

Master Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology – Policy in Practice

Master Thesis

# Your Sunglasses, Your Self

Understandings around adult men's use of sunglasses in Madonna di Campiglio (Italy) during winter season

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## Abstract

Sunglasses' medical importance in order to prevent eye-diseases is a fact scientifically proved however, their dimension as Personal Protective Equipment may be overlooked in favour of cultural values, since sunglasses are also commodities and lifestyle items. This thesis explores practices and perceptions around sunglasses of three different adult men's groups (tourists, ski teachers and mountain guides) in Madonna di Campiglio, an Italian ski resort, during winter season, and how their belonging to a certain group and the ski resort's bubble shape different practices and perceptions around these objects.

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## VAL RENDENA'S MAP

(Taken from Goggle Maps. The places' names circled are the ones mentioned in this thesis)<sup>1</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> This map includes only Val Rendena, where I mostly lead my research. This is why other places like Trento, Povo and Volano are missing, because they are not in Val Rendena, even if they are still in the province of Trento.

## 1. Introduction

If one year ago someone had told me that I would have written a thesis about sunglasses, I would have thought about some kind of joke. When I came to The Netherlands, my research aspirations were quite different, since I wanted to focus on other topics, like disability or sexuality. However, I soon understood that I would have faced many problems in finding a suitable internship partner for my research (since I chose the Policy in Practice's specialization of the Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology's master) for difficulties around privacy, data management, ethics, in addition to shortage of time (and skills) for planning a research of this kind. Furthermore, my housing situation in Leiden was quite precarious, like the ones of many other international students in this city. In these circumstances Jan Jansen, lecturer of the Research Design's course, suggested me in a quick exchange of mails that with Oogfonds as my research partner it would have been possible to study, among other things, "the use of sunglasses in the Italian Alps". This simple phrase was enough to trigger my interest and offered me a good alternative to my initial plans. It was something so "weird" and, at the beginning, unimaginable to me doing an anthropological research about these objects and people's relation to them that, with time passing, I grew a great fascination about it, plus the challenge of "rendering sunglasses anthropological" was really stimulating during the writing of my research proposal and during research, too.

Therefore, at the beginning of January, I found myself in Pelugo, a small village in the Italian Alps, in a flat found by a dear friend of mine. Indeed, the choice of Val Rendena was not casual, since I had many friends who had contacts in that area, where I could have easily found accommodation. From Pelugo, almost every morning until the end of March, I took the bus to Madonna di Campiglio, chosen as my field because of its incredible tourist fame in the area.

### *1.1 Object of Study and Theoretical Framework: Why, What and "How" is a Pair of Sunglasses?<sup>2</sup>*

The object of my study is the use of sunglasses. With the word "use" I do not mean only "wearing", but I also consider all the practices in which sunglasses are at the centre of different underlying goals, such as impression management ("showing off"), consumerism's patterns and, last but not least, health reasons, as their main goal would be to guarantee eye-protection in bright environments.

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<sup>2</sup> In this sub-chapter, the descriptions of the three analytical concepts are directly taken from my Research Proposal.

*“-I (thus) analyse sunglasses as a social arena that different actors (users, sellers-producers and medical associations) try to shape, according to their visions about this practice-.”*

I believe that an anthropological research about this topic is relevant, mainly for two reasons. First, from an academic point of view, since this is a topic that, as much as particular and maybe bizarre-sounding, no other anthropologists has studied yet. In addition, its complexity (as sunglasses are material objects at the centre of different narratives around health, consumerism and daily use) made it a challenging and almost unique topic. Second, from a policy-making perspective. Sunglasses' medical importance is a certified fact, however their dimension as commodities and lifestyle items may put what is the goal they are thought for (protecting eyes from the sun) at a second place. In this sense, an anthropological research may cast a different light upon this practice, helping medical associations to frame their policies and concerns in a different way.

My theoretical framework then revolves around three analytical concepts: consumerism, risk and performance. “Recent anthropological studies about consumerism deal with different themes, such as “excess, waste, connectivity, fair-ish trade and the semiotics of self-fashioning” (Meneley 2018: 118). With regard to my research, I am mostly interested in “connectivity” (Meneley 2018: 121) and, above all, [...], in “the semiotics of self-fashioning” (Meneley 2018: 124).” In this sense, the most relevant literature I found through Meneley's article (2018) are Newell (2012) and Menoret's (2014) ethnographies. “Newell's ethnography about young Ivorian men's performances known as ‘bluffs’ (2012) focuses, among other things, on the importance of brand's authenticity for ‘the success of one's public appearance’ (Meneley 2018: 124, Newell 2012: 170). In this context, brands are also classified into a hierarchy by their relevance into ‘the hierarchical schematization of modernity’ (Newell 2012: 173); although Newell's subjects were not unanimous about which brands assured most success, their concern about them was a sign of their relevance in this social context (Newell 2012: 173). Another thing I have found interesting in Newell's work is that being scammed wearing a counterfeit object would attract social reproach upon its owner (Newell 2012: 175-176). Newell goes even further, describing this attitude as an ‘obsession’ and reporting some ethnographic cases to sustain this definition (Newell 2012: 176), underlining how this ‘obsession’ leads people to seek for more and more effective strategies to obtain authentic products, such as buying them from people who have been to Europe (Newell 2012: 176-177). The author aims also to demonstrate these strategies of appropriation's role in developing a ‘national identity’ (Newell 2012: 3)”. What instead caught my attention in “Menoret (2014), in his study about young joyriders in Riyadh” is his description of “how cars are perceived as “a second skin, the iron clothes in

which people introduce themselves to others, and the foundation of collective and individual identities” (Menoret 2014: 153).”

“Risk is a central idea in the medical narratives about sunglasses, such as Oogfonds’ one. Initially, the main risk of not using sunglasses to protect eyes was considered to be blinded by the sunlight, and then scientific evidence showed how exposure to UV-rays is one of the main causes for the emergence of other eye-related illnesses, such as cataracts and macular degeneration of the eye. Therefore, Panter-Brick’s definition of risk as “a situation involving elevated odds of undesirable outcomes” (Panter-Brick 2014: 434) can offer a good insight on sunglasses use as a ‘healthy practice’. Besides giving essential definitions of risk and resilience, Panter-Brick (2014: 434) reviews an ethnographic study about hearth diseases among some South Wales’ communities (Davison et al. 1992), which shows how people negotiate medical risk basing on various sources, like personal experiences (Panter-Brick 2014: 434) or belief in luck (Davison et al. 1992: 681). Despite medical narratives are sustained by scientific proofs, “there lies a more chaotic distribution of illness and death. Some fat smokers really do live till advanced old age, and some svelt joggers really do ‘fall down dead’.” (Davison et al. 1992: 683). In other words, cultural narratives successfully challenge medical ones (Panter-Brick 2014: 434). Another series of anthropological studies that I have found particularly useful for my research project is the one concerning smoking behaviour, a practice that, [...], I think has some similarities with the use of sunglasses”, since it can be analysed through the very same theoretical framework I am describing here. “DeSantis (2003) in particular studied how group rationalization around smoking works in a particular cigars’ smoking club. These people considered cigar smoking as a hobby, rather than an unhealthy habit, and were convinced of public opinion’s and medical establishment’s hypocrisy and ignorance, while instead they really knew when and how smoking cigars could have been considered risky (DeSantis 2003: 441).” In other words, during my research, I tried to understand if and to what extent there were cultural motivations that challenged the concept of sunglasses as their legal classification, which is Personal Protective Equipment.

“Another fact that appeared clear to me was that the act of wearing sunglasses is somehow performative. ‘Performance’ is a concept that has been developed scientifically at its best by Erving Goffman in his *‘The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life’* (1990). [...] In my case, what caught my attention about Goffman’s analysis is his focus on what he calls ‘front’, which is the ‘part of the individual’s performance which regularly functions in a general and fixed fashion to define the situation for those who observe the performance’ (Goffman 1990: 32). Goffman goes even further, dividing ‘front’ in ‘setting’ and ‘personal front’ (Goffman 1990: 32-34), with the latter defined as

“the items that we most intimately identify with the performer himself and that we naturally expect will follow the performer wherever he goes” (Goffman 1990: 34). Some of these items are part of the performer himself, such as ‘facial expressions’ or ‘body gestures’ (Goffman 1990: 34), while others are material tools, like clothes, which can be used to ‘give off’ (Goffman 1990: 14) an impression. Following Goffman (1990) I (considered) ‘performance teams’ as well (Goffman 1990: 86), in which more people are involved as performers and they try to convey some sort of social meaning in front of other teams. [...] Goffman (1990) (came) also in aid to define two kind of performances [...]. Firstly, there are gender-related performances; Goffman quotes, as an example, college girls who actually play the part of the ‘silly girlfriend’ to please their potential partners, contributing to freeze male hegemony upon women (Goffman 1990: 48). Although this last example may indeed be considered old-fashioned and outdated” in this thesis I show “how (a certain type of) masculinity [...] is expressed through” the use of certain sunglasses instead of other, as in mountain guides’ case. “A second set of performances in which sunglasses” were involved during my fieldwork were “the ones regarding social class. Goffman (1990: 46-47) draws some examples on how the membership to a certain class (especially in cases of social mobility) is shown through the display of sign-equipment as a way to express ‘a material wealth.’”

In addition, I integrated my original three analytical concepts with Warnier’s article around ‘the techniques of the body’ (2001) which “discusses how the subject and its drives are invested in sensory-motricity in a material world. When it is socially validated and coded, such an investment amounts to what Foucault called the ‘techniques of the self’. The subjectivation thus achieved may be consistent or at odds with corresponding representations” (Warnier 2001: 5). How I framed the use of sunglasses as an incorporated ‘technique of the body’ will be explained in sub-chapter 2.5.

### *1.2 The Field: Where Everyone Wants to Be “Cool”*

Madonna di Campiglio (also simply known as Campiglio and its inhabitants as Campigliani, singular: Campigliano) is located at the end of Val Rendena, an alpine valley in the province of Trento (also known as Trentino), Italy, and it is a hamlet of Pinzolo’s municipality (the village of Pinzolo is also a ski locality). Val Rendena is a territory where its economy is largely based on tourism, especially in winter, next to dairy industry and woodcutting. Tourism is by far the most relevant source of profit in Campiglio, a place with more or less eight-hundred registered inhabitants but with over sixty hotels, the majority four-five stars rated, and an average of two thousands beds, according to my informants. My informants also refused to believe that Campiglio had eight-hundred inhabitants, even when I showed them the official cadastral data, claiming that

they were “wrong”, since “the majority of Campiglio’s houses and flats are second residences, owned by wealthy families from Northern Italy’s big cities.” Campiglio has a long and prestigious history of tourism, which dates back to the seventeenth century and had its peaks during Austrian domination and after the Italian economic boom of the 1960s, when it assured its position as a top-class place, just “a step down”, as my informants told me “to the likes of Cortina d’Ampezzo and Courmayeur”.

My informants always underlined how Campiglio was “a different place” from the rest of the province and from other ski resorts, due to its exclusiveness. Both Campigliani and tourists shared this view, telling me how they would have behaved differently, if they would have visited or worked in another ski resort. Many Campigliani told me how they felt obligated to display a certain look to keep up with Campiglio’s social environment, a concern shared by many tourists as well, who often told me how, for example, they rented a luxurious car just to go there on holiday. People from other Val Rendena’s villages, instead, often described Campiglio with harsh tones, labelling it as “a posh place for posh people”. Many of them expressed their concerns about me leading my research there; they thought it would have been “too difficult to approach Campiglio’s inhabitants and goers”, since they were “too posh and full of themselves” to understand and help me with what I was doing. As my neighbour in Pelugo told me:

*“You know, when someone tells me – ‘I am going to Campiglio on holiday’ - I immediately know what kind of guy he is.”*

So, from an anthropological point of view, Campiglio can be easily described as a touristic “bubble” (Cohen 1972: 2). All my informants perceived the bubble’s space as incredibly forcing also because Campiglio is “stage-managed to provide and sustain common sense understandings about what activities should take place” (Crouch 2009: 550). In other words, it is a striking example of “touristscape” (Crouch 2009: 550). As a “touristscape”, Campiglio is organized through “enclavic tourist spaces. Here I am referring to the resorts, restaurants, hotels, tour buses and a whole network of intersecting spaces which contains familiar amenities, including tour operators, health, sports and beauty facilities, shops, banks and information services” (Crouch 2009: 550). Naturally, this organization, supported by Campiglio’s spatial compression, where almost everything (slopes, restaurants, hotels and so on) is concentrated in one square kilometre, is maintained through a “cast [...] (that) supports tourist performance [...] making sure that any activity or artefact or anything else ‘out of place’ is removed so as not to disrupt the normative

spatial associations of comfort, convenience, entertainment, relaxation and leisure (Crouch 2009: 550) [...]. Such spaces are implicitly designed to minimize disorderly experience and cultivate the art of relaxation through a battery of architectural, design and managerial techniques (Crouch 2009: 551)". If "movement between" these spaces "is required, this takes the form of travelling in a mobile enclave" (Crouch 2009: 551). In Campiglio, this is well exemplified by ski busses that bring tourists from Val Rendena's main villages to the main slopes, almost every hour of every day of the week.

Campiglio's appeal is constructed through its fame as an exclusive and luxurious space, with events and narratives supporting this myth. The Asburgic Carnival, which celebrates Princess Sissi's stays there in 1889 and 1894, Bob Sinclair's concert at a high-quote refuge in 2018 or the many stories of Italian VIPs who frequented the area are good examples of how this construction takes place. The bubble-touristscape's intersection also forces people to "follow particular courses of action" (Crouch 2009: 551), with the most obvious activity that can take place being ski, next to hanging around at after ski parties, bars or restaurants. This influences also Campigliani, who mostly work in winter-tourism related businesses and hotels and who often run (and attend) these events and places. This brought to the raise of an awful amount of ski-schools, hotels, rent-shops, bars and hotels that actually fight to gain profit out of tourism.

