The background of the cover is a photograph of a person standing on a surfboard in the middle of the ocean. The person is small in the frame, with their arms raised. A large, semi-transparent graphic of a hand is overlaid on the image, with the fingers spread wide, framing the person and the title. The overall color palette is warm, with golden and brown tones from the sunset or sunrise.

Master Thesis

Privilege, Purpose and a Guilty Pleasure

An explorative study of the rationales behind the consumption of
voluntourism

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ABSTRACT

Voluntourism is an emerging trend that combines traditional leisure travelling with volunteer work in an organised fashion. In the present study, we are guided by a curiosity to explore this phenomenon and understand why consumers decide to devote time and effort working without getting paid during their vacation. Hence, this thesis aims to investigate the rationales behind going on a volunteer trip abroad.

The problem statement is clarified by three sub-questions that follow a modified version of McCracken's model Movement of Meaning. Consequently, this research investigates both what meanings that are attached to voluntourism, how individuals are assigning these meanings to the consumption and how it affects consumer's self-concepts. Thus, this study contributes to research within the field of Consumer Culture Theory and, particularly, to the domain of Consumer Identity Projects.

This research explores Scandinavian consumers' thoughts, feelings and behaviours regarding the consumption of voluntourism. Following the philosophy of science and theoretical foundation, it was deemed relevant to apply a mix of qualitative methods, including both a focus group and three in-depth interviews. The logic behind this was to get insights both into the subjective world of consumers that have experienced a volunteer trip but also to get a profound understanding of individuals that have not engaged in this type of alternative tourism.

By analysing the dynamics between cultural meanings, modes of meaning transfer and individuals self-concepts, the findings conclude that there are several rationales behind consuming volunteer trips abroad. Aside from the desire for an authentic experience, this study highlights that the main rationale to engage in voluntourism is connected to a wish to give back and contribute with something valuable during the vacation. In relation to this, it was found that consumers are driven to participate in a volunteer program to enforce and construct their travel identities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Setting the Scene

Travelling for leisure is an activity that has augmented rapidly in the last two centuries (Wearing, 2001), and especially in previous years (Reed, 2019). The improvements of railroads, highways, ships and, particularly, the invention of the aircraft, has made travelling a commodity to be sold and experienced by numerous tourists worldwide (Wearing, 2001). This massive growth of consumers wanting to go abroad becomes evident by observing the increase of international arrivals, and the total contribution of the industry. From 1996 to 2018, the number has almost tripled, amounting close to 1400 million arrivals. The overall contribution has grown with nearly 2,8 trillions US dollars between 2006-2018 to 8.8 trillions US dollars (Statista, 2018). Based on total yearly revenue, the global travel and tourism industry is one of the largest industries in the world (ibid.).

Much of the development of the tourism and travel industry has focused on mass tourism such as charter-trips, all-inclusive resorts, cruising-tours, and travelling in sizable groups to famous destinations (Wearing, 2001). The objective of this type of travelling has often been to provide the tourist a time to escape from everyday life by offering a "home-away-from-home" (ibid.). However, this type of conventional tourism has faced some negative critique because of its perceived damaging environmental, social, economic and political effects in the last few years (Mowforth & Munt, 2008). As a response, the last fifty years, there has been an increase in numbers of consumers seeking more meaningful, experiential and environmentally friendly travel experiences (Lo & Le, 2010; Wearing, 2001). So-called "alternative tourism", including tourism forms such as ecotourism, backpacking and voluntourism, has grown steadily and become a competitive option (Wearing, 2001). One of the most outstanding categories within this growing list of alternative tourism activities is leisure travelling in combination with volunteer work, often conceptualised as **voluntourism** or **volunteer tourism** (Terry, 2014; Wearing, 2001). Today, the voluntourism industry has an estimated turnover of more than 2.6 billion dollars per year (Save the Children, 2017). This travelling method lacks a widely accepted definition; however, in this research, the most commonly cited, written by Wearing (2001), is applied:

Volunteer tourism applies to those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment (Wearing, 2001, p. 1).

The overall idea of voluntourism is that consumers (volunteer tourists) use their holiday as a way of creating some positive effects on a host community (Wearing, 2001). A vital element of the definition is also the absence of pay (Tomazos & Butler, 2009). Thus, even though the volunteer tourist is working, he or she must in most cases pay a fee covering expenses such as accommodation, food and a contribution to the project or organisation involved (ibid.). Consequently, many volunteers usually pay slightly more than they would do if they would go to the same destination with a "normal" travel purpose (Brown, 2003; Wearing, 2001).

The volunteer trips are in many cases organised by non-profit organisations such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Global Contact (Sida, 2020), World Wide Fund for Nature and Earthwatch (Wearing, 2001). However, the growing demand for volunteer travelling has also been accompanied by a growth in the number and variety of profit-organisations, such as travel and tour agencies, offering and facilitating volunteer trips (Tomazos & Butler, 2009), including organisations in Scandinavia such as Projects abroad, Kilroy and GoExplore. Regardless of the trips are offered by an NGO or a profit-organisation, they can vary largely in terms of location, organisational purpose, size and required characteristics of the participant (Wearing, 2001).

Activities that the volunteers can decide to take part of ranges from working at orphanages in developing countries (Lo & Le, 2010), to taking care of animals such as elephants in Thailand or sea turtles in the Philippines (Kilroy, 2020), assisting research on societal or environmental issues (Wearing, 2001), building schools or doing medical assistance (Brown, 2005). Africa is one of the most popular destinations to choose for a volunteer trip, followed by East Asia and South America (Polus & Bidder, 2016). Moreover, many of the consumers participating in these programs are young, and often in the ages of 18 to 25 years old (Wearing, 2001). It is a common activity to conduct during the so-called gap year between high-school and university (Lo & Lee, 2011).

1.2 Background

Understanding why consumers want to travel is of great concern as it constitutes one of the most impactful industries in the world. Exploring the consumption of combining leisure travelling with voluntary work have been considered of significance as it is one of the most growing forms of alternative tourism. Historically, within the research of understanding consumers' behaviours, the consumer has been regarded as an animal acting on behalf of his or her basic needs, followed by arguments that the consumer is a computer which is able to process all available information and make the most rational decision (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000). However, these approaches to understanding the behaviours of consumers have evolved over the last 40 years, to now seeing that there are other rationales that can explain consumption choices (ibid.). There has over the last years been a greater emphasis on the irrational forces that drive consumers, such as fantasies, feelings and fun (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). It is also acknowledged that consumers are not only buying products and services for their utilitarian functions but for the symbolic meanings that the goods communicate to others (Belk, 1988; McCracken, 1986; Levy 1959).

In a similar vein, it is possible to argue that the rationales behind going on a volunteer trip cannot be explained from solely utilitarian and rational perspectives. For instance, why would some consumers decide to partake in a volunteer trip when they often have limited vacation and when they have to engage in something that can be both emotionally and physically challenging? Further, why would they decide to engage in this type of activity when they can go on a more relaxing and carefree trip to a similar monetary price? To understand this phenomenon, it can be argued that it is of significance to go beyond the investigation of "rational forces" and, instead understand how cultural and symbolic meanings impact consumption choices, but also how this consumption affects consumers' self-concepts.

Following the argumentation above, our thesis is positioned within *Consumer Culture Theory* (CCT) that emphasises the sociocultural, experiential, symbolic and ideological dimensions of consumption (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). It is a discipline that "address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 868). Consequently, in our research, we will explore and get more insights into the role of culture and how it impacts the postmodern consumer's choice of going on a volunteer trip by applying McCracken's framework called "Movement of Meaning" (1986). Additionally, we want to investigate how the consumption of voluntourism can play an essential role in the creation of consumers self-concepts by using theories by Belk (1988), Markus &

Nurius, (1986), Patrick et al., (2002), Schouten (1991) and Van Gennep (1960). As the consumption of voluntourism has been argued by some researchers to be a responsible consumption act (Wearing, 2001), theories regarding responsible consumption will also be installed (Hirschman, 1970; Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2007). Thereby, this research aims to contribute to research within the field of consumer culture theory.

1.3 Problem Statement

The present study is guided by a general curiosity to understand the rationales behind consuming volunteer trips abroad by applying the framework "Movement of Meaning" (McCracken, 1986). This has led to the following research question:

What are the rationales behind consuming volunteer trips abroad?

This research question is clarified by the three following sub-questions:

Q1: What meanings are attached to the consumption of voluntourism?

Q2: How do individuals assign symbolic meanings to the consumption of voluntourism?

Q3: How does the consumption of voluntourism affect consumers' self-concepts?

The first sub-question will help us to understand the dynamics and social logics behind the consumption on a macro-level by analysing the meanings that individuals attach to the consumption. Moreover, the second question will help us to move from a macro to meso-level, understanding how the advertisement, fashion system, and reference groups influence the symbolic meanings that the individuals assign to voluntourism. Lastly, the third question will guide us in the understanding of how the consumption of voluntourism becomes meaningful at a micro-level through different consumption rituals, and how these symbolic actions affect their self-concepts.

1.4 Delimitations

This research is limited to solely investigate the rationales behind going on a volunteer trip by interviewing Scandinavians within the millennial generation. Therefore, the result may not be generalisable to a larger group of consumers. However, it can provide theoretical insights that can help to extend existing theoretical formulations. The problem statement is addressed by applying McCracken's "Movement of Meaning" (1986). Consequently, the research is limited to, particularly, focusing on the socio-cultural aspects of the consumption of voluntourism and all the primary data is based on individual statements and their perceptions.

1.5 Definition of Key Concepts

In the following section, key terms used throughout the thesis are defined to minimise confusion.

Voluntourism and volunteer tourism: In our thesis, the words voluntourism and volunteer tourism are used interchangeably, and we will, as discussed before, apply Wearing's (2001) definition:

"Volunteer tourism applies to those tourists who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment"(Wearing, 2001, p. 1)

Voluntourist: Taking the definition of voluntourism into consideration, a voluntourist is any tourist who participates in volunteer work while travelling to another country than his or her own. Whether the voluntourist dedicates their whole vacation to volunteer work, or solely some parts, is not of importance in our thesis.

Volunteer work: In this research, volunteer work refers to work that individuals do for an organisation without getting paid. It can be anything from helping a non-governmental-organisation to being a part of a student council.

Tourism: The term tourism is in this thesis referring to the Cambridge dictionary's definition: "the business of providing services such as transport, places to stay, or entertainment for people who are on holiday" (Tourism, 2020).

Tourist: In the present research we will follow the Cambridge dictionary's definition of a tourist which is "someone who visits a place for pleasure and interest, usually while on holiday" (Tourist, 2020).

Travelling: This thesis refers to the term travelling as: "the activity of going from one place to another, especially over a long distance" (Travelling, 2020).

Self-concept: In this thesis, the term self-concept refers to "an organised configuration of perception of the self, which are available to awareness" (Arnould et al., 2005, p. 388).

1.6 Theoretical Positioning & Contribution

As stated in the introduction, this thesis is positioned within the field of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT). CCT is a research field that advances knowledge about consumer culture (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). The name of the research domain was first coined by Arnould & Thompson in 2005 when they compiled and synthesised the last 20 years of research published in the *Journal of Consumer Research* in a seminal paper. In the article, they proposed that the CCT is not "unified, grand theory" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 868), but rather a collection of theoretical perspectives that describes the complexity between consumer actions, the marketplace and cultural meanings. Within this perspective, consumer culture is viewed as a "social arrangement in which the relations between lived culture and social resources, and between meaningful ways of life and the symbolic and material resources on which they depend, are mediated through markets" (Arnould & Thompson, p. 869). Consequently, by applying this theoretical perspective, the rationales behind consuming voluntourism can solely be understood through its inscription within the sociocultural context that the consumption exists (Arnould & Thompson, 2005).

The CCT highlights the sociocultural and experiential dimensions of consumption that cannot be fully captured by quantitative methods, including surveys, experiments and database modelling (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Compared to other marketing domains, the CCT cannot work with causality in the same way, which means that it is what the consumer experiences that directly leads to this action and that is generalisable to a larger group of consumers (ibid.). Instead, the CCT is often focusing on consumers narratives with the aim of more profoundly conceptualise consumer phenomena such as the symbolic meanings consumers attach to commodities, how they practice consumption and how consumption helps to construct personal- and collective consumption identities (ibid.). To exemplify, many researchers

within this domain have studied particular consumption events and phenomena such as the extraordinary Burning Man Festival, the subculture of Harley Davidson riders and Star Trek-fans (ibid.). These sometimes very specific studies of consumption contexts are, hence, not preliminary aiming to present results of consumption patterns that can be generalised to a larger group of consumers. Instead, these studies often act as backgrounds to "...generate new constructs and theoretical insights and to extend existing theoretical formulations" (Arnould & Thompson, p. 869).

Furthermore, in Arnould & Thompson's article (2005) they also propose that the different research streams within CCT can be thematised into four different, but still related, categories; *Consumer Identity Projects*, *Marketplace Cultures*, *The Sociohistoric Patterning of Consumption* and *Mass-Mediated Marketplace Ideologies and Consumers' Interpretive Strategies*. Taking this thematisation into consideration, we can conclude that our research falls within the area of Consumer Identity Projects. The general premise within this perspective is that the marketplace is full of mythic and symbolic resources that the consumers can use to forge their identity (ibid.). Thus, within this domain of CCT, the research concerns "the coconstitutive, coproductive ways" in which consumers construct a "coherent sense of self", if also often dynamic and diversified, self-identity (ibid., p. 871). Thus, consumers are conceived as identity seekers and makers (ibid.).

Contribution

By studying the consumption of voluntourism, this thesis aims to learn about the dynamics between the consumption of volunteer trips abroad and identity constructions, clarifying the relationship of consumption systems and the individual identity, as well as the significance of consumption to identity. This study seeks to contribute to research regarding CCT and, particular, to the domain of consumer identity projects.

1.7 Philosophy of Science

The term philosophy of science refers to "a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge" (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 124). Hence, the philosophy of science concerns how the researchers view the world (ibid.).

As the problem statement indicates, our study is of an explorative nature as the research aims to find out "what is happening, to seek out new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light" (Robson, 2002, p. 59). Moreover, to explain what philosophical assumptions we have made in our study, it is divided into the two major components; ontology and epistemology.

1.7.1 Ontological assumptions

Ontology of science concerns the assumptions regarding "the nature of reality" (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 127) and can be divided into two perspectives: objectivism and subjectivism (ibid.). In our research, we have found it appropriate to take the position of subjectivism. Within this perspective, social reality is believed to be "made from the perception and consequent actions of social actors (people)" (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 130). The social-phenomena is therefore viewed as something that is constantly re-created through social interactions (ibid.).

To answer our research question, we have further found it of importance to take a social constructivist approach. Social constructionism emphasises that it is needed to study the details of the place of activity to understand the reality and that social phenomena are in constant flux and re-creation (ibid.). It stresses that the reality is socially constructed and that the researcher should explore subjective meanings that people attach to different actions (ibid.). This has been considered as relevant for our thesis, as we are aiming to identify individuals subjective meanings attached to the consumption of volunteer trips abroad.

1.7.2 Epistemological assumptions

The epistemological assumptions relate to what researchers believe is adequate knowledge within that specific research field (Saunders et al., 2016). Following our theoretical positioning of CCT, we have deemed it relevant to apply the epistemological perspective of interpretivism that advocates that "humans are different from physical phenomena because they create meanings" (Saunders et al., p. 140). We have emphasised that it is of more concern for us to understand the differences between human actors than

other objects existing in the world (ibid.). Also, this perspective highlights that there is no objective reality; there are, instead, multiple realities (ibid.). Moreover, there are some different strands of interpretivism. In our thesis, we will highlight the hermeneutical approach, which also matches our theoretical positioning. Hermeneutics emphasises the "study of cultural artefacts such as texts, symbols, stories" (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 141).

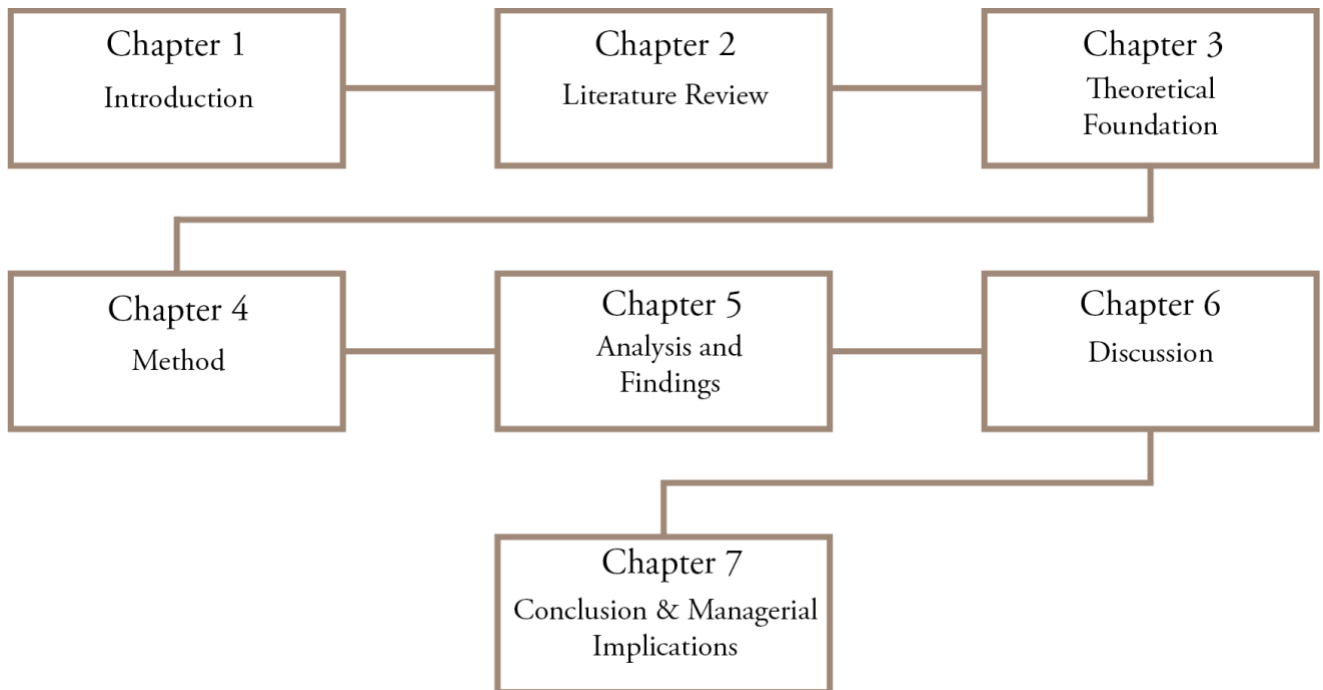
By taking this epistemological perspective of interpretivism, it is of importance for us in our research to understand the world from the object's (human's) point of view. Consequently, our study is of qualitative nature seeks to understand different individual's feelings, thoughts and behaviours regarding the consumption of voluntourism.

1.7.3 Research approach

Regarding the research approach, it has been deemed relevant to emphasise a deductive approach combined with inductive elements. A deductive approach to research means that the research moves from theory to data (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 148). This has been considered significant as our problem statement is derived from existing theory and more specifically from McCracken's (1986) "Movement of Meaning". Applying a deductive approach to research has several advantages, such as it may help the researchers to get started and give them an initial idea of the analytical framework (Saunders et al., 2016). However, as our research is of exploratory and qualitative nature, inductive elements are applied during the research as the collected data may lead to new insights that are not covered by the existing theories. Thus, some parts of the theoretical framework are gradually developed for us to "avoid being sensitised by existing theoretical constructs" (Saunders et al., 2016, p. 570).

1.8 Structure

In order to support the reader of this thesis, a structural overview is provided as followed:



The **first chapter** lays the foundation of the thesis and presents the problem statement. Thus, it functions as a guiding background for the upcoming parts of the research.

The **second chapter** introduces a review of the existing literature regarding voluntourism. It starts by reviewing the history of voluntourism, followed by a discussion of common themes that have been developed and suggested by earlier researchers, including previous research regarding voluntourism and the self-concept and motivation to participate in a volunteer trip abroad.

The **third chapter** presents the theoretical foundation of the thesis, which is deemed relevant to answer our research question. The foundation starts by reviewing the role of culture, followed by a presentation of the "Movement of Meaning" (McCracken, 1986). Moreover, different theories regarding the self-concept are presented. Lastly, the chapter discusses theories regarding responsible consumption as voluntourism has been argued by some researchers to be a more responsible way of travelling. Further,

the theoretical foundation serves as a background for not only the methodology process but also the presentation of the analysis and findings.

The **fourth chapter** presents the methodological choices and procedures used to answer the research problem. It starts by explaining why a mix of qualitative methods is chosen, followed by a more in-depth explanation of the long semi-structured interviews and the focus group. The chapter ends with a presentation of how the data was analysed and discussion regarding ethical considerations and how we ensured the quality of the study.

The **fifth chapter** presents the analysis and findings of the research and is divided into two main parts following, McCracken's framework: 1) The Culturally Constituted World to Good, 2) From Good to Individual. The first part helps us to answer the first two sub-questions and the second part the last sub-question. Those parts are analysed in order to address our research question.

The **sixth chapter** highlights the findings of our research and discusses it in accordance with our theoretical foundation and earlier literature on the subject.

The **seventh chapter** concludes the thesis and provides a condensed answer to the problem statement. Subsequently, managerial implications and limitations are presented.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Reviewed literature and research is presented in this chapter, to provide an overview and understanding existing knowledge about voluntourism. Firstly, the history of voluntourism and how it has developed is presented. Reviewing the history of voluntourism is relevant to review to understand the cultural context of the consumption of volunteer trips. Secondly, as many researchers have investigated voluntourism in relation to the self-concept, this has been important to include to explore and understand our research problem. Lastly, reviewing research regarding the motivation to participate in a volunteer trip has been considered important to include as it can give valuable insights into the rationales to consume voluntourism.

2.1 The History of Tourism and Voluntourism

Historically, travelling for leisure was something solely for the privileged in society (Wearing, 2001). For instance, as presented by Wearing (2001), during the 16th century wealthy and young men from mainly the United Kingdom did the "Grand Tour" where they travelled to continental parts in Europe to get educated and learn about the different cultures before entering adult life. This "Grand Tour" has later on been argued to be the start of international travelling (ibid.). However, according to Wearing (2001), it was not until the industrial revolution that travelling became a commodity to be sold to a more significant part of the population. The industrial revolution made it possible for more people to travel to other countries, and it also started a shift within the travelling industry (ibid.). Instead of travelling for an educational purpose with the intent of experiencing new cultures, travelling became more of a leisure activity (ibid.). As a result, tourism drifted further away from real reality as, for instance, comfortable hotels and train coaches were developed (ibid.). In addition, the frequency of the trips related to tourism increased (ibid.). According to Wearing (2001), this was the start of the well-known term "mass tourism".

Mass-tourism continued to proliferate rapidly; however, at the end of the 19th century, new forms of tourism started to emerge (Wearing, 2001). Alternative tourism, such as voluntourism, backpacking and adventure tourism, became a phenomenon during this period (ibid.). Notably, during the end of the 20th century and onwards, more responsible tourism including voluntourism, has increased significantly (ibid.). In contrast to mass-tourism, this type of tourism often has the objective of having minimal impact on resources and destination and, hence, tries to have a more sustainable approach (ibid.). It has been argued to serve tourists who seek a more meaningful holiday (Brown, 2003). Today is voluntourism one

of the most popular forms of alternative tourism (Wearing, 2001). The phenomenon exists all around the world and is arranged by several different types of sending organisations (e.g. NGO's, travel agencies, universities, governments), but also by the individual her/himself (Guttentag, 2009). The length of the stay may also differ widely, along with the volunteer work (ibid.).

The travel concept of voluntourism has throughout the years gained much positive response (e.g. Lo & Lee, 2011; Terry, 2014; Wearing, 2001). Concerning the positive effects of the host community, one of the most outstanding is that voluntourism can help to solve labour shortages. For instance, Terry (2014) investigated voluntourism in the context of organic farmers in the US. His results suggested that the volunteers gave both social and economic benefits to the host community. By hiring volunteers, they could mitigate their difficulties finding employees willing to work with farming and also minimise their cost of labour. However, by focusing on the experience of the host community (the farmers), the research also implied that the farmer faced some difficulties with having unskilled labour working there shortly with different ambitions. Yet, overall, the benefits exceeded the drawbacks (ibid.).

Despite the various positive effects with voluntourism, it has not been without critique, and as stated by Barbieri et al. (2012, p. 510) "...not every aspect of volunteer tourism is positive or desirable". In particular, voluntourism has been recognised for fostering neo-colonial values, decreasing employment opportunities in the host community and neglecting the local environment desires (Guttentag, 2009). In addition, volunteers tourists have been questioned for not having the skills that may be required for doing the work, which then leads to unsatisfactory work (Guttentag, 2009; Terry, 2014). Further, the motivations have been questioned as some researchers have indicated that volunteers may participate in these programs because it is a "cheap" vacation (Bailey & Russell, 2012). However, even though there may be several adverse effects with voluntourism, it has still been argued not to be "worse" than other forms of tourism (Guttentag, 2009).

2.2 Voluntourism and the Self-Concept

It has been argued that one of the most critical developments that volunteering abroad leads to, is regarding the personal nature of the participant (Wearing, 2001). According to Wearing (2001), "volunteer tourism provides an opportunity for an individual to engage in an altruistic attempt to explore 'self'" (p. 3). One of the main reason for this exploration of the self is that voluntourism enables people to live in a new culture and learn about other people (ibid.). Several researchers (e.g. Brown, 2003; Wearing, 2001) have argued that, for instance, "normal holidays", do not have a significant impact on how individuals see themselves in comparison to volunteer trips. These types of "normal" holidays do not necessarily change the way the consumer is acting, thinking or feeling (Wearing, 2001, p. 3). Instead, much of the literature has argued that "normal holidays" are rather about travelling from everyday life's issues and constraints (ibid.).

On a similar note, numerous studies have confirmed the exploration of the self and also proposed that the consumption of volunteer trips often leads to self-fulfilment, personal development and growth, an improved CV, gained confidence, skills and knowledge and a broader view of life and the world (Lo & Lee, 2011; Stebbins & Graham, 2004; Wearing, 2001). Moreover, research also emphasises that it can influence the volunteer tourist's direction in their career and enhance interest to become engaged in other volunteer activities (Wearing, 2001; Lo & Lee, 2011), social movement participation (McGehee & Santos, 2005) and responsible consumptions actions (Ulusoy, 2016). Engaging in volunteer trips has been argued to have a transformational effect on the consumer (Lo & Lee, 2011; Ulusoy, 2016; Wearing, 2001). It has been proved that it can create mutual understandings between different cultures, thus, diminishing potential cultural gaps between the country of origin of the volunteer and the host community (Brown, 2003; Wearing, 2001). The fact that organisations are often providing consumers with the opportunity to conduct the projects with other volunteers in a natural environment does often give the volunteers a strong sense of belongingness with other people in the group (Wearing, 2001). Also, the trip may help the volunteer tourist to realise what is important in life (ibid.).

2.3 Voluntourism and Motivation

A significant difference between traditional leisure travelling and voluntourism is that consumers are often paying for the privilege of volunteer working. Consequently, numerous researchers have been interested in understanding what motivates volunteer tourists to participate in different volunteer programs (e.g. Lo & Lee, 2011; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Wearing, 2001). Some recurring themes regarding motivation and voluntourism appear to be; a desire to give back to the less privileged, make a positive contribution to the hosting community and cultural immersion (Bailey & Russell, 2009; Brown, 2005; Wearing 2001). Later studies have shown that there is "... an acknowledged emphasis on the self in tourism volunteers" (Gallarza et al., 2013, p. 123). Thus, self-motives such as personal growth and self-esteem have been found as additional important motivations for consuming a volunteer trip (Bailey & Russell, 2009). In a similar vein, it has also been found that consumers can be triggered by the idea of getting hands-on-experience and learning something new (Polus & Bidder, 2016).

Most of the research regarding volunteers and motivation have been conducted with consumers from the Western-world. To overcome this limitation, Lo & Lee (2011) investigated motivation in the context of travellers from Hong Kong. The study revealed similar motivational factors as other mentioned studies; however, the study also highlighted that participating in a religious event was another strong motivation. The research also underlined that more studies should be conducted to understand what motivates consumers to participate in volunteer trips "...because it is the driving force behind their behaviour" and, particularly, also in different cultural contexts (Lo & Lee, 2011, p. 326-327).

2.4 Summary of Literature Review

Literature regarding voluntourism, particularly concerning the consumer's and effect on the self-concept has been discussed in this chapter. The reviewed research suggests that voluntourism is a complex topic, having both several benefits, but also drawbacks. Regarding the positive aspects, several studies have highlighted the positive effects on the consumer's self-concepts. For instance, the literature emphasised that voluntourism can lead to increased self-awareness, a greater understanding of different cultures and provide a direction in life. The negative effects are particularly the consequences it may have on the host community, such as fostering neo-colonial values and decreasing employment opportunities. The literature suggested that some of the main motivations to participate in a volunteer program are to learn about a new culture, a desire to give back and make a difference. In addition, development of the self-concept has been another recurring theme in the earlier literature and has been argued to be of importance both in terms of post-trip reflections, but also concerning motivations to participate in a volunteer program.

3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This chapter presents the theoretical foundation of the thesis. The theories serve as the background of the research problem and guide the interpretation of the consumption of volunteer trips.

The theoretical foundation is based on the premise of the CCT that implies that goods and services are carriers of symbolic meanings and that, thus, consumption choices can help people to define a sense of identity in relation to other people (Belk, 1988; McCracken, 1986).

The theoretical foundation starts by discussing the role of culture (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Geertz, 1994), followed by a presentation of the "Movement of Meaning", which explains the relationship between the symbolic meanings of consumption and the society's culture (McCracken, 1986). Further, a review of how consumption can affect the consumer's self-concept is presented (Belk, 1988; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Patrick et al., 2002; Schouten, 1991; Van Gennep, 1960). Lastly, as the consumption of voluntourism has been argued to be a responsible type of travelling, the last part of the theoretical foundation will discuss responsible consumption and the effects on consumption choices and identities (Hirschman, 1970; Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2007).

3.1 Culture and Consumption

To understand what meanings individuals attach to the consumption of voluntourism and, consequently, understand how consumers can be producers of culture, it is, firstly, fundamental to understand what culture is. As previously argued, within the theoretical domain of CCT, consumption can solely be understood through its inscription in its sociocultural context. Following the CCT-perspective, the concept of culture can be defined as "the very fabric of experience, meaning, and action" (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 869). Furthermore, culture is reflecting the postmodernist society, and it is, therefore, exploring cultural meanings as a heterogeneous construct that exist beyond meanings shared by members of specific societies, such as national cultures (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Following this, culture can be explained even further by Geertz (1994, p. 214):

"The concept of culture I espouse... is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and

the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning."

The definition illustrates that the concept of culture is created by humans, and found in everyday webs of significance. As a consequence, culture is hard to spot, as it is often taken for granted. Thus, individuals often tend to easier spot cultures that differ from their own.

Individuals constantly engage in the construction of their culture; defining and redefining the meaning of self, community and products and services (Arnould et al., 2005, p. 134). This constant trajectory between cultural meaning and the individual will be elaborated with McCracken's "Movement of Meaning" (1986).

3.2 The Movement of Meaning

The framework "Movement of Meaning" (McCracken, 1986) illustrates that cultural and symbolic meanings move between three different locations; the culturally constituted world, consumer goods, and the individual consumer, where several instruments of meaning transfer are responsible for this movement: the fashion system, advertising and four consumption rituals. It has, however, been argued by Copenhagen Business Professor Thyra Uth Thomasen (2018) that reference groups can be an additional important source of meaning transfer. In addition, Arnould et al., (2005) pointed out that peers have a strong influence on consumers beliefs and values. Therefore, this instrument will be added to the original model. This leads to the following model:

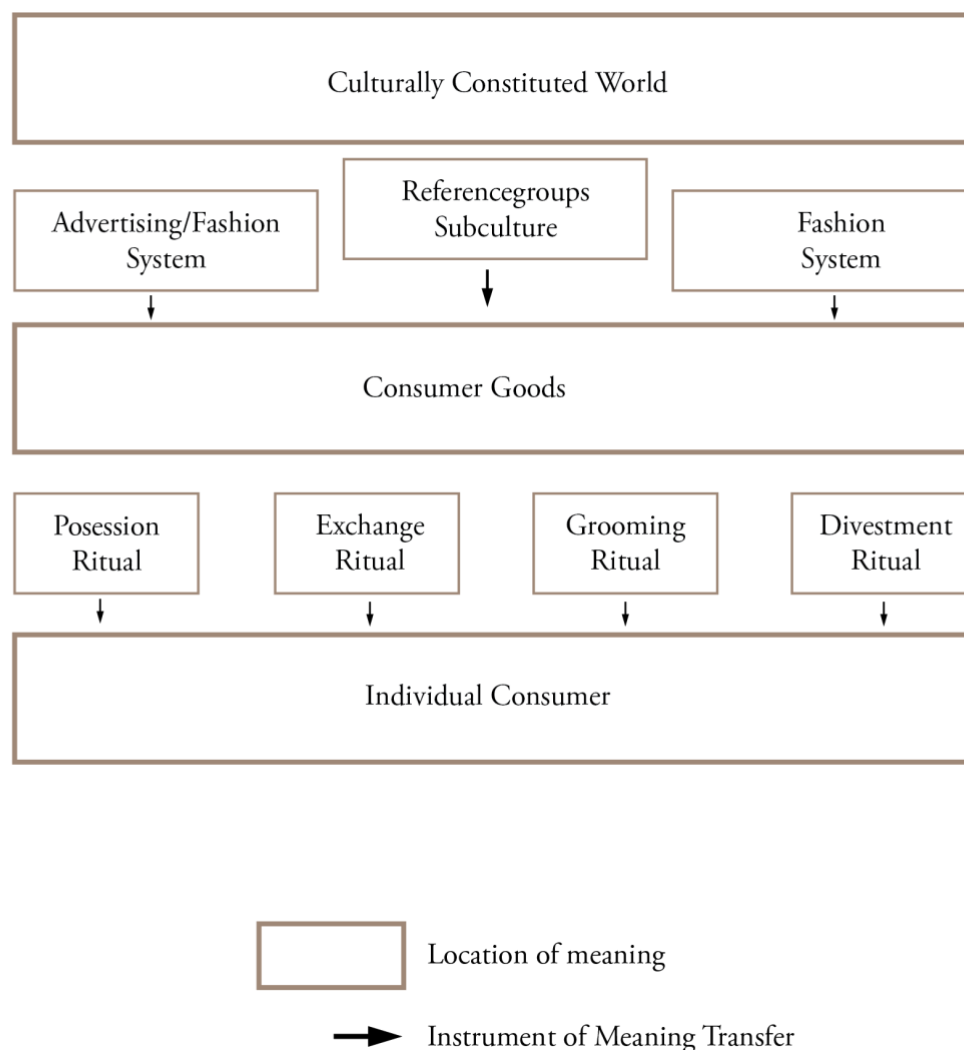


Figure 2- Movement of Meaning (Revised)

According to McCracken (1986), the meaning is transitional and is, thus, moving continuously in a trajectory between the world, goods and individuals, assisted by several instruments of meaning transfer. This process is valuable as it helps to understand the complexity between consumption choices and society (McCracken, 1986). Below all the locations of meaning and the instruments of meaning transfer are elaborated.

3.2.1 The culturally constituted world

The culturally constituted world is the original location of cultural meaning (McCracken, 1986). This world represents the everyday experience of the individual, who senses the world with the assumptions and the beliefs of his/her culture (ibid.). McCracken (1986) argues that individuals see the world through cultural "lenses" that is constituted by the assumptions and beliefs within it. Moreover, he defines culture as a "blueprint" that determines how the world will be shaped by human effort and thus, determining the co-ordinates of human action. Culture, therefore, constitutes the phenomenal world in two different ways. Firstly, as a "lens", culture determines how the world is seen. Secondly, as a "blueprint", explaining that human effort determines how the world will be fashioned (McCracken, 1986, p. 72). Culture constitutes the world by providing it with meaning, and consequently, is the meaning of consumer goods initially created in the culturally constituted world (ibid.).

Meaning can be described in terms of two fundamental concepts, namely, cultural- categories and principles (McCracken, 1986). Cultural categories are concepts that define and organise time, nature, space and society. These categories are dividing and organising the phenomenal world, with distinctions such as status, class, gender age and occupation (ibid.). It is, therefore, from this culturally constituted world that meaning stems. Additionally, according to Arnould et al., (2005), a complex cultural category can be conceptualised as a cultural field. An example of a cultural field is shopping trips (ibid.). Cultural categories are not visible, but sustained through ongoing practices in everyday life, telling each of us what is right or wrong, good or bad, loveable or detestable.

The meanings are also shaped by cultural principles, which explain that "meaning resides in the ideas or values that determine how cultural phenomena are organised, evaluated and construed" (McCracken, 1986, p. 73). Therefore, cultural principles help to distinguish, interrelate and rank, the phenomenal world by expressing the ideas that segment the world into cultural categories. Cultural principles are, particular,

expressed in goods, but also in all aspects of social life. However, goods will always signify both, as the two concepts complement each other. As McCracken (1986, p. 74) states "goods are both the creations and the creators of the culturally constituted world". Hence, culture constitutes the world, by supplying it with meaning, categories and principles before individuals decide to enter it.

Furthermore, as stressed in the introductory-chapter during the 40 last years of understanding consumers behaviours, it has been acknowledged that also hedonic meaning can play an important role concerning the value that individuals attach to consumer goods (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Hedonic meanings can be explained as meanings that evoke a particular emotional response, such as "fun" and "excitement" (ibid.). Thus, goods, such as a volunteer trip, can be associated with a particular feeling or facilitate or perpetuate feelings (Arnould et al., 2005).

3.2.2 From the culturally constituted world to consumer goods

In the second step of the model, McCracken (1986) explains how meanings transfer from the culturally constituted world to consumer goods. In this thesis, a good is not limited to being a tangible product, it can also be an experience. The meaning can be transferred from the cultural world to consumer goods, through three modes of transfer, namely, advertising, the fashion system (McCracken, 1986) and reference groups (Arnould et al., 2005; Thomsen, 2018). These instruments of meaning transfer can, therefore, help to understand how individuals form the meanings that they attach to the consumption of voluntourism.

Advertising

Firstly, advertising serves as an instrument of meaning transfer. The role of the advertisement is to conjoin the elements of a consumer good and a representation of the constituted world. Thus, the advertising works as a way of meaning transfer by conveying the consumer good and the world together within the frame of a particular advertisement (McCracken, 1986). As advertising captures the cultural meaning and invests it in the consumer good, makes it able to experiment and innovate new cultural meanings and reassign old ones, underlining McCracken (1986, p. 122) statement that advertising is "an important contribution to the context of consumption".

The fashion system

The second mode of meaning transfer from the world to goods is the fashion system. This is a more complicated instrument than the advertisement system as the process has "more sources of meaning, agents of transfer and media of communication" (McCracken, 1986, p. 76). The fashion world works in several distinct ways. Firstly, the system is performing in a similar character as performed by advertising. This is, for example, evident in newspapers and magazines. Another way of transferring meaning to consumer goods through the fashion system is by inventing new cultural meanings, in the way advertisers make use of agents of transfer, specifically, opinion leaders who help shape and refine existing cultural meanings (McCracken, 1986). Notably, as the development of the technology has opened up for new ways to communicate, such as social media, one of the most influential types of opinion leaders are today so-called influencers. These agents of transfer help invent and deliver cultural categories and principles that have been established as coordinates in the cultural world. McCracken (1986) states that they facilitate cultural innovation and style-, value- and attitude change, which is passed on to all in aspiration.

Reference groups

Reference groups are another essential instrument of meaning transfer (Thomsen, 2018). A reference group refers to a group whose "presumed perspective, attitudes, or behaviours are used by an individual as the basis for his or her perspectives, attitudes, or behaviours" (Arnould et al., 2005, p. 609). Peers can therefore have a great impact on forming a consumer's beliefs and values (ibid.).

