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Creating Traveller Experiences

- Travellers' Perspective -

Masters thesis, spring 2008

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Executive Summary

Title: Creating Traveller Experiences, Travellers' Perspective

Level of Essay: Masters thesis, spring 2008

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Problem: We were interested in how travellers create their experiences and we wanted to focus on their own role in creating these experiences. Because there has not been a study made about InterRailing in recent years we are going to study this topic. Our aim is that this study will contribute to the research on traveller experiences.

Statement of Purpose: Our objective with this thesis is to understand the experiences InterRail travellers have by focussing on their own role in creating these experiences.

Question(s) of Issues: What is central for travellers in creating their own experiences when travelling by InterRail?

Methodology: Empirical material based on interviews with four persons that have been travelling with InterRail in recent years and research material acquired from web logs. Theories based on four different experience models.

Conclusion:

Through our interviews and web based research we found that there are different aspects of creating experiences when travelling by InterRail. We found three central aspects:

- Freedom, because it is against the schedules of everyday life
- Spontaneity, because planning ahead would destroy the feeling of freedom
- Social contacts, since social boundaries seem to diminish or vanish when travellers are away from home

Furthermore, we found that there is a reason why these aspects are central in creating own experiences. This is due to Personal realisation.

Keywords:

InterRail, InterRailer, travel experience, tågluffa, tågoplevelser, reseoplevelser

Prologue

This essay was written during 2008 at the Institute for Service Management, Campus Helsingborg, Sweden. Through this essay we have acquired a deeper understanding about traveller experiences. This study was interesting and educational because there has not been a study made about this topic in recent years. We believe that this essay is going to help us in the future, because we have learned, among other things, the importance to work as a team.

We would like to thank our interviewees, David, Daniel, Lisa, and Petra for their contribution to this essay. Without you we would have never have gotten a great substance in this essay.

Furthermore, we would like to thank our supervisors Jan Henrik Nilsson and Szilvia Gyimothy for showing us the way and helping us to find the focus of the essay and to develop our analytical abilities. We greatly thank you for all the support and feedback during the writing of this essay.

Helsingborg, 2008

Sofia Boström, Bernadett Dimovski and Ariane Duthoit

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1. Introduction

“The idea, to do something completely new during my summer vacation in 2005, came suddenly when I was travelling from home to school in Amsterdam on a cold winter day in January. I wanted to do something special in my next summer, not going on a plane what would bring me and hundreds of other people to a sunny destination somewhere along the Mediterranean Sea and being lazy on a crowded beach... And then I saw some backpackers in my train (which I thought it was very strange for this time of year). And then, I remembered this thing called InterRail, travelling by train through Europe, sleeping in hostels and just go city to city of my interests. A multiple city trip through Europe... My summer was born... ” (InterRail Soap Series, Jay seeks travel mate 2007-11-08)

1.1 Background and Problem Formulation

The quote above shows that travelling by train is attractive to those who want to experience something different from others, who are travelling by plane. This gives rise to a question - In what way is travelling by train a way to experience something different from others? The others in this case are represented by passive tourists, who do not want to do more than just lie on the beach. By being active participants of a travel, travellers can distance themselves from passive tourists and create different experiences. Has differentiating always been central in creating traveller experiences?

In 1994, researcher Erika Andersson wrote an article about Swedish travellers that wanted to explore new cultures and new countries on their own, instead of treading down the beaten path, i.e. the schedule of a tourist agency. These travellers found it crucial to find the places that are not yet exploited by mass tourism and where the local culture and the local people are still genuine. By taking pictures of genuine places and people, a traveller could show that he or she really has experienced something that is different from the experiences of mass tourists. For example, mass tourists often visit famous

monuments; while a traveller tries to capture feelings through the people and buildings they see (Andersson, 1994). These travels were, to some extent, made possible by InterRailing.

In the period 1970-1990, InterRailing was the predominant option for Swedish youths to discover the diversity of the cities and landscapes of Europe. These travellers were often students and had limited amounts of money to spend (Andersson Cederholm, 1999). InterRailing was the least expensive option to travel with a pass that is valid for a certain period of time and a certain geography. During that period and within that geography an InterRailer could travel as much and as often as he or she liked.

