holes well-known to players – such holes are sought by some players who wish to test their skills against these specific golfing tests. Furthermore playing renowned or highly ranked courses may provide an opportunity to ‘brag’ about the experience (discussed in 4.2.3.3) in an attempt to underscore that the player has extended golfing experience (and golfing capital) (Humphreys, 2011). This was confirmed by JEREMY who recognised that being able to talk about the courses played is significant as it is “about being able to say yes you played a nice course”. However, the desire to select well-reputed courses may be tempered by other factors. RYAN debated this point:

“I would want to play a course that I regard as a good golf course. I wouldn’t really bother unless it was a course I liked and thought was going to be decent, but that said I wouldn’t travel miles on holiday because I’ve heard there’s a great golf course in [a distant town]. You know I am not that obsessed about it. I am not trying to tick off all the great golf courses of Europe. But that said, when it’s a choice between a championship course and the second or third course at a particular venue I would choose the championship course.”
One research participant (STEVEN) intimated that reputation impacted selection of a golfing destination but not necessarily the choice of course. When probed about this he explained that reputed courses would be less fun to play as higher prices would attract what he considered to be the “wrong type of golfer”. He further clarified his concerns that he could be put off selecting a course if he expected the attitude experienced in clubhouses might be:

“Too officious, not particularly helpful. We have all walked into a golf course where they – just because you are not a member, you are looked down upon, as a third-class citizen. You’re not allowed to go into this bar because you are not a member, you are not allowed to change in this changing room because you are not a member. That sort of thing really does get my goat because, at the end of day you are paying a reasonable amount of cash and are using the course, we are not idiots and are not going to ruin your course, and not going to ruin your changing room, so let us get on with it. That does make a difference to me, that more egalitarian approach I prefer, where you just turn and say ‘hey great to see you, welcome’.”

Therefore the expected behaviour of club members or other players likely to opt for reputed courses may influence choice. A sense of equity and overall fairness can be linked to the perception of service value (Hutchinson et al., 2009, Oh, 1999, Williams and Soutar, 2009, Zeithaml et al., 1993) therefore treating visitors equitably as compared to club members may be critical and any rules of behaviour imposed on visiting golfers must be perceived as fair. Rules of behaviour are often linked to golfing etiquette, which can affect decision making positively because it can ensure expectations are met. JEREMY reported that:

“You want a clubhouse that has [...] nice changing places, and [to] see people wearing the right attire - it’s the one, the constant golf snobbery that I think carries into a lot of golfers who play often. You try to wear a proper pair of trousers or a tailored pair of shorts, a polo shirt and what you don’t want to do is turn up and see people in tracksuit bottoms and trainers and football gear and things like that.”

Etiquette refers to the expected ways to behave and in sport may relate to written or unwritten rules which control the behaviour of players (Sibson and Taylor, 2004, Vamplew, 2007, McFee, 2003). Rules on etiquette often “deal with customary expectations on how the game should be played” (Chandler et al., 2002, p70) and as a consequence can be linked to discussions on the importance of the rules (section 4.2.3.5) but in this particular situation the focus is on the rules in relation etiquette in the clubhouse.
Golf has many areas where etiquette is important and as a consequence matters of etiquette are widely publicised, including being stated in the Rules of Golf (R&A, 2007) - although they focus on aspects related to play on the course. They fall into six areas:

1. The spirit of the game
2. Safety
3. Consideration for other players
4. Pace of play
5. Priority on the course
6. Care of the course

The R&A also include recommended penalties for breach of etiquette, which can include prohibiting players from competitions.

Many clubs introduce rules of behaviour related to the clubhouse, often linked to dress codes, use of mobile phones and access to or restrictions from specific areas (such as access to ‘members-only’ bars). The existence of these rules can impact the experience of the visiting golfers. Therefore the influence of course reputation and clubhouse rules, may affect the behaviour of other players.

**QE11: How do club rules and reputation influence choice of course and choice of destination?**

### 4.2.4.1.2 Role of the clubhouse

The above discussion of etiquette leads into a debate focused on the importance of the reception of the visitors in the clubhouse. Thus members and employees at golf clubs can impact the welcome received. This can form the perception of the overall experience and can manipulate decisions on repeat visitation and word-of-mouth recommendation. However, expectation of the level of service likely to be experienced may vary between sports tourists thus perceived service quality may be influenced by prior expectation (Francis and Murphy, 2005, Parasuraman et al., 1985). MICHAEL asserted that he looked towards experiencing a first-rate course but also that the experience in the clubhouse, the welcome, and helpfulness in the pro-shop were important. The work of McGinnis and Gentry (2006), exploring constraints on women playing golf, reported that the reception in the pro-shop and in the clubhouse can lead to a lack of confidence and a feeling of discomfort while “the use of condescending language (e.g. calling women ‘ladies’) and actions (addressing male and not female customers in service encounters) [can] create, consciously or unconsciously, an unwelcome environment for women”
(McGinnis et al., 2009, p21). DEBBIE specifically stated that the welcome received when she visits other clubs is a significant factor when she considers the overall experience. She gave an example of a recent holiday in Turkey:

“We were in a cab, and we were taken to the course, people came out and took our golf clubs out of the boot and put them on buggies, we were given fruits and water – it was in with the price, you were handed that as you went onto the course. They went out of their way to make sure you had a good time when you came in, they cleaned your golf clubs, they cleaned your shoes, obviously they are expecting a tip, and the luxury of the clubhouses that we went into were a cut above.”

Novice players may also feel intimidated (Mintel, 2009, Farrally et al., 2003) when visiting golf clubs away from home. Their lack of experience may give concern regarding expectations of their behaviour. McGinnis and Gentry (2006, p240) observe that “all new players to the game, whether male or female, should be welcomed to the course and helped through the difficult learning process as much as possible. All new members should be encouraged to take lessons and be advised on proper etiquette, terminology, and the rules of golf. Not only is this welcoming process effective for growing the game, it can also maximize business potential”. STEVEN, a notice golfer (he has been playing for only a couple of years) felt that he would not be comfortable at clubs where the service was rather over-attentive. He used an example of a course he visited in Ireland when he first started playing:

“we turn up, we’re a bunch of golf monkeys, that don’t play golf particularly well, and there’s a guy there [who] opens the car door for you, takes your golf clubs out of your car boot, [a] driver then gets you in the buggy, cleans your clubs for you, takes you to the driving range to hit a few balls and then he drives you off somewhere else, and yea they are all in these sort of white US Masters jump suit type things. That kind of thing for me is completely unnecessary, and that turns me off golf. Although it was a fantastic golf course to play – I’m glad I did it. But that kind of thing when you first immediately turn up, that’s when I start thinking I don’t really want to be here. It seems that this is a bit OTT.”

When probed on this matter he explained that:

“You can get courses where you turn up and it is overly attentive to the extent of being antiseptic and not feeling they you can just be yourself. And then you also get golf courses where you turn up and the lady or the guy behind the counter or the pro in the proshop is not particularly friendly or helpful to you and just wants to take your cash and get you out of there, […] rather than just saying ‘well good to see you’. I like the courses where you turn up and there is a guy that is so grateful that you have turned up, walked through the front door, that he is pleased to see you.”
McIntyre (2008, p8) reflects on his experience at a Georgia (USA) golf club to remark that “a warm welcome, a magic moment and a fond farewell [ensures that] the customer walks away feeling good about their experience. More importantly they’re eager to return”. Making visitors welcome can be beneficial for the club commercially. Their business will include spend not just on course fees but also in the pro-shop (on balls, gloves and other golfing paraphernalia) and after the game players who have felt welcomed into the facilities are likely to visit the bar or restaurant.

Linked closely with the factors above are the supporting golf facilities available to the player, such as changing rooms, and practice areas. There is an expectation that such facilities will exist even if they are not used fully by amateur players (Melvin and McCormick, 2001, Fradkin et al., 2001). JEREMY remarked that:

“You want a clubhouse that has got a certain level of facilities in terms of the pro-shop so you can buy anything that you might need. A driving range is a ‘nice to have’ but it’s not a massively important thing, because invariably you just turn up and play rather than warming up and doing all the things you should do.”

While the range of facilities may be a factor effective management is also crucial. DEBBIE intimated that her experience would be swayed by:

“the people using the course, whether they openly encourage you to play in groups. I think it’s nice to be met and greeted, and they look after you and tell you the rules of the club itself, rather than just let you go out there willy-nilly and do what you like. I think it’s nice that, a place has got to be well-run.”

Petrick et al (1999) explored golfers views to conclude that the performance of golf course services and facilities impacts satisfaction. Therefore understanding the role that the support facilities play in the decision to play at a particular course is useful.

4.2.4.1.3 Role of the course

The third theme acknowledges the role of the course as a destination factor. CHARLES remarked that playing a course won’t be much fun if it doesn’t offer a challenge that is suited to the player’s ability. He observed that:

“We would travel a long way to go and play somewhere good. You know, would drive down to Devon for five hours to go and play somewhere like Saunton [NR11] because it’s a great place go and play, and it’s difficult, and it’s interesting, it’s exciting, all these. There are courses within 10 minutes of my house that I have never played. And I can’t think why I would.”
This is confirmed by RYAN, who views the design of the course as influential. He states that a course:

“can be too bland, too non-descript. I think I would much rather be playing intelligently designed courses that challenge you to hit different shots - as a sort of technical example its boring to play a course where you hit ‘driver, wedge’ every hole, it doesn’t make it easy, it’s still hard to hit a driver in the middle of the fairway, still hard to hit a wedge to 10 feet, but it’s boring to do that 18 times. It’s much more interesting to hit a driver off one hole, a 3-iron off the next hole, 3-wood off the next hole, driver and then be hitting in everything from a wedge to a 3 iron because the range of challenge is greater and therefore, it more fulfilling if you do [it] well. Or irritating if you are doing badly. So I would rather be faced with a stiffer challenge ‘cos I would feel more satisfied by doing well - only by my own standards, not by any real or absolute terms - on a harder course.”

Even for higher handicap, less experienced, golfers the challenge can be a positive experience. When recounting the course played during her recent weekend break, PAMELA recalled that:

“It was good apart from the stupid trees they kept sticking in the middle of the course. We decided a chainsaw might be useful. It was amazing, so many fairways, you had to choose which side of this tree you were going to go. It was difficult but it was enjoyable.”

The design of the course can provide a challenge for the golfer (Graves and Cornish, 1998, Graves et al., 2002, Richardson, 2002). DEBBIE stated “I enjoy a challenging course. If I find it a bit open and easy I am not so enamoured with it”. While JEREMY didn’t shy from the challenge he did explain that for golf trips which last several days, complex, tough courses (he used the term ‘tight’) would be scheduled later in the week so as to not “put you off [your golf] for the next two days”. As mentioned earlier (section 4.2.1.2) the challenge may be linked with the skill and ability of the golfer. Literature examined as part of establishing theoretical sensitivity (section 3.4) highlights that meeting the challenge and mastery of the course can be a motivating factor for many golf tourists. This is evident in this research and needs to be further explored.

**QE12: How does the challenge of the course influence course choice when on vacation?**

The design of golf courses may be determined by the markets they serve (Priestley, 1995, Priestley, 2006). Warnken et al (2001, p683) argues “if a large group of players with similar expectations are drawn to the same area then the majority of golf courses will be designed to satisfy [their] demands” thus golf destinations and resorts may include championship courses and challenging holes to appeal to tourists seeking memorable holiday experiences.
The quality of the course is also perceived as being of consequence. Shmanske (1999) observed that golf course condition can be evaluated according to the state of the turf and trees, the absence of bare patches of earth or soggy areas, the quality of the sand in bunkers and other such attributes. JEREMY recognised that courses “can vary quite drastically in terms of standards; standard of the tee box, standard of the fairways, whether they there are a lot of divots or not, whether the greens have got lots of pitchmarks that haven’t been repaired”. These factors impact his view of the overall quality of courses. One aspect specifically mentioned is the quality of the greens (the putting surface) which DEBBIE claims impacts golf performance and CHARLES links to the age of the course.

“The greens – you want to be able to putt on them. I mean there was one set of greens that we weren’t too happy with. It’s no good playing good golf and then having a bad putting surface that you are not going to get the result that you’ve played a good hole of golf.” (DEBBIE)

“If you look at how new it is, newer courses tend not to have, the greens haven’t settled down well. The fairways, the grasses aren’t as established, the trees aren’t as old, everything is just – I don’t want to say new is bad but it’s just less well-established. It is more pleasant and more picturesque to play at Sunningdale [WR28], through the old oak trees and the beautiful old pine trees than it is to go to somewhere that’s been built about five years ago where it is probably on reclaimed farm land, its relatively flat, and the turf is quite newly laid, and it’s not of great quality and its full of newly planted trees that are only about head-height.” (CHARLES)

Thus the challenge and the quality of the course can influence destination selection (with rankings helping to confirm perceptions that the course will meet expectations). In addition speed of play can affect a golfer’s judgement of the course (Geissler, 2005, Warnken et al., 2001). DEBBIE recalled that a key factor determining her opinion of a course was “obviously not being too crowded, not waiting at every tee to be able to play your shot. You know it’s moving quite smoothly”. Courses with high demand may be encouraged to try to get as many players as possible onto the course and too-frequent tee times was a concern of both MICHAEL and JEREMY, who verbalised that that overly busy courses, with players in the group behind waiting, would make him feel under pressure when playing his shots. Research into golf course revenue management reported that increasing the number of tee-times available may not increase revenue as bottle-necks occur on the course and player satisfaction decreases (Kimes and Schruben, 2002, Kimes and Wirtz, 2003). CHARLES intimated that this affected the experience as it made it harder to play well.
“The main issue is the speed around the course so if people in front of you are slow then the whole course is slow. It is less enjoyable because you just spend a lot of time waiting on other people and you lose your concentration but it just takes too long, the whole thing becomes a bit of a pain.”

Therefore managing speed of play is influential on player’s scores and satisfaction levels as well as course success.

Course selection may depend upon the length of vacation taken as well as the destination chosen. For example JEREMY observed that:

“if there are two courses literally there, where you are going, you don’t have to do any travelling, great. You get variety basically without any hassle. If you are going for a little bit longer you tend then to want variety. If you are going for two or three days away, and it’s just yourself and your other half, well you’re not going to want to drive 15 minutes down the road to play a different course, you may as well just have everything where it is, at your hotel and straight onto the course.”

This was corroborated by other golfers. However RYAN stressed that while he would consider playing a course more than once his preference would be to play a different course each time as “it’s nice to do something slightly different”.

Convenience and ease of access may also be influential (Petrick and Backman, 2002a, Higham and Hinch, 2006). Bull (2005, p28) argues that the importance of sport resources can be affected by “the ease which potential users can travel to access them” and that distance, travel time and cost impact access. There appeared to be some conflicting views on this as DEBBIE specifically implied that “the convenience of the course, staying nearby, not having to travel too far and wide for it” was important to her. REX intimated a similar perspective:

“I pick a good hotel that’s won a prize in the previous year where the food’s good and it’s been highly recommended and so we go and stay there and then we play golf on the nearest golf course usually.”

However, CHARLES specifically stated that he would drive several hours to play a course he perceived to be good. Therefore this needs further investigation

QE13: What influences the distance a golf tourist is prepared to travel to play a course?
In addition to convenient access, course choice may be affected by cost and perceived value for money. Trip (and package) cost is specifically covered in section 4.2.4.3.4 but here consideration is given to course prices. Brown et al (2006, p48) explored golf tourism costs to conclude that “golf consumers who bundle the entire vacation together are more likely to play the expensive golf course compared to golf consumers who separate the decisions regarding how much to pay for each of the intermediate goods and golf”. JEREMY explained that one factor affecting his decision was cost-related thus he often purchased golf packages, which included several rounds of golf, accommodation and meals. REX also noted that cost was an influential factor. He stated that he did not want to pay a high price to play a championship course that was more demanding than his ability allowed. This implied that value for money was linked to the ability to ‘do the course justice’. He annually visited Scotland to play and he talked enthusiastically about the affordable golf:

“We played there last year, we stayed near Biggar in the Scottish Lowlands and we went to the local golf club there - it was a municipal course - and my wife and I each played for a fiver, 18 holes of golf on quite a nice course for a fiver each.”

Value for money can also affect decisions on when to play a course. More and more courses have been yield-managing tee-times, adjusting price according to demand (Lauerman, 2000, Kimes, 2000). For example, the De Vere hotel chain manages 12 golf clubs in the UK and offers different prices according to time of day, day of the week and season of the year (De Vere Golf, 2012). This can sway demand patterns. STEVEN recalled a case when they played a course while on holiday in Devon:

“We played that [course] twice, we played that the first time and it costs us £42 a round. Then we worked out that if you played after 3 o’clock it went down to £15, so this time we played it for £15 quid and that’s well worth £15 a round.”

Therefore price may impact both the choice of course and the time of day played. Course price may also influence overall destination selection, if courses in an area are perceived to be good value.
4.2.4.2 Food, drink and accommodation and the facilities in the area

This second set of destination factors provides insight into the supporting touristic facilities. These nodes were grouped into two themes:

1. Hospitality facilities
2. Leisure and touristic facilities

These nodes are presented in figure 4.6. Supporting, complementary resources have been said to be influential in attracting sports tourists (Bull, 2005) and there is evidence in the data that these facilities heavily influence golf tourist behaviour and destination selection. There is also some evidence to suggest that selection of hospitality facilities is gendered.

![Diagram of role of food, drink, accommodation and facilities in the area](image)

Figure 4.6: Role of food, drink, accommodation and facilities in the area

4.2.4.2.1 Hospitality facilities

The first of these two groups considers hospitality elements of the vacation, primarily focusing on choices made regarding accommodation, food and drink. Destinations are composed of many tangible and intangible elements which, combined, can attract visitors. Food and drink can be a critical element, acting as a primary or secondary motivator to visit (Okumus et al., 2007, Boniface, 2003, Hall et al., 2003) and can contribute to satisfaction (Fang et al., 2008, Kim et al., 2009). Several research participants stated an expectation that they would enjoy...
excellent food and accommodation as part of their vacation, and this expectation would influence destination decision making.

“We might choose where we went to make sure there were some golf courses that were attractive to us nearby, for example we go quite often on holiday to Quinta de Lago [NR11] in Portugal. Loads of golf courses there, you can find five golf courses within a stone’s throw – all of which are nice and great to play. So that fits our desires perfectly because it’s a great place to go on holiday there’s a nice beach, there’s nice restaurants good food, sun, tennis etc. and also golf that’s decent.” (RYAN)

This desire to have good food can dominate the decision. REX remarked that:

“The main reason for going there isn’t the golf, we know when we go to Scotland there will always be golf wherever we go, but the main reason, what I do is I get one of these ‘taste of Scotland’, like a little gourmet type thing, and every year they award a prize for the very best place for the food in Scotland. And that’s where I try and book. I know that there will be a golf course nearby.”

Clearly access to decent food plays a role in the choice of destination but this is less clear in terms of accommodation. While some players were concerned with accommodation quality (and sought accommodation with a range of additional facilities) others were happy to compromise. Both MICHAEL and CHARLES would consider local accommodation (such as B&B’s) with MICHAEL justifying his choice by saying he would rather spend his money on playing fine courses. CHARLES remarked that the accommodation chosen did need to be convenient to the courses to be played.

Several golfers mentioned an expectation to be able to access pubs and bars. There appeared to be an expectation for post-golf drinks, although not necessarily to drink to excess.

“Somewhere that’s got good pubs, good bars, but I am not after going clubbing and going nuts, because I think you do get quite tired playing golf. Certainly playing successive days takes it out of you. So it’s nice to go out and have a few drinks but not get completely shitfaced.” (STEVEN)

Similarly MICHAEL recalled that many of his golf trips often involved a social element which included drinking and socialising. He stressed that in many cases it wasn’t to drink excessively (although later in the interview he did state that drinking may affect his ability to play well the next day). In summary food and drink and possibly accommodation may influence golf destination selection.
4.2.4.2.2 **Leisure and touristic facilities**

The second sub-section acknowledges the use and role of tourism and leisure facilities in the area. Frequently it can take four hours to play 18 holes of golf (and in some destinations it can regularly take nearer five hours). As a consequence the time available for other activities can be limited by golf participation. Only two research participants specifically talked about undertaking tourist activities outside of playing golf. This raises an interesting issue, as to how extensive is the use of other touristic facilities. Research of golf tourists in South Africa, noted that 16.8% of expenditure of international visitors and 28.9% of expenditure of domestic visitors went on entertainment such as tourist attractions and entrance fees (Tassiopoulos and Haydam, 2008) while exploration of Korean golf tourists suggested that novice golf tourists were more likely to be motivated towards culture and entertainment than more experienced golf tourists (Kim et al., 2008). For example, MARGARET mentioned that she would often fit other activities into the day. She described a recent visit to Bayonne in France and noted that:

“we obviously went to see the cathedral, and we wandered the streets and looked at the markets, and wandered out and things like that.”

Mention was also made of the use of leisure facilities (such as swimming pools, gyms and spa facilities) while on a golf vacation, which was linked to an enthusiasm for relaxation. JEREMY explained that when he sought out a destination he was also:

“looking at the add-ons so that when you are not on the golf course, you [have] got facilities like a pool, a gym, things like that that [so] you can come off and relax and cool down and things like that.”

However, while literature may advocate that golf tourists make use of tourist and leisure facilities, few interviewees mentioned such activities. This is an area which needs further exploration.

**QE14: To what extent are tourist attractions explored when visiting a destination to play golf?**
4.2.4.3 Choice of destination, travel for competitive golf and cost

The third area linked to the parent-node of Destination Factors has brought together the remaining aspects influencing choice of destination (figure 4.7). These nodes have been grouped under four sub-sections:

1. Motivational influences
2. Destination characteristics
3. Travel for competitive golf
4. Cost and value for money

![Figure 4.7: Choice of the destination, travel for competitions and cost](image)

4.2.4.3.1 Motivational influences

Golf is not always the primary motive for destination selection but may still influence golf tourist behaviour. PAMELA said she would choose a destination and then see if it would be possible to play golf while there.

“I am not sure whether I would actually say ‘I am going on a golfing holiday lets go to Spain’; it would probably be ‘I am going on a Spanish holiday oh let’s see if there are any golf courses around’. It would be more that way round for me.”

The existence of subtle layers of motives was recognised by Pearce (2005) (see section 3.2.1), as each layer of motivation is met so confidence is gained in the choice of destination. Furthermore:
“secondary motives should not be perceived as inferior or second rate, but rather as sources of enrichment to the primary ones. For example, whilst the primary motive maybe to play golf, the experience of playing will be reinforced by a number of contextual indicators that the environment engenders. These could include climate, scenery, social elements, the quality of the course or indeed a host of other indicators which add to the overall experience of playing golf.” (Robinson and Gammon, 2004, p225)

It may be the case that destinations not renowned for golf are still chosen with an expectation that courses can be found which will be acceptable. This can be seen in the statements made by DEBBIE, who intimated that she and her husband (also a golfer) would generally select “a place where we know we can probably play a good bit of golf” but that her last holiday was a trip to Turkey, which they booked before they realised that it held opportunities for golf – it was only on advice from friends that they decided to take their clubs.

There are also cases where the motivation to visit friends and family is linked with opportunities to play golf. PAMELA remarked that she would be playing on her forthcoming trip to Ireland, a destination she was visiting in order to attend a family wedding. JEREMY recounted a recent trip to Bermuda to see a friend from University, who was living there. This trip included the chance to play courses on the island. DEBBIE discussed a visit to Spain, where she and her husband visited other friends who were living on the Costa del Sol. They chose to play golf at the course that the Spanish friends had joined. Thus choice of destination and course were both determined by the decision to visit these particular friends. The question this raises is whether the opportunity to include golf in their trip further stimulated their decision to visit these friends in Spain. Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) can stimulate the decision to take a trip while the opportunity to enhance kinship relationships (see section 3.2.1) is acknowledged as a social motive (Beard and Ragheb, 1983). Investigation into golf tourism in South Africa (Tassiopoulos and Haydam, 2008) revealed that 20% of domestic and 15% of international golf tourists surveyed claimed that VFR was a factor in their decision to visit. The VFR sector has received increased attention in literature as the economic value is more fully appreciated (Scott and Turco, 2007, Moscardo et al., 2000, Lehto et al., 2001) and acknowledgment made that VFR can be seen as an activity at a destination (often one of several) rather than as a market segment (Lee et al., 2005).

QE15: To what extent does the opportunity to combine golf and VFR influence vacation choice?
One issue raised was the influence of other family members playing golf. Of the research participants who revealed their marital status as ‘married’ or ‘widowed’ the majority had partners who also played golf and thus trips may include their partner when playing golf. Only one person, CHARLES, had a non-golfing partner and he specifically remarked he wouldn’t play golf on family vacations “because it does not fit well with having a family holiday and spending time with the rest of my family”. Thus how golf tourists with non-golfing partners manage to negotiate opportunities to play while on family vacation needs to be examined further.

QE16: How is opportunity to play golf while on vacation negotiated?

4.2.4.3.2 Destination characteristics

The second sub-section focuses on destination characteristics relevant to the golfer. Weather has often been cited as an influential factor when selecting golf vacation destinations (Geissler, 2005, Priestley, 2006) and in the UK this may lead to seasonal demand or decisions to travel overseas.

“You are looking for the added benefit of it being sunny, so that you are doing it [taking golf trips] probably at the end of the summer or beginning of the summer months.” (JEREMY)

However we can contrast this with the views of CHARLES who stated that:

“The weather is, for me, less of a factor, I’d be honest, I would go and play at Muirfield [WR10] in the rain, I wouldn’t really mind, whereas a lot of people probably wouldn’t.”

However, the level of enthusiasm for golf may influence this. JEREMY declared that he had played about 28 games of golf in the preceding year, with 10 taking place in summer and only four in the winter months. CHARLES claimed to have played 38 games, much more evenly spread across the year (12 in summer, 10 in autumn, 8 in winter and 8 in spring). Thus it may be the case that casual golfers are more likely to be affected by poor weather and thus seek out better climates for their golfing trips.

Convenient access to the destination is important for many of the golfers, regardless of ability or avidness. When considering golf overseas the issue of flying, and taking golf clubs as luggage is influential. With many short breaks often incorporating travel using low-cost airlines baggage charges for golf clubs can push up the total cost (in 2009 Easyjet charged £37 to carry golf clubs on a return flight while Ryanair charged £60 return for clubs). Scheduled airlines differ in regards to their policy on golf club carriage, with some charging (e.g. in 2009 Aer Lingus charged £50 while BMI charged economy-class passengers a fee of £30 return but not business-class
passengers) and others including carriage in the ticket price (e.g. Virgin Atlantic). This can influence decisions to fly both domestically and internationally. In addition to the cost of flying with golf clubs there is also the inconvenience of travelling to and through airports with clubs.

JEREMY explains this when considering destination choice:

“The thing for me is understanding who you would be flying with, where you could fly from to that destination because if you are having to face getting particularly say from southern London or somewhere like that to Stansted, you’re flying with EasyJet, Ryanair, of that ilk and having to pay for your golf clubs to go on... that is less preferable than being able to fly from an airport that’s close to you, without paying for your golf clubs extra. And then... a decent length journey the other end ‘cos you’re going to have a bag of clothes you have got your golf clubs on top... it’s a bit more bulky, so those little things can be quite critical.”

This was also a view held by STEVEN who explained that he had “gone off flying a little bit – it is a bit of hassle dragging your golf clubs to an airport, hiring cars the other end”. Convenient travel also appears to be significant to other research participants, influencing their destination choice. MARGARET mentioned that she and her husband had chosen to visit France for their golf trips as he did not like to fly so this was a destination they could reach by car, while MICHAEL specifically stated that it was crucial that the destination was convenient to reach in terms of the time taken to get to the destination region (either by flight or car) as well as the time taken in then reaching the selected accommodation and the golf courses to be played.

When asked about choosing a destination RYAN proposed that:

“The truth is it is partly dependant on who’s organising it, if somebody else is organising it they probably have got a pretty good idea of where they want to go, [they say] ‘I am organising a golf trip to Southern Ireland, would you like to come?’ and provided I think that area is nice, I like the people, convenient, then I’m fine for doing that. If I am organising it then, what drives me would be number-one the golf. In that scenario I would be looking for really nice golf courses that I don’t generally play, have access to, but also want to be an area where I would be happy to be staying, food, accommodation, not too much travel, if you go away for a long weekend you don’t want to spend half the time in the car.”

Therefore balancing convenient access with golfing facilities appears to influence the destination selected for a golf break or holiday (Correia and Pintassilgo, 2006, Choi and Lee, 2009).

Destination choice is also influenced by the variety of courses in the region. CHARLES remarked that he seeks “variety – [it’s] helpful if there is 3 or 4 courses within striking distance”. RYAN said he visits a golf area in Portugal because there are “loads of golf courses there, you can find five golf courses within a stone’s throw – all of which are nice and great to play”. Golf courses
collaborating to form a golf region include Spain’s ‘Costa del Golf’ and Myrtle Beach in South Carolina (Readman, 2003) and joint marketing efforts are common in an attempt to maximise commercial efforts (Standeven and DeKnop, 1999).

**QE17:** To what extent do weather, access and course variety influence destination choice? Is this affected by the casual/avid nature of the golfer?

### 4.2.4.3.3 Travel for competitive golf

The third group considers cases where golf travel is to participate in commercially organised competitions and thus destination choice is determined by competition location. Two of the research participants (CHARLES and MARGARET) explained that some of their golf vacations had included such competitive elements. Significantly these took place while the players were single-figure handicaps (5 and 9 respectively). CHARLES was involved in team events while MARGARET was involved in solo competitions. Entering competitions may imply a greater level of commitment as competitions may last several days and generally incur a cost to enter (Gillett and Kelly, 2006). CHARLES also emphasised that his team would go to the competition venue ahead of the start for one or two practice rounds.

The motive to compete in competitions can be linked to serious leisure (see section 3.4), rivalry and relative ability and in pushing towards achieving personal bests (Green and Jones, 2005, Dionigi, 2006, McDonald et al., 2002). This is evidenced in the statements of MARGARET that:

> “it was very nice to enter, there was something about it that - you didn’t go thinking you could win it, you are going to do your best, you didn’t want to come bottom, did you. But it was a nice feeling that you just had to prove to yourself that you could play alongside some of these people.”

Furthermore MARGARET observed that there was a prestigious element to some of the competitions she entered but when probed about this (to consider whether there was opportunity to gain golfing capital) she was blasé about how other golfers might react to her having played in the British Amateur Open:

> “I don’t think that they’re bothered, here. Wouldn’t be very impressed here [at her home golf course].”

Both players talked about returning to play in the same competitions year after year although for MARGARET the venue would change annually as different courses were selected to host the competition.

**QE18:** Why would competitions be entered and how are these selected?
4.2.4.3.4 Cost and value for money

The fourth sub-section considers the importance of cost and value for money. In their investigation of golf tourists in Korea, Kim et al (2005) revealed the influence of ‘appropriate travel cost’ on destination selection. Furthermore literature recounts that dedicated golfers are more likely to choose challenging and costlier courses than infrequent or moderate golfers (Hennessey et al., 2008, Priestley, 1995). Yet ‘cost’ may be considered only as a reflection of the overall package price of the vacation rather than just the cost to play courses (which was discussed in section 4.2.4.1.3) (Brown et al., 2006, Gourville and Soman, 2001, Xu, 2009).

MARGARET played golf on the Algarve because the group organiser “got us a very good deal in a hotel there, it was a ridiculous price, I was paying about £12 a night - not as cheap as that - something like £20 a night, bed and breakfast”. Similarly when choosing a destination JEREMY specifically responded that that the decision was “primarily cost related”. However RYAN commented that the cost of courses would not affect his decision, even to the point that he:

“would certainly pay a premium to go on a private course rather than a public course... because I would not want to be on there for six hours stuck behind people who did not know how to play.”

Furthermore it was intimated that price is linked to potential experience (in terms of welcome and quality) although the welcome was not always attributed to the highest cost course.

“We had a great time. And the whole thing was sea views, was much more fun to play because you weren’t surrounded by holidaymakers who have got too much money and mess around. You are not going on the golf course and spend the money that you do not be comfortable with the people who are playing. St Mellion [NR47] is a great example of a course which I didn’t really enjoy particularly much because it was just ‘we’ve got your money now bugger off’.” (STEVEN)

The perceived value of a golf destination may impact the decision to visit and therefore this needs further exploration

QE19: Does perceived value or actual costs have any link with expected welcome or quality of experience? Does perceived value impact decision to visit?
4.2.5 The holiday in action

Many aspects of the trip in action were constructed as themes influential to golf tourism behaviour. Twenty nodes were identified (figure 4.8) and these have been segregated into four realms:

1. Frequency of playing golf
2. Competition between group members
3. Influence of other players on the course
4. Forming the vacation group

Figure 4.8: The holiday in action
4.2.5.1 Frequency of playing golf

This topic area considers the frequency of playing golf while on vacation. Data suggests that when golf was the main reason for taking the trip then generally one round of golf would be played every day but when golf was not the main reason for the trip the amount played would be less. STEVEN said that he kept golf trips separate from other types of holiday and that he would not try to incorporate a game of golf into the activities he undertakes while away on a non-golf vacation. When away for a short golf break he would then expect to play every day but longer trips did not necessarily mean more golf:

“If I go for a week I wouldn’t play more than four times. We very rarely play at weekends when we go on golf holidays. If I go for a weekend you would probably play every day. It tends to be no more than four out of the whole time.”

In other cases, where the golfer was talking a longer trip (perhaps a week or more) and golf was not considered the main reason for the trip then the number of rounds of golf was adjusted.

“I feel that for 7 nights, if it was a golfing holiday, I think [I would play] 5 out of those 7 depending what you want from the holiday. We went away to Turkey last year not booking a golf holiday, not intending to play golf, but we were told we should take our golf clubs, we played three times. I was happy with 3 times, as we did other things as well, other excursions.” (DEBBIE)

Similarly RYAN also said he was likely to play about three rounds if he was away for a seven day vacation. This idea was further developed by JEREMY, who linked the amount of golf played to the others on the trip:

“It would depend who I was with, and so if I give the example: I’ve just come back from a holiday, there’s been a group of us from university away, where four lads all play golf, would love to play two maybe even three rounds, but when there are young kids involved, that limits it down, so in that sort of circumstance once in a course of a week would be sufficient. If there are less [fewer] commitments in terms of kids, if it’s just adults, then two rounds in a week would be probably pushing your luck so it would be two and no more.”

Attitudes to playing frequency while on vacation do not appear to be linked to skill or level of frequency of playing at home.

4.2.5.2 Competition between the group members

The second topic considers competition set between the golf tourists while playing each round as well as across the rounds played during the vacation. While only two of the research participants specifically entered commercially organised competitions other golfers included competitive elements into their vacation golf. MICHAEL explained that in his group they play in two teams (Ryder Cup style) with team membership determined years ago thus competing
against the opposite team has remained a consistent factor. The implementation of competitions between the players on a trip is significant for DEBBIE:

“If we are away on holiday with friends, say [a female friend] and I are together against her husband, and [my husband], and it is a challenge, we want to beat the men – and we laugh about it after but we are not too upset if they beat us.”

This infers that frequently it is women versus men rather than having a man and a woman playing on the same side.

Incorporating competition into the game can add a sense of purpose. STEVEN observed that when playing vacation golf:

“we are just there to have fun. It’s an enjoyment thing. We are not going on a golfing holiday to have a golfing holiday tournament; we’re there just to play golf.”

Playing informal competitive golf can provide a balance between fun and pressure. Although competition can create a variety of negative and positive emotional responses (Lane and Jarrett, 2005, Wang et al., 2009, Wilson and Kerr, 1999) it can also give recognition to players who excel (relative to their own ability or to others in the group). JEREMY described the trophy that his group plays for and explained the reason for its introduction:

“we decided that we wanted to create our own competition that we play for every year, ‘cos it a good reason, a good way of us keeping in contact as a social group, [a] reason for getting back together.”

Therefore the inclusion of a competitive element can encourage travel to occur, as well as providing a structure to the vacation, influencing how players are grouped together. The opportunity to compete against others in the group can provide a challenge, a sense of purpose, as well as an opportunity for social interaction – perhaps players bantering or sledging each other (discussed in section 4.2.3.2) to achieve competitive advantage.

4.2.5.3 Influence of others on the course

The third dimension considers the influence of others when playing. Earlier discussions of data on gender (section 4.2.2) considered the influence of playing partners when an emotional relationship exists between them. However players can also be influenced by other players on the course.
The effect of other players on performance and experience is significant. Literature on co-action and audience effects on performance offer some insight into the impact of poor performance on other players. Jarvis (1999) identified co-action as the effect noted when people enhance their performance of a task when performing alongside others doing the same thing while the audience effect is linked to the impact of being observed while performing (Rhea et al., 2003, Geisler and Leith, 1997, Gardner and Moore, 2005). Michaels et al (1982 cited in Jarvis, 1999) reported that skilled players improve when observed while less-skilled players tend to perform worse in front of audiences. Zajonc (1965, p273) explored literature on experiments (to humans, animals, insects and birds) to conclude that “while learning is impaired by the presence of others, the performance of learned responses is enhanced”. Explanations for this change in behaviour may lie in understanding drive-theory, which considers task complexity, arousal levels and learned habits (Jarvis, 1999), the outcome of which may mean that the presence of others can affect performance because it raises arousal levels or can lead to apprehension through increase anxiety levels. Catterall (1972 cited in Geisler and Leith, 1997) expanded on this to propose that it is the perception that others can observe and evaluate performance that may drive or inhibit performance. Furthermore, in cases where a player stands out from those around them (perhaps a high-handicap golfer playing with low-handicap, possibly more skilled, players) they may experience performance pressure (White, 2008, Thompson and Sekaquaptewa, 2002). When asked about playing with people of different skill levels DEBBIE noted that:

“Obviously if we were with people that are of a higher handicap, you have to take that into consideration ‘cos you want people whoever you are with to be able to enjoy it as well ... if you were with a higher handicap person you would not book that course.”

Thus avoiding performance pressures may occur through the selection of courses played. Pressure may also be caused indirectly by other players on the course (outside of the immediate playing group), who can impact the player’s performance and thus experience. Inter-culture conflict, caused by different demands to use resources is problematic for many tourism businesses (Thwaites, 1999, Harrison-Hill and Chalip, 2005). An overly busy course, the speed of other golfers and their waywardness may affect player concentration and overall perception of the experience. MICHAEL commented that players who did not understand how to ‘let you play through’ (allowing faster players to overtake) was also an issue. However JEREMY seems to be seeking a balanced pace:
“Tee off times that are five minutes apart on a Saturday or Sunday are ridiculous because it just creates carnage... no one wants to play slowly, but you want to be able to play without thinking there is somebody sitting right behind me waiting to play their shot, or potentially playing their shot and is running right up behind you.”

STEVEN, a higher handicap golfer, reflected on whether other golfers would affect him and suggested that it:

“...depends on the course [and] depends how close everybody is. If you are on a hole on your own and there is no one else around you. doesn’t really matter. But, if you have got someone completely up your shanksy trying to play through you, then that is likely to affect your round of golf.”

There is also evidence to suggest that in some cases individual performance may decline in team environments (social loafing), especially in cases where level of effort cannot be individually detected or in cases of less-complex tasks (Swain, 1996, Jarvis, 1999, Anshel, 1995). These ideas may play a critical role in trying to understanding the impact of other players.

QE20: To what extent do other golfers on the course influence the player’s experience?

4.2.5.4 Forming the vacation group

The fourth aspect considers how the vacation group is formed and the role and influence of the organiser (O'Connell and Cuthbertson, 2009, Decrop, 2005, Backstrom et al., 2006). Golfers who take a vacation often travel with others, although the vacation group may be composed entirely of golfers or may include non-golfers. Furthermore the group may travel on what is perceived to be a ‘golf break’ or ‘golf holiday’ (where golf is expected to be a dominant activity) or the trip may be for many other reasons (for example, to attend an event, visit friends and relatives, a ‘family holiday’). Anderson (2001) argues that family holidays are moving away from joint-leisure towards opportunities for children and parents to visit the same place but have separate leisure experiences. Therefore the opportunities for parents to play a round of golf while on vacation may not be blocked by family obligations or expectations.
Some male research participants indicated that they received invites to participate in a golf vacation, where the association with the group occurred through distant friendships. When asked about the formation of groups CHARLES remarked:

“It tends to be, unless you have got a group that have always hung out together, a bunch of school friends, university friends, whatever, it tends to be a slightly join-the-dot connection of people, with one or two at the centre who take on the organising, and do all the booking, and then their couple of mates will come and then this bloke’s mate will also come and this guy’s brother-in-law and this guy from work... a group forms around the centre of connected people.”