The verb "to fight" is not casual and should not be considered a mistake, since Campigliani described their working environment as a "war", often a "dishonourable" one, which is fought through multiple means. First, lowering of rates, which is considered "the most dishonourable mean". Since Campiglio is regarded as a top class place and its rates are, or at least, in my informants' opinion, should be high, many businesses decrease their rates in respect to the market's offer, managing to keep up because of partnerships with other businesses or because their owners have other personal revenues. Second, the just mentioned partnerships, which allow different businesses to "team up" and to make profit out from each other. For example, hotels often address their clients to ski schools, rent-shops and so on, which give them a percentage of these "addressed customers" back. Third, the most relevant of all the three, visibility: from Campigliani's point of view, having more visibility means to have the possibility of gaining more clients, thus every business comes up with its own strategies to be "more visible than the others". These strategies often revolve around sponsorships of famous brands, but may include other means. For example, ski teachers working for one of the biggest ski school in Campiglio told me that, since December 2018, they decided to wear helmets while doing their job, a decision issued through an assembly among them and their directors. However, they all stressed out how they did that to "increase their visibility" in

comparison to other schools, which do not obligate their employees to wear helmets, and not for “safety reasons”. These snowboard teacher’s words on Campiglio’s working environment really help to frame the situation:

*“Campiglio is a place where you can basically make money just three months a year, thus everybody tries everything in order to impress customers to make profit out of them.... everything is spatially and temporally pressed, it is a war.”*

This situation is cause of immense stress for local workers, both for the working intensity and for the necessity of displaying a “suitable look”. Many local informants actually admitted that Campiglio’s slopes are “good but not exceptional”, and that there are far better localities for skiing, revealing how in the end tourists go there mainly “for experiencing Campiglio’s posh environment”. In my informants’ opinion, local entrepreneurs’ lack of foreshadowing was the main cause of these “wars”; these people in fact understood that these ways of doing business were somehow profitable, so they kept investing in them. Massimo Faletti, the only mountain guide with whom I managed to do a photographic interview, told me these words, regarding this situation:

*“It is like a guy who is in ethylic coma but keeps drinking.”*

Small entrepreneurs’ initiatives who differ from this trend are often immediately repressed, like one of my informants’ intent to add a bar to his rent-shop “like they do in Austria” because, in his words, “the municipality would not gain anything out of it, so they refused to give me permissions”.

In conclusion, wanting to test this “bubble theory” on Campiglio, I spent some days in Pinzolo, which does not hold the same elitist fame of its famous hamlet, asking people if there really was a difference between Campiglio and other ski resorts. This ski teacher’s words sum up the opinion of Pinzolo’s workers:

*“There is competition and a bit of hatred in all ski resorts, and appearance is definitely important for ski teachers [...] but in Campiglio everything is brought to its extreme.”*

### *1.3 Methods and Ethics*

Observation has been my main method in many occasions, a tool I had always tried to activate in order to “gather” as much data as possible: while on the field, I tried to be like a “sponge” (Piasere

2002: 164), being there as long as possible, observing and listening to people and to their different narratives around sunglasses. Despite being on excursions with mountain guides, in bars or in any other place of my field, observing systematically how and when people used sunglasses has been my first concerns.

Small talks have been by far the best method to gather data but at the same time, the most draining one: both with Campiglio's inhabitants and, especially, with tourists. I often had to wait for the right time, right place and right people to "drop" a small talk: if I was in a bar, at a mountain refuge or during an excursion, "hunting for moments" always required a focused mind. On a side note, combining observation and small talks has been of course crucial to get in contact with certain groups of informants, and my personal background and skills often have been decisive in this sense. Once, for example, I spotted some tourists from Brescia, the capital city of my province, talking in my same dialect, so I interacted with them in the same language and we started talking about how good Brescia Calcio, the local football team, was doing that year (at the time it was first in Serie B, Italian football second division). After that, they gladly accepted to become my informants and I spent two days hanging around with them.

"Photographic Interviews", inspired by the Nina Nissen's study about men's healthcare practices in Denmark (2017), has been one of the most surprisingly effective methods during fieldwork, allowing me to grasp meanings and interpretations that otherwise would have been much more difficult to acquire. After the first two months of fieldwork, I started to analyse my data with the precise intent of selecting eight people, with whom I would have liked to undertake this method; I managed to do it with seven of them. The only downside is that I used it only with workers: although many tourists post many photos of their holidays on social networks, they have been quite reticent to show me theirs, for my research. Campigliani and workers in general, who were already used to my presence and my research, were much more easily convincible. Twenty-five photos were received; in one case, I asked a person to interpret another one's photos (asking the latter permission to do this, which he gave) and, in another case, one of my informant and I commented the Instagram's profile of the person I could not interview. People instantly agreed about their photos' publication in this thesis. Primarily, I asked these people to choose a minimum of four and a maximum of ten photos portraying themselves with sunglasses on, that they would have sent me through Whatsapp, except in Massimo Faletti's case, because I did not have enough time between the interview and our meeting to do so. Anyway, in the majority of cases, "this allowed me to familiarize myself with the images before the subsequent interview" (Nissen 2017:554) that I would have lead at a place of my informant's choice. During this meeting, (usually an hour long), I asked

them to show me their photos starting from their favourite to their less favourite, then people were asked to describe and interpret their pictures, their reflections on their images and “on the process and context of production” (Nissen 2017: 554). In this thesis, four of these interviews appear (and, consequentially, their related photos)<sup>3</sup>.

This research did not raise many ethical concerns. People did not have any problems talking about sunglasses, as they did not think it was a risky topic. However, almost all my informants, except the ones who have agreed to appear in my “photographic interviews” and Peter, a snowboard teacher and rent-employee whom I consider as my main informant, and who agreed to be mentioned, are quoted anonymously. In all my informants’ cases, I agreed to send a copy of my thesis in English or in Italian, as soon as I will manage to translate it, or, in exchange, a short summary, since many of my informants stated that they “did not have time and will to read a seventy-pages anthropological thesis”. In the few cases where I met drunk people who told me important data that I judged “sensible” for my research, I called or met them the day after, asking them permission to use these data, that the vast majority of the time they gave me. These “sensible” data often revolved around the field, and around the different relations people have with each other in the field. In other words, I tried to apply the AAA code of ethics’ principles (2012) during my fieldwork.

#### *1.4 Positioning and Informants*

As many other researches lead in a tourist environment, I could not escape but talking about people in terms of “locals” and tourists. However, even in Campiglio it is not possible to overlook the movement’s dimension of tourism (Leite & Graburn 2009: 49) since, for example, there are also many workers from all Italy and Eastern Europe. I chose adult men as my research population because I thought they could have been the most accessible one to me, a young man in his twenties; this appeared to be true, even if in many occasions women wanted to join my research, feeling disappointed by my reject, in order to strictly focus on my research population. The choice of Madonna di Campiglio was made by personal reasons, as mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter. In addition, leading research in my home country in my mother tongue allowed me to directly interact with my subjects and to acquire an amount of data that probably I would have not gained in other contexts. Therefore, the vast majority of my informants were Italian. In the final

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<sup>3</sup> I chose to use only these four interviews because I think they are quite representative of the three groups I dealt with (tourists, ski teachers and mountain guides) and because I found them particularly useful for my analysis, in comparison to the others. In any case, data acquired from these excluded interviews have not been lost, since I still used them for the overall empirical chapters’ analysis.

analysis, I chose to focus on tourists, ski teachers and mountain guides, because data acquired from these three groups allowed me to be consistent in my analysis. For example, I could have led a research about local non-snow professionals and the already mentioned not-Campigliani workers, but these groups were so diversified (and difficult to include in these three group-analysis) that I could not produce a consistent analysis. In addition to this, doing research in a bubble like Campiglio and after understanding its mechanisms, made me easier to interpret and to observe different behaviours around the use of sunglasses.

My first interactions with Campiglio's inhabitants usually followed this "script": me entering in their shops or offices, asking "to interview them about sunglasses", them (weirdly confused) telling me "okay let us do it, but just for fifteen minutes", us usually spending an average of an hour talking about it. This "interview" always started with the question "come vivi l'occhiale da sole?" which is difficult to translate from Italian to English; its literal translation would be "how do you live sunglasses?" In Italian it is possible to say "to live an object", which means, "to experience-to use an object", conveying many meanings at the same time. From there, I addressed the conversation toward topics such as the number of sunglasses owned by the informant, when he used them, where he bought them, why he bought a pair instead of another, why he used that pair and not another and so on. Naturally, I always kept in the back of my mind my three analytical concepts and, when new relevant topic came out during our chats, like narratives revolving around sunglasses' embodiment, I addressed the conversation toward that direction. In any case, after these first contacts, my relations with Campigliani slowly become really good, to the point that I can fairly say some of them started considering me "as a friend". I often showed up at their workplaces and they often gladly spent some time answering my questions or simply chatting randomly, often inviting me out for lunch or drinks. My relation with Peter is paradigmatic, in this sense. After the first interview, he told me, half-jokingly and half-serious, to not show up at his workplace anymore, but in one of our last meetings he hugged me and offered me a beer, telling me that I was "always welcomed."

I think my emphatic success with Campiglio's inhabitants and workers is to be attributed to three reasons. First, after every "interview", I asked them to suggest me other people I could get in touch with, so the classic "snowball sampling", as suggested me by Danish anthropologist Nina Nissen in a personal exchange of e-mails. This led to the creation of a "rapport" between the suggested informant and me and to the recruitment of a homogeneous group of people, as always Nissen told me in private, which I already had an idea about how to interact. Second, these people were at their workplaces nearly every day, so I had potentially access to the same people for three

months straight, thus, I had time to strengthen the “rapport” I was previously talking about. Third, finally yet importantly, to some extent I am a “Campigliano” myself; my hometown is just one-hundred kilometres from my field, local dialect is really similar to mine and I grew up in a resort locality too (Lake Garda). It did not take my local informants long to share some jokes about tourists from Rome or their frustration toward “tourists’ bad manners”.

In tourists’ case, things were drastically different and much more difficult and, sometimes, nerveing. To begin with, I had to choose the right setting in order to interact efficiently with them: it turned out that Rifugio Cinque Laghi was the best place to do that. I chose this small mountain refuge for two reasons: it is small, thus I could easily observe and choose tourists to interact with, and it is easily accessible through cableway. In addition to this, when I asked the manager, a woman in her thirties, permission to do it, she immediately accepted. The only downside is that this place is, as Campigliani would say, a “downhillers’ one”, (in Italian: “un posto da discesisti”) which means that its main goers are tourists who go there just for skiing, so I did not have the possibility to engage there with, for example, tourists with mountaineering passion. I usually went there at midday, when skiers had more or less lunch, and I tried to interact with them in these circumstances, just waiting for them to notice me or, when this did not happen, asking them “to help me with my research about sunglasses”. Usually my presence alone was enough to provoke some kind of reaction among them. I was never dressed as a skier, so this often alienated them from me, but many others were interested in what I was doing there (I often had my field notes with me and, while at the refuge, I often coded some of them) and kindly helped me with informal talks. However, with tourists I did not have enough time to build that “rapport” I mentioned earlier, and snowball sampling was ineffective, since tourists often go there in small groups and often do not interact with groups different from theirs. Usually I saw them just for one hour or two, in some cases I spotted them for three or four days in Piazza Righi (Madonna di Campiglio’s square) but that was it. Therefore, I had to perform my “emphatic best” to make them like me, to make them understand what I was doing there and what I needed from them. In addition to this, my interactions with tourists had not a “fixed script”, as with Campigliani. Sometime I found incredibly helpful people, some other no people at all and in many other cases things became incredibly awkward, like when one of my informants made “bold appreciations” toward a Polish girl, causing her boyfriend’s anger and, consequentially, a “bar-fight” between the two groups, in which I got involved. The good thing was that every person involved in this fight, me included, was wearing sunglasses, even if that time I was too busy to save my own skin rather than looking for cultural motivations behind it. My struggles with tourists may be caused also by the fact that the bubble-touristscape

intersection “forced” people to “follow particular courses of action” (Crouch 2009: 551) and, therefore, my presence there was something so absurd to them that they could not accept it. This is also caused by my struggles (mainly caused by lack of money) in performing the tourist-role.

Many insights about tourists came also from observation and small talks at Jumper, a bar located at the entrance of one of Campiglio’s main slope, which I could easily define as a “mythological” place, as it was at the centre of many of my informants’ narratives. The majority of tourists I met underlined how after-ski parties there were a “must” of their Campiglio’s experience while, for example, the majority of mountain guides saw it as a “bloody place” where “young ski teachers bring girls and drink”. Other insights about tourists came from small talks on the cableway; it was just necessary to say that I was doing a “research about sunglasses” and, in the five-ten minutes of ascent, they usually shared with me their opinions and narratives about it.

Finally, although my first interactions with mountain guides followed the previous mentioned “local script”, I think they deserved a distinct paragraph from the others, mainly for personal reasons. I slowly found myself to become more and more attracted to mountaineers’ world, so I started to go on excursion and icefall climbing with them, both with mountain guides from Gruppo Guide Madonna di Campiglio (the local guide’s association) and with independent guides as well. My family has a tradition of mountaineering (my grandfather climbed many peaks around the Alps, including Mont Blanc) and, above all, I felt mountaineering enthused me on a deep personal level, especially considering I had a hard time due to personal reasons after leaving The Netherlands. Jon Krakauer (1997: 23) explains this feeling very well:

*“Achieving the summit of a mountain was tangible, immutable, concrete. The incumbent hazards lent the activity a seriousness of purpose that was sorely missing from the rest of my life.”*

I usually went to excursions once a week; at the beginning, I wanted to go on excursions with groups composed by many tourists, but after one excursion with more than sixty people, I gave up on this idea. There were so many people that I could not interact nor with tourists nor with guides, too busy to look after all these people, so it was pointless by both an ethnographical and a “mountain aesthetical” point of view. I then started to go to excursions alone with a guide or, rather, with a guide and four-five clients: so it has been possible to build a “rapport” with the different guides and their customers, in addition to observe them and to ask them questions during and after the excursions. I mainly went to excursions with guides to gain their trust and respect but, in the end, some of them told me how they were more impressed by my commitment as an anthropologist,

especially in relation to my interactions with tourists. Some guides even compared me to the already mentioned Krakauer who, in their opinion, wrote “some sort of ethnography around mountaineers.”

In order to analyse how the three different groups frame their identification in relation to their respective groups and to Campiglio, I will borrow the concepts of commonality, connectedness and groupness from Brubaker and Cooper (2000: 19):

*“ “Commonality” denotes the sharing of some common attribute, “connectedness” the relational ties that link people. Neither commonality nor connectedness alone engenders “groupness” – the sense of belonging to a distinctive, bounded, solidary group. But commonality and connectedness together may indeed do so” (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 20).*

However

*“Categorical commonality and relational connectedness need to be supplemented by a third element [...] a feeling of belonging together. Such a feeling [...] will also depends on other factors such as particular events [...] and so on. [...] a strongly bounded sense of groupness may rest on categorical commonality and an associated feeling of belonging with minimal or no relational connectedness” (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 20).*

How I will use and develop these concepts will become clearer in the next chapters.

## 2. Common Perceptions and Strategies

Despite the various different perceptions and uses around sunglasses, due to the variety of informants and data, there were indeed many points in common among the different groups I dealt with. First, people claimed to use sunglasses “only when necessary”, which means, only during sunny days or in bright environments, like in slopes or glaciers. The majority of the people I met did not have particular strategies to display sunglasses: they just wore them, or they had them on top of their heads, if they were inside a closed space, after having spent some time outside, under the sun.

