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Travel discontinuities, enforced holidaying-at-home and alternative leisure travel futures after COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

The paralysis of global tourism caused by COVID-19 made it possible to conduct a unique and nearly real-time online survey to investigate adaptations and reactions to sudden severe leisure travel restrictions among residents in the Oslo metropolitan area of Norway during the 2020 Easter/spring holiday period. Stress relief, socialising, social bonds and discoveries of local recreation options were important home holiday experiences. Vacation challenges under lockdown included few opportunities for novelty and the chance of liminoid situations – reversal or bracketing of everyday routine existence. The enforced Easter staycation advanced reflections on impending leisure travel, indicating limited opportunities to boost future low-carbon near-home Easter holiday experiences. Path dependencies towards second homes and spatially stretched social obligations, as well as emphasis on freedom of movement, ostensibly constrain vacation travel habit discontinuities at this time of the year.

摘要

由于新型冠状病毒疫情导致全球旅游业瘫痪，我们有可能开展一项独特的、近乎实时的在线调查，调查2020年复活节/春季假期期间挪威奥斯陆大都会区居民对突发严格限制休闲旅游的适应情况和反应。重要的家庭度假体验有缓解压力、社交、社会联系和发现当地的娱乐选择。被封禁的假期挑战包括很少有机会寻求新鲜体验和有可能感受到阈值情景——颠覆或封锁了每天惯常的生活。强制实施的复活节居家度假预先让人们思考了即将到来的休闲旅行，表明推动未来低碳近家复活节假期体验的机会有限。对第二居所的路径依赖、空间延伸的社会责任，以及对行动自由的强调，表面上是限制了每年这个时候的度假旅行，实质上是中断了这一习惯。

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未来的旅游

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated early response measures created a unique situation in which to gain insights into home vacationing during the 2020 Easter spring holiday period in Norway. It was an opportune time to explore public reactions to and experiences of travel discontinuity and enforced holidaying at home when

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leisure travel freedoms were abruptly and unexpectedly suspended in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, these ‘staycations’ – residents taking holidays at home – might have prompted people to reflect on and possibly consider reducing their future vacation travel. The research presented in this paper can thus reveal aspects of holidaymaking practices, possible path dependencies, prospects for habit changes, and indications of holidaymaking adaptation to a post-pandemic and conceivably also a low-carbon future.

Home-based holiday research was largely non-existent until the first decade of the twenty-first century, when the relationship between climate breakdown and high-carbon tourism practices raised scholarly interest in home-based holidaymaking and short-haul leisure travel as possible responses (cf. Aamaas & Peters, 2017; Gössling & Higham, 2021). Still, it was mainly because of a weakened personal economy in some countries during the global financial crisis of 2007–2008 that the term ‘staycation’ (home holiday) entered the tourism vernacular (Molz, 2009; Sharma, 2009). A staycation is a temporary vacation-like activity during which one remains in or near one’s domicile. It seeks to replicate tourism practices that may include engaging in various leisure activities, enjoying different types of food and drink, and drawing upon local or regional recreation and tourism opportunities that are the domain of the visitor economy.

Holiday travel and freedom of movement is engrained in contemporary Western European culture (e.g. Font & Hindley, 2017). For many people in highly mobile societies, spending a lengthy leisure period at home have thus required extraordinary and unfamiliar justification (de Bloom et al., 2017). Nevertheless, it has been shown that some people with the health, the financial means, and the ability to travel *prefer* vacationing at their place of residence, for instance because they can host visitors, find vacation trips away from home too strenuous, or want to reduce the risks of travel dissatisfaction and time use (Haukeland, 1990; Molz, 2009; Opaschowski, 2002).

COVID-19 was first reported to the World Health Organization (WHO) on the last day of December 2019. The virus spread rapidly through the global air transport system and was established in 146 countries by mid-March 2020 (Gössling et al., 2021). The World Health Organization declared a global pandemic on 11 March 2020. One week later, on 19 March, the Norwegian government responded to the threat of COVID-19 by announcing unprecedented travel restrictions. Similar restrictions were imposed in many countries around the globe, paralysing global mobility systems, none more so than tourism. Norway’s travel restrictions included border closures for all but exceptional travel and a ban on overnight stays outside of one’s municipality. Furthermore, contacts with people outside one’s immediate household were limited, precluding larger indoor and outdoor social gatherings. This extraordinary set of circumstances brought both international and domestic tourism to an instant standstill, across Europe and around the world (Gössling et al., 2021).

Against this backdrop, we investigated Norwegians’ experiences of Easter/spring home vacationing when their freedom to travel entered a sudden and undefined period of enforced abeyance. In doing so, we added to the relative dearth of academic studies that address home holidaymaking. Our first research objective was to critically explore cancellations of Easter holiday trips, vacation arrangements changed by the lockdown, and enforced home holidays. Our second objective was to examine

Norwegians' reactions to and reflections upon unforeseen and unplanned travel discontinuities, especially concerning potential long-term changes in holiday tour habits and preferences. To do this, we administered an online questionnaire-based survey to a sample of Oslo metropolitan area residents who had planned an Easter/spring holiday trip in 2020 but were forced to revise their vacation plans due to the COVID-19 lockdown and border closures. The quantitative data arising from this empirical study offers unique and timely insights into important aspects of travel discontinuities, imposed staycations, and possible longer-term consequences of enforced home holidaymaking practices on leisure travel post-COVID-19.