Significantly there is an inherent assumption within this quote that the people invited will be male. None of the women interviewed intimated that they had joined a group via such an invite and this is an issue for further exploration.

QE21: Would women participate in golf trips where they may not know all players on the trip?

The organiser of the vacation can also be influential on destination selection as it appears that the organiser will narrow down the destination choice set (see section 3.6) and the range of courses to be played. MARGARET mentioned that last year she took a trip organised by her golf club. She did not have to organise this trip but attended with other club members. Similarly STEVEN also stated that while he might occasionally organise a golf trip more frequently he participated in trips organised by others. He confirmed that the golf destination was normally determined by the organiser, in discussion with some of the other participants. RYAN also reported that the selection of the destination lay in the hands of the organiser:

“The truth is it is partly dependant on who’s organising it, if somebody else is organising it they probably have got a pretty good idea of where they want to go. ‘I am organising a golf trip to Southern Ireland, would you like to come?’ and provided I think that area is nice, I like the people, [it’s] convenient, then I’m fine for doing that.”

Therefore destination selection may be determined by the trip organiser. Limited literature exists in relation to the dominant and influential role of the organiser of group vacations. However, it should be noted that recommendations received, perhaps through word-of-mouth recommendation (see section 4.2.4.1.1) may play a significant and influential role in this process (Kim et al., 2008).
4.2.6 The golf tourism industry

The last parent-node to be discussed is the influence of factors associated with the tourism industry. This has been coded into five nodes (figure 4.9) which look at the influential role of the industry and focus largely on the information used to select the courses to be played. That information may be obtained through marketing activity, information sources such as the internet and golf guides or through organisers (which may be tour operators or may be other golfers).

![Figure 4.9: The golf tourism industry](image)

Following on from earlier discussion that the choice of destination is largely determined by the organiser of the trip (section 4.2.5.4) it is helpful to understand why some golfers leave it to others to make the decisions and complete the booking process. For example, PAMELA mentioned that she would be playing golf in Ireland while visiting for a wedding but that the golf would be organised by her cousin, who she describes as an avid golfer:

“I think he is looking into all that [course selection] because I think he has been over there, I think he knows where to play so I haven’t really got involved with that, I have left it into his hands and we will just go where he has organised it really. But its somewhere in Galway, that’s all I know.”

The booking process varies across golfers, with some relying on intermediaries (tour operators and travel agents) more than others. DEBBIE explained that “A typical kind to us is to just book a holiday and take our golf clubs with us and look around and if we see a nice course then we book to play it”. In this case there is an intimation that intermediaries are used to manage the holiday process rather than assisting with the golf booking process. Conversely RYAN booked the golf courses by calling the destination hotel, “because they get a reduction otherwise we’d have gone direct”. However, JEREMY makes greater use of a specialist golf provider when booking a trip:
“I would look at somewhere like Golfbreaks.com. I spend a lot of time looking at the options on there. Where you can book, basically say I fancy going to this country, this area, what are the packages they have got for the specific length of time that you are looking to go and then sending that off to them saying ‘can you book it?, early start on this day, later start on the next day’, etcetera.”

However, STEVEN was more sceptical about the use of such intermediaries.

“[My friend] would use Golfbreaks all the time to arrange it. Whereas I actually much prefer to take the time to do a bit more research and set it out myself because I don’t think you save that much money with those guys at all. I have done a little bit of a test case with them, ‘can you organise this trip for me’ and it came out about £20 cheaper with Golfbreaks rather than doing it yourself. You don’t have much of a choice of tee-times. I actually quite enjoy doing my own research and trying to work out where one should play. What Golfbreaks tend to do is, they tend to push you towards where they need to fill, and equally they have obviously promised these golf courses and these various accommodations we can get you ‘X’ amount of business, they would tend to push you towards where they need to fill gaps. That’s the sense that I get.”

Such criticism of golf intermediaries can be coupled with criticisms of golf courses themselves, and their ability to service visitors wanting to play.

“Golf courses are not very good at marketing themselves because a lot of them are private clubs and so they are not particularly keen on visitors. They don’t like visitors at weekends and they don’t advertise anywhere. A lot of them are only just getting their first websites. - you have to put a bit of effort in to finding somewhere and arranging a trip yourself.” (CHARLES)

Recognising that golf courses may not make it easy to book direct allows a supposition that intermediaries may have an essential role to play in the booking process (Pearce and Schott, 2005, Bieger and Laesser, 2004). MICHAEL, who is employed by a golf tour operator, stated that many destinations were not particularly effective at grouping together to market themselves as a golf destination, although he did remark that this was perhaps changing for the better (examples in Cornwall and South Wales were outlined as examples). Some of these issues may be overcome if the destination is a golf resort, where accommodation and tee times can be booked centrally as part of the reservation. The use of intermediaries may influenced by whether the vacation is international or domestic.
The specialist business of golf tour operations has expanded over the past few decades. In 1997 a trade association, the International Association of Golf Tour Operators, was established to support these organisations. With over 1300 members across 77 countries, including 300 golf-tour operators, this organisation provides a central voice for the golf-tourism industry (IAGTO, 2009). To be effective tour operators need to make links with the golf professional at each course, to know products at each destination well, thus offering the customer more than can be gained from their own information search (Young, 2008).

Information about courses is also available via the internet as golf clubs develop websites. Separate to this are websites hosting reviews of golf courses. One of the interviewees, CHARLES, advised that he wrote reviews for such a site, which meant that he frequently visited different courses as part of this role. Access to course reports provided by fellow golfers provides insights into the experience at each course.

In addition to the increased level of information available, the UK also has a number of discount schemes, designed to encourage golfers to play at different courses. Schemes such as 2-fore-1, Greenfree and Open Fairways Passport all provide listings for the courses in their programs, which thus promote their use. Despite the existence of such programs no golfers claimed to use these. STEVEN knew of such schemes:

“2-fore-1’s? I have looked at that, thought about it but I am not convinced that you get the flexibility to play when you want to play. I have never done fully enough research on how easily accepted those vouchers are.”

However course selection may affected by the trip organiser’s awareness of such discount schemes and the price-sensitivity of the players. Overall, marketing, promotion, pricing and distribution channels may influence destination selection and the extent to which these factors are influential needs to be considered.

QE22: To what extent are intermediaries used in the organisation of golf vacations?
4.3 Links between these nodes

Discussion of these nodes has taken place in a structured manner there are obviously many associations and links across these groups. These were highlighted in the overview model (figure 4.1).

Several gender-related issues surrounding both golf and golf vacations have been mentioned. One area considered whether there was a gendered demand for supporting resources (discussed in section 4.2.2.4) which may be linked to the role that hospitality elements play on destination selection (discussed in section 4.2.4.2.1). This needs further examination.

The next interlinked area considers the reputation of the course (discussed in section 4.2.4.1.1) and discussion of playing well-known or reputed courses (section 4.2.3.3). Reputation can lead to word-of-mouth recommendations and can encourage players to prioritise playing the course. The tourism industry can benefit from this through packaging golf trips around the course and using it to encourage golf vacations (see section 4.2.6). The information provided about the course may include listings in golf guide books or course rankings (discussed in section 3.6.1) encouraging golfers to seek out courses with higher ratings. Linked to the issue of reputation is that of word-of-mouth recommendations (section 4.2.4.1.1) and their influence on the reporting of golf experiences to others (section 4.2.3.3). The opportunity to talk about experiences when playing on vacations can allow the player to relive the vacation experience and enhance their own golfing capital by recalling their golfing experiences and ability to play particular course, especially those with a positive reputation or highly ranked.

Links between the role of the course and destination choice are, perhaps unsurprisingly, frequent. Of particular note are the links between choosing several courses to play when on a golf trip (section 4.2.4.1.2) and the variety of courses in the area (section 4.2.4.3.2); convenience of access for both the course (section 4.2.4.1.3) and the destination (section 4.2.4.3.2); and course cost (section 4.2.4.1.3) and destination cost (section 4.2.4.3.4). Clearly the cost to play the course has an impact on the overall cost of the vacation, thus a destination can be perceived to be expensive or conversely good value for money depending on course cost. However other elements of destination cost, such as cost to reach the destination, cost of accommodation, food, drink and entertainment, can all play a role. Furthermore the debate is not just related to absolute cost but value for money (Geissler, 2005), thus factors such as perceived quality of tourism facilities can play an influential role.
Moving on to discussions of the golfing group it is helpful to acknowledge that players are affected by the poor performance of others in their group (section 4.2.5.3) but that this appears particularly noticeable in mixed-sex groups (section 4.2.2.3). While the influence of a relationship may shift expectations and patience, for many amateur golfers there is extensive tolerance to the difficulties experienced by others, regardless.

Furthermore embedding competitions is significant. In some cases commercially organised competitions are attended (section 4.2.4.3.3) but if this is not the case then informal competitions are frequently agreed between players in the travel group (section 4.2.5.2) with perpetual trophies often providing recognition for the winners.

There is a link between the guiding role of the ‘organiser’ of the golf vacation (discussed in section 4.2.5.4) and the decision by some vacationers to leave the organisation to others in the group. The organiser may wield power over destination and course selection as well as other factors such as accommodation type, tee times and non-golf entertainment. These decisions may be made in consultation with some or all in the vacation group but this does emphasise that golf vacation choices may not have laid solely in the hands of the research participant.

Finally there are some aspects of the data which have not demonstrated firm links but may suggest associations relevant to the objectives of this research. Firstly the formation of the golfing group (discussed in section 4.2.5.4) may be linked with the cultural habit of meeting up with the same players for each vacation (section 4.2.3.1). Golf may used to provide the reason (or possibly excuse) which encourages the same group to meet up or alternatively the same group may be met because there is a common enthusiasm to play golf. It initially appears that in this second case the location chosen may remain the same.

The individual player’s attitude to golf (and the importance it plays in their life) may be linked to the frequency of playing while on vacation (discussed in section 4.2.1.1 and section 4.2.5.1 respectively). This does not mean that more frequent players at home play more frequently while on holiday but that the avid player may work harder to overcome obstacles to include at least one game while on vacation. This will be further explored.
QE23: To what extent do avid golfers make efforts to play while on vacation? Does the type of golfer influence efforts to participate?

An on-course issue is that of busy courses and slow play (section 4.2.4.1.3) which can be considered in relation to the management of the course (section 4.2.4.1.2). This recognises the influence of others on the player’s perception of the course, which may influence overall perception of the golf vacation. In addition the influence of other golfers within the group should be considered.

Finally golf tourist behaviour may be influenced by a potential link between on-course banter (discussed in section 4.2.3.2) and competition (section 4.2.5.2). While golfing etiquette would severely limit opportunities for sledging or banter in official competitions, its inclusion in informal competitions between players on vacation is imperative for some golfers. This intimates an interesting position for such competitions, introduced by the holidaymakers to provide purpose and performance measurement (against other players) but allows for golfing cultures to be adapted to enhance the entertainment experienced on the course (and possibly between players).

4.4 Summary of concepts for further investigation

In summary the research has identified a number of areas of significant influence on golf tourist behaviour. With over 100 nodes being identified and discussed these, along with 23 QE’s, guide the next wave of primary research.

By returning to the aim and the objectives of the research it is possible to further appreciate the value of the 23 QE’s identified in ensuring relevant data gathering in cycle two. To recall, the overall aim of the research is to evaluate the relationships between golfer characteristics, golfer behaviours and destination choice. Specifically the first stated objective is to understand characteristics of the golfer and the influence it has on behaviour and destination choice. Six of the QE’s have particular relevance to this objective:
QE1: What is meant by being serious about golf and how does this impact choices made about golfing vacations?

QE2: Is there a likelihood that groups of similar ability will choose to play together and what influences this? What are the implications?

QE15: To what extent does the opportunity to combine golf and VFR influence vacation choice?

QE16: How is opportunity to play golf while on vacation negotiated?

QE18: Why would competitions be entered and how are these selected?

QE23: To what extent do avid golfers make efforts to play while on vacation? Does the type of golfer influence efforts to participate?

However, one particular area appears to have dominated, that of the influence of the social-demographic characteristic of gender. This may be hardly surprising, given that golf has, for many years, been accused of being a gendered sport. This theme has specifically provided six QE’s:

QE5: How do individuals respond when there are mixed-sex golf groups? How do they feel towards the ‘other’ gender when playing golf on vacation?

QE6: To what extent is there an advantage in playing in same-sex groups?

QE7: In cases where both members of a relationship couple play golf to what extent does playing together on golfing vacation differ from their normal playing behaviour?

QE8: Is there a link between choice of support facilities and gender? Does ability or avidness have a role to play?

QE21: Would women participate in golf trips where they may not know all players on the trip?

The second objective considers how the variety of golfer characteristics is influential on destination choice. Understanding destination choice (as well as choice of golf courses) is significant in appreciating golf tourist behaviour and exploration is needed if a model of behaviour explaining the relationship between the golfer and destination choice is to be established (objective four). In examining this aspect nine QE’s were highlighted.
QE4: To what extent is course and destination selection influenced by desires for an enjoyable vacation?

QE11: How do club rules and reputation influence choice of course and choice of destination?

QE12: How does the challenge of the course influence course choice when on vacation?

QE13: What influences the distance a golf tourist is prepared to travel to play a course?

QE14: To what extent are tourist attractions explored when visiting a destination to play golf?

QE17: To what extent do weather, access and course variety influence destination choice? Is this affected by the casual/avid nature of the golfer?

QE19: Does perceived value or actual costs have any link with expected welcome or quality of experience? Does perceived value impact decision to visit?

QE20: To what extent to other golfers on the course influence the player’s experience?

QE22: To what extent are intermediaries used in the organisation of golf vacations?

The third objective requires understanding of the influence of ability (skill) and also the influence of golfing capital on the behaviour of the golf tourist. Three QE’s have been identified in relation to these two themes and are significant areas for deeper exploration.

QE3: Is skill development an important factor and if so then in what ways is this developed?

QE9: What is the idea of “like-minded” people? What criteria are used to establish if they are like-minded?

QE10: Do experiences of playing well-known courses’ influence entry to the ‘golfing culture’ and add to golfing capital?

While these 23 QE’s form the outline guide to the areas explored in iteration two, the nodes which informed these questions are not ignored. As cycle two provides more understanding of these areas of relevance, the nodes and the literature which helped to form the concepts are revisited through constant comparison to ensure that analysis and interpretation is accurate.
Chapter 5 : Cycle Two

This chapter presents analysis of the data constructed through a second cycle of interviews. Grounded theory methodology requires that theoretical sampling is employed, whereby data is sought from sources most likely to inform theory (Draucker et al., 2007). As a consequence the 23 questions for further examination (QE’s) identified in cycle one were used to guide the selection of research participants for cycle two.

The first objective of this research is to understand the socio-demographic, lifestyle, and life course characteristics of golf tourists. From cycle one six QE’s were identified which related to this theme. It was therefore necessary to examine areas such as the ability of the golfers, the negotiation and efforts made to allow the player to participate in golf vacations, the nature of seriousness about golf and the influence of competitions. In addition a further six QE’s were highlighted relating to gendered issues of the sport and these recognised the need to explore areas such as the dynamics of single-sex and mixed-sex golf trips and the facilities required by these different groups.

The second objective considers the extent to which golfer characteristics influence destination choice and golf tourist behaviour. Nine QE’s were recognised in regard to this theme, particularly focusing on the course, clubhouse and destination resources. The link between ability and destination choice also needed further examination. Finally this iteration needed to explore the use of intermediaries in the booking process.

The third objective considers the interaction of ability and golfing capital on the behaviour of the golfer. While only three QE’s were identified, these are key to the research and therefore further examining the desire for skill development; the interaction with like-minded people and the development of golfing capital was necessary.

The final objective explores the possibility of developing a model which explains the relationship between the golf tourist and destination selection. The analysis of cycle two data collection, in constant comparison with data in cycle one and with literature, is used to outline potential relationships.
As with cycle one the research participants were sourced using theoretical sampling to collect pertinent data which elaborates the emerging theory (Charmaz, 2006). Drawing on the contacts gained as a result of the cycle one email request and contacts proffered by cycle one research participants, a number of golfers available for interview were identified. Grounded theory uses theoretical sampling to ensure that rich data is constructed from those most likely to inform the research. Thus pre-screening occurred to ensure that those selected for interview had golfing characteristics and travel experiences which meant that they could offer insights in relation to the QE’s. Selection of the interviews therefore included participants who travelled to play competitive golf and have a range of abilities, (reflected by handicap - see table 5.1). It was also helpful to interview players who were the only golfer in the family (ADAM, HARLEY, RAY AND TOMMY) as well as those who have other family members who play golf. To explore destination factors the variety of experiences included international and domestic trips, as well as short breaks and longer vacations. Finally it was important to ensure that players relatively new to the game (ALANA and HARLEY) were included as well as those who have played since childhood (ADAM, MAC and NATHAN). This provided the opportunity to discuss the influence of skill developed with both novice and experienced golfers.

Cycle one data highlights issues when understanding the views of couples (section 4.2.2.3), suggesting a benefit in hearing from both people rather than assuming the views of one apply to both. Therefore theoretical sampling sought a couple to interview and this was ALEXANDER and GAIL, who are married. They were interviewed separately to provide an opportunity to compare and contrast the differing experiences of identical golf trips. The interviews were managed to ensure that Gail, interviewed second, had not had the opportunity to hear the interview with her husband, or to discuss this with him prior to her own interview.

In total eleven golfers were interviewed, with five of these completed by telephone. One was at the preference of the interviewee (ALANA) and the others were required because the interviewee lived more than one hour’s drive from the interviewer. Face-to-face interviews took place at locations selected by the research participant. In three cases this was at a golf club (EILEEN, KENNETH, TOMMY), one selected a coffee shop (MAC) while HARLEY chose a meeting room at his work. All interviews were recorded and transcribed fully. The interviews lasted between 35 minutes (a telephone interview) and 75 minutes (with the majority lasting about one hour). The interviews were guided by a series of open ended questions, developed to directly focus on the QE’s. These are presented in appendix two.
As with the first cycle of research the demographic and golfing characteristics of the research participants was obtained. For those interviewed face-to-face this was completed at the end of the interview while telephone interviewees were emailed this form after the telephone interview and all returned these forms completed.

5.1 Characteristics of the interview participants
The diversity of experiences in regard to international and domestic golf trips was varied among the group. NATHAN, RAY and TOMMY spoke only of experiences with domestic golf trips, while ALANA spoke only of International trips. The other research participants spoke of both international and domestic golf trips and while Europe dominated trips taken to North America, the Caribbean, and North Africa and Australia were also discussed.

As can be seen in table 5.1 the handicaps of players spans the spectrum, with Mac almost off scratch (a term used to reflect a handicap of zero) while Tommy is at the men’s maximum handicap of 28.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Handicap</th>
<th>Years playing golf</th>
<th>Age band</th>
<th>Estimated number of rounds played annually</th>
<th>Number of golfing trips in 12 months prior to interview</th>
<th>Total nights away on golf trips (based on 12 months prior to interview)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALEXANDER</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALANA</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADAM</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EILEEN</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAIL</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HARLEY</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KENNETH</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAC</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATHAN</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAY</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOMMY</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12+</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Research participants: cycle two
Note: The names of the research participants have been changed (and are shown in capitals throughout the text).
Overall the players had a variety of experience with the golfing community. All the players, with the exception of NATHAN, are members of a golf club. However, HARLEY derived many of his golf vacation experiences through accompanying a close friend who is involved in running the EuroPro tour (which provides young golf professionals with a series of competitions, the overall winner earning the right to enter the qualifying events for the main European professional tour).

5.2 Developing concepts through constant comparison including cycle two data

Chapter four identified more than 100 different codes (nodes) which inform this research. However to remain focused on the goal of this thesis it is necessary to employ more theoretical coding to achieve a higher level of conceptual understanding. Through a constant comparison between this iteration of data, the data developed in cycle one, and relevant literature a comprehensive analysis occurred which ensured the theoretical coding identified conceptual categories (and properties of these categories). The outcome of the analysis (presented in this chapter) has been a refinement of the codes into conceptual categories which broadly span six themes. Table 5.2 lists these themes and their relationship to the objectives of this research project (see section 1.3).

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Table 5.2: Overview of chapter sections

The process by which these six themes have been arrived at is clarified through the discussions presented in each chapter section. However, to provide additional transparency in the analytical process six diagrams (appendix four) depict the nodes which have informed each of the six themes.
5.2.1 Golfer characteristics

Chapter four discussed the characteristics of the golf tourist (section 4.2.1). This recognised that each golfer has a unique perspective to golf trips, influenced by their own attitude to the sport, the role it plays in their life (section 4.2.1.1) and their desire to travel. Analysis of cycle two data, in constant comparison with cycle one data and with literature suggests three conceptual categories linked to golfer characteristics:

1. Constructing the golf holiday
2. Influences of lIfestage and life course
3. Emotional rewards

5.2.1.1 Constructing the golf holiday

The size and characteristics of the golf tourism industry were introduced in chapter one and the characteristics of the golf tourist, particularly in regard to typologies, were outlined in section 3.1.3. However there was a lack of clarity regarding what is perceived to be a golf holiday and what this means for golf behaviour and destination choice.

Hudson and Hudson (2010, p5) conceptually proposed that “golf tourism is simply defined as travel away from home to participate in or observe the sport of golf, or to visit attractions associated with golf” but the data suggests that for golf tourists it is not this straightforward. Therefore the debate presented here shows that the way an individual construes the concept of a golf holiday influences their motive for participation as well as affecting the research and booking process.

Defining golf tourism by the material elements employed would suggest that any round of golf, played while away from the home environment would be considered a golf holiday. The component parts (away from home and participating in some form of the game of golf) are present and therefore would meet the criteria determined by Hudson and Hudson’s definition above. Such an approach appears to have been used in many pieces of quantitative research into golf tourism. For example in his research on golf vacationers’ novelty, Petrick (2002) selected his sample of golf tourists based on those who had booked a package (which he defined as including golf, accommodation and breakfast). Hennessey et al (2008) determined their research sample as those who had declared themselves as non-residents and who had played on selected golf courses at the research area of Prince Edward Island. Even examining the
spectators of golf saw Tassiopoulos and Haydam (2008) draw their samples from attendees at a golf event.

However, the research participants disclose many examples where such a construction of the concept of golf tourism is not substantiated. Drawing on cycle one data, as he describes his holidays, RYAN states that the trips with his wife are not considered to be golf holidays even though golf is part of the decision and golf resources are sought.

“I am not sure I do typical golf holidays because for me I do, I play golf on a number of different holidays in different scenarios, so my wife plays golf so we would play together on holiday. I would - we don’t say alright let’s go on a golf holiday, but we do sometimes go to places that have golf courses. And it’s an active part of our decision to go to that place. Equally I sometimes go on holidays with a group of friends and we go off on a ‘golf holiday’ in inverted commas, where the whole drive, the whole trip is playing golf, then it’s a much more important factor in where we go.”

RYAN’s description of his golf holidays suggests that the concept is defined by the underlying drive which informs the decision making process. Similarly CHARLES discussed his golf travels to assert that they are:

“Only in the UK and not what you would you would call a holiday probably. I go on a few trips each year, golf, with lads basically, so we play in a big competition every April down at Royal St Georges [WR22] and we go down there for more or less a week. Stay at, hire a big house and we play in this competition until we get knocked out. And then we play somewhere else. And then we play another smaller competition up in Brancaster in Norfolk in October. And spend a long weekend up doing that. In between that we will go for, this year we went just for two or three days down to Cornwall, a couple of lads, we just went on a trip down there but don’t tend to go on overseas or holidays that are golf holidays.”

This suggests that individuals differentiate their golf travels between the ‘trips’ they take and their perception of what constitutes a golf holiday. However, this is not linked to the length of trip taken, because research participants use the term when discussing both short breaks and week-long vacations. What constitutes a golf holiday is clearly determined by the individual and is constructed and shaped by their own cultural references ( Löfgren, 2002) of playing golf away from the home environment.

How an individual perceives golf tourism may be determined by the motivation to participate, the expectations of the golfer - and others - which determines the extent to which golf will form part of the travel activities undertaken during the trip (discussed in section 4.2.4.3.1 and linked to QE’s 16 and 23) and the research undertaken to design the trip. Sirakaya and Woodside
(2005) argue that both external and internal variables, such as attitudes and motivations influence both whether the trip occurs and how it is designed, shaping the overall decision making process. Moreover trips rarely serve one motive. Swarbooke and Horner (1999, p56) confirm that “most people’s holidays represent a compromise between their multiple motivators”. Therefore the opportunity to play golf may not be a primary motive and a trip may be planned around many alternative demands which need to be satisfied. Bieger and Laesser (2004, p368), in their discussion of travel decision making, specifically comment that sports trips can be complex “as the potential activities of all travel companions have to be met by a supply in a given destination (maximizing the utility of each travel companion)”. Within tourism literature the decision making process has been widely discussed (see section 3.6), focusing on aspects such as demand and supply (Woodside and Lysonski, 1989), attitudes (Um and Crompton, 1990), utility and rationality of the decision (Woodside and MacDonald, 1994), and the involvement of others (Thornton et al., 1997, Zalatan, 1998, Nichols and Snepenger, 1988, Jenkins, 1978, Mottiar and Quinn, 2004). Thus levels of participation in sports, such as golf, are determined not just by the players, but by a decision making unit (DMU) (Decrop and Snelders, 2005) which includes all members of the travel group.

The influence of others, forming a DMU which goes beyond those in the travel party, is acknowledged by Humphreys and Weed (2012) who asserted that the DMU includes those taking the trip (referred to as the trip DMU) but may include others affected in some way by the trip, often family members, who form an extended DMU. The two tiers of DMU collectively influence whether the trip will take place, trip destinations and in-trip activities, with negotiation and compromise inevitable as a result (Humphreys and Weed, 2012). Furthermore the trip DMU may contain participants each with their own extended DMU. Thus groups of golf tourists must balance the needs of their own family with the demands made by the families of their golfing colleagues. The outcome is that multiple extended DMUs can influence the evolvement of travel plans (Bronner and de Hoog, 2008).

The composition of the trip DMU significantly influences the likelihood that golf will be played. For instance if the trip DMU comprises of golfers the decision to include golf is likely to be accepted with little question. In cases where the trip DMU comprises of a family unit, where only one adult has a golf interest, there is likely to be greater debate as to whether golf should feature in the trip. Literature acknowledges that those involved - or affected by the taking of a trip - will influence choices made (Mansfield, 1992). One outcome may be that there is no overt
motive to include golf in the trip decision making process. Furthermore even in groups containing only golfers the motive for travel may not be golf - perhaps travel to attend a wedding or see friends - with golf being included only if other factors allow. Therefore, combining golf with VFR (QE15) may encourage trips to be stimulated or extended so that both activities can be achieved. Decrop and Snelders (2005) suggest that opportunistic vacationers are stimulated to travel by invites from friends or advertised special offers, which impacts planning and booking behaviour, as well as influencing destination choice. Thus when considering the construct of golf tourism the golf element may form a primary, secondary or no motive at all for the trip. Secondary motives are not inferior to primary motives but help to refine travel decisions (Robinson and Gammon, 2011), influencing the creation (research and booking of golf elements) of the golf trip.

Where the opportunity to play golf is the primary motive and research is completed in regard to the courses which could be played when visiting a destination, the trip DMU (and extended DMU) are acknowledging that the trip is intentionally being constructed as a ‘golf holiday’. At this stage the destination may be adjusted if the courses are perceived as unlikely to fulfil the primary motive successfully. Once the courses are selected the travel arrangements are then booked. ALANA recognised that golf was a primary motive for her:

“When we play golf on holiday – we specifically book a golf holiday, we don’t go to a place where we could play golf if we fancied it, if we are going on holiday then we are going to play golf.”

When golf is the primary motivator the courses are usually the focus, although this does not preclude secondary motives from influencing holiday plans. MAC specifically highlighted the desire to balance desires to play golf with visiting fields and family.

“I suppose because golf is such a big part of my life I do try and combine the two. The thing about golf is that, the golf clubs never come to you; you have always got to make a real effort. If I go somewhere to play golf I will try and combine it with seeing friends and things but if I am just going on holiday it won’t be as much of an issue to be playing golf.”

There are, of course, cases where golf is not the primary motive but is recognised by the trip DMU and extended DMU as an opportunity to enhance the holiday. This acknowledges a distinction between the golf holiday, and holidays which allow for some participation in golf (Glyptis, 1981). Here, golf is recognised as one of many activities available and therefore trip decision making includes research into golfing possibilities, alongside other factors. Golf is then booked once at the destination and fitted around other activities. This attitude was noted in cycle one data whereby JEREMY commented:
“I am on holiday somewhere nice or somewhere different, I like to find a golf course to play to say that I have played in that country or on that Continent or somewhere like that, in which case it’s hiring clubs and just wanting to say that I have played a course in a different part of the world.”

Alternatively the trip DMU may not acknowledge golf as an important element of the trip, meaning it has little influence on the destination decision making process. In such a scenario no research into golf opportunities is completed prior to confirming travel arrangements However, an enthusiasm to play may encourage negotiation within the trip DMU which allows some golf participation. In such a case once the visitor arrives at the destination investigation will be made to see if there are courses which appeal - if the desire to play outweighs the perceived impact on the trip DMU, golf is booked. In-situ decision making occurs in all holidays (Blichfeldt et al., 2011) and can play a significant role in the likelihood of participation in sports tourism. Covert efforts may be made to increase the probability of participation (such as packing sports equipment). TOMMY said he "took a few balls and some tees and my glove. I packed them in case we might [play], if I could persuade somebody to go." Appreciating the existence of underlying motives separate from expressed motives (Robinson and Gammon, 2011) is helpful in accepting such covert actions and suggests distinctions between stated trip purposes and underlying motives to travel (Pearce and Lee, 2005). Thus golf tourism trip decisions can be driven by covert motivations, impacting the attention given to destination choice.

As with many sports, golf requires specific equipment for participation. However including golf equipment in travel luggage does not determine a clear definition of golf holidays. Little literature exists related to the influence of taking sporting equipment on vacation, and in golf, as with sports such as skiing or cycling, convenient rental opportunities allow players to hire clubs, bags and trolleys. Despite the lack of literature there is evidence in this data that decisions to transport golf clubs are made for trips even when golf is not the primary motive. In cycle one data DEBBIE explained her shift in holiday plans when she and her husband, on advice from others, decided to take their clubs.

“We went away to Turkey last year not booking a golf holiday, not intending to play golf, but obviously we were told we should take our golf clubs, we played three times.”

This was also supported by RYAN, who confirmed that, even if golf was not the primary motivation for travel, if golf facilities were in the area then he and his wife would take their own clubs. REX also recalled a holiday where golf equipment had been taken on the vacation and
many rounds of golf played to assert that this was, in his mind something that could ‘technically’ be called a golf holiday but which he seemed to give separate status to, as a family holiday:

“I mean we did have holidays in Provence in the south of France, I took my clubs with me then and I suppose technically that would be a golfing holiday but that was a few years ago. We played most days, or many of the days that we were there, staying in Provence.”

Thus looking beyond the ‘technical’ perspective of the material elements enhances understanding of how golfers define their golf holidays. Evidence in the interviews suggests that the perceptions of individuals dominate more than the technical, with the ‘state of mind’ of the traveller influential when defining the golf holiday. For both leisure generally and tourism specifically 'state of mind' has been acknowledged (De Grazia, 1962, Jafari, 1987, Dallen, 2005) as significant, reinforcing that an individual must ‘feel’ they are a tourist if they are to define themselves as such. Neulinger (1981) recognised leisure as a state of mind which proposed that how we perceive our actions or activities determines whether it ‘is’ such. This is also supported by Mannell and Iso-Ahola (1987) who assert that defining leisure or tourism experiences can be linked to the stream of consciousness accompanying the episode. Consequently the concept of ‘golf tourism’ can be constructed through the consciousness of the individual. PAMELA, who is relatively new to golf, suggested that for her there is an ordering in the decision making process, but that this may be influenced by levels of enthusiasm for the game.

“I am not sure whether I would actually say ‘I am going on a golfing holiday lets go to Spain’; it would probably be ‘I am going on a Spanish holiday oh let’s see if there are any golf courses around’. It would be more that way round for me. That’s not to say I think other people would probably feel the other way around if their absolutely avid.”

She presumes more regular players may construct their golf holidays in a different way to the novice player. ALEXANDER, who has high levels of golf participation both at home and on vacation, specifically identified a distinction between playing golf on holiday and golf holidays. He commented that:

“We have concentrated on the golf holidays which I say we have taken; I am just thinking elsewhere, we took clubs Dubai and South Africa. Again I think we played twice in three weeks or four weeks or something like that. So, there is this distinction between going on holiday and playing golf and going on a golf holiday.”

This suggests that the transporting of clubs is not enough to distinguish the trip as a golf holiday. Furthermore MAC made a distinction between playing golf when away from home and golf holidays.
“I suppose with my family we have travelled around the world and played a bit of golf, not golf specific. I haven’t really been on that many golfing holidays per se.”

KENNETH also appeared to have similar perceptions. When asked if he and his golf-playing wife took golf trips he responded:

“Um. No. We have played golf in Australia, but I mean that was a holiday where we took our clubs and we had sort of five or six games.”

His initial response was that they do not take golf trips. However he then immediately clarified that they do take clubs and play while on holidays. This emphasises that whether players perceive themselves to be on a golf trip – rather than an trip which includes golf - is influential.

In cases where golf is not overtly acknowledged as either a primary or secondary motive, the existence of golf at the destination may stimulate enthusiasm to play. Participation would fit around other holiday arrangements and it may be that this requires greater levels of negotiation to take place if participation is to happen. This was explained by TOMMY in regard to his holidays in Spain and Portugal.

I went away with my son and my nephew and his wife. And my son and my nephew at the time were 13 or 14 both keen at that time golfers asked ‘can we play golf somewhere?’, so made some enquiries and we hired clubs and - but we went in October in Spain it was like this, the week was wet. And the one day it didn’t rain was the day we played golf.”

The trip DMU (and extended DMU) along with golfing motives, influence the information search and travel booking process - this is summarised by figure 5.1 which outlines the different approaches to constructing a trip which includes golf participation.
Figure 5.1: Constructing the golf holiday
Clearly the concept of 'golf tourism' is not as straightforward as 'playing golf away from home' and whether the individual perceives the trip as a golf holiday is influential. This was evidenced in discussions with EILEEN about her travels, particularly with her husband:

“It depends on who I am going with. If it’s with the girls we will choose a golfing place, if it’s with my husband we will choose somewhere where we can have a break from golf – a holiday, because he is not – he can play golf but he just doesn’t have time to play. We play together in the Gambia but that is because the course is on the complex and it is just a par 3, there are 18 holes but it is just a par 3. But if we were going abroad on a holiday together we wouldn’t be going on a golfing holiday.”

Her comments suggest that although she and her husband may play golf in the Gambia (where they have a timeshare property) she does not really consider this a ‘golf holiday’. In their exploration of leisure and tourism experiences Mannell and Iso-Ahola (1987, p319) draw on Neulinger’s Paradigm to assert that “it is not the ‘objective’ presence of [freedom and extent] factors in the setting that is important in determining whether an activity is leisure, but rather their presence as ‘perceived’ by the participant”. Therefore the perception of the participant must dominate if the concept of the golf holiday is to be clarified.

One reason for avoiding the term 'golf holiday' may lie with the implications or repercussions of it stimulates. Several research participants commented that there was a need to separate golf holidays from 'other' holidays. In many cases the inference was that golf reduced the time with family and therefore needed to be negotiated. When asked whether he would play whist away on a family holiday RAY commented that:

“If I wanted to, yes. But I don’t. We went to Spain this year for two weeks and I didn’t take the clubs. Deliberately because I didn’t want to play golf while I was off with the family. Yes, I need to keep the two separate I think for my own conscience.”

Interview data also referred to limitations on playing golf while travelling with spouse and children.

“I wouldn’t do that. That’s separate. If I am going away with them I never ever play golf when I have been away for a weekend, a week’s holiday. We are going to America in February and I have got no intention of playing golf, I know there are loads of golf courses over there, I know you could hire but, no I wouldn’t do it. Because that’s different. For me I am going on holiday to be with my family so I wouldn’t.” (ADAM)

“I think if the wife doesn’t play then they are not going to go on golf holidays. If they are definitely going on golf holidays they will go somewhere where there might be golf. …People I know when they go away, if the wife doesn’t golf they don’t golf.” (MARGARET)
Therefore associated expectations may influence use of the term. In Goffman’s (1971) discussion of the presentation of self, he asserts that individuals have many motives for controlling the impressions that others receive about situations. Therefore motives underlying the naming of a vacation to be a ‘golf holiday’ may mean that expectations are set regarding the different activities which may be included in the trip. Use of the term golf holiday may immediately make it more likely that golf would be played but conversely may, for some, make it more difficult to negotiate the opportunity to take such a trip.

While there has been no confirmed definition of the term ‘golf holiday’ there are several conclusions which can be drawn from examination of the concept. Firstly it is essential to realise that the distinction set by players regarding what is considered to be a golf holiday is not determined by the amount of golf played, whether the player transports some or all of their golfing equipment or the overall time length of the trip. While some trips may involve several rounds of golf others have suggested that golf holidays do not always involve playing daily. Furthermore there are golfers who have described ‘other’ holidays which included golf, or where clubs (or as minimum golf shoes, balls or gloves) are packed as luggage with an expectation to fit in a round of golf. Finally the term ‘golf holiday’ is ascribed to short trips of a day or two as well as longer holidays.

The second conclusion is that the way in which the trip is defined may impact opportunities to play while on vacation. Negotiating time to take a golf holiday may have greater difficulties if it is perceived to exclude some members of the travel party while ‘other’ holidays may allow some time to play, with less pressure to negotiate the time needed. Therefore individuals construct their own definitions of their trips to manage/avoid implications of calling it a ‘golf holiday’. However this is not the sole determinant of whether players decide to take golfing equipment on their travels.

Thirdly the expectations set about the golf elements to be experienced (and critique of these elements) is influenced by whether the golfer considers their travels to be a ‘golf’ or ‘other’ holiday. Visiting destinations which are perceived to have an abundance of golf resources or a high quality course may increase the likelihood that the trip is considered to be a golf holiday. How the destination is comprehended can reflect a ‘reality’ perceived by the individual but this is not necessarily a universal reality. This questions whether there is an underlying drive to play golf, even though the traveller may not overtly verbalise the trip as a golf holiday.
Finally it seems possible to assert that there is a need to ‘feel we are golf tourists’ if we are to ‘be golf tourists’ and that this is more than just about playing golf; it is about a wider expectation of the overall experience relative to the decisions which underpin the trip. The distinction between a ‘golf’ and ‘other’ holiday is a construction in the mind of the participant rather than in the resources used or the activities undertaken. Evident in this research is the divergent perceptions regarding the concept of a golf holiday, how golf fits around other holiday choices and that personal circumstances influence the way golf trips are defined by golfers.

5.2.1.2 Influences of lifestage and life course

The data in cycle two, and supported by data in cycle one, illustrates many different types of golfer, with factors such as lifestyle and life course influencing golf tourism participation. Lifestyle and life course can be determined by factors such as age, marital status, the existence of children and income all of which influence travel behaviour (You and O’Leary, 2000). These aspects affect the amount of golf played and the courses selected. RAY specifically highlighted that he plays more golf and takes more golf weekends away now that his two children are older, while ALANA, pregnant with her first child, explained why she and her husband chose an expensive resort in Barbados:

“We were absolutely going to treat ourselves. It was the opportunity really, which is why we went to places... also thinking, before family comes, we wanted to go on a quite extravagant holiday whilst we could afford them.”

The influence of life course is evident in cycle one, where JEREMY commented that the presence of children on a vacation would limit the expected number of golf rounds played, and by REX’s view that his children had grown up and he had retired so he could find more time to play golf. HARLEY also highlighted that it was easier for him to negotiate time to take a golf trip with friends because he and his wife were yet to have children. Literature (Turley, 2001) confirms that children are influential both in the travel decision making process and in the activities and behaviour of families when on holiday. Thus being at a pre-children stage can lead to greater flexibility in deciding whether, when and how to participate in golf tourism. This can perhaps be attributed to the existence of a smaller, perhaps less-complex, DMU (Fodness, 1992)(discussed in section 5.2.1.1). Thus the existence of a spouse or children, and the obligations and responsibilities this may bring, can influence the decisions on whether, when and where to take a golfing trip. Furthermore once in the family stage, the age of children is influential, with older children participating in trip planning decisions, while caring for young children is more likely to
shape behaviour during the trip. Moreover, taking trips which leave family members at home can require greater negotiation and can appear self-indulgent (Davidson, 1996).