According to Arnould et al. (2005), four different types of reference groups exist, which are classified according to their level of attraction and degree of membership, namely; *avoidance*, *disclaimant*, *aspirational* and *contactual*. The first type of reference group, the avoidance, concerns a group of people that the individual is not a member of, nor wants to become a part of, thus, he or she wants to avoid it. In contrast, a contactual reference group is a group of people that the individual is both a part of and wants to continue to be a part of. Moreover, the aspirational reference group consists of a group of people that the individual seeks to be a part of, yet, he or she is not a member of it. Lastly, the disclaimant reference group is the group of people that the individual is a part of; however, he or she does not want to be a member of it (Arnould et al., 2005, p. 611). Importantly, all of these four different types of reference groups can be of equal significance in regards to influencing the individual. Hence, even though the consumer is not yet a part of a group, he or she can still be highly influenced by it.

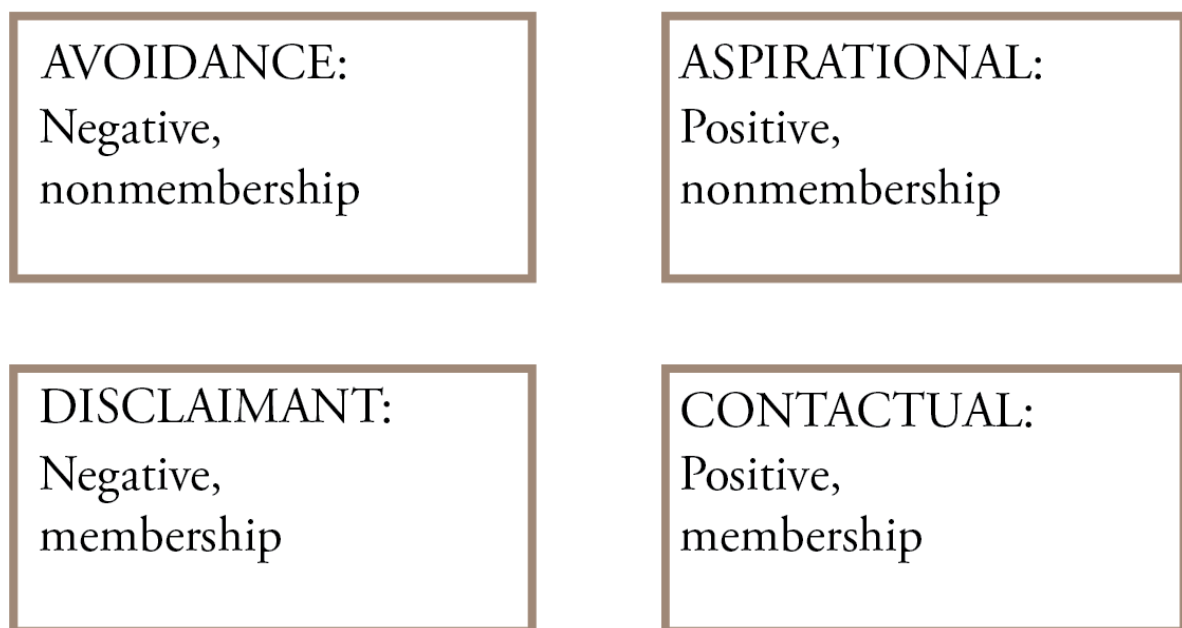


Figure 3- Types of reference groups

3.2.3 From consumer good to the individual

According to McCracken (1986), when the meanings have been moved into consumer goods, they can then be moved into the life of the consumer, and become meaningful on an individual level. This happens by four consumption rituals: possession-, grooming-, exchange-, and divestment rituals. Rituals are defined as "a form of social action devoted to the manipulation of cultural meaning for purposes of collective and individual communication and categorisation" (McCracken, 1986, p. 78). These rituals are an opportunity to "affirm, evoke, assign and revise the conventional symbols and meanings of the cultural order" (McCracken, 1986, p. 78). Rituals are therefore powerful for manipulating cultural meaning for the purpose of individual and collective communication (ibid.).

In addition to the four mentioned rituals, the cultural ritual called *rites of passage* has also been considered relevant to include in our thesis as previous research has indicated that voluntourism can have a transformational effect on the consumer (e.g. Wearing, 2001). The rites of passage is an old anthropological term that explains how a consumer can move from one social role to another in life (van Gennep, 1960).

Possession rituals

This consumption ritual explains activities that, despite their obvious functionality, have the supplementary effect of enabling the individual to claim possession over the consumer good (McCracken, 1986). The meaning is drawn from the good to the consumer by the way the consumer is claiming it. According to McCracken (1986), are these rituals, including actions such as discussing, cleaning, comparing, reflecting and showing off and photographing their possessions. Further, possession rituals also suggest that the meanings the good carries is not always evident to an individual, but rather they are served to control and inform actions (ibid.). If the consumer successfully deploys possession rituals, she/he manages to extract the meanings that have been invested in the good (McCracken, 1986). As a result, the meanings are moved from the good to the individual (ibid.). Thereby, the good can be used as a marker of time, space and occasion, and discriminate between variables of status, gender, class, occupation and lifestyle (ibid.).

Grooming rituals

According to McCracken (1986), another important means of meaning transfer are grooming rituals. These rituals are applicable when a continuously meaning transfer is needed to claim the possession of the potential good. In this case, the cultural meaning drawn from goods has a perishable nature, resulting in that the individuals draw meaning on a repeated basis of his/her possessions to the life of the consumers (McCracken, 1986). For instance, this could be repeated actions such as every year going skiing to the same destination in the alps.

Exchange rituals

Exchange rituals are another source of meaning transfer and explain how consumers give away meaningful property to another person, such as a birthday gift (McCracken, 1986). Another example could be a teacher giving away meaningful knowledge to her students. These exchanges include meaningful properties which the giver wants to transfer to the receiver. The gift-giver can also choose to give away a gift that contains symbolic properties that the giver offers the recipient to absorb (McCracken, 1986). Thereby, the gift-giver is seen as an agent of meaning transfer to the extent that he or she "selectively distribute goods with specific properties to individuals who may or may not have chosen them otherwise" (McCracken, 1986, p. 78).

Divestment rituals

Another consumption ritual is divestment rituals introduced by McCracken (1986), concerns withdrawing meaning from goods. When consumers engage in divestment rituals, they start to associate goods with their own personal properties. Often, these rituals are used to avoid confusion between the consumer and the good. For instance, could a consumer engage in divestment rituals to erase some of the meanings associated with a good, such as cleaning the property from the previous owner (ibid.).

Rites of passage

A rites of passage symbolises the permanence of a change in a social role, and also the behaviours that change in accordance with that transition (Arnould et al., 2005). An example is when an individual is graduating from high school. More specifically, as suggested by Van Gennep (1960), life passages usually include three stages with their attendant rituals: (1) separation, in which the individual is disengaging from its current role, (2) transition, in which the individual is adapting and changing to fit and become his or her new role, (3) incorporation, in which the individual incorporates the self within his or her new role. An example of a self-imposed rites of passage is extraordinary experiences, such as river-rafting (Arnould

& Price, 1993). As suggested by Arnould & Price (1993), the consumers are in an extraordinary experience involved in an emotional activity that leads to that he or she transforms into a new person because he or she is overcoming danger, acquiring new skills and developing new capabilities.

3.3 The Self-Concept

This section will elaborate on the last step of McCracken's model "The Movement of Meaning" (1986) and discuss how the consumption can become meaningful on an individual level. The following part will review research regarding how consumption choices can affect consumers self-concepts.

The self-concept arranges the wants and objectives of the consumer and can, in short, be defined as the "perceptions people have about themselves" and, more extensively as "an organised configuration of perceptions of the self, which are available to awareness" (Arnould et al., 2005, p. 388). An essential part of the definition is, therefore, that the self-concept that the consumer holds is highly related to society and culture (ibid.).

3.3.1 The self-concept is multifaceted

Following the theoretical positioning of the CCT, the dominant view of the postmodern consumer is that he or she is not solely inhabiting one self-concept, but multiple fragmented selves (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Hence, a consumer's identity consists of a collection of different, but most often related, perceptions of the self (Arnould et al., 2005).

Extended self

One crucial component of the multifaceted self is the extended self, introduced by Belk (1988). Belk (1988) argues that external objects in which consumers consider a part of themselves and are emotionally attached to are a part of their extended self. The material possessions that people own define them (Belk, 1988). He concludes that "(...) having possessions functions to create and maintain a sense of self-definition and that having, doing, and being are integrally related" (Belk, 1988, p. 146). In a similar vein, a sense of self may be acquired from *having*, by contributing to our capabilities for *doing* and *being*. In elaboration is Belk (1988, p. 146) arguing that "the only reason we want to have something is to enlarge our sense of self and that the only way we can know who we are is by observing what we have".

Further, may consumers view not only physical and tangible objects that they own as parts of themselves but also consumption practices or intangible objects (Belk, 1988). To exemplify, an individual can say that "New York is so *my* city", even though the person does not own the city. However, as New York is the consumer's favourite city, she/he can still view it as a part of the extended self. Consequently, possessions are not exclusively goods that individuals own.

Moreover, there are several ways of making an object a part of the extended self, including control, creation and knowledge (Belk, 1988). The first way an object can become a part of the self is "through appropriating or controlling an object for our own personal use" (Belk, 1988, p. 150). This implies that by managing to climb a mountain or getting around in a metro-system, the mountain and the metro-system can become a part of the individual's extended self as he or she is controlling and mastering the "object" (Belk, 1988, p. 150). Similarly, an object cannot become a part of the extended self if the individual does not know how to handle the object, such as not knowing how to ride one's bicycle (ibid.). Further, the second way of extending the self is by creating the object, for example, inventing it (ibid.). Regardless if the possession is an abstract idea or a material object, Belk (1988, p. 150) states that "the creator retains an identity in the object for as long as it retains a mark or some other associated with the person brought it into existence". Lastly, the third way in which an object can become a part of an individual's extended self is by knowing them, whether the object is a person, thing or a place (Belk, 1988).

Possible selves

Consumer self-representations may also refer to *possible selves* (Markus & Nurius, 1986). According to American researchers and psychologists Markus and Nurius (1986), this self-concept phenomena refers to that individuals have possible selves that derive from an image of the self in the past, and includes thoughts of the self in the future. These possible selves represent the individuals' outstanding fears, hopes and fantasies. For example, I am *currently* a student, yet, I *could* be a lawyer, a professional tennis player, or a volunteer-worker. The individual's collection of possible selves can be defined as "cognitive manifestation of enduring goals, aspirations, motives, fears, and threats" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954). Accordingly, these possible selves include representations of the self such as the ideal-self (whom the individual would wish to be), the expected-self (whom the individual thinks that he or she most likely will become), but also the hoped (whom he or she is dreaming of becoming in the future) and the self that the individual is fearing of becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Further, possible selves play a significant role in the formation of the individual. Firstly, possible selves function as a vital link between the individual's self-concepts and his or her motivation (Markus & Nurius, 1986). The possible selves can, therefore, be an incentive for future behaviour. Secondly, they "provide an evaluative and interpretive context for the current view of the self" (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 955). Importantly, individuals will often seek validation of the possible selves by taking both direct and indirect actions (Patrick et al., 2002). Meaning, a consumer can take direct action and for example, do plastic surgery or have a haircut. The consumer can also take indirect action, and try to reach the desired self by possessing a commodity with symbolic meaning that helps to express this desired possible self (ibid.).

Related to this, Patrick et al. (2002), studies how the consumption of products, services and activities can affect the future-oriented dimensions of the possible selves. In their study, they found out that, firstly, people possess several selves, including both hoped-for and feared- for. Secondly, consumers are able to identify products, services and activities that are of importance to achieve and avoid these different possible selves. Thus, their study indicated that consumption constitutes an essential linkage for consumers to approach their future-oriented "hoped- for self", but also to avoid the self that they fear to become.

The fact that consumers may both have different possible selves, they can also have conflicting self-concepts (Arnould et al., 2005, p. 404). To, therefore, integrate the conflicting selves can be of importance (ibid.). This is something that, for example, consumption can aid. Marketers can create products and services that allow the consumer to combine several possible selves (ibid.).

3.3.2 The self-concept is changeable

Lastly, the self-concept is not only multifaceted but also open to change. This means that the self-concept can be a dynamic, flexible and fluid construct that develops throughout the consumer's life (Arnould et al., 2005). Thus, the self-concept does not only change in a specific situation, but also in a more enduring way (ibid.).

Moreover, according to Arnould et al., (2005), there are three crucial, and relational, aspects in the consumers' environments that influence their *sense of self*, being; significant others, material objects and, lastly, ideas. The first aspect, significant others, means that the persons that the consumer is interacting with are of importance in the forming of self-concept. Material, objects and the physical environment, which are a part of the consumer's social interactions, is another significant element that supports the

construction of the self-concept. The last vital aspect consists of the ideas, beliefs and values that surround the consumer. Hence, if one of these three aspects changes, it is expected that the consumer's self-concept will change and, consequently, also the behaviour of the consumer (ibid.).

Research has suggested that the self-concepts are particularly changeable during some specific transitions in the consumer's life such as; between high-school and university, after been going through a divorce and when shifting jobs (Arnould et al., 2005). The change of role in life also has implications on the individual's consumption patterns that are coloured by the new role in life (ibid.). Thus, understanding how new roles affects consumption is of high-relevance. In relation to this, Schouten (1991), investigates how consumption both can help to maintain or reconstruct the consumer's self-concept when the consumer is moving from one role to another in life. By studying the dramatic symbolic consumption of aesthetic plastic surgery, it was found that consumption activities play an important role in "restoring harmony to an ambiguous, incongruous, or unsatisfying self-concept" (Schouten, 1991, p. 422). The research also indicated that symbolic and experiential consumption helps the consumer to successfully transit from its previous role to the new, as these types of dimensions of consumption allow the consumer to explore the new self-identity and also support it to proceed (ibid.).

3.4 Responsible Consumption

Earlier research indicates that voluntourism is a more responsible way of travelling. Therefore, this last part of the theoretical framework will elaborate deeper on responsible consumption and how this may shape consumer's consumption choices and, consequently, also the self-concepts. Following our theoretical perspective of CCT and previous argumentations, consumption is today a central part of individuals lives, and it can be seen as an "an active element in the construction of the meaning of life" (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2007, p. 422). However, as consumption has become a more significant part of people's construction of identity, there has, according to Ozcaglar-Toulouse (2007) simultaneously been a growing mistrust in society regarding how consumption practises can create meaning in life. As a response, the concept of responsible consumption has become an essential part of the field of understanding consumers behaviours (ibid.). An increasing number of consumers have, for example, decided to buy organic products and attend events such as the Burning Man Festival (ibid.). Accordingly, responsible consumption refers to the ability of "being able to respond to" and "justify one's acts" (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2007, p. 422). Therefore, the responsible consumer is an individual or organisation

that reflects and thinks about the consequences of his or her consumption actions, both in short and long-term (ibid.). More specifically, responsible consumption is defined as:

"The set of voluntary acts, situated in the sphere of consumption, achieved from the awareness of consequences judged as negatives of consumption on the outside world to oneself, these consequences raising therefore not from the functionality of the purchases nor from immediate personal interest" (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2007, p. 422-423).

Understanding how this "new" type of consumption contributes both to commodities symbolic meanings and the consumer's identity have arisen as a field of study. In many cases, the responsible consumer is facing an internal conflicting when her or she decides to consume and feel pleasure while, simultaneously, suffering because he or she is aware of the negative consequences of the consumption act such as unethical working conditions or destroying of the environment (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2007). To solve this issue, it has been suggested that the consumer can decide to take three actions (Hirschman, 1970). The first one is called *exit*. This means that the consumer will not consume the product, service or activity. Moreover, the second strategy is called *loyalty*. By applying this strategy, the consumer will try to minimise the negative consequences or maximise the positive effects of the consumption act. Lastly, the consumer can choose the strategy of *voice*, meaning, he or she will not care about his or her consumption act, but rather attempt to change the whole consumption system such as boycotting (Hirschman, 1970).

Related to these three mentioned strategies, Ozcaglar-Toulouse (2007) studies how consumers use these three responsible consumption strategies in their everyday life. His findings suggest that consumers apply several of these strategies and that responsible consumption for some consumers may be of high importance in the creation of their identity.

3.5 Summary of Theoretical Foundation

To explore the rationales behind going on a volunteer trip it is deemed relevant to apply McCracken's Movement of Meaning (1986). The model explains how cultural meanings move from the culturally constituted world to consumer goods, and to the individual. It is presented that the meaning that consumers assign to voluntourism can be influenced by three different modes of meaning transfers, namely; the fashion system, advertisement system and reference groups. Reference groups were added to the original model of McCracken, as it assumed that peers, in addition to media and influencers, is an important source of meaning creation in relation to the consumption of voluntourism.

All of the consumption rituals, including rites of passage, are presented as essential modes of meaning transfer in order to understand how voluntourism becomes meaningful on an individual level. If the consumers are successfully dragging the meanings the good carries to their individual selves, it can affect their self-concepts. Moreover, being aware of how consumption choices form the self-concept is of significance. Consumption can help consumers to be whom they want to be, yet, if the symbolic meaning of the good does not match the consumer's self-concept, there is a risk that it will not be consumed. In the context of voluntourism, this implies that it is relevant to investigate how consumption influences the consumers' self-concepts to understand the rationales behind this consumption practice.

Lastly, it has been presented how an increasing amount of individuals are seeking to consume in a more responsible way. Therefore, understanding how this "new" type of consumption contributes both to goods symbolic meanings and the consumer's identity have arisen as a field of study. In this thesis, the theory of responsible consumption is of relevance as some researchers have argued that voluntourism allows consumers to travel in a more responsible way. Simultaneously, some researchers have argued that going on a volunteer trip is not responsible. Thereby, to use the theory of exit, loyalty and voice, can help understanding how the participants are relating to this consumption practice, and how it (possibly) helps them to enforce their self-concepts.

4. METHOD

This chapter presents the methodological design, procedure and reflections of our thesis, which are the basis for the research findings that will be presented and interpreted in chapter five.

Our research aims to understand the rationales of going on a volunteer trip by applying McCracken's model "The Movement of Meaning" (1986), and is as argued of explorative nature. In accordance with the philosophy of science and theoretical foundation, we deemed it relevant to apply a mix of qualitative methods, including both a focus-group and three long in-depth interviews. This was considered appropriate as we wanted to explore and get insights into the individual's thoughts, feelings and behaviours concerning the consumption of voluntourism.

The research was conducted in a Scandinavian setting with individuals within the Millennial age group (23-26 years). In the selection of the participants to the in-depth interviews, we found it necessary to select participants that had been going on a volunteer trip abroad, to get insights regarding their different experiences. However, in the selection of the participants to the focus group, we considered it appropriate to contact individuals that had no experience of going on a volunteer trip. This to more fully understand the meanings that individuals attach to voluntourism at a macro-level.

In the following sections, the different elements of the method are elaborated. Starting with the design of the study, followed by how the data in the in-depth interviews and the focus group were collected and analysed. Lastly, there will be a reflection on ethical considerations and how we ensured the quality of the research.

4.1 Research Design

The research began with conducting an extensive literature review with the aim of identifying what had previously been researched on within the field of voluntourism, but also the CCT'-perspective. Doing a comprehensive literature review is recommended as it aids the construction of the interview questionnaire (McCracken, 1988). It gives the researcher a better understanding of the field that the interview will explore and how the data can be organised (ibid.). In addition, it also serves as a vital instrument for creating distance between the interviewer and the interviewee, which is of high importance when conducting a long in-depth interview (ibid.). Hence, the literature review guided the construction of the

questionnaires to both the long semi-structured interviews and the focus group. The design of the in-depth interview and focus groups will be elaborated in the following sections.

4.1.1 Long semi-structured interviews

As this research aims at understandings individual's feelings, thoughts and behaviours regarding the consumption of voluntourism, conducting long semi-structured interviews were, as argued, considered suitable. Qualitative interviews are sensitive to human situations (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018), and can take the researcher into "the mental world of the individual, to glimpse the categories and logic by which he or she sees the world" (McCracken, 1988, p. 1). Thus, the aim of qualitative interviews is not to discover and quantify the number of people sharing similar characteristics. Instead, it is about gaining "access to the cultural categories and assumptions according to which one culture construes the world" (McCracken, 1988, p. 9). Consequently, in-depth interviews work with "words not numbers" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 13) and the knowledge lies in the nuanced and precise description expressed by the interviewee (*ibid.*). However, according to Schmidt & Hollensen (2006), there are some potential problems and limitations with conducting in-depth interviews. For instance, it can generate a lot of irrelevant information as digressions can occur. Additionally, the interviewer cannot guarantee that the participants will not "stage" themselves (*ibid.*). Therefore, to avoid this, it is of importance that the researcher is attentive to contradictions in responses (*ibid.*).

Following our epistemological assumptions that knowledge is socially constructed, the purpose of the in-depth interviews was not to capture already existing knowledge, rather the interviewing and analysis was an "intertwined phases of knowledge construction, with an emphasis on the narrative to be told to an audience" (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018, p. 21). Hence, the interviewers may also be subject to change throughout the process as she learns more about the phenomena.

Recruitment of participants

One of the criteria for the recruitment process in relation to the in-depth interviews was that the participants had consumed a volunteer trip abroad. Additionally, the participants had to be Millennials from Scandinavia (Norway, Sweden and Denmark). We considered the Scandinavian region interesting to study as citizens from these countries constitute some of the most frequent travellers in the world (Khushboo, 2019). The age-group of millennials (adults between the ages of 24-35) was argued to be interesting to study, as they have quickly become one of the most powerful forces in the travel industry (Sofronov, 2018). In addition, several studies indicate that millennials travel more than any other age-group, and is driving the growth in the travel industry (Condor, 2019; Sofronov, 2018; Varricchio et al., 2019).

The participants were recruited by networking through friends and acquaintances, which further led to that we found several potential participants. To represent the different countries in Scandinavia, we sought to find participants that represented all of the Scandinavian countries. In the selection of participants gender was not a part of the selection criteria; however, earlier studies had highlighted that more women are going on volunteer trips than men (Mostafanezhad, 2013). This was also something that got confirmed during our selection process, as it was hard to find men that had been on a volunteer trip. Therefore, all of the participants in the in-depth interviews were women.

Furthermore, following McCracken's (1988) principle that "less is more" (p. 9) regarding the number of participants in a qualitative study, we ended up with conducting three long interviews. Longer interviews allow the researcher to work more deeply and with greater care than conducting interviews with more participants (ibid.).

Together, all of the above criteria and considerations served as the background to the recruitment of the participants. Even though they shared some similar characteristics including, age, level of education, gender and life-stage, they were all from different countries in Scandinavia and had travelled to dissimilar destinations. Henceforth, the three participants considered constituting a great balance of similarities and differences. The participants and their characteristics are presented in the following table:

	Linn Dimmlich	Julie Sørum	Sofie Nexø
Date of the In-depth interview	4 th of March	9 th of March	10 th of March
Age	23- years old	25- years old	25- years old
Country of Origin	Sweden	Norway	Denmark
Education	Bachelor of Human Rights studies at Lund University	Graduated- Brand and Communications Management master at CBS	Master in international business communication- intercultural marketing at CBS
Work	Store assistant in the Craftstore- Panduro	Communications Coordinator at DACHSER Nordic	Student Assistant at Nykredit
How often do you travel?	5-6 times a year	6 times a year	4-6 times a year

Table 1- Portfolio of In-depth Interview Participants

Data collection

It can be argued that people are not normally in the habit of reflecting upon the meanings that they attach to consumption, nor on how their consumption may construct and affect their identity. Consequently, it was important for us to create a questionnaire and an environment that encouraged the participants to share their stories and narrations regarding their volunteer experience. In the construction of the questionnaire, we emphasised so-called "grand-tour" questions (McCracken, 1988). More specifically, this meant that initial questions regarding the different themes during the interview were phrased in a general and non-directive manner (*ibid.*) (see appendix 1), allowing the interview participants to talk freely about topics they considered relevant in their own way and speed. To support this process, we also used "floating prompts", that directed the interview participants to continue talking, such as raising eyebrows or repeating key terms to the interviewee (*ibid.*).

Furthermore, in the construction of the questionnaire, we also had some "planned prompts" ready to ensure that we got all the necessary data that was needed. Particularly, auto-driving techniques were used. Auto-driving means that the interviewee is asked to comment on a picture or another stimulus (McCracken, 1988). Therefore we encouraged the key participants to bring relevant photographs and videos from the trip that could aid them to tell their story about their volunteer experience (*ibid.*). Using this type of auto-driving technique can be useful as it "helps to both foreground and objectify aspects of the respondents' experience that are otherwise difficult to bring into the interview" (McCracken, 1988, p. 25). Also, this helped us gain a better understanding of the context of the volunteer-trip which aided the analysis of the data.

Moreover, in the process of creating the questionnaire, we also emphasised creating some "contrast" planned prompts. Using these kinds of planned prompts have been argued to be one of the most essential as it gives the participant an opportunity to discuss phenomena that did not come top of mind (McCracken, 1988). Also, asking the participants to recall some exceptional incidents during their volunteer trip was another planned prompt that was considered of high relevance for getting insights into the subjective experience of the participants. Hence, the finalised questionnaire was based on the literature review and theoretical foundation and consisted of four different themes (see appendix 1).

The interview setting

The criteria in the selection of the location of the interviews were that it had to be a quiet and familiar location that would allow the participants to feel comfortable and speaking in a natural way. Two of the interviews were conducted at Copenhagen Business School's group rooms and one at Lund University.

All of the interviews began with that one of the researchers briefly introduced the subject of investigation. As the research is of explorative nature, it was of importance to not say anything that could influence the participants' answers. Moreover, the interviewer also asked if she could record the interview, presented the ethical considerations and asked some biographical questions. As suggested by Kvale & Brinkmann (2018), the interviews were ended with a short debrief regarding the purpose and the process of the study to ensure that the participants had all the information that was needed. Both of the researchers were present at the interview. However, only one of the researchers asked questions, while the other one was observing. All of the interviews were held in English to minimise confusion between the interviewer and interviewee, which also was a language that all of the participants were comfortable with. The interviews took 1,5 to 2,5 hour each to conduct.

Transcription of the interviews

In order to capture the participant's responses accurately, all of the in-depth interviews were transcribed from audio recordings into written scripts by the researchers. In the transcription of the interviews, it was important to not only write down the verbal conversation, but also emotions such as laughter. To write emotions are essential, as they describe the comfort level of the participants and help the researchers to provide a more accurate translation from verbal to written discourse and, thus, facilitates the analysis of the data (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Further, the audio-record was transcribed word by word, in order to exactly reflect what the participants said during the interviews. Also, as the participants showed pictures and videos, this is also described in the transcripts. According to Brinkmann & Kvale (2018), the differences between the oral speech and the written text can rise practical and principal issues. Therefore, we re-listened to the interviews to reveal errors and ensure accuracy.

The transcripts of the different interviews can be found in appendix 5,6,7.

4.1.2 The focus group discussion

In this research, we also deemed it relevant to conduct a focus group, as this type of qualitative research method allows a dynamic exchange and interactive discussion between participants (Saunders et al., 2016) and is useful for investigating unexplored topics (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). The purpose of the focus group in our research was to act as an additional source regarding what meanings individuals attach to voluntourism. As the selected participants in the focus group had no experience of going on a volunteer trip, they could help to explain how meanings are influenced by instruments of meaning transfers (such as media and advertisement), as the participants were not coloured by the volunteer experience.

In comparison to in-depth interviews, one strength with a focus group is that participants may feel more comfortable and forthcoming talking and sharing their experiences, as the group can create safety and inspiration for the participants (McCracken, 1988). Similar to the grand-tour questioning technique, a non-directive style also characterises focus groups. The aim with the focus groups is, therefore, to encourage a variety of viewpoints on the topic that is in focus for the group (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). However, there might be a downside to this type of group setting, since the respondents can be influenced and coloured by the other participants' viewpoints. Also, in comparison to an in-depth interview, it is difficult to gain the same depth in the responses from the participants, as the time dedicated is limited to each individual (Morgan, 1977).

Recruitment of participants

In the recruitment of participants to the focus group, similar criteria as to recruiting participants to the interviews were applied. Thus, the main criteria in the recruitment for the focus group were that the participants had to be Millennials from Scandinavia. However, as stated before, a major difference between the in-depth interviews and the focus group, was that the recruited participants in the focus group had not been on a volunteer trip.

By using networking among friends and acquaintances, we recruited six participants. This number of participants is aligned with Brinkmann & Kvale's (2018) recommendations, who suggest that a focus group should consist of six to ten participants. The participants were equally divided between gender, and the group constituted two respondents from Norway, two from Sweden and two from Denmark.

We considered relevant to recruit informants with relatively similar backgrounds in terms of education level, age and social class. However, the participants represented three different Scandinavian countries, and, therefore, it can be argued that they still could give different viewpoints to the discussion. Henceforth, the participants considered constituting a great balance of similarities and differences. All of the participants and their characteristics are presented in the following tables:

Name	Karolina Stenberg
Age	25- years old
Gender	Female
Country of Origin	Sweden
Education	Master in Economics and Finance at CBS
Work	No, looking for jobs
How often do you travel?	6 times a year

Name	Victor Bao
Age	26- years old
Gender	Male
Country of Origin	Sweden
Education	Master in Brand and Communications Management at CBS
Work	No, looking for jobs
How often do you travel?	5-6 times a year

Name	Olav Hexeberg Hovden
Age	25- years old
Gender	Male
Country of Origin	Norway
Education	Master in Customer and Commercial Development at CBS
Work	Fremad Media
How often do you travel?	5-6 times a year

Name	Øyvind Maraak
Age	26- years old
Gender	Male
Country of Origin	Norway
Education	Master in Digital Innovation and Management at IT Universitetet
Work	No work
How often do you travel?	4-5 times a year

Name	Anne- Sofie Kronborg
Age	25- years old
Gender	Female
Country of Origin	Denmark
Education	Master i Erhvervsøkonomi og virksomhedskommunikation at CBS
Work	Marketing assistant for The Old Irish Pub
How often do you travel?	3-4 times a year

Name	Marta Kusio
Age	25- years old
Gender	Female
Country of Origin	Denmark
Education	Master i Erhvervsøkonomi og virksomhedskommunikation at CBS
Work	Tre Kronor Media
How often do you travel?	3-4 times a year

Table 2- Portfolio of Focus Group Participants

Data collection

In the construction of the questionnaire to the focus group it was of importance to create questions that were both non-directive, and that could lead to an interesting discussion (see appendix 2). To get insights regarding the meanings that people attach to the consumption of volunteer trips, we also deemed it relevant to show and ask questions regarding the existing advertisement and framing in media. By googling the term "volunteer abroad" on all the different Scandinavian languages and English, we took the most relevant results of the search that had the highest ranking on the search engine Google. This led to that we had a vast collection of pictures, ads, videos and websites that we could show to the participants (see appendix 3).

The interview setting

In the selection of the setting of the focus group, it was also important to choose a quiet place that would not disturb the participants to express their thoughts and follow the discussion. Consequently, the focus group took place in a group room at Copenhagen Business School.

The focus group was led by one of the researchers that acted as a moderator, while the second researcher was making observations. In a focus group, the role of the moderator is to create a safe atmosphere that allows the participants to express their personal but also, potentially, conflicting viewpoints on the chosen topic (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Therefore, it is important as a moderator to not take over the conversation and, instead, let it flow in its natural order.

Further, as the research is of explorative nature, the focus group started with that the moderator briefly described the topic of the discussion without saying anything that could impact the participants' upcoming discussion. The moderator also asked whether it was okay that the interview was recorded and presented the ethical considerations of the study.

The focus group was also conducted in English to minimise the language barrier between the different participants. However, as all of the participants studied in international contexts, they did not have any issues with expressing their thoughts in English. The focus group took place on the 3rd of March 2020 and took approximately one hour to conduct.

Transcription of the Focus Group

The transcription of the focus group was executed in a similar way as the in-depth interviews. However, a difference between a focus group and in-depth interview is that other participants in the group can react to what the other participants are expressing. Thus, it was of importance for us to also write down the different reactions in the transcript, both the emotional and verbal. Moreover, during the focus group, the participants were also exposed to different advertisements regarding voluntourism. The emotions that these advertisements evoked were also found of importance to include in the transcript, as it was argued to be of relevance for later analysis.

The complete transcription of the focus group can be found in appendix 8.

4.2 Analysis of the Data

To analyse all of the collected data we found it beneficial to conduct a thematic analysis, with the aim of identifying relevant themes and other patterns that occurred throughout the data set (Saunders et al., 2016). This type of data analysis is appropriate when analysing qualitative data, as it both helps the researchers to systematically analyse the data material and still be flexible and accessible towards it (ibid.). The thematic analysis process involves the researchers coding the data and looking for themes that can be further analysed and used for answering the research question (ibid.). It is an advantageous approach as it is relatively straight forward (in comparison with other analytical processes), yet, it still leads to a rigorous analysis (ibid.).

The analytical process began with that we familiarised ourselves with the data. In comparison to grounded theory, the thematic analysis does not have a particular course of action that must be followed. However, the general process can still be summarised as the following: coding the data, searching for themes, identifying relationship and, lastly, refinement of themes (Saunders et al., 2016). Following our deductive reasoning, our thematic analysis began with coding the data based on themes derived from the literature review and the existing theoretical foundation. Based on this, we colour-coded similar meanings found in the data to facilitate further analysis (see appendix 4). After the data was coded, we searched for themes and tried to recognise relationships between them. In the last step of the analysis, we refined the identified themes and added theory that could explain the phenomena further and help to answer our research question. The identified themes will be presented and interpreted in the next chapter.

4.3 Ethical Considerations

It is of significance to continuously reflect on the moral and ethical issues throughout the research process. As argued by Brinkmann & Kvale (2018), one of the biggest ethical issues with a qualitative method, is that the research can interfere with the participants' private spheres and lives.

In regards to ethical considerations, a problem with explorative research is that it can be difficult to tell the participants beforehand what the objective and purpose is. Consequently, to avoid these issues, we both briefed and debriefed the participants during the different interview sessions. In the briefing of both the focus group and in-depth interviews, we told them about the procedure of the interview and that the study was explorative. We also asked for permission to record the interview and told them that all of the data would be deleted as soon as the research was finalised. Moreover, in the debriefing, we informed them more explicitly about the aim of the study and that we would send them the transcribed interview.

Furthermore, we also gave all of the participants the opportunity to be anonymous as particularly the in-depth interviews for some participants could be considered sensitive topics. In relation to this, we made it clear to them that they could deny responding to any of our asked questions.

4.4 Ensuring Quality of the Study

To ensure the quality of our study, we have throughout the process taken into consideration what Brinkmann & Kvale (2018) call reliability, validation and generalisation of interview knowledge. These terms can help to discuss important issues of trustworthiness, strength and transferability of the study (ibid). Some researchers have argued that the traditional terms of reliability and validity that often are used in quantitative research cannot be transferred to qualitative studies. However, as suggested by Brinkmann & Kvale (2018), by making some adjustments, it can be argued that these terms also can be applied to qualitative methods (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018).

Reliability

The term reliability refers to the trustworthiness and consistency of the study's findings and is often related to whether the study can be replicated by other researchers (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Given the purpose of the research, and the method chosen, it can be argued that the findings are difficult to replicate as the research aims to identify the subjective meanings of the participants. Importantly, to still make the study as trustworthy and consistent as possible, we found it necessary to create a questionnaire and continuously think about minimising bias.

Validation

The validity of qualitative research relates to whether the study is investigating what it intends to research (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). It is of importance that the researchers continuously check, interpret and question the findings throughout the whole process (ibid.). To obtain this, we placed the research question at the centre of the whole thesis process, thus, asking ourselves in every step of the process if it would help us answer our research question.

Generalisation

If the findings of qualitative research are found to be both reliable and valid, the questions that remain to be asked, is if the results can be generalised (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Common opposition to qualitative research is that the sample of participants is too small to generate a generalisable result (ibid.). However, as we have sought to give rich and deep descriptions of the interview process and the contextual background, it can be argued that our research is likely to be analytically generalisable regardless the small sample of respondents.

4.5 Summary of Method

For the purpose of getting insights into the rationales that Scandinavians in the millennial generation attach to voluntourism, the method of this research is of qualitative and exploratory character.

In order to gain rich and deep descriptions of the participants' thoughts, feelings and behaviours regarding voluntourism, three long in-depth interviews and a focus group were chosen as the research method. The participants in the in-depth interview were selected based on the criteria of being young millennials who have participated in a volunteer trip abroad. In a similar vein, the criteria for being millennial also applied for the selection of the participants to the focus group. However, the focus group participants were also chosen based on the criteria that they had not engaged in voluntourism.

Both the in-depth interviews and focus group were semi-structured with the purpose of getting access to the phenomenal and social world of our participants. Regarding the in-depth interviews, was the focus on facilitating a detailed description of their voluntourism experiences. The focus group was conducted with the purpose to get insights into the meanings that the good carries in the culturally constituted world and how individuals assign meaning to voluntourism. As interviewers, we wanted to see how these individuals act in the perception of their reality in all of the interview sessions. In order to capture the real perceptions of the individual's world during the interviews, we strived to make them feel as comfortable as possible, allowing them to talk freely about their feelings, thoughts and beliefs. In addition, we engaged in active listening, used prompts (such as auto-driving) and follow up questions (if needed). To facilitate the analysis, all of the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The data was analysed by conducting a thematic analysis, which started colour-coding the material, followed by coding, identifying relationships and finally refinement of themes.

Throughout the study, ethical considerations have been a part of the research process. For instance, during the interviews, the participants were both briefed and debriefed about the research process. Also, to ensure the quality of the findings, we have taken into consideration what Brinkmann & Kvale (2018) call reliability, validation and generalisation of interview knowledge. Thus, we created questionnaires and thought about minimising bias and about how all of the steps of the research process will help us to answer our research question, and also how we could provide a rich and deep description of the interview process and contextual background.

5. ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

In order to identify the rationales behind going on a volunteer trip, this chapter presents and analyses the findings found in our data collection. The analysis is divided into two parts. The first part of the analysis helps to answer the first two sub-questions. Thus, the meanings that are attached to the consumption of voluntourism and how individuals are assigning symbolic meanings to the consumption. The cultural meanings are presented and analysed in terms of two concepts, cultural categories and principles. Both findings from the focus group and the in-depth interviews are presented and analysed in this part.

The second part of the analysis helps to answer our last sub-question regarding how the consumption of voluntourism affects consumers' self-concepts. This part presents both how consumers practice voluntourism and how these symbolic actions affect their self-concepts. Thus, solely the volunteer experiences from the in-depth interviews are taken into consideration in this part.

5.1 The Culturally Constituted World to Good

As emphasised in the problem statement, understanding what meanings individuals attach to the consumption of voluntourism has been considered of importance to get insights into the rationales behind the consumption. Advertising, the fashion system and reference groups contribute to how these meanings are transferred from the world to the consumption of voluntourism. According to McCracken (1986), meaning can be characterised by two terms; cultural categories and principles. The culturally constituted world consists of cultural categories that are dividing the phenomenal world. These cultural categories can be differentiated, ranked, and interrelated through cultural principles (McCracken, 1986).

In the collection and analysis of the data, it became evident that there were several cultural categories linked to voluntourism that overlapped. Hence, the cultural category of travelling and tourism constitutes a complex cultural category, which can be conceptualised, as Arnould et al. (2005) names a cultural field. This first part of the analysis, is, therefore, presenting the findings identified regarding the cultural field of tourism and travelling, followed by a presentation of the cultural principles that distinguishes voluntourism from other types of travelling.