Holidaymaking – a multifaceted phenomenon

Conceptualising 'holiday'

A 'holiday' is commonly understood as 'free time'; mainly free from (paid) work (e.g. Inglis, 2000), with opportunities for recreation and relaxation (e.g. Cohen, 1979). Qualitative research has shown that some people see holidaymaking at home and vacation trips as at least partly similar (Blichfeldt, 2008); several long-established holiday customs such as sleeping, relaxation, walks, togetherness and meals require minimal conscious awareness and reflection (Warde, 2005). Nevertheless, it has been suggested that physical distance from one's home and workplace may be a necessary precondition of detachment from paid work, domestic routines, and everyday worries (de Bloom et al., 2017; Kaplan, 1995). As a break from the 'everyday', holidays have associated with calmness, relaxation, and gaining strength and ideas, while leisure travel has characteristically entailed freedom, new experiences, pleasure, and growth (Opaschowski, 2002). The novelty that may come with leisure trips can rejuvenate the senses and create special memories, such as visiting places for the first time (Mehmetoglu, 2012). The tendency for holiday time to 'fly' (accelerate) while creating enduring memories has been labelled the 'holiday paradox' (Hammond, 2012).

Characteristically, holidays have been said to be free of the duties, work, and routines associated with non-holiday time (Inglis, 2000). For many, a 'good' holiday brings escape from everyday run-of-the-mill tasks, preferably creating liminoid situations (Cohen, 2000; Turner, 1969). However, such routines may not only be bracketed by vacation travel but also by using one's imagination to assign alternative meanings to leisure situations (Elands & Lengkeek, 2012). This may lead to a circumvention of the natural attitude – the 'taken-for granted world of everyday life' (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Schutz, 1967) although familiarity and habit might influence people's sensitivity to their surroundings. In the words of Viktor Shklovskij: 'People living at the seashore grow so accustomed to the murmur of the waves that they never hear it' (quoted in Chomsky, 1972, p. 24). For home holidaymaking to become 'true leisure', Calhoun (2011) argued, one should reach a situation in which nothing *has to be* done. However, it might be difficult for many people who are vacationing at home to avoid the chores and obligations associated with their domestic practices (Stein, 2012). It thus comes as little surprise that a staycation may be resisted if it is not considered a 'real' holiday (Besson, 2017) incapable of escaping the mundane and everyday monotony.

Home holidaymaking as avoidance of leisure travel inconveniences

While the term ‘staycation’ emerged as a reluctant response in many countries to the economic uncertainties caused by the global financial crisis (2007–2008), staycations can offer potential advantages, as epitomised by the absence of inconvenience and strain of travel (Cohen & Gössling, 2015), particularly during peak public holiday travel periods. Typical causes of travel impracticalities and stress include preparation and packing, airport security checkpoints, flight and train delays, traffic jams, crowding and congestion, tensions with travel companions, finding one’s way in unfamiliar areas, washing and sorting upon return home, and paying the bills associated with the trip (Barry & Suliman, 2020; Blichfeldt et al., 2017; Brown, 2007; Hall & Holdsworth, 2016). Holiday travel has also been associated with financial, psychological, satisfaction, and time use risks (Roehl & Fesenmaier, 1992) that might be reduced or avoided by vacationing at home (Opaschowski, 2002). Some people enjoy the ease of holiday-making at home (Besson, 2017). Similarly, in qualitative research on pleasure travel, ‘home’ has been recognised as more of a personal than a physical place – where one feels ‘in place’, rested and safe (Harrison, 2003). For many Norwegian Easter holiday-makers, their mountain or forest cottage is such a place – literally a second home (Williams & Kaltenborn, 1999).

Holiday anticipation and disappointments

A leisure trip usually begins well before departure from home (cf. Clawson & Knetsch, 1966). Anticipation has long been considered part of the pleasure of holiday travel (Hahn & Hartmann, 1973). Parrinello (1993) has regarded anticipation as a group/dyad ritual when prospective holidaymakers think about and prepare for a forthcoming journey. The cancellation of travel plans may thus be a source of dissatisfaction. Cancelled Easter/spring trips might include disappointment over missed reunions, not being able to attend out-of-town events such as weddings and baptisms, lost time for activities such as late winter skiing, or a missed opportunity to enjoy warm weather outside of Northern Europe.

Holidaymaking at home and away

Engaging in social interactions and reinforcing or strengthening social bonds are vital components of a vacation. People do not only take trips with other members of their household; they also spend time with relatives in second homes and visit family and/or friends in their residences (Farstad & Dybedal, 2010; Larsen et al., 2007). Many people who may not travel themselves welcome visiting children and grandchildren over the holidays. As part of family rhythm and continuity, numerous Norwegians use cottages and other second homes for Easter and other leisure periods (Williams & Kaltenborn, 1999).