As Andersson Cederholm's studies show, it was central for travellers to create experiences that are different from mass tourism experiences. Also, they aimed at establishing social contacts. However, we believe that there has been a while since we heard much about InterRailer experiences and we were looking for answers why.

We found that the amount of travellers by InterRail had been steadily decreasing after the 1990s (Jan Svensson, International Sales and Marketing Manager at SJ, 2008-02-11), which could be the effect of the deregulation of the airline industry. Flight prices have dropped rapidly, enabling travellers to fly farther and more often, which has in turn adversely affected the amount of travellers by train. However, in recent years this trend seems to be changing again. The amount of travellers by train is rising as shown in recent statistics (ibid).

Fritidsresor and Ving, two major Swedish Tourist Agencies, started to arrange train charters to different parts of Europe in recent years. They believe that travellers want to enjoy their trip as well as the destination. Furthermore, everyone is conscious of the problems facing the climate of the world (Kupé magazine 2008) if we do not decrease our carbon dioxide emissions.

In the past, many articles and studies were written about Swedish InterRailers and researchers were trying to understand what kind of experiences these travellers were looking for during their trip. For example, Pine and Gilmore (1999) say that experience is an important part of a travel and different activities and encounters with people contribute to this experience.

As there has not been any study made about InterRailing in recent years we are going to study this particular topic. Our aim is that this study will contribute to the research on traveller experiences.

1.2 Purpose of this Thesis

Our objective with this thesis is to find out how InterRailers reconstruct, talk about and give meaning to their experiences. Through this we want to understand the experiences InterRail travellers have by focussing on their own role in creating these experiences. To be able to come to a conclusion we are going to search for answers to the following question:

- *What is central for travellers in creating their own experiences when travelling by InterRail?*

1.3 Limitations

We delimit our thesis to study only InterRailer experiences in recent years, from the travellers' perspective. Furthermore, we are discussing travels by train from a tourism perspective, without taking commuting by train into consideration. The climate and environmental aspect is approached only in terms whether its contribution can shape the experiences of our interviewees, but this aspect is not our focus.

1.4 Outline

In this part we will go through the different chapters of this thesis. After this first chapter we will talk about InterRailing. We start by presenting the history of InterRail, and then show some traveller statistics and how the InterRail pass has changed during the years.

Since the purpose of our thesis is about understanding in what way InterRailing is an experience for travellers, we will focus on the InterRailer's own role in creating this experience in the third chapter of this thesis. First, we present four different models that discuss experiences from different points of view. Secondly, we discuss in what way commercial products can interfere with creating own traveller experiences. To get a deeper understanding of traveller experiences, we discuss in what way travellers' experiences differ from other holiday makers, such as mass tourists. At the end of this chapter we will draw a conclusion in relation to the aforementioned theories.

In the fourth chapter we will illustrate the methodology when working with our empirical material. We start to explain our choice of primary and secondary sources. We also explain our choice of interviewees and how the interviews were conducted.

In chapter five we will show our empirical findings in preparation of the analysis in chapter six. In this chapter we will connect our empirical findings to the theories we presented in chapter three. At the end of this chapter we will answer our question: *“What is central for travellers in creating their own experiences when travelling by InterRail?”*

Finally, in chapter seven we will discuss our results regarding travel experiences and travel in general. We will also have a short summary and give suggestions for future studies.

2. The InterRail concept

This chapter aims to present the InterRail concept. We start by presenting the history of InterRail, and then show some traveller statistics and how the InterRail passes have changed during the years.

International Railway Union or shortly InterRail was created in 1972. It was a rail pass that allowed travels in 2nd class for one month in different countries in Europe. There were 21 participating countries at the time: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, East-Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, West-Germany, and Yugoslavia. The InterRail pass became a new way to experience Europe (www.interrailnet.com 2008-04-03).