Life course changes influenced HARLEY, although he referred not to the existence of children but in regard to his relationship with friends. He asserted that changing lifestage led to the existence of ‘lad’s holidays’ because it provided an acceptable reason for him to spend time with his boyhood friends. He recalled that after leaving school:

“the only time I would see them during the day or for a week-end break was if we had a lad’s holidays or a boy’s holiday where you don’t play golf and they’re a bit of a no-no really when you are all married and have got children, kind of needing an excuse to go away and to play golf is, sort of, a great excuse. I don’t know if it was, it is probably loosely linked to age but I think as you get older there is less opportunity to go away with your friends without a decent reason and golf tends to be - is a good reason.”

Analysis suggests that changes in life course influence the choices made in regard to single-sex golf trips. This is not only true for men but also for women. In cycle one MARGARET noted that “it’s different once your husband dies; your whole life changes. So obviously the golf changes, because no longer do you go off at weekends or at the drop of a hat and do things together”. While widowhood may lead to a lack of travel (and possibly playing) companion, it may also impact the level of enthusiasm to plan (or participate as part of a DMU in planning) trips (Kerstetter and Pennington-Gray, 1999). Furthermore widowhood may bring a change in lifestyle caused by a reduction in income. Widowhood does not mean that travel is abandoned but that a change to travel patterns may occur (Blichfeldt, 2007).

Changes in lifestage also influence trip activities and ADAM highlighted that the characteristics of the trips he takes has shifted:

“We have got a society that we started in 1990 – 1989. A group of us that decided we should have a weekend away and play golf. We went to Llandudno, I think, but since then – when we first started we were – I was 19, we were more interested in going away for the weekend and drinking and having a good time and going to a good place where there was a good night life rather than the golf course, that was the secondary thing. But as we got older, we have been going for 20 years now, the night life side of it we are not that interested in and it is now the golf courses, so we are now playing better quality golf courses.”

Changes to travel behaviour are linked to lifestage and life course in terms of the types of trip taken and expenditure (Lawson, 1991, Collins and Tisdell, 2002) while the presence of children in the travel group influence activities undertaken (Thornton et al., 1997). Furthermore, in their
discussion of tourists roles Gibson and Yiannakis (2002) report that life course influences participation in active sports tourism because different psychological needs assert themselves at different points in the life course. Changing physiological needs may be perceived to occur as part of 'growing-up' and growing old, and while ADAM's quote above suggests transformation to a maturing personality trait, Ryan (2003) argues that this may not be a trait reflecting life course but one which is influenced by attitudes towards the purpose or expectations of the function of each trip taken. Therefore the decision to take a trip which includes a golf element may be determined by the perceived functional benefits that such a trip will provide.

Cycle one data (section 4.2.1.1 and QE1) suggested that the player’s attitude to including golf in their life, and being 'serious' about golf, influences participation. This is reinforced by cycle two data. In some cases golf appeared to be a dominant activity and the players reflected this in their choice of terminology when describing their experience of taking up the sport. For example MARGARET commented that:

“I really didn’t think it would become obsessive. I think it is a very obsessive game. So I wanted to play all the time.”

Similarly, KENNETH recalled that “I played once and I was hooked, I thought yes, this is for me”. Significantly both KENNETH and MARGARET claim to play over 100 rounds of golf per year. In acknowledging this ‘culture of commitment’ (Tomlinson, 1993) Gillespie et al. (2002, p285) assert that “leisure practice and cultural consumption are essential in understanding the meaning people give their lives”. This passion for a hobby links to the concept of serious leisure (discussed in section 3.4) and in the presentation of cycle one data (section 4.2.4.3.3). Defined as “the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or volunteer activity that is so interesting and substantial that the participant seeks a career there in the acquisition and expression of its special skills and knowledge” (Stebbins, 1992b, p123) serious leisure requires perseverance, long-term commitment, skill development and integration in the leisure community which can result in self-actualisation and a social identity linked to the activity (Shipway and Jones, 2007). This suggests a deep engagement with the activity which can be time-intensive (Raisborough, 2006).
Some golfers were less keen to acknowledge the dominance that golf may hold on their lives. For example CHARLES commented that he “tends to only play once in a weekend and sometimes weekends not at all. Just because we need to balance our life in general”. Yet he is serious enough about the sport to travel to team competitions held across England. He also travels to different courses so he can provide reviews for a golf website. Similarly RYAN asserts that:

“I’m not one of those people who is an obsessive golfer but I have always been able to play, carried on playing more or less regularly throughout my life, played occasionally at University, occasionally at Law School, play occasionally now.”

This suggests that, despite claims about not being 'obsessive', RYAN has the drive (Kurtzman and Zauhar, 1997) to ensure that golf participation has been a regular part of his life. Consequently it is evident that while golf may not be stated as dominant it clearly plays a significant role in decision making.

5.2.1.3 Emotional Rewards
Cycle one data (section 4.2.1.3) demonstrated the influence of emotions on golf tourism, highlighting that desires for an enjoyable vacation can be achieved through a variety of trip elements and experiences. Cycle two data reinforces this, clarifying that the attitude to having golf in one’s life and level of ‘seriousness’ (Stebbins, 1992a, Siegenthaler and O'Dell, 2003) when playing golf are also influential. When KENNETH was describing his choice of place to play he highlighted:

“I am not bothered about practice facilities. It’s the course, it's the clubhouse. But the clubhouse isn't really as important as the course. Golfers are very serious about their sport, very serious about it.”

Therefore, while different elements of the trip must be decided upon, analysis suggests that emotive rewards achieved by experiencing an enjoyable holiday are heavily influenced by course selection (QE4). The challenge of the course is often highlighted as important if enjoyment is to be achieved. Some courses are considered boring if they do not provide the challenge and stimulation felt to be necessary for enjoyment. This was highlighted by CHARLES who stated:

“if you are playing a course where it’s not particularly challenging, you don’t feel like you are challenging your skills or not such a difficult test then it's less compelling for you.”
Boredom occurs when perceived ability exceeds perceived challenge (Danish et al., 2007). KENNETH and HARLEY both suggested they would avoid returning to courses which did not provide a challenge while MAC’s response suggests that a less challenging course would, for him, become something more light-hearted and less serious.

“Yea it would be a bit of fun I wouldn’t take that golf course necessarily that seriously, if it was too easy really. It wouldn’t really do anything for my golf, my game, I wouldn’t find it particularly enjoyable.”

GAIL clarified that course layout, lack of on-course obstacles and uninteresting scenery made for a boring course. She confirmed that, while she doesn’t “particularly enjoy a challenge” she chooses a course carefully to avoid the likelihood that it would be boring. Similarly ADAM noted that his group actively choose “ones that are tougher”. Seeking out courses which will stimulate interest leads to a more enjoyable trip experience (discussed in section 4.2.4.1.3 and QE12).

Conceptually ‘flow’ - the “experience of matching skill with the challenges of the activity” - can lead to a positive and satisfying leisure experience (Edginton et al., 1995, p3), which means that matching skill to the challenge can provide positive emotive responses leading to satisfaction. Flow research considers the rewards of participation, the opportunity to challenge existing skills and the opportunity to judge progress (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2005).

Developing golfing ability can justify seeking challenging courses when on vacation. It can also make golf at a home course seem easier in the future, and provide skill development.

“I mean the one in the Grenadines was bloody hard and so was the one in Portugal, but I quite like a challenge and also it is quite nice to play them because, I mean, you get back to your course you think Christ this is easy. Yea I am quite up for a big challenge.” (ALANA).

Literature (Abernathy et al., 2003, Garris et al., 2002) has debated the use of progressive challenges as a means of skill development to suggest, alongside the benefit that practice itself brings, that ability can be enhanced as new challenges are attempted and conquered. Influencing this is the extent of player experience. Flow research asserts that the experience is influenced by prior occurrences, which lead to changing motivations and goals over time (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2005). In cycle two data GAIL recounted that when she was new to the game she played a course on holiday which she felt too challenging for her skill level. She commented that, despite since improving in skill and experience she would not return to play the course. However, this may not be the reaction of all golfers as some may choose to return in order to measure their skill progression. The choice of ‘fight or flight’ (a human stress response (Cannon 1932, cited in Taylor et al., 2000)) will vary by golfer but evidence in this
research and in literature (Kimball and Freysinger, 2003) suggests that leisure activities which seem overly challenging can lead to experiences of frustration rather than enjoyment, achieved as an outcome of an optimal experience (Jackson, 2000b). Frustration can emerge through repeated disappointment and failure (Start, 1967) which may be experienced in golf, when playing mean result in a lost ball or a near-impossible next shot. KENNETH suggested that he wanted the course “to be a challenge but I don’t want it to be ridiculously hard”. NATHAN suggested an over-challenging course would make him feel:

“Beat up. Beat up. I wouldn’t say disappointed because it is always an experience, but bordering on disappointment. Obviously if you play a course that is too difficult and you don’t get a chance to score and you lose loads of golf balls, then you don’t really enjoy it. Which is why I wouldn’t play – I wouldn’t play some courses in the States and I wouldn’t play some courses in Spain where there is loads of water because one thing you don’t want to be doing if you are playing particularly poor shots or you are off the mark slightly you don’t want to be losing balls every time hit the ball – you can lose dozens of balls in a round on a course with loads of water. And that’s no fun at all, it just adds insult to injury.”

Similarly lost balls caused frustration for JONATHAN, who recounted:

“I think the courses that I get frustrated with are the ones where the rough is so dense that you can’t find your balls, I think that for an amateur golfer is the big thing. Okay you expect to make mistakes, you know you are going to make mistakes, that’s why you have got a handicap.”

As well as being associated with skill development, frustration appears linked to the ‘seriousness’ of the golfer. RAY felt that “some people get very frustrated, very upset and play a game in a very serious frame of mind, for me life is too short to be like that”. Several players used the term ‘serious’ when describing golf on holidays but frequently also asserted that ‘taking it too seriously’ was perhaps detrimental to the experience.

The overall experience is also influenced by the quality of the greens, to play at a pace which suits the group, the opportunity to use buggies, if desired, and, as highlighted earlier in this section, the physical environment in which the course is located.

“So I must admit with GAIL when we go as a couple we do enjoy more traditional tree-lined courses or something with decent views.” (ALEXANDER)

“I don’t like slow play. If I have got a four ball in front of me and they are slow I would actually go up and say to them ‘please can we go through’. It just drives me mad." (EILEEN)

“Good greens, just aesthetically pleasing, nice views as you go around. The layout. Yes, the aesthetics.” (KENNETH)
Thus design of the course impacts enjoyment while the challenge offered plays a significant role in overall trip experience. As a consequence selecting the course(s) to be played can be instrumental to the success of the golf trip. Positive emotive responses can be achieved through challenging and enjoyable experiences but excessive challenges or, alternatively, boring courses, can lead to feeling of frustration and disappointment (figure 5.2).

![Figure 5.2: Emotive rewards influenced by course characteristics](image)

In summary, this section highlights that, alongside lifestage and life course, the individual's construction of the trip - particularly the point at which golf is embedded into the trip decision - can influence destination selection. Furthermore course selection and golfer behaviours are also swayed by desires to achieve positive emotive rewards from participation.

### 5.2.2 The Influence of competition and ability

Having highlighted above the importance of positive emotive rewards, it is possible to assert a link with the role of competition. Literature examining competition in sport proposes a dual goal perspective: to demonstrate and develop ability and to make comparisons with selected others (Nicholls, 1992, Duda, 1992). Travel for organised competitions was discussed in section 4.2.4.3.3 but informal competition, arranged between groups of players is also influential on the golf tourist behaviour (see 4.2.5.2).
Three players (CHARLES, MAC and MARGARET) have travelled to play competitive golf, the first two as part of teams, and the last in regional and national competitions for women players. The locations of the competition determine the destination. MAC confirmed that he likes “to travel around the country and play different golf courses. That’s actually one very good way of playing organised golf”. He identified golf festivals (which are organised by clubs and usually last several days) as the sources for many competitions he plays. MARGARET mainly travelled to play the British Amateur Open, which was hosted by different courses each year and she stated that although she was unlikely to be skilled enough to win the competitions she entered she valued the opportunity to play various courses she deemed prestigious. Gibson (1998a, p161) acknowledges that championship golf courses provide skilled consumers "with the opportunity to test their skills in pre-eminent conditions". This can be contrast with CHARLES, who played with a team at two different golf competitions, each held annually. His team would repeatedly enter the same two competitions, playing the same courses each year. While it is clear that entering such competitions fulfils personal goals, it can also address motives linked to value for money. For example, MAC highlighted that the festival competitions often provided a means to play expensive courses for a much lower fee.

“I played a competition at Saunton [NR11] for the day, two courses and the price for the day was £45 – that includes prizes if you finish well, and I also got a complementary practice round. So that is what I describe as amazing value for money because if you just turn up and play for a green fee it is £65 per course.”

Entering competitions draws on the concept of serious leisure (see section 3.4) and linked to data presented in section 4.2.4.3.3 and section 5.2.1.2), providing the opportunity for skill development and skill assessment. MARGARET stated that competitions provided the opportunity to “prove yourself” alongside other players. The chance to measure current skill level, learn from those who are higher skilled, and display prowess in an activity can motivate travellers (Gibson, 1998a) and encourage leisure career development (Shipway and Jones, 2007). It is possible to contrast MARGARET’S enthusiasm for competition with TOMMY, the highest-handicap male player interviewed, who stated that “I have never been competitive at anything I do. I played most games and have been master of none of them, really”. TOMMY stated that when he takes a golf trip with his friends they set up a competition each day, but include fun events, to ensure that winners may not just be for those playing the best golf. He laughed when recounting that:
“we didn’t have a ‘nearest-the-pin’, we had a ‘nearest-the-bin’. We bought a bin along and walked down the first fairway about 150 yards and says ‘whoever gets it nearest that bin gets the prize’. Didn’t have a longest-drive. Because we just felt that when you have longest-drive it cuts quite a few people out of the competition, because it is always the same three or four people who will win the longest drive, because they are the biggest hitters. At least with nearest-the-pin or nearest-the-bin whichever it is, everybody has got a chance. I mean I have won it occasionally.”

While it might seem that there is a distinction between playing for fun and playing competitive golf, this is not clear cut as prizes are awarded for a variety of reasons.

While literature (Shields and Bredemeier, 2009) suggests that competitions can be a cause of hostility and resentment, frequently they are used to add fun and enjoyment to sporting participation. MAC stated that for him golf on holiday does not have to be competitive, yet, there is a suggestion that the desire to develop his skill and ability suggests that the competitive element may always be a part of what he is seeking.

“When I go on holiday I just want to have a bit of fun really, I just want to experience the golf course, hang out with good mates of mine. Just for me I want to try to improve and become a better player so that is why the competitive golf is quite important to me.”

Although no other research participants claimed to play competitive golf, many detailed the different competitions they arranged which culminated in players winning a trophy. The existence of a trophy suggests regularity in playing as a group as well as giving status to the competition played. ALEXANDER noted that in their travel group comprising of four couples they have daily competitions as well as a “small joke trophy” at the end. The monitoring of past winners allowed ADAM to recount that:

“It is just nice to say you have won; and we do play for a trophy every time so it’s nice to actually - the bragging rights is how many times you have won it. And there is still, after 20 years, there is – I have only won it once but there are people who have not won it – there are two or three guys who still have not won it and they are obviously desperate to try and win it.”

Similarly, in cycle one data MICHAEL noted that on holiday his group played in two teams with the winners earning 'bragging rights' (discussed in section 4.2.5.2) over the other team while they were the trophy holders. HARLEY and EDITH also described trophies which were played for by golfing groups of which they were members. The existence of a trophy seems to assist in creating a sense of purpose for the round of golf played, adding meaning and a competitive element.
Attitudes to playing competitions is a significant personal characteristic, influencing course choice as well as the outcome of the experience. The reasons are summarised in figure 5.3. Both commercially organised and informally organised competitions can challenge a player positively and has the potential to improve performance. Furthermore the symbolic status of the trophy can both reward the winner with rights to claim status over others (bragging) and to encourage repeat performances. Such extrinsic rewards (Vallerand and Losier, 1999) can alone justify participation, although more frequently this is supported by intrinsic motivations to gain pleasure and fun from engaging in the sport.

![Figure 5.3: Reasons for playing competitions](image)

Literature (Kohn, 1986) has contested the assertion that competitions can lead to positive performance but this research suggests players perceive that performance will be enhanced through competition, while acknowledging that high performance levels are not always achieved. The sharing of rewards (by establishing competitions which judge different elements of the game) ensures that performance can be graded just on a single golf shot as well as on entire rounds of golf. This can ameliorate some negative aspects of competition.
Examining the influence of ability on destination selection is a key objective of this study. Ability, as denoted by handicap, does not appear to determine membership of playing groups, although it is noted that some groups do contain members with broadly similar ability levels, especially if competition is involved (QE2). Selection is more likely to be determined by family and friendship associations rather than ability. However, there are acknowledged benefits when all players are of similar levels. Both ADAM and MAC highlighted the frustrations felt when low and high ability golfers are playing in the same group. Particularly ADAM suggests that his group likes to choose harder courses or play from the hardest (championship) tees, which means that “if you have got people who aren’t as good it’s a struggle”. Significantly he goes on to acknowledge the decision regarding course and tees is made because player abilities are similar, acknowledging that:

“if we had more of a mixture [of abilities] it would have been ‘alright we’ll just play off the standard tee.”

To some extent this is in contrast to the experience of HARLEY, who noted that when he first started and held a high handicap course ease was not influential in their selection of where to play.

In linking ability to course choice the issue of the challenge (considered in section 5.2.1.3) is raised. The desire for a challenge is significant for some, regardless of handicap, more to avoid boredom than purely in testing skills against the course. Obviously players with a higher level of ability will be challenged in different ways from lower ability golfers. MAC argued that “better players can raise their game and play better under more difficult conditions”. However, this does not necessarily mean different courses are required. CHARLES (a low handicapper) noted:

“One factor is how challenging or how difficult they are. You don’t want them to be too difficult because then it becomes not fun in that you can’t play the course properly. A lot of the courses in the UK that are good quality seem to be by the seaside where it’s very windy and if you are not a competent enough player, that tends to be not much fun either because that’s very hard. It’s hard to play in wind; it’s hard to play the links courses with hard greens and long rough.”

Thus course design, climatic conditions, choice of tee, and other such factors influence the extent of the challenge. However, the need to be challenged is not the only factor. It seems that the desire for enjoyment and fun also determines choice and that fun may come through rising to a challenge but can, at the other end of the spectrum, be achieved through scoring well on easier courses. To explain this ALEXANDER states:
“The best day’s pure golf that I have is with a friend of mine. If you are a
member of a club in Cheshire you can play any other club in Cheshire for half
price. And so we do that maybe ten times a year. At a different club around
Cheshire and we have a very informal but very competitive match every time.
When we have played two rounds in a day and it has been extremely close
and I have just beaten him at the end of it. On holiday that doesn’t happen
because I don’t play, we don’t play even a friendly competition to that
intensity and so it is different and it would be nice weather and a good round,
which is why I am happy with less challenging courses because yes it would be
nice, it’s nice to hit a good round and a lower score.”

It is evident that intensity of competition influences golf performance and overall experience but
conversely the joy of good scores can provide a different sort of emotive reward.

Ability is also linked to course choice via the issue of cost. In his research on skiers Richards
(1996) asserted that although skiers of different abilities may share the same resort, there is a
noticeable difference in their destination preferences, with higher skilled participants seeking
out destinations which could best serve their needs for challenging runs, while low-ability skiers
select destinations which generally offer lower prices. Similarly for golf, skill level and price can
moderate decisions made regarding course choice. Some players held the perception that
championship courses were more expensive and a lack of skill would mean a poor playing
experience which, in turn, would lead to a sense of poor value for money. Although this issue
was seen in the data in cycle one (section 4.2.1.2) it appears that this is not clear-cut. For
example, STEVEN compared two groups he travelled with to note that the characteristics of the
second group:

“tend to be slightly upper handicap, so it is less of a range, so I would say
probably from 22 up to 28. So that tends to be a less able mix of golfers but
equally, they tend actually to want to play, they tend to be a bit fussier about
the courses they play.”

It seems that ability does play a role in course choice when in a group, but affordability (relative
to disposable income) has a dominate influence. Section 4.2.1.2 noted that a lack of ability may
affect judgements made that the time and monetary cost of playing could be justified.
Furthermore cost and value for money (section 4.2.4.3.4) can be judged by actual monetary
price but also by psychological price (Moital and Dias, 2012). Several players discussed the need
to avoid ‘pricing out certain members of the party’ (NATHAN). For example, HARLEY recounted:
“[A golfer], who is a very close friend of mine - who is a scratch golfer - he tends to drive what golf course we are going to play. I started organising them and he got a bit snobby about the golf courses I was choosing, because they weren’t ‘on the map’ if you like. So he said ‘alright I am going to organise a golf trip let me see if I can get us Valderrama [WR89], let me see if we can get K Club [NR21].’ The price goes sky rocket, goes sky high, you are going from 12 to 16 people wanting to go, to 4, possibly 8 if we are lucky, and that’s what happened.”

Players also mentioned their ‘price bracket’ (KENNETH), suggesting that they would not consider paying more than a set amount for any one round of golf, to ensure they were able to enjoy playing the course.

It seems that the effort made to play different courses may also be linked to ability levels and skill development. For TOMMY, whose handicap suggests he is a low-ability golfer, there is an enthusiasm to play frequently but he claims limited effort would be made to visit highly reputed or expensive courses. This contrasts with MAC, a high-ability golfer, who claims that:

“if there was a specific golf course I wanted to play, or well-known golf course, a very good golf course, I would make the effort to play it. But if it was just an average, fine, standard golf course I wouldn’t really be too bothered.”

ALEXANDER reflected on course choice, noting that they “had probably become more selective” as he and his wife, GAIL had gained in golf experience. Although literature suggests that dedicated golfers are more likely to play challenging and costlier courses (Hennessey et al., 2008) ALEXANDER stated that he did not expect to pay more (and wife GAIL stated that she also had a limit on what she would pay) or seek out more challenging or harder courses, just that they made more effort to find those most likely to fulfil their specific preferences.

From this it can be concluded that competition and ability influence course selection but other parameters, such as group perception of affordability have a dominant impact on course and destination selection. QE3 questioned the importance of skill development and data from cycle two suggest that while this may be considered by some players, other factors, including enjoyment, affordability and competition against others are more likely to shape behaviour and course choice.
5.2.3 Group Dynamics

The inclusion of informal competition is often determined by the golfers within the trip group. The nature and intensity of competition is influenced by the dynamics within the group, shaped by gender and group size. Gender issues in sport were introduced in section 3.1.2 and data on golf specifically was reported in section 4.2.2. Furthermore the formation of the vacation group was introduced in section 4.2.5.4 and analysis in this chapter has clarified influences on group dynamics.

Research on group dynamics (Widmeyer et al., 1990) has shown that the behaviour of individuals is influenced by their affinity to and membership of groups. As with the characteristics of the golfer (discussed in section 5.2.1), the characteristics of the group vary extensively. The overall size of the group can impact the convenience of playing golf and the travel logistics. For example GAIL discussed two groups she travelled with, one large (approximately 35 people) and one smaller (12 people). She stated that:

“The places we go to don’t differ. I personally prefer the smaller group. We play the same sort of competitions during the weekend, probably, but obviously with the smaller number and we are all good friends it’s a lot easier. Because with a large group it takes an awful long time, it must take well over an hour to an hour and a half tee times for the whole group. So it is difficult to socialise with everybody, put it that way. There is a large dinner which is divided into different tables whereas when it is small group we just basically are together. And we make sure that within the three days we all play with each other – there are very rare exceptions but we change around so that we play in different groups so that we play with each other, and I prefer it to be honest. Yes, because it is just easier. I prefer a smaller group.”

The convenience of smaller group sizes was also inferred in ALEXANDER’s comment on being invited to join a group when other golfers had withdrawn from the trip.

“There were a group of 8 because 8 is a great number, because it is two fours go out to play and two dropped out because they became - they were the oldest members and couldn’t make it - so we (with his wife GAIL), just then took their place. We knew these people for seven or eight years, I guess, before we went on that group. So it was a limited number of 8 people and they had always gone for several years and two eventually dropped out.”

In cases where golf is played as part of a family holiday, the golfer is joined by others in the family only if they have an interest in the sport. The travel group itself is determined by the family structure, with individual traveller characteristics, for example age, influencing this (Dellaert et al., 1998, Blichfeldt et al., 2011) and group members contribute to both destination selection and decisions linked to level of golf participation. However, for ‘golf holidays’ – where golf is the primary reason for travelling – the travel group appears to be formed through two
means. The first is a group of friends, who all know each other, deciding to arrange a trip which will suit the group, similar to the group described by ALEXANDER above, and the five couples which form the group taking golf trips with KENNETH and his wife.

"Well, for the last four years we have been to Penina /NR16/, there is 12 of us go. Six couples. We were very disappointed last year with the way the pricing had, obviously it’s to do with the Euro but they are charging £6.50 for a pull trolley, two gin and tonics at £15 and so we thought no, enough is enough. So we have booked next year to go to Turkey. And it is one of these all inclusive holidays."

The second approach appears more disparate and can include players who do not know all the other members of the travel party. This seems particularly true for single-sex trips. In cycle one data (section 4.2.5.4) CHARLES described the 'join-the-dot connection of people' forming the group connected at the centre by the trip organiser. This approach was also described in cycle two data by EILEEN, noting how a core group of four expanded to 14 people travelling to France for a 4-day golf trip. She suggested that links due to friendship or membership of a golf club ensured that each player was acquainted with a few others on the trip. This addresses QE21, which questioned whether women would be prepared to participate in groups which include people unknown to them prior to travel (given that cycle one data showed that this was not uncommon for men-only groups). Both EILEEN and GAIL confirmed that having women they did not know in the group would not deter them from travelling in the group.

Being part of a travel group is often considered voluntary (Decrop, 2006) if it consists of friends. However, this assumes a coordinated agreement to form the group (Kane and Zink, 2004). This is clearly not the case for all groups, where additions to the group mean some participants are strangers to other attendees. This can impact group dynamics and trip experience.

In cycle one data MICHAEL highlighted the existence of a core membership with new players joining the group each trip (filling spaces vacated by players unable to make the trip on that occasion). In cycle two data HARLEY similarly noted that one group he travelled with were:

“primarily friends, mine and [a friend who introduced him to the game], all school friends and then you have got associated people, for instance my brother-in-law, [my friend's] brother-in-law plays, if we are somebody short, if somebody falls out at short notice, we might ask a friend of a friend or might say do you mind if so and so from work comes. So I would say there is a core of 8 or 9 then, there is 3 or 4 fringe, in-laws, friends of friends, that come.”
Being invited to join a group can lead to regular involvement. RAY recalled that the golf society he travelled with now was already running when a friend invited him to attend an event; this was more than 12 years ago. Similarly TOMMY commented how the golf group he travelled with was established:

“It was originally some post office engineers in London started it, hence the name PEGS and I got taken along, about 20 years ago as a guest, by one of these engineers. I am not an engineer, but doesn’t matter we take anybody. It started out as engineers. I think now there is one guy that still actually works for the Post Office, he is not an engineer but does work for the Post Office, the rest are all retired or they have been taken along as guests - we have got builders and architects and all that sort of thing - that have been taken along as guests and eventually joined it.”

Each golf group appears to form their own distinctive characteristics, in part perhaps through the rules established by the core group members. This impacts destination choice. As an example ADAM highlighted that early in the history of his group a decision was made that each destination would be visited only once, to avoid potential disappointments which might arise from comparing the courses and facilities across years. Another example of group rules influencing destination choices was offered by NATHAN who described the management of his group, which employs a system of rolling captaincy, with the vice captain becoming the next captain. Together these players are expected to investigate destination and course options for the yearly trips, effectively creating a choice set (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005) for the group to discuss and confirm at an annual meeting each January (NATHAN describe this as the 'AGM').

RAY also used the term 'AGM' when describing the end of year meeting for his golf society. This meeting provides opportunity to:

“talk about which courses we are going to play, what prize formats we are going to have, anything people want to bring up really. Rule changes, rule amendments.”

One rule implemented by this group is to reallocate each player’s handicap based on performance. The effect is designed to make it more difficult for winning players, and easier for those struggling to become more competitive within the group. RAY argues that this is designed to ensure “it is fair, so everybody who turns up, everybody who joins the Society has got half a chance of winning”. The rapid reduction in handicap of winners was also used by TOMMY’s golfing group. The use of such rules can help in the achievement of group objectives (Weinberg and Gould, 2010), often linked to ensuring all members can benefit from participation. It can also aid group cohesion. "Cohesion is now generally defined as the group members’ inclinations to forge social bonds, resulting in the group sticking together and remaining united" (Casey-
Campbell and Martens, 2009, p223). One consequence is improved communication between members which can aid group identity.

Throughout the interviews golfing groups were often given a name. For instance EILEEN played in two societies, once called ‘TEAM SPIRIT’, the other called ‘WANNABES’. TOMMY’s group was called ‘PEGS’ and KENNETH’S group called ‘WALLIES’. The naming of the group performs the function of providing identity but, as Rymes (1996) asserts, provides social meaning conferred by membership. This means that for the golfers, as well as offering a convenient way to distinguish between different golfing groups, it conveys cultural associations determined by the rules and behaviours of each group.

In cycle one the influence of gender on group dynamics (section 4.2.2) discussed male dominance in participation both in the sport generally and in golf tourism specifically. This particularly noted the existence of some masculine traits but questioned whether participants in mixed-sex golf trips have different experiences when compared to single-sex trips. Shaw (1999) argues that sports can be gender stereotyped leading to views on what is socially appropriate for each gender, although this often hides differences within gender groups. Furthermore, literature suggests there are gender-related differences when considering leisure motivation, concluding, for instance, that men gain greater satisfaction from competence mastery, competitiveness and adventure factors while women find greater satisfaction in social interaction, mental stimulation and psychological independence (Lounsbury and Polik, 1992, Lee et al., 2007). Thus gender can influence the outcomes desired from a golf tourism experience.

As well as considering individual motives and expectations, cycle one also questioned (QE7) whether golf trips which included relationship-partners differed in terms of design, the choice of facilities and outcome experiences. In terms of the effect of gender on holiday design, questions emerged regarding whether some travel elements were perceived as being weighted with greater importance by men, while different elements were sought particularly by women (QE8). Cycle two analysis explored this further noting a perceived gender bias related to facilities chosen. For example, when discussing the facilities wanted by women KENNETH suggested that the gym and pool would be important while men would care:

“how good the bar is. The important things on our weekends away are one the golf course, two the food and three the general cleanliness and ambience of the hotel.”
Examination of male-female differences in tourism demand highlight that while for many aspects of travel there is no discernible difference due to gender, some aspects, including the demand for particular amenities are gendered (Moscardo, 2008). So even though group members may have similar travel motives their different product preferences can cause conflict (Decrop, 2006). Thus while it is expected that, combined, the facilities and amenities must meet the expectations of all the travellers in the group (Decrop and Snelders, 2005), mixed-sex groups are more likely to experience greater divergence of view on the importance of different facilities and amenities used on holiday. Furthermore, the selection of facilities and amenities can be influenced by the trip schedule (and the time available to make use of such resources). GAIL commented that “playing a round of golf, going for a swim, drinking and eating takes up the day really, we don’t tend to do anything else while we are off on a golfing weekend”.

Gender also comes into play when constructing the travel group. Cycle one highlighted divergent attitudes towards mixed-sex and single-sex golf trips (sections 4.2.2.1 and sections 4.2.2.2). This was further clarified by cycle two data, with MAC comparing two trips he had taken, one which included women, the other a trip he described as a ‘boy’s weekend’:

“To be honest it wasn’t actually that different because – I think we are all pretty young people and we all really enjoyed going out and having a drink in the evening, actually it wasn’t that different because it was so sociable. However, with the mixed foursomes event in Hoylake [WR84] we are all very good golfers and we all play at a similar standard and we took the golf quite seriously, so. It was funny, actually it wasn’t that different but I think it’s because we are all of a similar age – quite young.”

This highlights the influence of group similarities, not just in terms of gender but also factors such as age and attitude towards golf. In cycle one both CHARLES and JEREMY hinted at the expectation to find alternative activities for female partners who had no interest in playing golf. This was further reinforced by cycle two data, which showed a distinction between golf-playing couples and couples where only one member played the sport. This distinction was acknowledged by ALEXANDER:

“I think maybe with those who travel with their wives. I am just thinking that the 8 of us [4 couples] who go on this Welsh trip, when I have talked to them about the courses they play abroad and so on it sounds pretty similar for them. The people, the other guys who I speak to in the golf club whose wives do not play golf, I think it is different. It is far more about the challenge and I think much more important about the clubhouse, rather than the hotel because I think they probably spend more time in the clubhouse than going back in the hotel and so on.”
This reinforces the notion that the gender make up of the travel group will influence golf tourism behaviour and the selection of tourist amenities used at the destination.

The social norms of the group encourage adjustments to travel behaviour, as individuals seek to conform to expectations. Thus the “holiday activities of each member of the group will be affected by the preferences of the other members of the group, unless the individual leaves the group for a significant period of time” (Thornton et al., 1997, p287). Thus either separation must occur, or compromises are made which shape whether and how participation occurs. The norms are particularly amended when mixed-sex, rather than single-sex trips take place. The distinctions between these group types was clarified by KENNETH, who suggested that the use of foul language was more common on men-only trips (an issue raised also by HARLEY) while the golf was felt to be “less competitive, more of the social element comes into it” when playing on holiday with other couples. He, along with others (ADAM, RYAN, HARLEY), also suggested that betting was highly likely to take place on men-only trips. In this regard EILEEN and DEBBIE suggested that betting would take place on women-only trips, although they both reinforced this by identifying that the bet would be small (perhaps £1 or £2). Recent data on US collegiate athletes reveals those specialising in golf are significantly more likely to be involved in wagering (on sports as well as other forms of gambling such as lotteries, casinos and bingo) (NCAA, 2013). Specifically 20% of male student golfers reported wagering on sports at least once a month compared to student soccer players at 9.7% (the next highest rate for the 11 sports evaluated). Although betting is less common for women, at the elite level female college golfers have significantly higher levels of wagering (2.1%) than other female sports participants (Softball - 1.1%; Basketball - 0.9% and Track - 0.2%). Betting is not exclusive to single-sex groups. For ALEXANDER and GAIL their bet determines “who makes the gin and tonic when we get back to the hotel” while DEBBIE highlighted that when on holiday she would bet with her husband to decide who buys dinner. Informal wagers have long been a part of sporting society (Davies and Abram, 2001) and are less about the rewards and more about the status gained from the right to claim the prize.

Selecting single-sex or mixed-sex groups for golf trips is not always an overtly recognised decision. Some men (CHARLES, RYAN and STEVEN) claim their golf group is men-only because they know few women players. However, when this is probed more deeply it seems this offers them a simple justification for something which occurs for more complex reasons. For example STEVEN continues by saying that:
“I think most of the girls that we all know are ...how can I put this... not adequate enough, they play golf but are not adequate- they don’t feel themselves adequate enough to spend money on a golf holiday. I don’t think we know enough ladies that play golf at a standard where they feel comfortable.”

Drawing from this the issue of being ‘comfortable’ within the group perhaps offers a useful insight. Significantly ALANA debated her discomfort with single-sex groups when stating that for her:

“The ideal scenario would be a mixed group. I just think that ladies, if they are not necessarily my friends can just sometimes be a little bit, I’d just say a little bit bitchy, where guys are a little bit more laid back about it but then again they are so bloody focused and that could take me the other way.”

EILEEN spoke of her husband’s lack of comfort with other men golfers due to his own lack of skill, leading to her frequently taking women-only trips. How players respond in mixed-sex/single-sex groups was questioned in cycle one (QE5) and clearly there are different dynamics at work in these groups. Avoiding potentially disharmonious groups highlights the role played by the group formation process, ultimately influencing the overall holiday experience (Fairley and Tyler, 2009).

KENNETH, ALEXANDER and EILEEN all suggested that mixed-sex groups tended to be couples travelling with other golfing couples. There were also occasional suggestions that each round of golf played grouped the holidaymakers into mixed-sex teams. The dynamic of such groups are therefore likely to be influenced by how well each couple knows other members of the travel group. Cycle one data also highlighted whether playing with a relationship partner would influence the overall experience (section 4.2.2.3). This was further examined in cycle two but appeared to have minimal direct effect on the overall golf tourist behaviour or decision making for destination selection.

The benefits of single-sex groups was questioned (QE6) and the use of single-sex trips as an escape was evidenced in the data. Literature (debated in section 3.2.1) identified ‘escape’ as an influential motivation and in cycle one STEVEN and CHARLES both suggested that golf trips were seen as an ‘escape for the lads’, away from the role of husband and father. Similarly in cycle two data, EILEEN suggested that on her women-only trips the group would have dinner, then sit in the bar drinking and chatting. She asserted that “some of the ladies who are out away from husbands and children, having been let of the leash as it were, may be a little more rowdy in the evening”. KENNETH highlighted his experience of single-sex trips was “16 lads on a jolly for a
week. So golf every day, obviously a fair amount to drink”. However, he identified that this group trip had ‘fizzled out’, replaced by a trip in which he and his wife joined five other couples. He noted that the trip differed in terms of:

“the amount of alcohol being consumed - because obviously with the lads one there was a lot of alcohol involved. After golf it would be into the bars and drinking and drinking, whereas now the mixed golf, we sit round the pool and have lunch, we relax and then we go out for a meal in the evenings. But the emphasis is not on the alcohol.”

Emerging from this is assertion that the norms of behaviour associated with single-sex trips differ from that of mixed-sex trips.

Like most sports, participating in golf trips is driven in part by the opportunity it affords for social interaction (Allender et al., 2006). TOMMY highlighted that participating in the PEGS golf society meant he had got to know new people as well as developing friendships with acquaintances. REX highlighted that the “opportunity for social intercourse when you’re playing a round of golf is one thing that attracts many people to the sport” while MARGARET recalled that by participating each year in a golf competition she:

“met the same people often and made lots of friends, people we had kept in touch with for years and years. And you met up there and you just had really good times. You know, after the golf, you are not on the golf course all the time, are you, so the people around you are very important.”

Interaction with others was described by STEVEN as camaraderie and was present within the group but also could develop with strangers who were playing the same course, through the opportunity to chat with others before and after the round of golf. Similarly EILEEN recounted:

“We were touring [South Africa] but we stopped at Sun City and so I asked in the pro-shop there and they fixed me up with somebody – a lady member and very kindly she got another lady member to lend me clubs and shoes – so I didn’t have to pay out for clubs and shoes and I had a really, really enjoyable time. And then they came and joined us for dinner in the evening so that was really nice. I went out to a course and there was another young man arrived at the same time to play and he didn’t mind going out with an older woman at all so we had a really enjoyable game. I think the thing about golf it is a leveller in some ways. It’s a delight to talk to people and appreciate each other’s game. I think golfers accommodate golfers, whatever your standard.”

In his seminal work on social capital and sport, Tonts (2005) highlights the role that sport plays in stimulating social interaction, thus enhancing well-being. This interaction has the potential to develop golfing capital (the concept was introduced in section 3.5, discussed in cycle one data (section 4.2.3.4) and is developed further in section 5.2.5). The common interest provided by the sport can stimulate interaction. MAC noted that:
“You are at the bar and [other players] might recognise a logo or emblem on your clothing or on bag or something and that will immediately start a conversation. A home member of a club will always ask your opinion on how you found the golf course. They always want to know other people’s opinions on their golf course. And then, secondly they will always want to know where you have come from, and where you play and things like that.”

However, while interaction with others is often welcomed, there are negative experiences of such interactions. ALEXANDER discussed the difficulties of being paired with other golfers on holiday and playing a round of golf [which could last four hours or more] when a common language is not spoken while both HARLEY and STEVEN recounted times when local golfers were rude or unhelpful, marring their experience of the course.

In summary the opportunity for social interaction with others in the group is significant and golf tourism provide a more easily justifiable opportunity for groups of friends to interact together. However affinities between golfers may need to exist for social interaction to effectively develop.

5.2.4 The use of intermediaries

For all golf tourism trips, whether it is a golf break for a large group, a family holiday which may include a round of golf, or an individual travelling to a golf competition, a decision is made regarding how the trip elements are booked. This may make the use of intermediaries such as travel agents or tour operators (TAs/TOs) or maybe be arranged directly with the principal supplier (such as the airline, hotel or golf course). The role of the golf tourism industry was discussed in section 4.2.6 and through analysis of cycle two data, it seems that the booking process, in association with trip cost, influences choice of both trip destination and the courses played.