5.1.1 The cultural field of travelling and tourism

In the collection and analysis of the data, it became clear that travelling constitutes a part of voluntourism. Thus, if engaging in volunteer trips abroad, voluntourists are simultaneously consuming travelling. In the introduction of the thesis, it is stated that the travelling- and tourism industry constitutes one of the largest industries in the world (Statista, 2018). The fact that the activity has become enormously popular, and, especially, in the richer parts of the world (including Scandinavia), was also evident in our findings. All of the participants travel abroad several times a year (see table 1 & 2 for exact numbers), and it has always been a significant and prominent part of all of their lives. It was also found that travelling is a consumption act that the participants associate with meaningfulness in life. For instance, when the interviewed participant Julie was asked how travelling made her feel, she answered:

Julie: *Like I am living a fulfilling life, I would say. I would like to think about myself as a person who tries to fill up my life with, different things and different experiences.*

The participant Linn said "I get a rush of it, you kind of feel another type of liveness, and...it's... it's exciting". In a similar vein, in the focus group, Karolina highlighted that travelling is exciting because it is an act that you "cannot fully prepare" and "you don't know what you are going to feel or see". Regarding *why* our participants travel abroad (both in the focus group and in the in-depth interviews), our findings underlined that they do it to "get a break from ordinary-life", "get some sun", "have fun", and "bond with people". This emphasises that travelling among these participants is often associated with hedonic meanings (Arnould et al., 2005), and even extraordinary experiences (Arnould & Price, 1993). The participants have strong emotions connected to travelling and are often expecting something out of the ordinary from their travels.

Another theme that became evident in the analysis of the data, is that learning about other cultures and widen their perspectives, are strong motivations for going abroad to a foreign country, and, thus, meanings that they attach to the cultural field. An explanation for why the participants think it is important to get educated about the world and different cultures could be traced back to the history of travelling and how leisure travelling commenced. As discussed in the literature review, travelling for leisure was from the beginning something solely for the privileged in the European society, where the purpose was to at a young age get educated and get to know other cultures by doing the so-called "Grand-tour" (Wearing, 2001). Thus, as we have seen through the data collection, these cultural meanings still

exist within the Scandinavian culture and travelling is strongly associated with learning about other cultures, particularly when you are young.

Travelling has never been as accessible and cheap as in the last years due to the development of the aircraft and so forth (Wearing, 2001). However, even though it has never been as accessible as nowadays, it was highlighted among our participants that travelling still symbolises a privilege and luxury good. Travelling is an activity that is out of the reach for a large percentage of the world's population. The focus group participant Øyvind underlined this:

Øyvind: *I feel, especially when you go to a new culture, meet new people, I feel really grateful. Because we have the opportunity to travel. This is an aspect to think about, as the majority of the world cannot travel as much as we do. This is actually something I have been thinking about when I have been out travelling.*

This cultural meaning was emphasised in the in-depth interviews as well, among other the participant Linn expressed the following:

Linn: *I think travelling is a huge privilege and opportunity and learning experience. This was something that I really learned during the two gap years when I was travelling, and also when I made this volunteer trip, that I was very privileged to do this.*

Throughout the data collection, the term tourist also appeared as a significant theme in regards to the cultural field of travelling and tourism. All the participants agreed that if you are travelling, you are also a tourist in the country you are visiting. However, in the focus group, it was discussed that a tourist was not necessarily the same thing as a traveller. Through their cultural lenses, it is apparent that there is a symbolic difference between a tourist and traveller. A reason for this was found to be that tourists are more associated with a group of people going to the standard "touristy" places, staying at mainstream hotel-chains, while a traveller is seen more as a person that is interested in exploring the culture and the people within the country that he or she is visiting. It is evident that the participants are tourists when they are out travelling, however, it is not a group of people that they want to be associated with. Therefore, tourists constitute their disclaimant membership group (Arnould et al., 2005).

There is an overall agreement among all of the respondents that being a "tourist" is generally associated with negatively loaded cultural meanings. For instance, one of the participants said: "You do not want to be a tourist, kind of". An explanation for why the word "tourist" is perceived as negative was outlined by, among others, Victor:

Victor: (...) *I think the word has been a lot associated with a person with bad taste, that does not care about the culture – you kind of look down to that stereotype typical person. But at the same time everyone that travels is a tourist, but maybe do not want to be associated with that kind of characteristics. Like a person with bad taste.*

A reason why the concept of tourist has become loaded with these negative meanings in this socio-cultural group can be connected to the reasoning regarding privilege and travelling. All of the participants had frequently travelled their whole lives. Therefore, they have already had the opportunity of being tourists and now they are instead longing for a social role that symbolises something more unique and less mainstream.

Furthermore, in relation to that the word "tourist" was loaded with negative cultural meanings, it was found that the industry tourism also was associated with negative connotations. For instance, it was highlighted that many cities, such as Barcelona and Rome, have become overpopulated, destroyed and lost their charm due to tourism. Moreover, it was also stressed that mass tourism has contributed to that many travel destinations are only focusing on accommodating tourists, instead of keeping what is iconic and unique about the place. Nevertheless, positive meanings were also found, particularly in regard to how tourism can contribute to the economy in a country. One of the participants in the focus group underlined this and said the following:

Øyvind: (...) *For me tourism is something positive since my home town is depending on it, my family makes their living from it. It is general, I like it, positive, but there are also small portions of tourism that kind of destroys the bigger picture of tourism. Some bus tours come, people are often very rude, occupy stuff and they really don't care about the culture in the town or anything. But that is not the case for me, it is not the majority, you really need to look away from the impression that you get from the small portion, that kind of destroys the bigger picture.*

Øyvind highlights that there are positive aspects in regards to the tourism- industry since it can make the economy better in the area that you are visiting. Despite, tourism may also contribute to negative effects such as it can destroy the uniqueness about a place and lead to overpopulation.

Interestingly, the focus group and interviews also revealed that the meanings linked to the cultural field of travelling and tourism are about to change, which underlines McCracken's theory that the meaning is in constant transit between the culturally constituted world, consumer goods and the individual (1986). Several of the participants expressed concerns for the environment and that the current way of travelling may not be possible in the future. On a similar note, when the interview participant Julie answered how she felt about the future of voluntourism, she answered:

Julie: (...) *I notice that in my group of friends, that yeah - we will fly much less. That I think is a very new effect. Here, the other day, I actually cancelled a trip, together with a girlfriend, because we wanted to save the aeroplane ticket to use it on another trip. So I don't know. Because I think that people will have higher barriers gradually, in relation to flying.*

In the quote, Julie states that it may not be a responsible behaviour to travel by aeroplane, and highlight the negative effects on the environment. She orients herself in relation to her contactual group (Arnould et al., 2005), as she wants to act aligned with their meanings. Julie and her group of friends have started reflecting on their impact on the environment and, hence, they are to some extent applying the strategy of exit (Hirshman, 1970), as they have started to consume fewer flight trips. In the interview, she developed this further and explained how the Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg (opinion leader) is influencing this cultural meaning regarding what is considered as responsible or not (which in this case is not to fly).

Furthermore, the interview participant Linn stated a similar concern regarding travelling in relation to the effects on the environment:

Linn: (...) *Lately when I look at trips, it's like, where can I go where I don't have to fly, because of the environment, and climate change and then that hinders you from making the trips that I used to do before when the climate change questions weren't as... Raised... or the awareness around flying and all the bad things that it comes with has, of course, always been there, but it has not been as hot debate as this year and the past year. So, I think it is different factors, and what would I call, the best kind of trip, would be where I could combine all these kind of things, I don't have to fly, I can meet up with a friend that I meet during travelling.*

Linn expresses how media, the fashion-system (McCracken, 1986), has strongly highlighted environmental issues in the last years and that it has to some extent become trendy to care about the planet and that her dream-trip would not include flying. On a similar note, the concern about the environment in relation to flying and travelling was also expressed in the focus group. The participant Victor said that travelling today could be looked upon as a "guilty pleasure":

Victor: (...) *But it is also that travelling is, increasingly a guilty pleasure, because it is really nice, but you should not travel, especially not by aeroplane so much. It is just like eating meat, it is really nice, but you should not, and you know more and more that you should not do it, so, I guess, we should travel differently in the future. I know that for myself, we can't keep on travelling as much as we do, not in the same way at least.*

Thus, Victor also stresses that the cultural meaning of travelling will probably change in the future and that it has already started to change. Two of the in-depth interview participants also mentioned that the "virus-thing", more well-known as the covid-19 pandemic, will probably also change the meaning of travelling, as it is unsure how it will impact them that we can travel in the future. To exemplify, the interview participant Sofie expressed:

Sofie: (...) *Like, now you can't travel because they have closed down all the airports. I really hope that I can do it still, even with all these virus things. But I really love travelling, always felt very safe about it and yeah.*

Cultural categories and principles

In the analysis of the data, we identified different types of cultural categories within the cultural field of travel and tourism. However, as highlighted at the beginning of the analysis, some of them appear to overlap with voluntourism. Throughout the data collection, there were, particularly, four cultural categories; backpacking (e.g. going to Asia and staying at hostels or in local homes, such as Airbnb), adventurous tourism (e.g. going skiing or scuba diving), exchange studies (e.g. travelling abroad and studying at partner university) and a "normal holiday" (e.g. a weekend to a capital or a charter-trip), which among our participants shared similar meanings as voluntourism. Therefore, we will in this part of the analysis, present and analyse the cultural principles that appeared to distinguish, rank and interrelated voluntourism from the four other cultural categories.

Voluntourism= an authentic travel experience

One of the cultural principles that distinguished voluntourism from more conventional forms of travelling in the culturally constituted world is authenticity. To exemplify, regarding why one of the interview participants, Linn, wanted to volunteer work in India, she answered:

Linn: (...) *I really wanted to go to India, but I don't want to go there, just to travel. I remember thinking. I knew that I didn't want to do the, in my head, touristy trip to Goa, where I was going to be on the beach and chill, so I was like, this could be the way in for me, into the country and the culture in another way.*

The quote above highlights that going to India and "lying on the beach" is interpreted by the participant as being something touristy that does not equal getting close to the local culture as she states that a volunteer trip could be "a way in for her". Thus, through her cultural lenses going to India and doing volunteer work is seen as a more authentic way of travelling as it enables her to get in touch with the local culture. Further, the participant Sofie also stressed the authentic experience in relation to her volunteer trip:

Sofie: (...) *I had not really gone to Africa before. I had been going to like South Africa and Egypt, like the touristy places. But never really to the "real countries", if you can say that. So I was really scared before I went on the volunteer trip and did not really know what to expect.*

Sofie underlines that her volunteer trip enabled her to experience the "real Africa". The reason behind this cultural meaning can be explained by the fashion-system and advertisement system (McCracken, 1986). Egypt and South-Africa are two countries that are more frequently mentioned in media and in commercials and are trendy destination to travel to. Thus, they are perceived as more touristy and commercialised travel destinations. The commercialised aspect of tourism was elaborated by the in-depth interview participant Linn:

Linn: (...) *I was in the Philippines and it is so beautiful everywhere, and all the islands that are untouched by people, like, so beautiful. But then you see like so many islands that are just like, American companies who bought them, and built their own tourist, huge, tourist resorts and they do this all-inclusive hotels and so that you don't have to leave the islands.... What is then the purpose of going to the Philippines? Like this hotel resort could be anywhere in the world, like, if you decided to go to the Philippines and not get an experience of what the Philippines actually is or stands for, or the history and culture and then whatever, then I think tourism has gone too far sort of.*

The respondent underlines that she believes that more conventional types of tourism may not enable individuals to get an authentic experience and get insights regarding what, in this case, the Philippines truly stands for in terms of history and culture. This can be linked to the history of leisure travelling, as the development of the tourist industry has led to that travelling has become further-away from reality. Consequently, this has created a counter-trend that consumers are seeking more authentic experiences that enable them to experience the local cultures. In a similar vein, the in-depth interview participant Sofie expressed the following regarding her volunteer experience:

Sofie: *I mean when you are volunteering, of course you are going to see the same thing as when you are on vacation. But I think it is like completely different experiences, of course, you are going to see the same thing, but the way you see them is*

going to be different. Because you know so much more when you actually know the culture some more, and you understand why it is like this.

Sofie is expressing why voluntourism is more an authentic way of travelling compared to a conventional holiday, highlighting that voluntourism allows the consumer to get to know the culture in more depth. She stresses by staying in more "local"-condition, you get to know and understand the culture better, and, thus, gets a more authentic feeling of the place.

The cultural principle authenticity appears to distinguish voluntourism from some of the cultural categories in our data collection. However, voluntourism is also interlinked with other types of travelling forms. For instance, an exchange semester can also be associated with an authenticity travel experience as the consumer, in that case, is also often staying with locals for a long period. This underlines that voluntourism overlaps with other cultural categories. Nevertheless, voluntourism appeared to in general be ranked to be more authentic than other types of travelling through the cultural lenses of our participants.

Voluntourism= a good deed

Another cultural principle that distinguishes voluntourism from cultural categories within the cultural field of travelling and tourism is doing a good deed by make a positive contribution to a host community during the vacation. In the analysis of the data, it was found that many of the participants thought that voluntourism contributes to something valuable in comparison to other cultural categories within the cultural field of travelling and tourism. The majority of the respondents perceive the consumption act as a travelling form that is helpful and honourable, as one of the main purposes is to work for free (volunteer work). In the focus group, this was highlighted and the participants said the following about voluntourism:

Anne- Sofie: *Of course, it is a good thing to do, no doubt about that.*

Marta: *I think it is very honourable.*

Øyvind: *I don't think it is necessarily a bad thing though if you are going to go on a holiday, you are going to go anyways, it is better to do this I guess then just go to a holiday. It is better to do something, the work you do is good anyway I guess. But you can't criticize the reasons behind it, but in the end, you did something. Contradicting to not doing anything.*

Victor: *I can agree to a little bit of what you said, of course, it is a lot better to do something, than nothing at all, so if you are going to travel, it is good to do what you can do.*

Øyvind: *I think it is good, at least you do something, you can be really unlucky or naive, go to some kind of organisation that is really not good. But I think the majority of voluntourism is for a good cause.*

Olav: *Yeah, it is better to do that, than doing nothing. Or making it worse.*

Among the participants in the focus group, it was overall stressed that going on a volunteer trip abroad is better than going on a "normal holiday". A volunteer trip leads in most cases to something valuable as the voluntourists are working for a local-organisation during their vacation. Thus, it symbolises a good deed in comparison to going on, for instance, an adventure travel or backpacking trip. As highlighted in the cultural field of tourism and travelling, tourism is overall perceived among this socio-cultural group as something that can harm a destination, since it can lead to overpopulation and that destination loses its uniqueness. Thus, voluntourism is in relation to this regarded as an act where consumers can do something helpful for a host-community during their vacation and diminish the negative aspects of tourism.

Further, doing a good deed can be interpreted as doing a responsible act. As discussed in the theoretical framework, responsibility means "being able to respond to" and "justify one's acts", and it is not limited to responsible actions in terms of making better consumption choices for the environment, instead, it includes all actions that have a "better" impact for the planet (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2007). In the in-depth interviews, this was highlighted. Both of the participants Sofie and Julie have positive meanings attached to the consumption and think it is a good deed and responsible practice. For instance, when asking about the negative aspects of the practice, Sofie said: "I don't know if there are any negative actually. I don't think there is".

However, there were some cultural meanings pointed towards that voluntourism may not be regarded as something that is solely a good deed and responsible act in the social world of our participants. For instance, Linn expressed the following:

Linn: *I think, voluntourism now maybe has become such a huge industry, but who is really benefiting from that industry and who is supposed to benefit from that industry... And if you don't think about that and you don't figure out that question, I don't think.... You can.. Justify it. The negative aspect is that I think it is...Privileged people can benefit from unprivileged people, that you go into the experiences like, "I am gonna save someone", "I can do so much better". You put people into different boxes like, "us and them"... I think it could also lead to exploitation of people and... To start a whole industry around the fact that people are suffering is, I don't, that's the best and.... Also, the negative aspects of... That you can always leave sort of. The part that it is not your reality, and you're not actually living it, and also that most of the voluntourism industry is global north, global south. What would happen if we would turn it around? Would it be more equal then? Like we could probably, or we could for sure learn from other people... That... That could come here and do volunteer work and teach us about how to do things. But that is not how the industry looks like right now.*

Linn highlights that voluntourism may not always represent a good deed and a responsible act as there is a risk that the voluntourists are performing neo-colonialism, implying that they think that their deeds are always needed. She stresses that it is of importance to be aware that voluntourism is not always symbolising a good and responsible act. On a similar note, the focus groups stressed that influencers and media (instruments of meaning transfer) have transferred negative meanings to the voluntourism practice. They highlighted that underlying reasons for why people exercise this consumption is due to selfish reasons and to "pimp their own resume". In relation to this, one of the participants in the focus group said the following:

Marta: *Regarding what I think about influencers who do voluntourism... I think, I see people who do it sometimes very negatively because they go away and do their voluntourism abroad, whatever, helping out with poor and, sick African kids. And then they like, posts two or three Instagram posts while they are down there and say "omg this has changed my life",*

so important. People really need to be aware of"whatever whatever", and then they come home, and say "look at my Louis-bag, omg".

This highlights that influencers (agents of meaning transfer), affects the cultural meanings attached to the good, in accordance with McCracken's theory (1986). It also stresses that many influencers (opinion-leaders) that are not necessarily regarded as responsible persons are going on volunteer trips and that sometimes gives the consumption practice negative connotations. However, in relation to this, it was argued by most of the participants in the focus group and by Sofie and Julie that it does not matter if people only do voluntourism for social media and selfish reasons, as long as the work gets done, it is a good practice. Julie highlights this in the following quote:

Julie: *It can be said that people maybe do it for the wrong reasons. But, it doesn't really matter the reason why you do it, if the work gets done and the money sent. You may not get the genuine bonds like if you had done it solely by heart, but the help still gets there. So, I don't really see any negative sides to voluntourism.*

Voluntourism can overall be distinguished as a form of travelling that enables the voluntourist to perform good deeds and contribute with valuable acts during their holiday. Nevertheless, it should not be neglected that there are also negative connotations in regards to this good deed in the culturally constituted world.

5.2 From Good to Individual

In the following part of the analysis, it is presented how the consumers of volunteer trips are engaging in different consumption rituals and how these symbolic actions affect their self-concepts. Thereby, this part of the analysis will help us to answer our last sub-question.

According to McCracken's model "The Movement of Meaning" (1986), cultural meanings move from consumer goods to individuals through grooming-, divestment-, exchange-, and possession rituals. These rituals comprise various forms of symbolic actions consumers engage in to transfer meaning to themselves from their respective volunteer trips (McCracken, 1986). As outlined in the theoretical foundation, we will, in addition, include the cultural ritual called rites of passage (van Gennep, 1960), as this has been considered relevant to answer our last sub-question.

Following the CCT and the theoretical standpoint of *Consumer Identity Projects*, this part of the analysis presents both how consumers perform consumption rituals, but also a process of identity construction that emerged from the data analysis, which further has been informed by the concepts of the extended self (Belk, 1988), possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Patrick et al., 2002), changeable self-concept (Arnould et al., 2005; Shouten, 1991) and rites of passage (van Gennep, 1960). As argued, the self-concept is a changeable and multifaceted construct that helps consumers define a *sense of self* in relation to other people (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Belk, 1988).

5.2.1 Consumption rituals and the self-concept

As this part of the analysis concerns how consumption becomes meaningful on an individual level, the collected consumption stories from the in-depth interviews will be of focus in this part of the analysis. To give the reader a more clear understanding of the variety of cases, this section will start by briefly presenting the different volunteer trips that the three participants from the in-depth interviews made, followed by explanations of how the consumption of the volunteer trips became meaningful through different consumption rituals and how this affected their self-concepts.

Linn's volunteer experience

In the year 2015, the respondent Linn went to Kolkata in India to help out at a non-profit organisation called New Light. The host-organisation that she had found herself was working with women who are in prostitution or gotten out of prostitution and children that are at risk for prostitution. Linn went to India straight after graduating from high school and was a part of the program for two months. During the trip, Linn stayed in an apartment that she had been recommended by previous volunteers at the host-organisation. As Linn planned the trip herself, the organisation did not offer any tourist-activities, however, during the weekends she had the opportunity to, for instance, visit other cities (see appendix 5 for the transcript of her voluntourism story).

Julie's volunteer experience

Julie went to Kenya in the year 2013 through a volunteer-exchange with her Norwegian high-school, Drammen Videregående Skole. The trip to Kenya was two weeks long, and they stayed at a hotel during the trip. The idea was that she together with several fellow students (that were picked out from the study board) travelled to Kenya to teach the locals living there about, for example, how schools in Norway are functioning, but also give them collected money, toys, clothes etc. The trip also included performing volunteer work at the school in Kenya, in the form of, for example, serving lunch to the students. During the stay, they also got the opportunity to go on safari. Later on, some of the students from Kenya came and visited them to see how life in Norway was. Notably, the students from Kenya did not come to do volunteer work (as the Norwegian students did); instead, they came solely as visitors (see appendix 6 for the transcript of her voluntourism story).

Sofie's volunteer experience

Sofie's volunteer trip was organised by the profit-organisation Actionaid, and her work took place at a kindergarten and nursery in the year 2014. To participate in the program, she had to pay around 40-50 000 DKK to the host-organisation, which included a month of "high-school" in Uganda and two months of accommodation at a host-family in Kenya. At the "high-school" she got an introduction to what voluntourism meant and how to act in Uganda and Kenya. During her stay, she mainly worked but was also able to do tourist-activities at the weekends. The volunteer trip took place during her gap year between high school and university (see appendix 7 for the transcript of her voluntourism story).

Grooming rituals

All of the participants from the in-depth interviews engaged in actions during their different volunteer trips that bare signs of McCracken's (1986) grooming rituals. Grooming rituals are repeated movements to draw perishable meanings from goods and invest them in the individual consumer (ibid.). These rituals are applicable when a continuous meaning transfer is needed to claim the possession of the good (ibid.).

Firstly, as stated in the culturally constituted world, all of the participants in this research, including the respondents in the in-depth interviews, regard travelling as a significant and prominent part of their lives and their multifaceted-identity. It is a consumption that makes their lives meaningful. For instance, Sofie stated: "It is a big part of who I am that I can travel" and Linn expressed the following in regards to how travelling makes her feel:

Linn: *Normally it's been like, you plan it for a bit, and you kind of save money, you take some jobs, that you maybe, don't want to have. But you just see that the goal is to travel, and, that is going to be worth it. So then I have something that I am saving for, and that I am looking forward to, so it is also to have some sort of specific goal in my everyday life. So that I know if I have a trip planned, I would... I would feel more excited about the time before, because I then know, okay, I have a month and then I will be there. Then I think life gets a little bit easier beforehand, as well cause then after, you have been on your trip, you get home and maybe you don't have any money anymore, you know maybe or you have to go back to your normal life it is like... That is a bit hard, then you have a period when you are a bit down maybe, and sometimes it is like you don't have the opportunity to travel if I have school, not any money or the time and then... I feel like that it is a bit sad, I always want to go somewhere.*

Linn expresses how important travelling is for her life and identity, and if she cannot groom this part of her self-concept she feels like she is losing a part of herself. By taking Markus & Nurius (1986) concept of possible selves into consideration, not being able to travel is, therefore, representing all of the participants feared-self. In relation to this, it is apparent that their different volunteer trips enabled all of the three participants to groom and enforce their respective identities of being travellers and avoid a feared-self. Therefore, by going on their volunteer trips, they draw cultural meanings that travel carries in the constituted world to their identity, such as being educated about the world, privileged and adventurous.

Furthermore, in the analysis of the data, it became evident that all of the three participants were not solely seeking to become travellers by going on their different volunteer trips, they were also aiming to become cultural travellers. For instance, Sofie expressed that the main reason for her volunteer trip was, as discussed before, to experience "the real Africa". In addition, the participant Linn said that she did not want to only lay on the beach, she wanted to get to know Indian culture. By taking Markus & Nurius (1986) concept of possible selves into consideration an explanation for why they were motivated to participate in a volunteer trip, was that it could release symbolic meanings by experiencing the authenticity with the place that, therefore, would enable them to approach a desired self of becoming a cultural traveller. Hence, by going on their different volunteer trips they all took direct actions (Patrick et al., 2002) and diminished the gap between their actual self of being a traveller that went with the family to touristy places, to become a cultural traveller.

By performing grooming rituals during their volunteer trips, the voluntourists draw the meaning of feeling like a cultural traveller as they took part in several authentic experiences during their trip. Linn engaged in a continuous process of local acts during her volunteer trip. To exemplify, a normal day for Linn was that she supported the local tea guy, which was important in the neighbourhood where she lived:

Linn: *Hmm. A normal day was that I woke up, and I had a guy outside the window, who would stand outside with tea. He was like the neighbourhood's tea guy, so he would come through the window, and come with a tray of tea and a biscuit. So I would do that in the morning, and then I walked to where the volunteer work took place.*

During Linn's stay she also got an Indian friend that showed her around and taught her about the culture:

Linn: *The culture was... I experienced it very different from my own and, very warm and welcoming but also. That I, I found myself being in a position where, I didn't know, that much of the culture. I had to learn, but the man that I met the first day that showed me around, and that turned out to be my friend afterwards. I was very open with him, like, with all my pressures, like I had a person that I could talk to, and I had the opportunity to ask questions that I was like, too afraid to ask others. Because I didn't want to offend anyway like I wanted to stay respectful. But I remember we talked a lot about*

how to behave as a woman and in, in this area, and also like "do I have to cover myself or". We talked a lot about religion, because he took me to a temple, where they sacrificed goats, and it was very special. I told him like we don't do this at home like it was kind of a shock for me.

Linn's Indian friend gave her a way into Indian culture that she would not have experienced without him. She expresses how her friend on a repeated basis gave her a glimpse into understanding the "web of significance" (Geertz, 1994) within Indian culture. This enabled her to get a better understanding of how to act in accordance with the norms, values and beliefs that make up this web. Thus, she underlines how it is easier to spot cultures that differ from her own, highlighting Geertz (1994) statement about culture.

In a similar vein, Sofie was not an active Christian, however, during her stay in Uganda she went to church every Sunday because it was an essential part of the culture:

Sofie: (...) *The man we lived with was a priest, so he took us to church every Sunday, and then he took us to the local prisons to pray for them after.*

She explains the continuous visits to the prisons in more detail, in the following way:

Sofie: (...) *We were left at the prison, me and the girl I went with, at one point. Because when you arrive to these prisons you have to bring a gift, because they do not have anything; they do not have soap, they do not have enough food. So we always had to bring like, soap, food, books, something. And then we went here, and the Danish girl said to the guard, like, "oh we didn't bring anything". Then the guards just left and said, "We are just going to buy something, then we will be back". Then they left me and her without anyone, except from like all the prisoners sitting in a row, in front of us like murderers, rapist, thieves, anything. And we were like, "hello".*

By repeatedly doing local acts, such as the example above, Sofie experienced what she interpreted through her cultural lenses being the "real" African culture. On a similar note, Julie worked daily at a local school during her trip, which enabled her to get an authentic experience of the place:

Julie: (...) *We served them lunch at school every day. And many of the kids poured the majority of the sup, stew or whatever into a plastic bag, and then they just eat a small portion themselves, because they knew that they needed to bring it back to their parents or siblings, that were too young to go to school. So you saw that they eat a little bit, but then they took it back with them. So I remember that also made an impression on me.*

Through engaging in these symbolic actions it helped the participants approach their desired self of becoming cultural travellers. However, as these cultural meanings are precarious, they are not lasting to them forever (McCracken, 1986). If they stop consuming these types of experiences, the meanings will only become memories to them. Thus, they must continue to consume goods that allow them to get an authentic experience of a place if they want to continue to approach their identities of being cultural travellers.

Divestment rituals

All of the participants also performed divestment rituals in regards to their volunteer trips. Divestment rituals explain the process when consumers relinquish possession of an object (McCracken, 1986). In the culturally constituted world, it was highlighted that being a tourist is associated with negative loaded meanings and a social role that they do not want to be. This also became evident in the analysis of the different volunteer trips where the participants wanted to divest the meaning of being a tourist by continuously engaging in acts that can be categorised as "local".

As addressed by McCracken (1986), individuals engage in divestment rituals to avoid possible confusion between them and the consumer good. It became evident from our data collection that the participants did not want to be associated with the tourist part of the travelling concept voluntourism, which encourages the use of divestment rituals. To exemplify, Julie did not even think about her volunteer trip being classified as voluntourism and she underlined that she would separate the two terms of volunteer working and tourism. This highlights that she is divesting a part of the consumer good, namely the tourist part of it. To exemplify, as interpreted from the data collection, was it easier for Sofie to divest the meaning of being a tourist as she got educated about the culture before going on her volunteer trip:

Sofie: (...) *So the first month was kind of like "high school" where they actually taught us like voluntourism is and how you should act in this community and you can't just take your phone up and record these kids, and like, "act like a tourist". You have to be respectful about that this are their lives. Like teaching us the language and all that.*

This quote underlines that Sofie received a package deal from the organisation that she bought the trip from, which included guidelines on how to behave and act to adapt to the local culture:

Sofie: *I mean they told us a lot about respecting the culture you have to do like this, be a part of where you are, don't be a tourist, be like a citizen. Ah, so we thought a lot about this, of course we did not look like all of them, but we had to like try to fit in. Respect the rules about clothing, about how to act, how to talk, how to like do groceries.*

The quote exemplifies how the organisation helped her to divest the meaning of being a tourist, and how she learned how to act in a more "local way". In relation to this, both Sofie and Linn had to adapt their clothing styles to fit into their respective local cultures and divest the meaning of being a tourist.

The fact that the participants wanted to divest the meaning of being a tourist, can be explained further by the concept of possible selves, which argues that consumers are both motivated to approach desired selves and avoid undesirable ones (Markus & Nurius, 1986). All of the participants were motivated to avoid becoming and be seen as a tourist, as tourists are associated with people with "bad taste" and a group of people that is not respecting the local culture. For these consumers, one of their feared-self can, therefore, represent acting like and being a tourist. However, by engaging in local behaviours they can avoid becoming a tourist, taking direct action (Patrick et al., 2002) and consuming a good that allows them to avoid a feared-self (Markus & Nurius, 1986).

Exchange rituals

An exchange ritual allows the consumer to give away meaningful properties that he or she wants to pass on to a receiver (McCracken, 1986). The fact that all of the participants engaged in volunteer work during their trips, highlights that they were giving a "gift", in the form of their time, money, and effort to a host community that they thought needed help.

In the analysis of the data, it was found that one of the main reasons to go on a volunteer trip, was to work for "free" and doing a good deed during their vacation. All of the three participants wanted to contribute with something valuable by going on their different volunteer trips. Consequently, they were all applying the responsible consumption strategy of loyalty (Hirschman, 1970), as they desired "to give back" because of their privileged situation and minimise the negative effects of travelling by working for a local community during their vacation. On a similar note, the participants were motivated to approach a desired self (Markus & Nurius, 1986), of being a "good traveller", instead of being a tourist. They, therefore, they took direct action and tried to validate this possible self (Patrick et al., 2002).

Julie's volunteer journey started in Norway, as one of their tasks was to collect money, but also toys, clothes and artefacts to bring to Kenya. When arriving at the destination, Julie devoted time, money and energy to give back to the host community in which she visited. Her work was to help out at a local school in the form of teaching, serving lunch and introducing innovative ideas to the school's student council. By doing this volunteer work, it allowed Julie to minimise her internal conflict and feel like she made a better consumption choice by combining her trip abroad with volunteer work. She also approached a desired self of being a good traveller.

The participant Sofie explained in the interview how she every day during her volunteer trip was doing acts that in her eyes were good deeds and responsible behaviour. Her volunteer work was teaching the older children English, and every day she was taking care of babies that needed help. Regarding this, she expressed the following:

Sofie: *A normal day was like, just us waking up, the family provided us with breakfast, then we walked to work, which was just five minutes away, so it was fine. I came to work, took care of the babies, provided them the food, the love, everything.*

By taking care of these children it allowed her to approach a desired self of being a good traveller by "giving back" to the less privileged as she spent her vacation doing volunteer work.

In a similar fashion, the participant Linn took care of both women and children who were in need of help during her volunteer trip. Her job involved several different activities, such as teaching kids, arranging different workshops (such as the World Aids Day) and hanging out with children and women that were at risk of prostitution. By engaging in these activities and giving away her time, she expresses her self-concept and approached one of her desired selves of being a good traveller. Nevertheless, as the self-identity is a multifaceted construct (Arnould & Thompson, 2005), Linn did not only approach her desired self of being a good traveller by doing these deeds, she also approached her hoped for self of working with women's rights in the future. In the interview, Linn explained how she was interested in working with women's rights and that it was one of the reasons for why she chose to work for the organisation New Light as they focused on these questions.

Furthermore, in the interview Linn also highlighted that now when she looks back at the trip she is no longer sure whether the volunteer work truly contributed with value to the host organisation. In relation to this she expressed the following:

Linn: *Yeah, I do feel like it was valuable... For me. But.. Mostly because of personal reasons... I don't know if the experience itself and to do the voluntary work, there, actually was valuable, because what I did mostly was spending time with people, I had some English classes, I went on some field trips, I had some photography classes, like I don't think that type of work like, I didn't learn any new from that. But it was valuable for me as a person, to get that experience, and to also be inspired and motivated to what I wanted to in the future. What I wanted to work with, and change with the world, sort of.*

Linn questions her actions during their trip and underlines that the experience was probably more valuable for herself than for the host-community. A reason for this could be that she is now studying human rights. Her education has given her more knowledge about the subject and she is engaged in a new sphere of influence and consequently has her self-concept changed. Arnould et al., (2005) argue that there are three aspects which can influence a consumer's sense of self, namely, significant others, material objects and ideas. In the case of Linn it is evident that, particularly, her significant other has changed as

she is now a member of a new contactual membership group that is consisting of students that study human rights and have a more nuanced perspective of the phenomenon voluntourism. This highlights how cultural meanings are in constant transit in the social world (McCracken, 1986).

Possession rituals

Possession rituals are the activities consumers engage in to claim the possession as her/his own, for example, discussing, comparing, reflecting, showing off and photographing the good (McCracken, 1986). Further by using these possession rituals, the consumers are moving the cultural meaning the volunteer trip carries out of the good and into their lives (ibid.).

Firstly, Sofie engaged in several possession rituals. For instance, she customised the trip herself with different personal actions, such as she decided to go river-rafting and bungee-jumping in her spare-time without involving the host-organisation. She also showed off, reflected and discussed the trip both on a vacation that she went on afterwards with other volunteers, but also when she was back in Denmark and talked about and shared her experience with potential volunteers. In relation to this she said the following:

Sofie: (...) *I mean, when I did it in Denmark, I wanted to let people get the same experience that I had. Because it was so good. Eh, I think that was the main reason for me, for volunteering in Denmark. I really liked the organisation and wanted to do something good for that one. And of course, when I did something voluntary I felt good about self, in a sense.*

The quote above presents how positive Sofie was regarding the volunteer trip and how she expressed and shared this experience with other people. Overall, it was seen throughout the whole interview that Sofie talked very positively about the experience, despite that she also mentioned that it was challenging and involved unexpected events. For instance, she said that her volunteer trip was one of her best trips and had a strong emotional impact on her. She also highlighted that she would recommend others to volunteer abroad. All of these possession rituals show that Sofie successfully claimed possession over the trip and extracts the meaningful properties that voluntourism deploys.

The trip also became a part of Sofie's extended self. Sofie spent one month at a high-school before going on the actual volunteer trip where she learned how to behave and act in the community. This made the transition to the local culture easier and she could overcome challenges. She stressed that many volunteers left because the experience was so challenging. However, Sofie managed to complete

the two months that she had planned and overcame the challenges. As argued by Belk (1988), possessions can become a part of an individual's extended-self through three distinct ways; control, creation and knowledge. However, it is evident in the case of Sofie, that herself-extension was mainly based on mastering and overcoming the experience. She felt like she climbed a high mountain and in a way took control of the trip and could, therefore, extend herself with the symbolic meanings that the good carries as she believes it matches her self-concept and represents meanings that are important for her identity.

In a similar vein, the respondent Linn took possession of her volunteer trip, as she engaged in several activities that allowed her to make this trip her own. When she reflects on the experience, she refers to it as hers and says statements such as "India is so special to me", and that the trip set a path for her upcoming travels and track in life. Today, Linn is studying human-rights and volunteers regularly in Sweden. She aspires to work with women rights, similar to what she did during her volunteer trip. Consequently, it can be argued that this consumption has contributed to the meaningfulness in Linn's life as she is using the good (the volunteer experience) as a guideline for her choices in life.

In addition, the collected data underlines that Linn performed possession rituals as she also customised the trip. Linn carefully planned the trip by doing extensive research; she saw a documentary and got inspired, then she contacted the organisation herself, found an apartment on her own, booked flight-tickets, personalised the apartment with her things and so on. She was strongly convinced that she did not want to go through an agency, as she thought that those types of organisations did not represent her self-concept:

Linn: (...) *I decided very early on that I didn't want to go through an agency, because all my friends had gone through an agency. I just felt like, uhmm that feels bad, I don't know if I can do that. Also I thought it was a crazy amount of money that I didn't want to spend on going somewhere to do work. I didn't really, in my head, I couldn't, ehbm, puzzle together how is this voluntary work if I am paying someone? And it's me paying someone, it's not even me paying someone to do any work like, and I quickly took a step back from that.*

Linn highlights how important it was for her to create and customise her own trip, thus, it was easier for her to possess the trip and invest it into her life. All of these symbolic actions also lead to that she

extended herself with the meaning of the good as she spent a lot of time and effort creating and spending time with the good. As Belk states, "a second way of having an object and incorporating it into self is by creating it" (1988, p. 150). Therefore, the volunteer experience, and its assigned meaning, became a part of her.

Similarly, Julie successfully deployed possession rituals and managed to extract meaningful properties that have been invested in the experience. Julie was a part of a student project arranged by her high school, and she was, therefore both planning the project and a part of it. She, therefore, invested a lot of time and effort into the project. After the trip, Julie also engaged in volunteer work where she promoted the project and talked about the trip to other students at her school:

Julie: (...) *I remember struggling to convey the trip to my peers. Because we were supposed to have a presentation and promote the project and let them know who they had helped. Like, "this is Angel and she tells you this and that". I told some kind of strong stories. I remember it was not that pleasant because you also realise that they will never understand it until they are there. And you have it not only in front of you on a board but also, literally everywhere. That you can't get out of it, and sometimes you want to get out of stuff like you turn off your TV and turn your head off. Being down there, you had to be there. And I stood there and talked to them but at the same time I realised that there is not that much that I can say. I can never explain it the way it was.*

The quote above paints a picture of Julie as a "teacher" giving her side of the story about the trip to her fellow students that never have experienced anything like it. The way she is talking about the volunteer trip shows her strong emotional connection to the trip and that she felt it was challenging. She is expressing her self-concept and showing the good deed that she has done.

By showing this good to her peers, reflecting on it and showing pictures of the trip and highlights how she successfully possessed the consumer good. She has moved the cultural meanings out from the good and into her life (McCracken, 1988). As stated by Belk, the second way of incorporating the good to the consumers extended self, is by creating the object (1988). By consuming this volunteer trip, she contributes to her sense of self as she has spent a lot of time and effort to create the volunteer trip. Consequently, the possession became a part of her extended self.

Rites of passage

To understand how the participants developed and changed during their trips, we found it relevant to include the rites of passage. It explains how the consumption allowed the participants to separate from one part of themselves (an act of disposition) and incorporate another (van Gennep, 1960) and it includes elements of all of the four consumption rituals presented by McCracken (1986). Through the three stages, 1) separation, 2) transition, 3) incorporation (Van Gennep, 1980), the volunteer trip made the participants transform from being young and immature, to become grown-ups and experienced.

According to Arnould et al (2005), are consumers' self-concepts, particularly, changeable during some specific role transitions in their lives, including between high-school and university. Both of the in-depth interview respondents, Sofie and Linn, went on their volunteer trip during their gap-years and Julie during the last year of high-school. Consequently, all of the participants were in a phase in their lives where their self-concepts were dynamic and open for change as they were about to shift from one social role (high-school student) to another (grown-up).