Although tourist self-catering is not uncommon (Therkelsen, 2015), meal preparations and other aspects of housework may still run counter to ideas of vacationing as a form of relaxation (Backer & Schänzel, 2013). At the same time, cooking and repasts have been important parts of Norwegians’ second home stays (Vittersø, 2007) and this may translate to a seamless transition to enforced staycations. In general,

Easter gatherings in Norway have entailed lavish meals with relatives or friends, particularly on Easter Eve (Aktiv i Oslo, 2020). Domestic responsibilities other than cooking might also be included in holidaymaking, both for those who travel and for those who remain at home (Deem, 1996; Heimtun, 2019). Moreover, holidaymaking with children might be both blissful and fatiguing for parents and guardians (Gram, 2005; Larsen, 2013). Still, reduced pressure by going away might be vital for parents of young children; even a trip filled with domestic responsibilities might be accepted as a holiday (Davidson, 1996). Although ludic experiences are quite common holiday elements, also in staycations (Besson, 2017), both for parents and for others, there might be intervals of boredom, for instance if one is stuck in a hotel room on a rainy day. To avoid staycation boredom, households should plan their activities, Opaschowski (2002) has argued.

Domicile and neighbourhood attributes influence staycation experiences positively or negatively. A temporary travel ban not only requires people to plan a staycation, but also affords the opportunity to learn more about recreation and tourism-like opportunities where they reside, with the potential to gain a greater appreciation of holidaymaking options in their local or regional vicinity.

Reflections on travel consumption, path dependency and habit discontinuity

Being forced to spend a holiday at home may run counter to the engrained dual freedoms of mobility (Molz, 2009): freedom from the daily routine and freedom to enjoy activities elsewhere. In Western societies, holiday travel has long been regarded as an important expression of personal liberty (Høivik & Heiberg, 1980). Nevertheless, reducing the carbon footprints of leisure travel is more important than ever, given the social and environmental impact of high volume and high carbon transport systems (Cohen & Gössling, 2015; Dubois et al., 2011). Thus, an increasingly untenable psychological tension between the effects of air travel emissions and the self-identity of environmentally conscious travellers has been termed the 'flyers' dilemma' (Young et al., 2014). As some people may feel unable to divert a perceived 'necessity' of travel arising from a sense of obligation, Gössling et al. (2018, p. 1586) have argued that travel may become a '... necessity for sociality, identity construction, affirmation or alteration', whereby refraining from long-distance holiday tours may become a threat to self-identity. This may give rise to cognitive dissonance; as attitudes and behaviours are misaligned, this may lead to conflict when having to choose between alternatives (Feldman, 1966; Festinger, 1957). However, cognitive dissonance may not only result in more pro-environmental behaviour but also in people's rationalisation of their actions (Thøgersen, 2004).

Leisure travel may be subject to path dependencies with considerable carbon footprints (Williams, 2013), such as ownership of and/or access to a second home and spatially stretched social obligations; visiting or receiving visits by significant others (Larsen et al., 2007), particularly in affluent societies such as Norway. As a way to reduce leisure travel, 'habit discontinuity' has been proposed. Verplanken et al. (2008) have argued that contextual alterations may create changes in habits by activating the personal values and beliefs that are part of an individual's self-concept, closing a value-action gap. Considering the mobile nature of self-identity in modernity,

many routines seem reflexively open to change (Giddens, 1994). The temporary Easter travel restrictions may thus trigger unforeseen and unanticipated reactions to the loss of journeying opportunities (cf. Font & Hindley, 2017; Stankov et al., 2020) and people's reflections on habits when they had to cancel trips, remain in place, and limit outdoor activities and social gatherings.

Background to the study area and Easter travel restrictions

The focus of this empirical study is the Oslo metropolitan area, with data collection in the city of Oslo (municipality population of 694.000) and Bærum, a neighbouring and mainly suburban municipality (128.000 inhabitants). This relatively affluent area was chosen because about half of the residents have access to second homes and people here frequently undertake Easter/spring and other vacation and leisure trips (Granseth, 2012; Hjorthol et al., 2014; Statistics Norway, 2020), implying that fewer or shorter trips among the inhabitants here could have considerable impact on the amount of leisure travel.

The main feature of the Easter travel restrictions in Norway was a temporary ban on overnight stays in other municipalities, meaning that people could not go to second homes or to see family or friends in other parts of the country. In addition, the closing of European borders, movement restrictions, ferry and flight cancellations, and travel insurance limitations made international vacations all but impossible. Norwegians were advised to maintain a one to two metres distance from others, both at work and elsewhere, avoid places where it would be difficult to maintain mandatory social distance, avoid public transport, and postpone all non-indispensable gatherings. In Oslo, most restaurants and bars and many shops were closed over Easter 2020, contributing to a low-key and calm ambience. It should also be noted that places for daily outdoor recreation (e.g. parks, forest groves, seashores, harbour promenade) are easily accessible to most people in the study area (Suárez et al., 2020). Pleasant and seasonally warm weather prevailed during the study period, which may have affected the reported staycation activities and broader experiences (cf. Denstadli et al., 2011).