Associated with the trip booking process is a set of expectations and assessments made regarding the choice of destination (Clift and Ryan, 2002) informed by information gathered from a variety of sources. From the data, it seems that the choice of course is influenced by the recommendations of others (including the intermediaries involved in packaging golf trips). ADAM mentioned that while looking at information provided on the internet was helpful many of their decisions were based on word-of-mouth recommendations, primarily from group members having played the course before. He also noted that recommendations from other golfers were influential. The importance of word-of-mouth recommendations was introduced in
section 4.2.4.1.1 and is supported by literature which asserts that travellers make use of “informal information sources that can be considered more trustworthy” (Bieger and Laesser, 2004, p369) in order to reduce risk in trip decisions.

In looking at short breaks, particularly in the UK, some players book directly with golf hotels, usually by phone. Focus was on those hotel chains which operate their own golf courses, thus offering dedicated golf packages (such as Best Western, Marriott and Devere). JEREMY noted his use of the tour operator Golfbreaks.com for his UK trips while STEVEN stated that, although his friends often used the same company, “I actually much prefer taking the time to do a bit more research and set it out myself because I don’t think you save that much money with those guys at all”. The use of intermediaries was raised in QE22 and further data analysis suggests that overseas trips are, either in full or in part, more likely to involve a tour operator. Travellers expect the complexity of travel decisions to be simplified through the use of travel agents or tour operators (Clift and Ryan, 2002). This is confirmed by ADAM who suggested they used a tour operator “because it was abroad, it just saved a bit of hassle. The ones in this country we would do ourselves. Definitely”. Although some players used intermediaries to arrange their overseas trips, including booked tee times, others asked intermediaries to make transport and accommodation arrangements only, booking golf themselves once were in resort. The interview with ALANA noted her expectation to play golf but her desire to avoid planning golf schedules in advance.

“When we play golf on holiday, we specifically book a golf holiday. We don’t go to a place where we could play golf if we fancied it, if we are going on holiday then we are going to play golf... When we went to the Grenadines it wasn’t peak season so we knew it would be quite quiet. Because we don’t like to project plan everything, we just like to rock up when we want to play. So that was another reason why we picked some of these places.”

This desire to be flexible in scheduling golf arrangements was also relevant for EILEEN, who announced that on arrival at their destination in Florida the group would visit the local tourist office, pick up golf brochures, investigate new courses, discounts and then make a decision about the courses to be played. EILEEN also noted that previous visits to the area meant that at least one course, which they liked from previous encounters, would be revisited each trip. RYAN suggested his prior experience of a destination would mean they would make their own arrangements, although he did also make use of the golf booking service his hotel offered, due to the discounts this would bring.
Literature has explored the travel decision making behaviour, particularly in regards to destination selection (Um and Crompton, 1990, Woodside and Lysonski, 1989, Woodside and Dubelaar, 2002) but only limited attention (Shaw et al., 2005) has been give to the impact of the trip organiser on these aspects. For group trips, determining who will be the organiser highlights some interesting issues. ALEXEANDER recounted that in his group of four couples they took it in turns to organise the trip, which regularly visited North Wales.

“It [was our turn] but we didn’t actually organise it in the end because I guess we are a bit more laid back and by the time that we were thinking about organising it I think the rest of them thought it should have all been sorted and began to panic a bit and so they took it over, I mean quite amicably so we never actually organised it. I am sure our turn will come again.”

This suggests that having arrangements confirmed in advance is important for some travellers. Such advance planning provides something to look forward to, as well as bring peace of mind that preferences are met.

Rotation of the organiser was noted by ADAM, who asserted that the winner of the trophy the previous year was required to organise the trip, although others would assist. This contrasts with the experiences of RAY and EILEEN, who both identify a specific organiser within their travel groups. TOMMY also recounted that he and a friend had taken over from the regular organiser, who couldn’t make the trip due to family issues. TOMMY then recounted, with some humour, that the choices they made were particularly beneficial to him. The influence of the organiser on destination and course choice was also noted by RYAN, who commented that “it is partly dependant on who’s organising it, if somebody else is organising it they probably have got a pretty good idea of where they want to go”.

Of the two different trips discussed by PAMELA both were organised by her friends and family, confirming that “I haven’t really got involved, I have left it into his hands and we will just go where he has organised it”. "The travel experience for the group participant is made simpler and many of the complexities of tourist travel are removed by their delegation of the organisation to a trustworthy member of the social network" (Shaw et al., 2005, p9). Accepting the decisions of others, and placing trust in the hands of the organiser means that many players may make little, if any, direct contribution to the course or destination selection. However, several research participants suggested that during a trip destinations and courses for future excursion will be discussed, allowing the organiser to have a narrowed field to work with. This
supports Shaw et al.'s (2005) assertion that the trip organiser will gather information from within the group to facilitate trip planning.

5.2.4.1 Trip spend

Research confirms that travel knowledge and access to low fares are significant factors in deciding to book through travel agents (Wolfe et al., 2004, Heung and Chu, 2000). Furthermore intermediaries can provide convenient access to a wide variety of products and services, while reducing the number of contacts required with the suppliers (Palmer and McCole, 1999). Where trust in the intermediary is lacking, duplication of contact may occur. Comparing intermediary prices with the cost of paying the course directly is not uncommon and GAIL specifically suggested that getting suggestions and prices from an intermediary narrowed her choices after which she contacted the hotel and course directly to see if better prices could be obtained. For EILEEN the booking process involved the use of a local intermediary, because they could offer discounted prices. When asked about choosing her last golf trip ALANA suggested that:

“Oh, we really cheated. When we went to all those three, we [contacted] British Airways Holidays and we just said to them ‘right we want a top quality golf and spa hotel in the sun’. And you, find out when you look for ‘luxury golf and spa in the sun’, there aren’t actually that many that have spa, if we said we want to go the Caribbean, golf and spa, these dates, with flight availability that is, how Barbados came up really.”

ALANA explained that using British Airways was a requirement because they had flight vouchers which meant the overall cost of the trip could be reduced. From this it highlights that factors unrelated to golf come into play and the use of intermediaries can determine what choices are considered. It also highlights the significance of overall cost on the decision making process. This was identified a theme in cycle one and has been clarified further through the data constructed in cycle two.

In cycle one (section 4.2.4.3.4) the influence of trip cost was explored. Specifically QE19 questioned whether cost (or value for money) would impact the decision to visit. In cycle two data several players reported that rising costs influenced choice of holiday destination. Relative increases in prices are known to impact market share (Dwyer et al., 2000) diverting demand to competitor destinations. While ALEXANDER recalled that an increase in price for the package they usually purchased meant altered plans, the recession and job losses of 2008 were offered as reason why NATHAN’s group looked to a UK destination rather than Portugal and KENNETH stated that the increase in prices of golf trolley hire, meals and drinks encouraged his group's
move from Portugal to Turkey as a golf holiday destination. While the cost of these non-golf elements clearly does matter, ADAM was more accepting of this, suggesting that all elements it must be considered as part of the entire trip cost and must be budgeted for accordingly.

“Le Touquet [NR13] is quite an expensive place. I found it quite expensive, the drinks were expensive, the food was expensive. It didn’t put a dampener on it, it just made us think ‘oo this is a bit dear’. It didn’t ruin it for us, but we knew that we were going out and I went to the bar in the hotel and ordered two beers and we got two pints and that was €16 which worked out to virtually £8 a pint. So you think that’s a bit steep but I had already paid for it, couldn’t ask her to put it back, you never normally pay £8 – I think it is the first time I paid £8 for a pint of beer. I don’t think it would make a difference - again if we chose to go back to France which we might do, I don’t think that would make too much difference. You know what it is going to be, you know how much it is going to cost and you budget for it. I think if we were going for a week then it would be a bit more difficult, I wouldn’t be able to afford to do that for seven days, going out and spending that sort of money. But it was only for two days.”

Establishing a total budget for the trip was also noted by RAY, who suggested that he identifies an expected level of spend and providing that the group is having a good time and that he does not exceed this cost, he considers the trip good value. Maximising utility in balance with budgetary restrictions influences consumption decisions, particularly in regard to destination choice (Barros et al., 2010). Significantly his group recently moved their annual trip from France to the UK because the former was perceived as becoming an overly expensive destination. Clearly price sensitivity is influenced by the substitutability of destinations (Lo and Lam, 2004), with places that offer unique golf experiences being buffered against price pressures.

The total cost of the trip appears to be more significant than the individual elements of the trip (such as course costs, accommodation costs and travel costs). RAY noted that their package price included food, accommodation and golf so there was no attempt to attribute cost to each element to establish the value. No players even hinted at a possibility of off-setting high-cost courses with cheaper ones in the package, although this may well covertly occur when intermediaries play a role in package the overall trip. ALEXANDER noted that:

“We bought a package through 3D Golf, or Bill Goff, where they offer five rounds of golf with a hotel, and they then say it is a round on each of these. I am pretty sure you could probably change but we haven’t bothered. So it is not a matter of choosing them particularly it is just that those are the five that come up on the packages.”

Significantly ALANA announced that purchasing a package which included golf meant she was less perturbed if she was playing the course poorly:
“I like going to golf courses, actually this is important, that are all-inclusive because often when you find out green fees are, say about £75 or £100 or whatever, I find that more painful, if you are having a bad game, than if I know I have already paid, let’s say it’s a grand for your holiday, and you can play as much golf as you want. That doesn’t bother me as much.”

Several golfers commented on their use of specialist golf tour operators when arranging trips. KENNETH highlighted his apprehension in using a company he had not tried before (following recommendations from friends). Particularly his responsibility for organising the group trip meant he considered the sums of money involved were large which gave him “slight concerns”. Knowing (and trusting) the tour operator or travel agent is key (Crotts and Turner, 1999, Carey et al., 1997). MARGARET identified her use of a company because she knew the owner, while JEREMY used Golfbreaks.com, a well-established brand. For groups using intermediaries was seen to be more likely because it ensured that a price for a package of golf, accommodation (and sometimes flights) was clear to all golfers travelling, which EILEEN suggested made it easier to organize.

In summary the use of travel intermediaries in the booking process is significant because some intermediaries influence destination and course choice through recommendations and packaging. Although perceptions vary regarding whether intermediaries provide value for money, they are used to provide a transparency in trip costs, particularly significant for group trips.

5.2.5 Developing Golfing Capital

In chapter three the concept of golfing capital was explained (section 3.5). This draws on the ideas underpinning social and cultural capital developed by Bourdieu (1984) to conclude that golfing capital may bring a range of benefits (including enhanced social status, extended golfing knowledge, cultural awareness and networks, and skill development) achieved as an outcome of being part of a golfing realm. Gaining golfing capital may be an outcome of participation in golf tourism, regardless of whether this is directly sought by the player. Cycle one data acknowledged the influence of different aspects of golfing culture on golfer behaviour (section 4.2.3) and further analysis has clarified the significance of golfing capital on trip planning, destination selection and golfer behaviour.
As well as making use of intermediaries (discussed in section 5.2.4) golfers also draw on the information and experience held by other golfers when planning trips. Cycle one data highlighted the role of the golfing community in offering recommendations on places to play (section 4.2.4.1.1). CHARLES identified that recommendations could come from a wider network, including internet reviews, and in cycle two data EILEEN identified the use of local golf specialists to provide course recommendations. However, while discussing golf experiences with others was a common activity, and players suggested they listened to recommendations, few seemed to act on those recommendations directly, moreover it seems that recommendations are used to confirm the player’s already-held decision to select a particular course. Recommendations are more likely to be acted upon when they come from a member of the group or a person who is ‘trusted’, with that trust coming as a result of being highly skilled (low handicap) or being like-minded in golfing attitude. In cycle one RYAN recalled accepting an invite to play a course because several friends had played the course and recommended it. Cycle two data reinforced this, with KENNETH highlighting:

“It depends how well I know the person. If I have just a passing acquaintance I wouldn’t lend as much credence to that as somebody I knew quite well who gave me information. I’d tend to take more notice of the low handicap golfer than the high handicap golfer.”

The idea of like-mindedness was questioned in chapter four (QE9) and, as is suggested above, this can influence the trust bestowed upon a player's opinion. Holding knowledge and experience of golf courses can add to golfing capital if this is valued or prized by others in the golfing network. Schuchat (1983) contends that some tourists find satisfaction in being with like-minded others while Ritchie et al (2004) argue that being among like-minded people can increase the sense of community experienced which, in turn, can provide opportunities to enhance golfing capital. Communities which value such knowledge may be experienced both in the holiday and in the home environment. However in terms of trust ALEXANDER suggested that recommendations are more likely to help him select a region or resort, rather than individual courses. Therefore recommendations shape destination selection and may play an influential role in course choice.

Membership of a golf club was held by 16 of the twenty research participants but the level of involvement in their own club varied. For example GAIL, EILEEN and MARGARET talked frequently about playing (and travelling with) other ladies in their club, while PAMELA stated that she only played with a couple of friends (they decide to join the club together). Similarly RYAN also noted that he preferred to play with his close friends rather than other members of
the club (section 4.2.3.1). ALEXANDER and GAIL, KENNETH and ALANA all highlighted that they had chosen to take a golf trip with a group of golfers who they met through the golf club. Historically golf club membership provides, among other things, an officially recognised handicap (a certificate identifying a player’s handicap was often required to play other courses). However, now such handicap certificates can be obtained through other means (for example online golf clubs which chart player scores and issue certificates). In addition to this many courses in the UK do not require players to hold a certificate in order to play. It is possible to conclude, therefore, that although club membership has the potential to develop golfing capital (expanding networks and providing recognised certification) the reality is that this may be limited by levels of involvement in club activities and reduced demand for the qualification it affords.

Golfing capital can be gauged by the status afforded to an individual within a golfing community, who determine capital value in the player’s experience, knowledge, skill and golfing network. Enhancing golfing capital was evident in some of the experiences recounted. For example, ADAM confirmed that opportunities to reveal his experience to others were important to him:

“Sometimes you hear people talk about the fact that they’re going away and it’s quite nice if you hear someone who says ‘oh yea we are going to France’ and rather than you sit there and not be able to say anything you say, ‘oh I went to France and we played such and such’ and then you can get into conversation and chat to them.”

HARLEY suggested it was nice to be able to mention some of the highly ranked courses he had played, and felt that such discussions were used to help make judgements about whether players had things in common (like-mindedness beyond being golfers). QE10 questioned whether playing well-known or highly ranked courses could aid entry into a golfing network and infer golfing capital. While there is some evidence that networks may be developed, golfing capital may not always be inferred through playing renowned or ranked courses. For example, KENNETH specifically confirmed that playing well-reputed courses did not in and of itself increase status, because many players travelled to experience different courses. Even playing exclusive courses such as Augusta National [WR5] (home to the Masters competition and accessible only by invite) did not, in his perspective, necessarily endow a player with status or increased standing within a golfing community.

“I know somebody who has played Augusta [WR5]. Now I think of all the courses in the world if I got the opportunity to play I would love to play Augusta. But it doesn’t really mean greater standing as such, it just means he’s a lucky bugger to have the opportunity to play it.” (KENNETH)
However, KENNETH did suggest that experiencing courses where golf professionals are known to play top competitions was seen as valuable. Furthermore MARGARET confirmed that although she had played in the British Amateur Open (a national competition for women), she believed few of her fellow club members would be impressed by this, thus it offered little to enhance her own golfing status. This contrasts with literature which suggests that leisure activities which require greater investment translate into greater benefits in terms of capital (Beedie and Hudson, 2003). Thus the extent to which capital can be gained through experiencing reputed courses is unclear.

Reporting experiences of playing different courses were common with judgements, based on how signature holes were played, made about player performance (and inferred from this an assessment of skill level). Experiences require an individual to interpret and reflect on the moment, in context to their own self, to achieve an internal recounting (Wright et al., 2005) which is often supported by a recounting to others, which further aids evaluation of the experience. Several players (JEREMY, RYAN, GAIL, KENNETH and TOMMY) also discussed the bantering which goes on (explained in section 4.2.3.2), and its role in making judgements about player skill. Reporting experiences is expected to influence future destination choice and RAY suggested that:

“I think that it is a shared passion, if the people you normally play with know you have been away, when you come back the first thing they want to know about you is what was it like? What were the courses like? What was the hotel like? What was the food, the deal - is it worth going again? Is it something that you would persuade them or something they may be interested in so you always recount your experiences.”

Thus recounting the trip experience displays player knowledge of the destination but also means that the golfer can influence destinations chosen in the future by friends and acquaintances. Significantly when asked about recounting experiences MAC confirmed that he "would and I presume that other golfers would be the same way, it completes the experience and if the roles were reversed I definitely would want to hear about someone else’s holiday." Thus discussing golf trips once the player has returned home is a significant part of the overall golf tourism experience, and influences the future actions of their golfing community.

Taking golfing trips was also considered advantageous to maintaining networks. Participating in regular trips with the same group of people is driven by the desire to stay in contact with friends. NATHAN asserted:
“If we didn’t have [our golf society] then a lot of us would have gone our separate ways. For example most of these guys live out Essex way – I am down in Bournemouth. The only time I actually get to see them are through the golf. That is why the golf events are important to me, because its chance to meet up with them on a fairly regular basis.”

Similarly MARGARET confirmed that she attended annual golf festivals because it provided a convenient opportunity to “meet the same people often”. One outcome of this regular attendance is the opportunity to share memories. ADAM declared that by looking back at past trips, recalling experiencing and special moments, friendships were strengthened.

In cycle one, the development of golfing capital as a means of enhancing work opportunities was noted (section 4.2.3.4). This was reinforced in the cycle two data. More than just providing opportunities to play with work colleagues, being part of a golfing network enhances the depth of work relationships. NATHAN declared:

“I talk to a number of people at work and I probably have a better relationship with those where I am able to share - we all play golf for example and I know some of them go off and do their own golfing trips with their own society. So we swap stories.”

Literature (Warde et al., 2005) confirms that recreational practices can promote trust which in turn enhances networks and relationships. Thus golfing capital is developed, enhancing networks and increasing status, certification and work opportunities. These help to provide additional justification for the efforts made in negotiating time to take a golf trip and the choices made in regard to course and destination selection.

5.2.6 The destination

Cycle one explored a variety of aspects linked to the destination and course. Discussions considered the golf facilities (section 4.2.2.4), the course and clubhouse (section 4.2.4.1) and the role of support facilities such as accommodation and catering (section 4.2.4.2). Cycle two data has further refined the influences that destination characteristics have on both golfer behaviour and destination selection.

Data in cycle one acknowledged that holiday courses are often championship courses and are thus perceived as more complex. The concept of ‘championship status’ is not formally defined and is used informally to denote a course deemed to be of the highest challenge and quality. The PGA (which regulates golf in the USA and Mexico) asserts that the decision to be consider a championship course is ultimately decided by the course (Quinn, 2012) while the R&A (which
regulates golf in 126 countries across the globe) confirms the term is used ‘liberally, and generally when courses have staged events of national or international status’ (Weir, 2012). To appreciate this concept further it is useful to examine the description offered by ADAM when talking about the courses his golf group liked to play.

“Well it has got to be in good condition, a hard course. We want tight courses, hard ones, water, trees, features. Championship golf courses, really. The ones we played this time were pretty much like that, you would expect to see tour - perhaps not the European Tour courses but close to it.”

Thus championship courses are likely to be highly ranked, perceived to offer high quality and a greater challenge. CHARLES noted that many courses played on vacation are championship courses, thus are more difficult than the courses played on a regular basis by most golfers at home and this was confirmed by KENNETH, when justifying why his golf scores were poorer when playing on holiday. This was also supported by MICHAEL who sought out championship courses and those with a good reputation. Significantly RYAN mentioned that he would expect to play championship courses when on holiday but he describes the course he is a member of as ‘terrible but convenient’. This highlights the compromises made in everyday life verses the efforts made to play perceived higher quality courses when on vacation. This suggests that golf trips can provide the time and possibly justification for spending the money needed to experience courses which are perceived as higher quality and possibly of higher rank and status.

Not all golfers felt that playing championship courses was important when selecting where to play. REX highlighted that such courses might prove too challenging (and too expensive) for him to enjoy, while ALEXANDER suggested that:

“If somebody says ‘you must play this course, it is a beautiful course’ then we would say ‘well, that goes on our list’. If it was a beautiful course that would be much more important than if somebody were to say ‘this is a great championship course, it is really challenging and so on’ that sort of reputation really does not appeal now.”

Similarly EILEEN also suggested that the condition of the course was more important than whether it was considered to be of championship status. RAY suggested his group didn’t just look at championship courses but did look for “a decent standard of course”. Occasionally research participants discussed playing courses using the ‘championship tees’ (which ensures the full length of the course is used). Both ADAM and TOMMY discussed the implications of this action on the higher handicap golfers, who then struggled to enjoy the experience.
QE17 questioned the influence of factors such as climate, access and course variety on destination choice. It is evident from the analysis that destination selection is influenced by a variety of factors - which have been grouped into six themes:

1. Climatic factors
2. Logistics
3. Supporting facilities and amenities (for golfers and non-golfers)
4. Frequency of play
5. Course choice
6. Reputation

Research of factors influencing destination choice (KPMG Golf Business Community, 2013b, p4) reveals that price of the package, quality of the course, accessibility, quality of the accommodation and climate are all considered important by the golfer. Furthermore, data gathered from UK golfers (Sports Marketing Surveys Inc., 2011, p4) notes that 51% of players considered travel time and convenient proximity to bars and restaurants as important while 67% considered variety of courses to be important. However the data revealed that reputation in terms of playing 'trophy courses' was important for 31% of players but not important for 36% of players. This suggest that the significance of reputation reaches beyond the direct renown of the course and must be explored in its widest sense.

5.2.6.1 Climatic factors

The chance to play in better climatic conditions is influential. Repeatedly this was noted: “just to get some decent weather” (ALEXANDER); “the reliability of the weather” (ALANA); “It’s lovely weather, you are relaxed” (EILEEN); “We always try and choose somewhere where it is likely to be reasonably warm” (GAIL); "I am influenced primarily by cost and by climate” (HARLEY); “There are a number of things which drive our decision of where to go. Weather. The difficulty of the course...” (NATHAN). This is not surprising for an outdoor sport. Smith (1993, p398) asserts that it is "self-evident that tourism is dependent on weather and climate", thus this needs little further clarification.
5.2.6.2 Logistics

In terms of logistics, research participants noted the growing cost of taking golf clubs on flights, as well as the inconvenience of travelling with clubs. Travelling with heavy of oversized luggage such as golf clubs can impact travel decisions (Aarts et al., 1997) and. ALANA stated that she would take clubs with her on trips where golf was not the main purpose providing there was the time and the places to play during the trip. Both STEVEN and JEREMY suggested that travelling with clubs was problematic because it was ‘hassle’ getting to and from airports (section 4.2.4.3.2).

For shorter breaks the ability to reach the destination within an acceptable drive-time is also significant. Distance and cost to travel to a destination is known to constrain tourism (Nyaupane and Andereck, 2008) and the concept of distance decay suggests that “destinations located in close proximity to source markets should have an inherent advantage over more distant destinations” (McKercher et al., 2008, p208). ALEXANDER stated that “we wouldn’t really travel much, or drive more than three hours. Yes. If it was just a one nighter – three hours.” TOMMY noted that the players in his group were spread across London, the Home Counties and East Anglia and consequently they selected destinations no more than two hours drive of everybody. RAY summed up the issue:

“If you are only going two hours down the road you can leave on a Friday morning and you can still play on a Friday afternoon. If somebody was to drive up to Scotland it would take you all day to drive there and it would take you all day to drive back, so consequently you would be losing two day’s worth of golf potentially.”

Significantly STEVEN noted that being too close to home would be problematic, thus he ruled out taking an overnight trip to courses in a neighbouring county. The recent growth of interest in staycations – where holidaying at, or close to home to enjoy local amenities and lower total costs (Alban, 2008) - is here refuted by the desire of some golfers to escape the usual home environment (Beard and Ragheb, 1983, Iso-Ahola, 1983). ALANA also stated that “we like to actually get away so it’s not just a two-hour flight, we like to literally get away” while RAY suggested the need for ‘foreign soil’ to feel further away even when the time taken or distance travelled to reach the destination may not be as great as some domestic destinations. KENNETH also highlighted that the proximity of courses to accommodation enhanced the overall trip experience.
“I chose purely on the fact that we heard that all the hotels were great, all the courses were great so okay, you have got 10 hotels and 20 courses how do you choose them? So we chose it primarily on the fact that we wouldn’t have to get on buses to go from the hotel to the course, that we could walk from our rooms to the first tee.” (KENNETH)

Similarly ADAM suggested that when selecting courses they aimed to drive only 15-20 minutes. EILEEN suggests that in her experience of France and the USA the group selected courses in a 30 mile radius of their accommodation. NATHAN and HARLEY highlighted that generally their journeys to courses would be no more than 45 minutes, although HARLEY did suggest that if he, and others in his group, believed a course was exceptional they would consider a journey time of up to 85 minutes. Course availability and accessibility is known to influence destination selection (Kim and Ritchie, 2010) thus the range of courses in an area can encourage groups to pick one destination ahead of others.

Balancing the courses played during each trip was suggested by STEVEN in cycle one and data in cycle two clarified this. For instance KENNETH stated that during a recent trip to Penina [NR16] they only played the championship course because the second course was a ‘much lesser course” Another factor, highlighted by ALANA, was the ability to compare rounds when playing the same course more than once. Although she concluded that she may well alternate between courses she also noted:

“We like to practice, and it’s nice to get to know a course and feel that you are improving, like when we went to Mauritius recently, it was good to get five cards off each course and try and think ‘what affected us that day? Was it the weather, was it this, was it that, was it the booze we had the night before?’ We quite like reviewing our games.”

The chance to make comparisons and chart progress is perhaps more significant for those players with a serious leisure perspective, or who are newer to the game, when scores are more erratic compared to handicap. The novice golfer may also have less experience of courses and thus wish to identify factors which impact their rounds whereas more experienced golfers are likely to have an existing awareness of the factors affecting their own game.
5.2.6.3 Supporting Facilities

Facilities and amenities in the area are also critical factors when selecting the destination and cycle one data recognised that food, drink and accommodation are key destination attributes (section 4.2.4.2.1). Accommodation decisions are frequently a balance between price, convenient location and quality (Pizam and Mansfeld, 1999). Cycle two data further supported this, as ALANA highlighted:

“We tend to chose places with a spa – we work ridiculous hours, so when we go on holiday we splash out a lot of money on holiday so that we can play good golf, know we are going to get weather, have a spa treatment every now and again, have a nice restaurant.”

Hotel facilities were also important to GAIL, who asserted that “if we had bad or very mediocre food somewhere we would probably opt not to go again, even if the course was reasonably good” because this affected her overall experience. Significantly her husband, ALEXANDER, stated that “Even if it were a good hotel, if the course was boring we wouldn’t go back”. This suggests that all elements of the trip must meet expectations of all members of the travel party.

REX acknowledged that he chose the destination by finding prize-winning hotels with good food, only looking at the courses available once the accommodation had been chosen. Successful destinations require levels of appropriate accommodation (Higham, 2009) and convenient accommodation was frequently valued by the golfers in this study. Specifically TOMMY and JEREMY both enthused about hotels with golf courses on-site while MAC appreciated the ability to walk to the course “two minutes down the street” from his accommodation.

As highlighted in section 5.2.1.2 the changing lifestage for ADAM meant the supporting facilities required by his travel group had also changed. He commented that:

“Well when we were younger and single then you would go somewhere where you knew there would be women around and try and perhaps pick up a girl, or do what whatever blokes do when they do that stuff, but we are all grown up and most of us have got kids and families and stuff now. We still want to go and have a good time but now it’s like ‘let’s go and find a good restaurant’. We will sit in there for a few hours and drink wine and have a good laugh and maybe find a bar or something for a couple of pints and that’s it really. Not so much the nightclubs that we used to do and staying out to 5 in the morning.”

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KENNETH was able to contrast his experience of the ‘lads-group’ with that of the mixed-sex group to identify that for the couples sitting by the pool and having lunch, was an equal part of the experience while the all-male group would focus on the golf, the betting (on the golf matches being played) and the alcohol. He identified that “the main thing was to get to the bars and then worry about food later”. ADAM’s view of his single-sex group was clearly linked to drinking but also hints at more.

“In Dublin we went on a Thursday so we had a sort of tour, well not a tour – we just went around the pubs in the city and didn’t play golf on one of the days. Just to drink basically. But we have not been anywhere to tie in with looking at culture and stuff. I think we had an extra day when we went into Edinburgh – we went Thursday to Sunday again – we didn’t play golf on Saturday but we went and watched the FA Cup Final and we just sat in the bar drinking all day. Not really cultural stuff, not visiting museums or anything like that.”

This is not considered by ADAM as ‘cultural activities’, yet does seem to be about experiencing local leisure spaces and making time to watch national sporting events. The decision to take time away from the golf course at these two locations is interesting, because these cities have reputations which hint at extensive social opportunities and his discussions of ‘tours’ and sporting events hint at a structured day.

ALEXANDER also suggested that, by choice, he would “go down the villages and eat in different restaurants” rather than eat in the hotel. It seems that food is significant for groups including women, rather than men-only groups. When describing golf trips with his wife RYAN noted that:

“We go quite often on holiday to Quinta de Lago [NR11] in Portugal. Loads of golf courses there. So that fits our desires perfectly because it’s a great place to go on holiday there’s a nice beach, there’s nice restaurants good food, sun, tennis etc. and also golf that’s decent.”

This desire to make use of a variety of facilities suggests that the destination is constructed as an amalgamation of golf, hospitality, leisure and other attractions which, combined, create destination appeal.
5.2.6.4 Frequency of playing golf

One factor constructed from the data is the amount of golf to be played (section 4.2.5.1), whereby for short breaks, where golf was the main reason for the trip, golf would be played every day. To justify this MAC advised that:

“it’s probably because you are there for such a short period of time you would probably want to try and play as much golf as possible. So when I went to Marbella for 3 days we played 4 rounds of golf. Which was actually quite a lot.”

The number of rounds played on longer trips was less clearly determined. From analysis it seems that when golf is a main reason for the trip most days will include golf, perhaps taking only one or two ‘rest days’. For trips where other reasons predominate then golf may only occur a few times, perhaps once every other day. For example ALEXANDER highlighted on a week’s golfing holiday he and his wife would play five times, using the other two days to walk (another of their hobbies) while ALANA suggested that she and her husband would take 10-day golf trips and expect to play nine rounds. Contrasting this EILEEN suggested that her women-only trip to Florida would include three rounds in seven days, using the rest of the time to “sit by the pool, read, shop”. The opportunity to shop is seen as an important part of the trip, including the chance to shop before and after playing golf. She frequently mentions the opportunity to purchase golf clothing, from golf course pro-shops and at shopping malls with ‘immense golf shops’. When the trip is not seen as primarily a golf holiday, and other family members are presented, then frequency of play may be as low as one or possibly two rounds (JEREMY). Participation frequency can be influenced by constraints and the ability to overcome these through negotiation can ultimately strengthen enthusiasm to participate (Gilbert and Hudson, 2000).

Fitting golf into the trip schedule demonstrates useful insights. Weed and Bull (2009) acknowledge that sports tourism behaviours exist alongside other tourism and non-tourism behaviours which occur during a trip, implying that non-golf activities will occur. It is the extent of golf, in relation to other behaviours that determine the trip schedule. Some research participants suggest that if golf is the dominant reason for the trip playing will leave little time for other tourism behaviours, while others suggest that golf can be fitted around other activities. This is perhaps best summed up by ALANA’s view:
“We try and play in the morning so that we have got the afternoon free. We would go and do watersports, I suppose, around the hotel. We might go on a boat trip around the island, go and see main cities, but say we were going for 10 days we would probably only take one full day out, the ideal scenario is we would rather just get up, play golf, have lunch and chill on the beach. So we would try and make an effort to see some of the local things but normally we don’t really leave the resort very much.”

This suggests that in some cases golf dominates plans and while there is a pressure to consider tourist trips in fact limited effort to do other things is generally made. QE14 questioned the use of touristic facilities during golf trips and the frequency of playing golf while on holiday becomes particularly significant when considering these alternative activities. KENNETH states:

“On our day off we used to go in Penina, we used to go in Portimao and have a look round but not to go around churches or places of historical interest but basically to just get a feel for the place and look round the shops, have a meal out, whatever. All fairly relaxed.”

His choice of terminology ‘On our day off’ suggests that golf will shape the schedule for most days. Although many research participants suggested that they would expect to play most days, when on a golf trip, as the length of the trip extended so the likelihood of a ‘day off’ would increase. DEBBIE, STEVEN and KENNETH all suggested that a week’s holiday is likely to include 4-5 days playing golf. A full schedule was also noted by NATHAN, who asserted that the group he travelled with would be unlikely to visit local tourist attractions because:

“we just have not got time to fit in anything else. Where we have any extra time we would want to put in another round of golf rather than go and visit something. Although to be fair, that’s what we did more over 10 years ago, maybe that’s just us as a group getting older, So we ended up playing all day, late nights, up early and it just killed us. So over the latter years we just limit to one round per day... aim to tee-off mid afternoon so people can sleep in or go to the hotel pool and have a swim.”

The exercise from playing golf, coupled with the social activities off the course suggests that golf trips can be tiring. The extensive physical participation required, the social context and the lack of individual freedom to perhaps opt out can be discussed in terms of ‘antileisure’ (Gilbert and Hudson, 2000), limiting the benefits of taking golf trips as a relaxing or refreshing experience. Such a ‘serious’ level of commitment (Anderson and Taylor, 2010, Green and Jones, 2005) brings with it pressure to commit time and money to allow participation to occur.
5.2.6.5 Course choice

Having considered frequency of play in 5.2.6.4, this theme considers the choice of course. This is heavily influenced by “location, location, location” (GAIL). Ease of access directly influences a course’s ability to attract a local, regional or international market (Higham and Hinch, 2006). To avoid lengthy journeys the choice of courses will be determined from those in near proximity to the accommodation (acknowledging that accommodation may be selected for its proximity to a variety of courses) (QE13). ALEXANDER stated that historically he chose the destination first:

“and therefore the golf courses haven’t mattered that much, but having said that I think we probably have become just a little bit more selective in the last two or three years as we have played more places.”

This is similarly true for ADAM, who felt his group never focused on course first but did now pick ‘golf resorts’ which are renowned for having several courses in the vicinity.

Analysis of the data shows an expectation from ‘men-only’ trips that a different course will be played each day of the trip (with the occasional possibility that more than one round will be played daily when multiple courses exist at the same club). This is not so evidently the case for couples and mixed-sex groups where convenience of other factors can outweigh the desire to travel to different courses. For women-only groups while there is often an expectation that different courses will be played this appears to be far less of an imperative. The demand for variety in men-only groups is complex. For example RAY states:

“When we go to France we normally play at Le Tourquet [NR13], the main championship course, which is a very much a dunes course, a links course. And then we play at Hardelot [NR18] which is more parkland, incut through the pine trees. So they are two very different courses. So we would look for variety.”

In this case despite the claim for variety, the courses are revisited annually so, although each trip has variety, the same courses are selected annually and the courses are both quite highly ranked nationally, suggesting similarities in terms of likely quality and challenge. The desire for variety is asserted by many (ADAM, CHARLES, EILEEN, HAYDEN and NATHAN) and it is TOMMY who suggests the predictability of repeat visits can be problematic:

“we did [a trip in the New Forest] two years running, we have enjoyed it, now go somewhere different this time – I don’t see the point in keep on going back to the same course each time. You get to know the course, you know pretty much the type of room you are going to get. You know the type of meal you are going to get. All very good, don’t get me wrong, but I just think I like to try different things.”
Thus different courses and different destinations are sought to provide a sense of variety, which may come directly in terms of on-course experiences but can also be driven other factors. For example the physical landscape surrounding the course may have an impact. EILEEN commented that she likes courses to be picturesque, and tree-lined, an aspect also desired by GAIL. Similarly KENNETH frequently referred to course aesthetics and confirmed that “we don’t choose a course on its measure of difficulty but on its aesthetic value”. This contrasts with MAC’s view that he would select the ‘best courses’ using ranking charts and information about events hosted to help determine this. NATHAN balances these views when describing his search for good courses:

“What is the definition of a really good course? Well, I suppose a course that is both challenging, interesting, scenic.”

Courses are also expected to be in good condition and often provide specific features such as water and trees enhancing playing complexity. GAIL suggested a course was “a bit boring if it is very flat and there aren’t many trees, there aren’t many obstacles” (discussed in section 5.2.1.3).

Club facilities are also a factor. This was introduced in section 4.2.4 and recognises that players expect to find a restaurant, changing rooms and golf practice facilities adjacent to the course. Significantly several research participants stated that they expected these facilities to be available, although few choose to use them. HARLEY summed up his preferences by saying:

“a good destination for me is somewhere that is warm, not too busy, immaculate condition good facilities, practice facilities, big bar, place to eat and drink outside, restaurant which does a fairly decent standard of food, nothing too gourmet.”

Included in the perception of a good venue is the level of service provided in the clubhouse. It seems poor service may be perceived in cases where it is either under-attentive or over-attentive.
5.2.6.6 Reputation

The discussion at the beginning of this section (section 5.2.6) recognised the existence of well-reputed championship courses. The “conferring of repute is an attestation of worth or value whereby uniqueness is recognized” (Rodden, 2006) thus reputation can play a crucial role in buyer decision making as attempts are made to distinguish between different products. Reputation has become an important issue in tourism, with many countries and destinations increasingly giving greater attention to their own image and reputation (Claude and Zaccour, 2009, Van Ham, 2001, Pike, 2002). Issues related to reputation were introduced in section 4.2.4.1.1 and have been clarified through this analysis to assert that, in the case of golf tourism, holding a positive reputation is deemed influential, with factors such as the quality of the course, the layout, historical associations (when the course was established, for example), and hosting major tournaments, all influencing this. Moreover, destinations and courses hold layers of reputation (Humphreys, 2011) based on the interaction between component parts.

Geissler (2005) states that factors influencing destination choice include climate, course availability, perceived value for money, entertainment and an individual’s own vacation time constraints. This can play out in terms selecting courses for convenience. For example JEREMY observed:

“if there are two courses literally there, where you are going, you don’t have to do any travelling, great. You get variety basically without any hassle. If you are going for a little bit longer you tend then to want variety. If you are going for two or three days away, and it’s just yourself and your other half, well you’re not going to want to drive 15 minutes down the road to play a different course, you may as well just have everything where it is, at your hotel and straight onto the course.”

Such convenience may mean that courses are selected not on a single judgement of the golf reputation held but based on a wider perspective of the entire trip elements. Furthermore, controlled access to courses can create a reputation based on uniqueness or exclusivity. In cases where courses limit access to ‘members only’ or restrict the times when visitors can play the course, then the opportunity to play can provide the golfer with an experience that few others in their golfing community can achieve.

Reputation was highlighted by some research participants as being influential in their decision making process when deciding upon the destination to visit and the courses to play. CHARLES commented that:
“if you are choosing somewhere to go and if you just want to go and spend a long weekend and do something, go somewhere, it almost always comes from big reputation.”

Globally renowned courses can stimulate demand (Priestley, 2006) but, significantly, not all golfers saw highly reputed courses as a draw. ALEXANDER suggested that beautiful scenery was more important than whether the course had hosted major tournaments. Similarly STEVEN suggested that the reputation of the destination (in meeting his need for entertainment) was more significant than course reputation. Thus the desire to select well-reputed courses may be tempered by external factors. In this regard RYAN commented that:

“I would want to play a course that I regard as a good golf course. I wouldn’t really bother unless it was a course I liked and thought was going to be decent, but that said I wouldn’t travel miles on holiday […] because I’ve heard there’s a great golf course in [a distant town]. I am not that obsessed about it. I am not trying to tick off all the great golf courses of Europe. But that said, when it’s a choice between a championship course and the second or third course at a particular venue I would choose the championship course.”

Thus reputation is not in and of itself enough to determine all destination and course selection decisions.

The influence of reputation is coupled with that of word-of-mouth recommendations. ADAM suggested that courses which are renowned for hosting a major tournament or which have been recommended by friends are more likely to be considered than unknown courses. EILEEN also stated that courses which were played before and enjoyed were likely to be revisited on future trips. Recommendations also assisted KENNETH’s decision to arrange a golf trip to Turkey.

“People within the golf club who had been to Turkey had very good experiences and we were told it was very much an up-and-coming venue for golf. They were very into having golfers out there, and what finally did it, one of the group went with a group of lads last October and came back from the place we are going to and raved about it.”