One of the most discussed strategies on the slope, however, was to wear sunglasses while having goggles on top of the helmet. There were many different narratives around this practice, which can be summed up in three types. First, narratives around “showing-off”, which means, people adopt this strategy to show more gears with more brands, which support their performance as rich people (or “cool” teachers). Second, narratives around practicality: having both sunglasses and goggles is useful, so in the slopes it is possible to change one or another according to weather conditions. I personally do not believe this, since snow-professional informants told me that it is more practical to have goggles or sunglasses in pocket rather than on top of their head, labelling as “posers” people who wear sunglasses and goggles this way. Third, narratives around habit: some people used only sunglasses and not goggles because sunglasses were “multidimensional” objects that they could have used in other contexts, like at the seaside, while goggles are specific object for skiing. In addition, many tourists who preferred sunglasses to goggles had normal vision, and they did not feel at ease wearing goggles on prescription glasses. However, it is fair to say that the vast majority of tourists preferred goggles to sunglasses.

### 2.1 Night Prohibition

All the people I met told me how wearing sunglasses at night was a practice to avoid, at least in Campiglio. People perceived wearing sunglasses at night as something “dumb” or suspicious, even when sunglasses were a medical necessity, like in this informant’s case:

*“Yesterday I was at my daughters’ ski competition [...] I had to wear sunglasses, even if it was night-time, because I have an eye-related disease and the lights illuminating the slope were too annoying... but, despite knowing this, my friends started mocking me.”*

Other people stressed out how wearing sunglasses at night was something considered suspicious, related to crime or to the fact of being “high or drunk”, as a DJ told me:

*“Let us say that, if you wear sunglasses at night-time, you are not presenting yourself in the best way ever.”*

In addition to this, many tourists told me that they would never wore sunglasses at night in Campiglio, but they would do it in other places, as this tourist once told me:

*“I would not use sunglasses at night-time here, not even displaying them. There is a different culture, different roles, different situations... but if I was at the seaside, I would definitely do that!”*

This assumption that sunglasses at night-time were acceptable in some contexts rather than in others was a belief shared by many informants. I believe this is due to three factors. First, Campiglio’s social environment. Wearing sunglasses at night is a practice often described as “boorish” by my informants, and Campiglio’s social environment is represented as luxurious and classy, not boorish. In other words, Campiglio’s elitist fame influences people’s decision to not wear sunglasses at night. Second, and connected to the first factor, that in Campiglio there are no proper places to “show-off” at night, like discos and, if there are similar ones, they still have this forcing environment that contrasts the “boorish” practice mentioned in this sub-chapter. Third, and most importantly and obviously, sunglasses are not meant to be worn at night-time. In any ski resort, this would be perceived as a stretch, both because the sun sets quite early, and because there are occasions when wearing them is perceived as acceptable and others when it is not. This is especially true in the touristscape that is Campiglio, where conforming to roles and occasions is incredibly important for people, as it will become clearer in the next chapters, and as the previous tourist’s quote may suggest. In addition to this, even if someone would like to impress people with sunglasses, he would not do that at night-time, because there are other ways to show-off, more suitable for Campiglio’s night environment, like, for example, ordering bottles and bottles of Champagne at bars. As an extreme example, I report an episode told me by a Campiglio’s hotelkeeper:

*“One late night this Russian guy pops out and asks to book an entire floor of my hotel for a week, for him, his friends and girlfriends who just arrived. I told him there was just the suites’ floor,*

*but he did not really care. He spent more than a million of euros just for one week. He badly wanted to show-off, if you ask me.”*

## *2.2 Italian Pride*

The majority of my informants are, as I have written in the introduction, Italian. Among them, and among all the groups I have dealt with, there is the conviction that wearing sunglasses has something “Italian” in itself. This “Italianness”, intended as something “cool”, unique and to be proud of, is related not only to these brands’ objects, but also to the practice of wearing sunglasses. Their general explanation relies on the fact that “sunglasses are fashion object, fashion is Italian, and thus wearing sunglasses is Italian.” Many of my informants, especially the ones who lived abroad, used sunglasses to express their “Italianness”, as these quotes from various Italian expatriates in other countries, in Campiglio for their holidays, would show:

*“We, Italians, want to act cool wearing sunglasses, and we have the right to do it.”*

*“When I worked in France and I was wearing sunglasses on top of my head people used to say ‘oh, that is really Italian!’ and, indeed, it is!”*

*“Luxottica is ours [its chief is Italian], he had a great intuition because he is one of us... Only an Italian could have done what he did.”*

My informants insisted much more about the value of the practice, than about the brands; however, some of them wore Italian-brand sunglasses, in order to display their Italianness. But, not only that: wearing Italian sunglasses was also a way to support Italian products, as in the case of mountain guides who are sponsored by Salice. Salice-sponsored guides always stressed out the goodness of being sponsored by this brand, as it is one of the few Italian-based companies that produces goggles and sunglasses; Salice has made its “Italianness” a strongpoint in its advertisements, as its slogan is “vedi Italiano” (translation: see Italian). In addition, many Italian informants underlined the urge of supporting Italian brands; when they were telling me their favourite brands, in the end they always conclude with “Italian ones are the best and it is always better to support them, because they are ours.”

### 2.3 Sunglasses and Social Networks

Another common pattern among the different groups was the value of sunglasses' image on social networks. People in Campiglio take pictures wearing sunglasses and post them on their Facebook and Instagram profiles, but this often has a meaning much broader than the simple wish to have a memory of their holiday. With the exception of the majority of tourists I met at Rifugio Cinque Laghi, who told me they do not use sunglasses there, but only goggles, almost all the people who used social networks told me that sunglasses "add" or "leave" something to their images. In snow professionals' case, wearing sunglasses on social networks was a necessary part of their agreement with sunglasses' companies. Companies provide them with free material but, in exchange, mountain guides and ski teachers should wear those products in technically every occasion, at least when they are working (but in mountain guides' case things are more complex, as I will explain in the Fifth Chapter). Visibility is again at core of Campiglio's narratives. In both cases, ski teachers and mountain guides act as brands' promoters through social networks, wearing their sponsored sunglasses on their profile's pictures or simply displaying brands on their Facebook profiles.

Therefore, in professionals' case, sunglasses "add" visibility to their pictures, both for them (using a certain popular brand can give more visibility than using another) and for their sponsors. To what regards non-professionals, things are much more complex. In their cases, sunglasses in their Facebook's photos may also "leave" something, but meant in a positive way: wearing sunglasses has been described as a practice that "leaves" their "shyness". However, in Campiglio, the vast majority of non-snow professionals I met were tourists and, in their cases, sunglasses "added" something to their photos. They could not wear "fake" sunglasses in these photos, since there is a discrepancy between "the luxury of Campiglio and an image of someone wearing fake sunglasses". Sunglasses added "prestige" to their photos and, then, to the narratives connected to them. These two quotes from two different tourists (Italian the former, Polish the latter) helps to frame the situation:

*"She [a girl he likes] has this rich boyfriend... but seeing this picture of me on Facebook, in Campiglio, with these clothes and these sunglasses... She will regret of not having chosen me."*

*"These sunglasses we [he, his friends and family] are wearing are cool, and Campiglio is a cool place, so it fits perfectly with the situation!"*

Sunglasses in these pictures are “personal front’s items” (Goffman 1990: 32-34) which help to “give off” (Goffman 1990: 14) an impression, suitable for Campiglio’s exclusiveness.

To use Warnier (2001) and Tisseron’s (1996, 1997, 1999) terminology, I would say that social networks are the place where the two media of images and words act together. Here “the images [...] have the advantage of being fairly permanent” (Warnier 2001: 17) and work toward the same directions of words; there is no discrepancy, or, better, people try their best to build as less discrepancies as possible in their social network’s discourses around their holidays in Campiglio, and sunglasses play a part in this narrative.

#### *2.4 Health and Experience*

All my informants (except two people) underlined sunglasses’ importance for preventing eye-related problems. Their awareness and general knowledge about the possible problems raised if their job was a snow-related one, while non-snow professionals stressed out the general risk of “getting blinded”. There was not a difference among tourists and Campigliani in matter of awareness, with the latter often telling me that they should have been more aware, but that they were not. People were also aware of the importance of wearing certified sunglasses, despising fake ones. People often told me that they try to find a balance between protection, (their sense of) aesthetic and price; all these three factors were equally balanced in a person’s choice of wearing a pair of sunglasses instead of another. As an example, I consider this tourist’s words quite emblematic:

*“I would not even let my dog wear Moroccan sunglasses”* [in Italy, it is a common stereotype to associate Moroccans to summer peddlers, who are believed to sell “fake products”].

In addition, connected to the previous “Italian” sub-chapter:

*“No no, protection is essential! Let us being cool way, let us being Italian, but not let us being assholes!”*

However, these assumptions should be taken with a grain of salt, since my presence on the field might have influenced informants’ declarations in this sense, since “the subjects seek to protect their secrets since these represent a threat to the public image they wish to maintain” (Berreman 2007: 147).

In general, people told me to have learnt sunglasses' importance "through experience", since they often stated how it is possible "to feel the difference when wearing sunglasses and when not, on the snow". Some people in their fifties told me how, when they were young, did not bother about using sunglasses because they did not want to have the non-aesthetic lens' sign on their faces in order to "impress girls", but regret it now, since they have eye-diseases. These same people blame young men to be like them when they were young, since in their opinion they do not have any awareness. This is especially true considering fathers' relation with their sons and daughters. Many of them underlined their struggles in teaching their children about the importance of wearing sunglasses, and their stress for failing it. This father's quote is a good example:

*"My daughters have me as an example [he has eye-related problems] but they do not care, they see sunglasses just as trendy objects. I suffer about the fact of not being able to transmit sunglasses' medical importance to them. They want to burn themselves with the hot pan."*

However, when speaking with young men, I always found quite attentive people about sunglasses' medical importance, at least as much as my older informants did. Young people in general had just one or two pair of sunglasses, since lack of money was often a problem for many of them (especially local workers, such as ski teachers) but these one or two pairs were always certified ones; in other words, they would have never worn "Moroccan" sunglasses.

Said this, during my last days of fieldwork, an enlightening episode for my research happened. It was the end of March, Pinzolo's slopes at valley were already closed and I kept hanging around for Piazza Righi, in a warm and beautiful sunny day. It was Saturday and there was a prize ceremony of a children's ski competition. The thing that stroke me was that everybody (teachers and parents) was wearing sunglasses, except children. It really impressed me, since children are the most sensible category in matter of eye-care. I then had some chats with Campigliani, and they too told me how their children did not use sunglasses or, if they did, they did it toward their adolescence, but just to "show-off", through "Moroccan" sunglasses. Some parents told me that it was difficult to teach children about how to wear sunglasses, since they tend to break them and, in many cases, people (especially tourists) described the fact of a child wearing sunglasses as "weird", because sunglasses are "trendy" and children "are not". However, I think this is also influenced by the lack of advertisement campaign in this sense. One of my informants, a shopkeeper, told me:

*“It is just a matter of advertisement. If some great brands would start a campaign to make children aware about it, you would see many children wearing sunglasses. However, they do not see a great profit in it. While, in goggles’ case, the profits are much higher.”*

I agree with my informants. It is enough to have a look at sunglasses’ advertisements on Google, to see how the vast majority of sunglasses’ advertisement is dedicated to adults. In addition to this, parents lamented the lack of initiatives around teaching sunglasses medical importance to their children, indicating a little workshop at Tione’s high school (Tione is the main village of the valley) as the only initiative in this sense.

### *2.1 The Use (and not use) of Sunglasses as a “Technique of The Body”*

In addition, drawing from Warnier (2001), I argue that the use of sunglasses, as well as the use of other gears, like goggles, can be considered a “technique of the body”. Warnier draws this concept from Mauss (1979) and completes it with Foucault’s considerations around the “techniques of the self” (Foucault 1989). Mauss’ starting point is that these techniques of the body “are felt by the author as actions of a mechanical or physical [...] order” (Mauss 1979: 104); in addition, “Mauss reminds us that [...] these embodied forms of knowing and understanding are social, which means that their principles are communicated and passed on through networks” (Crossley 2007: 88). Techniques of the body can then be considered techniques of the self that are “the procedures [...] that are proposed or prescribed to individuals in order to fix their identity, maintain or transform it, depending on a number of ends, and this by means of a relation of mastery over oneself, or of knowledge of oneself” (Foucault 1989: 134, trans. Warnier 2001: 10). The most efficient example Warnier made is “the hunter [...] (who) identifies with quite a different material object. His hunting gun of which there is a vast variety of models depending on the bore, the position of the barrels, the shape of the butt and its dimensions. Each hunter will choose the one better adjusted to his morphology, his experience, his taste and the type of hunting he practices. He will learn how to handle it, open it, load it. He will embrace the art and the emotion of gun shooting. In addition, he will be equipped with cartridges, clothes, boots, a horn and a dagger when hunting large game. He may have a hunting dog, and adjust his hunting habits to the idiosyncrasies of his companion. Without any doubt, these objects represent signs in a system of communication and connotation.” (Warnier 2007: 2).

This is also somehow connected to the fact that people add value to sunglasses through experience. Through experience, or better, through experiencing sunglasses, they literally “feel”

that something is different, maybe better than when they are not wearing them (the feeling of having a “rested eye” [in Italian “occhio riposato”]). Through experience, they incorporate sunglasses and add value to them as cultural signifiers as well. Snow-Professionals often told me how they would have felt “naked”, if only they would not have felt sunglasses in their pockets while they were heading to their workplaces. In addition to this, they described sunglasses as an essential part of their suit, often making the example that sunglasses (as well as other gears) are to them what to a Wall Street’s broker are “ties and overnight cases”. In order to explain this, this Warnier’s quote (2001: 21) is quite enlightening, if applied to sunglasses:

*“When they are in daily use for months on end, when moving without them has become inconceivable, they do not only make sense as signs, but rather as part and parcel of a subjectivity that has been transformed in its relationship to self and others.”*

This is especially true for snow-professionals, who spend minimum half a year (in the case of guides, all year) wearing sunglasses, tending to charge these objects with meanings and group-based concepts. Their “drives, passions, physical appearance, perceptions have been shaped” (Warnier 2001: 21) differently from “common people”, because of their belonging to their groups and to the different techniques of the body incorporated, not only around sunglasses. This last line is especially true for mountain guides, since embodiment is very different from guides and ski teachers, for reasons that will become clearer in their respective chapters. What I have written until now is also somehow true for tourists but, in their case, sunglasses are replaced with ski goggles. Why and how this happened is explained in the next chapter.