Method

Restrictions on leisure mobilities before and during the Easter holiday of 2020 created a unique opportunity to study involuntary home holidays and people's reflections when their planned leisure trips were suddenly cancelled. The study offers parallels with ethnomethodology; the pandemic's disruption of normal social events might have challenged some people's conception of the normal. Ethnomethodology is concerned with the ways in which people grasp and respond within actual quotidian settings to practical circumstances; and how social order is performed and reproduced, sometimes out of disorder (Garfinkel, 1967). The complex, dynamic and unique research context must be acknowledged, presumably making such research impossible to replicate.

The survey design was pilot-tested by ten area residents to ensure that all questions were relevant and understandable. The survey was administered online through an opinion-research institute that sent 3300 e-mail invitations to residents 18 years of age and older in Oslo and Bærum municipalities. Invitations were sent to a

stratified sample designed to be representative in terms of general demographic characteristics such as gender and age. To reduce possible memory bias (Dex, 1995), the data collection started on the first workday after Easter, 14 April 2020, and lasted until 27 April 2020. Some 1050 people participated, a response rate of 32%. Of those respondents, 501 indicated that they had planned one or more Easter vacation trips with at least one overnight stay away from home. A further 150 indicated that they most likely would have taken an overnight trip over Easter. The remaining 399 respondents had not planned a trip and were thus excluded from the remainder of the survey. This procedure resulted in 651 completed questionnaires being used for analysis (see Table 1).

To measure their experiences of and reflections on the involuntary Easter/spring staycation, respondents were asked to express agreement or disagreement with 23 statements. Responses to each item were recorded along a five-point scale ranging from 'strongly agree = 1' to 'strongly disagree = 5'. A lower mean score indicated more agreement with each statement (Table 2). Respondents could also mark 'not relevant', for instance for not having children living with them or not having planned a vacation in a place with warm weather. Cases with 'not relevant' responses were excluded from analyses for the item in question, resulting in variations in case numbers (=n) for each item.

T-tests for differences in mean scores were applied to investigate possible differences between respondent categories in terms of assessments of statements that could be considered advantages, drawbacks, benefits, and consequences of the cancelled trip, as well as reflections on holiday travel practices. Only respondent categories for which there were significant differences ($p > 0.05$) compared to the respective reference sub-sample are mentioned in the presentation of results.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the sample (N=651).

Respondent characteristics	Category	Percent	n
Municipality	Bærum	15	99
	Oslo	85	552
Gender	Male	49	317
	Female	51	334
Age category	18–29 years	27	177
	30–39 years	23	148
	40–49 years	17	113
	50–83 years	33	213
Employment	Working 20 hours a week or more	67	435
	Working less than 20 hours a week	33	216
	of whom retired	16	103
Children and/or adolescents in household	Children or adolescents age 19 or younger	32	206
	No children or adolescents	68	445
Planned trip destination	Domestic	70	457
	Abroad	30	191
Frequency of visit to planned destination	Frequently visited destination	72	459
	Seldom visited or new destination	28	176
Outdoor recreational possibilities	Good	78	509
	Not good, or none	22	142
Second home/cottage ownership or permanent access	Second home in Norway	59	386
	Second home abroad	10	66
	No ownership/access or N/A	31	199

Table 2. Experiences of aspects of home holidaymaking in Oslo and Bærum during Easter/spring 2020 (percentages).

	Fully agree	Partly agree	Neither / nor	Partly disagree	Fully disagree	Mean	St.dev	n*
Disadvantages of cancelled travel plans								
I was disappointed having to cancel the planned trip	38	42	13	4	3	1.92	0.97	640
I missed social gatherings with those I should have visited or travelled with	44	33	12	4	7	1.96	1.16	584
I disliked that I could not travel when I desired it myself	32	35	16	8	9	2.29	1.25	641
I disliked that I could not have a holiday in an area with warm weather	10	12	28	7	42	3.59	1.40	313
The cancelled trip meant that I missed an important event	12	18	15	11	45	3.59	1.48	573
Home holiday drawbacks								
Home holiday would have been better with more freedom to move around outdoors	28	32	22	10	8	2.38	1.21	622
I found it boring having to stay at home during the holiday	17	35	19	16	12	2.71	1.27	645
Home holiday led to more car-dependence for activities	10	21	18	13	39	3.50	1.42	573
Home holiday became wearier because of much household work	4	19	28	19	30	3.52	1.22	634
Home holiday made me wearier because of activities with children/adolescents	5	11	24	12	48	3.86	1.26	407
Home holiday benefits								
Home holiday became much quieter than the planned trip would have been	27	34	21	10	8	2.38	1.21	646
Home holiday strengthened the relation to the children	9	24	52	7	8	2.80	0.97	305
Home holiday more often led to nice meals	16	24	29	16	15	2.92	1.28	643
Home holiday strengthened the relation to my partner/spouse	7	21	53	10	10	2.95	0.99	480
I discovered more recreation possibilities in the area where I live	13	28	27	14	19	2.97	1.29	632
I think it was good not having to use time for the passage/transfer	7	17	24	19	32	3.51	1.30	624
I relaxed more than I would have done on the planned trip	7	17	18	25	33	3.60	1.29	645
Reflections on travel after staying home								
Home holiday is not a real holiday for me	25	32	16	16	11	2.56	1.31	648
Home holiday made me value more the area where I live	13	31	36	10	11	2.76	1.14	642
Home holiday gave me a clearer conscience in environmental issues	8	22	31	11	29	3.31	1.30	636
Home holiday made me reflect on whether one should travel so much	6	23	24	18	28	3.38	1.28	637
The practice made me desire more home holidaymaking in the future	2	11	23	28	36	3.86	1.09	646