All of the participants expressed that their trips were challenging and required an adaptation to the local culture in the country they visited. As discussed concerning the divestment rituals, all of the participants did in a way perform rituals where they separated themselves from their previous roles in their own cultures. They adapted to the local culture and felt like they almost became citizens of the countries they were visiting. Thus, they had a period of transition during the trip. These periods of separation and transition was just like in the case of the extraordinary experience of river-rafting (Arnould & Price, 1993), coloured by rituals that symbolise being something extraordinary. For instance, the respondent Linn stated:

Linn: (...) *It was super hard the first three weeks, I cried, like, everyday. And the first week I did not eat any type of food, because I was so scared of everything. You have the cultural clash, you have the language barriers, I was alone, I was female, I was young. You know you have all of, these stereotypes, in your head, and all of the people that had warned me to go- like "what are you going to do in India", "are you crazy", "you are going to get murdered", "you are going to get kidnapped", "you know they will sell you on the streets". They had all of these stereotypes, and I wanted to prove them wrong so badly. I think I tried to do that with so many trips, I think many are just listening to what the media says, or that, you have heard one bad story, and then you have made up your mind.*

Linn highlights that the volunteer trip truly was a challenge and that "she wanted to prove them wrong so badly", implying that overcoming the danger and challenges were big motivations for her to go on the trip. The fact that it was a challenge was mentioned several times. In relation to this, Linn explained that one of her fellow volunteers even decided to leave the organisation:

Linn: (...) *One of the other volunteers went home after two weeks and she didn't really give a proper explanation. Just more than that she couldn't take it. I remember thinking that I understood her a lot because it was such a different reality from home. I have never seen poverty in that way, I have never seen people living in that way before. Like, you can read about it, and see news and in movies and documentaries. But once you are really there, once you experience the whole thing, I don't think you realise it, and for her as she gave as an explanation, it was just too much. So she flew back to the US.*

Similar concerns that the trip was challenging, where they had to overcome danger, change their mindset and acquire new skills (Arnould & Price, 1993), was also expressed by Linn and Sofie. Sofie underlined that living in a host family and adapting to the strong Christian-circumstances was hard:

Sofie: (...) *The worst thing I think about with this work was that we had to, they are very Christian, so we had to get them circumcised. And they don't really, do like drugs their to like numb the pain, so they asked us, we went to hospitals, of course, if we could hold down the babies. So we had to hold them down when they got circumcised. That was just...*

Julie expressed that being in the slum and see how bad people had it, had a strong impact on her:

Julie: (...) *Also when you are exposed to the slum like we were, its eh, it's kind of these images that you don't get rid of.*

However, as their trips continued, they continuously engaged in local activities (grooming rituals) and were slowly overcoming dangers, starting to change their mindsets and learning more how to behave and fit into the local culture. For instance, their jobs allowed them to learn new things and develop new capabilities. As mentioned earlier regarding exchange rituals, all of the participants were teaching which required that they developed new capabilities. They also had to take care of others, which they barely had an experience of doing from home.

Furthermore, in regards to transiting to the local culture, and, thus, changing their mindsets, Linn met an Indian friend who taught her about Indian culture.:

Linn: (...) *I think there was a lot of things, that were just, it felt like such a contrast from back home, and everything felt different. Even in the beginning it felt like India and Sweden didn't have anything in common. But it was really nice to have someone that I could have these discussions with, and I could also open-up with. Like what kind of culture I came from back at home, and how I saw things, and he could tell me, like some back story and why things were as they were. And give me a chance to understand the culture a bit better.*

It can be argued that the adaptation and effort invested in overcoming dangers were, particularly evident in the case of Sofie and Linn, as their trips were longer and they stayed in a host family respectively an apartment. Importantly, the transit between being young and immature to become more mature and experienced did not stop there. In the period of coming back to Sweden, Linn explained how hard it was coming back:

Linn: (...) *It was a really hard time, like transiting, like coming back home. I also came back on Christmas, which was like. In my head, I thought that was supposed to be nice because everyone was going to be at home and I could be with my family. But, I just felt so much like anger and frustration against this society that we were living in, in Sweden. Also when you come home on Christmas, everything is just like so extra, and such overflow and the like gifts and, food and... The things you buy and the money you put in to celebrate Christmas. I had just, I just really felt clearly that I, I left people behind. And I had the opportunity to leave, like, this was just like a break for me. Like I could go on this trip and just learn so much and be a part of this experience.*

Both Julie and Sofie expressed similar thoughts when they came back from their trips. In fact, all of the participants expressed that they thought it was difficult to talk with their peers and share their extraordinary and dramatic experiences. For instance, Julie said "I can never explain the way it was" and Sofie that no one except for the girl that she travelled could understand her. Linn stated similar thoughts and said that when she came back home, she had difficulties fully answering how the trip was. This

implied that they had changed as persons, and it took time to get used to their new social role of becoming more grown-up and experienced.

These trips made all of the participants transit from their previous role and integrate and become more grown-up. All of the participants expressed that this trip made them develop, self-grow and even self-renew. More specifically, Linn stated that her volunteer trip is still one of her best trips:

Linn: (...) *I was there it would also gave me a lot of inspiration to what I wanted to do in the future and it sort of lead to that I figured out what I wanted to do and why I wanted to study human rights here so I think that it is why it is one of my favourite trips. And I also developed so much as a person I was only 18 also so it was like not that hard to develop as a person but when you push yourself out of your comfort zone that much. I think you are kind sort of forced to learn a lot about yourself and the environment and who to trust and not so it was very - I learned a lot and I think that is why I still have it as one of my favourite trips.*

In the quote, she emphasises that she was young, so it was not hard to develop as a person, but also that it was a challenge that gave her more answers to what she wanted to do in her new role in life as a grown-up. She also highlighted that this trip set the example of her upcoming trips, which also was discussed in relation to her possession rituals. Julie also emphasised that she went on the volunteer trip in an age when she was particularly changeable:

Julie: (...) *I think that it would be easier for me to do it today, than when I was younger. Because then you had lived more isolated, and stayed home with mom and dad. When you move out, even just to Copenhagen, that is not that far from Norway, you meet other people, from different places. You also learn about yourself in a whole other way. That I know so much more about myself now, and had travelled down there now, I don't think I would be that traumatised as I was back then from the experience.*

Julie highlights how she barely had any experience of travelling abroad without her parents before going on the trip. Therefore, the trip affected her self-concept strongly and made her become more experienced and self-aware. The interview participant Sofie also emphasised her young age and changeability and said:

Sofie: (...) *Like for me, I was 18 so and I just finished gymnasium, so it was a lot. But I grew so much when I did the volunteer trip. But I think that it was also because of my age. Of course it is going to be, if I do it again, I am going to grow some more. Like standing on your own two feet, actually have to be the adult. I think that is a lot, because you have to just take responsibility for someone else's life.*

By considering the above volunteer stories, it highlights similar to Arnould & Price's (1993) research, that extraordinary, challenging, exciting and adventurous experiences can help consumers to self-grow and in a way transform into new persons, as the experience allows them to develop new capabilities, learn about a new culture and overcome challenges. Additionally, it implies that volunteering abroad can be seen as a symbolic and experiential consumption that can help the consumer to successfully move from one role to another in life, confirming Schouten (1991) research that it can aid the consumer to explore this new self-identity and also support it to proceed. Thus, in this case, this highly emotional consumption experience helped the participants to transform into a new role in life of becoming more mature and grown-up.

6. DISCUSSION

In this section, we will discuss the contribution of our research. The discussion will be divided into three parts. In the first part, we will highlight the findings of our research by presenting how we answered our research question and sub-questions. The second part will discuss our findings in relation to previous research regarding voluntourism. Lastly, we will discuss the theoretical implications of the research.

6.1 Highlights of Findings

This present research has been guided by a curiosity of exploring the rationales behind consuming a volunteer trip abroad by applying McCracken's (1986) "Movement of Meaning". The research has taken its theoretical standpoint within Consumer Culture Theory, and more specifically the thematisation of *Consumer Identity Projects*. To answer the problem statement of this thesis, the research was guided by three sub-questions which followed the structure of McCracken's model.

The first sub-question concerned the meanings that individuals attach to the consumption of voluntourism. In the analysis of the collected data, it was found that the cultural category voluntourism overlapped with four other travel categories and that these categories constituted a cultural field. It was found that travelling constitutes a significant and prominent part of this socio-cultural group's lives and that the consumption symbolises something exciting, privileged, educational, adventurous, extraordinary, fun and luxury. In relation to the cultural field, it also became evident that the social-role "tourist" was associated with negative loaded meanings, as it symbolises something "mainstream" and "tasteless". The findings also emphasise that travelling has become a complex phenomenon as the consumption of flight-tickets contributes to carbon dioxide emission, which affects the environment negatively. In relation to this, travelling symbolises a "guilty pleasure", as it is associated with both environmental issues and the negative aspects of the tourism industry, such as overpopulation.

Furthermore, it became clear that what distinguishes, ranked and interlink voluntourism from other types of cultural categories is an authentic experience and doing a good deed. One of the main purposes to go on a volunteer trip is to get an authentic experience and a chance to get a way into the local culture. It was found that voluntourism represents a "real" travel experience. As brought up in the analysis, the authentic experience ranks voluntourism in relation to other types of travelling, nevertheless, it can be

argued that there are other types of travelling that also includes elements of authenticity but not to the same degree.

Another identified cultural principles distinguishing voluntourism from other cultural categories was the ambition of giving something back by doing something good for a host-community. At an even deeper level, many of the meanings connected to travel are related to that young Scandinavians feel privileged and travelling is a luxury good that not everyone on the planet has the ability to consume. Thus, consumers want to "justify" for their actions by not just "take" but also give something to the place they visit.

Overall our findings highlighted that voluntourism symbolises a more authentic way of travelling and a consumption act that is honourable, responsible and contributing to something valuable. Nevertheless, voluntourism also has negative connotations. It is a complex travelling phenomenon, as it is unsure whether it contributes to something positive for the host-community or if it is solely an industry that exploits less privileged people. However, it can be argued that the tourism industry, in general, has many drawbacks and negative connotations. Thus, voluntourism does not necessarily have to represent a travelling form that is "worse" than other types of travelling.

Regarding **the second sub-question**, this question was analysed in relation to the meanings that the individuals assign to voluntourism. In the analysis of the data, it became evident that reference groups played a significant role in the formation of the symbolic meanings assigned to voluntourism, but also the whole cultural field of travelling. More specifically, avoidance-, disclaimant-, and contactual reference groups occurred to influence the meanings that the consumers assign to both voluntourism and travelling in general.

Further, it was highlighted that the fashion-system played an important role in the formation of meaning, and, particularly, opinion-leaders and media. Regarding opinion leaders, influencers were stressed as important agents of meaning transfer, as many influencers did not seem to be a "great fit" with the image of the voluntourism consumption. Thus, it became evident, that these group of influencers belongs to the consumer's avoidance nonmembership group. Additionally, Greta Thunberg was highlighted as an important source of meaning transfer, and, particular, regarding how consumers regard travelling, including voluntourism, as a non-responsible behaviour.

Another important finding concerning the meanings that individuals assign to voluntourism can be traced to the historical context, thus, the fashion-system. For instance, it was found that a long-lasting trend is that young and rich consumers go out and travel in the world to get educated and, therefore, travelling is assigned these meanings.

The third sub-question concerned how consumers' self-concepts are affected by the consumption of voluntourism. It was found that the consumer's self-concept got affected in several ways by engaging in the consumption of voluntourism. One of the main findings was related to the aspect of travelling in general. Travelling constitutes a big part of all of the consumer's multifaceted identities and, therefore, a feared-self of the consumers is to become a person that is not able to travel.

Another important finding in regards to the self-concept was that the consumers within this socio-cultural group rather wanted to be travellers than tourists, as tourists represent a feared-self. Therefore, by engaging in voluntourism the consumers could avoid a feared-selves, as this consumption act allows them to be a part of an authentic experience and thus, really connect with the local culture. In relation to this, another key finding was that the consumption of voluntourism allowed the consumers to groom the meaning (and strengthen their-identity) of being travellers and approach a desired-self of becoming "cultural travellers".

Importantly, it was further found that if they want to continue to approach and be these cultural travellers, they have to continue to consume trips that give them an authentic experience. However, this may be difficult in the future as the research indicated that the travelling industry is both facing the covid-19 pandemic and environmental issues. Therefore, this can affect how consumers will be able to travel and groom these identities in the future.

Another important finding is that volunteering abroad can diminish the internal conflict of the consumer as voluntourism allows him or her to engage in a more responsible way of travelling, where he or she has the opportunity to do a good deed during the vacation. Thus, the consumption of voluntourism allows the consumers to "give back" to the host-community, and diminish the negative aspects of tourism and approach a desired- self of being "good travellers".

It also became evident that the consumption had a transformational effect on the consumers and helped them to transit from being young and immature to grown-ups and more experienced and cultivated

travellers. All of the participants developed as persons by engaging in voluntourism and taking a part of an emotionally challenging travel experience that required that they adapted to the local circumstances, acquired new skills and developed new capabilities. Therefore, by overcoming and mastering the trip, it also became a part of one of the consumer extended-self. The research also highlighted that creating a volunteer trip is another way to self-extension.

Another important finding connected to the self-concept is that one of the participants in our study has years after the volunteer trip become aware of the negative meanings attached to the consumption. She has become wiser and is more aware of the negative connotations linked to the consumption. Therefore, she no longer wants to drag these meanings to her identity and has changed her consumption pattern. She will not consume a volunteer-trip again and is now a producer of negative meanings linked to the consumption of voluntourism in the consumer culture. This highlights how consumers are producers of culture and how meaning is in constant transit between the culturally constituted world, the consumer good, and the individual.

6.2 Findings Related to Existing Literature

The previous section highlighted some interesting findings regarding the rationales to participate in a volunteer program abroad. In this section, we will discuss our findings in relation to previous literature and what they have suggested being the motivations and logical reasons to participate in a volunteer program.

Earlier literature suggested several motivations to participate in a volunteer program that were similar to the rationales identified in our research. For instance, previous research has emphasised that consumers participate in volunteer programs because they have a desire to give back to the less privileged and make a positive contribution to a host community (Bailey & Russell, 2009; Brown, 2005; Wearing 2001). This was also confirmed in our findings, as one of the rationales for participating in a volunteer program was that the participants decided to go on a volunteer trip because they wanted to contribute with something valuable during their vacation. Nevertheless, our research has developed the discussion about whether voluntourism leads to a positive contribution in the host community, or if it is solely something that the participants believe. Our research has highlighted the complexity with voluntourism and stressed that this must be further questioned and researched.

Furthermore, earlier research has also highlighted that the consumers want to take part in a volunteer trip because of self-motives such as personal growth and self-esteem (e.g. Lo & Lee, 2011; Stebbins & Graham, 2004; Wearing, 2001). This was partially confirmed in this research. Our research highlighted that participating in volunteer trips leads to that consumers develop as persons, however, it was not a significant rationale to participate in a trip.

Another recurring theme regarding motivation to participate in a volunteer trip in previous research was cultural immersion (Bailey & Russell, 2009; Brown, 2005; Wearing, 2001). This was strongly highlighted in our research. The main rationale for our participants to go on a volunteer trip was to get an authentic experience and, thus, get to know the local culture. In relation to this, our study also revealed an important aspect and rationale to participate in a volunteer trip that has not been emphasised in previous research. This research found that an important rationale to participate in a volunteer program is to avoid being and becoming a tourist.

By comparing our findings to existing literature, it has been identified that it both supports previous findings and challenges some of them. This present thesis has developed the discussion regarding voluntourism and shed light on it in a Scandinavian context.

6.3 Theoretical Implications

This section discusses some of the theoretical implications that were identified in the research process. In general, we found the McCracken (1986) model "Movement of Meaning" to sometimes be insufficient and lacking some explanation factors. Therefore, these factors will be discussed in the following section.

Cultural meaning is, according to McCracken (1986), transferred through the fashion system and the advertising system to the goods from the culturally constituted world. However, it can be argued that another essential mode of meaning transfer should be added to the model, namely, reference groups. As suggested by Copenhagen Business School professor Thyra Uth Thomsen (2018), reference groups are an additional important source of meaning transfer. This has also been highlighted by Arnould et al. (2005) who argue that peers have a strong impact on the values and beliefs of the consumers. For the majority of our research participants, it was found that their meanings were highly influenced by reference groups, both their member and non-membership groups. Throughout our data collection and analysis, it became evident that reference groups constituted some of the most influential modes of meaning transfer

in combination with the fashion system provided by McCracken (1986). Hence, adding reference groups to the original model gave a better understanding of the meanings connected to voluntourism.

Further, we found all of the four consumption rituals in McCracken's model (1986) applicable. Nevertheless, the theory "Movement of Meaning" was developed more than 30 years ago and focuses in particular on the meaning transfer between the marketplace, tangible goods and the individual. Therefore, it was sometimes challenging to adapt the model to an experience, which is an intangible good.

Lastly, another identified insufficiency with the "The Movement of Meaning" (1986), is that only four consumption rituals are described as instruments of meaning transfer between the consumer good and the individual. As described above, we found all of the consumption rituals in the original model applicable, however, the model lacked an explanation for describing the role transition that our participants went through. Therefore, we found it necessary to add van Gennep (1960) rites of passage as an additional consumption ritual. The theory helped us to understand how all of the four consumption rituals could help the participants to transit from one social role to another by partaking in volunteer trips.

7. CONCLUSION

Voluntourism is a growing alternative way of travelling and interesting phenomena to study as consumers are devoting time and effort to help out an organisation without getting paid. The aim of this thesis has, therefore, been to better understand and explore the rationales behind this consumption, particularly, through the symbolic meanings individuals attach to the good. Our thesis has also emphasised the link between meaning and identity construction for consumers engaging in voluntourism. Through a deductive approach, using qualitative research methods consisting of one focus group and three in-depth interviews, we collected data to analyse the consumer's feelings, thought and behaviours regarding voluntourism.

Firstly, this research has found that the main rationales to consume a volunteer trip is to do a good deed by contributing to something positive to the host community in the country of visit. Many consumers are facing an internal conflict and want to make more responsible choices when they travel. Therefore, the consumption of voluntourism allows the consumer to approach a desired self of being a "good traveller" that is giving back to the community that he or she is visiting.

Secondly, our research has highlighted that taking part of an authentic experience is another outstanding rationale to go on a volunteer trip abroad. In relation to this, it was also found that consumers are motivated to construct their identity of being a "cultural traveller" who desires to become a part of the local culture that he or she is visiting.

Thirdly, our research has identified that there are similar rationales behind going on a volunteer trip as consuming other travelling forms. We found that consumers are driven to participate in a volunteer program abroad to enforce their identity of being "travellers", experience something out of the ordinary, learn about the world and feel meaningfulness in life.

Lastly, this research has shed light on that voluntourism is a complex travelling phenomenon that needs further research. Voluntourism can be an optimal travel option for consumers that want to contribute to something valuable during their vacation and minimise the negative effects of tourism. However, in this research, it has become clear that there are several negative connotations linked to the consumption. The marketplace is constituted of ever-changing meaning, which the consumers can use to forge their identity.

Travelling is today a significant part of many consumers lives, therefore, it is of importance to be aware of these changing cultural and symbolic meanings, as this affects the rationales behind their consumption choices.

7.1 Managerial Implications

This research has several implications for organisations and marketers. Our research has highlighted that voluntourism has both positive and negative aspects. By engaging in a volunteer trip the participant can feel like he or she is "giving back" and doing something good during his or her vacation which creates several positive effects, both for the consumer and the host-organisation. As the world is facing big challenges, such as the climate, refugee and economic crisis, it can be argued that the need to help people that want to dedicate their time and effort to work for free will only increase. Nevertheless, the voluntourism industry can and should be improved to meet this growing demand and not lose its customers. Our research has shown that many consumers are negative towards the consumption as it is unsure whether it is actually contributing to something valuable for the host organisation and community. Consequently, organisations working in the voluntourism industry must adapt to these challenges and create jobs that are creating value for both parties. If not, the industry may continue to increase its negative reputation that is constantly created by the marketplace, modes of meaning transfers and the consumers.

Interestingly, as the criticism of voluntourism grows, it may not be an appropriate means for people to "pimp their resumes". In fact, some employers may be hesitant to employ people with voluntourism experience as it could indicate a lack of cultural sensitivity (and poor judgement). This could potentially be a downfall for voluntourism, when the world globalises even more or if developing countries rise out of poverty. Nevertheless, if voluntourism can work as a gateway to involve people in development, that may be a benefit for developing countries. Therefore, it suggested that both agencies and host-organisations must work on diminishing these critics towards the consumption and emphasise the positive effects with it.

Further, to make it easier for the consumer to make good and responsible consumption choices and minimise the potential dissatisfaction, it is suggested that the voluntourism industry should give organisations in the industry different quality stamps, similar to the fairtrade mark on products. This to show the consumer if the organisation is a "responsible" organisation.

Moreover, as found in our research, the travel industry is overall facing a great challenge. In the culturally constituted world it was emphasised that travelling has started to become a "guilty pleasure", and a consumption activity that is strongly connected with harming the environment. In addition, this spring it has also been highlighted how vulnerable the industry is and how easy a cultural meaning can change. This implies that the travel and tourism industry must improve its ways of coming up with more sustainable ways of travelling and, probably, encourage consumers to travel to destinations closer to their home countries.

Lastly, as found in our research, influencers (opinion-leaders) are playing an important role in the transfer of meaning between the culturally constituted world and the consumer good. However, these influencers were according to our findings not trustworthy as their brand did not match the volunteer work. Therefore, this implies that it is of significance as an organisation to collaborate with influencers that are aligned with the organisation's image and brand to not lose its trustworthiness.

7.2 Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. These limitations are worth mentioning as there are always choices that need to be made, that consequently affects the research.

Firstly, voluntourism is a phenomenon that is in constant development and consequently leads to a lack of a widely accepted definition. Aligned with this constant change are consumers behaviours changing in relation to the environment and elements surrounding them. Thus, this data collection can mainly be considered relevant around the time of the research.

Limitations are also present in the methodology-part of the thesis. None of us had any prior experience as moderators or interviewers, consequently, this can have led to occasional priming during the interviews and affect the quality of the data. The participants in all interview sessions were found through our social networks, thereby, could pose a risk that some things are not explicitly said, as these respondents may feel that their information is something that the familiar researchers already are aware of. Simultaneously, it was difficult to capture their emotional responses as the data collected were transcribed from an audio record. Thus, videotaped recordings of the interview sessions would most likely be more beneficial in relation to capture the emotions and facial expressions of the participants. Consequently, this may have

influenced the interpretation of the findings. In addition, all of the interviews (both the focus group and the in-depth interviews) were conducted in English, and hence, not in the participant's native language.

Regarding the method, adding more participants to our data set may have provided richer data and supported the quality of the study. Additionally, all of the three participants had been engaged in relatively similar types of trips in relation to their volunteer work. It can be argued that the findings would be hard to generalise for the phenomena as a whole, and thus, affected the quality of the study. Further, all of the in-depth interview subjects were all women which may have limited the quality of the study.

We also chose participants that shared somewhat similar demographics; all of them were highly educated, most of them studying at CBS and all except for Linn are living in Copenhagen. An optimal selection could more likely include participants outside Copenhagen as other reference groups may affect their answers as the environment in which the individuals engaged in affect their meanings.

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9. APPENDICES

9.1 Appendix 1- Interview Guide for In-Depth Interviews

Biographical Questions

- Name
- Age
- Gender
- Country of origin
- Education
- Work
- How many times have you volunteered?
- When did you volunteer?
- Where did your volunteer program take place, and what did you work with?
- What did the volunteer trip(s) approximately cost?
- What organisation arranged the trip(s)?

Introduction questions regarding travelling

- What makes travelling interesting for you?
- How often do you travel?
- What has been your best travelling experience?
- What is your dream trip?

Theme 1: Travelling and Tourism

- How do you feel about travelling?
- How did you get interested in travelling?
 - Can you tell me about your first travel experience(s)...
- How does travelling make you feel?
- How do you usually decide where to go when you want to travel?
- How do you feel about tourism?
 - How do you feel about the growth of the industry?

Theme 2: Volunteer Work

- How was your relation to volunteer work before going on a volunteer trip abroad?
 - What type of voluntary work have you done (if applicable)?
 - How often do you/have you done it?
- Why do you work voluntarily? (if applicable)
 - How do you feel after you have been voluntary working?
 - How do you make sense out of volunteering?

Theme 3: The Voluntourism Experience

Pre-trip

- How did you first hear about voluntourism?
- Why did you decide to go on a volunteer trip?
 - What influenced your decision?
- Can you tell me about your preparations for the trip?
 - How much information did you receive before the trip?
- Can you tell me about the expectations that you had?
 - How did you feel about going?

The Trip

- Tell us about the trip. Try to describe it as detailed as you can from the beginning to the end
 - Would you like to share/show us any of your posts and/or pictures from the trip?
 - Tell us about what we see on the pictures/videos/blog posts
 - How did you feel during the trip?
 - How did you experience the culture?
 - What was a "normal" day like?
 - Were there "normal" days?
 - Were there any unusual days or events?
 - How did you feel during those events/days?
 - How was the atmosphere at the host organisation?
 - How was it to work with the staff there?
 - How did you feel about the other volunteers that were a part of the program?

- What was the best with the trip?
- How did you use social media during the trip?
 - Would you like to share/show us any of your posts and/ or pictures from the trip that you posted?
 - Tell us about what we see on the pictures/videos/blog posts

Post Trip

- Tell us about how you felt when you came back home
 - How did you feel the first days when you came back?
 - What were your positive feelings?
 - Any negative feelings?
- How do you think about the experience (today)?
 - What are your positive thoughts?
 - Any negative?
- Do you feel that this experience was valuable?
 - ...how?
 - Would you do it again?

Theme 4: Further Reflections

- What are the differences and similarities between volunteering abroad and doing volunteer work in your home country (if applicable)?
 - In terms of feelings?
 - In terms of personal development and self-growth?
- What are the differences and similarities between a volunteer trip and a regular holiday?
 - In terms of feelings?
 - In terms of personal development and self-growth?
 - In terms of the impact on the local environment?
- Would you recommend other people to volunteer abroad? ... why?
 - How do you think that people will volunteer work abroad in the future?
- If you would do it again, what would be the ideal volunteer trip?
 - What would influence you to do it again?
- What do you think about voluntourism today?
 - What do you think are positive aspects regarding voluntourism?
 - Do you think that there are any negative aspects of voluntourism?

- How would you like to travel in the future?

"Wrap-up question(s) "

- Why do you travel?
 - What do you think about travelling?
 - What would you say is your primary purpose of your travels?
- *Would you like to add something or do you have any questions for us?*

9.2 Appendix 2- Interview Guide for the Focus Group Discussion

Biographical Questions

- Name
- Age
- Gender
- Country of origin
- Education
- Work
- How often do you travel?

Questions to Discuss

Theme 1: Travelling & Tourism

- What makes travelling interesting for you?
- How do you feel about travelling?
- How do you feel about tourism?

Theme 2: Voluntourism

- How would you describe voluntourism/the idea of volunteering abroad?
- What do you think about voluntourism? Please elaborate
- Have a lot of your friends/family members been going away on volunteer trips?

Theme 3: Advertisement and Voluntourism

*In this part of the interview, we will start by showing one **video** ad and ask the following questions;*

- How do you feel after seeing this video?
- What do you think about voluntourism after seeing this video?

*In this part of the interview we will show several **pictures** of ads (taken from both profit and non-profit volunteer organisations) of volunteer programs and ask the following questions;*

- How do you feel when you see these pictures/ads?
- What do you think about voluntourism when you see these ads?

Theme 4: The Future of Voluntourism

- What would influence you to go on a volunteer trip abroad?
- What do you think is the future of voluntourism?

"Wrap-up questions"

- Why do you travel?
- *Would you like to add something or do you have any questions for us?*

9.3 Appendix 3- Focus Group Advertisements

Advertisements in relation to the focus group

9.3.1 Pictures of ads



1. Volunteering at an orphanage in Africa



2. Volunteering at a school in India



3. Volunteering and picking plastic in Bali



4. Volunteering in rainforests in South America



5. Volunteering in a kindergarten

Volunteer work has become big business. Hundreds of gap year companies are there to guide gappers into a voluntary project, but if you are willing to be brave and do it all yourself it can be much, much cheaper.

www.freevolunteerworkabroad.co.uk



6. Voluntourism Commercial



7. Voluntourism Commercial



8. Voluntourism commercial



9. Voluntourism at an animal rescue- highlighting a Norwegian influencer, Andrea Badendyck



10. Two Norwegian influencers, Sophie Elise Isachsen and Andrea Badendyck, volunteering at a school



11. Angelina Jolie volunteering at a kindergarten

9.3.2 Videos of voluntourism

Voluntourism in Costa Rica through the profit-organisation GoXplore Sverige.

Link to video advertising:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ff-c6lUTkD0&feature=youtu.be>

Voluntourism in South Africa through the profit-organisation Kilroy.

Link to video advertising:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5AaujPsGfs&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR0TMUcThqXd9SvLiSoClukkDS3203BaMdFgbf9o1ny-b9THhy4heewa0JY>

9.4 Appendix 4- Coding process

Excerpt of colour-coded interviews (first-round)

The symbolic meaning of voluntourism:

The symbolic meaning of travelling and tourism:

The symbolic meaning of volunteer work:

How the consumers practise voluntourism:

Influencers of symbolic meanings:

The self-concept:

Responsible consumption:

Experimental consumption/extraordinary experience:

Interview with Julie 9/3-2020 (example):

M: Would you do it again?

J: Yes I would. I think that it would be easier for me to do it today, than when I was younger. Because then you had lived more isolated, and stayed home with mom and dad. When you move out, even just to Copenhagen, that is not that far from Norway, you meet other people, from different places. You also learn about yourself in a whole other way. That I know so much more about myself now, and had travelled down there now, I don't think I would be that traumatised as I was back then from the experience. But if I should do it again, I would not go alone, I think I would bring my boyfriend or friend or something, but I could go for couple of weeks to do that. But I would separate. I would do that and do the work, and separate that if we would do something else. Like, go there, do the work, and enjoy be with the people there, and the continue the vacation or whatever you call it, or just go home again. I would go do volunteer work. Yeah.

M: So let's head on to our last theme which is called further reflections.

M: What do you think are the differences and similarities between volunteering abroad and doing volunteer work in your home country?

J: Hmm.

- *Waiting a while before answering*

J: I think, at that time I worked that one time where I did something to gather money in Norway. I think actually I had a part-time job, where I just took the 250 kroner from my salary there to give. Ehm. But comparing it to the experience abroad, where we served them lunch for example, or just sitting down and talk to them. To join the council, so much more of a real feeling. It is not that comparable, because one thing is just to put money in an envelope and deliver it somewhere. While something else is when you travel down to see the people that you actually have helped. Ehm. And also make a bond with them. That is very, what should we call it, priceless.

M: In terms of feelings?

J: Hm. I would think it is a lot of the same. If you did volunteer work here in Denmark, maybe help people who are addicted to drugs. Maybe that also will give a good feeling, it is a good feeling anyway to help others. And if you help people in another country, then you are helping someone in another culture, maybe with another religion. This mean that you need to take this into consideration when helping. But I would say, in thoughts of feelings, the good feelings you get with helping out others, would be the similarity. But also bad feeling that I don't do more.

Interview with Sofie 10/3-2020 (example):

M: ... and how does travelling make you feel?

- *Laughing and smiling*

S: It makes me feel very happy. (*laughing again*). Yeah, I mean, I hate when I am not able to travel.

Either if it is because of money, or time. And now when you have a job, and can only take 5 weeks off a year. It is a big part of who I am, that I can travel.

M: ... how do you usually decide where to go when you want to travel?

S: Hm, depending on how long I have, because I have some stuff on the bucketlist that I want to go too. Yeah so there are these things, but yeah, there is also the time, so if I only have one week, I would probably stay in Europe. So it is mostly that, not - of course money also, but mostly the time aspect. Yeah.

M: How do you feel about tourism?

S: Eheh. I am not really a fan of places with a lot of people. If course, if you are going to a capital it is going to be a lot, and it is a part of the experience. But I prefer smaller places. Because I feel like you get to keep the real experience. Where there is a lot of tourism, they often change the place, by building a lot of hotels and people earn their way through tourism, and not how it normally is. If that makes sense?

M: So how do you feel about the growth of the industry?

S: Ehm... Like both good and bad, because then you see these countries that do not have so much, they could actually earn some money through this and have a better economy. But then again, it changes all the things that are iconic about of these places. So they change from being how they used to be to just accommodate the tourists. And I think that is too bad.

Interview with Linn 4/3-2020 (example):

S: Why did you decide to go on a volunteer trip?

L :I decided to go a volunteer-trip, I don't think it was the original plan at all, I was just very focused that I wanted to go to India, that was like my main path and I knew that I wanted to go out travelling. So during high school I worked extra, because I knew that as soon as I was done with high-school, I just want to leave. So, I like saved up a lot of money while I was studying, to be able to travel and have the freedom to do what I wanted afterwards. So then I think it was only, ehm, the country that

controlled what I was supposed to do more and I, eh, I read up a lot on India. I saw this documentary that was called “women are half this guy”. It is also a book. In the documentary afterwards and also in the book, they had a page with different organisations that had been a part of this documentary. Because they had been around the world interviewing different organisations that worked with women and, yeah, in the end the book and in the book, they had a list of organisations that welcomed volunteers. I was like awww, this is interesting. And I saw that they had a few that was about, and it was in India, and I knew that I wanted to go there. I knew that I didn’t want to do the, in my head, touristy trip to Goa, where I was going to be on the beach and chill, so I was like, this could be the way in for me, into the country and into the culture in another way. So I emailed the organisation and I told them, yeah, “I saw the documentary and I got really interested into your work”. Like already in high school, I had a very big interest for gender equality and women's rights, so I knew that I wanted to work with women somehow, and they told me “yeah you are very welcome but you have to be 18 first”. I was like come on, damn it wait, and, then sort of, when I turned 18 and graduated high school, I started to look into it more. What type of trip can I do with voluntourism and I decided very early on that I didn’t want to go through an agency, because all my friends had gone through an agency. I just felt like, uhmm that feels bad, I don’t know if I can do that. Also I thought it was a crazy amount of money that I didn’t want to spend on going somewhere to do work. I didn’t really, in my head, I couldn’t, eh, puzzle together how is this voluntary work if I am paying someone? And it’s me paying someone, it’s not even me paying someone to do any work like, and I quickly took a step back from that. But then that meant that travelling would be a bit more unorganised and it didn’t feel as safe and a bit uncomfortable. Honestly when I got on the airport in India. I didn’t know if I would have a job or somewhere to stay. Because I didn’t go through an agency, so I didn’t have someone that fixed everything for me. I had to fix everything for myself and do all the research for myself, I didn’t know what to expect, I could have got scammed, like I didn’t know but at least I didn’t pay any money beforehand. So I knew that when I landed, so if the case is that I will get this

place, where I got an address and there is basically nothing there. I knew that I basically would just have to be on a vacation, then in India for 2 months instead. Then I haven't lost anything on it, except for a flight-ticket and my time but, yeah..

S: Can you tell us about your preparations for the trip?

L: Mmm, the preparations for the trip was doing research about, first of all how to volunteer or like what is the idea of voluntourism and that was when I decided that I didn't want to go through an agency. Because I don't want to pay money and then I also like researched on the country and on India itself. Like what am I getting myself into and, eh, what have other volunteers at this organisation, like I read up about the organisation New Light a lot. Not only for what I saw in the documentary and read in the book, but also their website, and what they did, and what type of projects they did, and what I could do while I was there. What I could sort of contribute with, which I knew, wasn't a lot because, I was 18, and I didn't have any education except for high school. So I knew it's not like "I am going to be able to go there and start a brand new project", but rather what type of projects do they already have that I can be a part of or eh, help out with sort of. Then it was also preparations about the VISA process, that was so long and, so hard and like I crushed myself a lot during the VISA process. Also just finding somewhere to stay, and a bit of language, and things like that. I tried to be as prepared as I could, even though I knew that it was a possibility that I would get there and have nothing to do. But I sort of knew that.

Focus group with 3/3-2020 (example):

How do you feel about travelling?

A: I love it. I just think it is fun to see something different, for example, I have lived in Copenhagen for the last five years. And I really enjoy to just get out and see kind of a different view than CBS or my apartment. Ehm, I think it is nice because you can try different things maybe, something that is not available in Denmark or, hm, meet new friends, if you are in a fun place where that is an option. Eh, yeah.

K: Excited.

O: I would rather spend money on travelling than most other stuff, I think. So it is a, just to get new experiences that you can live on. I feel positive.

K: I said excited because you can experience something that you can not fully prepare. Like even though you now where you are going, you do not know how you are going to feel or what you are going to see, or what is like going to happen in detail. So what we said before, when you are stepping out your like you comfort, normal, daylife, you know. It is going to be more dynamic maybe, something else. So that is why I think it is exciting.

V: I think it is exciting and really nice as well. But it is also, eh, increasingly a guilty pleasure, because it is really nice, but you should not travel, especially not by airplane so much, it is just like eating meat, it is really nice, but you should not, and you know more and more that you should not do it, so, I guess, we should travel differently in the future. I know that for myself, we can't keep on travelling as much as we do, not in the same way at least.

Ø: I feel, especially when you go to a new culture, meet new people, I feel really, grateful. Because we have the opportunity to go travel.

- Laughter in the group

Something to think about, the majority of the world can not travel as much as we do. This is actually

something I have been thinking about when I have been out travelling.

- Agreeing voices in the room

Also when it comes to, flight shame, if we can call it that. Have not thought so much about that because I do not feel like I have been travelling that much. I know people that go away every third weekend by plane, that is something else. I probably just go on one vacation a year. There are other times I go home.

O: I can relate to that. I do not know if this is relevant or not, but I remember I was a kid, I was in Egypt. Then we talked to a native guy, he said he had never left Egypt, and for me, that already had been travelling a lot, I was shocked. Like, how is this possible, a different culture or travelling lifestyle or something.

M: I also love travelling, but I think, both of my parents are from Poland. We always took trips to Poland, not anywhere else, so boring. All my friends got to go to cool places, and I was just like, okey, three weeks in Poland again this year. So for me it has become associated with luxury to travel other places, like I finally get to go on places I want to go. So, really excited about it, but almost I think I am more excited about thinking about travelling, like if I booked a trip six months from now, it is more the time leading up to the actual vacation, I think OMG YES. I get more excited in my head then, of course I am also excited when I am there, if compare, the two emotions I actually think I am more excited before.

9.5 Appendix 5- Transcript In-Depth Interview with Linn

The interview took place 4th of March at Lund University

General Information

Name: Linn Dimmlich

Age: 23 years old

Gender: Female

Country of origin: Sweden

Education: Bachelor of Science in Human Rights at Lund University

Work: Craftstore - Panduro

How many times have you volunteered abroad? Once

When did you volunteer? In the autumn/winter, November- December- 2015 (right after graduating high-school, 18 years old)

Where did your volunteer program take place, and what did you work with? I was in India, Kolkata. I worked at an organisation called New Light and New Light is working with women who are in prostitution or who have got out of prostitution. Also with their children or children that are at risk for prostitution. So, in this area, where I lived in and worked it was one of South-East Asia's largest red light districts. So it was like the organisation was located where the women had been or were working. So, it would be easier for them to get there and know where to turn.

What did the volunteer trip(s) approximately cost?

I don't know. I did not pay to be there. I paid for the flight ticket, which was like, I would guess, 6000 kr back and forth. And I paid for housing, which was maybe 5000 Swedish kronor for two months and then the food was really really cheap. I don't know maybe 10 000 kr or a bit more. I also paid for visa that was kind of expensive. Let say about 12-15 000 kr in total for the two months.

What organisation arranged the trip(s)?

I did not go through any agencies, found the organisation myself. It was really important for me to not use any organisation. So I did not pay anything to the host organisation.