At this time, the pass was only issued to people up to 21 years of age to travel freely across Europe at lower prices. Seven years later, the age limit was changed, also giving people up to the age of 26 years the opportunity to InterRail. As for today, people of all ages can travel by InterRail, the age limits were taken off ten years ago, yet different prices apply to different ages (ibid. 2008-04-03).

Several years later, the ‘InterRail + ferry’ offer was created, to increase the sales for the InterRail pass. In 1990-1991, the rail community expanded with new participating countries in Central and Eastern Europe (ibid. 2008-04-03). Currently, the InterRail pass can be used in over 30 countries in Europe on a railway network with over 40,000 stations. There are three different InterRail passes to choose from; InterRail Global Pass Flexi, InterRail Global Pass Consecutive and InterRail One Country pass. These all have different terms and restrictions that apply (see appendix 8.3).

According to statistics from Jan Svensson, Manager of International Sales and Marketing at SJ, Statens Järnvägar (i.e. Swedish Railways), InterRailing was at its peak between

1980 and 1992. In 1991 the amount of sold InterRail passes in Sweden reached its record with 71,237 passes sold. However, in 1994, the InterRailing sales became radically lower, and since then have not reached the same number of sales. Last year this trend shifted. Preliminary sales statistics show that in 2007, SJ sold 12,570 passes in Sweden, which is 117 per cent more than in 2006 (see figure 2.1 and appendix 8.2).

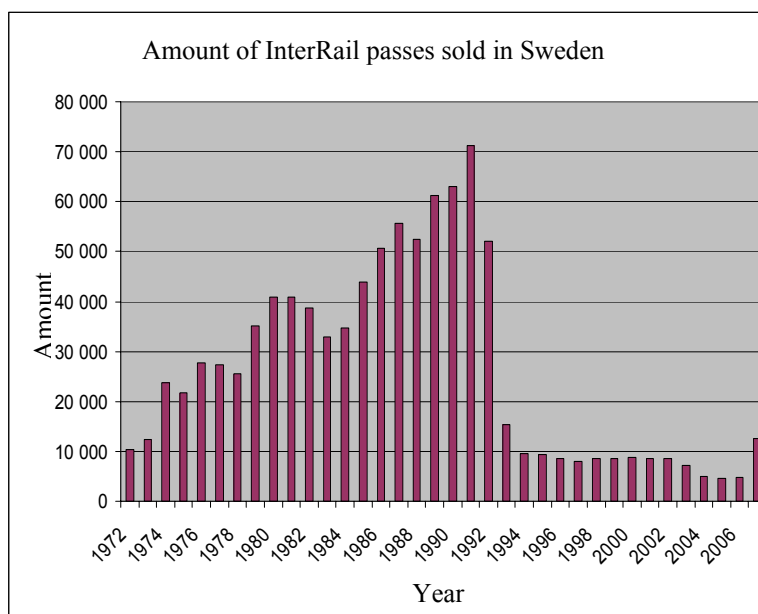


Figure 2.1 Amount of InterRail passes sold in Sweden (SJ 2008)
For bigger picture and exact numbers see appendix 8.2

The reason for the decline of InterRailing could be due to the increase in price. The Swedish crown also lost much of its value against other currencies, and new competition from low-cost airlines had a negative impact on the attractiveness of InterRailing. The youths in the 1990s and in the beginning of the new century preferred other ways to

discover the world, for example round-the-world trips or mountain climbing in the Alps (Jan Svensson, International Sales and Marketing Manager at SJ, 2008-02-11). Also, the destinations have changed and nowadays youths can travel to e.g. Southeast Asia as easily and for nearly the same cost as they can travel to e.g. Spain.

As InterRailing is becoming increasingly popular again, we ask what is central for travellers in creating their own experiences. The next chapter will try to explore this aspect further.

3. Understanding Traveller Experiences

This chapter aims to present our choices of theory and subsequently to present these. At the end of this chapter we will write our final thoughts about the theories and models we have chosen.

3.1 Choice of Theory

After four years of studies within the field of Service Management we have acquired a better understanding of this topic. Our knowledge has been shaped and influenced by our studies at the university, which have contributed to our methods of choosing relevant literature and to analyse our findings and to reflect over them. We believe that our knowledge will be of great use when dealing with the topic of this essay.