Several research participants relied on recommendations from others to help them select courses to play. For example, DEBBIE used word-of-mouth recommendations from other tourists to select courses to play while on holiday in Turkey. Thus word-of-mouth promotion provides a stimulus to course choice specifically and destination selection generally. Significantly long-established courses may have more players with prior experience of the course to act as advocates, therefore newer courses may need to encourage golfer to try the course. This may be achieved by developing reputation through working with the media and opinion leaders to enhance awareness.
Finally, it is useful to consider the influence of marketing and other promotions on course selection. Few destinations work collaboratively to establish their reputation as a golf destination but there are some successes in this regard. For instance several Spanish Costa’s and Portugal’s Algarve have developed reputations as golfing destinations. Such locations provide visitors with access to a variety of courses, which can thus serve markets with differing demands. In their investigation of golf destination selection Jorge and Monteiro (2011) reveal that Portuguese golf resorts are perceived as having better reputations for hospitality and value, ahead of their Spanish counterparts, although they draw distinctions between dedicated golfers and holiday golfers.

5.3 Summary
Before providing a final analysis of this chapter comment on the three QE’s left unexplored by this chapter is offered (QE11, QE18 and QE20). The data developed in cycle two relevant to each of these areas offered little further insight in terms of higher-order theoretical understanding of the behaviour of the golf tourist and their selection of golf tourism destinations. Grounded theory methodology advocates that the move from open coding to focused or selective coding promotes a concentration on the core variables in order to produce a parsimonious theory (Glaser and Holton, 2007). Furthermore, in his discussion of grounded theory field research, Layder (1993a, p44) confirms the importance of focusing on "theoretically relevant data" over an examination of the full data set. Therefore these three QE’s have been disregarded in terms directing the next iteration of data. However, although the specific questions raised by the three QE’s will not explicitly direct future research the broad themes (competition, reputation and the influence of other golfers) are consider in future data collection and analysis because other categories address these areas.

In review this chapter presented key findings relevant to the aim of the thesis. This was developed from analysis of cycle two data and supported by use of both literature and cycle one data to ensure the conceptual categories identified are grounded.
In line with the aim of the research - to evaluate the relationships between golfer characteristics, golfer behaviours and destination selection - and through the process of theoretical coding and integrative diagramming (Urquhart, Charmaz, 2006) - the data suggests that there are four theoretical concepts which link golfer characteristics with the destination. These are (1) determining way the trip is constructed, (2) the emotional rewards to be gained from participating in golf tourism, (3) the costs of the trip and (4) course/destination reputation. Furthermore there are four substantive categories which act as domains or spheres of influence (Levine, 1972, Mir and Watson, 2001), shaping the design of the trip. These spheres of influence are (1) group dynamics, (2) the influence of competition and ability, (3) the use of intermediaries and (4) golfing capital.

Analysis suggests that the four spheres of influence variously interact with the four theoretical concepts to shape how golfers behave and how they choose destinations for golf tourism and figure 5.4 presents an integrative diagram to outline relationships between these theoretical concepts and spheres of influence. Charmaz (2006, p117) suggests that "diagramming can offer concrete images of our ideas" so this figure also makes reference to the categories discussed in this chapter, to show how they have informed the process of theory development. This aligns with grounded theory methodology which encourages transparency in theory creation.
Figure 5.4: The relationship between golfer characteristics and destination selection
The four theoretical concepts influencing the relationship between the player and the destination require additional conceptual clarification (CC). The first two theoretical concepts consider the construction of the trip and the emotional rewards of participation. The data has shown individuals have different approaches to including a golf element into a trip. While this has been outlined in this chapter there has been limited discussion of how this negotiation can impact the emotional rewards felt when participating.

CC1: To what extent are emotive responses linked to the golf holiday construction (and the stage at which golf is negotiated into the trip)?

Intermediaries appear to have a sphere of influence over the theoretical concept of reputation which also needs further exploration. Reputation is acknowledged as having some influence on the course or destination but in cases where an intermediary is used the power of the course (in terms of its appeal) may need to be balanced with the power of the package to attract golfers. Intermediaries often establish packages which include a particular course or range of course, limiting overall choice. While some intermediaries will arrange bespoke trips, many package trips balance quality with price. The intermediary can also influence choice by suggesting particular options outside of the golfer's choice set. Therefore intermediaries have the potential to influence destination selection.

CC2: To what extent do intermediaries control the choice of course and destination?

CC3: How do total trip cost and value for money judgments influence the course and destination selection

By participating in golf tourism golfing capital can be established. This capital is exchangeable in a variety of manners, including expanding networks, sharing experiences and learning about new destinations and course. If, as the concept of capital suggest, this is has a exchange value, then exploring whether trading experiences can enhance the overall golf tourism experience is necessary.

CC4: Is golfing capital traded to enhance the golf tourism experience?
Cycle three data has been designed to clarify the four key theoretical concepts shaping destination selection (construction of the golf trip, emotional rewards, cost and reputation). It also focuses on the four spheres of influence determining golfer characteristics and behaviour and shaping the relationship between the golfer and destination selection. Furthermore it considers the four CCs highlighted above.
Chapter 6: Cycle Three

This chapter presents analysis of the data developed through the third cycle of interviews. It also draws on literature and earlier iterations of primary data to provide an insightful evaluation of the relationships between golfer characteristics, golfer behaviours and destination selection.

The first objective for this research is to understand the socio-demographic, lifestyle, and life course characteristics of golf tourists. Cycle two highlighted that golfer characteristics are complex and varied (section 5.2.1). Furthermore the way the trip is constructed to include golf influences behaviour and destination selection. CC1 was related to this theme. Thus data was gathered and analysed to clarify characteristics of the golf tourist.

The second objective concerns the extent to which golfer characteristics influence destination choice and golf tourist behaviour. Cycle two reported the influence of competitions (section 5.2.2), group dynamics (section 5.2.3) and the use of intermediaries (section 5.2.4). CC2 and CC3 also linked to this theme. Therefore data was analysed to determine factors which clarifies the link between golfer behaviour and destination selection.

The third objective considers the extent to which ability and golfing capital impact the behaviour of the golfer. Section 5.2.5 in cycle two explored this in detail and CC4 also highlighted the need for further clarification in this regard. Therefore cycle three data examined the nature of golfing capital and its value as an asset to understand golfer behaviour.

The fourth objective of the thesis considers the development of a model which explains the relationship between the golf tourist and destination selection. While chapter five (figure 5.4) proposes the key theoretical concepts and spheres of influence on the relationships, this chapter in constant comparison with data from earlier cycles and from literature develops these further to provide conceptual clarification, allowing substantive theory to be constructed.
6.1 Gathering data

Adhering to grounded theory methodology, the third cycle of data collection draws on sources most likely to inform theory, determined as an outcome of the cycle two analysis (presented in chapter five).

The four theoretical concepts and the four spheres of influence identified in the summary of cycle two (figure 5.4), alongside the four conceptual clarification (CC) questions (section 5.3), guided the selection of research participants for cycle three. Theoretical sampling requires that research participants are best placed to discuss the key topic areas (Charmaz, 2006) thus this iteration included golfers who travelled in groups of varying types and sizes. It was also necessary to interview players who had experience of using intermediaries as well as independent travel.

Research participants were sourced using contacts obtained through earlier searches and contacts proffered by those interviewed. Again pre-screening occurred to ensure those selected for interview held a variety of golf tourism experiences which would inform the research. This included golfers with family members who play the sport (DAISY-MAE, DEBBIE and IVAN) as well as those who are the only golfer in their family (CARTER and STEVEN). A couple who participate in golf tourism were interviewed - in this iteration DONALD and RITA, who are married to each other. As with cycle two data collection, they were interviewed separately to avoid influencing each other's accounts.

Furthermore, a decision was made to return to cycle one participants in order to investigate whether the theoretical concepts being developed as theory related to their opinions and behaviours. As well as enhancing the quality of the theory constructed this processes of 'member checking' can add transparency to the analytical process (Beth et al., 2005). The first two research participants interviewed for this thesis, DEBBIE and STEVEN, were thus selected for a second interview. STEVEN was a relative novice when first approached for interview but the extended timeframe between the cycles of research has allowed him to gain several years of additional experience. His handicap has also decreased slightly (from 25 to 22). Over this same period DEBBIE has not seen her handicap change, although her frequency of play has markedly increased (from 28 rounds annually to 97). She attributes this to a change in her work schedule.
6.1.1 Characteristics of the interview participants

This cycle of interviews included discussion of international and domestic golf trips, with both short breaks and longer trips being considered. DONALD stated he now took two-week trips while CARTER and IVAN spoke mostly about trips staying only a few nights away from home. DAISY-MAE discussed both short breaks and longer trips. Similar to previous cycles, while Europe dominated other international destinations were also discussed.

Although no golfers were relatively new to the sport, IVAN had recently joined a club and this had increased his golf participation generally but not impacted his level of golf tourism participation. Both IVAN and DAISY-MAE turned to golf having given up an alternative sport (hockey and football respectively) which both said had been their main hobby. Only CARTER had played golf since childhood.

All the research participants are members of a golf club, although there are differences in extent of membership experience. For example IVAN joined his first golf club only a few months prior to interview while CARTER belongs to two different golf clubs concurrently, something that has happened to him throughout his life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Handicap</th>
<th>Years playing golf</th>
<th>Age band</th>
<th>Estimated number of rounds played annually</th>
<th>Number of golfing trips in 12 months prior to interview</th>
<th>Total nights away on golf holiday (based on 12 months prior to interview)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CARTER</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>+12</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAISY-MAE</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DONALD</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>+12</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IVAN</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RITA</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>+12</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEBBIE</td>
<td>11 (11)</td>
<td>+12</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>97 (28)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>7 (15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STEVEN</td>
<td>22 (25)</td>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>20 (16)</td>
<td>1 (2)</td>
<td>6 (8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1: Research participants: cycle three

Note: The figures in brackets for DEBBIE and STEVEN show the data provided in their first interview (in cycle one). Again, the names of the research participants have been changed (and are shown in capitals throughout the text). N/A denotes information not provided by the research participant.
6.2 Clarifying concepts through constant comparison including cycle three data

The conclusion of cycle two analysis (summarised by figure 5.4 in chapter five) proposed that the relationship between golfer characteristics and destination selection was structured by four theoretical concepts (the construction of the golf holiday, emotional rewards, total trip spend and reputation). Furthermore four spheres of influence (group dynamics, competition and ability, use of intermediaries and golfing capital) shaped this relationship. This chapter conceptually clarifies these constructs to comprehensively understand the relationships between golfer characteristics, golfer behaviours and destination selection.

A thorough analysis of the interview data, in constant comparison with earlier iterations and with literature was completed. This led to the theoretical concepts and spheres of influence discussed in section 5.3 being used to guide the presentation of the data analysis. Their relevance to the research objectives are outlined in table 6.2 - and the process by which these concepts are arrived at is explained within each chapter. Significantly this approach was employed not to force the data into predetermined domains (Glaser, 1992, Charmaz, 2006) but to provide a coherent and transparent reporting of the theory being constructed in this research (Dey, 2004).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Section</th>
<th>Predominant focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>6.2.1 Golfer characteristics</td>
<td>Objective 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.2.2 Theoretical concepts structuring golf tourism behaviour</td>
<td>Objective 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Construction of the golf holiday</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Emotional rewards</td>
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<td>• Total trip spend</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reputation</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.2.3 Spheres of influence shaping the relationships between the golfer and the destination</td>
<td>Objective 2 and Objective 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Group dynamics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Competition and ability</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Golfing capital</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use of intermediaries</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 6.2: Overview of chapter sections
6.2.1 Golfer Characteristics

Understanding the different characteristics of the golf tourist is key to addressing the aim of this thesis. Literature acknowledges that the sports tourist is not homogenous, with participation levels often used to provide distinctions (Weed and Bull, 2009, Hennessey et al., 2008). However, analysis of the data demonstrates that many other factors influence golfer characteristics. Several research participants declared that they have played golf for many years and that this forms part of their everyday life. It is therefore not surprising that a sport central to their lives will thus form part of their holiday travel plans. For example CARTER stated:

"I started playing a lot, really enjoyed it. It fitted around my life, I was travelling more by this time so wherever I went I could play golf. Either on my own or with others, if I was travelling somewhere where there were people who wanted to play, it fitted my lifestyle."

The role of golf in a player's life was discussed in cycle one (section 4.2.1.1) and further clarified in cycle two (section 5.2.1.2), suggesting that when golf is embedded into daily life limited additional effort is required to fit the sport into a trip schedule. This was evidenced in the interview with DAISY-MAE:

"All of our holidays are golf holidays. Every single one. Because both of us play, and we don't have children then obviously it is great because we don't really have to care about anybody but ourselves, selfishly, and because we both play there isn't this need to compromise in terms of 'oh you go and do that dear and I'll, you know' so I suppose we are very lucky."

Involvement with a sport such as golf can bring "greater sensitivity toward the subtleties of activity attributes and greater perception of activity importance" (Kyle et al., 2004, p100) which can ensure centrality to lifestyle (Iwasaki and Havitz, 2004, Havitz and Dimanche, 1999). Participation may require effort to overcome barriers (such as time and money) but centrality of the activity strengthens endeavours to achieve this. Conversely where the sport is seen as less central, participation may be compromised. In his cycle three interview STEVEN reiterated that golf is not dominant in his life:

"I think it just depends on your outlook on life doesn’t it really. Golf isn’t my be-all-and-end all. I play it as a leisure activity rather than as a sport. So it’s a bit like going down the park to play tennis, I don’t want to play at Wimbledon, I just want to play tennis."

This influences the choices he makes regarding golf courses to play and is emphasized in his cycle one interview whereby he commented that "enjoying yourself" was more important that the golf (section 4.2.1.3). For STEVEN lifestage factors have changed his efforts and frequency of participation, about which he commented:
"Not quite as much as I used to. Life has got a bit more complicated, my U.S. girlfriend has moved over to the UK so I have got to spend a bit more time with her."

Changing work roles also led to STEVEN missing golf trips with friends, further reducing frequency of participation (from two trips a year to one trip - see table 6.1). Similarly DONALD remarked that when he was working short city breaks were common but since retirement his travel now is for two-week breaks, frequently centred around golf.

"It would be true to say, when I was working we often used to do long weekend breaks, it might be Friday through Sunday or Monday but they were usually city breaks in Europe. So now, I'd say if you were to go back the last ten years we have not, I can't think of any weekend type, or two or three day type, golfing breaks."

Longer trips do not necessarily correspond to more golf. Section 4.2.5.1 observed that short break golf holidays would often involve playing daily, while longer trips (perhaps of seven days or more) would include days free from golf. Section 5.2.6.4 further clarified this, asserting that short trips constructed with a primary motive to play golf will see play every day (and very occasionally more than one round daily). This was also evidenced in cycle three data, as DAISY-MAE confirmed:

"We are playing golf every day. We get up, go and play golf, come back do some spa or leisure stuff, have food and drink and then get up and play golf next day."

Longer trips constructed primarily as golf trips will see golf played most days, with the occasional rest day included. Longer trips constructed as 'other' holidays may include the occasional round of golf, as opportunity presents. Where the length of trip is extensive competition between activities is reduced and golf can be fitted into schedules with less conflict. For example, when discussing a family summer holiday, CARTER highlighted:

"My wife’s a teacher so we always had time, and we were never under the time pressure in the summer of we couldn’t do everything. We always had time and the resource to do the things we wanted, so we just basically come up with a plan where everyone does a bit of what they want to do."

This suggests that participation can be more easily negotiated when fewer constraints mean multiple activities can be accommodated, meeting the needs and motivations of different members of the travel group (Alexandris et al., 2002).
Playing to handicap (or very close) while on holiday is desired but not expected. In her cycle one interview DEBBIE stated that she expects "to play reasonably well - it doesn’t always happen, but I always go out having confidence in my ability." However, her cycle three interview clarified that she often plays less well as the holiday progresses, which she attributes to off-course activities (specifically the consumption of alcohol) and a lack of concentration. The ingestion of alcohol is known to impair psychomotor skills and impact aerobic performance yet research stated that 70% of golfers drink alcohol and play or train the following day (O’Brien and Lyons, 2000). However socialised behaviours which encourage drinking after sports participation (Burke and Maughan, 2000) suggest this is not an unusual pattern of behaviour. IVAN stated that players on one golf trip were required to take a breathalyzer test after lunch and "your score didn't count unless you failed the breathalyzer". In cycle one data MICHAEL also stated that his performance was affected by the alcohol he consumed. Therefore it is not uncommon to see examples of golf performance impacted by alcohol consumption, often an expected part of overall trip activity.

Introducing rules specific to a group - such as failing the 'breathalyser test' - is not uncommon. The game of golf is guided by 34 rules and abiding by these is discussed in section 4.2.3.5 but informal rules are also introduced by golfing groups. Section 5.2.3 noted that ADAM’s group ruled they would only ever visit a destination once, while NATHAN and TOMMY both confirmed rules governing the system used by their separate groups to determine captaincy. In cycle two data RAY discussed amendments made to handicaps and cycle three data shows this was also experienced by IVAN, who acknowledged its purpose:

"In handicapping terms it tends to be, on the weekend handicapping systems, so if you do well on the first day you will be cut shots for the second day, etcetera,. If you do badly you might get shots given to you, just to try and concertina the field a bit."

The handicapping system allows players to "compete meaningfully against each other almost regardless of their playing abilities" (Lewis, 2005, p151) and the data shows that groups proactively use handicapping systems to create an equitable chance for any golfer to win. Thus players agree to seek "victory within the limits of the rules agreed upon by the participants" (Clifford and Feezell, 1997, p63).
While successful performance may be significant for more fanatical golfers many others participate in golf tourism because of the opportunities for social interaction with friends and peers. This is recognised as a significant motivator (section 4.2.3.1), with trips providing the occasion to spend time with like-minded others. Section 5.2.3 acknowledges that participation in sports trips affords social opportunities and this is reinforced in cycle three data, whereby CARTER asserts that "I only ever want to play golf with people I want to play with. I wouldn’t take somebody I don’t want to take, I don’t feel any obligation to do that". DAISY-MAE also discussed the importance of the social element stating:

"That is as important I think, yes, as your time on the course. So if there is a group of six of us we will take [a master suite] room and we will all sit round and we will play cards, and before we go for our meal in the restaurant. So, yea, I think the social element is very important."

The social interaction afforded by sport is widely acknowledged (Chalip, 2006, James and Ross, 2004, Wann et al., 2008) and in his seminal text on social capital and sport Tonts (2005, p142) argues that "sport can provide access to social networks and helps provide a sense of connectivity". Thus participation in golfing trips is stimulated by the reward of social interaction.

While the design and condition of the golf course can influence overall experience, some golfers are also particularly interested in the off-course environment. Cycle one data (section 4.2.4.2) and cycle two data (section 5.2.6.3) discussed the importance of facilities and amenities. Cycle three data also corroborated that other destination factors are significant. DONALD comments that he and RITA:

"...tend to go to golf resorts. We would try to find resorts that have got fairly decent restaurants, so that we don’t have to go away if we don’t have to, and one of the beauties of it from our point of view, and it was particularly so when I was working, was the fact that we could just – however far we flew, once we got there we just camped out for two weeks, and there wasn’t a matter of driving around."

However, IVAN suggests there is a balance between the importance of the course and other elements:

"It is more about just how good the courses are, how good the courses are expected to be, and then other than the course it’s all the other things around, like food and drink really and the accommodation and stuff like that."

CARTER remarked that there are significant differences in the elements demanded within his group. His interest in bird-watching influences some of the requirements he particularly has of the destination.
"Again that’s where a number of us have differences. So I would - probably most of us would go and look in the big cathedrals or whatever or we would look at, if there were photo exhibitions on we would go and look at them, we like walking around the squares, just gradually generally assimilating the atmosphere of the towns or cities we go to. So we do do that. But again if it comes down, wildlife I mean there is a couple of us people will always come and meet up do a bit of Birding, but most of them don’t, they would rather go to the bar."

Thus he combines two hobbies - bird-watching and golf. The appeal of the wider destination - beyond the course - influences individual experiences. Literature suggests that satisfaction can be achieved by meeting an individual’s multiple needs and motives (Tian-Cole and Cromption, 2003) and that pull factors, related to the features and attributes of the destination (Dann, 1977, Klenosky, 2002), influence where and how people travel (Prayag and Ryan). Some golfers give priority to these elements ahead of the experiences which can be gained from playing a particular golf course.

Golfers also vary in their desire to play challenging and complex courses. Section 4.2.4.1.3 discussed the different factors influencing course choice, highlighting the balance between convenience, value for money and expected enjoyment. Section 5.2.1.3 furthered this to show that emotional rewards can be determined by course characteristics. Cycle three data showed that judgements about courses played on holiday are made in relation to experiences of courses played regularly at home. Both DAISY-MAE and IVAN alluded to this directly:

"Okay so the course that we belong to is considered – there is probably two or three really great courses in Suffolk and it is considered to be one of the better ones. But it is a particular type of course, i.e. Heathland. What’s really good in Ireland is the O’Meara course [NR44], the bunkers are fierce, they are really, really deep, and you have to be a very good bunker player. Much more so than on our home course. So it would test your game." (DAISY-MAE)

"The actual physical condition is probably the first thing, so that is the condition of the tees, the fairways, the greens and the bunkers. The course that I am a member of is excellent and so it needs to be of a good quality to feel as good as that. You don’t want to go away and play somewhere you feel is worse than you play at home." (IVAN)

The course can provide a substantial challenge (section 5.2.1.3) but this may not restrict weaker golfers from playing. In cycle one data (section 4.2.5.3) DEBBIE suggested that ability levels might influence course choice. However, in cycle three data she clarified this in her suggestion that most holiday courses are designed to provide enjoyment to all levels of golfer:
"I can’t remember ever playing a course that I found too daunting but there are some out there I realise that, but I don’t think on holiday we would choose a course that was really, really difficult. The golfing holidays that have been booked, they are for the run-of-the-mill golfer, they are not for low handicap scratch players."

Many research participants were adamant that ability would not influence course choice, and that weaker players would consider complex courses if it was likely to meet desires for a positive experience. Recognising that emotion and satisfaction can be influenced by the holistic environment (Brunner-Sperdin et al., 2012), compromise on complexity may occur as other destination elements are considered during the decision making process.

Although many golfers are keen to focus on their own rewards for playing, some felt it was important for others in their group to enjoy the experience. DEBBIE reiterated in her cycle three interview that it was important to her that her husband plays well, something she also mentioned in her cycle one interview (and discussed in section 4.2.2.3). Similarly in cycle two data EILEEN highlighted that a playing partner performing poorly "does affect my game, I always think about the other person, very much so". This suggests that for some golfers individual goals are balanced with wider group benefits. Thus some players may be fanatical and serious about their own golf, while others are more interested in the enjoyment and fun gained from being social players (Wood, 2011) which is "reinforced by sustained interaction with like-minded players" (Scott and Godbey, 1994, p282).

Overall, golfer characteristics determine how the factors influencing destination section are judged and the consideration given to the needs of others in the group.

6.2.2 Theoretical concepts influencing golf tourist behaviour
The summary of chapter five proposed four theoretical concepts which appeared to affect the design of the trip and the expectations players hold of the golf tourism destinations they select. Through a constant comparison which included cycle three data, analysis demonstrated that some characteristics of the destination also shape behaviours of and choices made by the golfer. Thus greater clarification was made in regard to the conceptual category of the ‘destination’, distinguishing the importance of course characteristics and amenities. Justification for this expansion of theoretical concepts is evident in the data and arguments presented in this chapter and thus six theoretical concepts are used to provide a transparent, structured explanation of the analysis:
1. Construction of the golf holiday
2. Emotional rewards
3. Total trip spend
4. Reputation
5. Course and destination characteristics
6. Amenities

6.2.2.1 Construction of the golf holiday

Chapter five (section 5.2.1.1) stated that playing golf while travelling away from home is not enough to justify calling the trip a golfing holiday. Multiple motivators (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007) influence decision making, thus affect how the trip is constructed in the minds of the individual. In chapter five examples were given whereby research participants stated trips were not 'golf holidays' despite golf being included in the trip and, in some cases, equipment transported to the holiday destination for this purpose. This is further supported by data constructed in cycle three as CARTER comments:

"The default would be that if I possibly had room I would always take my clubs anyway, I mean, my clubs are always in my boot of my car... If we go to Spain we fly and I just take the clubs with me on the plane. If we go to [my wife's] brother's he has got a set of clubs there I can use."

MARGARET had a similar attitude, confirming that having played a golf competition in the USA she continued to travel with her clubs - "I should have sent them back in a way because I wasn’t intending to play again but I wanted to keep them with me." This highlights that travelling with clubs can occur regardless of future stated plans. However, although taking clubs on the off-chance that a game of golf may be played can be common for some players IVAN felt this is changing because the cost to transport clubs on flights has significantly increased in recent years.

"Now if I came to go to America or I thought I might take my clubs just in case I play golf, and I was going to pay £50 for it I probably wouldn’t bother, because I have taken them and not played before, so there is a cost issue around that."

While this change may affect whether rounds of golf are played unexpectedly, there is evidence that players are prepared to hire equipment if the desire to play is stimulated, perhaps by discovering an exciting course nearby. RITA and DONALD both mentioned hiring clubs during two of their trips:
"It was in New Zealand and obviously it wasn’t a golfing holiday and we were there for a few weeks, well four weeks, and sometimes I go past a golf course and I think ‘ohh’, - a bit like a swimming pool, want to dive in, ‘oh, I would love to play a game of golf’ and a couple of times we hired clubs. I think we had probably packed our golf shoes." (RITA)

"Hauling clubs is a bit of a pain in many ways, so for example about five years ago we had a three-week trip to New England and we had no intention of playing golf at all, but one of the areas we were at - we probably just booked to stay there for a day or two longer than we needed to - and there were a couple of golf courses nearby so we just phoned up and said could we rent some clubs and so on. But typically we tend not to take golf clubs unless we are going to be playing quite a bit of golf. But we will play the odd round, just depending on what crops up really." (DONALD)

While transporting sporting equipment provides an element of convenience it can also carry connotations about expected behaviours while on a trip. A consequence of this is that it acts as a signifier of intentions, explicit to the travel group that golf is being considered as an activity which may be undertaken during the trip. This can stimulate participation negotiations. In the summary of chapter five CC1 questioned the influence of negotiating to participate in golf tourism and it is evident from the data presented that the expected enjoyment gained from participating in a sport central to lifestage encourages efforts to participate.

6.2.2.2 Emotional rewards

Drawing on cycle one data (section 4.2.1.3) and cycle two data (section 5.2.1.3) linked to emotional rewards avoiding scenarios where frustration, feelings of failure or disappointment are likely to occur is significantly influential to both course and destination selection. In his cycle three interview STEVEN commented that:

"I think that if you have a very, very difficult course and you are having a bad day it can be a pretty tough experience. Whereas, and equally, if you are playing incredibly well and the course is darn easy, then that is just as difficult. There is, I think a definite balance there and I think that’s where the make-up of the course does have an element to do with it. Definitely."

Similarly IVAN also noted that course design engenders frustration when it restricts players from performing to expected ability levels.
"We had quite a significant, quite an interesting debate after we played Glenegles [NR14], the six of us, where we all played badly, not played badly we all scored badly, and my view was what a fantastic place, I am not good enough for this golf course, but I am still really glad that I have come here, whereas the best golfer in our group said ‘we are not good enough for this golf course and therefore I am actually not enjoying it’, so it’s personal reaction. Mine was ‘I’m glad I had the experience’, his was ‘I wish I hadn’t bothered’, but it is the same experience essentially. I have probably got less high expectations in terms of my own performance than he has, so I suppose he is more likely to get frustrated."

In their discussion of motives for sports participation Recours et al (2004) establish four dimensions determining motivation for sports participation - competition, exhibitionism, 'playing to the limit' and sociability. Competition and exhibitionism are extrinsic motivations which allow individuals to prove themselves to others and display overtly their skills and ability levels. Conversely playing to the limit offers intrinsic rewards in the present moment, allowing rewards to be heightened by the focus and efforts required (Kerr and Houge Mackenzie, 2012) while sociability suggests intrinsic links with the desire for shared experiences and group interaction. This links to the motivational theories developed by Iso-Ahola (1983, 1981)(presented in section 3.2.1). From this it can be argued that course and destination selection are influenced by intrinsic desires to gain immediate emotional rewards. Achieving such rewards requires the avoidance of boredom and RITA emphasized that course design also influences this.

"It was boring because it was just up and down there was no, there is nothing about it – it was just samey -yes it was a golf course but it was boring, there was nothing to test you, nothing to make you think."

This is in line with literature which recognises both competence mastery (Beard and Ragheb, 1983) and escape from boring or mundane environments (Iso-Ahola, 1983, Pearce and Lee, 2005) as fundamental motives for sports participation (see figure 3.4). Thus the opportunity to gain emotional rewards from playing at particular courses influences expectations held about destinations.

**6.2.2.3 Total trip spend**

Although the cost of playing a sport (including equipment hire, lessons, etc) may be an absolute barrier for some, more commonly it acts only as a relative barrier (Coalter, 1993), which can be negotiated by considering frequency and spaces used for participation. Furthermore, it is perceived utility (based on expected satisfaction gained from consuming the product or service) which influences demand (Gratton and Taylor, 2000). Cycle one data recognised the
importance of cost and perceived value for money (section 4.2.4.3.4) while cycle three data furthers this by acknowledging judgments made about the affordability, value, and perceived utility of playing expensive courses:

"I suppose golfers by and large are relatively more affluent than non-golfers but I find it quite difficult to, on the one hand so in my mind justify spending $500 on a round of golf, and I wouldn’t do it if I was playing on my own actually, I would only ever do that if I was playing in a group of people as well, I wouldn’t want to do it on my own. On the other hand you think you only do it because you can afford to do it and if you had to make choices you wouldn’t do it, but they charge what they charge and they get away with it and that’s the way it is, and I guess over a period, you get cheaper courses, more expensive courses and it all comes out in the wash". (CARTER)

"We are going to Ireland quite a lot at the moment because economically it’s in the toilet. So there is some really, really great deals. Though Ireland is still expensive the holiday you get is so superb. You play at absolutely immaculate courses, you stay at somewhere like Carton House, which is a five-star hotel, and you pay not a lot of money for what you get actually." (DAISY-MAE)

Perceived value is not just about the cost of the course but the entire trip spend (section 5.2.4.1). This may include travel elements such as accommodation, but also considers cost of food, drink and entertainment.

"It is important that it is good value. That’s the important thing. I don’t mind it being a bit rough and ready but you expect to get the benefit of it being cheap. But I am also very happy if it is good standard accommodation, yes. I understand you pay a bit more for that. When we were in Scotland earlier this year, when we played Gleneagles, we were at a pub, with fairly spartan comfortable enough accommodation, but we thought the value was good, we were not in the room very much other than to sleep." (IVAN)

In chapter five CC3 questioned the link between trip cost and destination selection. Further data analysis suggests that players select trip components based on the extent to which they help achieve the overall desired trip outcome and that these components are considered in combination when making judgements regarding perceived value. Furthermore time, search costs and convenience combine with monetary price to create a perceived product price (Kashyap and Bojanic, 2000). This is evidenced in cycle three data whereby CARTER confirms that he sees his own time as influential on judging value:

"I guess [value for money] is important but it depends what it means and for me the biggest value is I wouldn’t want to waste four hours of my time playing a crap course. There aren’t many of them as it happens but that would hurt as much as the fact that it cost whatever, is the fact that you have wasted your time."
Judgements regarding trip spend may also be made in relation to the group as a whole, rather than individuals. Trips comprising a group of friends will consider whether the total trip cost is affordable to all those wishing to participate. This can impact decisions made regarding amenities and facilities (discussed in section 6.2.2.6) as well as overall destination selection. For example, DONALD stated his preference is to participate in golf tourism only with his wife, because a larger group requires him to compromise on some aspects of the trip he perceives important:

"We are quite prepared to have quite expensive meals, not everyone is. So if you go with a group 'oh I wouldn’t pay that for dinner' so you end going somewhere you rather not be going, but just so everyone's happy."

Similarly CARTER asserted that his group had moved their annual trip from France to north Wales, to accommodate more cost-sensitive members of the group:

"When we stopped going to France, we’d got some younger members and the cost was more of an issue for them and we chose to go somewhere other than Eurozone countries at that point because the value became poor because of the exchange rate."

Linked with perceived value is an assumption of fair pricing. While the utility received can justify the price paid, the perception of extortionate or unfair pricing must be considered. For services where experience is an element of the overall package assessments of value must account for intangible elements. For golf tourism this can consider factors such as reputation (and brand), exclusivity of access, and design uniqueness. Perceived value may make judgements about the overall experience relative to monetary price. This is evidenced in the comment offered by STEVEN:

"I think the more money you end up paying, you are there just to help fund whatever they are trying to do. I want to go there and just feel like I am welcome. Actually I like to turn up and feel - I have paid let’s say £50, I have had a great time for paying £50. If I turn up at St. Enodoc [NR16] and pay £85 and have been made to feel like I am not welcome and don’t want to play, actually I am not going to enjoy it. It’s that simple really."

Overall, utility of participation, perceived cost and value for money judgements are made in relation to total trip spend.
6.2.2.4 Reputation

Reputation has been a dominant theme running through the analysis (section 4.2.4.1.1 and section 5.2.6.6). Destinations and tourist attractions benefit from word-of-mouth recommendations as consumers "exert powerful influences upon each other" (Litvin et al., 2008, p.458). For service sector firms specifically, the importance of word-of-mouth recommendation has been well established (Mangold et al., 1999) and the intangible nature of many tourism goods means that such influences shape perceptions of potential users. Furthermore, recommendations help reduce perceived risk related to destination choice (De Bruyn and Lilien, 2008, Gilly et al., 1998). Supporting this CARTER confirmed that:

"Given that it is the tyranny of choice, given that you've got the huge amount of choice, if somebody says 'oh yeh, I played there', that takes a bit of risk out, so if somebody says it's a good place and somebody I know and somebody who's judgment I value. It's one less choice to make."

Similarly DONALD also stated that recommendations are of value if the person is known and trusted.

"For me, whether it's a golf course, a restaurant, a hotel, unless you know those people well enough to know what their standards and expectations are the recommendation isn't worth much, so it really depends on who it is and what they are recommending."

This is supported in literature (Herr et al., 1991, Gilly et al., 1998), which recognises that the characteristics of the communicator, in terms of similarity, credibility and trustworthiness influences how the information is judged.

For golf tourism specifically such recommendations can enhance course and/or destination reputation which further influences expectations of the golf tourist. Conceptually this was introduced in section 4.2.4.1.1 and further developed in section 5.2.6.6, confirming that reputation can influence trip decisions but invariably is balanced with other factors such as convenience, service quality, landscape and prior experiences. Cycle three data supports this with STEVEN contending that:

"Now when we are in Cornwall, because most of these courses are coastal they are hellishly challenging whatever happens, so it doesn't matter that it's got five stars out of five stars from some website or anything, because we have got the luxury of having gone there over a long period of time we have got to realise that sometimes a three-star course is actually more fun and a nicer experience than some of these grand marque courses."
Thus 'nicer experiences' and satisfaction can encourage positive word-of-mouth recommendations, and increased likelihood that recommendations would both be offered to and acted upon by friends and family (Beeho and Prentice, 1997). Furthermore, drawing on their research of golf travellers, Hutchinson et al (2009) confirm that positive word-of-mouth recommendations are influenced by perceived quality, value and overall satisfaction. Significantly dissatisfaction is also shared in the form of negative word-of-mouth comments (Richins, 1983). This is evidenced in the data as DAISY-MAE remarked:

"The Belfry [NR32] is a really good example of how not to do it, and Celtic Manor [NR5] is really good example of how to do it. The Belfry is like a conveyor belt. 'We held the Ryder Cup so why don’t you come along and play the Brabazon' [The Belfry’s main course], but what we will do is we will force you into four-balls, ah, we will get you out in such a regulated way that you feel like it is not really an experience, it is come-along-and-play our course and we will charge you x amount of money. Whereas Celtic Manor, we went before the Ryder Cup and we went after the Ryder Cup. The service and the way you are looked after - you are treated like a king or a queen."

This also acknowledges that course reputations can be influenced through involvement with professional tournaments or competitions. Such competitions reveal the abilities of players and this can stimulate comparisons. DAISY-MAE recalled that she:

"stood on the 16th [at Celtic Manor [NR5]] three weeks after Hunter Mahan duffed that chip that Graham McDowell then [won the Ryder Cup for Europe] - I stood on that and we replayed that chip, because you have just watched on telly - its famous people – if you enjoy your golf you admire these golfers don’t you, and what they are able to do, and they can play golf in a way that you will never be able to probably, so you kind of want to experience what they have experienced."

Significantly, in his cycle three interview STEVEN claimed that while playing courses where professional golfers have played may be appealing there is no expectation that it will influence his own performance level:

"I think it is a nice aspect. And I think it does play a part with a lot of people, and probably, it is quite nice to watch Sky Sports European Tour or a major championship and go 'I’ve played that course'. Albeit that the course is never set up in the same way as it is for the professionals, so I mean it is nice to have been there and looked at it. It would probably have some bearing I suppose but it is not something that launches my list of choices as to, Nick Faldo or whoever or Rory McIlroy has played fantastically well there and therefore so will I."
Reputation clearly influences the decision to play a course when visiting an area, although the course alone may not be enough to stimulate visitation to a destination. Both DONALD and CARTER suggested that being in an area for a limited time may encourage them to consider playing renowned courses but that it is the time/geography element rather than the courses themselves that stimulate efforts:

"We have played some of the championship courses in Scotland, we actually lived in Scotland then. We were living in Scotland, I got moved back to London with the company and we decided to do a tour of all the places we meant to go and never had done, so we had already played St Andrews but we went to Royal Dornoch [WR13], Turnberry [WR17], went back to Gleneagles [NR14], we had played there a few times, so we played those sort of courses." (DONALD)

"Well Pebble Beach [WR12] is a star, it's on a peninsular, it is a renown golf course and it is one that, the structure and the quality and the finishing, it is one of those that's got all the fine tuning. To be honest with you I would play others in preference to those but when you are there, I do sometimes think 'oh well, everyone else raves about this so let's go and have a look'. Actually very often on the big courses, apart from the fact they are well looked after, well, it's just another golf course in many ways." (CARTER)

Therefore the reputation of a golf course can influence decisions to play the course once the player is in the vicinity, and being highly ranked internationally may encourage play. However, it may be the appeal of other tourism elements which pulls (Dann, 1977) the player to the vicinity (and without which the course would not be considered).

Alongside word-of-mouth recommendations are a variety of other information sources supporting reputation development and maintenance. This includes information provided by media (such as seeing courses through televised competitions, news items or magazine articles) and through marketing collateral. Several research participants identified information sources shaping their trip decisions:

"Web. Web Teetimes.com, there’s a range. Friends -where friends have been to places and they say 'that’s a good course, didn’t like that one'. Near to where you are, the proximity, if there is a course, even if it’s not very good, if it’s near to where you are staying it’s convenient to you so there is a variety of factors there. But if I was in Monterey I would play Pebble Beach [WR12], for example." (CARTER)

"We will look up on the computer, and books, we will read about courses and places and make our own decisions." (RITA)
In conclusion, reputation is established through a variety of elements which influence decisions to play particularly courses. However these need to be balanced with other trip elements (including convenience, value and quality of surrounding landscapes) if they are to act as a significant draw to the destination. Furthermore reputation can shape expectations of a destination.

6.2.2.5 Influences of course and destination characteristics

Through their examination of golf travellers, Hutchinson et al (2010) identified that destination attributes as well as golf-specific attributes (such as course design, appearance and quality, and clubhouse condition and facilities) impact the decision to visit or revisit a destination. Chapter five (section 5.2.6) acknowledged the importance of climate and logistics in the decision to select a golf tourism destination, with climate and landscape providing a contextual appeal (Robinson and Gammon, 2004) which can influence overall perception. For example in her interview RITA twice recounted the climatic appeal of California:

"For instance, California I love the climate, because I don’t like really hot weather, but it is a fabulous, fabulous climate and it is just a lovely, very easy place to be."

"I don’t really like intense heat, and California is a fabulous climate so that’s another favourite."