*The numbers are exclusive of respondents who marked 'not relevant' on the item.

Results

A majority of the sample (70%) had planned a domestic Easter holiday trip that had to be cancelled due to the pandemic lockdown. The remainder had scheduled a visit to another Nordic country (7%), a European country outside of Scandinavia (16%), or a destination outside of Europe (6%). Private cars accounted for 60% of the intended journeys, 28% had plans for air travel (6% domestic, 22% international), 8% by train,

and 5% by other means of transport. Three out of four respondents who intended to visit other countries had planned to go by air. A large proportion could be described as habitués, as 45% stated that they had gone to the same area or place almost every Easter, while 26% had visited the anticipated destination over several Easter holidays in the previous five years. Some 11% would have travelled to a place they had seldom visited, and 16% to one where they had never been before. Over half (60%) of the sample had planned to go to a second home in Norway and 6% to a second home abroad. One-third (34%) had intended to visit family or friends in Norway, while 11% had intended to visit family or friends abroad. The remainder had plans for city break, sun and seaside vacation, cruise, and/or visiting or participating in a special event. (Respondents could give more than one answer to journey type.)

A large majority (80%) were disappointed after having their planned trip cancelled. Some 77% missed being with people they had hoped to travel with or visit. Moreover, 67% disliked not being able to travel when they wanted. Sixty percent felt that the home vacation would have been better if they had more freedom to move about outdoors. Half of the respondents (52%) found having to stay at home boring; 55% considered the staycation 'not being a real holiday'. Three out of five (61%) reported that the holiday spent at home was much quieter than the trip would have been; which could be interpreted either positively or negatively. More respondents agreed (40%) than disagreed (31%) that staying at home had led to more nice meals than they would have had on the planned trip. More respondents agreed than disagreed that home vacation strengthened a relationship with spouse or partner (28% agreed, when relevant) or with children (33%, when relevant). Some 41% concurred that they had discovered more recreational options close to home, and 44% agreed that they had come to a greater appreciation of the area where they live. About one quarter of respondents (24%) felt that they relaxed more staying at home than they would have on their planned trip. A small but noteworthy share of 13% felt that the staycation had made them interested in spending more holidays at home, and 29% answered that the staycation made them reflect upon whether they should travel as much as they had before the pandemic. Some 30% believed having to remain at home had given them a clearer environmental conscience.

Detailed results are shown in [Table 2](#), with items organised in four main categories: disadvantages of cancelled plans, staycation drawbacks, staycation benefits, and reflections on travel after staying at home – by ascending mean scores within each category.

Disadvantages of cancelled travel and home holiday drawbacks

The most distinct overall differences were between those who had domestic travel plans and those who had intended to go abroad ([Tables 3–6](#)). A significantly larger share of those who had to cancel a trip abroad agreed that they felt disappointed (85%) compared to those who's intentions had been to travel within Norway (79%) ([Table 3](#)). Respondents with plans to go abroad were also more likely to indicate that they had missed an important event like a wedding or an anniversary and were more likely to dislike not being able to visit a place with warm weather. Among people with domestic travel intentions, only those who had planned to go to a second home stood out as more disappointed than other respondents.

Respondents who had organised to go to a domestic second home communicated a stronger displeasure at not being able to travel when they wanted than did respondents with other vacation plans within Norway. Both men and women agreed that they missed social gatherings, demonstrating the importance of holiday socialising and maintenance of strained social ties. People living in households without children or adolescents missed social gatherings more than those in households including children or adolescents. Those who had planned to call on an infrequently visited place or a destination where they had not been before were more resentful that they could not travel when they wanted. Among people who had planned international trips, those who had not been able to visit a warm destination were more disappointed than others.

A majority of respondents found the staycation less stimulating than they had expected their planned trip to be. Those who had planned international trips considered the home stay to be more boring than those with domestic travel plans (Table 4). Most respondents reported that housework during the staycation had not made them wearier; to a lesser degree those without children living at home. Few reported that they felt weary from activities with children or adolescents. Respondents from households with children opined more than others that the domicile stay would have been better if they had been less constrained to engage in outdoor activities under lockdown.

Home holiday benefits

People who had planned international travel found the home stay to be quieter than those who had intended to travel domestically. Respondents who had anticipated to visit friends or relatives in Norway agreed more than others that the staycation was quieter than the planned holiday trip would have been (Table 5).