## *2.2 Differences and Similarities among Snow-Professionals: Seeing Through Professionals’*

### *Eyes*

In the highly competitive environment that is Campiglio, there is strong competition and, in some cases, hatred between mountain guides and ski teachers, but also within these categories themselves. In the first case, the majority of mountain guides often expressed their contempt toward teachers, and do not like to be compared to them. They often described ski teachers as “tennis teachers, who do not have any culture about the mountain, ignorant people who promote an ephemeral culture” while they were “three-hundred and sixty degrees’ mountain professionals”, a definition of themselves that many mountain guides used with me. However, mountain guides could

potentially teach ski, as their qualification allows them to do so, but only a few of them actually are ski teachers. A guide once told me:

*“I was a ski teacher until a few years ago, but then I left. Those guys are a bunch of morons and I do not want to mix with them.”*

Another good example in this sense is Faletti, who taught ski in Austria for some time, but then he dropped, because he understood, in his words, that:

*“It was not something for me.”*

On the other hand, ski teachers often described mountain guides as “massive jerks who think they are super-human because they deal with risk” and “fanatic of their badge”, assumptions that will become clearer in the Fifth Chapter, but they did not care about being compared to them. At the core of these contrasts there was often working competition around free-ride ski. Many ski teachers claim to be “skilled enough” to carry clients out of the slope, even if they do not have the specific free-ride insurance, so mountain guides, who actually are licensed and insured to do free-ride, get really mad about this teachers’ behaviour, especially considering that their jobs opportunities are really reduced, during winter season. A guide once told me:

*“It is like if you are a doctor in Law and you want to practice a surgical operation, because you are still a doctor.”*

In the second case, “normal” ski teachers often scold cross-country skiers, labelling them as “nerds”, while mountain guides appear to be much concerned about other guides’ professionalism. Massimo Faletti told me these words, regarding a guide who opened a mountain route “irresponsibly”, as he told me. Just mentioning this guide’s name was enough to cause an expression of disgust on Faletti’s face:

*“That guy is an imbecile, a person who does not know what ethics are, he should be professionally burned, that despot.”*

However, snow professionals have much in common, when it comes to sunglasses. First, they perceive sunglasses as “work tools”, necessary for their job on the snow, as in sunny days it would be much more “tiring and dangerous” for their eyes. Second, snow professionals do not feel an actual contrast between ski goggles and sunglasses, as tourists do. Snow professionals claim to use sunglasses or ski goggles depending by the different situations they face: if they teach to children, beginners or they just need to explain theory they wear sunglasses, since their skiing speed would be slow and so they believe it is not necessary to wear goggles. In fact, goggles are used in situations where protection is perceived as essential, such as during snowstorm or fast skiing performances, in order to better protect themselves from cold air. Third, as already suggested in this chapter, mountain guides and often many ski teachers are somehow “forced” to use brands of sunglasses that they are sponsored by (if they actually have a sponsor). However, there is a big difference between guides and ski teachers’ sponsor agreement: the formers are often personally sponsored while, in latter case, sponsorship is decided by the ski school, which then “obligates” its employed teachers to only use that brand of sunglasses, at least when they work. With regard to their preparation, the tests for becoming mountain guides or ski teachers impose both physical and written exams, but in guides’ case, the selection is much stricter, since it is necessary to present a technical curriculum, where it is proved that the candidate has done a sufficient number of climbs and excursions just to take the selection, and tests include climbing alongside skiing.

### 3. Tourists

Wherever I went during fieldwork, on the summit of a mountain, along snowy paths in the forests, on the slopes or in bars and even in libraries, tourists' presence was something that could not pass unnoticed in nearly every Val Rendena's village. When I spent time with Peter during his breaks, outside his rent shop, we usually looked at tourists that were passing by on the streets, and all of Peter's statements about tourists were similar to this one:

*"You can immediately recognize a tourist: look at them, with their fancy clothes, shoes and even sunglasses... what a posh group of people."*

With workers allowing me to enter in their performances' backstage, I saw how "interactions with tourists and members of the local population [...] reveal tensions [...] and stereotypes that operate on interpersonal, intercultural and international levels" (Edensor 2009: 48). The main strategies through which local workers responded to these interactions were "ironic humour and outright antagonism" (Edensor 2009: 48). In the first case, Campigliani's habit of calling tourists "down-hillers" (in Italian "discesisti", referring to tourists' lack of ski skills opposed to them) is a good example, while in the second case many contrasts came out by Campigliani's belief around "tourists' bad manners", especially toward Polish tourists. This hatred does not lie in racial stereotypes, but on economic reasons. Although its fame as an "elitist" place, Campiglio's tourism is now organized on a mass-level, which allows middle-class people from Eastern Europe to go there at reasonable rates during winter season's "dead periods", in order to guarantee valuable incomes to Campiglio's businesses even in those days. This type of tourist, however, does not spend much money in expensive leisure activities, as those are already included in holiday packages, and does not spend much money in restaurant and bars either, since they usually, borrowing an expression from my Campiglio's informants, "sack supermarket" rather than engaging with Campiglio's businesses. However, these tourists still pay careful attention to their appearance, as well as Campiglio's informants directly involved in winter tourism.

Tourists' commonality in Campiglio is based on the attributes that the touristscape tries to introject, forcing people to "follow certain courses of action" (Crouch 2009: 551), which leads tourists to share the same spaces and to do the same activities. This commonality is then built upon events like after-ski parties, happy hours at mountain refuges, ski lessons and so on. Their groupness is built upon the tourist-skier image, which is activated by the touristscape and it is self-

evident to them, since Campiglio is structured in a way that makes it obvious, in winter, to do ski and snow related activities. In addition, the luxurious pressure of the bubble manages to flatten tourists' standards around appearance; this, however, does not generate connectedness, since the tourist-skier's identification is directed by the touristscape, which does not establish a growth of relational ties, that it is not necessary to its maintenance. Moreover, people always go there in small groups, which do not feel the necessity of expanding outside of their boundaries.

### *3.1 Tourists' Patterns (not) around Sunglasses*

Tourists always chose to wear trendy and fashionable sunglasses, despite their different beliefs around these objects. Some people believed that "the more you pay, the more you are protected from the sun", others told me "it is possible to wear good and fashion sunglasses at a fair price". Despite these different narratives, one brand was largely the most-dressed one among non-professionals: Ray-Ban. Ray-Ban sunglasses were described as "cool" and "quality" ones and their excellence was also valued in what I would call their somehow already mentioned "social networks power". Many informants used to take selfies on the snow and then uploaded them on social networks, telling me that having original sunglasses was an essential part for the "social network" success of these objects. For example, one young man of the already mentioned group from Brescia (page 11) told me he was taking selfies just to "show-off" on social networks; when I asked if he would have ever worn "fake sunglasses" for these selfies he told me:

*"Hell no! I am in Campiglio now. If I would wear fake sunglasses here, I would make a bad figure... especially if I would post it on social networks."*

In this sense, brand's authenticity is central for "the success of one's public appearance" (Newell 2012: 170) and wearing "fake sunglasses" would attract some kind of social reproach (Newell 2012: 175-176). However, as I have already written, the vast majority of people do not use sunglasses, but only ski goggles. Even when they are in solarium, not many of them wore sunglasses; I would say that sixty per cent of people there was not wearing sunglasses and a forty per cent was.

When I asked them why they did not bring sunglasses, people told me that they went there "just for skiing", thus sunglasses were unnecessary, because they were using ski goggles. In addition to this, ski goggles were considered much more protective from sunlight, wind-chill effects and risk of falling. I heard many stories from tourists about how they had terrible falls on the snow and that, if it would have not been for their goggles, they would have had their "face disintegrated".

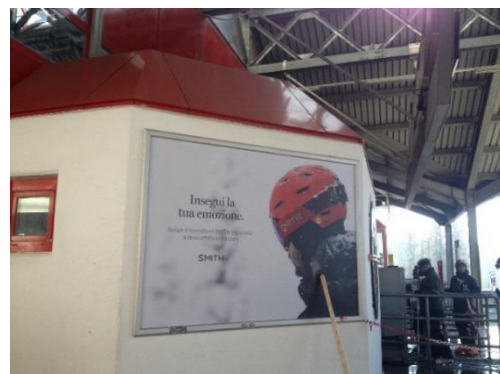
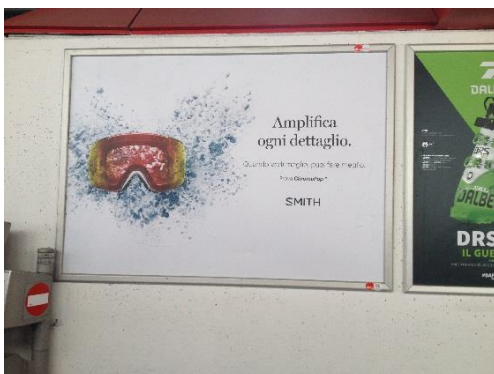
Moreover, people told me that wearing helmet with sunglasses was “aesthetically unpleasing”, as much as the tanned signs sunglasses leave on faces. As long as goggles’ effectiveness is a proven fact, I personally believe there is much more than that.

When I asked Peter and other winter tourist workers about goggles’ spread over sunglasses, they told me that it started to happen around fifteen years ago. All shopkeepers told me how, in that period, they used to sell goggles “just during stormy days” and how now, instead, they often ran out of goggles toward the end of the season. In their opinion, the technical advances in ski caused this spread; in Peter’s words:

*“Now even a donkey can ski decently and at a considerable speed, it is normal that big companies around ski developed and promoted their materials to guarantee a better safety for their customers.”*

However, not all my informants shared Peter’s same good opinion about “big companies around ski”. These informants acknowledged the technical advances in ski, but also underlined two other factors. First, in the last twenty years skiing competitions were streamed worldwide, showing to non-professionals how a skier should look like and, second, these companies understood that they could have made great profit out of the spread of ski goggles, so they started advertising campaigns of huge proportion in this sense.

I tend to agree with my informants, as during my fieldwork I saw everywhere at slopes’ entrance advertisements, showing people with helmet and or goggles. Big companies’ strategy became so effective that goggles’ image was portrayed not only on ski-related advertisement, but also on advertisement not related to ski, such as banks and in the souvenir t-shirt of Campiglio (pictures taken by me):



*Goggles advertisements outside of Campiglio's slopes (around Grosté's ski facilities)*



*Advertising company's advertisement outside of Campiglio's slopes (around Grosté's ski facilities)*



*Campiglio's souvenir T-shirt (Piazza Righi's Supermarket)*



*Bank Advertisement Outside of Campiglio's slopes (around Grosté's ski facilities)*

In two of these advertisements, goggles are associated with helmets. This, united to the previous considerations around ski competition being streamed worldwide, explains why people often find “unaesthetically” wearing helmets and sunglasses, because helmets and goggles became “institutionalized” at an imaginary level on the slopes at the point that wearing them it is felt as “right”, while wearing sunglasses it is not. The most emblematic quotes from tourists, in this sense, are:

*“Wearing goggles, helmet and ski suits here is necessary, in order to not feel out of place... it is like a lawyer who must work with his suit.”*

And

*“Wearing helmet and goggles on the slopes makes me feel protected, almost invincible; [...] But when I walk around Campiglio in my ski suit, I feel like a duck. However, on the slope, I become a swan.”*

What it is in play here is a process of symbolization (Warnier 2001, Tisseron 1996, 1997, 1999) which “allows one [...] to domesticate [...] his experiences. This symbolization uses three media: sensory-motricity, image and words” (Warner 2001: 14). In tourists’ case, sensory-motricity is in play in the act of skiing, naturally, the feeling of “cold air on the eyes and being vulnerable” without goggles. “Image” is mediated by Campiglio’s bubble and advertisement, since “images provided by all the material objects of a manufactured world, have the advantage of being fairly permanent. They help the psyche in its work of establishing duration, memory and sense of continuity” (Warnier 2001: 17). Naturally, also images produced by tourists are essential and probably more important than pre-manufactured image, since here there is a “learning-by-doing” process in play, in this case (Warnier 2001: 16). All the (often-personal) narratives around goggles’ effectiveness over sunglasses represent “words”. “In other words: there must be internalization through personal experience for communication and expression to take place, and it comes through sensori-affectivo motricity, elaborated by means of images and words” (Warnier 2001: 16).

### *3.2 A Frontier Category: DJs*

Before delving into the photos’ analysis, it is fair to write a paragraph about the particular category to which the protagonist of this analysis is part, and why I decided to include it in this chapter: DJs. During the first days I was in Campiglio, I had the opportunity to have a long chat with a DJ, who was working in one of Campiglio’s most popular bars. With time passing, I realized that his patterns and views around sunglasses were quite different from tourists but that, at the same time, he shared something with them, like the relation with social networks and the passion for Ray-Ban. So, I decided to have a chat with all Campiglio’s DJs, after knowing that there were just seven who worked in the area, managing to talk with all of them. In addition to this, six out of seven of these DJs were not from Campiglio, but from other parts of Italy. In any case, DJs have been one of the best groups I worked with in Campiglio, where I found incredibly nice and collaborative people, far from the stereotype I had about them, as “posh guys”. In fact, I incredibly felt this DJ’s words:

*“To me being a DJ is a job, but also a sacrifice, especially in this period of my life... It is not really profitable, but that is what I like doing, so I am fine with it.”*

DJs felt Campiglio's social environment somehow threatened their category. They felt Campiglio was not properly the right place for them, because its goers were not "DJs' customers". I actually had some chats with many Campiglio's barkeepers and they told me that, in the past, they "tried to hire some DJs" but their customers "did not like it", so they opted for other musical choices, such as piano and acoustic sets. In addition to this, there are no discos in Campiglio, except for Piano 54, which however people described as a "disco-bar" and not as a "proper discotheque". Therefore, Campiglio's DJs are mainly active at after-ski parties, which officially start at 4 pm., when ski facilities usually close. However, some DJs lived this role as something momentary or secondary, a "nice and profitable hobby". In one case, a DJ told me how he used his DJ's role as a mean to "catch customers" (an expression I will explain in the next chapter) for his snowboard teacher's role:

*"I managed to conciliate these two things, which are both perceived as cool... I gained many clients, as a teacher, telling my bar's clients that I was also a snowboard teacher."*

To what concern sunglasses, all DJs told me they perceived sunglasses as "work tools", like snow-professionals, necessary if they were doing DJ-sets at sunsets or if stroboscopic lights were too annoying. Some told me that, this way, they could watch their DJ consoles, while other stressed out this necessity only for eye-protection, since wearing sunglasses reduced their vision. In addition to these situations, DJs told me they wear sunglasses in circumstances in which they purposely want to "show-off". Nicolas, the DJ I will soon talk about in the next sub-chapter, told me:

*"Once we had these young boys and so, in order to entertain them, I played the fool, wearing sunglasses inside the bar... but it was just for fun."*

DJs to whom I talked to had two different opinions around brands. For some DJs, brands were essential to "guarantee their performance's success" in front of Campiglio's customers, but not all the brands were equal. For example, DJs who shared this opinion told me that they would have never worn Salice. For others, brand was not essential, but design was. If Salice had produced "sunglasses appropriate for DJ's situations", they would have worn them without any problem.