Since our main focus is to look closer at what is central for travellers in creating their own experiences, we collected different theoretical sources within this topic. These sources gave us a deeper understanding of traveller experiences. As we presented in the introduction, earlier studies and research show that travellers want to differentiate themselves from mass tourists in many ways. Travellers are striving for more freedom and spontaneity during travel, establishing social contact with locals and other travellers, and share and experience traveller stories (Andersson Cederholm, 1999). Because of this, we will also build our research on these findings, because we think that these factors are still important for travellers when InterRailing. To be able to understand these factors, we were first looking for recent studies about traveller experiences and we found Hanefors and Mossberg's work (2007) *Turisten i upplevelseindustrin* (i.e. The Tourist in the Experience Industry). Through this work we also found previous research and studies.

The first model that we found was Maslow's pyramid of human needs. This model is used as an introduction to understanding the motive behind travelling. Also, Jafari's tourism model shows what is central for travellers in creating their own experiences. His model is based on how a tourist leaves an ordinary environment (home) and enters a non-

ordinary environment (tourist destination). Jafari strongly points out, as a part of his model, the importance to be liberated and free from the every day life. In this part we will also discuss InterRailer experiences from earlier Swedish research.

We found that the more active a traveller is the greater experiences he/she will create. To be active means participating in different events and establishing social contact. This aspect was highlighted by Hanefors and Mossberg and they also drew a model that shows factors that affect our five senses and by actively using these senses travellers form their experiences. Also, we found Pine and Gilmore's experiences realm, which is about placing the experiences into two different dimensions – activity level and absorption level. By knowing what the purpose of a travel is, the model tries to predict beforehand the type of experience that the travellers will have. Furthermore, we discuss the chances of succeeding in creating own experiences by concentrating on the influences from commercial products and storytelling.

We are aware of the fact that the four models we chose are not conclusive and that we could have chosen other models, but we have chosen to focus on these four. We have, however, complemented them with additional theories in order to get a broader theoretical coverage.

To show what is central for creating experiences from the travellers' perspective we present and adapt these four models. At the end of this chapter we will explain how the different theories complement each other to give us a guide towards understanding InterRailer experiences.

3.2 The Search for Self-Actualization

We could read in Wahlströms book (2002), *Guide till upplevelsesamhället*, and in Coleman and Crang (2002), *Tourism – between Place and*

“Some seek authentic nature, culture, exotic others, amusement or the discovery of self. Being a tourist represents a period removed from the constraints of every day routine” (Coleman and Crang 2002)

Performance that we are living in an experience society; where the need for appreciation and the need for self-actualization are enormous. The American psychologist Abraham Maslow established already in the 1940s that humans have five needs that need to be fulfilled during our life. Maslow draws a pyramid (see figure 3.1). At the bottom of this pyramid are the vital needs, i.e. physiological needs. These are air, food and water, shelter, warmth, et cetera, which we can not live without. At the second level of the pyramid are the safety needs. Here we are looking for security, order, law, limits, stability, et cetera (Maslow 1943).



Figure 3.1 Maslow's Pyramid of Human Needs

Only after these needs have been fulfilled, can humans strive for love, where the family, affection, relationships, et cetera are central. Humans want to feel loved and want to experience love at this level. At the fourth level of the pyramid are the needs for esteem. Those are self-esteem, achievement, independence, status, managerial responsibility, et cetera. This is where humans want to achieve respect from others. Finally, at the top of the pyramid are the needs for self-actualization, which is realising personal potential, self-fulfilment, seeking personal growth and peak experiences. This is the time “to become everything that one is capable of becoming” (Maslow, 1943:382). When we feel comfortable on one level we automatically strive for the level above.

Maslow also points out that just because humans are motivated to do something it is not easy to point out all the motivations behind this act. For example, to shop could have different motives. “I am hungry,” “I need to feed my children,” “Shopping makes me happy,” et cetera. The most important is that every act has several motivations that may not always be revealed (Maslow 1943:370-371).