Introduction questions**S: First question, what makes travelling interesting for you?**

L: Hmm, travelling, ehm, how to put this..... I traveled a lot and I really enjoy travelling but I realised that I think that, it is like interesting and rewarding for me when I get a cultural exchange, ehm, with a new environment and new people and, like, locals, but also people who decided to go to the same very places like me, at the same time. So I think that the interesting part of it is to experience a different type of reality and not what I am used to back at home, or what I normally do on a normal day basis. And, also, yeah If I have like an interest in the country in general, not only I want to go to this country and do this because I think that it will be nice for me or whatever. But also if the country has a very rich history or a specific tradition, or another religion than we have in Sweden perhaps. So, I try to go to countries that maybe don't in society wouldn't seem as mainstream, cause i don't usually enjoy going to places where it is only tourists or its been very westernised or something like that. Because then I don't feel like you could get a genuine picture of a country when you come as a foreigner, but I believe that you sometimes can choose where to go, and, ehm, see how, authentic it is. If you like go perhaps to Thailand today, compared to 20 years ago it is totally different, because the tourism looks completely different, and it is very westernised. So I try to go to countries that challenges me a bit and, push me out of my comfort zone, which makes it interesting but also a bit scary.

S: How often do you travel?

L: Hmmm, not as much now when I have been at university. I try to though, so still pretty much. I have been on exchange two times abroad and I went to another trip with Lund University. I really try to, take all the opportunities and chances that I have to go abroad. Ehhm, so last year, I got the chance

to visit ten countries while I studied, which was really exciting and amazing, I did not expect that to happen. But in between high-school and university I was basically just out travelling and just working a bit for money so, I would say that I travel a lot maybe more than the average person. I really enjoy it.

S: What has been your best travelling experience(s)?

L: Hmm.. I think that India is still one of my best travel experiences, like this trip, when I volunteered because it was my very first trip. I had just graduated high-school, and I had never been abroad on my own before, and it was a huge challenge for me. When I look back at it, I can't believe that I did that so, I kind of set an example for the rest of the trips that I did later. I went back to India a year later and that is also one of my favourite ones. But then, I spent 6 months in Turkey, and I don't know if you can call it travelling. Because I was like living there, but it was a trip that I took but I also started studying there. So, both India and Turkey I think, so far, has been the best.

S:... why?

L: Ehmm... cause I got challenged on both of the trips, I think. India for me, I just I fell in love with the country. It was super hard the first three weeks, I cried, like, everyday. And the first week I did not eat any type of food, because I was so scared of everything. You have the cultural clash, you have the language barriers, I was alone, I was female, I was young. You know you have all of, these stereotypes, in your head, and all of the people that had warned me to go- like "what are you going to do in India", "are you crazy", "you are going to get murdered", "you are going to get kidnapped", "you know they will sell you on the streets". They had all of these stereotypes, and I wanted to prove them wrong so badly. I think I tried to do that with so many trips, I think many are just listening to what the media says, or that, you have heard one bad story, and then you have made up your mind. So.. I think India is so special to me, because it set a path for me. But it was also the time, where I realised, what I wanted to do in the future, what I wanted to work with. I really wanted to go to India, but I don't want to go there just to travel. I remember thinking. I knew that I didn't want to do the, in my head, touristy trip to Goa, where I was going to be on the beach and chill, so I was like, this could be the way in for me,

into the country and the culture in another way, and be in this chaos that India is with all the people, traffic, animals. Hmm, I need to do some other type of trip, but still go there, so it was really set on that I wanted go to India. I was there it would also gave me a lot of inspiration to what I wanted to do in the future and it sort of lead to that I figured out what I wanted to do and why I wanted to study human rights here so I think that it is why it is one of my favourite trips. And I also developed so much as a person I was only 18 also so it was like not that hard to develop as a person but when you push yourself out of your comfort zone that much. I think you are kind sort of forced to learn a lot about yourself and the environment and who to trust and not so it was very - ehm I learned a lot and I think that is why I still have it as one of my favourite trips. Sort of the same with Turkey, because it was like, people told me not to go, I get kind of frustrated when people tell me not to go.

- *laughter in the room*

Ehm, I believe those trips maybe shape you the most, and I try not to go just to have a nice time. I try to go to the country, take a history class or lesson in the country. That I go to try to understand the context. Like, you can never go to a country blank, you will always have some stereotypes, or some opinions of the country. Like that is enviable, like that wouldn't make sense if you would just go there blank, but I think if you stay open-minded, and you try to push yourself a bit, and spend time with locals, try to get their point of view, try to explain your point of view and realise why you are so different. Try to find a common ground within that- I think that's when we learn the most.

S: What is your dream trip?

L: Ohh. My dream trip. Ehm.

- *Silence in the room*

Right now, I am very much, like, in the mood to go to Peru or Colombia. Just because I haven't spent any time in America. I have spent most my time in Europe and Asia. So I think it would be very interesting to see another culture, and, also, I really want to do the Inca trail. But, yeah, either like Peru, or maybe like Sri Lanka or something. I love diving, so, I would love to go on a diving trip. Like, I

would love to just go on a boat, and be around for like 2 weeks and go around diving. I think that would choose now.

Theme 1: Travelling and Tourism

S: That was some kind of introduction questions, let's head into our first theme which is travelling and tourism. How do you feel about travelling?

L: Like travelling in general- or just for going anywhere, like going to Copenhagen?

S: How you interpret it

L: I think travelling is a huge privilege and opportunity and learning experience. This was something that I really learned during the two gap years when I was travelling, and also when I made this volunteer trip, that I was very privileged to do this. I meet so many people that were locals in different countries in Asia. And I realised that it was crazy that, I, as a young woman, was able to do this, and just in general, as a young person or human being, but especially being young and female. Ehm. I believe that not everyone has the opportunity to be out travelling, and, I think you can be on both sides of the coin, and you can be like; I have this huge opportunity to travel so I should take it. I should do this to learn more about the world, and meet other people, and, ehm, realise my privilege. But also, since everyone is not able to do this, maybe, ehm, I should sort of take a step back, and realise how crazy this is, maybe you can.. Stop travelling for a bit, and give someone else the opportunity to do it. Or like to put yourself in that position to make a choice, but, I think I have been very much in like, as long as you realise that you are privileged, and that you realise the opportunities that you have been given, and also been creating for yourself. Ehm. So if you have that thought process before you go on different trips, even if it is just over the bridge to Copenhagen, or if it is on the other side of the ocean. Like, I think if you go in to with the mindset that not everyone can do this and that, and, it is crazy that you can do this, maybe you also feel the need of like, ehm. Once you get to a place you.. put in some extra time to

try to understand the culture, try to stay open-minded, try to, ehm, realise why you are there, what is the purpose, la da da da. How can I be a "good traveller" or a "good tourist", like how can I still be respectful, at the same time not compromising too much with your own values, and soul sort of. And sometimes, the culture clash is huge, and you don't know how to, ehm. Kind of position yourself, like, should I compromise with my own values, because I want to respect another country's values? Like, for example, in India, where you have to cover yourself or when I couldn't be out at specific hours at night, or walk alone without a man and.. things like that. That is very against what I feel is, right, but, then again I am in a different context, culture and country, shouldn't I try to be respectful? Like you can still ask questions, and be like, "why is it like this", and "why do I have to do like this". And still be like okay.. you know, I don't know how to say it in English, but "ta seden dit du kommer". They probably have an English expression for that, haha.

S: But, how did you get interested in travelling?

L: I think I got interested in travelling.

- Silence in the room

Like, very early, me and my family would always spend the summers, somewhere, being out travelling. So I have always traveled a lot with my family. I was always like, "oh this is really nice", even though, it was a different type of travelling. But, for me, travelling the way that I have been travelling the last five years, has been more that I am such a person, that like, doing more, seeing more, experiencing more, and, I just want, to, learn about everything. It has been like that since I was a kid. My family would give me this different maps, and, eh, earth globes- is it called that in English? And atlasas, because I was so interested in the world, and what was happening everywhere. I was also very interested in social sciences, and that specific field. I was trying to realise how the world, works, and that everything is so different everywhere, so I think that is where it all started. I didn't have the opportunity to travel alone before I was done with high-school, so after I was done with high-school, I was like I don't have any

responsibility left. I can do whatever I want to and I.. I am also eighteen, so I can also decide over myself. Because before I had to ask for permission from my parents. So I think another way of travelling kind of started, or was possible for me and I.. I took it basically.

S:.. Could you, if you remember, tell us about your first travel experience(s)?

L: Like the very first?

S: Yes

L: Oh, I think I probably have constructed memories. Hmm, let's see.. what that could have been... God, I guess the first things I remember by myself is that, when I was five, six and seven, I spent the summers in Turkey. Ehm. With my family. But then also during like the fall, and the autumns, we would be in Germany for a bit, because we have family in Germany. Then we would take the car to Germany, and then... Yeah probably, when I was five, we took the car down to Italy, and I know that, this was a really bad trip. My sister was three, and, I, was, hm, five and my family decided that we would drive down to Italy. And we were so impatient, and we fought all the time. They had to like drive, with toys and everything, and we stopped, like, everywhere. Then after, my parents said, that we were not doing car-vacations anymore. We just did it once afterwards, but I think, ehm. Summer vacations like what. I remember the most because, then you actually left your friends, for such a long time, and, ehm, yeah.

S:.. How does travelling make you feel?

L: Travelling makes me feel

- Silence in the room

Very happy, like, I enjoy it a lot, and, ehm, it also makes me feel... scared, sometimes, it doesn't matter where I am travelling. I always feel a little bit nervous and scared for just everything. And I hate flying, like, I don't enjoy airplanes at all, so, I always have that panicking feeling. But I always feel that it's worth it, like, no matter where I am going. Yeah. I feel like exciting, I feel like that it is an opportunity

for me to do something else, that I am not doing on a daily day basis. I get a rush of it, you kind of feel another type, of, liveness, and ehm it's ... it's exciting. Normally it's been like, you plan it for a bit, and you kind of save money, you take some jobs, that you maybe, don't want to have. But you just see that the goal is to travel, and, that is going to be worth it. So then I have something that I am saving for, and that I am looking forward to, so it is also to have some sort of specific goal in my everyday life. So that I know if I have a trip planned, I would... I would feel more excited about the time before, because I then know, okay, I have a month and then I will be there. Then I think life gets a little bit easier beforehand, as well cause then after, you have been on your trip, you get home and maybe you don't have any money anymore, you know maybe or you have to go back to your normal life it is like... That is a bit hard, then you have a period when you are a bit down maybe, and, ehm, sometimes it is like you don't have the opportunity to travel if I have school, not any money or the time and then, ehm... I feel like that it is a bit sad, I always want to go somewhere.

S:.. how do you usually decide where to go when you want to travel?

L: Hmm, ehm. I usually decide based on... either what I want to see, and experience, if I want to do something new, then I usually like, check where I haven't been, where would it be possible for me to go. And, lately like since I started traveling, it has been like where can I meet up people that I met travelling, like, where do they live and, ehm, so then the purpose is not the country in itself, then, maybe the purpose is more... This person, like my friend that I want to see, then it doesn't really matter where I am that's, ehm ... yeah then it's more the person who are the purpose or ... It would be now, Lately when I look at trips, it's like, where can I go where I don't have to fly, because of the environment, and climate change and then that hinders you from making the trips that I used to do before when the climate change questions weren't as... Raised... or the awareness around flying and all the bad things that it comes with has, of course, always been there, but it has not been as hot debate as this year and the past year. So, hm, ehm, I think it is different factors, and the most like, eh, what would I call, the best kind of trip would be where I could combine all these kind of things, I don't have to fly,

I can meet up with a friend that I meet during travelling. So to staying abroad and it would also be a place that I haven't visited before, so that I can get a new experience from it.

S: How do you feel about tourism?

L: I think.. Tourism could be both good and bad, and that it is very complex, because I feel like tourism, ehm could explode, and sort of, takeover a place and then make it, ehm, in the majority of the cases very westernised, and not as authentic and genuine anymore. I think this is really a shame where a place or a country, loose it's cultural and tradition, for the cause of tourism. But I also think that sometimes tourism is needed. Like it can go both ways, because without tourism maybe, ehm, a country, or a place, wouldn't have survived. Like a lot of countries, ehm, "livnärar" sig, they would make their living out of tourism, and sometimes places would go under without it. But at the same time if you never let countries, like, that is in the need of tourism, then we don't really know if they are actually need of tourism, or if we want them to be in the need of tourism sort of. Ehm. Yeah. I think it can go to the extreme, I mean tourism could also be a way for people to, ehm, open their eyes for a new culture and a new country. It could be the way in for something bigger, but I think it is such a fine line, when it is just a way in for people travelling, to a country, and appreciating it for what it is then.. it.. on the other hand, could be like, people going in to a country, seeing, this is what we could do with this environment, like for it to benefit yourself, and our interests more, than the, ehm, native cultural and.. locals. For example. I was in the Philippines and it is so beautiful everywhere, and all the islands that are untouched by people, like, so beautiful. But then you see like so many islands that are just like, American companies who bought them, and built their own tourist, huge, tourist resorts and they do this all-inclusive hotels and so that you don't have to leave the islands.... What is then the purpose of going to the Philippines? Like this hotel resort could be anywhere in the world, like, if you decided to go to the Philippines and not get an experience of what the Philippines actually is or stands for, or the history and culture and then whatever, then I think tourism has gone too far sort of.

S: How do you feel about the growth of the industry?

L: Hmm, I feel a bit, scared sort of like, I don't, as I said before, I try not to go to as, touristy places, because I don't feel like I get an experience from it, whether it is good or bad, I just feel like I could be anywhere in the world. I don't know, if I am in Peru, or in India, or in Germany, like it is the same everywhere, and then it doesn't really matter, so then I feel the growth of tourism is a bit, intimidating somehow, and I realise that I.. it could be.. sort of.. it could be needed. But I don't know, if it is done it in the right way, and I am not sure whether there is a right way of doing tourism, or like, ehm, the growth of tourism. But now, I just feel like, in the, hmm, ehm, the speed that it is growing, is also, usually, tourism from the west, to the south, or the global north, to the global south. And then if tourism can't go both ways we have this like, ehm, imbalance in power and still like western people taking advantage of nonwestern people. And kind of benefitting from their, their exotic culture, or food or people, and sort of, for the case of their own winning. And once tourism is growing towards that way and in that speed it's just going to look.. everything is going to be westernised we will not going to have anything.. ehm.. any differences left and I think then we are moving towards something really scary where everywhere is just going to be the same and everyone is just going to be the same basically.

Theme 2: Volunteer Work

S: So, this part of the interview is going to be a little bit about volunteer-work. So, how was your relation to volunteer work before going on a volunteer trip abroad?

L: Ehm, I think the general concept of volunteer work, I am positive to. That you can help an organisation or a company out, ehm, out of free and get an experience from it, but also helping a greater cause sort of. I think in many different types of institutions you have volunteer work and ehm, "ideelt arbete", ehm, like you know just being in an student council or ehm, doing extra activities after school for the benefit of the school or another student, like you. I think that in Sweden, we have that ehm, like I can't find the word, maybe tradition, but sort of, a standard that it is not weird to ask your

students, could you be a part of this you are not getting paid, or you're not getting anything from it, but, ehm, we need your help, and maybe you can learn something from it. And you do that from a verly age and then it just keeps on going with you, and its just like if you see university life, especially Lund's University, it is build on students on their free time. Like on their spare time, just out of voluntary reasons, ehm, so yeah, like I think we have that kind of tradition in the society, and ehm, then of course, there is different types of volunteer work and, ehm, you can see it from different perspectives.

S: Had you done any voluntary work before going on your volunteer trip?

L: I have, well, if you count then the student council, like, I was a part of that, I also did volunteer work at west-pride which is Gotenburg's pride week, like the pride-festival. Ehm, and then yeah, that was it, the things that I did like before eighteen. Yeah.

S: Do you do it right now?

L: Ehh, yeah I am in Lund's political and economic organisation, LUPF, and I have a project that is about people going on exchanges abroad, and doing internships. It is kind of like a word press website, where, eh, people share their experiences for students who want to do the same thing, or be inspired to do something, and do an internship or go on exchange, so I do that.

S:.. Why do you work voluntarily?

L: Ehm. I do it to, learn, eh, to learn something new, but also to, ehm, kind of stimulate myself and my, ehm, interests and I feel like, ehm. If I have the time to do, I did it a lot in Lund, it could also benefit me in a way. I try to know when I have been in Lund to do voluntary work that fits my, ehm, bachelor, so that I can also use things that I have learned in university, and in classes in a more practical context. So yeah, I do this with LUPF this semester but before, I was very involved with Save the Children and that was like more, I think I had more a clear agenda with, that I would benefit from that in experience and knowledge for my bachelor's program and vice versa. Like the things that I have learned in my bachelor program I could also use in my work for Save the Children.

S: How do you feel after you have been working voluntarily?

L: Ehm, I usually feel good like I don't feel anything special, I think that I don't see that much of a difference to work for money, and for voluntarily, without any payment or whatever it could be. Because for me, like in my feelings and how I stand to it, I do put in the time and the effort that I have to and usually when I work voluntarily I work with something that I think is fun or interesting. Or where I get an experience or learn something whereas, when I work for money it's mostly something that I do just for money. But it's the same idea of just like, this is me going to work, or this is my putting down the time that I have to do, because other people depend on me sort of. So, I don't think I feel anything special like with voluntarily work, compared to normal work. I mean I think you gain result in another way with voluntarily work, with people and then you can see how your work affect people. And if you did a campaign, an event or a project, you can see how it turns out and you can be like, "wow I did this". While when I work extra in a store, ah, I could help the customer, but I don't really think about it that much afterwards or longer, like, "o I really did that". But sometimes when you do something within an organisation or ehm where you work voluntarily you can be look oh I made this project and now it is going to like live, like stay there even though I leave sort of, so maybe it has a bigger impact ehm but that could also be because of what type of work voluntarily work I have decided to sort of.

S: ... how do you make sense out of volunteering?

L: Make sense?

S: Like justify?

L: Hm, ehm.

- Silence in the room

I think, that it is very hard to 100% justify, ehm, voluntary work. I think the people, who say that they do it 100% because they want to help others, eh, only for the reasons for help others, and not benefit from it themselves. I think they are lying, and I think you are always benefiting something out from it. That necessarily does not have to be a bad thing, that you admit that that like I am doing this because it will benefit me in this specific way, or it will improve my knowledge or help me getting a job afterwards

or whatever it could be. So, I think there is two different sides of voluntary work, and you can maybe this form of volunteer work that you do, let's say like, for the example, ehm, in university where you, ehm, do voluntary work in organisations or student associations or things like that and then you do it around... students you do it, maybe, in your home country, while you are studying you have another, ehm... thing that you are doing at the same time. But I think it is a whole other thing to do volunteer work going abroad, because when you go abroad you get the extra layer of, like, you leaving your home. And normally its like a very good situation to go somewhere else, where you believe that your work is needed. But you don't actually really know if you're work is needed, but maybe in an student organisation you can know that your work is needed. Because they are like "we need someone to volunteer at this dinner, otherwise we cannot have the dinner", "we need you to be there", and you are like okay. But when you do volunteer work abroad, then especially when you leave, ehm, the type of country and type of context you come from. You get another layer from it, because, you just assume that people are in need of your time and work and, in some ways expertise and I think it is a very fine line of, ehm. How to say it, like it is very easy to end up in the trap of being like a "savior", like I am going to come and help you guys, because you need my help. Often it is not even like that, you just have that idea and I think when you put the layers of like the global north and the global south it is super tricky, because you, you think that you can help someone that is maybe not in need of your help at all. Usually maybe you will learn more of the volunteer experience, than the persons you are there to actually help, or ehm, that you think that you are helping at least. I also believe that doing volunteer work abroad often comes with, ehm, that you go through an agency, and when you go through an agency you have like this third-party that is a part of this whole trip. That, ehm, earns money from people who want to help and do good. They get like, it so expensive to go on an volunteer trip, to like different animal rescue places, or whatever, or to a kindergarden or a shelter somewhere, then you pay so much money to, ehmm, an agency. Which is like, then you have an organised trip of volunteer work, compared to what you have at maybe, the university, where it is not that, organised, in the same way.

Like you don't pay anyone to go and do free work, you just do it, and, you will benefit from it somehow. But I think that type of volunteer work, that you pay someone to go and do free work, is really weird. I don't know how, that I don't how you justify. I have very hard-time to be like this feels good to do, but, ehm, at the same time that could be for a lot of people. They think that it is, when you are doing it through an agency, you automatically think that this makes it, ehm, justified, because then someone else did the research, and the job that I didn't have to do myself. Then it is like, why wouldn't they want to help, and it feels maybe safer and more comfortable and... but that's..

Theme 3: The Voluntourism Experience

Pre-trip

S: Let's continue then, so now we are going to head forward to the voluntourism experience.

We are going to start by some questions regarding the "pre-trip". So my first question, how did you first hear about voluntourism?

L: So now, in the context of voluntourism, ehm. Ah, I think I heard about first in high-school cause I had a couple of friends who were older than me who had done it. But also when I was in high-school, it was the beginning of the blogs, the blogs were trendy and they hadn't been that before. The internet and social media kind of exploded during 2012-2015, when I was in high-school, so I think I heard it from friends who had the experience. But, yeah, also from blogs and social medias, that were existing at that time. And different advertisements on like the metro, and the magazines, and like "go on this trip and help the koalas" and type like that. Probably in the beginning of high-school.

S: Why did you decide to go on a volunteer trip?

I decided to go a volunteer-trip, I don't think it was the original plan at all, I was just very focused that I wanted to go to India, that was like my main path and I knew that I wanted to go out travelling. So during high school I worked extra, because I knew that as soon as I was done with high-school, I just want to leave. So, I like saved up a lot of money while I was studying, to be able to travel and have the

freedom to do what I wanted afterwards. So then I think it was only, ehm, the country that controlled what I was supposed to do more and I, ehm, I read up a lot on India. I saw this documentary that was called "women are half this guy". It is also a book. In the documentary afterwards and also in the book, they had a page with different organisations that had been a part of this documentary. Because they had been around the world interviewing different organisations that worked with women and, yeah, in the end the book and in the book, they had a list of organisations that welcomed volunteers. I was like awww, this is interesting. And I saw that they had a few that was about, and it was in India, and I knew that I wanted to go there. I knew that I didn't want to do the, in my head, touristy trip to Goa, where I was going to be on the beach and chill, so I was like, this could be the way in for me, into the country and into the culture in another way. So I emailed the organisation and I told them, yeah, "I saw the documentary and I got really interested into your work". Like already in high school, I had a very big interest for gender equality and women's rights, so I knew that I wanted to work with women somehow, and they told me "yeah you are very welcome but you have to be 18 first". I was like come on, damn it wait, and, then sort of, when I turned 18 and graduated high school, I started to look into it more. What type of trip can I do with voluntourism and I decided very early on that I didn't want to go through an agency, because all my friends had gone through an agency. I just felt like, uhmm that feels bad, I don't know if I can do that. Also I thought it was a crazy amount of money that I didn't want to spend on going somewhere to do work. I didn't really, in my head, I couldn't, ehm, puzzle together how is this voluntary work if I am paying someone? And it's me paying someone, it's not even me paying someone to do any work like, and I quickly took a step back from that. But then that meant that travelling would be a bit more unorganised and it didn't feel as safe and a bit uncomfortable. Honestly when I got on the airport in India. I didn't know if I would have a job or somewhere to stay. Because I didn't go through an agency, so I didn't have someone that fixed everything for me. I had to fix everything for myself and do all the research for myself, I didn't know what to expect, I could have got scammed, like I didn't know but at least I didn't pay any money beforehand. So I knew that when I

landed, so if the case is that I will get this place, where I got an address and there is basically nothing there. I knew that I basically would just have to be on a vacation, then in India for 2 months instead. Then I haven't lost anything on it, expect for a flight-ticket and my time but, yeah..

S: Can you tell us about your preparations for the trip?

L: Mmm, the preparations for the trip was doing research about, first of all how to volunteer or like what is the idea of voluntourism and that was when I decided that I didn't want to go through an agency. Because I don't want to pay money and then I also like researched on the country and on India itself. Like what am I getting myself into and, eh, what have other volunteers at this organisation, like I read up about the organisation New Light a lot. Not only for what I saw in the documentary and read in the book, but also their website, and what they did, and what type of projects they did, and what I could do while I was there. What I could sort of contribute with, which I knew, wasn't a lot because, I was 18, and I didn't have any education except for high school. So I knew it's not like "I am going to be able to go there and start a brand new project", but rather what type of projects do they already have that I can be a part of or eh, help out with sort of. Then it was also preparations about the VISA process, that was so long and, so hard and like I crushed myself a lot during the VISA process. Also just finding somewhere to stay, and a bit of language, and things like that. I tried to be as prepared as I could, even though I knew that it was a possibility that I would get there and have nothing to do. But I sort of knew that.

S: ...How much information did you receive before the trip?

L: Nothing? I would say. Not much at all.

- *Laughter in the room*

Like I had contact with the organisation with a woman, that I was emailing with. But it was like, she was like, it is a whole other culture in India ,with like emailing and time and, as a Swede we are very punctual, and we want all of the information. Like, you answer the information as quick as you get it, and you give all the information that you can possibly give. But in India they were like just, "come here

and you will see" and I was like "okay sure" sort of. So no, I didn't receive a lot information beforehand, about, like, what I was supposed to, eh or what I was supposed to like, live or work or anything.. So, I went to it kind of blindly, that was kind of naive, but, eh, at that time it didn't feel like a problem. I was like "ah, I can't expect anything from them, they haven't even met me, they don't know what I am going to do or what I can do". I also found this apartment, and I was in the apartment for two days, before I actually went to the place where I was actually supposed to work. I got like an introduction and even after the introduction, I was like "what am I doing here". Like the first week I was very confused, eh sort of so, hmm, not a lot of info.

S: Could you tell us about the expectations that you had?

L: Eh, my expectations were really high, because it was my first trip alone, and also my first trip abroad, and I was also so hyped about me going to India and me working with something that I felt genuinely was very important. Something that I wanted to do in the future, as well like, work with women's rights, and gender equality. So that was like the main expectation, that this was such an adventure. But I, was also like very eh, not very, but I was a bit scared and nervous about what I was supposed to do. And before, I had never been alone for a time, and I hadn't like stayed with anyone else but my family for 18 years so. That was, I think that was more nerve wracking than the fact that I was going to India. It was just a part of being away from my safe-space for that amount, like long amount of time, but mostly I felt really good about it. Since a lot of people told me not to go, and thought that I was stupid and that I was like, "you are getting into something that you don't know anything about" and "all the bad things are going to happen to you and especially since you are woman and you are young". It could have turned me more scared, and maybe it even should have turned me more scared and nervous. But instead I turned it around, and as I said before "I am going to prove that you all are wrong" and I have to do this, eh, sort of so. Yeah.

The Trip

S: Let's head on then to the trip. So, eh, yeah like tell us about the trip. And try to describe it as detailed as you can, from the beginning to the end. This is also where you can show your pictures, if you want to.

L: Yeah. Sure. I don't know all the pictures that I have, and I don't think that they are good. I tried to send things to my parents, but I didn't have any internet so it was kind of hard. Yeah, well I left in, hm, the beginning of November, and I had just like quite my job, eh, a couple of days before and. I remember saying goodbye to my parents. Like my mother at home, because she didn't want to come to the airport with me. She was like "I don't think I can handle this, you have to go to the airport with your father", and I was like "okay". Then the flight company canceled my trip, and it was Lufthansa and then I started to question everything, like should "I really go". Then yeah, I mean we left to the airport to figure out if I could still make it with another flight and I could. So yeah, so then I said goodbye to my father and I thought, in my head I was like, I started hearing all the people that told me not to go. I thought what if this is the last time I see my parents, eh, hehehe oh shit, it just got really real once I was there at the airport. I took the flight and I never flew on my own so that was also very special, and I don't like flying so that made it even worse and eh. I landed in Mumbai first and, the first thing that happens is that there is no power, like the power went out, and which everyone seemed so chill about "like this happens all the time". I was like, omg, everything stopped working and I it was in the middle of the night, and it was so dark everywhere, and I didn't know anything. I just remember that it was really scary, and I had to go through the security things, and in my head, I didn't have any thought about that it would be eh. Gender separated that like, men was in one line, and women was in the other, I didn't even occur me that it could be that way on an airport. And I went in to the wrong line, of course, and they yelled at me in hindi, and I was like "oh shit what is happening". Then yeah, they did this security check, which felt really sketchy like compared to the one that I did, I mean I flew from Landvetter in Gothenburg and I was like, they took my passport and run away with it and I was like "oh shit this was the only thing that I was not supposed to leave, my passport is everything". Eh,

otherwise I wouldn't get out of here. Yeah, so it was already some confusion at the airport, and that's when I started to be a bit stressed about the whole thing. I called my father, and we could call for like 2 minutes because like I got wifi from some coffee shop. I just cried in the phone and I was like "I don't know what I am doing" and he was like "It is going to be fine you are not even there yet". He was like "is everyone else freaking out", and I was "no everyone else is super chill", and he is like "okay, buy a coffee and be chill about it then". I was like "okay then"... And then I did the trip to Calcutta and I still remember going out from the airport, trying to get out money, which was impossible because all of the ATMS were closed. So I just had US dollars and I got in a cab to go to the apartment, ehm... yeah, I have found and like I think have. Of course I got scammed in the taxi, they took so much money from me, and I didn't like, I couldn't argue, against it either, and I didn't know what was a fair amount of money. I knew that I checked before what it should, sort of cost, and then they told me another price, and then I was just like, I just want to get there so I didn't care. But then I realised that they took a lot of money from me, and I was like, ehm, I felt already there "Oh i failed everything" and in my head I thought I was so street smart. Then the first thing I did was getting scammed, basically. I got to the apartment and there is a guy there, that is supposed to welcome me, eh, from the organisation, so like this is the room, I had

- *showing a picture of the apartment etc.*

in the apartment and this is like outside of the street, like yeah, you can't see that much it's like small streets, but it was still more in the city center sort of. So I got there and there was this guy from the organisation, and there was another guy there cleaning and fixing everything. It was really hard to find this apartment, and I didn't have any wi-fi or data on my phone, I just had one phone number and remember that the taxi-driver was like, "where are we going?".

S: You got this room from the organisation?

L: Ah, the organisation recommended it, they were like you can check this out and I was like "okay" and... I don't even think I saw any pictures of it before, I was just like "I need somewhere to stay", and I knew I could have stayed in a hotel, but there were no hostels close to where I was going to work. Yeah, so I got there, and then this guy from the organisation that was there to led me, the first thing he did, was basically asking me for money. I didn't know if I was supposed to give him money, or not, and I didn't know if I was rude or anything. Then he was like, you have to give me, I don't even know how much it was, but maybe it was a 100 kronor or something but in rupees I think it's like 600 rupees and I was like "okay". And then he was like, you can't tell Urmi, she is the head of the organisation, and right there I was like this is really sketchy, but I don't know what he is going to do if I say no, and I don't know I guess you are entitled to the money or somehow since he helped me to get in there. He was like "yeah we will call you and you will get the info that you need for your intro" and I was like "oh when is that going to be?" and he was like "I don't know it's a holiday now so we will see", because it was Dewalli the light festival when I got there so I was like "oki". Then it was just the first day, I tried to like make it bit more cosy, and like a home, ehm, because in the apartment it was just furniture's. I wanted to put up things that made it feel like a bit more my own, ehm... which is very hard cause you don't bring that much things, and it was dark and like lizards and cockroaches everywhere. I was like "ohh this is a nice experience you just have to take it all in" and they had this ehh, little book where people that had stayed in the apartment had written like "go and eat here" "do this "think about this" and they were like "don't leave any food because the rats will come" I was like "great". I tried to locate around the area that I lived in, to be able to see if I could find a place to buy water, and I couldn't and it was like getting dark and I was very confused about everything. So I kind of called it a day. The first day I had like some cookies with me from Sweden that I ate. It is going to be it tomorrow, you are going to start brand new and I kept notes everyday from the experience. Like I wrote notes on my phone to remember how I felt, eh, to see also, did it get better did it get worse, what was the challenge today. Because I realised that I am not going to remember this whole experience otherwise. On the second

day I was like trying to... Like in the evening I couldn't, like I went out late in the evening, because it was dwelli so it was a lot of fireworks, but I didn't recognise that it was fireworks so I went out and it was completely dark and that's like, I think that was my first cultural clash, it was only men out. Because women are not allowed to be out when it's dark on their own, and everyone just looked at me so weirdly, and I just felt so like watched. Then after thinking a bit, this is probably not okay for me to be out alone, and I was out for a bit and I saw the fireworks, and then I went back to sleep. The next day I thought I was supposed to get my introduction, because I waited at home, because they were supposed to pick me up, so I just waited and waited and then they were like "oh" in the end of the day, change of plans. We are not going to do it today. So everything was still very unsure the first two days, and I didn't get a lot of information at all. And I was like, "what have I gotten into" and, I tried to locate around the area again, and it was this man coming up to me, who helped me during my entire trip. I just met him on the streets, and he got up to me, and he was like "hi I have seen you walking the same path for an hour now". Like I just went in circles basically, and he was like "what are you looking for?" and then I told him yeah "there is supposed to be some kind of shopping center around here because someone wrote that in the book, where I can buy like food and water", and he was like "yeah it's the other way you are walking in the wrong direction", "do you want me to show you?". In that moment I was so desperate, so I was like "yeah, sure", sort of. Then he walked me to this mall, and I made like a map on where to go, so that I would remember it, and ehm and then... He sort of became my first friend there, which is really weird when I think about it now. Because he was like older than me, and kind of in the same age as my dad. But he took me under his wings, and it was kind of sketchy, but it was also like I am in position where I just have to trust people. Trust them that they want what is good for me, and not that they want me to do any harm. He was super helpful, and he was like showing me the coffee shop where you could get wifi sometimes. Then I would like update my parents, I hadn't even updated them that I had got there. Then, ehm, the day after, I got my introduction at the organisation and we went to their head office and yeah... We got into a cab and it was like a crazy ride,

because the traffic is just super crazy. I got there and I got into this office, and I was sitting there for my own, for like an hour, and I still didn't know what I was doing there. I still just crashed in everything "this is a part of the experience sort of", and then another girl was also supposed to, ehm, she was supposed to be there for 6 months but she left after two weeks. She couldn't take it, she was like "this is too much", but she was there the first day as well, and she rented an apartment in another, like part of the city. We met and I remember thinking it was at least a relief to meet someone else, who would do the same thing as me. I wouldn't feel like totally alone in it. Then, yeah, they just told me about like what their expectations were, and they told me about the organisation, and what was going on, because this was just an office, not where I was actually supposed to be every day.

S: So what was like a normal day?

L: Hmm. A normal day was that I woke up, and I had a guy outside the window, who would stand outside with tea. He was like the neighborhood's tea guy, so he would come through the window, and come with a tray of tea and a biscuit. So I would do that in the morning, and then I walked to where the volunteer work took place. Which was in this red light district, and in Caligat, it is called. It was maybe a 30 minute walk from my place, it was more in the city center and than the district was more like in the suburbs. I think I have a picture on it too. Hm...

- *Showing pictures*

Yeah then it is like this. "kåkbostäder" yeah, and exactly, so it just looked like this everywhere. That is like how it looked there and then you had sort of these. Narrow. This is taken two years afterwards so it doesn't look the same, as when I was there, the first time, because this is like super clean. When I got there two years before it was just like. The first thing I remember was just the smell, and it was people, and trash lying everywhere, and it was just like very dirty. You could feel like the smell of, ehh death, and urine, and like animals and everything, it was super dirty. But then they did like a project in India where they cleaned up the slums and or something, they called it something completely different. And then inside the organisation it looked like this sort of (showing a picture). It was like a big building and

it was one big room that they used for everything, and then they had a smaller room with like a kitchen and, ehm, one computer, yeah, so, I would come here and go upstairs. The times were confusing, you could kind of show up whenever, and you could leave whenever, it wasn't any set times. Then they also had like a small school downstairs and you had like a river going down the whole slum, which was used for also everything for cooking, cleaning, yourself and everything else. Ehm, so most of the times I spent here, and then I was also in another district that was 45 minutes from me by metro, so on Tuesdays and Thursdays, I would be at one place, and then on the other days I would be at this place that was kind of close to my house and... and... Ehm... Yeah.

S: But where there normal days?

L: Hum... It was like a, it was supposed to be a set schedule where I was supposed to be, ehm so like Mondays, Wednesday and Fridays, I would be at one part of the organisation and on the rest of the days I was supposed to be on the other part of the organisation. But that could change like even the same day, and it could be like now, we are going to do this, or someone is coming here to have a lecture without. So we need you to do this. It was never like, they give me some type of work description what they wanted me to do but it was very much like "you do what you want and we're going to ask you to do things and if you want to do them you can do them". So it wasn't any, no everyday really looked different, depending on what the need was, and what was happening. If it was a special day or if it was like a holiday or, ehm, for example, I was there on 1st December, and then it was like. The World Aids Day, and then they had like an entire day of workshop of, ehm of condoms, how to protect yourself and ehm... Sexual education sort of. On some other days it would come like a doctor there, to check up on all the kids and yeah it was... yeah.. no days were like normal days but that kind of you just had to go with the flow.

S: So how did you feel during those special days/events?

L: I usually felt very out of place. I really didn't know what I was doing there and sometimes they would ask you like "give a speech" like randomly when you were just there. And I never knew what I

was supposed to do, and what my role in it was. For me I think when I early on, realised that this is not gonna be organised at all, and it is just going to be like a bit of chaotic. I just need to find my place in this, so I spent a lot of time with the children and the young women. Like so I usually, when it was big events like this, I tried to be near them, and do what I could do to them. Instead of me being super involved in the events that they did. Most of the time I didn't even, they were speaking bengali so I didn't understand also, ehm. So I think I kind of tried to adapt where I am I needed. What should I do but a lot of the times, I just felt a bit out of place and a bit like is it really necessary to be here, and be a part of it. But it was also cool to see and be a part of the different workshops, and events that they had, to see how the organisation operated on a daily basis, sort of.

S: How was the atmosphere at the host organisation?

L: The atmosphere was, ehm... There was a very clear hierarchy within the organisation, like who was in control, and who was not, and who you would be kind of respectful to, and who was kind of chill. there was kind of a lot of different rules that, the people that worked there had been told, like that they were not allowed to hang out with the people who volunteered there. Like, after work was done whatever, ehm, so that was for example one of the biggest things, at the, the environment got a bit, not toxic. But it was sort of weird, because I remember we started to hang out with the guy who was a teacher at this place, and he hadn't told us until a couple of weeks later that I am not really allowed to hang out with you guys just so you know. Like, don't say this because then I will get consequences from it. And it was also, he had to pay like a huge respect to the women who founded this whole organisation, and you could see how the kids and the women like kind of changed around her, and that also took some time, to like, realise, how eh, everything worked out in the different relationships, between people. And how you would fit into all of this. A lot of people just like came and left. And you didn't really know everyone's role was, but everyone still knew very clearly, who was in the top of the hierarchy, and who was not.

S: So, how did you feel about the other volunteers that were a part of the program?

L: Mmm... So when I was there, 2 who was like set to be there, no wait we were 3 girls. One of the other volunteers went home after two weeks and she didn't really give a proper explanation. Just more than that she couldn't take it. I remember thinking that I understood her a lot because it was such a different reality from home. I have never seen poverty in that way, I have never seen people living in that way before. Like, you can read about it, and ehm, see news and in movies and documentaries. But once you are really there, once you experience the whole thing, I don't think you realise it, and for her as she gave as an explanation, it was just too much. So she flew back to the US. So then it was just me and another women and she... She was much older, she was like 47 or something. She was there because she was doing some sort of thesis for her university things, so she was there with a whole different purpose and she also spoke a bit of Bengali. So it was she had like a whole different experience, but, aww, I just remember thinking it was nice to have someone in the same position. That was in even though it wasn't exactly the same, but also to have someone to hang out with, ahmm, after work was done, sort of. Even though we spent most of our time there, there were still some days that were off.

S: What did you do during those days "off"?

L: When I had free time I tried to explore more parts of the city, and went on like trips, or ehm, just like visited, mmm, "sevärdigheter" (attractions). Touristy things, and went to like local markets, eat a lot of food, walk around, we had a huge park close to our place, we would normally go there and I would bring a book and ehm. After a while I started to get to know people, so I hung out with them, but we didn't have that much time.