### 3.3 *The Photographic Case: Nicolas*

One of the first days of fieldwork, I was wandering in Campiglio at early evening, temperature below zero and the sky dark as if it was late night, looking for a warm place to sit while waiting for the bus, which would have left at 8 pm.. Suddenly a familiar tune, played aloud from speakers, caught my attention and I walked towards its origin. The more I got closer, the more I recognized the tune: it was Gala's "*Freed from desire*", one of the many songs I listened while working during many summers on Lake Garda. I finally went into the bar, named Ober 1, and the music overwhelmed me; drunken people in their ski suits were doing the conga, singing along to the addictive chorus, so I ordered a beer, drank it and joined the crowd. After some more dancing, I managed to sit with some tourists and I started chatting with them, while my attention was caught by the DJ, who was the only person in the bar wearing sunglasses on top of his head. Having already started to chat with other DJs, the next day I went to this bar to have a chat with him, and the bartenders told me to show up at half past two, when he would have started to prepare his set.

This is how I met Nicolas, a young man in his twenties. At first, I was rather intimidated by him, who was always wearing black clothes and had many tattoos representing skulls all over his body, but in the end, my reluctance disappeared. Nicolas was incredibly nice and willing to help me, and he has been the informant who took most seriously (or to whom I managed to explain best) his "photographic interview". Nicolas is originally from Volano, a small city next to Trento, and this experience in Campiglio was his first one as a "professional" DJ. After middle school, he attended Trento's conservatory, where he studied bass, but eventually dropped ("studying was not really for me", he said once) and then he had a brief career with a metal group, which split because "all its members started to live far from each other". In the end, he started writing beats for rap competitions, and finally he decided to become a DJ, "to keep up with the ever-changing times".

With regard to sunglasses, Nicolas sided with those DJs who did not care about brands, rather on design. In fact, he had only one pair of Ray-Ban, which he bought a long time ago, and he did not believe in the brand as a "guarantee of one's performance":

*"We must be clear about what a DJ is... If you want to act like a super-star, then you can believe this bullshit, but to me a DJ is a person who plays music and who makes people happy, do you know what I mean?"*

Here are photos and comments; photos are showed in the same order Nicolas showed me them.



**Nicolas:** Here I am playing at Ober 1; I had just started, around half past three, there were not many people around... My girlfriend wanted to take a picture, so I put my sunglasses on. I always have sunglasses with me, in case someone wants to take a picture of me. If they told me “hey, we are going to take a picture!” I immediately put my sunglasses on. Sunglasses somehow manage to leave my shyness, in a positive way... It is not a matter of “seduction” toward the client, here sunglasses’ use has an “intimate” meaning to me, let us say so. In addition, this photo has a special meaning, too, it is a memory of this period, that soon will be over. I potentially could have used it on social network, but I did not. These sunglasses are the ones I always wear, in every occasion.



**Nicolas:** This photo has been taken in Ala, where I was opening for a bigger DJ, with other two guys. Here I am wearing sunglasses because there was too much sun, to be fair I could not watch the display either, but it was not a big problem, I just had to play a bit with distortion effects. Without sunglasses, my eyes would have been destroyed. Here it is not a matter of shyness; I was really annoyed by sunlight. The organizers took this photo and then I post it on my Facebook. I am wearing my “usual” sunglasses, the ones

I am wearing now [during our interview].



**Nicolas:** This is a picture of many years ago, I was opening a concert with my metal group at Doss of Trento, have you been there? A super-cool place. We were opening for a dance group; do not tell me why they wanted us [laugh]. It was half past four in summer and there was a strong light. With groups, I often used sunglasses, because I often was on super-illuminated stages. However, to be honest, here I was wearing them because of habit. It was part of my outfit, as a bass player, also because these sunglasses were super-cheap and practically

useless for medical purposes. I was wearing them just to act super-cool. Growing up I understood that maybe I should have put attention about sunglasses' medical importance. A guitarist's friend, who was a photographer, took the photo, because we were so poor that we could not pay an "official" one.



**Nicolas:** Here I was at the last evening of Calcio Splash, a very popular event in Volano, my hometown. We start drinking by Wednesday and, when we arrive at Saturday, we are worn-out [laugh]. Actually, my friend here was the DJ; I just improvised as a vocalist, even though I am a terrible singer... to cut it short, I wanted to play the fool. Wearing sunglasses was like a signal to tell everybody that something was not right. To be precise, that alcohol demolished me [laugh]. Also, remember that here I felt at home... actually, I was at home. I knew everybody and everybody knew me. And, indeed, everybody there knows that I am a moron [laugh].

In all the photos except one, Nicolas underlined sunglasses' role in his performative acts as a DJ; only in one, he mentioned that sunglasses were actually useful for his eyes. However, in that case, Nicolas' need of protection did not really rely on health reasons, but more on the fact of being "annoyed" by the sun. On the other hand, in another photo he mentioned how he was wearing "fake" sunglasses but only as performative items, without considering their protective quality and admitting how these sunglasses were quite poor, in his view. In addition, I think that Nicolas' assumptions around sunglasses' medical importance in the third photo may have been influenced by my presence as a researcher. In any case, sunglasses assumed different meanings in all the different photos showed me, from their use as something that "leaves" his shyness to their night dimension for accentuating his drunken state. However, he did not believe in the role of sunglasses had in adding "prestige" to his self-mediated image and, by the way, all his photos (except the first one) were posted on social networks.

In addition, Nicolas shared the common perception that Ray-Ban were both cool and protective sunglasses, a belief shared by tourists and DJs. To sum up, sunglasses among Non-Professionals are stretched between their trendy dimension and their protective one. The former dimension clearly overwhelms the latter, but it is also interrelated, since "original" (and therefore certified) sunglasses are necessary for "showing-off" performances, especially considering Campiglio's bubble. Although protection is one of the factor that influences their use of sunglasses, their main reasons are controlled by performative and environmental reasons, which clearly emerge if we compare their use of sunglasses to mountain guides and ski teachers' perception around these objects.

#### 4. Ski Teachers

Before deeply digging into the actual object of this chapter, it is safe to point out a general overview of this group. The best way of doing this, it is to explain the main differences between ski, snowboard and cross-country skiers. Speaking with snowboarders and cross-country skiers, my informants of these two groups often told me something around the lines “you know, now that you make me think about it, we are kind of similar to each other”. Both these two groups are in fact ostracized by the main ski world: snowboard is often perceived by “official” ski teachers as mere “fashion” and “reckless” and snowboarders are regarded as “weed guys”, while cross-country ski is perceived as a “boring nerdy activity”, which lacks the adrenaline of “official ski”. In addition, these two groups have different relation to sunglasses, compared to “official” ski teachers, who use sunglasses or goggles according to their students’ skills and weather conditions, as explained in sub-chapter 2.6. Cross-country skiers in fact mainly use sunglasses, since their ski speed and conditions rarely impose the use of ski goggles, while snowboarders most of the time use goggles, since snowboarding often implies high speeds and falling risks are much more possible. However, snowboard teachers use sunglasses in certain situations, as I am going to show in a moment.

Explained the differences, it is now time to underline the many points in commons that, aside from the use of sunglasses, suggested me to treat these three groups in the same way. First, all of these jobs are, of courses, seasonal ones: during the rest of the year, these people work as carpenters, woodcutters, cooks or painters, among other jobs. Many teachers told me how their main incomes came from their winter job, feeling stressed to gain “as much money as possible”. Second, ski teachers’ environment is extremely competitive, especially in Campiglio, where there are twelve ski schools, three snowboard schools and a cross-country one, with over three-hundred teachers present there, during high season. Campiglio’s “wars” among ski schools are fought through one main mean: visibility. For example, the province of Trento sets out official parameters for ski teachers, which in theory should be followed: the most relevant one, as a matter of appearance, is that teachers should wear the national light-blue ski suits. However, in practice in Campiglio almost nobody adjusts to this parameter: only one ski school dresses his teachers with the national suit and, when I asked why, its director told me it was because they “came first”. Thus, every ski school has a suit of different colours from each other: orange, black and white stripes, red, green... almost every combination of colour is present among ski school’s suits in Campiglio. In addition to colours, another visibility’s strategy played by ski schools is the already mentioned sponsorship: being sponsored by some prestigious brands is believed to increase a school’s

visibility, thus to increase the opportunity of gaining more clients. Sponsorships involve ski-related brands as much as brands like Audi, Colmar, Surveye and Red Bull.

Brands play a major role in that care of the image that is central in ski teachers' opinion, since they consider their job as a "communicative one, then care of the appearance is of course fundamental", as all of my teachers informants underlined. Many ski teachers in Campiglio expressed their concern about the necessity of pulling off a performance suitable for Campiglio's exclusiveness, where having the right accessories of the right brand (gloves, skis, sunglasses etc.) is regarded as fundamental, in order to do that. Peter's words about his belief around the role of appearance in his job as a teacher are emblematic:

*"Shit, I cannot go around dressed like a hobo [while teaching] I must show off a certain image... I am in Campiglio."*

Naturally, appearance was not the only attribute teachers considered relevant: ski and teaching skills were considered decisive in a customer's choice of choosing a teacher rather than another.

Ski teachers indeed share "some common attribute" (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 20) and feel connected to each other from these attributes: their constant presence on the slope, the stressful rhythms of teaching every day and every hour and, most importantly, their strategies about how to be a good teacher, which includes communicative and skiing skills and care of appearance. However, this is not enough to build a groupness. Teachers see each other for little time in the office, sometimes they spotted each other on the slopes and they often know little about teachers from other schools, unless they have the same age (like in Andrea and Mirko's case, described in the last part of this chapter). Business dinners and review days are considered as simple formalities that any other worker would face. Ski teachers in fact do not perceive themselves as a "distinctive, bounded, solidary group" (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 20) but more as independent "leisure professionals". This quote from a teacher is quite useful to frame their rationalization around how they self-represent:

*"Tourists see ski as a leisure activity and I am first a leisure professional [...] without them, there would be no job for me."*

In addition to this, ski teachers are generally both male and female. There is not a solid belief around macho myths, like in guides' cases, as I will describe in the next chapter. In addition, ski

teachers never underlined their knowledge about ski skills or even snow science's matters, as mountain guides did, even though they took exams in these subjects, like guides. Teachers, in other words, perceive themselves as "common people". Which to some extent they are since, at the end of the winter season, they often "go back" to their life as carpenters, painters and so on. Teachers employed by big ski schools often described themselves as "employee" and their school as "corporations", expressing only a working tie to them and their peers. Moreover, the highly competitive environment of Campiglio often do not allow any solidarity in ski teachers' case:

*"If someone is mean to a customer, or if he cannot teach him well enough, there is the concrete risk of losing him or her, then he or she would ask to change teacher or even school [...] we must report bad behaviour of our colleagues to our directors, in order to avoid this."*

In other words, competition is played through means that do not help in developing a common ski teachers' "identity", rather, this competition actually "prevents" it, shaping ski teachers as independent workers.

#### *4.1 "Catching Customers"*

Sunglasses have then a main role in visibility's strategies for ski teachers. As I have already mentioned, being sponsored by a main brand may be considered a wise strategy by some school, but that is often not sunglasses' case; only two ski schools in Campiglio actually signed contracts for sponsorship with sunglasses' companies, underlining the previous mentioned importance of this for visibility's reasons, but not only that. One of these two schools is also an official seller of a very popular sunglasses and goggles' company, and its director told me how he uses his employees as promoters of the brand itself:

*"Let us say that this condition happens, on the slope: a customer is having trouble with his goggles.*

*Customer: Shit, I cannot see anything!*

*Employee-Teacher: My goggles are good; would you like to try them?*

*I sold lots of goggles, this way."*

The same goes for sunglasses:

*“Once the company asked me to sell more sunglasses... mine is a snowboard school, so we do not use sunglasses very often, but I told my employees to wear them in some occasions, like while teaching theory on the snow... and thus I started selling much more sunglasses.”*

This is one of the many strategies to “catch customers”, as many of my informants told me, which means, “trying to gain as much profit as possible” from them, but it is not the only one, as the next sub-chapter will show. The Italian expression is actually “accalappiare clienti”, which refers to the “accalappiacani” (Italian for “dog-catcher”). As I was saying, many schools do not have a sponsor to what regard sunglasses, because they generally think that sunglasses are such personal gears that it is not fair to impose their choices on their employees. However, the vast majority of teachers I met used Oakley sunglasses, whose managed to combine, in their words “both coolness and lens of good quality”, alongside with being sporting sunglasses. In general, teachers try to find a balance between “coolness”, “sportiness” (two essential concept for an efficient image to “catch customers”) and “protection”, even among the more experienced ones or the ones who told me that this “seducing aspect of sunglasses is bullshit”. I remember asking to one of my main informants, a ski teacher in his fifties, if he knew about the existence of Serengeti, a brand that produces sunglasses of extremely good quality but with old fashion design. He knew it and he praised Serengeti’s quality, but when I asked if he would ever use them while teaching he told me:

*“Shit, no! Serengeti are – “grandad sunglasses” -, I would never use them on the snow.”*

As probably may appear clearer now, teachers believe sunglasses almost have a “seducing” quality toward customers, and having sunglasses of a certain brand is seen as necessary in order to pull off a performance suitable in front of Campiglio’s customers. One of the few mountain guides who actually practiced the ski teacher’s job was also a ski school’s director. The fact that he wore Oakley surprised me, as some guides actually really disliked it. His answer was:

*“You know, my customers are mainly rich people from Milan, if I want to seduce them, wearing Oakley is one of the things I do.”*

Wearing the right equipment and, for extension, sunglasses, is seen as necessary for gaining more chances to gain more clients, especially for teachers who are not famous. In Goffman’s words, sunglasses are seen as a necessary part of a set of “personal front items” (1990: 34), for teachers’

success in front of their customers. Once I talked with a young teacher about an old and experienced ski teacher and mountain guide well-known in Campiglio, who told me he “did not care” about wearing the right “seductive sunglasses”, having no problems about wearing Serengeti:

*“Of course he does not care, he has all the clients that he wants because he is him... normal people like me must keep up to fashion, in order to survive.”*

However, teachers were perceptive of sunglasses medical importance, in order to prevent eye-diseases, and despised fake sunglasses. Said this, even if they perceived sunglasses as a medical necessity, they still perceived them as a commodities, especially in relation to their “seducing” attributes. In addition, a major concern for young ski teachers was often sunglasses’ price. Many of them, as the more experienced ones, had many sunglasses and did not bother about the price, to have both “cool” and “protective” sunglasses, but other had just “one good pair of sunglasses for the snow” and, maybe, “a good pair of sunglasses for the sea”. In any case, the protective dimension was always taken in account, in a teacher’s choice of wearing sunglasses. However, the distinction between “summer” and “winter” sunglasses was rather blurred, in teachers’ case: some told me how they used Ray-Ban but just in summer, other did not mind about using Ray-Ban on the snow while other literally hated them, as they firmly believed that “a snow professional wearing Ray-Ban is a joke”.