This repeated enthusiasm reinforces the claim that RITA perceives the climate at this destination as part of the appeal. Climate, beautiful scenery and natural landscapes were emphasised as important by several research participants including DEBBIE in her cycle three interview, who stated that "we want it to be warm and sunny. Not too hot.", while in cycle two ALANA declared that "It’s the reliability of the weather" which is influential on destination selection. ALEXANDER and GAIL also discussed the importance of scenery while in his cycle three interview STEVEN mentioned that for him:

"It's all to do with the land, the best golf courses in my opinion are the ones that haven't tinkered too much with the landscape around them."

This is supported by Kozak (2002), in his research of tourist motivations to visit Turkey and Mallorca, who contends that "weather is the most powerful destination attribute" for tourists while scenery and landscape had varying degrees of influence. Furthermore Beerli and Martin (2004) declared that scenery, activities and experiences to remember are considered elements of destination attractiveness.
Travel convenience is also a significant destination influence, with choice sets (Crompton, 1992, Crompton and Ankomah, 1993) considering drive or flight time to reach the destination as well as distance travelled once at the destination to participate in trip activities such as golf. For short beaks ensuring a logical travel schedule forms part of the trip planning process. For example when planning his 3-night trip to France CARTER claims:

"We try to play a different course every day, I am always the planner so we will always either start or finish at one of the ports, one of the courses by the ports at Hardelot [NR18], Wimereux [UR] or Dunkerque [UR]. We will then wend our way up through Saint Omer and up to Arras."

Destination choice sets are also influenced by mode of travel. DAISY-MAE stated "I haven’t flown for ten years and don’t see myself flying any time soon. So we have to think about holidays and how far away those things are". Pressures linked to flying were also mentioned by DEBBIE:

"I don’t like the airport experience. I hate the airport experience. I don’t mind once we are on the plane, but the actual airport experience itself I find stressful. Getting through the security and then queuing to do this and queuing up to do that, I just want it all to be over. I find it just stressful."

Long-haul international travel can lead to problems with jet-lag and this has now affected destinations considered by RITA.

"As we are getting older we are finding the jet-lag is kicking in a bit more than it used. California you have got quite a time difference and this time when we came back we felt quite tired for a week afterwards so that is kicking in a bit more if I am honest."

Finally in terms of logistics, transporting golf clubs can prove complex. Private transport (such as use of a car or taxi) is often perceived necessary when transporting sports equipment (Dolnicar et al., 2010) while many airlines now charge substantial fees to transport sports equipment (section 4.2.4.3.2 and section 5.2.6.2). IVAN concedes that this affects his travel behaviour:

"The way in which you can travel with golf clubs, the airlines, I think that probably has affected me. It was the case that it didn’t affect luggage allowances and there weren’t charges around taking your clubs away, so you could take a set of clubs as well as a suitcase, but I know it’s now that the airlines are just seeking to charge for things a lot more. One of the reasons why we chose to drive to Scotland was just we did the comparison and just thought its hassle. Now if I thought I might take my clubs just in case I play golf, and I was going to pay £50 for it I probably wouldn’t bother."
This does not preclude small items of equipment such as balls, gloves or shoes, to be packed, which may increase the likelihood that some golf will be played at the destination. This is particularly significant when the main motivation for the trip is not golf (section 5.2.1.1). Consequently travelling with golf equipment (including or excluding golf clubs) can influence golf tourist behaviour as well as destination selection.

6.2.2.6 Amenities

Finally alongside course and destination characteristics is consideration of support facilities such as accommodation, catering and entertainment. Cycle two data (section 5.2.6.3) proposed that accommodation selection may be gendered, with trips that include women (women-only or mixed-sex trip members) more likely to give importance to this aspect. This is supported in cycle three data as DAISY-MAE discussed trips she took with her girlfriend:

"I will prefer to stay in 4 or 5 star for holidays. It’s a girl thing, probably. Cos even though we are playing golf and even though it’s about the quality of the course, actually it is also about spoiling yourself and staying in a lovely room with wonderful facilities. But the quality of the hotel is equally important to me as the quality of the course actually."

In her cycle three interview DEBBIE also commented that accommodation quality was important to her and her husband when they travelled:

"I know you only sleep in it, but to me if I walk into a room and it’s disappointing I am then thinking I don’t want to stay in this room I want to see if they have got anything else to offer me. [My husband] is the same. He tells me at times not to unpack the suitcase. Yeh, it is quite important to me."

DONALD also confirmed that accommodation elements factored into his decision making related to the destination:

"As I have got older I do want a comfortable bed and I want a reasonably comfortable room. The counter balance to that is that, excluding the time you are sleeping you are not spending a massive amount of time in there, so whilst I want it to be comfortable it doesn’t have to be the best room in the house."

It is useful to recall here that DONALD has not participated in men-only golf trips, preferring to travel with his family or, occasionally, with other couples. This means he shares his accommodation bedroom with his wife.
Consequently a gendered aspect, to accommodation selection does seem to be evident. This is best comprehended by DAISY-MAE's summary of the overall position:

"At the risk of sounding a little sexist women definitely will look for spa facilities, even if they are golfers. I am just trying to think of the guys and there are different groups of friends – you get a group of society men, going on a four day beano to Spain where they just want to put their head down every night, and going get drunk every day and play golf. Other than that I think if you are away as a group of friends and couples, I think you want a nice venue."

Gill (2008) argues that many aspects linked to the psychology of sports behaviour have a social element constructed in the norms and expectation created by self-expectation and the expectation of others. Thus decisions which focus on the comfort of accommodation are perhaps linked to stereotypes surrounding desires to provide safe and restful environments for women travellers.

Moving on from issues related to accommodation, it is evident that food and drink affects golf tourist behaviours, and locating destinations which can service these requirements informs decision making. This was discussed in both cycle one (section 4.2.4.2.1) and cycle two (section 5.2.6.3) and is further clarified here. Understanding role that food and drink play is informed by the way CARTER describes the golf trip schedule:

"The first day. We will get the [Channel] tunnel over, we will play golf, we will have lunch, we will play golf, (we have lunch at the course) play golf at about 2 o’clock, drive up to the hotel, get showered go out for a meal, get back at midnight or whatever, some of them later still. The next day we have a 10 or eleven, 10.30 start so we have breakfast, go to the golf course, have a fair few drinks at the golf course or, just really generally socialize, go back have a siesta and go out and eat in the evening."

This clearly demonstrates that the day is structured around occasions to play golf but also opportunities to eat and drink (socializing around these activities). Bars and restaurants provide "desirable environments for social interaction" (Fox and Sobol, 2000, p430) among group members but also allows group members the chance to socialise with others (including with staff and other customers). Furthermore DEBBIE stated that catering requirements meant her travel group usually selected all-inclusive resorts. Two quotes elucidate why this is perceived as important:
"The food and the drink. It sounds pretty feeble but we like to have the branded drinks. I have been somewhere where you have the house wine, no branded spirits and I just didn’t enjoy having a drink. But if you go somewhere where they are offering you branded drinks, nice wines that’s what we are looking for. I don’t want to go somewhere where I can’t drink anything but an awful bottle of wine."

"Food is quite important as well. Although you are in an all-inclusive resort I like to go to different places to eat every evening and we choose places that have several different restaurants on site that you can eat different places every night."

As well as providing spaces for social interaction restaurants and bars can create experiential moments (Park, 2004). Consequently the opportunity to access suitable food and drink, in environments which allow for positive experiences influences golf tourist behaviours. Furthermore trip planning will factor in hospitality elements. For example CARTER mentioned staying in a hotel in the town centre rather than at the golf course so the group could conveniently use restaurants in the evening.

6.2.3 Spheres of influence
Chapter five argued that the key theoretical concepts were influenced by four factors (termed Spheres of Influence in section 5.3):

1. Group dynamics
2. The role of competition and ability
3. Golfing capital
4. The use of intermediaries in the booking process

Through constant comparison, including the third cycle of primary data, analysis has further clarified these spheres of influence, in order to appreciate how they shape the relationship between the golfer and destination selection. Data is presented in this chapter to provide transparency to the arguments offered and thus clarity of justification for the theory being constructed in this research. The four spheres of influence are seen to interact with the six theoretical concepts presented in section 6.2.2, the outcome determining golf tourist behaviour and decisions on destination selection.
6.2.3.1 Group dynamics

Chapter five identified the importance of group dynamics (section 5.2.3) proposing that groups can be formed through agreed membership (with the same people travelling repeatedly) or through ad-hoc arrangements for each trip. In the latter case additions and withdrawals can impact the operation of the trip. For example IVAN remarked:

"There have been three groups that I have been regularly going with, they've got some of the same people in common but they have got different roots. One of them came out of a lot of people who worked in banking, a golf society, and then a friend of mine who worked in banking had played hockey [with me] so I got invited along, it tends to happen, these things tend to be annual events, and so I would go one year, and then you end up going for the next seven years until you stop going, until you get fed up with it or someone gets fed up with organising it. What happens is the organiser just thinks ‘oh I've had enough of this’ and then either somebody feels strongly enough to take up the reins, or they don’t, in which case it stops."

Organisers act as ‘gatekeepers’, heavily influencing group membership and trip elements such as destination location and trip timing. Lewin (1947) revealed the impotence of gatekeepers in establishing or shifting habitual behaviours of groups, an idea furthered by Beauchamp and Eys (2007), who argue that such leaders embody the values of the group, helping to ensure new members appreciate established group norms. Therefore changing organiser can cause trips to alter their norms (or cease altogether). In cycle two data (section 5.2.2) HARLEY recalled when a friend took over the organisation from him, highlighting the type (and cost) of courses played shifted, leading to the withdrawal of about half of the group members.

Furthermore, selecting people to join a trip carries with it obligations to the group. TOMMY identified the complexity surrounding inviting people who may not fit the cultural norms and expectations of the existing group:

"There has been a couple that have perhaps not fitted in – there is one member who is hard work to talk to, very much keeps himself to himself but he came away on the [last] away-day and three guys who played with him said ‘he was fine’ so perhaps he realises it’s as much about social interaction as well as golf. There is one other guy who was quite bad, I hated, but because his dad was in [the society] as well and was loved and well-liked that was why he played."

When members are tied extensively to others in the group they are more likely to remain and more likely between themselves to develop long-term friendships (McPherson et al., 1992). Maintaining a culture which is seen as positive is significant and in cycle three data DEBBIE commented that her group has been reticent to expand for fear of changing the group dynamic:
"It would be nice to get another pair involved but it’s awkward. I think we are now feeling that if we got another pair to come it may rock the boat. There is that worry because we have all got on so well, and there has been no upsets that somebody else could rock the boat."

A changing group dynamic may, however, be inevitable over time. For example IVAN declared that:

"There is always a bit of a churn on these things. What makes things really interesting is, if you actually do stay with a group for the long term, by the time you get to the end it has completely changed. You know it is actually completely different personnel to what it was, but it is very gradual."

While this gradual shift in culture over time may be attributed to the change in membership, it is also possible to draw on the experience of ADAM, who noted that the passing of time (and a corresponding change in lifestyle) impacted the behavioural norms of the group which had not encountered any change in membership.

The naming of groups was noted in cycle two (section 5.2.3) as a means of establishing a social identity to the group. The selection of group names usually follows the same approach - clarified by IVAN:

"They are just acronyms that tend to be various double entendres. I think there is one called TARTS, but I can’t remember what it is – so you actually lose the origin. Our small group is called TOSSERS and that is something to do with stocks and shares and equities because we have a share-club to finance it. Something like 'The Old Stocks and Shares Equity Release Society' or something like that. Typically an acronym with a double meaning."

Naming confirms the identity of the group and establishes its historical origins. In his discussion of the naming of houses rented by students in Oxford, Ohio, LaDousa (2007) reveals that the process of naming is seen as a 'baptismal event' while retaining names maintained the traditions of the house students inhabited. This suggests that naming marks a point in time after which the group becomes identifiable to others. Furthermore, it can help members distinguish their affinity to the group.

The size of the group also impacts group dynamics and consequently trip behaviour. Literature suggests that for all levels of sport, group size influences performance outcome and player enjoyment (Widmeyer et al., 1990). Furthermore optimal group sizes can maximise social interaction, participation in group activities and conformity to group norms (Carron et al., 1989).

In this research IVAN travels with two different size groups and contrasts the two experiences:
"I notice the difference, even if you go with the same people. So my closest friends is a group of six and that group of people is [part of] a large group of 24. It changes the dynamics of the group obviously and I enjoy it both ways but it is different. If you have got a great big group you are playing with different people all the time. It is just a bit easier when there is just a smaller group. Logistically it is so much easier. I suppose the socialising is different, even the golf is different because you actually do play in a much wider competition, so there is more of a scale, of winning and losing really. With a group like that which changes a little bit on the fringes every year there is always some people that you are meeting for the first time. The drinking culture is different, the bigger the group there is bound to be some people that want to go and get absolutely pissed, just treat it as a drinking weekend rather than a golf weekend, which I don’t really want to do any more, now it is very much a sporting orientation."

However, there reaches a point at which adding members does not increase the benefits. "When group size increases beyond the optimal point it becomes more difficult for each member to interact and communicate" (Widmeyer et al., 2008, p167). While group behaviours may be influenced by group size the benefit of establishing groups is also significant. In their analysis of amateur cyclists O'Conner and Brown (2007) conclude that the coming together of like-minded individuals who benefit from advantages gained by participating in a group can be powerful. Significantly group cohesion is relevant to group performance (Widmeyer et al., 2008). However, participation requires conformity to expected behaviours but brings with it group solidarity and a sense of identity. and maintaining harmony in a disjointed group may be challenging when the behaviours of members can vary significantly.

Earlier in this chapter the compromises required when travelling in groups was discussed (section 6.2.2.3) and this is further supported by DEBBIE in her cycle three interview. She uses the example of selecting start times as an example:

"The group we are with are in different camps on this. Some want to get up early and play and get back so you are not out in the midday sun, it gives you the afternoon free, and others don’t like to get out of bed too early in the mornings, so they want to play later. You have to compromise between the two. It is a compromise. So instead of getting up at the crack of dawn we make it a little bit later, that person that wants to lay in bed until half past eleven o’clock will have to get up a bit earlier so there is a compromise between the two. So I am happy to play, so long as it’s reasonably early hours, I think ten o’clock is the latest I would want to begin a game of golf if I’m on holiday."

While the outcome of this may mean no player gets to play at their preferred time, the benefit of playing in a group is seen to make such compromises worthwhile because it offers increased variety and enjoyment. DEBBIE declares "you can play with different people, we play different
formats every day, so it makes it more interesting that way rather than keep playing with the same person each time." Such compromises, once agreed, often become part of the established norms of the group. This means that discussions around these decisions are unlikely to be revisited each time golf is to be planned, thus they become part of the norms guiding group behaviour.

Group members frequently take on different roles within the group. For example CARTER stated:

"I am a leader. I am the planner, I am the organiser. I am not the driver by the way, we have a driver, we have drivers, planners, we have all got different roles."

DEBBIE also noted the different roles within her group, and that her preference is to leave the organisational aspects to others:

"The role of [a male member of the group] is to organise the holiday, [A female member of the group] gets us to where we have got to go, [DEBBIE's husband] has done the driving, [another female member] and I do the drinking. [Laughter]. I must admit I tend to switch off and want to be told what I have got to do and when I have got to do it."

Roles played by group members are important to the smooth organisation of golf trips as well as ensuring that responsibilities are clearly demarcated. It also suggests that some members choose to play passive rather than active roles. In conclusion, the formation of groups and overall group size influences golfer behaviours. Furthermore, while trip decisions may be informed by the group, it is often determined finally by one - or a few - of the group taking the role of organiser. This role may be rotated around the group or held continuously by the same person.

6.2.3.2 The Influence of competition and ability

Commercially organised competition can encourage participation. Two interviewees in cycle one, one in cycle two and one in cycle three (MARGARET, CHARLES, MAC and CARTER respectively) have all travelled to participate in commercially organised competitions. Significantly all these players have held a single-figure handicap at some stage (9, 5, 2 and 6 respectively). Section 4.2.4.3.3 and section 5.2.2 discussed motivations to compete in commercially organised competitions and cycle three analysis further clarifies this, as CARTER asserted that selecting competitions was determined by:
"Dates. Dates. Time. And of course if you see a flyer in the club in your locker room and you see the date and then you think, yea I fancy playing that course – that kind of approach really."

This suggests that participation in such competitions provides access to courses and other competitors, which can appeal to players fanatical in their desire to develop their skills and test their abilities. Furthermore, and as highlighted in chapter five (section 5.2.2), commercially organised competitions can provide access to courses at lower than usual cost. This can manipulate the decision to take a trip at a set time (determined by the date of the competition).

While commercially organised competitions are a specific motivator to travel to a golf event, many players also embed informal competition into golf trips. This was identified in section 5.2.2 which clarified the reason for establishing competitions. Furthermore the complexity of competition varies, from a single shot being judged the winner ('longest drive' or 'nearest the pin') to trophies offered for multiple-day results. The use of multi-prize competitions can stimulate increased effort among participants (Clark and Riis, 1998) as there is increased belief in the opportunity to win something. The inclusion of a variety of competitions is recognised by DAISY-MAE as being common to most golf trips:

"Actually they are all competitions, I think that is the nature of golf. I don’t know anyone that goes on the golfing break where there isn’t some little wager, bet. On our June holiday we have an annual trophy we play for. On our March holiday there are millions of rules about ‘we will play for this, this, this and this’. So depending on the group, I think every golfing holiday you have a competition. A little friendly bet, usually with either trophies and/or money. But not serious money, just a bit here, a bit there. You might have an overall, where everybody puts a fiver in and then the winner on the day but then you might have a pound for birdies, a pound for sand saves. Yeh, you have all sorts of little bets. In our March holiday, we have Easter eggs of different shapes and sizes and we have got a baboon’s backside as a head cover and whoever gets the lowest score has to have that every year. You have all these fairly tongue-in-cheek awards."

Similarly DEBBIE stated in her cycle three interview that competitions are varied throughout the golf trip and that multiple competitions can be happening during the same round of golf:

"We will do an aggregate stableford. Also we’d play between ourselves, maybe skins and the winner will buy the drinks. Another day we will have a secret pair from each group, ‘cos being six you have to have two three-balls. We’d have a secret pair and we don’t know who our partner is going to be. We play stableford points mostly because it is easier. If you are playing a medal round you wouldn't be able to pick your ball up and it would not make it much fun."
As discussed in section 5.2.2 the existence of multiple rewards can bring recognition and acknowledgement of achievements. Shields and Bredemeier (2009) argue that some compete for the glory while others compete to share camaraderie with others. Furthermore, competitions may be designed to affect the outcome of the contest (Cohen and Sela, 2005, Ryvkin, 2010) ensuring all participants have a chance of receiving a reward. This was highlighted by TOMMY (section 5.5.2) and also by IVAN and CARTER:

"Actually you do pretty badly if you don’t come away with some sort of prize because there are - if you play four rounds - there is first, second and third, there is nearest the pins, longest drives, etc. So it’s edged that everyone should come away with a prize." (IVAN)

"We have quite a big range of abilities of golfer, I have to construct scoring systems that keep everyone in it until the last day so that’s quite a challenge. I will do things like on the first two days you just count the best 12 of 18 holes, so if you have had 6 really crap holes it sort of levels it out, and then I would make adjustments as the week goes on as by the last day, usually anyone can win." (CARTER)

Thus embedding competitions can help maintain an interest in the golf and encourage camaraderie and banter between players.

Even when competitions against others are not included, players may see the game as a test of their own ability, skills, performance and prowess (Shields and Bredemeier, 2011, Hinch and Higham, 2001). RITA commented that she will "always mark a card... go out with a card and I will do my best". Similarly DEBBIE, in her cycle three interview acknowledged that:

"I have got to have something to play, I just can’t play willy-nilly. I have got to have focus. If I have got no focus then I don’t play well at all."

The creation of competitions can be linked to the desire to perform well and thus is linked to ability and skill development. Few players choose to include lessons while on vacation but many players do make judgements about their performance relative to their own ability. For example RITA recalled:

"We stayed at Abama [NR15] and we just played Abama for the week or ten days however how long we were there, and I kept the cards and I did compare them. Look at them at night and discuss them."

RITA’s decision to mark and review scorecards is similar to that of ALANA (section 5.2.6.2), acknowledging that ability and skill progression are monitored. Significantly, most of RITA’s golf trips are with her husband DONALD, who mentioned that when he plays on holiday he avoids competition:
"If you go to the club and play with some guys there is always a competitive element to it. Sometimes it is nice just to go out and play without any competitive element at all, for me it takes the pressure off. To be able to go out there and relax and hit the ball and if you hit a bad one it doesn’t matter and it’s quite pleasant. Usually we’ll score but it is not the big deal."

Therefore keeping score allows RITA the opportunity to identify performance and provide a focus of the game without needing to compete directly against her husband.

Winning can often mean earning a prize or becoming a trophy holder. Rarely does winning entail significant monetary reward but it can endow players with status and prestige within the group, albeit often short term. Creating trophies was noted by JEREMY (section 4.2.5.2) and further identified in cycle three data.

"We have a money box on a plinth spray-painted gold. So we have this thing and every year we take it to the key cutters and get a real plaque, whoever is holding the [trophy]." (DAISY-MAE)

"People put in contributions to buy golf related prizes or drink related prizes. It tends to be a not very impressive trophy but it is a psychologically impact of winning it I suppose. Two competitions that I play in the main prize is the green jacket which is some Oxfam-purchased bit of tooter really. But it is more the principle of winning it that’s the issue." (IVAN)

The group in Cornwall, we have this challenge where if you win that particular day, it is always a stableford event, we have got this trophy and the trophy is just an old house brick and whoever wins then has to carry the house brick in their bag for the next round." (STEVEN)

Trophies have physical manifestations which are often symbolic to the group. The symbolism of trophies (rather than their monetary reward) was revealed in Heino's (2000) discussion of snowboarding's use of the 'Golden Duct Tape trophy' to reward a competition established in the early days of the sport. Duct tape is regularly used by snowboarders to repair worn and aging clothing, becoming a "symbol of the well-seasoned rider" (Heino, 2000, p180) thus its use as a trophy recognises long-standing cultures and behaviours within the sport.
In conclusion commercially organised competitions play a role in stimulating a trip to take place, with the location and timing set by the existence of the competition. This is can be encouraged by the perceived value of entering the competition, both in terms of direct monetary cost and in overall experience of the event. Informal competitions also play a significant role because they encourage golfers to concentrate and focus their attentions, while also offering symbolic recognition of success. Groups create trophies which have direct associations with the cultural beliefs within the group and winning such trophies can enhance status within the group, albeit it often temporarily.

6.2.3.3 Golfing Capital

The concept of golfing capital, defined in chapter three (and discussed in section 4.2.3.4 and section 5.2.5) acknowledges a range of benefits from participating in golf tourism. Analysis further asserts that opportunities for interaction can be an important part of golf tourism participation. While this frequently means engaging with others in the travel group, there are examples whereby groups can be temporarily extended by social interactions with others travelling at the same destination. This may be initially enforced by the golf course management - for example, in cycle two ALEXANDER recalled that they had frequently been asked to play with other visiting golfers, in order to maximise the number of players on the course. Additionally in her cycle three interview DEBBIE identified that her travel group was extended through social interactions with other tourists off the course:

"We have interacted with people, you are sitting down chatting and people join in with you. Nobody has joined us for a game of golf but they have joined us for sitting down and having a drink of an evening. Just sitting down chatting and somebody may be sitting near you and they will join in the conversation, or you will talk to them."

The flow of information can create ties bridging different groups (Brown and Reingen, 1987, Putnam, 1995), expanding the development of golfing capital. Such interactions are governed by rules determined by shared beliefs, which allow outcomes to be achieved such as developed friendships and expanded knowledge. Murphy (2001), in her research on the social interactions of backpackers, confirmed that 'information sharing' is an important part of discussions, motivated by the need to learn about other destinations and tourist places. Furthermore Murphy (2001) identified a ritual sequence of behaviour, commencing with discussions of prior experiences, which determine the extent to which social interaction will be maintained. The outcome is that friendships can be developed through these interactions.
Evidence of friendships developed through social interaction was confirmed by Yarnal and Kerstetter's (2005, p375) examination of cruise ship passengers, which asserted that opportunities for social interaction can foster relationships, creating "contagious sources of communitas" which have expectations guided by norms of behaviour expecting reciprocity. This is underpinned by the conceptual ideas of social capital (Heimtun, 2007), particularly in terms of bridging to new networks and bonding with existing members (Putnam, 2000). Groups which have greater levels of diversity often extend the range of resources available to benefit the group (Widmeyer et al., 2008). Thus developing ties and bonds with other golfers, and gaining experience of golfing places expands golfing capital. However, golfing capital must be transformative - that it can be traded as an asset - to be considered 'capital'. The ease with which it is traded and the value it obtains may vary. For example IVAN debated his own golfing capital developed through travel experience:

I think every time you go on another two or three trips a year you are building up a bank of experience and therefore you feel like you are more part of that fraternity. I don’t know whether you actually are. I’m very new in the club that I have joined and so I don’t particularly feel part of it, it feels like there is a club and there’s me. But I certainly think you feel like a more experienced golfer as a result of doing this sort of thing."

CC4 queried whether the trading of golfing capital could enhance the golf tourism experience. Analysis of the data concludes that capital may be earned by taking trips which expand golfing experiences but trading on these assets may be complex, requiring relationships with others in the network to already exist. Furthermore the fact that golfer have experienced renowned or highly ranked courses is not, in and of itself, enough to enhance status. This is confirmed by DEBBIE who asserted that her opinion of a golfer would not change just because they had playing internationally ranked courses - "not at all. Because they have played certain places doesn’t make them a better golfer or worse golfer".

While the above has noted the expansion of networks through bridging with members outside of the group (Putnam, 2000), participating in group golf trips can help bond existing networks. Developing existing friendships was noted as a significant motivator to attend group golfing trips (section 5.2.1.2) and this is further confirmed by CARTER, who organised the trips he attended:

"The groups I would normally organise competitions for, I mean first and foremost we are friends for whatever reason anyway, so golf is just another reason for doing something else around that friendship."
Larsen et al (2007) argue that the desire to spend times with friends is underpinned by shifts in the wealthier western societies which has created dispersed networks, requiring travel in order to connect with family and friends. Travel facilitates the maintenance of existing friendships thus strengthening bonds.

Discussing golfing experiences with people outside of golf networks is likely to be minimal because research participants suggest this would be of little interest to non-players (section 4.2.3.3). Furthermore some control is placed on the types of things mentioned so as to behave in a manner which does not damage the golfer's own reputation.

"I might in passing say to non-golfers 'oh yeah, it was great, the hotel was lovely, and the course was really beautiful', but in talking about the golf side of it there’s only a point in talking to other golfers because frankly I am sure non-golfers think it’s like watching paint dry, it’s of no interest." (DAISY-MAE)

When discussion of a golf trip does occur it is usually with other golfers. However, there is some adjustment made in regard to the nature and content of discussions, again to behave in a manner which does not damage the golfer's reputation.

"Some of our friends are not golfers so it would probably be boring for some of them. Others are golfers, some of them wouldn’t be prepared to spend as much money as we do and so we don’t want to appear to be ‘lording it’ over them so it is really only a handful of people that we would share our experiences on some of these things. It tends to be people who would be happy to go to the same sort of places themselves and who are golfers." (DONALD)

"When I talk to friends about golf there is a sort of currency of understanding of the demands of different golf courses so if I am talking to someone and they know that [a golf course] is difficult for example, know it is challenging because the gorse is there, you might say ‘I did really well’ and it was [this golf course], whereas if it was a lesser course you wouldn’t bother to go on about it." (IVAN)

"Well I would definitely recommend the courses I like and say ‘oh yes you must play this, you must play that’. But if somebody said ‘I am playing Spanish Bay [UR] because it’s a fabulous course’ and she were a high handicapper I would probably say ‘oh that’s really tough’. But I would probably, I wouldn’t lay into the course. I would just say ‘well you know that is a tough course’ but I wouldn’t sort of give a blow-by-blow account of my disaster [playing Spanish Bay] because they may have a good round." (RITA)
Recounting trips is clearly part of the social interaction occurring within networks which allows players the opportunity to display their own experiences and performances. DEBBIE highlights the importance of this reflection in enhancing the enjoyment of the trip as well as post-trip perceptions of the overall experience:

"You have got to have a stewards! We call it a steward's enquiry because that to me is all part of the fun. You get home and you discuss all the things that happened and especially the fun things. You don’t dwell on the things that are not so good, but some of the funny things and you do spread it about with people when you are sitting down socialising."

Recounting particular ‘memory markers' (Ahn et al., 2009) influences judgements of the overall trip experience and, although limited research on tourist recollections has been completed. Curtin (2006, p303) argues that "when we recollect and reconstruct our past experiences it is natural to be selective and imaginative". Furthermore it is significantly influenced by prior expectations, which inform judgement as well as recollection of the experience. Memories of sensations can help to create long-lasting personal experiences, while recounting experiences to others plays a significant role in shaping the perception held of the trip, which in turn can influence intentions to make recommendations (Hosany and Witham, 2010). Such recommendations may also be influenced by reputation.

6.2.3.4 Role of intermediaries

Several golfing groups made use of travel intermediaries (tour operators and travel agents), some of whom specialise in golf travel. Cycle one data (section 4.2.6) recognised the influence of the tourism industry, particularly in regard to marketing, while cycle two data (section 5.2.4) suggested their influence on price and trip organisation. For trips originating within the European Union, using tour operators or travel agents to package a trip brings with it the benefit of financial protection (HM Government, 2012). However, no golfers directly acknowledged this benefit, although some did highlight that having a price set by the tour operator provides transparency to the group. Furthermore, in some cases intermediaries were perceived as being able to offer increased options and/or cheaper prices. For example CARTER claimed:

"There are a number of benefits, they have often got block bookings on times so you can get more times, better times. They often are price competitive because they can buy at different rates as well, so include the hotel rooms and the tunnel crossings. So I have come to the view that there ain’t much difference between whether you do itself or use them to do it, in which case it is convenient for me to use them."
Both STEVEN (in cycle one data presented in section 5.2.4) and DONALD suggested that while intermediaries may offer slightly cheaper prices their preference was to make their own arrangements to ensure greater choice. DONALD stated:

"We did use [a tour operator] for the Scottish coaching thing. It was Longshot golf. I wouldn’t exclude it but recently when I had looked at it, the resorts they were tending to use were down-market from the resorts we normally go to. Usually I will research it on the internet, and then make bookings either through the net or direct with the hotel on the phone. There are various golf-type websites, there are people that sell golf packages and I’ll go on their websites to have a look at what they are selling that might give you an idea of what resorts to look at, and there have been occasions when I have given them the opportunity to do better than I can do, doing it on a bespoke basis, and sometimes one of them can. It is not a huge amount cheaper usually."

Historically, package holidays are "usually substantially cheaper than those arranged independently, with transport and accommodation being booked separately" (Pearce, 1987, p187) but changing market tastes demanding increased adaptation has led to the introduction of dynamic packaging, whereby individual products are selected by consumers and purchased together from an intermediary usually at a slightly reduced overall cost. For intermediaries, providing tailor-made products without the risk of extensive chartering arrangements can expand sales opportunities (Holloway and Humphreys, 2012). The internet has also aided change (exampled in DONALD's quote above), as more golfers source information, quotes and make bookings online. This has enabled golf tourism suppliers to communicate with the global golf market (Hinch and Higham, 2011), thus expanding their business reach. Significantly, IVAN seems to suggest that the decision to avoid intermediaries may be determined by the desire for bespoke trips:

I tend to do that comparison. I have only used Golfbreaks once and it was pretty seamless I would say but I tend to do this anyway with holidays, I’ll look at a package holiday, and then I would idly think ‘well how much is the flight there’, so I do that sort of bench-marking really. So I would make that check, obviously they do the organisation for you but it’s not a big deal to do it yourself and you can, it depends on how bespoke you want to be really."

Therefore the decision to use intermediaries may be based on absolute costs - and transparency to other members of the travel group about costs - or may be based on the choices available directly or through intermediaries. The decision may also be based on the perceived effort required to book individual elements, including golf tee times, thus convenience comes into play, which can be particularly important to the trip organisers. While the internet (and the expanded use of email) has made contact with most golf suppliers easier, the complexity of some golf trips means that organisers often turn to intermediaries for convenience.
"I do sometimes do the booking myself, but I sometimes use Tee Times, sorry not Tee Times, that’s America, its Golf whatever based in Reading [Golfbreaks.com]. They do a good job. So I sometimes just say sort this out - we want to stay at that hotel, we want these times we don’t care which order we do the two or three courses in." (CARTER)

Different types of golf trip may lead to different approaches, influenced by the length of time away, location, the perceived complexity of the elements required and the dominance of golf as a motive. For example while CARTER notes the use of Golfbreaks.com for his UK-based golf group trip, he asserts that "If I was going to America [with my family] I tend just to find out where I am and ring [golf clubs] up and book a time". He further states that participation in golf on a family holiday would be "more random, more spontaneous", with little effort made to book anything in advance. DAISY-MAE also considered two different types of golf trip she takes each year, the first being a short UK-based stay while the second a week-long European holiday booked through a tour operator:

"On a short break we will go usually to one hotel with two courses. So in itself that takes care of itself. I have only to date actually used them for the June break because previously to Ireland it was France. On the June break if it’s France or if it’s Ireland, we will get looking at one hotel, sometimes on its own. And then we are looking at four or five courses so you need a holiday company I suppose, one doing the logistics because it is a pain-in-the-neck, and secondly you get the best deal. And also we go back to that company because they do a good job, they deliver."

DAISY-MAE also commented that specialist golf operators hold valuable knowledge about golfing destinations, and can thus provide advice and guidance when selecting courses to play. Similarly RITA stated her trust in the opinions of an intermediary when planning a golf trip:

"We looked at the K club last year and the money for the K club [NR21] was just! - it was a bit silly in terms of price. So they [intermediaries] are quite good at trying to say 'well, within this bracket you could do this, this and this'. So yea, they are quite good." (DAISY-MAE)

I can’t think of the guy’s name but this particular company are excellent and we have been with them two or three times. We have usually got a course in mind and we have talked about it and he’s been very good and we haven’t been disappointed and he’s almost backed up what we are saying, but if this particular guy recommended it I would definitely look at it because he is brilliant. Without a doubt. " (RITA)

As trust in the knowledge and opinions of intermediaries can shape trip planning, it is proposed that intermediaries can shape the reputation of a course. The influence of reputation has been developed (section 5.2.6.6) and further elaborated (section 6.2.2.4), demonstrating its influence on destination selection.
Specialist golf intermediaries are aware of reputations and course characteristics, using this knowledge to direct golf tourists to locations likely to best meet client demands. CC2 questioned the control over destination and course choice held by intermediaries and it is evident that recommendations from intermediaries are influential in the decision making process (Hudson et al., 2001) with intermediaries having the power to achieve effective directional selling towards competing golf tourism products. In cycle two data ALANA mentioned that she had chosen British Airways Holidays in order to use travel vouchers she held but that she also sought suggestions on location choice - "we just said to them ‘right we want a top quality golf and spa hotel in the sun’." The holiday company then recommended Barbados. Relying on guidance about courses also influences destination choice. For example GAIL acknowledged that "golf holiday companies tend to give you a fairly good description of the course. So we look at those" to inform trip decision making. A consequence of the reliance and trust in tour operators and travel agents is that such intermediaries can increase the visibility of destination areas through their marketing activities thus stimulating additional tourism demand (Bastakis et al., 2004).

In conclusion intermediaries are often used because they are perceived to offer convenience when booking the trip. They are occasionally perceived to offer advantages in terms of price (both absolute costs and transparency regarding cost for groups) or access to better tee times. The knowledge and experience held by specialist golf intermediaries is often valued by clients, and recommendations offered may be used to determine destination selection, and perhaps more specifically course choice. The ability of intermediaries to disseminate information about courses means they have an influence on course and destination reputation.

6.3 Summary
An outcome of this chapter is that the heterogeneous nature of the golf tourist can be further clarified, with characteristics beyond socio-demographic, lifestage and life course factors influencing behaviour. The intensity of each of these aspects determines the nature of golf tourism participation.
6.3.1 The golf tourist

The golf tourist is clearly not a homogenous character and there has long been recognition of the many different types of sports tourist. For example Weed and Bull (2004), in their seminal work on sports tourism acknowledge many attempts at developing sports tourist typologies. They propose that sports tourists can be categorised based on levels of participation from Incidental through Sporadic, Occasional, Regular and Committed, to the Driven sports tourist for whom sports participation is “professionally significant” (p77). Distinction has also been made between active participants and passive spectators of sports events and competitions (Pitts, 1999, Gibson, 1998a, Green and Jones, 2005). While it is helpful to acknowledge efforts to categorise sports tourists in general it is of more value to focus on efforts to define the characteristics of the golf tourist.

Classification by frequency of participation is considered by Hennessey et al (2008), using three categories - Infrequent (5 rounds of less per annum), moderate (6-24 rounds) and dedicated (25+ rounds annually). Their research also identified golfographic characteristics which influence the number and variety of courses played while on vacation and the ability to play to handicap while on vacation. More recently Moital and Dias (2012) distinguish between 'hard-core' golf tourists and 'recreational' golf tourists on the basis of main purpose of travel, concluding that recreational tourists play less frequently and are less likely to book golf tee times in advance of the trip. Petrick (2002) used golfographic variables (handicap, golf membership, years of play and number of golf trips taken) alongside personal (demographics) and tourism variables (travel group size, length of stay, prior visitation and information) when characterising different golf tourist segments while Kim et al (2008) use segmentation (beginner, intermediate and advanced), travel specialisation (frequency, expenditure and length of stay) and golfer profiles (including socio-demographic, travel attitudes, motivations and destination preferences) to characterise golfer specialisation. Although such participant profiles are helpful in characterising market characteristics the research data demonstrates that many other golf-specific characteristics influence attitudes towards participation in golf tourism, which ultimately determines golf tourist behaviour.
However, prior to presenting discussion of the characteristics determining participation a brief comment is offered in regard to terminology. Two terms are drawn from 'in-vivo' codes (Charmaz, 2006) present in the data. The first "fanatical" denotes a seriousness about participation and, as an example, is used by MARGARET to allow her to make judgements about the attitudes of other players:

"I don’t think [my husband] was as fanatical as I was".

"Jane’s fanatical [about golf]."

Contrasting this is the second term "fun" which was used by several players (including CHARLES, DEBBIE, EILEEN, REX and STEVEN) when recounting attitudes to participation. For example DEBBIE states:

"[I] like to enjoy the fun part of it and not take it too serious."

"It’s nice to play well but it’s a bit of fun."

Therefore the following discussion uses these two terms to reflect contrasting attitudes towards golf tourism participation.

The first attitude to note is the centrality of golf in the player's life. Discussions introduced in section 4.2.1.1 and clarified in section 6.2.1 assert that centrality influences both enjoyment and participation. Centrality acknowledges the player's self-identity as a golfer. Where golf is an inherent part of daily life, it is not unreasonable to assume that it will influence a player's attitude towards golf tourism participation. Self-identity acts as a social construct which reflects roles within society, and central to identity theory is the view that it can predict intentions and actions (Terry et al., 1999). Furthermore Donahue et al. (2009. p527) argue that "when a person likes and engages in an activity on a regular basis, the representation of this activity will be integrated in the person’s identity, consequently leading to a passion toward this activity". Therefore centrality of the sport shapes the player's identity as a golfer as well as influencing passion for and enjoyment gained through playing golf. Therefore, being identified as 'a golfer' within wider society can stimulate discussion about the sport as well as invites to participate in golf trips.
The second attitude aiding understanding of the golf tourist is the effort made to create the opportunity to play golf. Where players are part of "golfing families", in which all members play golf, there is rarely a need for compromise about whether a trip will be taken that includes a golf tourism element" (Humphreys and Weed, 2012. p13). However, data demonstrates that where players are part of families which include non-golfers negotiation is required in order to participate in a golf tourism trip (section 5.2.1.1 and section 6.2.2.1). Such negotiation may require significant compromise over spend, location, timing and, in some cases, compensatory actions. Players who are more fanatical about their golf are likely to make greater effort to create opportunities to participate in golf tourism. This can be linked with centrality which strengthen endeavours to ensure participation.

The third attitude regards frequency of play. This may influence both the number of trips which include an element of golf tourism taken and the amount of golf played during each trip. While this may be a reflection of the amount played in the home environment, in some cases it is a reflection of the difficulty in negotiating opportunities to play. The data also illustrates that longer trips do not necessarily mean more golf will be played. In cases where golf is the primary motive for the trip golfing frequency will be high, but the need for a 'day off' or rest from the sport is seen as the trip lengthens (introduced in section 4.2.5.1 and clarified in section 5.2.6.4 and section 6.2.1). Competition between the sport and other touristic activities can determine frequency of play and for trips where golf is not the primary motive competing activities may provide greater appeal than additional rounds of golf. Therefore player attitudes reflect the appeal of the sport in balance with alternative activities available, affecting participation frequency.