Compared to others who had planned travel in Norway, people who had to cancel trips to their domestic second home were less likely to agree that the home holiday was more relaxing than the planned holiday trip, and they also appreciated less the time saved from not having to leave home. Those who had intended to visit friends

Table 3. Reported disappointment due to cancelled holiday plans, by type of planned trip, multiple answers possible (percentages, means and p-values).

Percentage	Domestic trip (n=449)	Abroad trip (n=191)	Visit family or friends, domestic (n=155)	Second home visit, domestic (n=353)	Ski or snow holiday, domestic (n=155)	Warm weather, abroad (n=45)	City break, abroad (n=75)
Fully agree	35	48	31	37	40	62	53
Partly agree	44	37	43	44	39	24	34
Neither/nor	14	9	18	13	10	9	7
Partly disagree	4	4	5	4	6	2	3
Fully disagree	3	2	3	3	5	2	3
Mean	1.98	1.75**	2.06	1.92**	1.95	1.58	1.67
P-value		0.000	0.211	0.032	0.782	0.144	0.328

**Significant differences ($p < 0.05$) from the reference category, which for all trips abroad are all domestic trips. For named domestic travel purposes the reference category is all other domestic trips, and for named travel purposes abroad, all other trips abroad.

Table 4. Found it boring having to stay at home during the holiday, by type of planned trip, multiple answers possible (percentages, means and *p*-values).

Percentage	Domestic trip (n = 449)	Abroad trip (n = 191)	Visit family or friends, domestic (n = 155)	Second home visit, domestic (n = 353)	Ski or snow holiday, domestic (n = 155)	Warm weather, abroad (n = 45)	City break, abroad (n = 75)
Fully agree	15	22	13	15	15	22	27
Partly agree	34	38	34	25	37	47	33
Neither/nor	20	16	18	21	17	16	13
Partly disagree	17	15	20	17	23	11	17
Fully disagree	13	9	15	12	7	4	9
Mean	2.79	2.52**	2.90	2.77	2.69	2.29	2.53
<i>P</i> -value		0.012	0.193	0.527	0.323	0.124	0.827

**Significant differences ($p < 0.05$) from the reference category, which for all trips abroad are all domestic trips. For named domestic travel purposes the reference category is all other domestic trips, and for named travel purposes abroad, all other trips abroad.

Table 5. Home holiday became much quieter than the planned trip would have been, by type of planned trip, multiple answers possible (percentages, means and *p*-values).

Percentage	Domestic trip (n = 449)	Abroad trip (n = 191)	Visit family or friends, domestic (n = 155)	Second home visit, domestic (n = 353)	Ski or snow holiday, domestic (n = 155)	Warm weather, abroad (n = 45)	City break, abroad (n = 75)
Fully agree	23	37	30	22	30	40	40
Partly agree	34	35	34	34	33	35	31
Neither/nor	22	17	24	22	19	16	22
Partly disagree	12	3	5	14	12	3	2
Fully disagree	9	8	7	9	6	7	4
Mean	2.50	2.11**	2.26**	2.55	2.32	2.00	2.01
<i>P</i> -value		0.000	0.002	0.072	0.071	0.465	0.379

**Significant differences ($p < 0.05$) from the reference category, which for all trips abroad are all domestic trips. For named domestic travel purposes the reference category is all other domestic trips, and for named travel purposes abroad, all other trips abroad.

Table 6. Home holiday not being a real holiday, by type of planned trip, multiple answers possible (percentages, means and *p*-values).

Percentage	Domestic trip (n = 449)	Abroad trip (n = 191)	Visit family or friends, domestic (n = 155)	Second home visit, domestic (n = 353)	Ski or snow holiday, domestic (n = 155)	Warm weather, abroad (n = 45)	City break, abroad (n = 75)
Fully agree	24	28	21	25	26	33	28
Partly agree	33	31	29	34	35	31	35
Neither/nor	16	15	17	15	16	18	12
Partly disagree	17	13	18	18	16	7	15
Fully disagree	10	13	15	8	7	11	11
Mean	2.57	2.52	2.77**	2.49**	2.44	2.31	2.45
<i>P</i> -value		0.664	0.021	0.019	0.190	0.223	0.565

**Significant differences ($p < 0.05$) from the reference category, which for domestic trips is all other domestic trips, and for trips abroad, all other trips abroad.

or relatives in Norway found the home stay more relaxing than others with domestic travel plans, and they appreciated more the travelling time that they had saved. By contrast, people who had planned to visit friends or relatives abroad disagreed more than others with international travel intentions that they appreciated not having to spend time in transit and had a quieter home stay. They were also more likely to disagree that they had enjoyed more nice meals at home. People who had looked forward to skiing or other snow-based holidaying in Norway were more likely to report that the staycation had strengthened their relationship with their spouse or partner.

Respondents whose households included children or adolescents found that the staycation improved their relationship with spouse or partner more than did other respondents. Those living with children or adolescents also claimed to have had more nice meals when holidaying at home, and they appreciated more than others the time saved by not having to travel. People who had planned to go to a place for the first time or to a seldom-visited location found the staycation to be quieter and more relaxing.