#### *4.2 Campiglio, “Fashion Capital” of Ski Teachers*

One afternoon, right after my meeting with the already mentioned Faletti, I went to the ski teachers’ trade union in Trento, where I had the opportunity to have a long chat with a young ski teacher who was working in Andalo, another ski resort in Trentino. After having mocked Campiglio’s “posh environment”, he stated that Campiglio was a place from where “ski fashion spreads across the region” and, as a proof, he showed me an Instagram profile of a ski teacher who, in his words, was a “sort of influencer”, who was wearing a pair of sunglasses that were “very popular”. These sunglasses, in the words of this Andalo’s ski teacher, were popular because it was “a trend spread from Campiglio.” When I got back to my field, I started asking questions about if Campiglio was really what this ski teacher told me, and pretty much everyone agreed on that. The only difference was that the majority of my informants labelled as “posers” these so-called influencers, with the same dynamics described by Edensor and Richards in their study about snowboarders and skiers (2007: 106). Whenever I mentioned these teachers-influencers’ names and showed their Instagram

profiles to my informants, everybody busted out laughing, telling me that they know who they were. Peter's opinion about them is exemplary:

*“Look, these guys and girls are just posers... it is just another tactic to catch customers, to keep in touch with them even when the season is over. They show that they are cool and hot, so they hope that the customer will go back to them. But on the slopes, we see who is a really good skier. And they are never as good as the others and, for extension, as me.”*

In Edensor and Richards' words, “clothes are subordinated to the performance” (2007: 106). However, Campiglio's bubble still manages to influence this belief around gears and, for extension, sunglasses, as Peter's quote at page 37 shows. In any case, my informants told me that Campiglio is indeed a sort of “centre of fashion” for the local ski world, at least to what regard Trentino, as a mountain guide once told me:

*“To find another place around here with the same prestige, you must go to Cortina [d'Ampezzo], which is in another region [Veneto]. I think it is normal that these wannabes are here, because Campiglio is Campiglio.”*

To sum up, there are two different categories of teachers, one being the fashioner, who firmly believes in the efficiency of the brand or that, at least, he “keeps up” with fashion, and the performer, who does not believe in brands' efficiency and he is much more concerned about his actual ski skills. Naturally these two categories are not static; a person can be both a performer and a fashioner (like Peter) and the extent to which he is one or another depends by his working condition (the more he has “guaranteed” customers, the more he would claim to not care about it) and, in Campiglio, by how much the “bubble” affects him.

#### *4.3 The Photographic Case: Andrea vs. Mirko<sup>4</sup>*

One morning I went into a ski rent-shop, managed by a mountain guide suggested me by another informant: I did not find him, but there were over ten ski teachers chatting with an employee. I decided to ask questions about sunglasses to everybody and one of these people impressed me:

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<sup>4</sup> This photographic sub-chapter may appear much more detailed, compared to the other two. However, I purposely wrote it this way. I wanted to underline the striking differences between Andrea and Mirko, which are not reflected just in their different views around sunglasses, and would probably help the reader in having a better understanding of the field's dynamics described in the first chapter.

Andrea. Andrea is a twenty years-old ski teacher from Liguria, an Italian Northern region on the sea, who told me he had a “great fascination” over sunglasses, having dozen of them and always them in every occasion, even at discos, since he really liked sunglasses as a “concept”. His colleagues that morning often made fun of him, especially commenting his photos on social networks such as Facebook and Instagram. From that moment, I wanted to interview him through my photographic method. Some days after that meeting, I managed to chat with three teachers from one of the two ski schools with sponsored sunglasses and I especially focused on Mirko, since he resembled me an opposite version of Andrea. Mirko is a twenty years-old ski teacher raised in Campiglio, who during summer works as a cook and he described his relation with sunglasses as a working one: he had just two pair of sunglasses, one for his free time, which he told me he did not use often, and one for his job, provided him by the school’s sponsor. Mirko even told me that he did not use social networks and did not really care about fashion, and that he was not an “Instagram guy”. In addition to this, Mirko and Andrea were different on not only my data, but also physically, which made the difference even more memorable: Mirko is tall, with long blonde hair and blue eyes, while Andrea is short, with short brown hair and brown eyes. Resembling a suggestion from one of my professors in Leiden, I then decided to interview Andrea first, asking him to describe his photos, and on a second time Mirko, asking him to describe Andrea’s photos. Luckily, I managed to do it with the two of them.

I first contacted Andrea, setting out a meeting at a place of his choice, which was Majestic, an elegant and expensive lounge bar in the centre of Campiglio. I waited for him outside the bar and when he came, he was wearing a long grey raincoat, blue elegant trousers and sunglasses, even though it was half past five and the sun was setting. We then entered and sat at a table, where he ordered a coffee in a glass cup and a bottle of water. Before delving into the actual interview, I asked him a few questions about Campiglio and Andrea has been my only informant who did not described Campiglio as an “exaggerated place”, claiming that “Courmayeur or Cortina are like that” and that “Campiglio is a place for everyone: rich people, families, singles” and so on. His opinion on the fact that Campiglio was not an “exaggerated place” was also based on the assumption that there was only “one sort of disco, Piano 54” where he always had “a table booked on Thursdays, the day scheduled for parties”. At the end of the interview, he greeted me, saying that he had “to go to a golf lesson”. Mirko chose as a set of our interview the small pub next to his ski school: he went there at the end of his working day, still wearing his ski suit, telling me that he was “a bit late” because he wanted to “at least take his boots off”. Even though it was just half past three in the afternoon, he offered me a pint of beer, proceeding to order one for himself, too. He waited for the

bartender to drip it in our steins, he thanked her and then he carried both beers outside, since it was a warm day. When I started describing him the person I wanted him to comment the photos about, he started laughing:

*“That is Andrea, right? Only he could have brought you to Majestic.”*

Mirko even told me that that day he spotted him on the slopes, “teaching while wearing his fucking Ray-Ban”. When I asked Mirko about Campiglio’s environment, he described it as my other local informants did: as a war, a struggle, “a place where everything it is brought to its extremes”. When I asked him why Andrea did not share the same opinions as him and the other informants, he quickly told me:

*“I do not have anything against the guy, he is pleasant but he is also a moron. He always has a table at Piano 54, where he often wears a smoking and spends four-hundred euros for a bottle of Dom Perignon per week [...] Campiglio is ordinary to him because he inserted himself incredibly well in its system.”*

These were the photos analysed and their comments; I chose to show them to Mirko and to write about them following the sequence Andrea decided to show me.



**Andrea:** This is a boorish thing, I admit it... but I just got out from the hairdresser, I was driving along the highway... where? I do not remember really well, maybe to a date... I really think that

this is a perfect photo, look at all the details... on the right lens there is my Rolex mirrored. The light was strong, so sunglasses were used for protection, too. And many of the photos I will show you are posted on my Instagram, of course.

**Mirko:** He is travelling all elegant to an unknown destination to me; I cannot imagine what the fuck he is going to do, anyway. He is trying so hard to show-off, I think. Those are sunglasses appropriate for the context, at least. Let me check what is mirrored in those lenses... shit, look at that Rolex, what a boor.



**Andrea:** Here I am on a helicopter, I cannot drive it [laugh], even if I would like to... I am wearing sunglasses because it is necessary, as a protection.

**Mirko:** He is showing off, he wants to appear as a stud on a helicopter, a stud who has money and spends them, and he shows that he spends them... sunglasses here are secondary, and then those are fucking citizen sunglasses.



**Andrea:** Here I am on the slope, just before starting a lesson, the context was nice and I decided to take a picture to send it to my parents, to show them how I am doing. Primarily, on the slope, I wear sunglasses for protection, and this pair is super-efficient in that sense, then I notice that I look good

and I am like “let us take a picture”! And yes, this is the model that Andalo’s guy showed you<sup>5</sup>. Indeed, this fashion spread from Campiglio. Nah, it is not to “seduce the customer”, it is something I do for me.

**Mirko:** He is showing off again, he is wearing those sunglasses to impress people, those sunglasses are meant for that... then it is true, they are super-protective, but if you just want protection you can just use the first certified sunglasses that you find, that is it, I bet he has different sunglasses for every of these photos! I do not know if he is wearing them for his personal taste or for some bizarre intent to “catch” a customer, but I do believe that he wants to show off.



**Andrea:** I am in Ibiza, always the context brought me to take this picture, and I thought I looked good; all the colours were at their right place, so I took a picture. I was not in hangover [laugh].

**Mirko:** He looks like a Bedouin [laugh]... Still, I think that all these pictures are taken just to show off on social networks. [I asked him to guess where this photo was taken] I do not know... Porto Cervo? Oh right, Ibiza... what a surprise [sarcasm].



**Andrea:** This is another model of sunglasses that is really popular among teachers, and I took this picture for my parents. It was a pretty warm and sunny day, so I did not have to wear goggles. Anyway, I had them with me, as you can see; you never know what can happen! I was about to start a lesson, too. Oh, and the colours were at their right place!

**Mirko:** He is just showing-off again, those sunglasses, and goggles (which he is wearing just to show off), are meant for that, like the other pair in the only other photo on the snow that he gave you. I do

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<sup>5</sup> Before taking the “Photographic Interview”, I asked Andrea, among other things, if Campiglio was actually a “Fashion Capital” for ski teachers, mentioning my interaction with the Andalo’s ski teacher at the ski teachers’ trade union in Trento. And Andrea confirmed it.

not know if another person who looks at these photos would believe that he is a ski teacher. In this and in the other one, at least, he is wearing the CCM [Andrea's ski school] suit.

As a last general comment, Mirko added:

*“I still think all these photos were made just to show off, there is nothing more than that... I did not check, but I bet he has different sunglasses for every photo... Protection is not a thing in these photos... And look at them, they are all selfies! What a vane man!”*

The different answers of Andrea and Mirko allow me to sketch a quite efficient overview of sunglasses' use among ski teachers, because they represent two different types of teachers, the “fashioner” and the performer. In any case, what comes out from Andrea's photos is that his job as a ski teacher did not involve him at a point of identifying himself with it, as the majority of his photos are taken in other contexts than slopes or mountains. Both Mirko and Andrea's words expressed a tension between showing-off performances and health awareness. Although Andrea often expressed his concerns around sunglasses' medical importance, he always put them after aesthetic reasons; Mirko underlined this, telling, “If you want protection, you take the first pair of certified sunglasses that you find”. This quote is quite important, since it shows Mirko's awareness, as he implicitly revealed that he knew the difference between fake and certified sunglasses. In any case, Andrea's sunglasses were all certified, but this is probably more because of his need to appear than for actual protection (Mirko was also on point, telling me how these photos were all selfies and that for every photo he was wearing different pairs of sunglasses). Both Mirko and Andrea felt that some sunglasses were appropriated for some situations and contexts rather than others. In addition, despite Mirko's claims of not being an “Instagram guy”, he knew well how to read Andrea's “photographic language” since, in the first photo, he quickly noticed the mirrored Rolex without me helping him.

## 5. Mountain Guides

The job of the mountain guide is deeply rooted in the tradition and history of the province of Trento and of Madonna di Campiglio, where in its small centre there are a monument in bronze and granite (picture taken by me) and even a small museum dedicated to this figure. Many guides underlined the “prestige and honour” of doing this job, often regarded as an “elite” one. This is connected both to mountain guides’ rate (about 300 € per day) and to their period of formation, which lasts after five years of intensive physical (climbing and ski) and cultural (snow science, meteorology and geology, among others) exams, trainings and traineeships.



*Mountain guides' monument in Madonna di Campiglio*

As I have already written, guides often reacted annoyed to my continuous comparisons between them and ski teachers.

They claimed that they had “nothing in common with them” and that guides and ski teachers were like “two lines following parallels routes but that never meet”, since they always claimed to be “three-hundred and sixty degrees’ mountain professionals, who cannot and do not want to deal with the masses”, while ski teachers were just “fashion figures”. This opinion was also supported by guides’ statement that in Campiglio there were just thirty guides and tenfold ski teachers. Indeed, Campiglio’s winter tourists did not really know mountain guides, in comparison to ski teachers; when I asked them if they knew who guides were, they often did not know what to answer, or they just told me something like “some guys who bring you around mountains”. These two quotes, from a mountain guide the former and from a snowboard teacher the latter, cast more lights on this matter:

*“First we mainly work in summer, with climbs, then the experience with an mountain guide is not socially marketable... tourists come here, go down their hill [ski], go to Jumper doing after-ski parties and post a cute picture on Facebook, so when they go back to the city they have something to tell. If they would go back to the city saying – “you know, I have been on Brenta’s icefall and I spent three-hundred euros there” - all their friends would treat them as morons! Second, a ski mountaineering excursion is hard work. It is not a pleasant down-hill trip, you have to sweat and spit blood to reach the top of a mountain.”*

*“Try to wear tourists’ shoes. You are a young guy, you want to have fun and you come in Campiglio, would you prefer skiing or boring yourself with a mountain guide with his tight trousers and badged-jacket who tells you what the fuck is a glacier?”*

In any case, guides are proud of this isolation from the rest of Campiglio’s environment, which they described as a “place that promotes The Ephemeral”, and this Ephemeral is promoted, in their view, (also) by ski teachers. Therefore, mountain guides often hold grudges against anything considered “fashionable”, from brands to activity to places and even social networks, in some cases. I asked many guides to do “photographic interviews” with me, but their answers were always around the fact that they were not “the kind of guys who take cute pictures of themselves”. Furthermore, I may argue that mountain guides in Campiglio believe they are the most courageous defenders of a very delicate concept, at least in anthropology of tourism, which is authenticity. Between the lines, guides stressed out how an experience with them is more “authentic” than one with ski teachers, due to their knowledge of the mountains and of their history. Guides believe they are the true keepers of an alpine authentic experience, and this belief, which distances them from other groups, is stronger in Campiglio, a place generally shaped on luxurious and “posh” myths, as explained in the introduction. In addition, mountain guides’ narratives are filled with lots of macho culture. When I went to excursions with them and small boys were complaining about the difficulty of the trails, guides used to tell them “girls are the ones who complain”, while they sometimes mocked me because I listen to Jack Savoretti, a ballads’ songwriter they considered as “gay music”. This “machismo” is not a big surprise, since on the official mountain guides’ register of the Province of Trento, out of more than three-hundred people there is not even a single woman, and if we want to find (just) one we must go on the provincial candidate guides’ register. If we consider the provincial “accompagnatori di montagna”’s register, the ratio increases a little, but not in a substantial way (an “accompagnatore di montagna” can bring people to excursions that do not involve mountaineering skills, unless they are hired as mountain guides’ assistants).