The fourth influential attitude addresses the nature of competition. For some golfers a desire to participate in commercially organised competition acts as a primary motive for travel, providing opportunities to access courses, assess ability and meet with like-minded others. While this appeals only to a small segment of the golf tourist market informal competition (organised by groups of players on a trip) is a common occurrence. Section 4.2.4.3 and section 4.2.5.2 discuss this while section 5.2.2 and section 6.2.3.2 clarify how the nature of competition shapes participation. Although some informal competitions frequently have a frivolous element they are designed to stimulate concentration, ascribe status to successful players and provoke group discussion. Frequently perpetual trophies provide symbolic recognition of victory as "symbolic prizes not only recognize the achievements of the victor but cast a spotlight on him within the
group" (Eisenberg, 2011, p204). Furthermore trophies awarded perpetually are created to stimulate repeat participation in trips (section 6.2.3.2), with some informal competitions also demonstrating a high level of formality. Therefore embedding competition confirms a seriousness which can influence trip decisions regarding destination and course choice, timing of participation and group member status.

The fifth attitude influencing golf tourist participation is the desire for skill development. Some golfers may specifically aim to improve skills when on holiday (section 4.2.1.2 and section 5.2.2) and occasionally destinations are chosen because they offer access to lessons in notable teaching schools and coaching, accompanied with practice, improves performance (Ward et al., 2004). In sport commitment levels lead to different patterns of participation (Gibson, 2004) while deliberate practice, which specifically centres on improving performance, can lead over time to the mastery of performance skills and the attainment of expertise (Baker et al., 2003, Ericsson and Charness, 1994). Significantly, frequent participation during golf trips offers time for practice to occur and although such practice may not deliberately develop expert skills, it can aid motor skills resulting in enhanced consistency.

The sixth influential attitude acknowledges the desire inherent in the player to achieve a performance level reflective of their ability (section 6.2.3.2). This acknowledges that it is not absolute ability but the psychological reward of performing at or above expectations that motivates some golf tourists, while at the other end of the spectrum the desire for enjoyment and fun can shape participation behaviour (section 5.2.1.3 and section 6.2.2.2). Gillet et al (2009) illustrate the link between self-determined motivations and enhanced sport performance while a passion to participate can promote "an exclusive focus on trying to master the activity" (Vallerand et al., 2008, p388). Furthermore hopeful thinking can also influence performance outcomes and achievement (Curry et al., 1997) meaning that the very act of hoping for positive performance can lead to a positive effect. Thus those golf tourists who focus on maximising performance are more likely to have successful performance outcomes.

The seventh attitude considers adherence to the rules of golf (section 4.2.3.5). Rules structure the game, ensuring fairness (Wilson, 1994) and adherence can reflect acceptance of the norms of golfing behaviours. However, some players felt strict adherence could diminish the fun aspect of the game and therefore compromised by accepting the key principles, without focusing on the detail. Rules provide standardisation (Vamplew, 2007) and compromising on rules can
reduce fairness, making it challenging to determine winners. However, the data (section 6.2.3.1) suggests that when rules are ignored this is often done with the tacit agreement of other players in the group, all of whom accept that interpretations in more complex situations should be agreed informally with a view that the decision offers a sense of 'local justice' (Loland, 1999) which achieves a fun but fair outcome for all. Compromises are often made around playing order and complex interpretations of rules which seek to ensure no player gains an unfair advantage, but which, if adhered to strictly would slow the overall speed of play. Strict adherence to the rules by more fanatical golfers highlights the seriousness bestowed on each round of golf when compared to an attitude of flexibility which ensures fun is achieved.

So far the attitude explained all suggest higher levels of significance for players who are more fanatical in their golf participation. However, there are some elements which are linked to players seeking greater levels of fun and enjoyment from their participation. The first of these, element eight, appreciates the desire for social interaction with friends and other like-minded travellers. Enjoyment gained from participation may be sought by many golfers, as the social element is salient to participation for many golfers (Allen, 2003), but the research data (section 5.2.1.3 and section 6.2.1) suggests that more fanatical golfers gain enjoyment from different rewards such as playing success and status recognition. In her discussion of the conceptual meaning of 'fun' in sport Jackson (2000b) argues that there is a social component in fun, as distinct from feelings of enjoyment, thus achieving fun demands interaction with others. Furthermore, while participating in sport enhances social support networks (Allender et al., 2006) the desire for social interaction is felt less keenly by those players more fanatically focused on the game itself.

The ninth element accepts that some players look beyond the golf course to the landscape around, the facilities and amenities available to enhance the trip, and the time made available to enjoy such assets, when deciding on participation (section 5.2.6.3, section 6.2.2.5 and section 6.2.2.6). The surrounding landscape is an important aspect of golf course design (Hawtree, 1983), with courses renowned for their setting or terrain (DeChaine, 2001) but this appeal has the power to distract focus from the round of golf itself (Stuller, 1997). Such distractions may be welcomed by those less fanatical in their participation behaviours. Significantly, research (Firth, 1990, McElveya et al., 1991, Gimmy and Benson, 1992) suggests that the majority (between two thirds and nine-tenths) of homeowners living in golf course communities do not play the sport regularly, with the appeal of the location derived from the local facilities and attractively
landscaped environment (Nicholls and Crompton, 2005). Thus for those who participate infrequently the surrounding environment can be of greater importance than the course specifically.

The off-course environments discussed above link with the tenth element, which acknowledges a player's preparedness to compromise over the quality of the course. Quality may reflect both the complexity of the course and its condition in terms of maintenance. Discussion of course quality has run through this research (section 4.2.4.1.3, section 5.2.6.5 and section 6.2.2.5), with the data illustrating that some players are prepared to accept courses where the condition of the course is at a less-high standard provided other elements of the trip (such as local attractions and amenities) are perceived to offset this. However, this is not the case for more fanatical golfers who see course quality as important, being likely to forego participation if the course is perceived as poor quality. Although literature has historically asserted that quality facilities are vital for attracting sports tourists (Gibson, 1998a) the data suggest that course facilities of a slightly lower quality will be tolerated by some golf tourists, particularly those desiring a fun experience, provided other key elements are deemed to be of sufficient standard to offset this.

Finally consideration given to the experience felt by others in the travel group can be influential. This includes both players and non-players and highlights the desire to compromise in order to maximise group travel rewards rather than individual golf tourism rewards (section 5.2.3 and section 6.2.3.1). Long and Sanderson (2001, p191) recognised these as 'community benefits' which can ultimately aid inclusion in groups. Furthermore individuals with high levels of social motivation are likely seek the company of others and prefer group trips (Pearce and Stringer, 1991). Pearce and Stringer go on to argue that altruistic behaviour is evident in tourism, particular when social groups exert influence to achieve group goals. Earlier discussions which recognise that satisfaction and fun is achieved through social interaction (section 6.2.1), often with like-minded others (Schuchat, 1983), means that considering the needs of others can ensure an outcome of fun for the individual.
In summary, comprehensive analysis of the data suggests that the typology of the golf tourist is informed by eleven key attitudes which determine whether the primary attitude to participating in golf tourism is one of 'fun' or whether the player is 'fanatical' in their desire to participate. Seven attitudes are considered more significant by fanatical participants while four are more important for participants driven by a desire for fun. Each of the eleven elements informs the position of the golf tourist across a participation spectrum (figure 6.1) which immediately acknowledges that these multiple elements combine to influence tourist behaviour (Moutinho, 1993, Pearce and Stringer, 1991). Few golfers are likely to be at one extreme for all eleven attitudes - and example data is provided in appendix five to support this - therefore it is useful to acknowledge intermediate positions characterised as 'focused fun' or 'moderated fanaticism'.

![Figure 6.1: Golf tourist participation spectrum](image-url)
The value in the golf tourism participation spectrum is that it illustrates the characteristics which inform decisions made in regard to taking a golf trip and in the behaviours which take place during a trip which includes golf. Clarifying both of these can inform an understanding of destination selection.

6.3.2 Key theoretical concepts and spheres of influence
While the discussion above clarifies how the characteristics of the golf tourist shape different attitudes to participation moving beyond an exploration of golfer typologies provides a focus on the key factors which determine how golf tourist behaviours influence destination selection. This chapter has conceptually clarified six key theoretical concepts which establish the nature of the relationship between the golf tourist and their destination selection. The first of these concepts is the construction of the golf holiday, which recognises that, alongside dedicated 'golf trips' (where the primary motive is to play golf) golf tourists embed playing rounds of golf into trips which may have primary motives not associated with the sport, for example family vacations where trip participants includes non-golfers. The second concept appreciates the emotional rewards of participation, which is linked to both 'seeking' and 'escaping' factors (Iso-Ahola, 1983) which culminates in intrinsic and extrinsic benefits. The third concept establishes the importance of total trip cost, and comprehends the powerful influence this has on determining perceived value. The fourth theoretical concept is that of reputation, which appreciates the influence of word-of-mouth recommendations on reputation development and trip decision making. The final two concepts are linked to resources provided by the destination, with the first of these accepting that the course, climate and logistics influence destinations selection, while the second recognises that amenities influence both golf tourist behaviours and the choice of destination.
Finally the chapter corroborates that the four spheres of influence identified in chapter five interact with the six theoretical concepts to manipulate the behaviour of the golf tourist, in turn influencing destination selection. These four spheres have been evident in all three cycles of data analysis and this chapter has culminated in clarifying their characteristics. The first of these spheres is the power of group dynamics which plays a role for those groups which include non-golfers as well as for groups containing only golfers. Group dynamics establish the identity of the group as well as determining norms of behaviour. The second sphere of influence exposes the effect of competition and ability on golf tourist behaviour. This illustrates the importance of informally organised competition in providing opportunities to demonstrate and measure ability. It also establishes the influence that competition plays in bestowing status on successful participants. This leads on to the third sphere of influence, that of golfing capital, which appreciates the ways in which individuals enhance their own status and value as a golfer, by trading on their experiences and successes. The final sphere identifies the role of tourism intermediaries, particularly in regard to their influence on destination selection.

In summary, analysis in chapter six has shown that six key concepts constructed from the data relate the golf tourist to behaviours and destination selection. For clarity these are listed in table 6.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Concepts</th>
<th>Spheres of Influence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Construction of the golf holiday</td>
<td>• Group dynamics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Emotional rewards of participation</td>
<td>• Competition and ability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Total trip spend</td>
<td>• Golfing capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Influences of reputation</td>
<td>• Intermediaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Course characteristics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Amenities and support facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3: Summary of theoretical concepts and spheres of influence

Grounded theory requires that data gathering continues until saturation is reached - determined to have occurred when no new categories develop and any further data collection would bring minimal "incremental improvement to theory development" (Oliver and Romm, 2002). For this thesis acknowledgement is made that, while this chapter has focused predominantly on conceptual clarification, no new categories were evident in the data and that categories are fully developed. To justify this assertion it is possible follow the development of one conceptual theme (Group Dynamics) as an example (table 6.4) - there are of course many examples which could similarly be outlined.
Cycle One

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenting the data</th>
<th>Summary - development of the theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Codes linked to the travel group were presented in sections:</td>
<td>This identified that composition of playing groups and the formation of the trip group can influence golfer behaviour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2.1 Mixed-sex groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2.2 Single-sex groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.2.3 The influence of other players</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2.5.4 Forming the vacation group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cycle Two

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenting the data</th>
<th>Summary - development of the theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The category of &quot;Group Dynamics&quot; (section 5.2.3) clarified the characteristics of the four codes listed above.</td>
<td>This suggested that specific aspects linked to gender, group size and the negotiations and compromises within groups create a dynamic which affects golfer behaviour as well as determining the choices made regarding trip destinations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cycle Three

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presenting the data</th>
<th>Summary - development of the theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The theme of &quot;Group Dynamics&quot; (section 6.2.3.1) confirmed the conceptual ideas identified in the domain above.</td>
<td>This clarified that group membership influences trip decisions while compromises within groups can establish norms which determine golfer behaviour and the selection of trip destinations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4: The development of the "Group Dynamics" theme

For clarity saturation is more than just seeing the same patterns repeatedly, it is the point at which data reveals no further enrichment which could be used to shape the theory (Manuj and Pohlen, 2012, Flick, 2009). Debates surrounding the use of the term 'saturation' in grounded theory acknowledge the difficulty in confirming this point, with Dey (1999) suggesting that 'theoretical sufficiency' more accurately fits the practice of grounded theory studies. Moreover sufficiency implies that enough data is analysed to ensure the theories proposed are well-founded. It is therefore concluded that the sufficiency of data analysed now allows a move forward to the presentation of a substantive theory (Charmaz, 2006). This is presented in Part Three of this research.
PART THREE - THESIS CONCLUSIONS

This part reviews the conceptual findings which have been constructed from the data and presents conclusions in regard to understanding the relationships between golfer characteristics, golfer behaviours and destination selection. It presents a discussion of the factors informing the relationship between the golfer, golf tourist behaviours and destination selection. Drawing on the constructs determined in the six theoretical concepts and four spheres of influence, a model is developed which explains the relationship between the golfer and their selection of a destination for golf tourism. Following this, conclusions are offered in regard to how the grounded theory developed in this thesis can provide value to the wider field of sports tourism.
Chapter 7 : The relationship between the golfer, behaviours and destination selection

A grounded theory methodology requires that theory is constructed through the continuous gathering and analysis of data. This has occurred throughout the three preceding chapters allowing theoretical concepts to be constructed and refined. The presentation of these concepts, their refinement and clarification provides transparency in the process as well as facilitating the development of substantive theory (Glaser, 1978). To appreciate this it is necessary to briefly return to the epistemological origins of this research. In taking a constructivist approach (presented in chapter two) it is acknowledged that individuals construct their own meaning and realities thus theories aim to conceptualise phenomenon in abstract terms within those positions (Charmaz, 2006). Abstract theory should be parsimonious, 'fit' the data and 'work' as an explanation of the phenomenon (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This chapter presents the substantive theory which can be drawn from this process, so that a model of golf tourism behaviour is developed which explains the relationship between the golf tourist and their selection of trip destinations.

7.1 Understanding destination selection
The characteristics of the golf destination are determined by tourist elements (such as accommodation and other facilities) and by golf-related elements (such as the course, golf shops, practice facilities and clubhouses). However, there are also factors directly related to the golf tourist which shape golfer behaviour. In turn this behaviour influences choices made regarding destination so that golf participation can be included in a trip. The six theoretical concepts developed in this research construct the relationship which directs the golf tourist's selection of the destination. These six elements were explained in section 6.3 as:

1. Construction of the golf holiday
2. Emotional rewards of participation
3. Total trip spend
4. Influences of reputation
5. Course characteristics
6. Amenities and support facilities
These concepts act as a distinct strand connecting the player’s characteristics to their golf tourist behaviour and - taking into account destination characteristics - ultimately destination selection.

7.1.1 Construction of the golf holiday

Throughout this thesis, but particularly developed in section 5.2.1.1 and further clarified in section 6.2.2.1, acknowledgment has been given to the point at which a decision is made to include golf in the holiday trip. In many cases, especially when all participants of the trip are golf enthusiasts, golfing elements are considered during the trip planning stage, which influences decisions related to the choice of destination. However, it is also clear from the data that golf is included in many trips which are not considered by participants primarily to be for golf. In such cases the point at which the decision to play varies (explained in figure 5.2), with the outcome being that golf tourist behaviour may be determined by how much golf is to be included and how this fits around other planned activities during the trip. Furthermore the later the decision to include golf the less it impacts destination selection.

Of course, as explained earlier (section 5.2.1.1), there may be covert actions by golfers which can increase the likelihood that golf will be played. Actions by golfers may intentionally be covert to avoid signifying intentions to other travellers in the group that golf may be planned. Established norms (perhaps negotiated historically within extended decision making units such as families) will influence whether discussions to include golf in such trips take place. For example, if the established ‘norm’ is to play on holiday then discussions may only revolve around timing and logistics. Humphreys and Weed (2012) presented the complexities of this issue, arguing that the process of negotiating with these extended decision making units (DMUs) is assisted by rules of engagement, established over time in order to agree norms, the effect of which is to truncate or speed decision processes. Lifestage and life course shape the structure of the extended DMU, and influence whether trips include golf tourism elements.

Therefore golf is included in trips only some of which are termed by participants as golf trips. Furthermore travelling with - or without - equipment does not necessary determine whether golf will be played during a trip because, on the one hand some golfers choose to travel with their own set of clubs even when golf plans have not been made, while on the other hand hire opportunities service any spontaneous demands to play. However any inconvenience and cost
of hiring clubs may influence behaviour in terms of frequency of participation. For trips where
golf is the primary reason for travel equipment will be transported to the destination but
concerns related to the logistics of travelling with sets of golf clubs can directly influence
destination selection.

In conclusion the way players construct trips which include a golf element shapes golf tourism
behaviour. Specifically, the point at which participation is determined influences the extent to
which destination selection is adjusted to meet the needs of the golf tourist.

7.1.2 Emotional rewards of participation
Participating in golf tourism is driven by the desire for satisfaction and positive experiences
(section 4.2.1.3, section 5.2.1.3 and section 6.2.2.2). Attitudes to golf, particularly when players
consider themselves fanatical or 'serious' about the sport (Stebbins, 1992a, Stebbins, 2006),
influence the player’s behaviour and expectations, particularly shaping choice of course. Both
fanatical golfers and those driven by a desire for fun and enjoyment aim to avoid boredom but
player attitudes determine behaviours which shape demands for an enjoyable or challenging
experience. In cases where courses are excessively challenging, or alternatively perceived as
boring, frustration can be felt (figure 5.3) thus satisfaction and enjoyment is achieved by
ensuring the level of challenge flows in line with expectations (Edginton et al., 1995).

Furthermore analysis of the data showed (section 6.2.2.2) that the desire to achieve emotional
rewards from participating in golf tourism is linked to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations,
which shape golf tourist behaviour. Specifically both individual performance and interaction
with others can determine what is required from the course in terms of design. Comparisons
are frequently made to both judge and enhance the experience, including contrasting course
design with a home course, or benchmarking player performance relative to a professional.
Expectations usually require that courses outperform those at home, providing satisfaction with
the decision to play. Furthermore the opportunity to display and assess competence, relative to
both the individual and to other players (including comparisons with professional golfers) can
bring emotive rewards. Significantly, in the data (section 4.2.1.3) several players recounted
experiences where performance was below their usual standard, attributed to other elements of
the trip such as alcohol ingestion and lack of sleep, but this did not alter decisions regarding
course selection.
It is concluded that course selection is significant if feelings of frustration and boredom are to be avoided. This acknowledges motives linked to excitement, escape and social interactions (see figure 3.4) ultimately influencing destination selection.

7.1.3 Total trip spend
There is perhaps no surprise that cost is influential on tourism demand. Although the sport of golf has often been linked to markets with higher levels of disposable income (Mintel, 2003b, Mintel, 2009) total trip spend is still significant for destination selection. Specifically, the complex link between cost, perceived value for money and trip decisions is explained. Data highlighted that while absolute costs may be a factor determining whether participation can take place (section 4.2.4.3.4) it frequently alters destination choice to maximise the likelihood that players will participate in trips where golf is the primary motive (section 5.2.4.1 and section 6.2.2.3). Literature (Coalter, 1993) asserts that cost of sports participation acts as a relative, rather than absolute, barrier therefore, while packages are used to create transparency around absolute costs (explained further in section 7.2.4) it is assessment of value for money which is used to make judgments about the suitability of destinations as a whole.

Linked to value for money is perceived utility. The "utility derived from purchasing a particular product is not the same for all individuals" (Anderson and De Palma, 1992, p53) as tastes, ability, knowledge and prior experiences vary. Data illustrates that some players choose to play less-expensive courses fearing their ability level would fail to justify the investment, while others measure value by considering the scarcity of their own time alongside the cost needed to ensure a positive experience. Furthermore value is linked to perceived fairness in pricing, which takes into account perceptions of the product elements such as quality, reputation and uniqueness.
As well as golf elements, total trip cost includes spend on travel, accommodation, food and drink. Fluctuating exchange rates have directly altered destinations selected, with many UK travellers moving outside of the Eurozone in their search for value. Given particular attention was the cost of support facilities (such as golf trolleys or buggies for use on the course) and the cost of drinks (primarily alcoholic) off the course. The outcome is that once at a destination cost influences behaviours such as frequency of play, use of support facilities and consumption choices around food and drink. Significantly destinations will be avoided altogether if they are perceived as poor value.

Finally when considering perceived value for money company performance is influential. Data exposed examples where venues focused on earnings rather that service delivery. There were also examples where cost was determined by group needs rather than individual desires which meant players compromised on their personal preferences for the greater good of the group. One outcome of this is that, while spend might be lower, perceived utility and desired service levels may also compromised.

Overall, it is clear that both absolute and relative cost influence trip decisions. This can shape golf tourist behaviour regarding choices made about where to play golf, where to eat and drink, where to stay, for example, but also influences the destination selected. For some groups higher than desired costs have moved trips to alternative international locations or - in some cases - to domestic locations. The impact of this is that compromises are made which may influence who participates and golf tourist behaviours during the trip.

### 7.1.4 Influences of reputation

Throughout the data there are examples which demonstrate the influence of reputation on destination selection. These were first introduced in section 4.2.4.1.1 and further developed in section 5.2.6.6. Section 6.2.2.4 clarified conceptually the role of reputation, concluding that it is established through a variety of trip components, which, combined, encourage golf tourists to select one destination ahead of others.
The research participants frequently made reference to golf courses, offering names with which to identify their experience. With only a few exceptions these courses were highly ranked, either nationally or globally. In cases where reputation and rank was not seen as significant, courses were not specifically named - instead experiences were associated to a destination country. This suggests that course reputation (reflected by ranking) can form part of how trip is perceived and recounted.

Of particular importance for reputation is word-of-mouth recommendations. Players confirm that they are frequently offered recommendations but that acting upon this is shaped by judgments made about the person offering the recommendation, especially in regard to like-mindedness. The power of other golfing consumers is therefore limited by elements linked to trust. Section 6.2.2.4 examined the importance of credibility and trustworthiness when considering information sources concluding that accepting word-of-mouth recommendations is about risk-reduction in decision making. A lack of trust or credibility may apply to individuals and to other sources of information, including marketing materials and press coverage of the destination. Furthermore, there is evidence in the data that reputation can be gained as a result of increased awareness achieved through hosting (and frequently televising) professional golf events.

Tourism destinations have given increased attention to image and reputation because of its power to influence consumer choice. Humphreys (2011) confirms that reputation is bestowed by stakeholders or communities who collectively value the assets of the reputation holder. Therefore a golf destination may use assets such as the characteristics of golf facilities, service quality and uniqueness to establish or enhance its own reputation. Supporting - or despite - the best intentions of the destination, reputation can be impacted by the behaviour of other golfers (visitors and club members) with dissatisfaction also shared through negative word-of-mouth comments.

Therefore earned reputations as good golfing destinations encourages players to choose some destinations ahead of others. While this will be especially true for trips where golf is the primary motive for travelling, there are examples where a positive golf reputation can encourage golf to be negotiated into other trips. Taking the opportunity to play a renowned golf course can enhance the players own reputation (which is discussed in section 7.2.3) thus efforts are made to factor in a round of golf.
7.1.5 Course characteristics

In some cases it is the appeal of playing a specific course which stimulates players to choose one destination ahead of others. Accessing the course may require logistical aspects to be negotiated (for example to reach the destination or schedule a time to play) and the destination choice sets evaluated for golf are influenced by decisions linked to climate and travel logistics.

Destination selection is influenced by desire for variety. For trips where multiple rounds of golf are expected course characteristics become more dominant in player expectations, increasing the likelihood that several courses would be required at the destination. While variety may be demanded on any one trip, there is evidence (section 5.2.6.5) that some players will return to the same destination repeatedly, playing some courses - those perceived as offering high levels of satisfaction and value - again and again.

While the playing tract is significant, there are other elements which add to the appeal of the course. Of particular note is the surrounding landscape, including whether it is tree-lined, has expanses of water, contours or interesting wildlife. The clubhouse and practice facilities are also influential, although it is useful to acknowledge that while many players expect to find at least minimal practice facilities few use this substantively.

The number of golf courses available worldwide means players can factor in a range of elements when selecting the environment in which they would like to play. However, with many golf courses offering similar environments it is destination attributes and golf course attributes combined which ultimately determine selection of the location. Additionally satisfaction with a course can encourage repeat visitation to a destination.
7.1.6 Amenities and support facilities

Amenities such as accommodation and catering have dominated discussion about off-course golf experiences. Gender differences were noted (section 4.2.2) in terms of group dynamics (discussed in section 7.2.1) but also illustrated that the accommodation selection is influenced by the inclusion of women in the travel group. In this sense accommodation is partly about room quality but is also the leisure facilities linked with accommodation (such as swimming pools and spa facilities). Data demonstrated that men-only groups may compromise on the quality of accommodation because time spent using the accommodation was felt to be lower than when in mixed-sex travel groups.

Lifestage also influenced accommodation selection, with players noting that as they had aged they had increasing sought higher standards of accommodation (section 5.2.6.3 and section 6.2.2.6). While increased disposable income may assist in making this possible players were adamant that it was motivated by a desire to eat and sleep well.

Using time on a trip to participate in other tourist activities (such as visiting commercial attractions or historic or cultural sites) was noted by a few research participants but was infrequent. While shopping did offer an appeal for some, again this appeared to be an infrequent use of holiday time. For trips which included non-golfers alternative activities which took a similar amount of time as a round of golf were demanded. Additionally the role that food and drink play in the structure of the trip is evident (section 6.2.2.6) as it is linked to elements of relaxation and socialisation which form an inherent part of the motivation to travel (see figure 3.4). Bars and restaurants provide spaces for experiential moments to occur and can influence perceived trip satisfaction. Therefore destinations are selected if they are perceived to offer amenities likely to satisfy the needs of the trip group off the golf course - which is seen to be a significant proportion of the overall trip schedule.
7.2 Four spheres of influence
The six theoretical concepts presented above are individual strands of the relationship between the golf tourist and their selection of a destination. While each strand is largely independent of the others there are four factors which influence multiple strands. These four factors are denoted as 'spheres of influence' (Levine, 1972) acknowledging their ability to shape or change the way the golfer responds in terms of each strand. These spheres of influence were outlined in section 6.2.3 as:
1. Group dynamics
2. The role of competitions and ability
3. Golfing capital
4. The role of intermediaries

Therefore each of these spheres has characteristics which shape how the golf tourist behaves and the effect this will have on destination selection.

7.2.1 Group dynamics
The formation of travel groups can shape the nature of the trip. Whether this includes family, friends or acquaintances known only indirectly, whether it includes non-golfers, women, or high-ability and low-ability players can all influence group dynamics. The construction of the group is intertwined with the way the golf trip is constructed. The point at which golf is embedded into the trip decision and whether golf is considered a primary motive is determined in part by members of the trip group. Each trip member may need to balance participation within their extended DMU (section 5.2.1.1 and section 7.1.1) but can be influenced by powers exerted by other members of the trip group. Therefore group dynamics shape the construction of the trip.

Groups may have a fixed membership or may have transient additions. In both cases norms of behaviour are established and members are expected to adhere to these. The process of naming groups is significant in the creation of group identities (section 6.2.3.1) recognised externally. Group identification is also important to the self-identity of players, whose behaviour is shaped by their affinity to others. Once groups are formed habitual behaviours of the group are developed, which influence choices made about the destination. Habitual behaviours can be determined by group 'organisers' who emerge as gatekeepers, controlling membership, rules of behaviour and trip elements. This may be in negotiation with all or just some of the group members - depending on group size and construction - thus some group
members exert greater power than others over decisions such as trip timing, destination location, course choice and frequency of play.

Group size is also noted to influence trip behaviour. Data demonstrated that larger groups have different social dynamics from smaller groups. Compromises are necessary for both groups but, significantly, in some aspects larger groups can manage with lower levels of compromise as it becomes acceptable for groups to segregate into smaller units for convenience and greater enjoyment. The emotional rewards of being part of a coherent, established group was evidenced in data, with players showing affinity to their groups and gaining enjoyment by playing repeatedly with the same group (section 6.2.3.1). The desire to spend time with the same group of people stimulated, in some cases, the decision to create a travel group. Therefore group dynamics can enhance the emotional rewards felt by participating with others.

To accommodate the needs of all members of the group compromise may be made around costs. The influence of total trip spend was explained in section 7.1.3, concluding that destination selection can be shaped by affordability. Further to this groups proactively compromise on many elements of the trip to ensure that participation is possible for all members of the group.

In conclusion group dynamics influence some strands of golf tourist behaviour, particularly in regard to the including golf in a trip, emotionally benefiting from participation and the compromises made in terms of total trip spend so that participants can gain utility, value and satisfaction.

7.2.2 Competition and ability

Explanations of golfing behaviours demonstrate the influence exerted by competition. Participating in commercially organised competitions allows judgments to be made by and about the golf tourist but it also offers access to courses which may not otherwise be possible. Moreover competitions may provide a more affordable way to play the course than would otherwise be the case. Therefore attending competitions is a means for lowering total trip spend and gaining access to a wider range of courses.
In terms of informal competitions, organised between groups of players on the same trip, the emotional rewards gained from success - winning a trophy, prize or just a small bet with another player - can be used to enhance individual status within the group. Betting is frequent within many groups, and while occasionally the sums involved may be large, more commonly winning is about the right to claim the bet, rather than actual value which is often insignificant. Competing for the glory can enhance camaraderie and, in turn, increase satisfaction and enjoyment of the trip.

The influence of ability (forming part of objective three) has been evident throughout this research (section 4.2.1.2, section 5.2.2 and section 6.2.3.2) and it is clear that the ability of players does not directly influence course choice. However, while course choice may not directly be affected by the involvement of low-ability players - and groups do not overtly and directly use ability as a marker required for membership - frequently players of broadly similar abilities form the core of the group and courses are selected which are suited to the needs of the trip group. Furthermore groups make decisions regarding trip behaviour (such as determining the complexity of the course by the tees they use) which can accommodate weaker players. While it may be the case that outliers - in terms of handicaps - move to other groups, emotive rewards of being part of the group (perhaps through reinforcing existing friendships) can mean diversity of ability is irrelevant to golfer behaviour. Furthermore differences in ability can be managed through the manipulation of handicaps to concertina the field, equalising opportunities among high and low performing players to achieve overall success in the informal competitions.

In can be concluded, therefore, that ability has limited direct influence on destination selection while embedding competitions can provide positive trip experiences. These positive experiences can be derived as outcomes of playing successfully, accessing courses otherwise unattainable, or through increasing the likelihood that perceived value for money will enhance overall satisfaction.
7.2.3 Golfing capital

The influence of golfing capital (forming objective three) has also been deliberated throughout this research project (section 4.2.3.4, section 5.2.5 and section 6.2.3.3). Conceptually it is clear that the interaction which occurs when participating in golf tourism expands networks. Frequently motives to participate are derived from desires to bond with existing friends but there is also evidence that golf tourism can bridge different golfing groups together, for example in cases where golfers are asked to play together or where social spaces in golf resorts are shared. However, it is not seen to bridge to non-golfing groups thus the diversity of network is limited. Furthermore, the experience of playing golf in a variety of locations, some of which may offer unique or unusual environments, means that knowledge about the sport is built. This knowledge, in and of itself, can be informative but it can also been used to strengthen ties with others. For example discussions of courses played are frequent among golfers, who may make judgements about each other based on opinions about courses known by both parties. Such examples show that golfing capital can be used to establish status within golfing cultures.

However, analysis of data showed that while golfing capital may be obtained through participating in golf tourism, trading on these assets can be challenging. For example, an ability to play golf is seen as an asset when working in the corporate world and performing consistently - not necessarily to a high standard - is seen as a direct means to trade golfing capital for financial capital. While this is helpful, few golfers directly have the opportunity to use their skill in this way and their desire is to participate in golf for golf’s sake, rather than for the indirect benefits it may bring in terms of trading capital.

Within groups (thus established networks) the status of winning competitions (and being the trophy holder) has a minor effect on enhancing golfing capital. In the case of perpetual trophies there is evidence that players who have never won the trophy are often teased about this fact, so this has some, albeit minor, impact on status and golfing capital. Conversely players who have frequently won the perpetual trophy are recognised for their achievements and this can enhance their reputation within their group. With informal competitions, any golfing capital developed as a result of success is really only of value within the trip group so the opportunity to trade on this capital is again limited. Group dynamics (including the size of the group and its churn in membership) further influence the extent to which such successes are converted to golfing capital. Significantly playing commercially organised competitions, even national events, also adds little to a player’s capital directly. Finally it is evident that holding a low handicap, as
a reflection of being a skilled player, is more likely to add golfing capital than competing in such competitions.

There have been examples in the data where golf tourism has taken place on highly reputed courses, in some cases courses inaccessible to the majority of golfers due to rules requiring membership. However, discussion with research participants suggest this adds little to a golfer's status in the eyes of others. Moreover, it appears that although players are often covetous of such experiences - and would perhaps like to have the experience themselves - it is of limited importance when considering overall status of a golfer. Golf tourism today allows access to such a variety of experiences that gaining unique experiences is linked to effort rather than status. Therefore, while playing reputed courses can add to overall golfing capital in terms of extended knowledge and experience, its tradable value is rarely, if ever, high. What is valued, however, is holding a diversity of experiences. If two golfers have played the same course then discussions frequently focus on performance and opinions on the course layout. Holding knowledge of an extensive number of course is more likely to ensure that such discussion develop and these can provide opportunities to trade on golfing capital.

Earlier discussion on reputation (section 7.1.4) acknowledged the importance of creditability and trust when listening to, and acting on, reputation. Golfing capital helps to establish that trust, particularly through its ability to bond players together in strong networks. Therefore recommendations are more likely to influence destination selection in cases where they have come from within networks.

In conclusion golf tourism can expand an individual's golfing capital but trading on the capital is challenging. Networks are expanded through golf tourism opportunities and its is within these networks that the capital is more successfully traded. Groups dynamics influence the characteristics of networks thus golfing capital can influence status and recognition within these groups. Additionally golfing capital plays a role in enhancing trust and reciprocity, which can determine whether recommendations are used to inform the destination selection process.
7.2.4 Intermediaries

The final sphere of influence constructed from the data is the role of intermediaries. While there are many specialist golf operators, the golf tourism sector is of such size and importance that some mainstream tour operators have introduced golf departments into their operations to capture some of this market. Data demonstrates the use of both specialist and mainstream tour operators and shows that the tourism industry has significant effect on the decisions made when participating in golf tourism. Additionally, in some cases no intermediary is used, with players making their own arrangements directly with the principal. Two factors predominantly determine the approach used; firstly the perceived complexity of the trip and secondly the nature of the trip group. In the first case intermediaries are used where the trip is perceived as complex, perhaps because multiple courses are to be used, transport elements are required or the trip is overseas and reservations are to be made in a foreign language. In the second case, where trip participants are not from one family (or a very close group of friends) intermediaries are used to provide transparency to the pricing and the booking process. In such cases using an intermediary lets the organiser transfer some of the risk should problems occur before or during the trip.

In some cases intermediaries are perceived as offering better value. This may be in terms of a lower total price (possible because bulk-purchase arrangements allow discounts to be passed to the consumer) but also in terms of quality of experience, as an outcome of better tee-times or knowledge of when courses are at their best.

The knowledge held by intermediaries is valuable asset, the result of which is that customers seek the opinions of agents when selecting the trip destination. Specifically, knowledge of courses, climates and logistics means intermediaries can offer informed recommendations. There is an overtly acknowledged concern (section 4.2.6) that tour operators and travel agents will push customers to courses and hotels most profitable to the intermediary (something noted in the mainstream tourism industry generally). However, data also suggests that organisers appreciate the guidance of specialists, to help reinforce decisions made to select a course or destination.
Throughout the data there is evidence that some golf tourists will put together their own trip, contacting golf courses directly. These golf tourists will also book accommodation and make their own travel arrangements. But this is not to say that such customers don't use intermediaries for advice. Frequently intermediaries are asked to quote, making suggestions about suitable options, which the golf tourist uses to arrange their own trip. This is an issue for the travel industry generally and it is through developing customer loyalty and tailored service that the intermediaries retain their valued position in the supply chain. Customer loyalty was seen in a number of interviews, whereby the same intermediary was used for all trips, and were recommended to other golf tourists.

The power to recommend destinations, courses and accommodation to the customer base means that golf tourism intermediaries have an influence on reputation in all of these aspects. This power can influence decisions by a trip organiser, perhaps diverting from a destination known to the golf tourist to one known only to the intermediary. Where large travel groups are concerned intermediaries may be asked to offer multiple suggestions (along with price) which then informs group discussions of destination selection. In such cases the intermediary effectively narrows the destination choice set.

Consequently intermediaries can influence the perceived reputation of a destination within the market, can shape the destination choice set considered by the golf tourist (and golf trip groups) and offer convenience to the customer, in turn gaining loyalty. The outcome is that intermediaries shape destination selection.

7.3 A model of the relationships: Six strands of golf tourism destination selection

To provide clarity to this discussion a model of behaviour has been developed which depicts the relationship between the golf tourist and their destination choice. This model (figure 7.1) identifies how each of the six theoretical concepts acts as 'strands' which form the relationship between golfer characteristics (derived from the golf participation spectrum), golf tourist behaviour and destination characteristics. Furthermore it clarifies how each of four spheres of influence affect these strands.
Inherent in this model is appreciation that both player characteristics and destinations characteristics are not homogenous. Golf tourist characteristics have been discussed in academic literature largely in terms of frequency of play and performance (Hennessey et al., 2008, Petrick, 2002) but the data shows these characteristics have greater complexity (explained in the Golf Tourism Participation Spectrum in figure 6.1) which considers particularly the centrality of golf (presented in section 4.2.1.1), Lifestage and life course (section 5.2.1.2) and the experiences earned through participation (section 6.2.1). Three of the key strands identified in this thesis (section 7.1) are directly linked to golfer characteristics: (1) Constructing the golf holiday (section 7.1.1); (2) the emotional rewards experienced from taking a trip (section 7.1.2); and (3) total trip spend (section 7.1.3).

Parallel to 'golfer characteristics' is 'destination characteristics'. The three remaining strands (drawn from the key theoretical concepts identified in section 7.1) draw together characteristics which are inherently associated to the destination: (1) Amenities and support facilities (section 7.1.6); (2) Course characteristics (section 7.1.5); and (3) reputation of the destination (section 7.1.4). The latter two concepts directly influence destination selection while the first combines with golfer characteristics to shape golf tourist behaviour, the outcome being that golf tourist behaviour determines decisions made regarding trip destinations.

It is clear from the analysis that the relationship between each of these six strands and destination selection is not without external stimulus. Such stimulus spans multiple strands and have been identified as a 'sphere of influence' which acknowledges their cross-territory effects. Analysis has shown that the first of these four spheres - group dynamics (shown in red on figure 7.1) - has an effect on the way the trip is constructed, the emotive experiences of trip participants and trip spend (summarised in section 7.2.1). A second sphere of influence - competition and ability (shown in blue on figure 7.1) - has been asserted to shape golf tourist behaviour by affecting decisions on total trip spend as well as the emotional rewards of taking a trip (for example in establishing measurements of performance which depict success or failure (section 6.2.3.2)). Its influence also reaches directly to the choices made regarding the course, thus having direct bearing on destination selection. The third sphere of influence - creating and trading golfing capital (shown in orange on figure 7.1) - is related to the emotive rewards of participating in golf tourism. Although it does not directly influence the other two strands linked to golfer characteristics it does have an indirect effect on golf tourist behaviour through the variations it can bring to the two spheres of influence previous explained ('group dynamics' and
'competition and ability'). For example drawing on golfing capital can help bond groups (section 6.2.3.3). While this third sphere has limited direct influence on golfer behaviour it does have direct influence on destination selection through its relationship to reputation, although analysis has acknowledged limits to its power (section 7.2.3). The final sphere of influence - using intermediaries (shown in green on figure 7.1) - directly influences destination selection because it has relationships to the three destination characteristics strands (amenities and support facilities, course characteristics, and reputation of the destination) as well as affecting total trip spend (examples were presented in section 6.2.3.4).