Reflections on travel after staying at home

A majority of respondents agreed that a 'home holiday is not a real holiday for me' – with no difference between respondents with domestic travel intentions and those who had planned to go abroad (Table 6). However, those who had cancelled a domestic trip had tended to seek out recreational possibilities near their homes and became more appreciative of what their area had to offer. It is also noteworthy that those who had to skip a visit to friends or relatives in Norway were less inclined to judge the staycation as not being 'a real holiday' and were more willing to consider spending parts of future holidays at home.

People who had planned to spend the holiday at their domestic second home felt more strongly than other respondents that the staycation was not 'a real holiday'. They were also less willing to spend more of future holidays at home and did not agree that the home stay had given them a clearer environmental conscience. People who had looked forward to visiting a warm destination expressed less interest in decreasing their future leisure travel than others with international travel plans.

Female respondents who had intended to go on an international trip were more inclined than men with similar goals to contemplate not travelling as much after the pandemic as they had before. Moreover, women agreed to a larger extent than men that the enforced home vacation had given them a clearer environmental conscience, regardless of their Easter destination plans. Women with children or adolescents in their household and with plans to go abroad were somewhat more inclined than other females to consider spending more of future holidays at home.

People with limited opportunities for outdoor activities in their neighbourhood (Table 1) were less inclined to take future holidays at home, having been more tired from housework, and less stimulated during their home vacation. Many simply did not see the staycation as 'a real holiday'. In contrast, those with good opportunities for local outdoor leisure had discovered additional recreational possibilities in their area and the staycation had led them to value their neighbourhood higher. More

than others, the staycation experience had also improved their relationship with spouse or partner, and they had enjoyed more nice meals.

Some 16% of the respondents found it somewhat likely or very likely that they would remain at home for Easter holidaying in 2021, whereas 76% found it somewhat or very unlikely, and 8% were unsure. Among those who considered an Easter staycation the following year, 36% had cancelled air travel (Table 7). People who had timetabled a domestic trip indicated that they were more inclined to consider staying at home next Easter. The same applied for those with plans to go to an infrequently visited place in Norway or abroad, or to visit friends or relatives in Norway. By contrast, among intended domestic second home visitors, representing a majority of respondents, 61% found it unlikely and 23% very unlikely that they would stay home next Easter.

Over two thirds (69%) of the survey participants considered spending more of their forthcoming holidays in Norway, being less disappointed of having to remain at home for the Easter break and disliking to a lesser degree not being able to travel when they wanted. Those inclined to more future domestic holidaying had to a larger extent discovered recreational possibilities in their neighbourhood, learnt to appreciate more the area where they live, found the home stay to give them a clearer environmental conscience, and were more inclined to contemplate not traveling so much (as before). Fewer of those who considered more domestic holidaying thought that a staycation was not 'a real holiday', compared to other respondents.

Discussion

As expected, many people resented not being allowed to travel at will, thus confirming negative reactions to limited freedom of movement (Font & Hindley, 2017). Still, almost one in three of the respondents reported that the involuntary staycation had led them to reflect on whether they should travel as much as they had before, and just as many found that remaining at home during the Easter/spring holiday had given them a clearer conscience on environmental issues. This indicated that the disruption caused by the pandemic may have challenged some people's comprehension of what constitutes 'normal' holidaying (cf. Garfinkel, 1967) and made them express or reflect on what had previously been tacit knowledge when forced to

Table 7. Likelihood to stay home for Easter holiday 2021 and likelihood to spend more of holidays in Norway during the coming years, by transport mode for cancelled Easter trip 2020 (percentages).

Transport mode for cancelled Easter trip 2020	Likely to stay home next Easter (n=102)	Not likely to stay home next Easter (n=494)	Likely to spend more of future holidays in Norway (n=450)	Not likely to spend more future holidays in Norway (n=151)
Private car	41	65	63	48
Aircraft	36	24	23	42
Bus	4	3	2	3
Train	15	7	10	3
Ship/ferry	3	1	1	3
Other transport	0	0	0	0
Total	100	100	100	100

reorganise their Easter vacation. The findings thus suggested that habit discontinuity may lead some people to contemplate or reconsider their future holiday travel intentions (cf. Verplanken et al., 2008), as a key to some vacationing changes might lie in cultivating holidaymaker mindfulness (Stankov et al., 2020). People who placed more weight on the positive aspects of a staycation, such as bonding with family members or appreciating their neighbourhood, were more willing to rethink their future travel plans. Additionally, women with plans for international trips were more inclined than men with such goals to contemplate not travelling as much as before – in line with previous studies (Hunter et al., 2004).