S: How did you feel during those days?

L: Mm. I... I remember thinking I thought going into it that I would have more days off, in my head I had a plan that I would have the time to go to other cities, or go on trips, that were longer. Or, ehm, visit other places, ehm, other organisations also, but we didn't have that many days off and I didn't ehm... I didn't.. ehm. Need it, and it wasn't like, I asked for more days off either, am. I think it was

nice to have those days, to get away a little bit, and time, and have some time to process everything that was happening but, ehm... They weren't that much different from the days, that I was at the organisations, because I normally spend it with the same people, sort of. I wasn't ehm. It was mostly just that I left the part of the town, that I was to see something else, so that was the major difference, I think to see something different, that I didn't see on a daily basis.

S: How did you experience the culture?

L: The culture was...I experienced it very different from my own and, very, ehm, warm and welcoming but also. That I, I found myself being in a position where, I didn't know, that much of the culture. I had to learn, but the man that I met the first day that showed me around, and that turned out to be my friend afterwards. I was very open with him, like, with all my pressures, like I had a person that I could talk to, and I had the opportunity to ask questions that I was like, too afraid to ask others. Because I didn't want to offend anyway like I wanted to stay, ehm, respectful. But I remember we talked a lot about how to behave as a woman and ehm, in, in this area, and also like "do I have to cover myself or". Ehm, we talked a lot about religion, because he took me to a temple, where they sacrificed goats, and it was very special. I told him like we don't do this at home like it was kind of a shock for me. I think there was a lot of things, that were just, it felt like such a contrast from back home, and everything felt different. Even in the beginning it felt like India and Sweden didn't have anything in common. Ehm, but it was really nice to have someone that I could have these discussions with, and I could also open-up with. Like what kind of culture I came from back at home, and how I saw things, and he could tell me, like some back story and why things were as they were. And give me a chance to understand the culture a bit better. ehm, and... But it is also, so you have that part of the culture, but then you also have the culture of like, ehm, being, because, I remember when I went back. So when I was there, I was there in the winter time, and I would have super long hair, and I was super pale, and they thought that it was the nicest thing ever. When I got back, two years later, and I was very tann, and I had very short hair, and they were like "what have you done to yourself, like why do you look like this". They had this

book, I think cause I had a an english class with the younger kids, and you had this book that they went and looked through, and you can see

- *showing a picture of the book (white woman, with blond hair, marked "beautiful", while in another picture, a browner girl, with black hair, marked "ugly")*

they were supposed to be taught that being like, pale and this is a book that is produced in India, is not a book from a Western company, it is like an Indian company. And it is just so weird, and I just remember, like seeing this, and teaching about this, and ehm, it was very different from back home. I think that part of the culture also, became very clear that if you are pale and.. ehm look like western you're considered more beautiful, and then you get more benefits. And then if you're dark and look more south asian you, ehm, are uglier and not as worthy, basically ehm. So. We talked a lot about that.

S: What was the best with the trip?

L: That best with the trip was.. like.. I mean the experience overall was like... The best. I guess. But also getting to know a new culture and have an understanding for other people, ehm. But I think the very best for me, like personally, was it was a reality check, and it was, ehm, an opportunity to realise how lucky I have been. Just because I am borned in a certain country, and family. I think I learned a lot about myself, and usually, when I talk about this trip, I am like "oh I think I got so much from that personally, than just me being there to do some type of work", "like giving my time to this organisation". Ehm.. I think, I want to believe that I contributed with ehm, things that were of value, but I also think that, I overall, got so much more from the experience and I, had a chance to realise like how privileged I am. And how, ehm, we live differently around the world. I think that was something, that I got from that trip, and that I took with me to all the other things that I have done after. But then also like the people and the, yeah the people, to be in that, and to be in the place, I still have such a special place, ehm, in my, for me, India, like, I love that country, and ehm to.. Realise that you can feel sort of at home, on the other side of the world, in a society that is nothing like your own, it's a really cool feeling.

S: What was the worst with the trip?

L: I think the worst was, the uncertainty that, it was very unorganised, and at a lot of times, I felt like, "what am I doing here, what is the purpose?" Ehm. And since it was no clear, like work agenda, or schedule, I think, yeah, the uncertainty of it, was the worst or whatever. But I mean that was an experience in itself, also, that I learned from but, ehm, I think in the position that I was in, then, and being young, and being on my first trip, I would have liked that it would have been a little bit more organised. And to not feel as, confused but, ehm, yeah. I think for me, also processing being on my own, ehm, that it was really hard to being away from. Ehm. Everything at home, I wasn't able to be in touch with friends or family, because I didn't have any wifi, or internet, or anything. And I didn't have any access to any news or information, and what was happening around the world. So I think I felt very isolated which was, could be a good thing. Because then I was really living in that life that I was having at that moment, and not thinking about other stuff. But it was also really hard, when things happened, ehm, at home that I couldn't control at all.

S: How did you use social media during the trip?

L: I used it, ehm, when I could, because I didn't have any internet. So I like uploaded five pictures on my Instagram, that was it.

S: Would you like to show them?

L: Yeah I have picture, let's see which ones I uploaded when I was there. And which ones I could upload when I was back. So I uploaded those two pictures when I was there.

- *Showing pictures from her Instagram- account*

These was like on the same day, so I had been here now for like two weeks, so it was like, where I lived. This was the women I worked with, who was writing her thesis, and then also, yeah, the one picture that I showed you with the textbook. And this is from another trip I think, yeah, so I got really close to one of the kids and then I spent a lot of time with him and his family like outside of work. And, ehm, because he was not really like, he was sick and he wasn't really in school, and, ehm, he had a very like

confusing life. Then his mother invited me to their house, and, ehm, so I spent a lot of time with him, ehm, even though I was probably not allowed to do that. It wasn't that popular at least, ehm, so, yeah. Then I didn't have any, I didn't use Facebook and I didn't have any blogs or anything like that and, I emailed people, basically. Like, that was how I stayed in touch with people.

S: Okay, so let's head on then, to the post-trip. So, could you please tell us about how you felt when you came back home?

L: Ehm. Awful. I was. It was a really hard time, like transiting, like coming back home. I also came back on Christmas, which was like. In my head, I thought that was supposed to be nice because everyone was going to be at home and I could be with my family. But, I just felt so much like anger and frustration against this society that we were living in, in Sweden. Also when you come home on Christmas, everything is just like so extra, and such overflow and the like gifts and, ehm, food and ehm. The things you buy and the money you put in to celebrate Christmas. I had just, I just really felt clearly that I, I left people behind. And I had the opportunity to leave, like, this was just like a break for me. Like I could go on this trip and just learn so much and be a part of this experience. But I could just also leave, whenever I wanted to. I always knew that I had that opportunity, and knowledge, and that hit me so much when I came back home. I remember writing in my notes the last day, I cried so much going there, because I was so like confused, and unsure, what I was going to do. It was like a hard time being alone, but I think I cried even more, when I had to leave everything. Because then I realised that I can do this, I can leave, and I am just gonna, it felt like I left people in misery, and I just came home to this overflow and I just looked at all this food and gifts, do you know how long this would last for the people that I spent my last months for and ehm. I felt like maybe even more alone when I got home, because I realised that no one would know how what I felt and when I was away and I can't explain it for them and it just felt like.. I didn't know what to tell people, when I got back home. They were like "oh, how was it in India, what did you do?" and I gave so short answers. I was like "yeah, it was great, the people are lovely, the food was so nice" because I felt that I couldn't really talk about the real stuff,

like everything that I have seen, everything that I have experienced, and went through, and all the people and their stories and.. I was such a limb, like should I tell them everything, or should I just let them have this like, "oh she went on a nice trip and she did some things she could".

S: What were your positive feeling?

L: Mmm, my positive feelings about coming back, was that I felt like, I learned a lot, that I got a crazy experience and that I. Ehm. Really understood the reality that I was living in, and, I got a reality check, and my privilege and everything like that. So I guess that was positive for me to realise that, and also, ehm.. I mean it was nice to see my friends and family. But like the first weeks I just felt very eh, like nothing felt fun or good or, I couldn't just, I couldn't stop thinking about what I left and the contrast was so huge. I think that was also it, so it was hard to, basically, to feel and process anything. So I felt like in the beginning, I didn't see it like as anything positive, or negative, or anything, I just... was in it sort of, trying to process it.

S: How do you think about the experience today?

L: Today, I think about it in so many different ways and I... Yeah... Ehm.. I wouldn't do it again. Like, voluntary work in that way, or voluntarism. I understand myself, why I did it when I was 18, and a part of me, like gives credit to myself, that I did it. That I wasn't afraid to do it. That probably has to do with it that I was naive, but I am like, I am glad that I did it, but after like. Starting uni and reading more about voluntary work and voluntourism, reading more about different theories about people from the west, going to the global south, and come with this idea of "I am gonna come and save you and help you" and that made me think a lot about my experience and ehm. I am glad that I, was so, ehm early on, very clear on that I didn't want to go through an agency. That I wanted to go to a local organisation, right away, and be like "do you want me here", like "is this some deal that you have with an agency", and I didn't want to pay anything. I just wanted the, like for me the authentic experience and I am... I am glad that I did it that way but... at the same time as I said before, I don't know how much I contributed with. I don't know if it contributed with anything, and I don't know if it helped

anyone at all. I want to believe that what I did was of value and, ehm. That for me I think it was mostly like, I dedicated my time, and energy, and put in, effort into this organisation and I, believe that it was received good, but at the same time ehm. I was just able to leave you know, and that I think that was the kind of part where it is like, ehm. Feels a bit hard for me that I am like, I just left and I was able to just leave. That is always going to be the case of when you do voluntary work, in that way that you can always go back to your normal life, and you will always have that type of structure and power relation. Ehm. That you are, I am privileged enough to go to another country to experience, and see other people's misery. Which is just crazy for me when I think about it that way. But I also want to believe that people want to do good and people want to help other people. But I just don't know how to do it ethically and morally correct, like how do you justify it, can you ever justify it? Probably not. And... Ehm.. So yeah I feel a bit split towards at it, at the moment, and I mean it has been five years, it looks a bit different now. To just to look like how people are travelling and voluntourism, overall and what knowledge you have now, compared to the knowledge that I had when I left.

S: Do you feel that this experience was valuable?

L: Ehm. Yeah, I do feel like it was valuable ehm.. For me. But.. Mostly because of personal reasons ehm. I don't know if the experience itself and to do the voluntary work, there, actually was valuable, because what I did mostly was spending time with people, I had some English classes, I went on some field trips, I had some photography classes, like I don't think that type of work like, I didn't learn any new from that. But it was valuable for me as a person, to get that experience, and to also be inspired and motivated to what I wanted to in the future. What I wanted to work with, and change with the world, sort of.... Learn a lot about myself and then... I hope that.. it was yeah...

S: But what did you learn about yourself?

L: What I learned about myself was that ehm.. Yeah as I said, the privilege part, and the reality check, but also what I... was able to do, ehm.. sort of like being independent and, ehm, navigating myself in a whole new context, and with, ehm, people that I would never have met before, to put myself, to push

myself out of my comfort zone and, ehm, experience a new society, and a new culture, and like stay open-minded, and stay respectful and, ehm, also... Like try to process, analyse, all the things that were happening. I think it was really good for me that I wrote everything down, from day to day, and to see, also, I changed towards some parts of the culture, and some part of what I felt was hard in the beginning. That I realised afterwards and just like how to adapt and, ehm... Just to like always stay curious, I think about new things and new people. In, I think in Sweden, I can think that it is offensive when you're, ehm... asking a lot of questions about someone or being very curious, or just wanting to know a lot of things about another person. But in India it was like.... people it felt like sometimes didn't even had a filter, you could meet someone on the subway, and they could ask you about your whole life, and they could tell you "curiosity is one of the nicest personal traits that you can have here". I was like "ahh that is a bit different that it is from back home". I liked that a lot, because I think when we stop being curious about other people we stop... learning and understanding, and stay open-minded, so sometimes you just have to listen to some other peoples stories. You don't have to feel or think anything about it, you just have to like "this is your reality, this is mine" nice...

Theme 4: Further Reflections

S: So, the last theme of the interview is called further reflections. What are the differences and similarities between volunteering abroad and doing volunteer work in your home country?

L: I think the differences are often... ehm.. Power relations or like imbalance in power, I think it is about, the historical context and about colonialism ehm... It also depends on where you are going abroad, I think. But if you're going abroad, with the purpose of that you think that you can help

someone ehm.. Or you can contribute with something that you believe that they don't have. It's very easy to divide in a like "us and them" and then also the aspect of like going abroad is that you have an opportunity to go abroad and that you are privileged and enough to go abroad. For example with VISA-laws or, ehm, with money or ehm, taking time off from school or work at home, or not have any maybe specific expectations on you to be like, okay, now you have to get married (if you are a female) and start a family or something that like. Like I can actually do this, so I think doing voluntary work at home usually don't come with that ehm... dynamics sort of and that contrasts, because if you do it at home you're usually... In the same context as you are in your daily ehm... It's not... of course it depends on what you are working with but.. Then... I don't think that it is, that is easy to fall into that like colonial heritage trap sort of and that you have to think about your actions in a bigger way so that you don't end-up in this like "white-man savior style " and ehm.. exploit people in a way for your own winning

S: And ehm, in terms of feelings?

L: In terms of feelings... In terms of feelings I think it is easier ehm.... To... it's probably easier to justify to do voluntary work in your home country ehm but it's..... Ehm... Probably more exciting, the feeling of excitement, and an adventure, and an experience, is probably more when you go abroad. Because then you get a different layer on it, it's not only work, it is also, that you are going maybe to a new country, or ehm, getting yourself into a new culture and meet new people that you have not met before ehm.. and I also think that it is more, at least it has been more nerve-wracking to and do voluntary work abroad than it has been to do it in Sweden. Because as I has said before, like to do voluntary work in Sweden I just do work I don't think about it as much as "I do voluntary work", but when you go abroad you are very much out of your normal life and your comfort zone.

S: So, in terms of personal development?

L: In terms of personal self-growth... I think you get different things from different, ehm, types of work. For me it's been very much like, if I do voluntary work in Sweden, it's usually for the purpose

that it will fit me education, like my bachelor program, and that I will learn something in terms of, eh, knowledge, or eh, tools that could help me in the future. Also of course it depends on the type of role that you have when you do voluntary work, eh... I was a president for an organisation, and a project leader for a project, and then you learn a new type of role but eh... Personal growth, when you go abroad, I think it has to do with the holistic picture, like all the things that you have to put yourself through, you have to be very like streetmart and independent and conscious and eh... It's different layers and like and eh, who do I trust and I am safe or eh can I do this am I allowed to do this like that type of personal growth eh... It's probably different.

S: What are the differences and similarities between a volunteer trip and a "regular" holiday?

L: I think a voluntary trip is... more about, eh learning something... I think a voluntary trip contains work, and that you have a special purpose, and why you are going and you often stay in one place. Eh, and you spend the time with people, and you do same things for a certain amount of time, and you have, eh, certain.. eh..... Tasks.. That you are supposed to do. But on a normal trip it's more for... leisure and fun, eh, maybe like every day is blank, sort of you can do whatever there are. No expectations on you, and there are no responsibilities, or anything like that. I am just gonna be here and have a good time and it's gonna be maybe a vacation where I can rest and where I can collect energy and I can be like eh.. Chilling in a different way and maybe be like "oh this is gonna give me more energy than it takes". But I feel being on a voluntary trip, you have, eh, a role, eh, and for me it sort of took the same amount of energy, that it gave sort of and also the idea of like coming home. When I come home from a normal trip, I feel like rested, or eh, ready to go back to my normal life. But when I got home from India, from the voluntary trip there, I was just like exhausted, and down, and like frustrated, and angry, with so many things. Eh, so I think the after- process is also... different

S: And in terms of personal development and self-growth?

L: Eh... I think that you can learn the same amount of things on a vacation and a voluntary trip, depending on what type of vacation you do. I mean if you go to an all-inclusive resort then you will

probably, maybe you will learn something I don't know, I don't think I would learn anything by going on that. Ahm but if you go to a country, to experience it, and to get to know the culture and the history even though it is a normal vacation. I mean you could probably develop a lot as a person, but on a voluntary trip, you also get the personal growth, and ehm, knowledge about a specific type of work so if you're. If you work with women rights, you will probably get to know a lot about that, and if you are at an animal rescue you will probably get to know a lot about that ehm... Anything that's difference between, ehm, going on a normal vacation maybe you focus on other things, maybe you focus on like going to nice restaurants or different attachments, that are really important in those kind of countries. And you put your time and focus on that, and also focus on having a good time, while you do a volunteer trip then you learn more unexpected things.

S: And in terms of the impact on the local environment?

L: In terms of the impact on the local environment. I mean no matter what type of trip you go on, and no matter like how you are travelling, it is going to have an impact on the local environment. And on the local people, and I think it could be the same if you on a regular vacation, as you go on a volunteer trip. But I think in a volunteer trip you get closer to the local environment and the people because... I think you get into it more and you.. live sort of the same life as the people, at this place, you are living, while maybe if you're on a normal vacation you still like... Maybe you're staying at a hotel, but you are still doing some kind of field trips to see more of the local parts, but you are not living in it. So if it was for me going on a volunteer trip, and then leave to go back home, like that was the big realisation to me to be "I am leaving this life", and you guys will be on a vacation you constantly battle between those two things. Because you go on a trip within the country, the city you are in but then you go back to your hotel or the apartment that you are renting and you are constantly going forth and back, and going in to the society and out from the society and you distance yourself in another way. But I think if you go on a volunteer trip, for me, when I did the voluntary trip, I was in it for 2 months and then I left so it came also like all at once, ehm...

S: Would you recommend other people to volunteer abroad?

L: Ehm....

- *Silence in the room*

I don't know actually like... I think it depends on... How you do it and how aware you are about your own actions, your own impact and about the history and how... It can be interpreted sort of and... As the world is looking right now, and with the knowledge now, after like a full bachelor program, which has been discussing this and thinking about to my own experience. I am not quite sure if I would and I wouldn't like recommend it, and want to go through an agency or doing things like that but... I think.. I you have a really good idea or a really good project, that you want to do, and you have an open discussion and an open conversation with an organisation, somewhere and be like "will this be anything that will be of value for you". I mean then maybe, yeah, you can do it, but I think I wouldn't sell the idea to someone and be like "this I highly recommend you to go and do this" , "I highly recommend you to be a part of the experience of voluntary work" then maybe I would push more to like "I highly recommend people to be out travelling and experience the world if you have the opportunity", but also realise.. Realise that you have the opportunity and that kind of privilege to do that and.. Be.. Ehm.. Respectful with that, that not everyone can do that. But also think it is the cultural exchange and the ehm to put yourself out of your comfort zone and be open-minded is how we learn and how we develop and especially when we live in such a global world. So... I don't think I would fully, whole hearted recommend it.

S: If you would do it again, what would be the ideal volunteer trip?

L: The ideal voluntary trip for me would be that I... I really feel that I have something... Valuable to contribute with that is gonna outlast me, ehmm, whether that could be a project or an idea or...

Whatever that could be, ehm... I would... Be happy to do it, I think. But I would also feel like I would need to spend a lot more time, ehh, I think for me, looking back to five years ago, two months were such a long time for me. And to be away and do all that, but when I think about it now I am like 2

months is nothing, I was there for 2 months and I left. So, if I would do a voluntary trip again I would like it to be for longer and I would like it to be more like... I am gonna leave when I know that... This project isn't sort of like depending on me or anything like that I am just sort of... Giving the tools and the knowledge that I have, I can never know for sure like.

S: What do you think about voluntourism today?

L: Hm, if I think about voluntourism today.... That is very hard and very complex, because you can never do what the purpose is. Like, the people that are doing it, are they doing it so they feel good about themselves, or are they doing it for their social media platform, or the whole society now that we live in, ehm.. influencers and.. Everything like that, I believe that they have a great platform to educate, and to spread knowledge, but, it is also in the way you are doing it and if you are doing, so that you will look like a good person, or if you are doing it because you actually want to like spread the word about an issue, and ehm... I don't know if we ever going to figure out if we can justify that, or not because of like the history that we have in the world and the different positions that we are living in. Ehm.. So... Ehm... I think, voluntourism now maybe has become such a huge industry, but who is really benefiting from that industry and who is supposed to benefit from that industry. Ehm.. And if you don't think about that and you don't figure out that question, I don't think.... You can.. Justify it.

S: What do you think are positive aspects regarding voluntourism?

L: (laughing a little bit).

The positive aspects I think is the cultural exchange and learning about other people. And like getting an experience about something that is so way off from your own life, and your own like small little bubble, that you are living in, and I think that could be very educational and ehm, and a good experience and.... And... To... I hope, I think that the ehm... The basis of voluntourism and why it occurred was probably that someone thought that I have an opportunity to do something good, and that I can help someone that doesn't have the opportunities and privilege, that I have why I shouldn't I do it. And.. If you just look at that idea and don't think too much about it, it is a really nice concept.

But we also live in a world where you can't just see that idea for itself, you have to analyse a bit and you have to put on some perspectives and ehm.. do your research and realise that maybe that this is not always the best idea ehm.. so yeah.

S: So... What are the negative aspects?

L: (laughing a little bit).

The negative aspect is that I think it is...Ehm... Privileged people can benefit from unprivileged people, that you go into the experiences like, "I am gonna save someone", "I can do so much better". You put people into different boxes like, "us and them". Ehm.. I think it could also lead to exploitation of people and, ehm... To start a whole industry around the fact that people are suffering is, I don't, that's the best and.... Also the negative aspects of, ehm.... That you can always leave sort of. The part that it is not your reality, and you're not actually living it, and also that most of the voluntourism industry is global north, global south. What would happen if we would turn it around? Would it be more equal then? Like we could probably or we could for sure learn from other people ehm... That... Ehm... That could come here and do volunteer work and teach us about how to do things. But that is not how the industry looks like right now. So. Yeah.

S: How would you like to travel in the future?

L: In the future I would like to travel environmental friendly and I would like to travel... in a way that... is... Ehm... Hm.. Receiving for me like, like I feel that I would get something from it in terms of personal growth or experiences or.. Understanding of a new cultural and to be like inspired by others. If that is 2 hours from here, or 20 hours from here, I don't really care. But I think I, and in the idea of travelling for me it's still to, to learn and to understand sort of.

S: Thank you so much. Would you like to add something or do you have any questions for us?

L: No I am fine.

9.6 Appendix 6- Transcript In-Depth Interview with Julie

The interview took at 9th of March at Copenhagen Business School

Biographical Questions

- **Name:** Julie Sørum
- **Age:** 25
- **Gender:** Women
- **Country of origin:** Norway
- **Education:** Graduated (Brand and Communications Management master at CBS)
- **Work:** Communications Coordinator at DACHSER Nordic
- **How many times have you volunteered?** I was part of the solidarity project for 3 years, but only traveled once to Africa
- **When did you volunteer?** From 2011 to 2014
- **Where did your volunteer program take place, and what did you work with?** At school and at home. I worked as an "ambassador" who promoted the project and engaged my co-students to contribute to the project
- **What did the volunteer trip(s) approximately cost?** I don't know
- **What organisation arranged the trip(s)?** Drammen kommune and Drammen videregående skole, so no particular organisation other than us.

Introduction questions regarding travelling

M: What makes travelling interesting for you?

J: I think it is interesting to gain new experiences, ehm, experiences that you don't necessarily have at home. So, I would say that's my primary reason maybe for travelling. And, also, relaxation and just, yeah, doing something different than you are used to. Vacate your life.

M: How often do you travel?

J: Ehm, I think perhaps, for the last five years, ehm, I think maybe twice or three times a year.

M: What has been your best travelling experience?

J: Hmm, that is a hard one.. Hm, I remember I went to the Caribbean with my family, that was really nice, complete relaxation, and just, ehm, enjoying being with my family in a place where we never been before, just experiencing that together. That was a nice trip.

M: What is your dream trip?

J: Ehm, I would like to travel from the east of The United States, all the way towards the west with a car. I think that would be nice, ehm, I would also like to go back to the Caribbean if I could. Mexico perhaps, ehm, and also just see some other big cities. Ehm, maybe not China right now.

- Laughter in the room

But Tokyo for example, that would be interesting.

Theme 1: Travelling and Tourism

M: How do you feel about travelling?

J: I feel that travelling is a good way to kind of balance out your life a little bit. Ehm, I think that everyday kind of turning into the same thing, especially, if you just yeah, do the same thing in your life, the same routine, every day of your entire life, you will maybe eventually think "what is the point?". And then, when you stop and take a break to something different, you might, ehm, gain that new energy or yeah, it is just nice to change your perspective sometimes.

M: How did you get interested in travelling?

J: Ohh, I don't think I have it as a particular interest, I just like to go on vacations, that is primarily why I travel. Ehm.

M: Could you tell me about your first travel experience(s)?

J: Oh my first travel experience.... Ehm, so I think, when I was small I went to Florida with my parents, we went to Disney World. Which is of course something I remember as a little girl and seeing

all the princesses and stuff like that. I think that's, yeah, that is one of the earliest memories I have of experiencing something like completely different from Norway.

M: And how does travelling make you feel?

J: It makes me feel, ehm..

- *Waiting a lot*

Mmm. **Julie:** Like I am living a fulfilling life, I would say. I would like to think about myself as a person who tries to fill up my life with, different things and different experiences. Ehm, yeah.

M: How do you usually decide where to go when you want to travel?

J: Hmm, for the last couple of years, it's been a lot about, ehm, where I can afford to go, because I have been a student. So, maybe, a lot of the trips have been like, three or four days to a city, and, then, the one week during summer when you take off someplace warm, doesn't matter where it is, as long as it is warm and you can go swimming. So this past summer I went to Spain, to just relax, not do anything interesting, just relax and be in the heat.

M: How do you feel about tourism?

J: Tourism.. hmm

- *Waiting a while*

I think it is a nice, ehh, concept, you kind of, when you see tourism in your own country, you kind of, you become proud, maybe. Ehh, that people find your own country and your customs, eh, interesting. Whereas, tourism for me, I don't know why, but I try not to act so much as a tourist.

M: Why is that?

J: I don't know, I just think today, when you see all over the internet, all of these memes, like, holding your hand on top of the pyramids, and supporting the tower of Pisa, ehh, I just find it a bit, ehm, mainstream, perhaps. I think it has a lot to do with social media, actually. Because that's where you kind of are exposed to all of those pictures and all of those different influence shares, and just people who wants to show you their life, and for me, that's seems kind of silly, travelling just to show other people

that you been travelling. I would much rather, go to a place, and be there. Instead of just taking pictures of everything. So I think that is my issue with tourism.

M: How do you feel about the growth of the industry?

J: Ehm, I feel like it is a positive growth, except for the emissions, of course, with all of the flying and eh.. But I think it is important that we learn stuff about each other, and that we are not, kind of, separated by borders, anymore. Eh, like we are, but we aren't. Ehm, so I think it is important to learn about each other, so I like tourism.

Theme 2: Volunteer Work

M: How was your relation to volunteer work before going on a volunteer trip abroad?

J: My relationship was that, during, ehm, high school, in Drammen where I am from in Norway. We have this, one day a year, we take the day off in order to collect, or, each student collects 250 kroner each. This money goes to this cause, where we all send those 250 kroners each, down to Kenya and they just it for scholarships for the kids down there. Some of the kids at least. Ehm, and, first I just joined that one. Eh, and then, you know the concept was that, students help students and that there should not be any "organ" between. Of course you needed a committee of students to be the representatives of the Norwegian school, and then to meet the teens down in Kenya. I joined the committee and then I of course, I got more engaged and started to spend more time on the project. I also collected all toys, old cloths, and stuff like that and meet up to sell it, I guess. But think that is more of a re-use. Ehm, no, I don't know, not more that I can think of, actually, no.

M: Why did you work voluntarily?

J: I think it was to have something, first of all, I thought it was a cool project and of course, I think that any person would want to help where they can. And of course I could be satisfied with just giving, or "just", collecting the 250 kroners, but I wanted to be a much bigger part of it, and I think that, eh, one reason is to help those in need. And another reason is that it will help me, to grow and to learn about a

different culture and what we have been doing actually has an effect. Because I think for many, especially young people they give money, but don't really see an effect or they don't give money because they don't think it will have an effect. So, it was interesting, because I knew I was able to actually see and almost, you know, touch and meet the people that we were helping. Ehm, so I think that made it more real to me, ehm, yeah.

M: How did you feel after you had been doing this voluntary work?

J: Mm, I did not feel very good, because when I got home after two weeks, and the problems that they are dealing with it is so, like it can't even be compared to our world. I remember sitting in one of their student councils and they went through this list of problems they were trying to solve, eh, and, then they wanted to, and you know, these are very serious issues, "we want to reduce the amount of rape", we want to this and that, all of these terrible that we have trouble imagining. Ehm and then, because this is kind of peer-to-peer project they of course they were curious to know, what our problem was, what our issues are, in the student council. You know, you can't just show up there and say "oh, we don't feel like we get enough meat, and the baguettes they sell in the canteen is not good", because it is silly you know, yeah, you feel kind of stupid being there. Also when you are exposed to the slum like we were, its eh, it's kind of these images that you don't get rid of. It is just, like, even when I talk about it now, I think that it is terrible to think about that some people have to live like that. Ehm, so when I got home, I actually felt kind of ashamed, because they also were so happy to see us and were looking at us like, angels. When in reality we have so much that they don't, and those 250 kroner is nothing to us, so you kind of feel bad that they think you are so great, but you are not. So I felt bad, I had a bad conscious, and I did not feel better after having being down there.

M: I would now like to ask you some more questions regarding your volunteer trip experience.

Let's start with talking a little bit about your "pre-trip".

Theme 3: The Voluntourism Experience

Pre-trip

M: How did you first hear about voluntourism?

J: I have not heard about the term before, but I think I know what's in the word. I would think that you, as a tourist, go to a place and do voluntary work. Ehh, and I feel that's a good way to combine, you know, two things. I just think that doing volunteer work is very serious, and you are exposed to things you, perhaps did not want to be exposed to or you do not really know what to expect. So for me, personally, I would separate going on an vacation, from doing voluntary work. Definitely. So, it is not something I would do. I would go either to do volunteer work or go as a tourist somewhere else.

M: You did not do "touristy" activities on your trip?

J: We did. We did different things down there, and what was so terrible, was that we started at the school, in the slum, and then we were sent out to their national park. Then we were offered to stay in a resort out there for two days, and the of course we were treated like royalty and taken on safaris, and stuff like that. Which was of course amazing and incredible. The problem is that, when I think back at in now, I just remember, the shame that I felt, going on that two day trip, and straight to the slum again. So it is like slum, poor, and horrible things too a movement to something amazing. It was a huge contrast. You go back and see, eh, people have it awful, and think suddenly, the money they used to send us on the safari, we could have used here. We could have build a house, maybe two for that amount of money. We don't really need to go on safari, of course it is fun, but I can use my own money on that. So that experience is also tainted. So, I would definitely separate the two, tourism and voluntourism.

M: So, why did you decide to go on a volunteer trip?

J: I decided that based on, you had to apply for joining of course, because you had to have done certain things and be a good fit for the entire group going down there. Ehm, so, I knew I wanted to go, because, as I said before, I wanted to see the effect of the money that we were spending.

And also, I as I said, to help myself grow. So, is was those two things, I wanted to see where the money went and meet the people that we were helping. And also, to help myself grow. To be honest, it is always two parts to everything, and it did for sure help me grow, because I felt terrible when I came back home.

M: Can you tell me about your preparations for the trip?

J: Yes, we collected cloths for teenagers and also I think some toys, but that's for younger kids. So primarily, clothes. Ehm, and then we gathered a lot of kind of pictures and artifacts and created a powerpoint presentation too. We did this to bring down to and tell these kids about Norway, and even explain what snow is. And then just, ehm, yeah, it was that we collected clothes to bring down and prepared a little information, a little entertainment for them. So they could learn more about who we are and where we come from.

M: How much information did you receive before the trip?

J: Yes, oh, it is so long ago, but I guess we received some kind of schedule. And I remember it being, we started the week in Nairobi, eh, and then went to and from the slum from the school. And then those it were those two days, when we went to the national park, and then back.

M: Can you tell me about the expectations that you had?

J: Ehm, I was very, excited, I would say and also a little nervous, cause I knew this would not be, like, going to Disney World.

- Nervous laughter

Or the Caribbean. I knew that it was not going to be like, pleasant. But I did not expect it to be that bad, I think. Because I was 16 years or 17 years old I think, I don't remember, but I was young, so I don't think I kind of realise that "ooh, we are doing this solidarity project" and this is so exciting and now I am able to get down and meet these people. And you know it is Africa, and I never been to Africa. It was all of these kind of excited feelings. Ehm, yeah.

M: How did you feel about going?

J: I think it was a mix between being hesitant and also excited. Yeah.

The Trip

M: And now I wonder if you could tell me about the trip. Try to describe it as detailed as you can from the beginning to the end.

J: I can tell what I remember. I remember that we took a fly from Gardermoen. Then we went to Holland, or something, then we changed flights, two flights, I remember this. And when we got there, it was so much traffic in to Nairobi, because they had no system, I feel like the traffic rule was, "who has the biggest car", or "who has the car that will not be smashed if we run into each other", so think we spent about three hours getting from the airport and in to the city. And then we went to our hotel, which was fine, except that it was guarded by two people with guns, so it's, I had never experienced that before, but I understood, okay it was for security reasons I guess. And then, we had a driver, who came and got us everyday, two and from and I think we went around Nairobi for a while then, eh, went to, into the slum, into the school, and we spent a lot of time at the school. And then, you know, some small walking trips down to the slum, but we were always accompanied of some of the teachers or some of the people running the center. Yeah, it is more a center where you can play sports and you can gather support groups, than a school. But it is also a school, buy maybe better to call it a community center. And after that week, we sort of, left them there, and that is also what it feels like, leaving someone who is in disperse and that you feel like, you can't help. And even though you feel like you are not helping, they are so thankful. So it is kind, yeah, not a good feeling. Yeah, anyway, so we went home. Ehm. That is sort of what I remember.

M: Would you like to share any pictures from the trip?

J: I think we took a lot of pictures, I have had no time to look for them though. But I can try, and get them for you, if I find them.

M: How did you feel during the trip?

J: I felt like in the beginning, I felt excited. And also amazed by the nature out in Masai Mara and everything was so new, everywhere you looked, something you had not seen before. Ehm, but, it was really, ehm, tough and kind of grose, being in the slum. Eh, and of course we were with the adults always, and we eat at the school and stuff like that. We went to the school every day I think. It was important to have a community there, I felt.

M: How did you experience the culture?

J: Hm, I feel like they are a very very religious community, because that is kind of the only thing that they have, the faith in god. And what they are saying is that, "this is god's plan for me". So they kind of, settle with that. I think that it is kind of two parts to that, one is that it is important to have a community that you can join and be a part of. And you are absolutely dependent on other people to survive. The other part of it is that you kind of give up, saying that "this is god's plan for me", and then you just, reconciling with that and then it is kind of limited for what you can do. Because you just kind of give up. And it is kind of a good excuse to give up, because it is god, and who can say against him? So, I experienced the culture as like, people are religious so when they come and say "Hello", it is like using all of, ehm, these sentences that seems so dramatic kind of. Ehm, and also all of their names, are very like, angel, and even the football team were called "the angels of.." something, so it is very, so everything it is themed around god and Christianity. But other than that, they were very open, smiling, and like I said so thankful. But I don't know if this is their culture or just their situation they seeing us coming with money. Also I think the most difference in the culture there and home in Norway was that the religion do not play that big part of our lives here. Not as much as it do there, because, literally, that is the only thing that they have. Ehm. So I think, yeah, being religious to that extent is the biggest difference, especially among young people.

M: What was a "normal" day like?

J: So we got up and ate breakfast at the hotel and then our driver came and picked us up, and I think that we most days directly to the school. And that was were, I said, we were, and joined student councils, sat in class, and then held some classes and played football. The girls, I went with my best friend, who also had blond hair, and all of the girls I remember wanted, when they had spare time, to braid our hair. They think we were so fascinating. All the time they asked us "are you sisters", or are you "brother and sister" because there were boys travelling with us. Because all they see is like, a white face. So, you look the same, so he is white, she is white, so are you, siblings.

- *Laughter*

J: Ehm, so I think that was more, just hanging out with the people we were helping.

M: Were there any unusual days or events?

J: I would say that every day was unusual, because we encountered things that we did not expect. Like you expect it since it is a poor country and you know you are going down there because you are helping them and because they need help. But being there, and being in the slum and seeing... Ehm...We served them lunch at school every day. And many of the kids poured the majority of the sup, stew or whatever into a plastic bag, and then they just eat a small portion themselves, because they knew that they needed to bring it back to their parents or siblings, that were too young to go to school. So you saw that they eat a little bit, but then they took it back with them ehm, So I remember that also made an impression on me. You know. You get hot lunch here, but you can't really, yeah, eat it.

M: How did you feel during those days or events?

J: During this event, thinking back on it, I think I was very moved. It just shows, that people with little, knows much better than us how to share, the little that they have. So you get kind of impressed, you get moved, and you get sad. Mostly sad, I think.

M: How was the atmosphere at the host organisation?

J: It was very happy. Because, they want to keep every bodies spirits up and make them forget that there in the situation that they are in. Because it is nothing that you can do about it anyway. Ehm, So, it was a really positive spirit all the time. Ehm. Yeah.

M: How was it to work with the staff there?

J: I thought that, that was nice as well. Ehm. They were also, very happy, and good people, and very interested, and... You know they were just very helpful. Just people that you see, doing good stuff and you don't really have anything bad to say about them since they are so good, kind of.

M: What good stuff did they do?

J: I mean they facilitate everything at the school, and divided the resources or allocate the resources the most efficient way that they. Or I think, what they are doing is very smart, in terms of how they spend the money that they get. And who they set to teach the different kids, and how they organise the different sports and different sport teams. Ehm, just the meetings and the gathering of the girls, for example. Ehm. Yeah.

M: Ehm, and how did you feel about the other volunteers that were a part of the program?

J: Oh, I loved them, they are super cute. I of course know, that it is so long ago, I remember best the Norwegian people that I traveled with. We were four adults and four teenagers. Ehm, but I also remember the people we meet down there, I don't remember their names anymore, but of course, they are just as interested in you, as you are in them. And we were all there for the same thing, to get to know each other and I guess some of the points in this project is that, we as their peers, can come home to Norway again, and talk to our Norwegian peers, and explain for a teenagers point of view what we saw. Ehm. Yeah, I remember I was bonding kind of with them, in terms of being a teenager, but still, they are in a completely different situation and they don't know anything about you really. Like if they saw who we eat, how we slept, how we drive our cars and stuff like that, I think they would be like, I don't think they would kind of get it. Ehm. All of the Norwegian also did the same work, or

the adults spoke to the adults, while the children spoke to the children. And the children was the once getting helped, kind of. So I, I think we all did the same stuff, the staff travelling from Norway, kind of promoting the project back in Norway and also going down there and ehm. I feel like when we got there, they wanted to show us their country in the best way, that is also why I think it was organised that we went on this safari. And also they took us everywhere, took us to the slum, took us to the school, took us here and took us there. So we were kind of going with the flow, and letting the be the hosts. They also came to Norway.

M: What was the best with the trip?

J: Ehm.

- *Waiting a while*

J: I think just having the memory. And like, one the memory of Africa as this beautiful place where you see elephants, lions and stuff like that. We also meet this tribe and stuff like that. But then at the same time I am having these memories about this incredible people, who does so much for their community and always smiling, and are very, like they just want what is best for everyone all the time, and nothing else matters to them. So just creating those bonds, meeting those people, I think, I think that was the best part, knowing that even though it did not help that much, it still helped them you know. They maybe do not see the big picture, they see their situation, so of course it helped them very much. But when we see everything happening around, because they do not know any better, they are born and grown up in the slum, they do not know what anything else is like. But we do. So we feel like we are helping a little bit, but they are feeling like they kind of being saved, or whatever.