We have to take Maslow’s model into consideration when we analyse our empirical material. Tourism could be an opportunity for self-actualization, as an identity seeking event. This means that tourist experiences should be made visible to be able to mark ones identity. If the traveller’s motive to travel is to meet new people, then we can determine that his/her search for experience is going to be based on social contact with people. In this case, the traveller’s “needs” are going to be central in creating own experiences. However, Maslow’s model does not explain what humans do in order to fulfil these needs. These needs might be difficult to fulfil if you do not make any changes from your everyday life. This is something we are going to discuss in the next part.

3.3 Creating Experiences

Since experiences have a beginning and an end, researchers often place experiences in relation to time and space. Jafari (1987) argues that tourism is a manifestation of life.

“The experience of being a tourist is one that engages all the senses, not simply the visual” (Ryan 2002:27)

In this way, travelling is a way of living and a big part of life (Jafari 1987:159). Jafari defines five different components of travelling in which the tourist leaves the conformity of every day life for a temporary journey to the non-ordinary (see figure 3.2) (Jafari 1987:151).

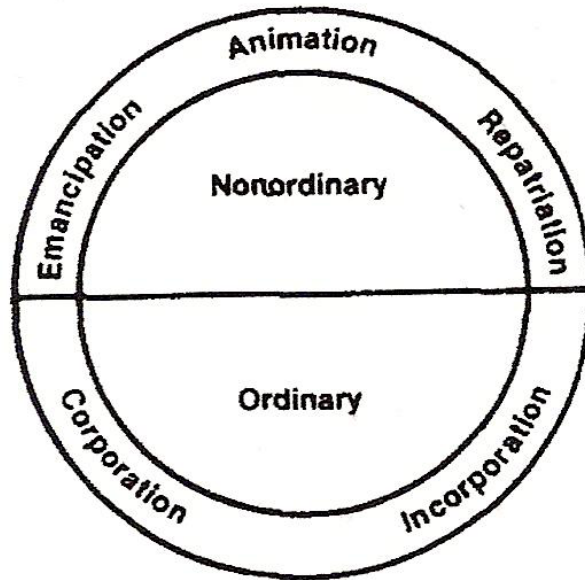


Figure 3.2 The Tourism Model (Jafari 1987)

Jafari's model begins with *corporation*. This describes the reasons and factors that are attributed to the need to get away from ordinary life. This can involve a way of thinking and emotions induced by cultural, personal and physical levels, which lead to the desire or search for escape. This also involves a structural point of view; the long ordinary, i.e. everyday life, and the short non-ordinary sequences of people's lives (Jafari 1987:152). This is the stage where the traveller is planning to leave everyday life. To get away is the result of man's constant search for identity and asking "what kind of an exciting person am I and which stories can I tell?". Before we decide to travel somewhere, our expectations of what we will experience during our travel already exist in our subconscious (Wahlström 2002:23, 27-29). Films and books can greatly contribute to create the desire for escaping conformity. For example, when travelling by train has been the central theme in a film, this can give birth to a desire to do the same travel as was shown in the film. The mystical travels on the Orient Express (www.orient-express.com 2008-03-28) and the Trans Siberian Railways (www.trans-siberian.co.uk 2008-03-28) in the early 1900s are examples of famous railways that have been used in films. Both of these railways play important roles in writings and stories, such as Agatha Christie's "Murder on the Orient Express" or Eugenio Martín's film "The Horror Express". The Orient Express is a more luxurious way of travelling for the upper classes, while the

Trans Siberian Railways is a simple and more adventurous trip for the people who want to see genuine cultures. Both these railway companies still exist.

The second component of Jafari's tourist model is *emancipation*. This is an important process where the individual is emancipated from the ordinary bounds into the unbounded and non-ordinary. This means that the traveller is going to be liberated and in some way freed from the reality by taking off and leaving the ordinary geographical environment and moving to a new place. There are also cultural and sociological thresholds of leaving the ordinary environment, which are often enhanced by several symbolic items. For example, a suitcase, a camera, an oversized hat or traveller's cheques help to ease the transition into the realm of touristhood or the non-ordinary (Jafari 1987:152-153). Studies show that travellers want to create experiences that are different from mass tourist experiences. This anti-commercialism behaviour is for example shown in their choice of accommodation, restaurant, transport, clothes, and luggage. In this way a traveller can blend in much better in the environment that he/she is travelling in, i.e. with the locals and also other travellers (Andersson Cederholm 1999:75).