Finally, mountain guides also underlined their dimension as “risk and safety professionals”: when they talked with me, they always ended up telling me episodes where they risked their lives or where their competences managed to avoid their involvement in avalanches or landslides. This guide’s story offers a good example:

*“I was on the Alps training some guides [he was a mountain guides’ teacher]. It was getting dark and a storm was flaring on top of our heads. I knew something bad was about to happen, so I brought my students away from there. After that, a landslide happened. If I had waited for five minutes more before taking this decision, there would have been no students anymore. And no me, of course.”*

Mountain guide’s job appears to be so involving that it leaves out every other role. This involvement is caused both by the many risks a guide often faces and, most importantly, by the mental state of climbing. This state requires constant attention and focus, which literally involves both physical and mental skills at their best, a mental state that is difficult to leave, when the climb is over. The physical commitment toward their jobs is translated into a mental one. Many guides told me how it is often difficult to have both a family



*Mountain Guides' Badge*

and being a mountain guide, because “your life ends there: mountain and family, you have no time for anything else”, as a former guide, who now runs a restaurant in Campiglio, told me. Therefore, all the guides that I met were highly proud of their badge<sup>6</sup> and they showed it in any occasions, even outside their job, as a proof to their belonging to a “unique group”. A mountain guide once told me that he would wear his badged jacket even at weddings and even Faletti, who in our long chat despised this attitude of displaying the badge, because he thought it could “create an unnecessary reverence from the customer” told me:

*“I feel these guys, always displaying our badge. It is an important landmark in the end, not everybody can show it. Even I have it, but it is just a small key chain... but it is definitely something important for me.”*

Mountain guides’ perfectly fits into the “analytical language” of commonality, connectedness and groupness suggested by Brubaker and Cooper (2000: 20). Guides’ commonality relies on their narratives around professionalism and risk, their externalized elitism, their conviction of being the holders of an “authentic alpine experience” and, last but not least, their proud relation to their badge. In addition, guides share a repertory of skills and they are convinced that other people do not know them. For example, once a guide spent an entire excursion discussing with me

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<sup>6</sup> Picture taken from <https://www.mountainguidesitaly.com/about-us>

how he knew how to do a “step turn” (in Italian “passo di giro”) and how “ski teachers did not even know about its existence”. “The relation ties that link” (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 20) guides one to another are their affiliation to the provincial association, as well as affiliation to local associations, like Gruppo Guide in Campiglio. Due to the short number of guides and associations, these people often know each other very well or, in a way or another, they heard about each other. The opposition between their representation as “an elitist and authentic group” against the “Ephemeral” environment of Campiglio and – largely – of all winter resorts, shapes their groupness. This “feeling of belonging together” (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 20) is strengthened by the mental state of climbing and by events such as climbs in groups, where cooperation is essential, or even through excursion on the snow with snow rackets, where all the guides involved try to convey their common view around themselves and the mountains, as I will explain in the dedicated sub-chapter. Of course, competition is present among guides; Faletti did not describe guides as “fools who play at who has it harder” for no reasons. However, this competition is often played through narratives and performances that re-affirm the core concepts of being a guide: importance of skills and professionalism.

### *5.1 Safety, Sponsorship and Professionalism*

Mountain guides often described sunglasses as Personal Protective Equipment (in Italian “Dispositivo di Sicurezza Personale”), essential for their jobs. A mountain guide always has at least two pairs of sunglasses with him, one for himself and a reserve one, in case his own pair gets damaged or if his client eventually does not have his own pair. In addition to this, depending on the type of excursion, guides may also carry with them glaciers’ sunglasses, with grade four of protection. Mountain guides then always stated that their choice to wear a pair of sunglasses instead of another was mainly determined by technical reasons: This guide’s words well express his group’s belief around sunglasses:

*“Being always on the snow or climbing, sporting and dynamic sunglasses are essential to protect your eyes at best.”*

Many guides also told me how sunglasses’ importance was a common thing in their life, something that they always cared about even in their free time, claiming that their awareness as guide influenced their free time and personal life. I often asked guides with children if being a father increased their interest in sunglasses’ medical importance, but they told me “there was no need”,

since they have been aware about it “since always”. In contrast to the majority of ski teachers, guides do not perceive a division between “free time” and “professional” or winter and summer sunglasses. They always use the same type of sunglasses in every occasion, claiming that even in their free time, summer or winter, their main activity are excursions on the mountains and climbing, thus they “do not care” about having a “citizen” pair of sunglasses, “appropriate” for those situations.

However, things are much more complex than guides tried to explain me. First, a big imposition for many mountain guides is sponsorship. Many guides are personally sponsored for their equipment by sporting and mountaineering brands, which usually give guides a set of gears for free and guides, in exchange, must use those gears in, technically, every occasion. Massimo Faletti explained me these dynamics quite well:

*“I needed some sunglasses and goggles, so I sent an email to Salice, telling them who I was and what I needed [...] and then I got it.”*

Therefore, in the vast majority of the cases, the guide seeks the company, unless he is a world-class mountaineer. However, practically many guides do not always use sponsored equipment, since they told me “there are some circumstances where a gear of a certain brand is better than your sponsored one”, including sunglasses. The majority of guides despised this behaviour, labelling as “jerks” guides who do it since, in Faletti’s words:

*“You ask a company to sponsor yourself if you believe in the brand! If you believe in the product, you must use it, or you are a massive jerk and intellectually dishonest.”*

This “belief in the brand” was always something guides underlined, and it relied on different personal narratives around sunglasses. Some guides decided to have Salice as a sponsor because it was “an Italian product”, so they wanted to support it, or because, in their personal opinion, a certain brand of sunglasses had better lenses than another, or simply because a company just accepted to sponsor them.

Second, the majority of guides always stressed out their necessity to show off an appearance that could inspire a “one-thousand per cent safety”, otherwise it would have been better “to change job”. Safety is at the core of many guides’ narratives around their professionalism, and safety is displayed through personal skills but, also, equipment. In this sense, they are similar to teachers,

who believed that an efficient working performance needed first personal skills and then good equipment. Anyway, there were two different opinions among guides, about the best way to perform efficiently through equipment. Some believed that “it is necessary to always have new equipment”, some other told me that “having everything new is not a good strategy, as the client may think you have never been on a mountain. It is enough to have equipment that it is not consumed”. Sunglasses are indeed part of this display of professionalism, as guides told me “there are sunglasses’ which are professionals, while others are not”, especially considering brands.

Speaking of brands, mountain guides do not really have a “favourite” one, like ski teachers or tourists, but have various brands, and their choice depends by their personal sponsors or their beliefs around some brands instead of others. There are a couple of brands that mountain guides universally acknowledge as “performing” for their jobs, while their preference for one or another is often strictly personal. However, there is a particular brand guides really dislike, Ray-Ban. When I asked them about it, the majority of guides labelled Ray-Ban as “gay, Top-Gun<sup>7</sup>, and pussy-ass” sunglasses or sunglasses “good for ski teachers”, while some others told me that there was a technical reason behind this hatred, since Ray-Ban does not produce sunglasses protective enough against wind-chill effects. However, there are concrete cultural motivations behind this choice, as this guide’s quotes will show:

*“There is a discrepancy between what Ray-Ban wants to represent and who we, mountain guides, are... We are incompatible.”*

Therefore, in addition to technical reasons, wearing Ray-Ban compromises both a guide’s ideal self and other actors’ evaluation of them as a guide. However, there is a particular performance, where the technical performativity of sunglasses is not strictly necessary: excursions with snow rackets.

### *5.2 Sunglasses, Excursions and Self-Representations: Performing the Mountain Guide’s Role*

Mountain guides often did not like to talk about this kind of excursions: some guides described them as “something we invented in order to survive”, since, in their cases, winter-job opportunities are really reduced, while Faletti actually described them as “small trips for dummies”. These excursions cost thirty euros per person and last two or three hours, while sometimes there are excursions, which cost sixty euros and last for the entire day, with lunch included in a small refuge. This kind of events are mainly organized by Campiglio’s Gruppo Guide, but its sister association in

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<sup>7</sup> Referring to the homonymous 1986 movie starring Tom Cruise, which boosted Ray-Ban’s popularity in Italy.

Pinzolo has similar activities, too. Concretely, it is a long but relaxed walk in the woods, much different from ski mountaineering excursions. During (frequent) small breaks, guides tell people about “their” mountains by a historical and scientific point of view. During these walks, guides do not face the struggles and technical difficulties of climbs or ski mountaineering; however, they always wear sporting and technical sunglasses, as much as technical mountain outfits. When I went to these excursions, I could clearly notice a strong discrepancy between how guides and tourists dressed, with the last ones wearing Ray-Ban and, sometimes, even jeans. In addition to this, at least to what concern Gruppo Guide’s excursions, one of the older guides always took the time, during the excursion I went to, to self-promote his job as a “summer one”. When I asked guides about all these matters, some of them acknowledged that it is possible to do an excursion with rackets “wearing some jeans, a t-shirt and Ray-Ban”, but they would never do that, since these excursions are thought as “propaganda’s vehicle” for guides, to show to common tourists who a mountain guide is. A guide once told me:

*“Like a broker in Wall Street must always wear a tie, we must always wear our technical outfits.”*

In other words, guides found a way to fit into Campiglio’s environment, wearing “outfits and expressions that harmonize with themed environment” (Crouch 2009: 554) but this themed environment it is not Campiglio, but their (marketable) idea of mountain. Mountains and paths in these occasions become stages where mountain guides perform their role through a collective performance, in order to gain money and to promote themselves. In this sense, excursions with rackets clearly show that guides must come to compromise with Campiglio’s or, more in general, with the winter-tourism working environment but at the same time, they must distance themselves from the mainstream tourism movement, in order to offer “something different”. This is why the importance of technical outfits in such occasions and, for extension, of technical sunglasses. In addition to this, sponsorship’s role must not be forgotten in guides’ decision regarding what kind of sunglasses to wear.

### *5.3 The Photographic Case: Massimo Faletti*

Since the first time I met Peter, he insisted that I had to meet Massimo Faletti, who he described as “a perfect candidate” for my research. I have always been doubtful about it, since Faletti lives in Povo, quite far from my field, even though he worked in Val Rendena for several years. In the end, I decided to contact him through Facebook, asking if I could meet him to ask some general

questions and doing the photographic interview, and Faletti immediately agreed, since he was at home recovering from an injury at his ankle, so he had “time to spend” with me. I met Faletti in a sunny morning at his house in Povo and I immediately understood that I was not dealing with the average guide anymore. Even before asking the actual questions, Faletti started to harshly describe Campiglio’s social and working environment and all the guides involved in it, and he moved a general critique toward mountain guides’ attitude in general, as his already mentioned definition of guides as “fools who play at who has it harder” showed. After these first rants, Faletti told me about his career and explained that he left alpine rescue’s team because at a certain point he “did not believe in it anymore” and opened his own business. He even told me that he became mountain guides’ teacher “to change the system”, and during our chat he often used an environmental activist vocabulary that other guides in general lacked, proudly telling me how he cleaned many mountains by himself and how it was necessary “to educate people at respecting The Mountain”. At a certain point during our conversation, he stood up, looked outside the window and pointed the mountain in front of his house, passionately saying:

*“Can’t you see!? Everywhere there is a mountain; everywhere it is necessary to educate people! That is what we guides should do, not those small trips for dummies!!”*

I would easily describe Faletti as an “outcast”, in comparison to other guides, as many of his views around the job are completely different from everything I wrote here. For example, Faletti had no problem about telling me his vast use of social networks, in order to promote his job. When I told him about the actual hatred some guides have towards social networks, he laughed, telling me:

*“These are old-fashioned guys, who have their asses covered by Campiglio’s Gruppo Guide, so they do not need to promote their jobs, as Gruppo Guide provides them with all the work they need. I do not have the ass covered by anyone; I have to promote myself as much as I can.”*

Said this, I can delve into the actual photographic analysis I have done with him. As in the previous cases, I decided to explain the photos according to the sequence Faletti showed me them.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Faletti actually gave me four photos. The one missing here is also from his Pakistan expedition; it did not add anything to my analysis, so I decided not to include it here.



**Faletti:** Here I start showing you some pics of an expedition in Pakistan... Having sunglasses here are A MUST, I HAD TO wear sunglasses, or my eyes would have burned. My sunglasses are Salice's, since it is my personal sponsor. A colleague took these pictures.

**Me:** Who is the person in these pictures with you? Is he a tourist?

**Faletti:** A tourist? That is Maurizio Giordani, a massive mountaineer!

**Me:** Is he a mountain guide?

**Faletti:** Jeez, Giordani is much more than that... he is beyond being a guide.

**Me:** Then why is he wearing Ray-Ban? All the mountain guides I met until this point told me they hate Ray-Ban; this is mesmerizing to me!

**Faletti:** Mm dunno... but let us ask him [he takes his phone and calls Giordani, putting him on speakerphone] Hey, what is up man? Listen, there is this guy, doing some research about sunglasses... he asked me to show him some photos, I actually gave him some of them, with yourself, too, for his research... and he keeps asking me why you are wearing Ray-Ban, because all the other guides he met do not like them because, how can I say it...

**Me:** ... they told me there is some kind of discrepancy, between what a guide is and what Ray-Ban represents.

**Giordani:** What kind of fucking question is this? I BOUGHT THEM, I USE THEM, AND I DO NOT GIVE A FUCK ABOUT THESE BULLSHIT STATUS SYMBOLS!

**Faletti:** Yeah, I mean, he is right... I honestly think they are cool and quality sunglasses, too, even if Salice is better.



**Faletti:** I think this photo is super cool... do you want it? I decided, I give it to you! This was taken in the mountains near home. I always use sunglasses while skiing, even if I am going at eighty kilometres per hour, they are a part of me, with the right sunglasses, you have enough protection... goggles are essential only during snowstorm, if I would always use goggles I would get used to them and then I would cry to the minimum wind blow. I never take picture by myself; there is always someone else who does it... who was, in this case? I do not remember...