M: Is there a particular episode that you remember? In a positive way?

J: It is hard to say one positive thing, because I feel like It's every memory is kind of mixed, it is sad, but in the same time it is also happy memories you know. Because it is a good thing that you are doing, and they appreciate that. It is hard to say, I liked the trip as a whole, because it helped me to see and taught me a lot and I also created new bonds. I remember something funny, we went to, like

everywhere you go, they try to sell us stuff, no matter what it is. And I understand that they do, because they need money. They are so passionate about what they are doing.

- *Laughter*

First of all, they are very happy, and it is always are special price, just for you. And they are really looking at you, like you are their friend. I remember we laughed about it, because it happened so often, and you felt like they wanted to be your friend and you wanted to be their friend as well. We bought so much. Oh my god. *(laughing)*

M: How did you use social media during the trip?

J: We did not use it during the trip, but we used it after. I did not use my own private account. But we had this common Facebook-page, were primarily students from our school used it. Because the student down there, do not have Facebook. So it was for our school where we planned activities, and told how much we had been saving up and yes, that we did that and that. Used it like a page where things were updated. I can see if the school still have the page.

- *searching for the Facebook- page*

J: This was a unique project for my school. Usually in Norway they have, something called "Operasjon dagsverk". What is a much more national thing, so instead of doing that, our school did this, our own project. Every year it was kind of this, you had to vote for what you wanted to do, and what you wanted to be a part of. So I don't know if they are still doing it actually.

- *Showing us their Facebook- page*

J: The pictures you can see is from the later years, I think that we were one of the first ones to go and then it became a tradition. I don't actually recognize the place in these first pictures. But I think that this is one of the houses in the slum. And this picture is just from a classroom I guess.

- *Showing a picture of a football court with a lot of people, with green grass and mountains in the background*

J: Ehm. And this picture is from my school, and not from Africa. Yes, here I think they are visiting Norway. For us, they picked actually out, the students who had done a lot of charity work and were

engaged in the project to go to Africa, and I think It was a similar process down there. There were four kids and four adults that came up. Ehm, and the four kids I think that they had made an impression or had good grades. I don't know how they picked them out. I remember we were interviewed, for example, before going. Them who visited us, mostly came to see, we just wanted to host them, as tourists in Norway. So we took them to Holmenkollen and all of these touristy stuff. So they did not really, like they came more to see Norway. They came like as ambassadors, so I guess they would probably bring something and tell us what that happened at their school at that time. They could take what they learned from us, and bring it back. So this is how the project works. I thought it was very nice at the time, that they came and visited, and we wanted to do everything to make it the best visit ever. Because most likely they would never travel again. And we had it so much fun, because they thought it was so interesting and everything was so new to them. I remember that like fun and giving me actually more of a happy feeling, because then I felt like, oh you can now experience this with us. Ehm. Yeah. So more excited to. Yeah, to show them around and just yeah. Like it was a little snow on the ground and they have never seen that before, so that they could try to slide. So they were just so interesting and fascinated about things, so I remember that as a good experience.

Post Trip

M: How did you feel when you came back home?

J: I did not feel good at all. I remember struggling to convey the trip to my peers. Because we were supposed to have a presentation and promote the project and let them know who they had helped. Like, "this is Angel and she tells you this and that". I told some kind of strong stories. I remember it was not that pleasant because you also realise that they will never understand it until they are there. And you have it not only in front of you on a board but also, literally everywhere. That you can't get out of it, and sometimes you want to get out of stuff like you turn off your TV and turn your head off. Being down there, you had to be there. And I stood there and talked to them but at the same time I realised

that there is not that much that I can say. I can never explain it the way it was. So I did not feel very good when I came home. It was also positive feelings though, when I came home. I gotten to go to Africa, to see how people lived there. I also got the possibility to help the once that I did. Helping a little is much better than to not help at all. I meet some incredible people, and I am still friends with some of them on Facebook to see how they live their lives. Like not the teens, they did not have Facebook. But the adults, the staff working there. So it is just, yeah, it is a good memories. I also had pleasant memories about it. And you know, the fact that we were taken on a safari, and got to be with each other as a Norwegian team, to talk and adjust all that we saw, I think that also brought us together, and made friendships that I will never forget either. So it was a very nice trip in terms of who I was travelling with, and whom I met. And Africa is a beautiful beautiful country that I think everybody should see.

M: How do you think about the experience today?

J: I think about it as a good experience, would not be without it. Ehm, I am really happy that I went. And it is something that I will have, in my memories, as I said with travelling also, it is just creating new experiences and adding stuff and pictures to your life. This is definitintelly a strong memory in terms of it being sad but it is also a good thing. Because it is about people helping each other. I think it is special that it is young people helping other young people.

M: Why is that?

J: I don't know. That is a hard question. I think perhaps a much stronger impression on an Norwegian teen, than a Norwegian adult. I can't say this for sure, but I feel like that if you have a lot of life experience, you have seen and read many other things. And you have a much more nuanced way of looking at life. So I feel like you getting directly exposed to something that you can't really explain or defend or anything. Ehm, I think that might make a more effective impression.

M: Do you feel that this experience was valuable?

J: Yes, I do, definitely. As I said, I think it is good being exposed to things that are not necessarily comfortable. Because it gives you this other perspective on life, and I think that it is good to be kind of humiliated sometimes or you know you get humble. It is a humbling experience in a way. So. Yeah. Really valuable.

M: Would you do it again?

J: Yes I would. I think that it would be easier for me to do it today, than when I was younger. Because then you had lived more isolated, and stayed home with mom and dad. When you move out, even just to Copenhagen, that is not that far from Norway, you meet other people, from different places. You also learn about yourself in a whole other way. That I know so much more about myself now, and had travelled down there now, I don't think I would be that traumatised as I was back then from the experience. But if I should do it again, I would not go alone, I think I would bring my boyfriend or friend or something, but I could go for couple of weeks to do that. But I would separate. I would do that and do the work, and separate that if we would do something else. Like, go there, do the work, and enjoy be with the people there, and then continue the vacation or whatever you call it, or just go home again. I would go do volunteer work. Yeah.

Theme 4: Further Reflections

M: So let's head on to our last theme which is called further reflections.

M: What do you think are the differences and similarities between volunteering abroad and doing volunteer work in your home country?

J: Hmm.

- *Waiting a while before answering*

J: I think, at that time I worked that one time where I did something to gather money in Norway. I think actually I had a part-time job, where I just took the 250 kroner from my salary there to give. Ehm. But comparing it to the experience abroad, where we served them lunch for example, or just sitting

down and talk to them. To join the council, so much more of a real feeling. It is not that comparable, because one thing is just to put money in an envelope and deliver it somewhere. While something else is when you travel down to see the people that you actually have helped. Ehm. And also make a bond with them. That is very, what should we call it, priceless.

M: In terms of feelings?

J: Hm. I would think it is a lot of the same. If you did volunteer work here in Denmark, maybe help people who are addicted to drugs. Maybe that also will give a good feeling, it is a good feeling anyway to help others. And if you help people in another country, then you are helping someone in another culture, maybe with another religion. This mean that you need to take this into consideration when helping. But I would say, in thoughts of feelings, the good feelings you get with helping out others, would be the similarity. But also bad feeling that I don't do more.

M: What do you think are the differences and similarities between a volunteer trip and a regular holiday?

J: The similarities would be going to a country that you do not know. Where you are not a native, or come from. So, that is the similarity. But I feel like a experience are made up of who you meet, so, on a vacation you would not necessarily meet new people, you would be with the once you are travelling with. Like thinking about the last vacations I have been on, you maybe meet people out on the cities. But when you go to another country doing volunteer work, you will meet people who has a lot of the same interests as you, they also want to help and you are together about one cause, that binds you together like, I think few other things can bind people together. So, I think to travel to help, more meaningful, in the terms of "enrich your soul".

- *Laughter in the room*

J: But on a holiday, you feel like it is nice, and you get happy. You have also memories from there, but these are memories you have with those you are travelling with. I think, maybe.

M: In terms of feelings?

J: It is emotions in relation to doing volunteer work abroad. I think you would feel more carefree on a regular holiday, and feel more meaningful, you would feel a stronger feeling of the meaning of life if you go abroad to help others. I think those are the primary differences. That is the reason I say that for me, I would always separate the two. I don't think I would travel on a holiday to help others, I would have just traveled to help others.

M: In terms of personal development and self-growth?

J: That I would absolutely say, I learned a lot about myself. It was a shocking experience, but you grow even more from a big shock.

M: And when you are on a holiday?

Hm. (*laughing*). When you are on holiday, you come home with loaded batteries, and you have had a great time. It is something you have looked forward to for a long time. For example travelling to the cabin with you family, and things like that, you have it so nice, and then you come back home and ready for a new week. Then you start to look forward to the next vacation. More joy maybe with an holiday. It is another type of "look forward to" with a volunteer trip abroad, I think. I would not think that I travel down to help somebody, for a relaxing reason. I would have looked at this as, yes you get new friendships, and yes, you connect with people, and this is an extraordinary experience. So you would maybe look forward to this. But I would not look forward to it, the same way as I would with for example a trip to Disney World. Not that I look more forward to Disney World, but I look forward to it in another way. But in the long run, I think you will get more back from doing volunteer work, than travelling on a booze cruise.

M: In terms of the impact on the local environment?

J: I would think that on a regular holiday, you contribute to the locals by going out to eat at restaurants, staying at a hotel, and all these kind of things. It is important for a local environment to earn money on tourists. Eh. But. So this would have a more "monetary" positive affect, I think. Compared to a trip

where you are going to help out others, you would not only help in a "monetary" way, but also help to facilitate new buildings for people who needs it, for example. On a holiday you help getting a restaurant business to live, but on a volunteer trip you are helping a poor family to get a house. So you are contributing in two different ways, I think.

M: Would you recommend other people to volunteer abroad? And why?

J: I think that people should, if they want to. I don't think people should do it, just because they think they have to. But I think that everybody would benefit from it, I don't think anybody would regret doing it. However, I think that people should be prepared that it is not that "cool" that you might believe, it gets to you. But I would recommend it.

M: Why would you recommend it?

Because, it is a great opportunity to help others, meanwhile you are also helping yourself grow to become a better person. Because, you get such different perspectives on things. And if that perspective last one month and eat less meat, or last for two months, it has at least had an effect on you. That I think is important.

M: How do you think that people will volunteer work abroad in the future?

J: That is very special, I notice that in my group of friends, that yeah - we will fly much less. That I think is a very new effect. Here, the other day, I actually cancelled a trip, together with a girlfriend, because we wanted to save the aeroplane ticket to use it on another trip. So I don't know. Because I think that people will have higher barriers gradually, in relation to flying. So maybe that it will be, or, that will may not happen so near because the flight-tickets are so cheap now. But I think absolutely, that it is a future for volunteerism abroad. I think people would still fly and do it. But I think also that people would need to justify it another way, because you do not contribute positively to the environment by flying. It is highly highlighted nowadays, with Greta Thunberg. Maybe this will just last a month or two, but it has made an impression. So I don't know, I think it is hard to answer.

M: If you would do it again, what would be the ideal volunteer trip?

J: I think, as a woman myself, it is important to help women. Not because I do not want to help men, but I remember when I was in Nairobi, I sat with a group of women, were they had made a micro-bank, where their goal was to save up money to a nursery. Many of these young women have children, so instead of selling their bodies, they could leave the babies at the nursery, so they could go out and find other kind of work. And, do not know how this project went, but types of project like that I think I would do. I would also like to travel back to Nairobi and focused more on this side.

M: What would influence you to do it again?

J: If somebody down there, reach out a hand to me and asked me if I wanted to come back and help out for a couple of weeks. Ehm. I think so. I think they would need to ask me for help, it is horrible to say, but yeah, I think that would be the influence for me to do it again.

M: What do you think about voluntourism today?

J: I think it is much better with voluntourism than only tourism. And kudos to them who manage to look at it as a holiday combine with volunteer work. That is great, I think. For me, it would be hard to separate in the same way.

M: What do you think are positive aspects regarding voluntourism?

J: Eh, that people that needs help, gets help, and the people who help, gets the feeling of joy to be helping. And they also get a holiday. Eh, so "two birds with one stone".

M: Do you think that there are any negative aspects of voluntourism?

J: It can be said that people maybe do it for the wrong reasons. But, it doesn't really matter the reason why you do it, if the work gets done and the money sent. You may not get the genuine bonds like if you had done it solely by heart, but the help still gets there. So, I don't really see any negative sides to voluntourism.

M: How would you like to travel in the future?

J: I would just have sailed with a sailboat, just kidding

- *Laughter*

J: I want to continue go on holiday and travel, like I have done earlier. But for me, holiday is also about whom you are traveling with. So a holiday could also be for me, to travel to Norway to visit my family, as well as traveling to Palma. Except from the heat, maybe a bit hotter in Palma. But yes, I would travel I think the same way as before. Two-three times a year. For example to Tokyo, this is a dream, but do not think it would be soon. This is a trip you need to save a lot of money to take. So, once in a lifetime experiences, would be this, a travel far away.

"Wrap-up questions"

M: Why do you travel?

J: As I said in the beginning, I think it is interesting to change a bit about how you are spending your life. Change up your everyday life. Get new memories, and experiences things that will transform you as a person, and form you in terms of personality.

M: What do you think about travelling?

J: When I hear the word "travel", I smile and get happy, and I think, yes this is something I want to do. So if somebody asked me if I wanted to join and leave for Palma tomorrow, I would have said yes.

- *Laughter in the room*

M: What would you say is your primary purpose of your travels?

J: To create happy memories.

M: Thank you so much for that you took your time and contributed to our study by being a part of this interview.

9.7 Appendix 7- Transcript In-Depth Interview with Sofie

The interview took at 10th of March at Copenhagen Business School

Biographical Questions

- **Name:** Sofie Nexø
- **Age:** 24
- **Gender:** Women
- **Country of origin:** Denmark
- **Education:** Masters of Arts- MA International business communication- intercultural marketing at CBS
- **Work:** Student Assistant at Nykredit
- **How many times have you volunteered?** Once
- **When did you volunteer?** In 2014
- **Where did your volunteer program take place, and what did you work with?**
S: In Kenya and Uganda. Yeah So, I worked at a nursery and a kindergarten.
- **What did the volunteer trip(s) approximately cost?**

S: Laughing

S: It was quite expensive I remember, I think it was around, 40-50 000 DKK.

- **What organisation arranged the trip(s)?**

S: Actionaid

Introduction questions regarding travelling

M: So.. what makes travelling interesting for you?

S: Ehh. Well, I travel quite a bit, since I was a baby my family always took me. So I love seeing other cultures and.. how they do. Just see how it is to actually live there.

M: And.. how often do you travel?

S: I travel at least four times a year. Try to do a bit more, but.. yeah.

- *Laughing.*

M: And, what has been your best travelling experience?

S: Eh. Maybe the one in Africa actually, or when I went to Beijing in my exchange year. Yeah...

M... what is your dream trip?

S: My dream trip, eh, I think right now it is to South America...

M:... why?

S: That's probably first going to be when I am done though, with study, because I want to do like four months. Then travel along living with people there, so you actually get the real experience.

Theme 1: Travelling and Tourism

M: So, how do you feel about travelling?

S: *Smiling and laughing.*

S: I love it. Yeah, a lot. Like, now you can't travel because they have closed down all the airports. I really hope that I can do it still, even with all these virus things. But I really love travelling, always felt very safe about it and yeah. I really enjoy travelling as I said before, to see other cultures because it is such a small country here in Denmark. Travelling is actually sooo easy, it is just a couple of hours on an airplane and then you are in a completely different place. So to see how it is actually possible to live in other places in the world, where they do not have the same benefits that we do. And.. Yeah.

M: So, how did you get interested in travelling?

S: In travelling like in general?

M: Nodding

S: I think from my family, because they always traveled. So, both my parents did like gap- years and took a couple of months abroad. And they still do. Not gap years but travelling, they often travel a couple of months out of time. Mm.

M:... can you tell me about your first travel experience or... experiences?

S: I mean, the first big trip we took, that I remember, is like I think I was ten, when we did a bit of South- America for four weeks. That trip is like the first of the big ones. But yeah. They took me places where it is not normal to take kids. People were like "oh this is the first time I've seen a kid here", on that trip, so.. I think that were is got that from, to go places where people do not necessarily always go to.

M: ... and how does travelling make you feel?

- *Laughing and smiling*

S: It makes me feel very happy. (*laughing again*). Yeah, I mean, I hate when I am not able to travel.

Either if it is because of money, or time. And now when you have a job, and can only take 5 weeks off a year. It is a big part of who I am, that I can travel.

M: ... how do you usually decide where to go when you want to travel?

S: Hm, depending on how long I have, because I have some stuff on the bucket list that I want to go too. Yeah so there are these things, but yeah, there is also the time, so if I only have one week, I would probably stay in Europe. So it is mostly that, not - of course money also, but mostly the time aspect. Yeah.

M: How do you feel about tourism?

S: Eheh. I am not really a fan of places with a lot of people. If course, if you are going to a capital it is going to be a lot, and it is a part of the experience. But I prefer smaller

places. Because I feel like you get to keep the real experience. Where there is a lot of tourism, they often change the place, by building a lot of hotels and people earn their way through tourism, and not how it normally is. If that makes sense?

M: So how do you feel about the growth of the industry?

S: Ehm... Like both good and bad, because then you see these countries that do not have so much, they could actually earn some money through this and have a better economy. But then again, it changes all the things that are iconic about of these places. So they change from being how they used to be to just accommodate the tourists. And I think that is too bad.

M: Why is it bad?

-laughing

S: Like I went to one place in Asia, and I talked to my grandad before going and he said "oh, it used to be this and this", and then I told him what it was now, like it completely change, like it does not have these things anymore. So they have just accommodate the tourists instead of being them, in a way...

Theme 2: Volunteer Work

M: Then it is time to move forward. I would now like to ask you some questions regarding volunteer work.

M: So, how was your relation to volunteer work before going on a volunteer trip abroad?

- laughing a little bit

S: Before I went abroad I did not do anything. Not really like, I was a gymnastic coach, but was too young to get paid, so it was volunteering. So it doesn't really count, but yeah. So I did that, but otherwise it was like, I don't have time to do this, I need a real job, so I don't have time for all of this. It was something I wanted to do though, and still want to do, but I can't find time for it. Hmm...

However, I worked a bit after I went to Africa. Not that much though. It was only in Copenhagen and I

moved away from Copenhagen, so I could not do it in that organisation anymore so. It was with Actionaid as well. So I went out to just to promote, and keep in contact with the family in Africa.

M: How often did you do it when you came back?

S: I did it in periods of times, but when it was a lot it was two-three times a week, then sometimes every second week, in 8 months. Like 8 months.

M:... And how did you feel when you did it?

S: I liked it very much, I think it is very good, eh, I got to talk a lot about my experiences from Africa to people who actually wanted to listen. Like telling people how great it is and getting people to actually want to do it.. It is really good...

M: And how do you then make sense out of volunteering?

S: Ah.. Hard to make sense out of... Hard question... I mean, when I did it in Denmark, I wanted to let people get the same experience that I had. Because it was so good. Eh, I think that was the main reason for me, for volunteering in Denmark. I really liked the organisation and wanted to do something good for that one. And of course, when I did something voluntary I felt good about self, in a sense.

Theme 3: The Voluntourism Experience

M: Now we will move forward to some questions regarding your voluntourism experience. I will start by asking some questions about the "pre-trip".

Pre-trip

M: So... how did you first hear about voluntourism?

S: Hmm. The term. I don't remember.. I think. I think it have just always been there, you knew what it was, eh, my mum talked a lot about it, she wanted to do it, but actually never came do it. And this trip I actually saw on a random poster and thought, ah, this might be good for my gap-year. Yeah...

M: Why did you decide to go on this volunteer trip abroad?

S: Eh.. I liked it a lot, because it was only, it had a focus on volunteering, but had two parts of it. So the first month was kind of like "high school" where they actually taught us like voluntourism is and how you should act in this community and you can't just take your phone up and record these kids, and like, "act like a tourist". You have to be respectful about that this are their lives. Like teaching us the language and all that.

M: So, what influenced your decision to go on this trip?

S: I mean, the company was good, because they had a combination of actually teaching you what to do and not just working and then be a tourist afterwards. It was like, only voluntourism. Ehm, and I liked the places you could actually go. Because there is a lot of different options, so many companies offering you to travel and to do voluntourism, volunteer work, ehm. But this one just had very good places that I wanted to go and what they offered was just, because I had not heard about Actionaid before, but suddenly it was just there.

- *smiling and laughing*

M: So, can you tell me a bit about your preparations for the trip?

S: There was this weekend in Copenhagen, that they arranged for us. Where they also said like, what you can expect. And for me, I did not know that much, because I travelled in August, I think. So I had this summer break after finishing my gymnasium, so it was kind of fast for me to go. Ehh I just like tried to see, what is this country, what languages do they speak, apparently a lot (*laughing*). Yeah, so I was not that prepared I think. So that is why it was good to have the weekend in Copenhagen and a month of school to actually learn what it was to do. Because if I just started going to the nursery first, I would have been completely lost.

M: So, how much information did you receive before the trip then?

S: A little bit. (*laughing*). Ehm, mostly like the same like anybody else could find actually online. But they sent us like some emails of what we like could expect, what to be aware of, they just made some narrow regulations about gay people and how like you should dress. Because it was illegal to show you knees

and shoulders, so they were very much like; please be aware of this and please respect this. Yeah, like guidelines.

M: Can you tell me about the expectations that you had?

S: Ehm, I think I expected it to be rough, which it was. But I think it was more than I expected, because, I lived with a family when I was in Kenya and eh, so it was really real and very right there. Eh, so it was a lot, I got overwhelmed sometimes, cause they were just so happy about so little. Eh, yeah, so I did not think I expected it to be so emotional while I was there, but I was.

M: and how did you feel about going?

S: I was scared.

- *nervous laughter*

S: Very much, because I had not really gone to Africa before. I had been going to like South Africa and Egypt, like the touristy places. But never really to the "real countries", if you can say that. So I was really scared before I went on the volunteer trip and did not really know what to expect.

The Trip

M: So, let's head on then to the next phase, which is the trip.

M: Can you tell me about the trip. Try to describe it as detailed as you can from the beginning to the end.

S: Yes, but it is been like six years.

- *Laughter*

But I will try as good as I can. After the first month in Kenya at the school, we went to Uganda. And I went with two other people so I stayed at the same house with this family, and they were very apologetic, because me and this other Danish girl needed to share a really big bed. For them it was a lot like "I am so sorry". But yeah, then all three of us worked at a nursery, with about, I think there lived maybe 50 kids and then during the day, 400 kids arrived because we offered free food for them. So they could come and go to school and get food. So we worked with the babies, or I worked with the babies.

- *Smiling a lot*

So they were about one month to one year, the once I had. Yes, so they were very small, and some of them were very sick. So for me, the job was to make sure they were clean, make sure they got food, make sure they had someone to play with. (*barkling*) But also we took them to the doctor, to get the HIV test, the AIDs test, malaria test. One of the kids got malaria every second week, so, yeah.. We were just playing with them and made sure they were all right. That was like the work. But we also went to like other schools, to also see how the school system worked in Uganda.

M: Would you like to share or show us any of your posts and, or, pictures from the trip?

S: Yeah of course. I will try to find them here on my computer. (*fixing with the computer*)

S: We did like also go to local schools as well. Just to see, and teach a couple of courses in English.

- *Showing a picture of children in school uniforms*

S: These are their school uniform, it is not that good, but yeah, it is what it is. (*I need to find this picture for you*)

It was a lot of teaching them English but also teaching them that people live different, because some of them cried when they saw us. The reason was that they had never seen like a white person before, and they were like, "what is this", "why do you look like this". It was very weird to them, and they like tried to rob it off. We had to then explain why I was white and why they were black, and I can't even remember what we said, just something like "we live up north, don't have the strong sun". But it was like, it is very Christian. (*fixing with the computer*)

- *Showing a picture from the nursery*

S: Yeah, so this is where they lived. Their beds is kind of like this. The worst thing I think about with this work was that we had to, they are very Christian, so we had to get them circumcised. And they don't really, do like drugs there to like numb the pain, so they asked us, we went to hospitals, of course, if we could hold down the babies. So we had to hold them down when they got circumcised. That was just...Then we had to shower them, like this:

- *Showing a picture of her showering a baby*

S: So, yeah, here is a picture of me and the Danish girl with the babies, we were responsible for

- *Showing a picture of S and a Danish girl with babies*

S: And then the older school kids came at the day.

- *Not that enthusiastic in her voice*

S: We went to church with the kids. The man we lived with was a priest, so he took us to church every Sunday, and then he took us to the local prisons to pray for them after. Which was kind of weird.

M: Why did you think it was weird?

Because he said when he took us to church: "Okey so this is my white kids and they will now pray for you". And then we needed to say a prayer for them. He was like: "this is rapists", "this is murderers," and he just took us there without any bars, without anything.

- *Showing a picture of the prison*

- *Then showing a picture of the children at the nursery again*

S: Here you can see, here was the cloths they were wearing. It is just whatever people found, what was donated to them. All of these kids were abandoned by their parents. So some of them were just found near the gate or they were found parents that tried to kill some of them, it was just.. yeah.. Have a picture from one of the kids when he arrived, I will try to find it.

- *Showing a picture of a baby before he was taken into the nursery*

S: He looked like this (picture) but ended up like this (picture). A completely different baby. This is our work, to try to make them healthy. But then this guy, one baby got fat so he went on a diet the last week I was there (*laughing*). I didn't always know what to do, and the staff laugh a lot of us.

M: How did you know what to do?

Because we were like, what can we do, what could we do? But I think it is basic instinct a lot of it. I just took the kids and took care of them, because most of the time, they just needed to be held actually.

Because there were so many kids, and there were only like four adults to them. It was two for my kids

and two for the older once. So they did not have time to held them like we do, they only had time to give then food and change their diapers. And like the diapers were looked in a room, so then we could only change them in a time period, because otherwise they were afraid that we were going to use too many diapers. Soo..

- *Showing some more pictures.*

S: All of these kids were street kids, so they only came to get some of their education and some food. This is where we lived actually.

- *Showing some pictures of were S lived and a pictures of herself.*

S: Yeah this is me. My hair was a mess all the time.

S: Here you have the living room, which was very good for being an African standard. Here is the bed that we shared. The family where we stayed thought it was too bad and were like "oh this is too small for two, sorry you have to stay there, you can't stay two people there", but it was fine. We also had a actual toilet, which was a nice change compared to the nursery.

M: ... how did you feel during the trip?

S: During the trip I was very happy... Because you get all of these emotions and everyone's like happy that you are there, and that you want to work there, and have all these babies that just wants you attention. It was all so good. Ohh, look at this baby.

- *Smiling and showing a picture of a little baby I her hands*

S: But I was very emotional because you realise how good you have it here, and how bad they have it there. Ehh, I was there at some point and said, someone send them some presents, and they were over the moon, and it was just this little thing. And I just almost started to cry, I would maybe not appreciate this, but for them that was their whole world. So it was very tough actually (*nervous laughing*). Yeah, and you just....

M: How did you experience the culture?

S: The culture was very different, ehm, they made us you know go to the prisons, attend strangers

weddings, eh, they had so much faith in us and they were a lot: "You could do this because you are white". When I went to the hospitals, they made sure that we held the babies, because then the staff their would say, "oh, this is your baby? 'Then you can go in front of the line", "you can get more medicine because you are white". One way they used us, but it was okay, because then we got in front of the line and got more things. I don't know, maybe we were more trustworthy. At one point when I held the baby, one guy was like, "oh, can I see", when he saw that the baby was black, he just turned around making a weird sound. Then it wasn't for him. But they were also so happy, always dancing, asking us to join, which was a bit awkward sometimes.

- *Laughter in the room.*

S: But in a way, it just seemed like they were happy about their lives. Yeah.

M: So, what was a "normal" day like?

S: Hm yeah. A normal day was like, just us waking up, the family provided us with breakfast, then we walked to work, which was just five minutes away, so it was fine. I came to work, took care of the babies, provided them the food, the love, everything. At the end, I almost every day we went to the hospital. Eh, either with some people from the living situation staff, but also people from the street. At one time, I got picked up and he was like one of the African workers said "Sofie you have to come, come with us" and he had found a boy, think he was maybe 14 years, walking around the streets, near the place, who had gotten hit in the head with manchette. So he was just bleeding from his head, and the worker just said to me, we have to take him to the hospital and you have to come. And then we had to take care of that. Like I wasn't really a normal day, since all those things happen and at one time one of the Danish people that was there, got malaria as well, and he got sick. Oh, we had to take care of so much, and it was just.. But yeah, it was quite fun - and we tried to help making the food, but for them there was a lot about honor as well. So they had to make it for us, we can try to teach us if we wanted, but they did not really want to. So. And then cooking was outside, like here:

- *Showing a picture of a women and girl cooking in a garden*

S: So this is my "mom" (pointing at the woman), kind of. And this is her niece, trying to cook for us.

Yeah... But for them it was weird that we actually wanted to help, for them there was pride, they wanted to make all this food.

-Showing pictures of babies and smiling

S: The toughest thing was like saying goodbye to these babies.

M:... but were there any unusual days or events?

S: I mean... I don't know.. A lot of things was kind of unusual. We were left at the prison, me and the girl I went with, at one point. Because when you arrive to these prisons you have to bring a gift, because they do not have anything; they do not have soap, they do not have enough food. So we always had to bring like, soap, food, books, something. And then we went here, and the Danish girl said to the guard, like, "oh we didn't bring anything". Then the guards just left and said, "We are just going to buy something, then we will be back". Then they left me and her without anyone, except from like all the prisoners sitting in a row, in front of us like murderers, rapist, thieves, anything. And we were like, "hello".

- nervous laughter

We did not get prepared at all on this. No one told us, we only got to know that we were going to a prison, two minutes before we went. So it was a lot more than I expected... Yeah, so we did take a week with vacation after this to, just to like sum it all in and realise what that had happened.

M: So how did you feel during those events, days?

S: The funny thing like was that I was not really afraid until after when got home and realised what that had happened. Because there, it was just what it is. And I think you are kind of on guard, everyday and all the time, because you never never know what that is going to happen. And this was just, the way they did things, it was so normal for them, no one was saying anything, they were just like: "okay". So I just think that you went with the flow and took it, whatever happened.

M: ... how was the atmosphere at the host organisation?

S: Oh, it was very good, like it was at a family, so you lived at the mom and the dad, eh, and then they had three kids and a maid. But the maid was the niece, so it was just to give her something to do. The kids were not always there because they were at school and they lived at the schools and were home some weekends on holidays. But they were just very happy for having us. But they were also like, "okay you have to eat now", and normally they would maybe have two dishes, but now they had like eight or nine. Because they wanted everything for us, so we got so fat, because all the time they were just like, "eat, you have to eat". And then they just gave it to you, and you did not want to be rude. But it was really good, and I am still in contact with them, they keep calling me and yeah sometimes and say "Hey Sofie, are you still Christian?".

- *Laughter*

S: That was a big part of our lives down there, you had to pray a lot, that was kind of difficult. Because I do not do that at home. Here you had to say a prayer before you eat, and they could be like, "oh, Sofie do you want to lead the prayer today", you know.

- *Laughter in the room*

M: How was it to work with the staff there?

S: Yeah. We had a lot of different staff. But, we had like two "mamas", that were our main staff. Then the owner son was there a lot as well. Ehm. They were there every day, this was what they did. But they loved having us, because then we could do some of the like, dirty work. The things they didn't want to do. And we could get away with more stuff, so if it was something, they were like "Sofie you can do this". But yeah, they were very nice and very friendly. But they may think it was a bit weird that we came there, for three months - and then we left and then someone else would be there. Like, all this change. This was not a nursery where a lot of volunteers come, Uganda is not that common. Most people go to Tsania and stuff, but yeah I think it is a bit weird for them.

M: How did you communicate?

Their English was like so-so not that good either, we been told before we came that their English was very good and that we did not need to learn Swahili, because they did not speak it there. They did.

(laughing). But the son of the owner spoke very well English, so that was fine. Another thing was just like pointing and then you got like routines so you knew. But yeah, we tried.

- *(nervous laughter again)*

M: How did you feel about the other volunteers that were a part of the program?

S: I had two other Danish people there; who were really nice. I am still very good friends with one of them. She is one of my best friends now, so. *(nervous laughing)* Yeah. One point there were Americans there, with their Christian organisation, so it was a lot about this. Which was kind of weird, because again we got presented as "this is mine Danish daughters, they are not Christian, discuss". And I did not know what to say. But it was kind of fun to see, because for some of the Americans, this was their livelihood. It was not volunteering, but their actual work. But they did so much extra so it was volunteering as well. But... Just to see how you could actually live your life there and see not only African house, but an American African house. It was a huge difference.

M: What do you mean with huge differences?

S: Their houses looked kind of American in the best way they can. Inside them they also had a lot of furnitures and you feel like this actually could be a western household. And then you go to the African one and it looks nothing alike. I have some pictures of the African one... Somewhere in this mess.

S: But it was so different; the walls, the floors, everything. But they also had like this open door policy in the African houses.

- *showing us pictures of the African house, how it looked like*

S: You can see they have a lot of clothing all over here, and a small window, the only one. The kitchen is, I don't even know how to explain it, it looks like an empty storage room in the basement I guess. So yeah. But they also they had this open door policy, so people were knocking on the door all the time, all day. And you should take them in, you couldn't say "oh, I don't have the time", "he is not home", you

just like took them in, made tea and makes some cakes to them, you had to like, be there for them. So, if you wanted to go somewhere, our host were just like, "just go and knock on some doors, it is fine". And I were like thinking, "oh, I am not sure if I want to do this". So yeah, as one of the only African homes this is not their home (picture), but they had a small TV, but was through high class they had some.

M: So, what was the best with the trip?

S: Mm, I mean I think the best thing was just working with the kids, just being there every day with them - because you got so much love from them, and they felt like almost like your babies. As be just able to come there and when you walk through the door and they were like "Sofie, Sofie, Sofie", because they could not say the name of the other girl, so it was just my name. Feel kind of sorry for her, haha, but I loved it (*laughing*). Because before you went to the house were the babies were, you had to like walk through a yard were all of the other kids was. They were just coming running to you and they jump to you and yeah, it was just very overwhelming the first day.

- *showing picture of the yard*

S: Yeah, so you have to go through here, to get there (showing on the picture), were the babies are. All the love you got, but that was also what that made it tough, because during the last couple of days you realised you soon had to leave them. And I am not, or I can't really be in contact with the kids anymore, I mean, I am with some of the workers and the family, but the kids are just, "goodbye". But then, yeah, it is tough, because some of them asked, not those who lived there but the older once that lived on the street were like "Can you please adopt me", "can you take me home", "can you do something, please sponsor me". Like the sponsor thing is a big thing, because then you pay for their school and stuff like this, but we were not allowed to. But you kind of want to just take everyone in.

M: And how did you use social media during the trip?

S: I have never really used social media that much, I did post some pictures up. Me and the Danish girl made a Facebook- Group just for friends and family, so they could stay in touch. Eh, but we were told

not to do that much, like, don't take too many pictures, don't post, don't do voluntourism if you just want to do it - to show people you have done it. We got this information from Actionaid. They were like, if this is what you want to do, then we are not the company for you guys. So yeah, we were very much aware that we could take pictures, ehm, we often gave our phones to the kids so they could take the pictures, cause they did not really have this technology. But it was like a lot on our mind, that we should not do too much.

M: Do you have some picture that you would like to share?

S: I can show which pictures I put on my private Instagram. First picture is from Kenya, we went to see where they actually lived, so it was in this small huts kind of. And this girl on the second photo, she is like nine years or something here, I think, she lived in a room with six of her siblings, and they had two beds. And me and this other Danish girl had to sleep there with them, in the same beds. And so they were very poor, so their chickens under the beds in the same room. Horrible night for me to stay here. And here it was very normal for them to take a beating, so had like this big rope in the corner, ready to just like yeah..

M: How did you feel about that?

S: I felt terrible, we got told before we went there, that this was the case, and some of the people were just start talking to the family, asking why do you do this. Because we were told we could ask questions, but just be respectful. Yeah. They loved the pictures, because then they could see how they actually look.

- *Showing pictures of boys from the local schools*

Here on this school we had to teach English.

-- *showing a picture of a baby and smiling a lot*

Yeah, here is one of my babies in Uganda.

M: How do you feel when you look back at these pictures?

S: I miss it so much. But the weirdest thing is, there were one of the kids got adopted by one of the Americans. Which was such a long process because normally they do not allow this. Eh, I think he left a year after I was there because the process was very long. Normally they do not want to take the kids out of Africa. They want them to stay there, were they know their routes, know the culture. But this one actually was allowed so he is in the states now, so I can still see what's he doing and his life now and it is so different. He was a baby when I was there, now he is in school in America, and it is so weird. The women who adopted him worked for a company that provided all that stuff for the nursery, so she was down just to see if they actually used the things and that everything was okay and just. Then she stayed there, and just fall in love with this kid and kept coming back to him. It was a long process for her, because at first they said no. Saying "we would never do this, it is not okay, he needs to be in Africa".

M: How did you feel when this happened?

S: It was a lot, I was like, oh, I want one as well. But then again, it is six years ago, so I was 18 years. Ah yeah, so I was not ready for it. But I feel happy for him, because his life now is so different, I am not sure if I could say that it is better, because he was happy there. But now he actually has a mother that can take care of him. I felt kind of sad for the other kids, because when she was there, she was like, the mom, and she took care of him. Of course she tried to be friendly, like she was friendly to the other once, but it was just so much love to this other one, so you had to take more care of them when, like the other kids when she was there, not only him. But he was very popular, with like every time it was some kind of visitors or anything, he was always the one people loved. He was a very smiling kid, and he went up to people without screaming at them, some of the others were just so hungry for attention, so they could not really control themselves. But he was always so well behaved, so smiling and yeah. People just liked him.

Post Trip

M: Now I would like to add ask some questions regarding the post-trip.

M: So, tell us about how you felt when you came back home

S: It was very weird then. I first went to Zanzibar, eh, to talk about the whole experience with her, the one I went with. We meet up with some other people both African and Danish who also had been travelling around Africa and just talked about, what actually just happened, are we ready to go home, what do we want now. Because no one really understands other than the girl I travelled with, what happened there. All these experiences we had, we can talk to people about it and they will be like, "oh, sounds cool". And then I came home to Denmark and you just had to do your day again, and it was so weird, because, I was like "where are my babies", how can I get back to them.

M: What were your positive feelings?

S: Ehm, I was very happy that I went. This is and the Beijing was like my best trips, and I am so happy that I made the decision to go here and I would recommend it to almost everyone. Eh, if they want to go, they should, because it is so so good and you get to learn a lot about yourself and be just more secure on like who you are. Yeah, but it was a lot.

M: Any negative feelings?

S: Like, there is a lot of just missing everyone there. And then you go home, and just have spending so much time with this friend, in one room, and we were just so happy of having a normal toilet. But there was not really any electricity it stopped at night, so you had to charge the phone during the day, and be fast. In Kenya we only had internet for one hour a day. And then you came home and you just, you were very happy about it at first, but then you start and taking it all for granted. And I think when I started realising, oh, I actually have it so good, it is like a sense of guilt in a way.

M: How do you think about the experience today?

S: Basically the same, I am so happy that I went, it is one of the best decisions ever. I wish, the plan is to go back at some point, not like working, but just to visit everyone, visit the family, stay there, work a bit, but not officially. But yeah, I really miss it, it was so good.

M: What are your positive thoughts right now regarding it?

S: I mean, in the gap year a lot of people do like Asia, travel around there. I did some Asia, afterwards. Ehm, it is such a different way of travelling, this one, it is not like going out partying, taking pictures, laying on the beach, it is nothing alike. So I am so happy I chose a different way to do it. And, I don't know, I just, I don't know if you can say proud in a way that I chose this instead of all the other things I could have done.

M: Any negative feeling about the experience today?

S: Mmm. I don't know if there are any negative actually. I don't think there is.

M: Why?