The noteworthy but still moderate perceived willingness to spend the Easter of 2021 at home seemed related to path dependencies, mainly through habitual second home breaks. In countries like Norway, where domestic second homes are commonplace, there may be different expectations of holidays than in countries where fewer people have access to second homes. Yet another path dependency is the established custom of visiting significant others living elsewhere – spatially stretched social obligations (Larsen et al., 2007) that for longer journeys might be drivers of the ‘flyers’ dilemma’ (Young et al., 2014). Prior to the pandemic, Easter holidaymaking for Oslo area residents had been a time for family and couples’ togetherness; most respondents had planned to go to a second home or visit family or friends. That a majority missed being with people they had hoped to visit or travel with confirmed that maintaining social bonds with people living elsewhere is an important and deeply entrenched aspect of Easter holidaymaking (Farstad & Dybedal, 2010).

Recreational opportunities at home can offer couples and families possibilities to enjoy (newly discovered) staycation activities that can reinforce their bonds. It appears that home vacationing would have been better had there been more freedom to move around outdoors, thus the abnormal context of the COVID-19 infection risk and associated social distancing requirements distinguished home-vacationing this Easter from other times when home-holidaying might have been practiced. That a majority found home holidaymaking to be much quieter than the planned vacation trip confirmed that leisure travel might encompass stress and hassle (Blichfeldt et al., 2017; Haukeland, 1990), such as arriving in unfamiliar places demanding more *in situ* effort (Brown, 2007). Still, results reinforced the idea that separation from everyday realities might be easier away from one’s primary dwelling (cf. Elands & Lengkeek, 2012).

Findings point to an underlying ‘cognitive dissonance’ in this Easter home holiday context: On one hand, some people found home-based recreation to be convenient and beneficial for family/couple togetherness, while increasing the appreciation of their immediate surroundings and slightly diminishing the psychological stress arising from environmental guilt (cf. Young et al., 2014). On the other hand, many others seemed to require physical distance from their everyday surroundings to relax (de Bloom et al., 2017), the journey away from home literally acting as a rite of passage. That people who had planned to go abroad felt more disappointed, bored and restricted than others might have resulted from international holidays providing more novelty, distance and escape from everyday life than domestic trips (cf. de Bloom et al., 2017; Hammond, 2012). Additionally, missing out on an opportunity to enjoy warm weather or a personally important event abroad could mean a perceived deprivation of one-of-a-kind recollection.

The observation that most respondents agreed that a 'home holiday is not a real holiday for me' suggested that many people may regard the staycation as a 'poor relation' of a 'real' holiday, as Besson (2017) phrased it. This raises questions as to how people perceive 'holiday-like' characteristics and the degree to which they can be replicated in a home environment – and during a pandemic lockdown. Although few people were willing to spend the subsequent Easter vacation in their primary residence, it is still noteworthy that about seven out of ten considered more future domestic holidaying.

Conclusions and implications

Personal reflections upon the necessity of recurrent leisure travel were a direct and inescapable consequence of the travel restrictions abruptly imposed in Norway in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey results offered insights into the immediate involuntary changes in Easter vacationing. Although most people expressed disappointment, boredom, and frustration with constraints on their freedom and missed social gatherings, many appeared simultaneously capable of making the best of the situation, and even seeing a silver lining in the unexpected home stay, be it stronger domestic relations, discoveries of local recreational activities, or reduced stress.

Several holiday characteristics, including catering and beverages, activities, and socialising, may – under normal circumstances – be readily adapted to one's primary residence and its vicinity. That the study indicated limited possibilities for Easter travel habit changes seemed related not only to the demand for social distancing but also seasonal customs. Staycation advocates should be aware of travel path dependencies, in this Easter context particularly second home visits; the strong attachment to second homes for relaxation and family rhythm (Williams & Kaltenborn, 1999) – and also late winter skiing and other snow-based activities. Such habits might be hard to break after pandemic discontinuity (cf. Verplanken et al., 2008). The findings indicated that many second home habitués and those having desired to go abroad required physical distance from their primary residence to escape routines and have a 'real' holiday, although it remains unclear how far from home is far enough and what other criteria should be fulfilled. Challenges for more future home holidaying include possibilities for creation of lasting positive memories (Hammond, 2012) and arriving at liminoid situations – a reversal of everyday life (Cohen, 2000; Turner, 1969) that might encompass inter-subjective realities such as fantasy, contemplation, and leisure (Lengkeek, 1996).

From urban governance and (outdoor) recreation policy perspectives, it will be opportune to counter the negative and elevate the positive aspects of local and regional holidaymaking in the post-COVID-19 rebuild. Since numerous Easter staycationers arrived at a greater appreciation of their local environment and its recreational possibilities, additional development of local leisure opportunities both as commercial services and public amenities, and improving awareness of and access to them, could encourage more future staycations. Further opportunity lies in communicating that communal neighbourhood outdoor activities and casual meals at home can strengthen relationships with spouse and/or children – and achieve desirable family togetherness (Larsen, 2013). A key action might be to mimic some presumably positive aspects of

more distant vacationing closer to home, such as togetherness through newly discovered sites or experiences in nearby surroundings. In that regard, the enforced staycation disclosed openings to circumvent the natural attitude towards one's home and its surroundings and appreciate one's everyday environment with fresh eyes. Conceivably, there might be post-COVID-19 opportunities for somewhat more staycations and short-haul travel in other holiday seasons and different contexts, with less prevalent customs and more diverse vacation interests.

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