It is important to notice how Faletti always underlined first sunglasses' medical importance, regarding their protective quality as an essential feature and then all the other factors (brands, sponsorship) which were always secondary. Even when describing Ray-Ban, he praised their protective quality first, and then their "coolness". Despite the different guides' narratives around which brand is the best and which one is the worst, protection is at the core of guides' narratives. This is due to their constant contact with risk, both through narratives from other guides and from personal experiences. Being a guide is so involving for a person's self that it "cannibalizes" all other identities, and everything related to the job (and not only) is directly influenced by this prominent role. In their case, even sunglasses. Mountain guides do not even think about wearing "fake" sunglasses, for sponsorship, role-identity and education's reasons. The fact that the vast majority of guides do not have "summer" sunglasses is a proof that they incorporated sunglasses through a "technique of the body" differently from the other two groups mentioned in this thesis. Once a guide is withdrawn from his environment, "his sensori-affectivo-motor, psychic and discursive" (Warnier 2001: 21) attitude is difficult to come to term with other realities, since "the

materialities provided for him offer nothing compared to the stock of violent sensations and emotions experience(d) by him” (Warnier 2001: 21) when he was climbing or doing ski mountaineering. It is not a surprise then, that even Mauss included climbing and mountaineering in his body techniques’ list (Mauss 1979: 116).

Giordani’s statement about Ray-Ban and regarding how he does not care about status symbols, indirectly reveals how indeed there are some status symbols and a prejudice towards guides who do not wear “the right sunglasses”. I talked with other guides about Giordani’s attitudes towards Ray-Ban and they told me that he only cared about “climbing”, and many guides were left stunned by my interaction with him, who they considered a “kick-ass mountaineer”. Said this, it is fair to say that Giordani’s main job is not the one of the guide, but now he is an estate agent. Sunglasses’ difference between him and Faletti in fact is striking, as the latter perfectly fit into the guide-type, with Salice’s sunglasses. So, in guides’ case, sunglasses are perceived as objects that add meanings to team’s performances (Goffman 1990: 86), helping them to perform their identity both in front of other guides and other actors (tourists), as well as others “personal front’s items” (Goffman 1990: 32-34). In any case, I think that Giordani’s statement on Ray-Ban does not mean that he does not care about sponsorships. Giordani’s thought can be translated simpler with this quote: “if they give me free gears to use, I use them, otherwise I use the gears that I want”, as Faletti’s comment shows. However, Giordani would probably say this with stronger language.

Another interesting fact is that Faletti only has photos of himself on the snow or while doing mountain-related activities, like the vast majority of mountain guides who at least agreed on showing me their pictures and who use social networks to promote themselves. This is because of their need for self-promotion and for the already discussed weight of their prominent role in their lives. In addition, guides love to photo themselves as dynamic and sporting people; I was doubtful about Faletti giving me the last picture, because sunglasses were barely visible, but he insisted so much about giving it to me, because he thought it was “cool”, so I accepted it. Last photo is also interesting for Faletti’s description of his relation with sunglasses, as “a part” of himself. His different relation and thoughts about sunglasses and goggles from Andrea are a proof of sunglasses use as an embodied practice, a “technique of the body”, as mentioned earlier.

## 6. Conclusions

Sunglasses are objects that people charge with different values and meanings, according to their group's values and their roles inside of Campiglio's social environment. Tourists use sunglasses of popular brands because they help them in fitting into their role as "cool" people on holiday. Ski teachers prefer brands such as Oakley because they help them in performing their role as sporting and "cool" professionals, with this "coolness" being regarded as an essential feature to "catch customers". Finally, mountain guides opted for technical sunglasses because, in contrast with Campiglio's "Ephemeral" environment, want to represent themselves as independent "three hundred and sixty mountain professionals". In other words, people tend to overlook sunglasses' medical value in favour of socio-cultural values. However, this is not always true, since this two values may correspond, like in mountain guides' case. In order to display their professionalism, guides must use technical sunglasses and always stressed out their protective and medical function. In their case, medical and cultural values are deeply intertwined to the point that one does not prevail on the other, but they are equally important for a guide's self-representation. But guides are an (although remarkable) exception. In addition, the use of sunglasses (and goggles) is at the centre of companies' strategies such as advertising campaigns and sponsorships, which manage to influence how people use and perceive these objects.

Since many laws recognize sunglasses as Personal Protective Equipment, sunglasses' companies must produce certified sunglasses, in order to not be considered illegal. However, the main goal of sunglasses' companies is to sell their products, thus they promote sunglasses as trendy and appealing lifestyle items, spending lots of money in advertisement. For example, every time in Campiglio I went to the local sunglasses' store, since its keeper was one of my main informants, I always found myself in front of a poster representing Jared Leto with sunglasses. Not that I have anything against Jared Leto himself, since at the high school, being quite of an emo, I listened every day to Thirty Seconds To Mars, but this example perfectly frames the problems with "big companies' narratives". Promoting sunglasses as "cool" objects imposes the perception of sunglasses as lifestyle items rather than as Personal Protective Equipment, "leaving out" their protective dimension and, thus, not educating people to add this decisive value (protection) to their sunglasses. Naturally, this narrative is promoted in relation to popular culture, which mainly portray sunglasses as "cool" objects.

However, in Campiglio a surprising coincidence happens, that is the fact of the bubble "forcing" people to use some original-brand sunglasses, in order to pull off a suitable performance

for its environment. Although people's main goal is not to protect their eyes from sunshine, the bubble is a factor that indirectly contributes to improve people's eye-care. It is a coincidence that people value sunglasses according to their self-representation, managing to protect their eyes at best. Someone may argue that, since the "bubble" is staged through elite narratives, this means elite people protect their eyes better than others do, even if not intentionally. I do not think this is the case. The "bubble" does not only host elite people, but even seasonal workers and Polish tourists who do not fit into the "elite"-type, however even these people try to fit into the "cool" type of Campiglio, even if for different reasons. In other words, the "bubble-touristscape" forces people to avoid fake sunglasses in favour of original ones, but because original ones have a cultural meaning there ("showing-off" richness, professionalism or both). This is the case, at least, of people using sunglasses, since goggles replaced sunglasses for many tourists; but even in their cases, the choice of wearing some goggles instead of another is often based on the assumption that some goggles are "cooler" than others, and then for presumed technical reasons. For example, people found goggles of different colours more performing than transparent ones, but since this was not my research topic, I did not delve more deeply into people's various choice of a pair of goggles instead of another.

Another thing that works next to the bubble-touristscape intersection is, of course, the processes of commonality, connectedness and groupness (Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 19) mentioned in all the group-based chapters. These factors filtered differently the effects of the bubble, according to the different nature of the different groups' self-representations, shaping sunglasses' use differently, too. Mountain guides are again a perfect example, in this sense. Their self-perception as outsiders, due to the constant contact with risk and their narratives around professionalism, crashes against Campiglio's "Ephemeral" environment, against which they stood, self-representing themselves as authentic mountain professionals and, then, using authentic mountain professional sunglasses. Naturally, I am not claiming that guides heroically resist against Campiglio's (and, in general, winter resorts') bubble, since excursions with snow rackets and sponsorship agreement are evidences of the fact that they actually came to term with it. In other words, sunglasses are objects in which different values are categorized, differently from one group to another. Among these values, except for guides, medical necessities are never at the first place. Ski teachers in this sense are a missing link between tourists and guides, as the photographic paragraph about Andrea and Mirko had shown. Medical awareness is a constant message in Andrea's words, but it is always put after all the others factors, as even Mirko underlined. A constant reminder, which is missing in almost all of Nicolas' photos, that is the main factor Faletti underlined in his own interview. To sum

up, people in Campiglio use sunglasses also as a set of signifiers to express their belonging to a group, according to their self-representations. This research showed how sunglasses are part of a set of “personal front items” (Goffman 1990: 34) that people use to (self) represent themselves in a fitting way in front of their group’s representations and of Campiglio’s bubble.

But not only this. People in fact showed different degrees of embodiment when it came to their relation with sunglasses and goggles or other ski items, depending on their role in Campiglio. Snow professionals often described their sunglasses as part of a working suit like “brokers” in Wall Street. This is an interesting metaphor, since many tourists have used it too but, in their acceptance of a ski suit, they do not include sunglasses, as it would make feel them “out of place” because of environmental reasons (see Chapter Three) and because of the feeling of “not being protected enough” against the cold. This last assumption is not to underestimate, because sensations of cold and different relation with these sensations are decisive in one of the main point of my thesis, which is the embodiment of sunglasses through a technique of the body. Snow professionals are more used to use sunglasses than tourists because of their constant presence on the slope and their better knowledge of ski conditions. For the majority of tourists it is almost inconceivable to use sunglasses while skiing both for all the environmental factors (imposing bubble and “institutionalized” ski goggles) but also for their different relation with coldness. It is obvious that a snow professional, who has embodied different gears and has a different relation with them and their related techniques, compared to a tourist, would use sunglasses differently. It is probably not entirely correct saying that snow professionals embody sunglasses through a technique of the body, but it is more like that a sum of other gears (helmets, goggles, skis) interplay with each other and with sunglasses too, through different techniques of the body. For example, tourists prefer using goggles and helmets, because goggles help in “putting still” the helmet. Snow professionals agree on that, but they do not care. They do not need to “feel the helmet still” because they embody it and they know it would stay still, regardless of goggles or sunglasses, which are used depending on different situations, as already explained. In tourists’ case, I would not call their use of sunglasses or even goggles, a technique of the body. These gears do act as signifiers for them, too, but their signifying attribute is caused by the environmental factors rather than a proper and continuous practice of ski, which tourists only describe as a “pleasant activity”.

### *6.1 Executive Summary*

This research showed how, behind the choice of one self to wear a pair of sunglasses, there is an entire set of cultural reasons: group-based representations, role-based concepts, environmental ones and many others. People in this research usually overlook sunglasses' medical importance in favour of cultural factors, even if they constantly remind me how, indeed, they took this into account, when choosing a pair of sunglasses. However, my presence may have influenced their answers in this sense. In any case, there are two components that are always missing, in my informants' narratives, and that I originally listed in my research proposal, that are medical associations and doctors. Sunglasses' medical importance is a fact for all the people I met, but their awareness is circumstantial, based on "experience" rather than on facts. Even in Snow-Professionals' case, courses do little to raise their attendees' awareness in this matter, since it is assumed as something obvious, as all mountain guides and ski teachers I met stressed out. In the second chapter, I mentioned how guides often know very well all the possible diseases caused by sunlight; but their relation with other guides, who encountered these problems, causes this awareness' increase, so this knowledge is again an experiential one. An experiential knowledge in sunglasses' case, when it is group-based, it spreads across the group, helping to raise a single's awareness, like in guides and teachers' case. However, when it comes to amateurs, things start to become more delicate, since their experiential knowledge is not produced by a connectedness between people, but by personal assumptions, that are much more easily influenced by "big companies'" and popular culture's narratives around sunglasses.

Some now may argue, "What is the problem, since sunglasses from these so-called big companies are always certified"? The problem comes out when on the market there are what my informants call "Moroccan sunglasses", which are purposely designed to "be cool", following these very same, main narratives supported by popular culture but with their protective quality being non-existent. In addition to this, experiential knowledge is, of course, based on experience, which children and adolescents lack, and personal narratives; personal narratives are decisive in the "embodiment" of objects, and then of sunglasses, especially for the person who produces them. However, every cloud has an unseen benefit. These overwhelming cultural reasons can also be used TO STRENGTHEN people's awareness. What I want to say is that sunglasses' medical importance should be promoted TOGETHER with these cultural factors; one should not overcome or eliminate the other, but they should be used in synergy to promote a common goal, people using sunglasses. In other words, "we flex lives toward better health outcomes by leveraging social [...] resources, remaining attentive to normative definitions of what matters for a human well-being" (Panter-Brick

2014: 444). This concept of “coolness”, which is different from group to group in this thesis, but which is a *mainstream* conception (which policy makers should consider) is the tourist’s (and partially ski teacher’s) one, should be used *in tandem* when promoting sunglasses’ medical importance, but how?

This research showed how sunglasses’ mediated image is important on Social Networks such as Facebook and Instagram. Policy makers should made extensive use of social networks, combining the message of an efficient UV-protection with the concept of how “cool” is to wear sunglasses. Another crucial step is not leaving out what my informants called as “big companies”. Although, as I have expressed earlier, these companies main goal is to sell their products, they also have to conform to the legal parameters, and I do think policy makers should try to convince them to underline even more that their sunglasses, alongside being cool, are also efficient for protection against sunshine, developing efficient marketing strategies in this sense. Ray-Ban is a perfect example of this, since some years ago promoted its children’s sunglasses at half of their original price. This (good) marketing strategy brings under my lens (not sunglasses’ ones) another point: children. During my research, parents have often expressed their concerns around children’s eye-care. I suggest that policy makers should use this as a strong point in their narratives. Claiming that children are more sensible to UV-rays than adults are, despite being a proven medical fact, would attract parents’ attention, so they would be inclined to protect their children (and themselves, too) with sunglasses. This would also be a good attempt to avoid people learning sunglasses’ importance only “through experience”. Or, to say this more anthropologically, to favour people in adding medical value to their sunglasses.

These strategies should not be developed all together and in a hurry, or this would result “as a series of downstream, last-minute dives into the water to save people from drowning” (Panter-Brick 2014: 444). Rather, it is necessary to develop “a series of integrated policies aimed at upstream risk prevention, midstream risk mitigation, and downstream action” (Panter-Brick 2014: 444), especially considering that eye-related illnesses are often caused by long-term lack of appropriate protection. These series of strategies should start by combining cultural and medical factors in promoting sunglasses through social networks and through an extensive display of pictures representing people wearing sunglasses. This thesis already showed how images are central in the spread of sunglasses and, most importantly, of ski goggles. In other words, we should use a very dear mean for promotion of my Campiglio’s informants, visibility. This way, also sunglasses’ companies could notice these series of strategies and could be interested in adopting them, offering the possibility to not only “sell” their sunglasses as cool objects, but “protective” ones too,

legitimizing them to consumers' eyes even more. In this stage, drew the attention of sunglasses' companies, we should promote sunglasses as Personal Protective Equipment in relation to children, which is the most sensible category in this sense, potentially incentivizing sunglasses' companies to promote offers like the Ray-Ban's one previously mentioned. Finally, we should issue days (once a month) still to underline the importance of sunglasses as Personal Protective Equipment. These days are already being issued (like the Sunglasses' Awareness Day on the 27<sup>th</sup> of June), but this kind of manifestation should be encouraged even more, constantly being visible and on the spot.

In other words:

1. Short-term solutions are not applicable and they would not work. We should aim for long-term solutions and not for the so-called 'magic bullet' ones. Naturally, these strategies will follow a 'horizontal approach' rather than a 'vertical' one.
2. These strategies should follow "a people-centred [...] approach" (Panter-Brick et al. 2014: 4). This way, we would pay attention on cultural values around the use of sunglasses, and use them in order to increase people's medical awareness. These cultural values are well represented by the concept of "coolness" expressed by tourists (and partially by ski teachers) during my research, which relies on popular culture's narratives.
3. These strategies will have to work "on multiple levels, from the individual to the structural, the biological to the cultural" (Panter-Brick et al. 2014: 4). Sunglasses are object embedded in different levels and all these different levels (from what my informants called "big companies" to consumers and medical associations) should be included in these strategies.

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