I am just very happy about it all. If it should have it should have been that I should have been there for a longer time. Ah, because I did not feel like I was that ready to go home. Because I chose the short one, you could choose how many months you wanted to go, and I chose the short one. Because I did not know if I were going to panic down there. Some people also went home. Eh, there were some people who went to Tsania because the housing wasn't alright, and yeah like one of the coordinators got sick so she forgot to find housing for all of them and yeah. So some of them were like, this is too much, I am going home. So I am just so happy that I did not end in that situation, because I would not know what to do.

M: Do you feel that this experience was valuable?

S: Hm. Very much, very much. Ehm, like you got to see someone who lives a completely different life than you do. And you get to actually appreciate the things you have, of course I take it for granted sometimes, I forget things. But then when we talk here now, I am like okay, you should be grateful for what you have. You should remember, and you should also remember how happy those people were all

the time. Without having all of these things that we just need all of the sudden. Of course some things you need here that you don't need there, I do need my computer in relation to my education. But then I take my education for granted, because they don't have that. Of course they have, but you need to pay for it, but they don't have the money, so for them is just not going to school, they like it and are very dedicated. And for me is like, you wake up, it is raining, and yeah, I am going to sleep in. Ehm. So it is just these small things, and just having food every day, having a place to live, I mean some of these people didn't have places to live, and some woman that worked there got kicked out of her house, but she had somewhere to go, otherwise she would just stayed in the street. And they don't have these big shopping malls, they go to fairs, which is kind of disgusting. It is like all of these everyday things.

M: So, would you do it again?

S: I am not sure if I would do, like the same trip. Ehm, but I would like to travel and volunteering again. Eh, but I am not sure, I need to graduate here first, to have the time. But for now I think I would do like some volunteer work here in Denmark, before I like would start travelling again.

M: Let's take a short break and then we will head to the last part of the interview.

Theme 4: Further Reflections

M: What are the differences and similarities between volunteering abroad and doing volunteer work in your home country like Denmark?

S: I mean when you are doing it abroad, you are doing it basically like 24/7. Of course you can go home, but it is not your real home. So you are there a lot and you have to take culture into the perspective. Eh, because when you do volunteer work here, you are talking mostly to Danish people, and of course it can be very tough because people are going through a lot of stuff, if that is what your volunteering is about. But I think it is more.. Like it is more rough when you go abroad, especially when you go to places that are so different then where you are from. Eh, so it is just a 24/7 experience, when you are there.

M: And in terms of feelings?

S: I think it is a lot about that you don't have the same ability to actually speak about it. Because when you are here, you can talk to someone and say "oh, I had a really rough day", you can actually get someone wordside, because when I was in Africa, of course I had the one Danish girl I could talk to if it was very important. But I couldn't talk to everyone around me, because some did not speak English, sometimes I couldn't find the words in English. And if I called my mom she would be like, "oh, that sounds terrible", but she could not really understand. So I think, not saying it is easy, but I think I would say it is easier to do it here.

M: Do you think there are any similarities?

S: Similarities is depending on which kind of work you do. Ehm, so if you work, for example I worked at a nursery there, so if you do some volunteering hours at a nursery here, I think it will be some similarities, like the kids would still adore you, it is still going to be tough because there are still these issues. It is a reason that people living in these places. But it is going to be different issues, but still, basically you just have to take care of these kids, ehm, all around you just have to care. You have to actually love what you do, before you can do it well.

M: And in terms of personal development and self-growth what are the differences and similarities?

S: Like for me, I was 18 so and I just finished gymnasium, so it was a lot. But I grew so much when I did the volunteer trip. But I think that it was also because of my age. Of course it is going to be, if I do it again, I am going to grow some more. Ehm, like standing on your own two feet, actually have to be the adult. I think that is a lot, because you have to just take responsibility for someone else's life. And it is the same if you are sitting on a hotline here in Denmark, you have to actually guide someone, to how they can be better, how they can be okay, how their life is not completely shit. Eh, so I think it takes a lot of responsibility to actually do voluntary work, almost no matter what you do.

M: What are the differences and similarities between a volunteer trip and a regular holiday?

- *Laughing*

S: Ehm, this are like some of the things they actually told us, that we are not on a holiday, remember you are not on a vacation. Ehm, I think again like you have to take care of someone else. When you are on a holiday you mostly just want to go to the beach, and you just want to like travel, maybe see some sightseeing. And we did have the weekends to do this, but we had to ask about permission because they really wanted us to work, all the time. Ehm. Also, when you are having a holiday you can switch your brain off a lot more, because when you are there, you have to think about almost every move you make, and you are representing a company. And I was representing Danish people as well, "oh this is how Danish people act", "oh, this is this is how people from this company act". So you have to think about like more your actions.

M: And in terms of feelings?

S: I mean they told us a lot about respecting the culture you have to do like this, be a part of where you are, don't be a tourist, be like a citizen. Ah, so we thought a lot about this, of course we did not look like all of them, but we had to like try to fit in. Respect the rules about clothing, about how to act, how to talk, how to like do groceries. And then when we went to the holiday afterwards, we were more like, okay now we are on vacation. We don't have to cover up that much, we don't need to be as respectful, of course you are in another country. But you can just be more free and not think about how much what you do, just be you in a way.

M: And in terms of personal development and self-growth?

S: I don't know if it is that much self-growth in just travelling. There is a lot in volunteering because you learn so much about yourself. It depends on the holiday you are taking as well, I would say. Because if you do just one week on a beach, you don't learn that much about yourself. But if you do like an adventurous experience, of course you are going to set some boundaries for yourself, you are maybe going to get over them and settle on them. So of course there you can taggle some things, but you are more in control I think on a holiday. Where you just can throw some curveballs when you are

volunteering, you can't really say no to all of them. But when you are on vacation, you are able to say, that this is just too much, where there you actually just had to do something, and I was like "okay".

M: What do you mean with more control?

S: With more control I mean, when we went to the hospitals, they expected this of me, I should, for me to do this was such of importance for them. And it meant so much and they expected me to do it, so I couldn't really say no. Even when holding the babies down doing the circumcision, they were crying, and going into the room with the guy the head injury with the manchette, they wanted us to hold his hand. And you can't really, they just say, do this, and you just do. Were it was like when I was on vacation, they asked me to do stuff, for example when we went bungee jumping, I love doing stuff like that, ehm, I said no a lot of times, no, no, no, because I did not like it, I was so scared, but then they said, if you don't do it now you have to leave. Then I were okay, I am going to do it, because I wanted to prove something there, but it was me, then volunteering is more like for others.

M: Could you tell us a little bit more about what you mean with that you learned more about yourself?

S: I mean I learned more like to be comfortable with myself, be actually happy about, okay this is good, this is bad, learning that I actually could make a change for someone, by doing so little, it meant so much for them. Again being able to just travel by myself.

M: And in terms of the impact on the local environment?

S: You learn so much about the local environment, when you are volunteering. Whereas, when you are just travel, one week in a city, some days, you don't really see so much of the local environment, you see the highlights, and you can maybe do one day like as a real and "oh this is where they live" and "oh this is their normal shopping area". Whatever you are into, but you don't really see like the real facts I think.

M: Are there any similarities?

S: I mean when you are volunteering, of course you are going to see the same thing as when you are on vacation. But I think it is like completely different experiences, of course, you are going to see the same thing, but the way you see them is going to be different. Because you know so much more when you actually know the culture some more, and you understand why it is like this.

M: Would you recommend other people to volunteer abroad?

S: For sure, yeah, ah, I had such a good experience with it, eh, but I mean it is not all of my friends I would say "oh, you should do this". Because you need to be aware of like it is tough, and it is not for everyone, and you should be kind of strong mentally, to actually do it. I wasn't like the strongest mentally before I went, but like I got stronger like being there, but I was very up for the challenge, I wanted to do stuff, I wanted to do different stuff. So I think that is actually why I went, just to try something else that not everyone does.

M: How do you think that people will volunteer work abroad in the future?

S: Ehm. I mean, it is been a lot about only people doing it to have it on social media and people who do it only because it looks good. I fear that is going to be more of this, because this is what I really hate. And it is a lot of talk about it is your white privilege and stuff, which is. I mean, it is, we are very privileged here and you should accept it. But you should not use it as a reason to do volunteer work.

M: What do you mean with that you hate people who post things on social media?

S: I mean, you are allowed to post, you are travelling and doing something well, but some people, that's what we talked about when we was about to go, that you should not just do it because you want to look good for others. You should do it because you want to help others and that you want to make other people good, and of course in this process, you are going to feel good about yourself. Eh, so when you only do it because you want to show other people how you are, which is not really, yeah, it shouldn't be like the reason for going.

M: If you would do it again, what would be the ideal volunteer trip?

S: Ehm. I think now, I would like to go to Africa again, I don't know, either in the same place that I was before or a completely different place in Africa. And I really want to do babies again, I mean with kids, but then be away for longer time. I like know more about the culture before I go, I wish I knew a bit more. Like the taught us a bit, like in the months before they talked a lot about African culture in general and like if you see this you shouldn't be afraid, if you see this. But actually do some more like preparing myself on this exact area.

M: What would influence you to do it again?

S: Eh, like time is a big factor, to actually have the time, but that is always an excuse. Eh. But I will also say the political situation in the country, because there are a lot of places where they have these terrible rules, for example about homosexuals, that it is not allowed. So, I would like to go down and work with that actually. Go down and see oh, women are not allowed to vote and actually take some more to this. And like teach kids, oh I love kids, but teach like young girls that it is okay to do stuff and.. yeah.

M: Why?

S: I think again what we take for granted here, is just go down and vote, we can wear whatever we want, we can say whatever we want, and for them it is just so weird that we are allowed to do this and why. Yeah respecting, there was a lot of Christianity, they were like, can you tell us a story from the bible, I was like, yeah I can try, but I am not really sure if I am going to get it all right. Ehm, just to teach them that it is good to have faith, but there are other things, and you can still be a Christian while you act in a certain way and you don't have to, like be so.. (*nervous laughing*)

M: What do you think about voluntourism today?

S: Ehm. I think it is good. I mean I love when people want to go somewhere and I am quite amazed when people use so much time on it. I wish that I did it some more. Eh, so. But it is like always what I say, and what my family and my friends say, that they wish to do it, but people should just do it. Ehm. Because we need it, because it is not, sometimes is this small organisations who can't really pay you. So they need someone that actually want to do the work, and want to do it for free. So I am so impressed

of people who actually just do it. I paid the organisation most of these money went to fly insurance, of course food for me, but a lot of it goes to the family that hosted me. To make sure that they don't like, spend any money on having us, which I think they did, because they were so like they wanted it to be so good. Which it was. But it was a lot about giving them the comfort, but not so much that they would like earn money, because the family shouldn't be doing it for the money either.

M: What do you think are positive aspects regarding voluntourism?

S: Eh, I think it is mainly positive that people want to do this. Ehm. Both the organisation, but also for like the way people feel about themselves. Ehm, and I think it is so, there is a lot of when you get too old, retirement, then you can and have so much time, and it is then you should do it. And I hope that more people will actually do it there. But also, just, if you just take one day a week, or every second week to just actually do something, you can do so much and you can make such a big change for someone, and it doesn't have to cost you anything. Because the easy way is to just pay for a kid in Africa, it is like an easy way to just do something, but it doesn't have to cost you anything, just take some couple of hours of your time, sit on a hotline, go out and promote something.

M: Do you think that there are any negative aspects of voluntourism?

S: I mean, there is like the, the way people do it only for their Instagram account, ahm, you are far away, and if you don't have a cultural knowledge, you can't really be as good of a help as you might think you are. And you need to remember that you are only there for a couple of months, and then you go again. So you leave them. And for me it has been six years since I was there, and they just keep living their lives, you make a difference when you are there, but only for the time you are there. And then they do not longer have that person that was there for them for such a intense couple of months, and they just have to live their lives. Eh, it was one of the toughest things, leaving, because you are going to miss them. But you also realise that they are going to miss you. They just keep living whatever life they had before I went there, so I didn't make that, I made a change while I was there, but it wasn't like continues. Eh, yeah, so it is very tough. Ehm. Yeah.

M: How would you like to travel in the future?

S: Hm, yeah I would love to do like the longer travels, because you then actually can get to know the culture. Eh, I would love to go back to Africa, see the family again, cause this is an area I kind of know now. They said to me, "Sofie, you are now a daughter of this house", "You are a member of this family, this is your home", so they want me to come, and are very welcoming. Eh, so I would love to like take these long travels, of course to the tourists sides as well, because I am a tourist when I travel. Ah, but I just think you gain so much more when you maybe learn the language, learn the culture, see, like do some research on the country before you actually go.

"Wrap-up questions"

M: Why do you travel?

S: Ehm, there are a lot of reasons I think. Eh, we live in a quite cold country, so somewhere you can get some sun. Just to get like a break, to experience other things. To see how both like nature-wise but also people-wise how different lives they actually have. You do not need to go far to see for example, somewhere they have a break in the middle of the day. There that's normal. Or you can see that they are so happy without anything, like why are they so happy, and you can just, go to Germany and just shop whatever you want to do.

M: What do you think about travelling?

S: I think it is so good. I mean I really enjoy travelling myself, and I think that more people, if they can afford it, they should travel. Because it is broaden the knowledge, broaden your mind, you actually get to know why people act in a certain way, you understand more about the world. And it is so easy for you to go somewhere, it does not take that long. So I think people should travel some more.

M: What would you say is your primary purpose of your travels?

S: It depends on like, the travel. Because, as I said, sometimes it's just to get some sun. But yeah, I think maybe the main reason is, no matter where I go, is to get away from my daily day, do something

completely different, whether that is just tanning or if it is working. Yeah, you always go home with a broader understanding of the country. Which I love.

M: Would you like to add something or do you have any questions for us?

S: I can show a bit more pictures, as you can see here, this is from the weekends. So we did vacation while we were volunteering. We combine the two of them, but then when you are travelling while you are volunteering because we have that cultural understanding, it's so different. Because we know why africans are doing like this, and we can see people that are so tourists. They do not know how to do this and quite fun and we did a lot of different trips. We did a safari, which was not the best but it was fine. Ehm, we climbed a mountain one weekend. Which is very weird. I don't know if you guys have had experience with that, but they take your things and then the African guy take your big bag while you have small one, and runs on the top. In the meantime he makes you lunch. Because he is bringing all the food, all the pans, everything, he cooks for you. He cleans all, and then back. It is terrible in a sense, we tried to say that we could carry it ourselves, which we couldn't but we wanted to try. This was very, it was a cool experience but it's, kind of the worst things about tourism. Because you take like this poor guy, and he just carry all your things, and his payment is so bad. But you want the experience. One weekend our family took us out, because they were so keen on showing us all of Africa, so this is just (showing pictures of the family). Yeah. So yeah, the dad was a minister, a priest, which is not a paid job in Africa, because you are doing god's work. So you are not allowed to get paid. So it was a lot of people in the town just giving him gifts, and he were like, oh god told me this is for free. People were treating us very nicely because they knew that this is the kids of Amos, they need a free ride home, we know were they live. Without sounding creepy. Yeah.

S: This is the school for the kids actually (showing pictures). Here they had a celebration. They took my phone a lot and made slow motion videos, as you can see here. This is just during the day, and they could just start dancing. I think one of them got a scholarship or something, then they just started to

dance. It was very weird to go back to the kids after for example doing river rafting. They would like ask, "oh what did you do this weekend", because they can't do this, because it takes maybe an hour to go here and so if they had the money, the time, they could do it, but what we did was very touristy. Like we went to, of cause we went to see the capital, we went river rafting, bungee jumping, and they were like, why will you ever do this kind of thing, they did not understand. We went to see waterfalls, all this touristy things, that they just find stupid. These things are made for the tourists and to try to get some more tourists to the country. But it was fun and it was nice to get a break. But sometimes you felt kind of guilty that you were there, do close to them, having fun without them, actually, relaxing. But yeah.

M: Thank you so much for the interview. I will stop the recording now.

9.8 Appendix 8- Transcript Focus Group Discussion

Theme 1: Travelling & Tourism

S: What makes travelling interesting for you?

K: I think for me, it is about discovering new cultures, to see, yeah, new places, maybe do some special sport, if that is possible, then I am thinking about skiing and hiking and that kind of stuff. Ehm, also, getting like, better weather, or going home.

V: Yes, I agree, I think is also about seeing maybe, want to discover new culture or a cool culture that you can not have here, back come. But also, I think for me, it's been also about doing something fun with friends. So some trips is not just to see something, but just to have fun with friends, so doesn't really matter as much where you go, as long as you are with a group of nice friends. Eeh, yeah.

- Agreeing voices in the room

M: Ehm, I do not know if this is interesting, but I think the primary reason why I travel, of course, to see new places, experience new things, but primarily to get away from everyday life.

- Agreeing voices in the room

Ehm, I think it easy to kind of lean back and relax, and stuff like that when you are taken out of your everyday contexts. So that is primarily why I travel. And of course, eating good food, drinking, a lot, enjoying the sun, I can do all those things with a good conscience, since then I am on holiday so I can take another glass of wine.

A: I agree with what all of you said. I also think that it depends on what kind of holiday or travel you are going on. Like normally I actually would not say I go on vacation to experience new culture and such, I mainly just go to relax, have a great time, lay by the beach.

- Laughter in the group

Hehe, yeah well, I am being honest! Ehm, and just see something else than boring, old, Copenhagen, where I have spent a lot of time. Yeah.

O: I think, probably, the main reason for why I like to travel is to, ehh, I is usually regards to do some kind of activity. For example going skiing somewhere, or going surfing, or, yeah, this is kind of the main reasons why I travelled the past three years. So, but also, since coming from the upper west coast in Norway, it is a great way to escape the rain.

- Laughter in the group

And yeah, meeting new people, discover new culture. But main reason for me, is to do some activity. I actually do not go just to relax on a resort.

O: Ehh, for me it really depends on whom I go with, I think. If I go with my family, it is usually some kind of activity, as you have said Øyvind. Eh, and that it is way cheaper for me. But if i use my own money on vacation, depending if I go with friends or, with other people, so it is, usually, a mentality shift when you go to a new place where you escape from all the, eh, every day stress. And I live more in the moment, maybe.

S: How do you feel about travelling?

A: I love it. I just think it is fun to see something different, for example, I have lived in Copenhagen for the last five years. And I really enjoy to just get out and see kind of a different view then CBS or my apartment. Ehm, I think it is nice because you can try different things maybe, something that is not available in Denmark or, hm, meet new friends, if you are in a fun place where that is an option. Eh, yeah.

K: Excited.

O: I would rather spend money on travelling than most other stuff, I think. So it is a, just to get new experiences that you can live on. I feel positive.

K: I said excited because you can experience something that you cannot fully prepare. Like even though you now where you are going, you do not know how you are going to feel or what you are going to see,

or what is like going to happen in detail. So what we said before, when you are stepping out your like you comfort, normal, daylife, you know. It is going to be more dynamic maybe, something else. So that is why I think it is exciting.

V: I think it is exciting and really nice as well. But it is also that travelling is, increasingly a guilty pleasure, because it is really nice, but you should not travel, especially not by aeroplane so much. It is just like eating meat, it is really nice, but you should not, and you know more and more that you should not do it, so, I guess, we should travel differently in the future. I know that for myself, we can't keep on travelling as much as we do, not in the same way at least.

Ø: I feel, especially when you go to a new culture, meet new people, I feel really grateful. Because we have the opportunity to travel. This is an aspect to think about, as the majority of the world cannot travel as much as we do. This is actually something I have been thinking about when I have been out travelling

- Agreeing voices in the room

Also when it comes to, flight shame, if we can call it that. Have not thought so much about that because I do not feel like I have been travelling that much. I know people that go away every third weekend by plane, that is something else. I probably just go on one vacation a year. There are other times I go home.

O: I can relate to that. I do not know if this is relevant or not, but I remember I was a kid, I was in Egypt. Then we talked to a native guy, he said he had never left Egypt, and for me, that already had been travelling a lot, I was shocked. Like, how is this possible, a different culture or travelling lifestyle or something.

M: I also love travelling, but I think, both of my parents is from Poland. We always took trips to Poland, not anywhere else, so boring. All my friends got to go on cool places, and I was just like, okey, three weeks in Poland again this year. So for me it has become associated with luxury to travel other places, like I finally get to go on places I want to go. So, really excited about it, but almost I think I am

more excited about thinking about travelling, like if I booked a trip six months from now, it is more the time leading up to the actual vacation, I think OMG YES. I get more excited in my head then, of course I am also excited when I am there, if compare, the two emotions I actually think I am more excited before.

S: How do you feel about tourism?

O: Tourism, it has become a word that is quite negative loaded, in my opinion. You do not want to be a tourist, kind of.

- Agreeing voices in the room

You hear of things in the cities, such as Rome or Barcelona, that have been kind of ruined by tourism. And when you are travelling, and people, eh, one weekend, me and my parents was walking down the street in Vancouver, and some people pointed at us and said "look at those tourists", did not like to be called that.

- Laughter and agreement in the room.

M: I think it is also negative things about it, I think, it is kind of, like, hypocritical, because, we are from Denmark, so if you see a tourists standing in the middle of the street taking, annoying when I cannot pass home from work. But when you are a tourist yourself, you kind of like the worst thing that actually can happen to you when you are at tourist is for the natives to think of you as one. Need to be critical because you are thinking of tourist as annoying when back home, ehm, so when I travel, you do not want to go places that is too crowded. Do not want to do and be look at as "ah, that is such a tourist thing to do"- kind of way.

V: I agree. I think the word has been a lot associated with a person with bad taste, that does not care about the culture – you kind of look down to that stereotype typical person. But at the same way everyone that travels is a tourist, but maybe do not want to be associated with that kind of characteristics. Like a person with bad taste.

Follow up question: Is it a difference between tourist and tourism?

Ø: I have grown up in one of the most popular tourist town in Scandinavia, almost one million tourist at summer, a small fjord. For me, divide into different sections of tourist, standard tourists, groups with cruise ship and stuff, then adventure tourism which is a growing trend of tourism which are more of a tailored experience. That is how usually we travel. Like Norwegian travels, if you are not going on a charter trip, usually when I go travelling, often mostly for adventure tourism, because I actually go tailored mountain trip, do stuff i want to, not just going into a set guided trip. For me tourism is something positive since my home town is depending on it, my family makes their living from it. It is general, I like it, positive, but there are also small portions of tourism that kind of destroys the bigger picture of tourism. Some bus tours come, people are often very rude, occupy stuff and they really don't care about the culture in the town or anything. But that is not the case for me, it is not the majority, you really need to look away from the impression that you get from the small portion, that kind of destroys the bigger picture.

M: Kind of separate tourist from travelers. Tourist the word, kind of think about like, groups of people, like person with a flag, leading the to "most see" sightseeing trips. When like being a traveler, you are more dependent, exploring, culture, going unknown places. Think there is a big difference between those two terms, if you can call them that.

Theme 2: Voluntourism

S: How would you describe voluntourism/the idea of volunteering abroad?

Ø: Maybe travelling with a goal of contributing to the local, to some kind of cause.

O: Maybe you get a better sense of self after doing it. Like if you go to some a poor country, and help children and animals and whatever, yeah you get a better self of going there, and a good experience of it all in addition.

K: I think for me, it kind of like travelling to volunteer, I kind of separate from being a volunteer,

working with it more professionally, or like, dedicating your life to help others. For me thinking about people who travel maybe for four weeks, to help out in children orphanage or animal centers, or whatever. I kind of like, I have these ideas of like, privileged white kids going to Africa to put on their Instagram that they help African children or like.

A: That is actually a really big thing in the media right now.

K: Yeah.

A: That you use Instagram just to look nice, and do not actually care about it.

M: My view of it, people mostly do it for selfish reasons, go abroad to like live in another country, take picture with an African kid that is homeless, and like, pimp their own resume.

A: Yes, and then they can oh yes, I did that, I am such a good person.

O: I kind of think, in regards to that, like the moment you post something on social media, that you are doing something good, you are losing credibility that doing it for their reasons, instead, rather doing it for your own branding kind of.

V: Yeah I agree, a lot of people doing it this way. But I also feel people who do it for good reasons too. So of course both sides.

A: Maybe because we see the people more that does it. Not aware of people doing it without seeing.

S: What do you think about voluntourism? Please elaborate

M: I think it is very honorable.

A: Yeah, it is a nice way to spend some of your life.

M: If you want to actually go ahead and do it, it is great, I think, rather see you brag about helping others than bragging about eating and expensive dinner at a restaurant. So again, it is kind of can't win, if you do something good, can't brag about it, but if you don't, also not so good. I think how you go about it is very, important, how you are perceived, when you do it.

- Victor is agreeing a lot

A: Of course, it is a good thing to do, no doubt about that.

O: I think it is good, but it is also dependent on the motivating reasons behind going on a trip. Like you go there to fulfill something within yourself, or you go there for actually helping out. I don't know, if you go there to help out a good cause, it good anyway, but I kind of doblemoral, if you just go there to get a Instagram post.

K: I think it requires a lot of research before you go, you really need to know where you are going, and why, and what kind of place it is. Because if it is a kind of place where you have like taken the local labor, or where it is, you were touching upon it, the Instagram thing with all the celebrities going, yeah abroad, now they find, they are taking poor kids to fill the orphan homes even more. So I mean, yeah, you need to have a lot of knowledge before you go.

A: Can I add something, is it like, not as good if you not have a lot of research before, like if I just want to say, okey, I am tired of my life now, don't know what to do, maybe just go to a plane to africa and see if anybody needs my help. I mean is that bad thing, compare to if I had a lot of research and really wanted to do it?

K: I think it is hard to say, rather if it is like bad or good.

A: It is just that you said, needed to have research done, and I don't think i agree with that.

V: Maybe if you do more research, you can utilize more time and energy, in a better way.

A: Yes sure, but you can still just, wake up one day, and want to do it.

K: But you would still do some research about where you want to go, time and effort to booking all thing. Worth to look into, for some hours, what the place kind of are.
but should booking, a lot of hours here.

O: For some reason, I am more positive, in people working with health in other countries, rather than for instance animals, that anyone can do. If you use your education, if you are for example a doctor and travel to Africa, actually contribute to some disease.

- All are agreeing

In my opinion, it's seen in a more positive light in my eyes.

O: Voluntourism, it is not only going for just helping out with aid. You also have voluntourism in Scandinavia, and richer parts of Europe. For example, I tried twice to participate in this thing in the Faroe Island. Which is like, think you pay like 1500 kroner or something, then you get to fly, stay and you get food. But you have to help out cleaning, fixing stuff. Why I want to do it is, one, I want to go to the Faroe Island, and second, then I have a justification for actually going to a place that is overpopulated. When you go to the Faroe Island, compared to longer away, you don't have like this, mindset, you have to go there to actually help out with life support. If you go here you it is more about the exploratory kind of mindset. You really want to go to this amazing place, but it is overpopulated, and a lot of tourists, and the island not built for mass tourism. So then you can also contribute to making the infrastructure better.

M: Regarding what I think about influencers who do voluntourism... I think, I see people who do it sometimes very negatively because they go away and do their voluntourism abroad, whatever, helping out with poor and, sick African kids. And then they like, posts two or three Instagram posts while they are down there and say "omg this has changed my life", so important. People really need to be aware of"whatever whatever", and then they come home, and say "look at my Louis-bag, omg".

A: And yeah, living the exact same life.

M: Then it is like, it is forgotten, and everything they kind of preached about on their social media about how important, and how much it has touched their hearts, it kind of like, goes away and then it is lack of continuity and integrity I think. This kind of annoys me about people who do it, cause it is like suddenly you are a saint, and then you are not.

A: Yes but that is because those are mainly the people that we see. Probably a lot of people that does it a lot of time, and do not brag about it, and that is really good. But I think I am more negative about it because I only see people who does.

M: Like people who don't post it, I have much more respect for, who kind of like do it on a regular basis, maybe once a year go down somewhere and help out. They don't need to brag about it or

mention it rather if it comes up in a conversation. Then I would like be "wow, you are actually spending time making a difference somewhere".

Ø: Also if your whole Instagram feed is about spa resort, purses, luxury, and then suddenly, there is a picture about helping out. This feels kind of fake. In contrast to a person actually have a Instagram feed feed up with like meaningful stuff.

V: Is like they are trying to greenwash their image.

- All of the participants are agreeing

O: It is kind of related to, or comparable to if you giving money to a homeless person and are filming it while you are doing it.

- Several says and are laughing, telling that is a lot of people who are doing it right now. Surprising to some.

S: Have a lot of your friends/family members been going away on volunteer trips?

M: No, I think it is like friends of friends. Or people you stalk on Instagram.

A: I think actually no one I know have done it.

V: I know a couple of people, but that is mostly in their home country, so like help in a refugee center or they participate in green things. But do not know that many who have gone far to do something.

K: I also just know a few. But I think my impression of those people are pretty good, it has been decent and yeah, they have been doing real cool projects.

O: I know a few people that have done it through Kilroy, the travel agency. I don't know if that makes it more or less legit kind of, but then, yeah I don't know, they post a few pictures.

Ø: I know people from "leger uten grenser", they have been travelling and helping out. They dont post a lot about it, a lot of them work there now as well. Started out to go down and help for a while, and they did not brag so much about it. I also know some people that have been going too south America to help out in orphanages and stuff like that and it's, their motivation, one of my cousins did it, more for like, she felt she needed to do something to help out. To fulfill something within here, she went there and yeah, and she does not go around telling everybody about it.

O: What you said, about using your skills to do something, makes it more legit kind of. Like if you have a education that can do good in some countries, in my eyes is this seen as more positive. For example if I went to Africa to help them out with marketing, or if a you are a doctor or psychologist, this would make a big difference.

O: It was a cool program in where I studied before, in Trondheim, where all my friends that studied medicine was going to like different African countries for a half a year, a year. Took their exchange year their, but helped out in hospitals, and stuff. They said is so crazy down there, so bad compared to here. They said it was super rewarding to help out, they brought with the equipment and stuff, and feel like that and them are have made a difference.

Theme 3: Advertisement and Voluntourism

*In this part of the interview we will show several **pictures** of ads (taken from both profit and non-profit volunteer organisations) of volunteer programs and ask the following questions;*

S: How do you feel when you see these pictures/ads?

V: I guess, I feel like, starting to think about the organisations behind those pictures. That there must be, non-profit organisations doing it the good way, and then on the other side, organisations that also want to earn money, and requite young people to have fun, guess it is like a continuum of like good, real, but also organisations that wants to make money.

O: For instance, what is said on this one:

- showing the one: volunteer business big business

Saying on the ad, that "voluntourism has become a big business", so people are making money of it.

M: And you get very happy if you do it.

O: Yes, and you might find a girlfriend.

- showing the ad with a girl and a boy. laughter

A: I also think this one:

-Showing the one: drom deg bort i vinter

So, I think that is really something we talked about, that you really need to have a purpose, or you giving yourself a purpose, going on a plane to get far away. Need to justify going away. Going on a holiday and do it this way, maybe visit an orphanage and then, okay I did something nice. Now I can just enjoy my holiday, stay by the beach, because I did something good.

Ø: I don't think it is necessarily a bad thing though if you are going to go on a holiday, you are going to go anyways, it is better to do this I guess then just go to a holiday. It is better to do something, the work you do is good anyway I guess. But you can't criticize the reasons behind it, but at the end, you did something. Contradicting to not doing anything.

S: What do you think about voluntourism when you see these ads?

M: I get the logic of your point, you probably going to go travelling, then you could do something good while you are away. Somehow, I still, like don't look down on it, but it is more like, I don't know, it feels like you are kind making an excuse for yourself. Also I think you get something out of it by also being able to call it voluntourism, like, I am not just going on a holiday to get amazing pictures on the beach, but I am also such a good person, like here (pointing on one of the picture, girl on the beach). I use my vacation to also help out. I colored by, predators, about it, about those girls (Showing the pictures of the bloggers with animals and kids), ehm, I can't see the logic, of course it is good going abroad doing something good while you are there, so consciously, I can't help by thinking it must be driven by something else than being a good person.

O: I think it is kind of comparable too, eh, business that say they are sustainable to appeal to the young generation, but are not. You really need to show that you are from a to å, it is not transparent, it is not good enough. Doing one of these trips doesn't make you a good person kind of.

*In this part of the interview, we will start by showing one **video** ad and ask the following questions;*

How do you feel after seeing this video?

V: I can agree to a little bit of what you said, of course, it is a lot better to do something, than nothing at all, so if you are going to travel, it is good to do what you can do. But at the same time, I hope, I just feel like it is about how you handle this good deed afterwards. Are you satisfied with it or are you going to use this to justify something else, are you going to justify your lifestyle or are you going to use this as a leisen to do something like "then I can travel since I have done this". So It is about how you, kind of like, keep and use this, this thing.

Ø: I think kind of the deal breaker for me is like how you communicate it after. If you just, eh, i don't know, kind of difficult to change your lifestyle when you come back home, i don't know, give away a lot of you stuff to get to help further one. I think the biggest difference is how you communicate it in regards to how like, you afterwards go out and try to spread the message, that you have actually been there, just to get attention, compared to like, i don't know, i guess it is okay to say something about it, but not just like try to spread it out and really, i don't know, spread a rumor that you have become really good.

- Laughter in the room

K: But if the purpose is just to spread information about what is actually going on, it could be good.

Ø: To refer to the Norwegian bloggers, they are not really doing good, I think.

M: I think the videos just confirm my idea of what voluntourism usually involve for a lot of people. I thought the first video was just like, a holiday, look at these nice beaches, we have a barbecue outside, occasionally playing with children, picking up garbage, some more beaches, some more barbecues. The second one, was very much focused on what the experience did for them as volunteers, rather than what it actually helped to achieve where they were. Of course it is so nice that they go there, and do these things, but seems kind of pointless, mention themselves, these children really need love. Need some people that are stable in their life, and these girls go down there maybe three weeks then they

leave. And these children are left again, and then these children need to connect with a new girl that comes next week. It seems like, what is the point in offer these children with a stable home, stable figures in their lives, if these girls are just leaving again. Seem pointless, more about himself, how it change them. Seems pointless, did not make a different for the children maybe, but for them as people, a great experience for sure.

S: What do you think about voluntourism after seeing this video?

O: Like, I want to travel to Costa Rica, because it looks a bit like an adventurous place.

M: I think also it looks like an exciting and unique experience, compared to going to Mallorca, for example, laying on a beach and staying at a resort.

Ø: I think it is good, at least you do something, you can be really unlucky or naive, go to some kind of organisation that is really not good. But I think the majority of voluntourism is for a good cause. It is also, I think, important to distinguish between other types of voluntourism, for example going to the Faroe Island helping out building infrastructure, or going to Bali helping clean up plastic. I know, I think, all in all it is good, like with tourism, you have a small group that kind of destroy the whole image of tourist. I think it is the same with voluntourism, when we think about voluntourism it is probably those bloggers going down there posting Instagram feeds, eh, but a lot of people go there and you don't hear about it. All in all, I think it is a really good thing.

V: I agree, could be good, if you don't use it as a license to do something else, or if you are truly believe in something. It could be good, it could be bad.

M: I think it depends on how it is commercials, with all the trouble with the world, all that is wrong, I don't think it can be fix by going to Costa Rica for three weeks. I think about it so negatively, I think it such quick fixes like not really taking the pic of the real problem and creating long-lasting solutions. It is just like, going down, do it for three weeks, whatever, and then it does, of cause if you go down and build something long lasting, see more the point. But often it is just, helping out in an orphanage or like animal center for three weeks, doesn't really change the fundamental thing that is wrong, with the

world.

A: It depends also on what kind of activity you decide to do. For example with the children, totally agree with that, don't change that much with Scandinavian girls come down and then just leave. But you go to Costa Rica, more the impression that they were doing something, clean and trying to build something, I can see the point more in that. Then I can by going to an orphanage.

Ø: I think also it is important to distinguish between the short term fixes and the long term. For example the people I know from "leger uten grenser" they really need money, so if you are going to spend 20 000 kr going on a short fixed trip to Costa Rica, would actually be better to give money to people that could actually work with stuff like that long- term. But like I said, if you are going on a vacation, going to Costa Rica, do not see the bad thing in just helping out a little bit.

O: Yeah, it is better to do that, than doing nothing. Or making it worse.

K: But I really think that you should be critical, even with like infrastructure projects and like if you are taking jobs from the local labor force, really important then that you teach them how to do it, and integrate them in the process. This is what I meant before when I said you need to make some research.

A: Yes, that make sense.

K: To know what you are doing, because otherwise it will never be long term for the people that lives in the country.

M: I think it is also important to always think of what value can I bring, instead of what can they give me.

A: Yes, or what I can get out of it.

M: Making an informed decision, thinking long term, like if it is something you really care about and want to make an impact.

A: Or if you can make an impact.

M: Can I give my resources in other ways? Can I donate instead? Or am I only going down to play babysitter for three weeks and then I am going to tell my children, "I did this, this was great".

Theme 4: The Future of Voluntourism

S: What would influence you to go on a volunteer trip abroad?

V: I think after this discussion, I would look up "what are the most effective ways to help", most effective ways to give value to something. I would try to do research, as best as I can to see which organisations is actually doing or giving most value out of it. And maybe then do it, eh, instead of just choosing anything, because I guess there are a lot of commercial ones.

Ø: I also think, for me personally, it is way more rewarding if you donate money, to people who actually work with this long term, for example, like you said, not worth going there to take jobs, but maybe investing in an organisation that provides financial aid to that area so that they can hire a contractor to build a school and that also contributes to the local economy and future growth.

O: Like the Faroe Island trip, then you go down there and you actually do work, you just work in a different country kind of. I could do that, but that would honestly be more for my own experience, then doing it for the Faroe Island.

Ø: Like you go to Bali to surf, you do not go to Bali just to pick plastic, but as a side activity, then you feel like you are contributing.

S: What do you think is the future of voluntourism?

V: Maybe it should be some kind of like organization that kind of mark the good ones and the bad ones, so you actually know which organization that are serious and do a good job. So maybe there should be a green mark or something, to tell. So it would be easier to navigate through which ones that are doing a good job.

- All the participants are agreeing

Ø: Also highlight more the silent voices within voluntourism, cause like we were discussing, a lot of bloggers go there, and post some pictures then a week later they post a picture of an expensive car. Then highlighting that people are actually contributing a big part of their life, and put a lot of effort into that. Right now, like I said, a small part of voluntourism are kind of contributing to a bad reputation for the rest.

O: And I don't think the focus on environmental changes are going to get down within the first years. So I think that, voluntourism in regards to picking up plastic, is going to get up. And immigration, read an article earlier today about people going to Greece to help the refugees, maybe that will go up. I don't know. You don't hear so much about it, eh, compared to people going to Costa Rica to pick up plastic.

M: I also think like, just with environmental problems like going on an airplane, should be reduced. Ehm, I think the future of voluntourism also are going to be more than helping out in local communities, adn not travel so much, but maybe like taking the train to wherever, to more proximate areas, to help out. Instead of going to a very CO2- heavy airplane, just to be there for 2-3 weeks. I think it will be more locally based, helping out in places that we don't need to travel so long to with plane.

A: Yes, let's hope it will be more like that, if people want to help.

Ø: Like I said, a lot of places in the west coast of Norway that I know of that have a lot of voluntourism. In form of that people coming and helping out on farms, ehm, they are helping out with like, just like helping out with different stuff. I don't know if it can be called voluntourism if you get a free night at the farm in contribution of helping out. It is a big webpage in Norway where they post offers "come and help, and we can drive you wherever you want" stuff like that.

"Wrap-up questions"

S: Why do you travel?

O: To experience.

A: Yeah, to get an experience.

V: To feel good.

O: Bonding trip.

A: To see new places.

K: You feel like you understand the world better, maybe you don't, but you think you do.

V: To have a break from the ordinary life.

Ø: To get some sunshine.

M: To have fun.

S: Have we missed anything, is there something you would like to add?

Ø: Like I said about, I think when you are writing the paper also it is important to pay attention to the other side of voluntourism. Like the things you see here in Scandinavia, and not only the aid- kind of voluntourism. Because I think this is a new part of a new wave of how people travel.