In summary figure 7.1 (which has drawn on concepts constructed progressively as the data has been presented in chapters four, five and six) provides a parsimonious representation of the relationship between the golfer, golf tourist behaviour and destination selection, demonstrating that six strands link these aspects but that fours spheres of influences have additional power to shape behaviours and, as an outcome, the selection of destinations for trips which include golf.
Figure 7.1: Six strands of golf tourism destination selection
7.4 Summary

This chapter has explained the characteristics influencing participation by golf tourists, their behaviours and the strands which influence selection of golf tourist destination. It has also proposed a model of behaviour which clarifies understanding of intertwined involvement of group dynamics, competition and ability and golfing capital on golf tourist behaviours. Furthermore it acknowledges that the tourism industry also shapes destination selection in its role as an intermediary between customers and principal suppliers such as golf courses and golf resorts.

Thus, through a robust analysis of data including literature, a substantive theory has been developed which identifies the complex characteristics of the golf tourist. It acknowledges that lifestage and life course characteristics can influence golfer behaviour, particular in regards to the construction of trips including golf. It also explains how the emotional rewards of participation and trip spend also determine golfer behaviours, which, combined then determine the choices made about the destinations selected. Coupled with these strands are destination characteristics, which note the importance of the golf course and supporting amenities as well the as more intangible factor of reputation.

While the research objectives sought to focus on the extent to which ability and golfing capital influenced golf tourist behaviours - and both were determined as spheres of influence - two other aspects, group dynamics and role of intermediaries, also were determined to be influential on the how the golf tourist and golfer behaviours combined determine the selection of the destination for trips which include golf.

While the focus of this thesis is specifically on golf tourism as a conclusion the value of this research for the wider tourism and leisure industry is presented in chapter eight.
Chapter 8 : Conclusions

Although this research has focused directly on golf tourism it is helpful to also consider the wider lessons which can be leaned as a result of this research. There is value in opening up substantive areas for scholarship and critical thought while applied use of theory can encourage modification increasing parsimony and improving understanding of social processes (Charmaz, 2006, Glaser, 1978). Therefore conclusions are offered in relations to the wider context of this research.

8.1 Summary of the key findings

One justification for the focus on golf was the clear demarcation of ability (judged by handicap). The research clarifies that although players of similar ability may cluster together, and seek similar challenges, ability is not in and of itself a determining factor to affect course choice. In contrast with Holden's (1999) research of skiers which concluded that higher skilled participants may require more advanced resources, this research concludes that high and low ability players can both be challenged by the same course, albeit using different assessments. It is, however, important for both groups to feel some sense of reward, enjoyment or challenge, in that avoiding boredom is key. Furthermore performance can be measured (keeping score during rounds) and initiatives are often embedded into the cultural norms of groups to ensure that participant enjoyment is achieved by administering schemes to offset poor performance (in the case of golf through extensive manipulation of handicaps). It must be recognized that there are few sports where players of significantly different abilities can effectively compete against each other thus the limited influence of ability on participation in this case may not hold true for some other sporting activities.

The concept of golfing capital was created, drawing on the Bourdieus's distinction of symbolic capital (derived from social and cultural capital). This term is used to reflect the way in which golf-related factors can create exchangeable assets which enhance the symbolic capital of the individual (Humphreys, 2011). This thesis shows that golfing capital is a useful concept to explain the value attributed to interaction with others in the golfing cultures. Moreover, participating in trips has the ability to both expand networks and enhance bonds within existing networks, all of which can extend social and thus symbolic capital. What has also been noticed in this regards is that trading such capital can be difficult. Finding others who will prize such assets and values can occur within pre-existing networks but outside of such networks it carries...
limited value. In this case few non-golfers desire knowledge about golf courses thus holders of such information can only viably trade this with other golfers. Still, this is perhaps true of all capital, where value is determined by a combination of scarcity and desire (supply and demand). Having acknowledged its limitations what is of value here is that the experiences gained can be used to bridge between groups with similar cultural enthusiasm. In this case having something in common (golf) meant that players travelled in groups which included trip participants unknown to them. Therefore golfing capital helps to explain golf tourist behaviours. While this has privileged golf (as the focus of this research) other sports where participation has elements of group as well as individual behaviour (skiing, for example) may also experience similar traits, an idea which would benefit from further research.

Analysis suggest a gendered dimension to the importance attributed to accommodation when participating in golf tourism. It appears to be the case that this can be attributed to the time spent using accommodation facilities on trips where other activities - in this case golf - consume significant amounts of time. The conclusions offered from this research are that for golf trips which include women, accommodation is given greater importance than trips which have only men as participants. An initial question arose to consider whether this was more about travelling with family (or relationship partners) than a gender issues. However, the data refuted this because there is evidence in women-only trips and women travelling solo that accommodation remains significant. Consequently the focus on accommodation appears linked to expectations of how the balance of time will be spent during the trip, with accommodation facilities providing an alternative relaxation space.

Tourism intermediaries influence the process of choosing trip locations. Over the past decade changing tourist characteristics, with greater independence and a desire for tailor-made rather than mass-packaged trips hailed the removal of the intermediary from the trip booking process. Yet this research highlights that the role played by the intermediary is still seen as important, particularly in aiding the search process by narrowing destination choice sets. With more than 30,000 courses believed to be in existence in the world, assistance in narrowing choices comes from recommendations made by trusted golfers, from the player’s prior experience but is also guided by the tourism industry. Knowledgeable guidance on golf resources is appreciated by the customer and is a useful role for the industry to take. Moreover, the intermediary has significant power to influence destination reputation as it provides information to customers about climate, characteristics and locations new to the market.
In many of these aspects understanding golf tourist behaviours can offer some wider insights for other sports tourism markets. It also aids understanding of the elements which influence the destination selection process.

8.2 The model and its application to sports tourism

The model presented in chapter seven (figure 7.1) identifies six strands which establish the relationship between golf tourists, their behaviours and ultimately selection of the trip destination. While the aim of this research has focused on golf specifically these factors can be more widely applied to the sports tourism industry.

Making generalised assumptions about the sports industry is a challenge because of its diversity. For example participation may be a solo activity or team game; it may require limited resources to play or may need dedicated spaces with specialist equipment. Therefore any generalisations are made with extreme caution. However, within this caveat, it is possible to look at characteristics and behaviours and consider their applicability to the wider sports tourism industry. Each of the six strands identified in figure 7.1 (in chapter seven) are thus considered in a wider context.

The first strand "construction of the golf holiday" particularly considers the underlying process of including golf into the trip. This particularly focuses on the point at which golf is included (pre or post departure) and any negotiations which may underpin this. Literature on negotiating constraints in sports participation (outlined in section 3.2.2) acknowledge that these are embedded in individuals as well as shaped by the cultural and structural norms of each sport (Little, 2007). Furthermore negotiating with others, such as family members, may lead to conflict and disapproval which can directly impact participation (Dionigi et al., 2012, Shaw and Dawson, 2001). Moreover. some sports may be easily included into a trip at last minute (because they require limited resources such as equipment) while others may not be - for example including swimming into a trip is likely to be somewhat easier than including downhill skiing. This means that the point at which the sport is embedded into the trip decision may vary. This strand thus considers "the way the trip is constructed and the point at which the sport is embedded into the trip".
The second strand "Emotional rewards of participation" focuses on the personal experiences gained from taking golf trips - with rewards coming from many factors such as spending time with others or achieving successful performance. These rewards may provide short-term or immediate gain while others can provide longer-term enhancements, such as expanded social networks or memorable life-markers to look back on (Fairley and Gammon, 2005). Therefore this strand considers "the emotional rewards and benefits earned by participating in the sport".

The third strand spotlights the perceived value for money in association with "total trip spend". Golf participation directly adds to the cost of a trip because it requires access to a course which is usually at a fee, with higher charges for more exclusive access or better quality courses. While some sports (for instance cycling) can make use of the public realm to avoid adding to total trip cost for some enthusiasts cost may be seen only as a relative barrier (Coalter, 1993) thus electing to purchase access to dedicated facilities (i.e. a velodrome) to enhance overall experience. This strand also considers spend on non-sport elements of the trip, such as catering and accommodation which inform judgements about value and perceived utility. This is influenced by absolute costs of the resources provided at the destination as well as relative costs, affected by factors such as shifts in exchange rates or seasonality pressures on demand (Nadal et al., 2004). In summary although different sports may contribute a substantively dissimilar ratio to the overall trip spend it is necessary to consider "perceived value for money alongside total trip spend".

The fourth strand "amenities and support facilities" explains the influence of hospitality elements such as accommodation, food and beverage provision. It also confirms the importance of places for entertainment and social interaction. This includes visits to tourist attractions, cultural and heritage sites, music venues and bars (Fox and Sobol, 2000). These are not unique to golf and therefore can be considered for all sports participants. This strand thus considers "the characteristics of amenities (hospitality elements) and support facilities (including entertainment and social spaces)".

The fifth strand specifically acknowledges the availability and quality of the golf resources (including practice facilities) desired by the golf tourist under the heading "course characteristics". Availability considers both geographic accessibility and any controls over guest use of golf courses and club facilities while quality links to judgements made about the condition and maintenance of the golf course (Shmanske, 1999, Warnken et al., 2001). It also considers
the appeal of the surrounding landscape and climate. Other sports which rely on the natural environment (for example skiing or scuba diving) may need to consider how maintenance and protection can control resource quality and maintain an appealing atmosphere conducive to participation. Sports less reliant on the natural environment will still need to consider how constructed facilities fit in the surrounding built environment. Design of sports facilities can play an important role in determining successful use (Puhalla et al., 1999) while informal spaces are more frequently serving as places for sport (Kural, 2010). Therefore the tangible and intangible characteristics of the sporting resources must be considered if destination selection is to be understood.

The sixth strand highlights "influences of reputation", which acknowledges that recommendations are used by golfers to shape travel plans. This construct has been apparent in many aspects of the data on golf tourism but in this context particularly focuses on the destination. It distinguishes between places and acts to pull the golf tourist to one location ahead of others (Rodden, 2006, Dann, 1977) by stressing characteristics deemed significant to the golf tourist. To be of value reputation relies on dissemination, often through word-of-mouth recommendations or media reporting. In a wider context "the reputation of the sporting and non-sporting elements of the destination" are thus significant.

Significant conceptually to this model is that these six strands are shaped by four spheres of influence. As can be seen in figure 7.1 these are closely aligned to the cultural norms and behaviours of golfers and are therefore not easily transferable to a general model of sports tourism destination selection. However, further examination of the these four spheres can inform understanding of how the key strands are shaped.

Firstly in terms of golf tourism the dynamics between trip participants significantly impacts both golf tourist behaviours and the selection of trip destinations. Both fixed membership and transient membership groups were apparent, as well as larger and smaller trip groups. In a wider context team sports may have contrasting experience in this regard - on the one hand membership is fixed when entire teams travel as a group to compete, while contrasting this is the need to travel with sufficient numbers to play the sport thus additional players are recruited to 'make up the numbers' when entire teams are unable or unwilling to travel. Importantly, such recruits are not without affiliation to the group and are likely to adhere to group norms and behaviours (Bouchet et al., 2004). Having highlighted the issue for team sports it is helpful to
note that participants in solo sports can still be encouraged toward group travel to achieve shared emotive rewards and collective identity (Higham and Hinch, 2009b). The substantive theory also suggests that trip organisers act as gatekeepers, controlling membership and norms of behaviour. Thus overall 'group dynamics' are influential on sport tourist behaviours.

The second sphere of influence acknowledges the importance of embedding competitive elements into the trip, in terms of both commercially organised events and inform competition. This provides a means for focusing sporting efforts which allows ability to be developed and displayed. The form of competition can vary the intensity of the challenge to meet differing expectations of players, in turn enhancing the overall experience of playing golf. For other sports embedding such a variety of competitive challenges may be difficult - and few sports have a handicapping system which allows different ability players to perform fairly and enjoyably in the same competition. This is not without possibilities however. For example an amateur hockey festival may assemble leagues comprising teams of similar ability, with each league playing for a separate trophy. Solo sports can also use competition to provide opportunities for ability assessment. For example runners may compare times on a daily run to evaluate improvements (and possibly comparing times with other runners). Therefore providing opportunities for 'competition' which allow sporting ability to be effectively developed and displayed will affect sport tourist behaviours and can lead to one destination being chosen ahead of others.

Thirdly using the concept of golfing capital has helped to clarify both the assets gained from participating in golf tourism and tradability of such resources. It has also shown networks and conceptually it helps to appreciate group bonding as well as sporting status (Murphy, 2001, Putnam, 1995). This ease with which golfing capital can be amassed and traded depends on the actions and networks of the individual. In a wider sporting context it is useful to understand the influence on 'sporting capital' amassed and traded as an outcome of participating in sports tourism activities. Furthermore this is directly linked to the competition and ability sphere of influence (discussed above) in that opportunities to develop and display ability can directly enhance capital value and tradability.
The final sphere of influence acknowledges the use of intermediaries to create and retail the golf tourism trips. While it is clear that not all travellers use intermediaries in their purchase of trip elements the influence of the industry to package trips and market destinations means that information about golf tourism is shared, consequently stimulating demand. While golf tourism is seen to be the largest sector of the sport tourism market other sectors have specialist intermediaries serving the needs of the players. Specialists need to have extensive knowledge of the product (and suitable destinations) as well as understanding the cultural norms of their sport in order to best serve - and gain loyalty from - their market. This will bring with it trust and 'power' which can be used to influence behaviours of, and choices made, by their niche sports tourism sectors.

In conclusion a more formal model which considers how the key characteristics of the sports tourist influences sporting behaviours and consequently selection of a trip destination is presented in figure 8.1. This model is developed to initiate critical thought on this realm, with the rewards that better understanding of the relationship between the sports tourist and their choice of destination can enhance understanding of the expectations of the tourist and furthermore inform industry practice.

![Figure 8.1: Relationship between the sports tourist and destination choice](image-url)
8.3 Summary conclusions and areas for further research
Having a detailed understanding of the characteristics of the participation spectrum (figure 6.1) confirms that golfers are heterogeneous and that a variety of external factors also influence participation decisions. This research concludes that attitudes of golfers towards aspects such as the importance of golf in their daily lives, playing frequency, the desire for skill development or social interaction (and others) locate them on a participation spectrum. As a result golfers require different things from their golf tourism products. The implication of this is that courses and destinations can promote different aspects of their product to appeal to different markets.

Having acknowledged that golfers are not homogenous the research then considered how golfer behaviours inform the choices made about the courses played and destinations selected. The conclusions demonstrated that four different strands (trip construction, emotional rewards, total trip spend and amenities and facilities) determine golf tourist behaviours and these, combined with two additional strands (course characteristics and reputation), govern the choices made regarding the selection of trip destinations. Significantly the strands are affected by four spheres of influence shaping and controlling the outcome.

This thesis has provided a sophisticated analysis of this complex issues and has outlined a formal theory to explain the relationship between the behaviours of the sports tourist and their selection of a trip destination. It is however acknowledged that while this outlines the context for this relationship in regard to sports tourism more generally, additional research is needed to confirm these assertions for different sports (which fall beyond the scope of this thesis).

There is value in the findings of this research for the tourism industry. The participation spectrum can enhance understanding of market characteristics while knowledge of the factors influencing behaviours can help inform marketing activities. For example appreciating that golf may be embedded in to the trip once at the destination could encourage courses to package golf fees, club hire and competition entry together to attract holidaymakers in nearby resorts. Furthermore it could also help enhance marketing and promotion of courses to create coherent reputations as a golf destinations. Again, although beyond the aim and scope of this thesis future research may consider how an understanding of the relationship can inform golf tourism marketing.
Some limitations should also be noted regarding the wider applicability of the findings of this work. Firstly, the data draws on the views of only 25 research participants. Although the use of theoretical sampling (required by grounded theory methodology) does ensure participants are selected for their relevance in addressing the theory being constructed, a larger sample may have provided additional clarification. For example, interviewing a gay man about his experiences of accommodation when travelling for golf with a relationship partner may have further clarified the strand linked to amenities and facilities.

The use of CAQDAS software assisted the management of this large research project. As stability of the system improved so too did the variety of tools available to analyse the data and model findings. Of particular value was the ability to interrogate the data comprehensively and quickly. For example, as a possible concept came to light so the database could be thoroughly searched to establish whether other incidences existed. However, one limitation is that computer searches are only as robust as the choice of terminology used. The system does allow for similes and word-stems to be considered but it is vital that the researcher know the data well, to ensure evidence is not missed. Therefore, while the software can speed the search process, the researcher must still have a comprehensive knowledge of the data.

Using a qualitative approach to this research has ensured that insightful and in-depth understanding of the behaviours of golf tourists has been achieved and a model portraying golf tourism destination selection has been created. Having identified the six strands and four spheres of influence, it is now possible to consider the use of quantitative data to further confirm these for other sports. Therefore, further research, which goes on to test this model in regards to other sports would be a useful next stage.

The presentation of this research reflects the requirements of PhD study. However, to be of value to the sports tourism industry, re-presenting the findings in a manner which is relevant and accessible to industry is an important next step. Therefore, reporting the findings, and what these can mean for the operation of golf tourism provision must occur to ensure this work is of wider value.
This focused on the UK golf tourist. Examining the behaviours of golf tourists originating from other regions of the world is necessary in order to clarify the extent to which the model is globally applicable. Furthermore, one consequence of focusing this research on UK golf tourists is that there are established cultural attitudes about elitism in golf (asserting the possibility that participating in golf infers a status which can automatically endow capital). There are also characteristics around group golf trips which are stereotyped to be 'lad's trip. Expanding the research to other nations will allow for cultural nuances, adding further robustness to this substantive theory explaining the relationships between golf tourist behaviours and destination selection. Furthermore exploring this issue in relation to other sports will further clarify the conceptual themes which shape the proposed formal theory linking sports tourist behaviours and destination selection.

One final point to offer is that the way in which golf tourism has been previously understood is much less sophisticated than the model developed as a result of this research. The comprehensive and robust analysis has identified and explained the complexity of the relationship in a more dynamic way. Therefore this has offered a useful contribution to knowledge in terms of understanding the heterogeneous nature of the sports tourist, as well as appreciating how sports tourism behaviours are related to and shape decisions made regarding the location of sporting trips.
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APPENDICES

Appendix One: Course rankings
Appendix Two: Interview guides
Appendix Three: Post-interview questionnaire
Appendix Four: Development of conceptual categories - six themes
Appendix Five: Example data - Golf tourism participation spectrum
Appendix One: Course rankings

The rankings are sourced from an online website (www.top100courses.com) and lists courses specifically referenced in this document. In addition European courses are also scored using the Peugeot Golf Guide - Europe's top 1000 courses (2008). This provides three separate scores - the first is a ranking for the course (out of 20), the second for the clubhouse (out of 10) and the third is for hotel and restaurant facilities in the vicinity (out of 10). In cases where there are multiple courses at the same location – particularly true for golf resorts – the score for the highest ranked course has been listed.

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<td>Unrated [UR]</td>
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<td>Augusta National</td>
<td>4th in USA</td>
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<td>Brabazon (The Belfry)</td>
<td>32nd in England</td>
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<td>Celtic Manor</td>
<td>5th in Wales</td>
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<td>Dunkerque</td>
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<td>Gleneagles</td>
<td>14th in Scotland</td>
<td></td>
<td>18/8/7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardelot</td>
<td>18th in France</td>
<td></td>
<td>16/6/6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoylake (Royal Liverpool Golf Club)</td>
<td>10th in England</td>
<td>84th</td>
<td>18/8/7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K Club</td>
<td>21st in Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td>17/8/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Manga</td>
<td>37th in Spain</td>
<td></td>
<td>15/6/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Touquet</td>
<td>13th in France</td>
<td></td>
<td>16/5/7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muirfield</td>
<td>2nd in Scotland</td>
<td></td>
<td>10th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O'Meara (Carton House)</td>
<td>44th in Ireland</td>
<td></td>
<td>14/7/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pebble Beach</td>
<td>8th in USA</td>
<td>12th</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penina</td>
<td>16th in Portugal</td>
<td></td>
<td>15/6/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quinta do Lago</td>
<td>11th in Portugal</td>
<td></td>
<td>16/6/7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal County Down</td>
<td>1st in Northern Ireland</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>19/6/7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Dornoch</td>
<td>3rd in Scotland</td>
<td></td>
<td>13th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal St George's</td>
<td>1st in England</td>
<td>22nd</td>
<td>19/7/6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saunton</td>
<td>11th in England</td>
<td></td>
<td>18/7/5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Bay</td>
<td>Unrated [UR]</td>
<td>Ineligible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Andrews</td>
<td>1st in Scotland</td>
<td>9th</td>
<td>18/8/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Enodoc</td>
<td>16th in England</td>
<td></td>
<td>18/7/4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St Mellion</td>
<td>47th in England</td>
<td></td>
<td>17/8/6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunningdale</td>
<td>3rd in England</td>
<td>28th</td>
<td>18/8/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turnberry</td>
<td>4th in Scotland</td>
<td></td>
<td>17th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valdarrama</td>
<td>2nd in Spain</td>
<td>89th</td>
<td>19/8/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wimereux</td>
<td>Unrated [UR]</td>
<td>Unrated [UR]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix Two: Interview guides

The following six pages show the three interview guides. The text in red is the main prompt for the discussion. The text in black notes the areas arising from theoretical sensitivity and data analysis. They were added to the interview guide to encourage efforts to probe for greater depth when interviewing.
QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW: CYCLE ONE

Patterns for taking a golfing holiday
• Tell me a little about your golfing history, how did you come to take up golf?
  o How long have you been playing golf?
• Could you describe a typical golf holiday that you take
• As you have become a more experienced golfer could you explain how has your golf trips changed?
  o How have your golf holiday patterns changed (are you taking more trips, longer trips?)
  Why might that be?

Influence of peers
• Tell me about the influence that your family and friends have on your decision to take a golf holiday.
  o How do your family and friends influence your decision to take a trip?
  o Do they influence where you decide to go?
  o Is there a level of negotiation needed to find the time and money to take a golfing trip?
  o How important is word-of-mouth advice when deciding on courses and destinations?

Groups
• Tell me about the people you tend to travel with when you play golf
  o Who do you travel with when you play (family, other golfers?)
  o How is this group determined?
  o Is it always the same people?
• Tell me your views on the abilities of the people you travel with
  o How varied is the ability of the people you travel with and does this have an influence?
  o Are there ever conflicts between those with different skill levels (slow play, lost balls?)?
• What is your view on mixed-sex or single-sex golf holidays
  o Does the gender of plays have an influence?
• As you look back on past golfing holidays could you identify people who helped to decide which destination was to be visited and which courses were to be played?
  o Are there any “group behaviours” that must be adhered to?
  o Who tends to get the final say?

Skill and Ability
• How, if at all, does the range of abilities of players influence your choice of destination and choice of course?
• Tell me about your expectation of how well you will play when on holiday
  o Are the ‘uncertainty of result’ and the opportunity to challenge your ability important?
  o Is this linked to competitions (vs. course, handicap or others).
  o Do you expect to play above, below or to your handicap?
• Could you tell me about your feelings when a course is either too easy or too hard for you, or for other group members.
  o Is there ever a frustration if the course is too easy or too difficult? Is there a ‘thrill’ achieved?
  o Has the type of holiday taken changes as your handicap has changed (up or down)?
Golfing capital

• Could you explain to me what you perceive to be the norm for a golfing trip by your fellow golfers and do you think you adhere or deviate from the norm?
• Tell me about your conversations with other golfers about your and their golf holidays.
  o Do you feel that it is important to be able to talk about your trip with other golfers when you return, do you like to hear about other peoples golfing holidays?
  o What is important about hearing from others about their trips?
• How important to you is a feeling of comradeship with other golfers
  o Do you feel part of a golfing fraternity?
  o Does taking a golf trip make you seem a close part to this network/world? Do trips help this?
  o Does this provide a golfing network of wider people you then might play with (either at home or on other holidays) and interpersonal coordination (finding likeminded others)?
• What are your views on playing strictly to the rules of golf when you are on holiday
  o Do you think it is important to abide by the golfing rules when you are on holiday? Why?
• Could you describe to me the influences that other players on the course (or at golf destinations) have on your holiday experience

Courses

• Can you describe how you and the other players decide on which destination to visit and which courses to play
  o How do you decide which course to play?
  o What factors come into play when deciding?
  o How do you narrow it down when there are several courses offering similar provision?
• Considering the example of your last golf holiday what contributed to your decision to play the selected courses
  o Is this influenced by the ability of the players? Is the image and reputation of the course influential, to you drawn on rating and guide books to help select courses? Do you line to repeat your visits to courses? Why might this be?
• What are you looking for from a golf course when you are on holiday?

Destinations

• Tell me what you are looking for when you select a golfing destination
  o What influences destination choice (do any of these link to psychological factors rest, relaxation, stimulation, escape, etc)?
  o How does destination image play a role?
  o Does non-golf factors came into play (social opportunities, other attractions, amenities, etc)? What about clubhouse, golf retail outlets)?
  o Are some golfing destinations more appealing to you? (consider adventurousness and authenticity?)

Closers

• Is there anything else you think I should know or understand?
• Is there anything you would like to ask me?
QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW: CYCLE TWO

Patterns for taking a golfing holiday

- Tell me a little about your golfing history, how did you come to take up golf?
  - How long have you been playing golf?
  - How often do you play?

- Could you describe a typical golf holiday that you take

- As you have become a more experienced golfer could you explain how has your golf trips changed?
  - How have your golf holiday patterns changed (are you taking more trips, longer trips?)
  - Why might that be?
  - Do you travel to play in organised golf competitions?
  - How much effort would you go to in order to make playing while on holiday possible?

Influence of peers

- Tell me about the influence that your family and friends have on your decision to take a golf holiday.
  - To what extent do you combine playing golf with holidays to visit friends or family, a family event, etc?
  - To what extent do you have to negotiate time to play golf on holiday?

Groups

Tell me about the people you tend to travel with when you play golf

- Who do you travel with when you play (family, other golfers?). How is this group determined? Is it always the same people?

- What is your view on mixed-sex or single-sex golf holidays
  - Does the gender of players have an influence?
  - Do you think there are advantages in playing in either mixed-sex or single-sex groups?

- Tell me your views on the abilities of the people you travel with
  - How varied is the ability of the people you travel with and does this have an influence?
  - Are there ever conflicts between those with different skill levels (slow play, lost balls?)?
  - What are the implications of mixed ability groups?

Courses and destinations

- Can you describe how you decide on which destination to visit and which courses to play
  - To what extent does destination image play a role? What facilities are you looking for that the course must have?
  - How do you narrow it down when there are several courses offering similar provision?

- To what extent is the course selection (and destination) influenced by an expectation that the holiday will be enjoyable?
  - What course factors might make the holiday less enjoyable?
  - What if the course is a really tough challenge? What if the course is too easy? (Linked to later question on skill / ability)

- Tell me what you are looking for when you select a golfing destination
  - What facilities are important to you when you are choosing a golfing destination?
  - To what extent does weather/climate play a role?
  - To what extent does course variety (more than 1 course) play a role when choosing a destination?
    - Do you think this is the same for all golfers (ones who play more/less frequently)?

- How far would you be prepared to travel to play a course?
  - What influences this? How does this impact destination choice?
  - To what extent does ease of access play a role in destination selection?
• How likely would you be to visit other tourist attractions in the area when you have gone on a
golf holiday?
  o How is this fitted into your holiday schedule?
• To what extent do you look for ‘value-for-money’ at a destination?
  o What factors help to determine whether you get this?
  o How does this influence your likelihood to visit a destination?

**Golfing capital**
• Tell me about your conversations with other golfers about your and their golf holidays.
  o Do you feel that it is important to be able to talk about your trip with other golfers when
    you return, do you like to hear about other peoples golfing holidays?
    ▪ To what extent does playing the same courses as others give a common
      affinity?
  o What is important about hearing from others about their trips?
• How important to you is a feeling of comradeship with other golfers
  o Do you feel part of a golfing fraternity?
    ▪ What is the idea of ‘like-minded’ golfers? What criteria makes them like-minded?
  o Golf Club membership –
    ▪ Does this provide a golfing network of wider people you then might play with
      (either at home or on other holidays) and interpersonal coordination (finding
      likeminded others)?
• What are your views on playing strictly to the rules of golf when you are on holiday
  o Do you feel it’s important to abide by the golfing rules when you are on holiday? Why?
• Could you describe to me the influences that other players on the course (or at golf
  destinations) have on your holiday experience
  o To what extent do other golfers on the course influence your experience?
• To what extent do you use intermediaries when booking a vacation?
  o Do you use golfbreaks or similar intermediaries (to’s?)
  o Do you use discount schemes? (2-4-1, passport, greenfrees, etc)?
    ▪ On holiday? Does it influence destination or course choice

**Skill and Ability**
• Tell me about your expectation of how well you will play when on holiday
  o Do you expect to play above, below or to your handicap?
  o Is skill-development / improvement important when playing on vacation
    • Would you have lessons while on holiday?
• Could you tell me about your feelings when a course is either too easy or too hard for you, or
  for other group members.
  o Is there ever a frustration if the course is too easy or too difficult? Is there a ‘thrill’
    achieved?

**COUPLES**
• Do you have a partner who plays?
  o How does holiday golf different from recreational golf?

[WOMEN ONLY]
• Would you go on a group golf holiday if you didn’t know all members of the group?
• How do you get invited to such golf trips?

**Closers**
• Is there anything else you think I should know or understand?
• Is there anything you would like to ask me?
QUESTIONS FOR INTERVIEW: CYCLE THREE

Patterns for taking a golfing holiday
• **Tell me a little about your golfing history, how did you come to take up golf?**
  o How long have you been playing golf?
• **Could you describe a typical golf holiday that you take**
  o Do you see a distinction between short and longer trips?
  o Distinction between those with golf in mind and those where golf takes place as one of many activities?

Groups
• **Tell me about the people you tend to travel with when you play golf**
  o Who do you travel with when you play (family, other golfers?)
  o Is it always the same people?
  o Does this ever include non-golfers? How do they influence behaviour?
• **As you look back on past golfing holidays could you identify people who helped to decide which destination was to be visited and which courses were to be played?**
  o Are there any “group behaviours” that must be adhered to?
  o Who tends to get the final say?

Intermediaries
• **There are many specialist golf tour operators or travel agents (such as Golfbreaks or Bill Goff)? What are your views on using such companies?**
  o Do you book directly with courses or through hotels?
  o How does this influence the travel decisions you make?
  o Does it influence the choices made over the amount of golf you play?

Skill and Ability
• **Tell me about your expectation of how well you will play when on holiday**
  o What are your expectations in terms of developing your own skill level?
    • Do you take lessons or other skills training when on holiday?
  o Do you participate in organised competitions
    • To what extent does a competitive element form a part of the holidays you participate in (vs. course, handicap or others).
  o Do you expect to play above, below or to your handicap?
• **What are your views on whether your own skill is developed by your golf travel experiences**
• **Could you tell me about your feelings when a course is either too easy or too hard for you, or for other group members.**
  o Is there ever a frustration if the course is too easy or too difficult? Is there a ‘thrill’ achieved?
  o Has the type of holiday taken changes as your handicap has changed (up or down)?

Influence of peers
• **Tell me about the efforts you make to take a golf holiday or to make the time to play when on holiday.**
• **Tell me about how the decisions to take a trip including golf is influenced by your family**
  o Do they participate also?
  o Do they influence where you decide to go?
  o Has your decision making process change over the years? What influenced this?
• **How frequently do you play when on holiday?**
  o How frequently do you play at home?

Destinations and courses
• **Tell me what influences you when you select a golfing destination**
o What influences destination choice (do any of these link to psychological factors rest, relaxation, stimulation, escape, etc)?
  o Does non-golf factors came into play (social opportunities, other attractions, amenities, etc)? What about clubhouse, golf retail outlets?

**Can you describe how you and the other players decide on which destination to visit and which courses to play?**
  o What factors come into play when deciding?

**What role do recommendations play in your decisions to pick a particular destination or course?**
  o Do advocates for a particular location influence your travel behaviours?

**Tell me about the importance you place on choosing the accommodation you use?**
  o What does it need to provide
  o Does this vary by travel group members
  o If you are travelling with relationship partner does this change?

**What are your views on playing challenging courses?**
  o Have courses ever led to boredom or frustration? What influenced or determined this?
  o How would you ensure the best balance/outcome for you and for those you might be playing with?

**Many golfers play championship courses when on holiday. What are your views in this regard? Why do you think this is the case?**
  o Is this an overt choice for all golfers?

**Golfing capital**
  o What are your views on the idea that golf travel and additional golf experiences adds to your own golf status?
    o Does it influences others response to you?
    o Do you think playing challenging or well-known courses adds to your own golfing credibility?
    o How is this portrayed to other people?

**Tell me about the social interaction which takes place on holiday. How does golf influence or shape this?**
  o How important is this
  o How does it differ on different trips?

**How much do you reflect on the trip once you return?**
  o What form would these reflections take?
    • Would you recount stories about this trip
    • Would you make recommendations/judgements to others about the place

**Closers**
  o Is there anything else you think I should know or understand?
  o Is there anything you would like to ask me?
Appendix Three: Post-interview questionnaire

**Interview Candidate:**

**Golfing Information:**
- Do you hold an official handicap?  
  - YES: What is your official handicap?  
  - NO: What is an estimate of your handicap?

- Are you a member of a golf club?  
  - YES: What sort of membership do you hold?  
    - 5 Day  
    - 7 Day  
    - Other __________

- Are you a member of a golf society?  
  - Yes  
  - No

- What was your score on the last round of golf you played?  
  (Please state whether this was gross/net/stableford points) ________________

**How many rounds of golf do you estimate to have played in the last 12 months?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>12 Months Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autumn (Sept.-Nov.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter (Dec.-Feb.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring (Mar.-May)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer (June-Aug.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How many golfing holidays do you estimate to have taken in the last 12 months?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total number of golfing holidays</th>
<th>Total Number of nights away on golfing holidays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Demographic Information:**

- **Age band**
  - 16-24  
  - 25-34  
  - 35-44  
  - 45-54  
  - 55-64  
  - 65-74  
  - 75-84  
  - 85+

- **Family status**
  - Single, that is never married  
  - Married and living with your husband/wife  
  - Married and separated from your husband/wife  
  - Divorced with no children  
  - Divorced with children living with me  
  - Divorced with children living elsewhere  
  - Widowed  
  - Other

**In your household how many of the following are living with you?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Son/ Daughter</th>
<th>Brother/Sister</th>
<th>Parent/Guardian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting Partner</td>
<td>Step-son/daughter</td>
<td>Step-brother/sister</td>
<td>Step-parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civil Partner</td>
<td>Foster Child</td>
<td>Foster-brother/sister</td>
<td>Foster parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grand-child</td>
<td>Other relative</td>
<td>Grand-parent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Household Income
Annual Income
☐ Up to £9,999  ☐ £10,000-£34,999  ☐ £35,000-£59,999  ☐ £60,000-£84,999
☐ £85,000-£109,999  ☐ £110,000-£134,999  ☐ £135,000-£159,999  ☐ £160,000 and above

Employment status
Which best describes the industry you work in?
☐ Upper Management  ☐ Middle Management  ☐ Junior Management
☐ Administrative Staff  ☐ Support Staff  ☐ Partner / Self-employed
☐ Trainee professional  ☐ Consultant  ☐ Skilled Labourer
☐ Researcher  ☐ Student  ☐ Unskilled labourer
☐ Retired  ☐ Unemployed  ☐ Other _________________________

Which best describes the industry you are in?
☐ Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting  ☐ Arts, entertainment and recreation
☐ Broadcasting  ☐ Construction
☐ Education  ☐ Finance and insurance
☐ Government and Public Administration  ☐ Health and social care
☐ Information, Software and data services  ☐ Legal services
☐ Manufacturing  ☐ Military
☐ Mining  ☐ Property (rental and sales)
☐ Publishing  ☐ Religious
☐ Retail  ☐ Scientific or technical services
☐ Telecommunications  ☐ Tourism, hospitality and food services
☐ Transporting and warehousing  ☐ Utilities
☐ Wholesale  ☐ Other _________________________

Education
What is your highest qualification?
☐ Higher education and professional/vocational equivalents
Higher degree and postgraduate qualifications / First degree / postgraduate diploma and certificates
(inc PGCEs/professional qualifications at degree level e.g. graduate member of professional institute, chartered accountant or surveyor/NVQ or SVQ level 4 or 5

☐ Other Higher Education below degree level
Diplomas in higher education, HNC's HND's, higher level BTEC teaching qualifications for schools or further education below degree standard) Nursing or other medical qualifications not covered above / RSA higher diploma

☐ A Levels, vocational level 3 equivalents
A Level / AS Level / SCE, Scottish certificate of sixth year studies NVQ level 3 GNVQ level 3, ONC/OND BTEC national, SCOTVEC National certificate / City and Guilds advanced craft Part III, RSA advanced diploma

☐ Trade apprenticeships
GCSE O Levels grades A-C, vocational level 2 / NVQ level 2 / GNVQ Intermediate / RSA diploma

☐ Level 1
NVQ/SVQ level 1, GNVQ foundation level, GCSE grades below C, SCE / CSE below grade 1 / BTEC first certificate

Other qualifications
☐ Foreign Qualifications ____________________________
☐ Others not listed above __________________________
Appendix Four: Development of conceptual categories - six themes

1. Golfer Characteristics

2. Competition and ability

3. Group dynamics
4. The booking process

5. Developing golfing capital

6. Destination characteristics
### Appendix Five: Example data - Golf tourism participation spectrum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centrality of golf in the player's life</th>
<th>DEBBIE</th>
<th>CHARLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[i] got hooked and it took over our lives from there.</td>
<td>I started to play when I was 13, I joined the club and started play teams and competitions and all that sort of stuff. I am now 31 and have played more or less constantly though it fluctuates as you go to university and travelling.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Effort made to create the opportunity to play golf | We have been on holiday where we were just going for a break and the destination, we were told after we booked it that ‘Oh there are some lovely golf courses around the area’, so we decided just to take our clubs with us on the off chance and in fact we found some lovely courses and we played them. | We do go on a holiday to Spain and other places, I don’t tend to play golf when I go because it does not fit well with having a family holiday and spending time with the rest of my family. You might get one game in on a week-long trip somewhere, you sneak out one morning and have a round at a local place. |

| Frequency of play | We played three times out of the seven days we were there, six days we were, there two days travelling. | Its UK based shorter trips which is the most common thing to do, I tend to only play once in a weekend and sometimes weekends not at all. Just because we need to balance our life in general. |

| Level of formality of competition | We always have a competition between ourselves, always like to play with some sort of...deal, maybe paying for dinner. | We play in a big competition every April down at Royal St Georges and we go down there for more or less a week. Stay at, hire a big house and we play in this competition until we get knocked out. |

| Desire for skill development (and inclusion of lessons) | I don’t know if it improves my game, it makes you think more when you are playing a different course, obviously. I don’t think it improves my golf, no. | [If] you don’t feel like you are challenging your skills then...its less compelling for you – that’s part of the challenge of golf, playing against the set up of the course. |

| Desire to perform at the highest level of the player's ability | You have got to make it fun. You can’t get down in the dumps about doing a bad shot or having a bad round, you are on holiday, it’s a fun thing enjoy it, make the most of it and try and do better the next day. | Usually you shoot over your handicap away from home. |

<p>| Adherence strictly to the rules of golf | I wouldn’t go so far as to pull up every single thing, you got to be a bit lenient, you can’t be that strict. | Playing by the rules? Not really, that is not so much of an issue, |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>DEBBIE</th>
<th>CHARLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Desire for social interaction</td>
<td>[Social interaction] is an important part of the holiday. It is something you look forward to. You know you are with people that you get on with and you like, you can have a lot of fun with but that doesn’t mean to say that we are insular. We do talk to other people.</td>
<td>It’s a relaxation and good fun, there is a lot of time for talking and catching up on a golf trip, and it’s a pretty social game</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Appeal of the off-course environment</td>
<td>You just want nice surroundings. Why do you want to go away and stay in a place that’s worse than where you live.</td>
<td>You look for a decent place to stay nearby with some good food stay for a few days, nothing posh and that’s broadly it, a bit of weather, but just the quality of the golf.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Preparedness to compromise over course complexity</td>
<td>Obviously if we were with people that are of a higher handicap you have to take that into consideration ‘cos you want people whoever you are with to be able to enjoy it as well...it’s got to be a course that I think is fair, to all players really..</td>
<td>you travel a long way to go and play somewhere good. There are courses within 10 minutes of my house that I have never played. And I can’t think why I would.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Importance given to the experience felt by others</td>
<td>It’s nice to play well but it’s a bit of fun and what would delight me the most is for my husband to play well so that he’d be happy.</td>
<td>You can get away with a few that you don’t [like] because you only play with one or two people at a time. In our group there is a bloke that I can’t stand but that’s fine because we don’t really have to spend any time together.</td>
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