While away from home, the traveller adopts another identity. For an InterRailer it is, for instance, central to search for genuine experiences and to blend into the new environment, which is more exciting and full of new activities (Andersson, 1994). Jafari explains how the individual's own face becomes a 'mask', which he hides behind. Together with the tourist symbols mentioned earlier, this induces an emancipative magic. The tourist is provided with tourist cues and moods to which he responds and contributes to playfully. This process makes the transition to the non-ordinary easy, with little interference. When 'adequately' masked and transformed, the individual will enter the state of touristhood (Jafari 1987:153).

The third component of the tourist model is *animation*. As the transformation from 'ordinary citizen' into a tourist proceeds, the non-ordinary and temporary becomes the new reality. The new tourist culture starts to redefine roles, rules, motions and the notion of animation. The new environment in the perceived new reality is anti-structural, as

opposed to the culturally shaped and sanctioned life at home, i.e. an illusive separation process begins and the tourist realises that he is no longer captivated by his everyday life, but has a new identity where he can truly feel free. The animated mode is hence increased in the out-of-time and out-of-place, now a place separated from the realities back home (Jafari 1987:153-154). This is the phase where the traveller arrives to his destination and tries to get used to the new environment. Travellers often prefer to learn about the local culture and people by trying to blend into the local environment. They show that they are interested in the real and genuine places by e.g. taking the local busses and going to distant places from tourist destinations. This way the traveller puts an effort into making his own experiences (Andersson, 1994 and 1999).

After the animation phase, the tourist returns to the base in the fourth phase, *repatriation*. This component represents the transformation process from the non-ordinary back to the ordinary state (Jafari 1987:154). This phase begins when the time for the departure approaches, as the tourists leaves the spatial zones of tourism behind, and also the resurrection of the former self and yielding back to the ordinary world. The two different realities begin to switch positions (Jafari 1987:155).

Incorporation, the tourist subsumed in the ordinary mainstream, is the fifth and last component. The tourist arrives home and is 'incorporated' into its ordinary body (Jafari 1987:155). This means that the traveller is at home.

Jafari's theory shows the different phases of a tourist's travel. He puts a lot of weight on how tourists leave the everyday life to a more liberated state where his/her behaviour changes. At the same time, Andersson (1994) points out the difference between tourists and travellers and in what way the travellers want to differentiate themselves from tourists. This gives us a perspective on how people can create their own experiences when they leave their ordinary life. Jafari's model shows only those components of a tourist travel that are connected to the space and time. For our analyses emancipation and animation components will be the most helpful because at those stages the traveller is in a non-ordinary state and creates experiences. Space and time are also important when

talking about experiences, because it is these factors that decide if something becomes an experience or not. This is an aspect that Jafari does not discuss further, but Hanefors and Mossberg (2007) do.

Hanefors and Mossberg state that experience occurs in a certain time and place that a traveller is in. It is this time and place, which are going to trigger the traveller's senses and create experiences that the traveller will remember vividly. The experiences that occur in the everyday life are more difficult to remember. However, the experiences that we can remember after a long period, i.e. after several years, are often labelled as "extraordinary experiences" (Hanefors and Mossberg 2007:132).

Experience is an event that a person has taken part of and gotten emotionally touched by (O'Dell 2002:20). Experiences are often forgotten after a period of time, but can be remembered again when a specific event occurs (Jönsson 2002:62). Some experiences are stronger than others, but it is difficult to decide which one is the strongest or which one we remember the best.

Extraordinary experiences illustrate a high volume of emotional intensity. However, this does not mean that a person needs to strain himself or perform independently. To interact with others is the way to achieve extraordinary experience (Hanefors and Mossberg 2007:133).

By using our senses; seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling and feeling experiences are created. We do not need to use all our sense at once to create experiences, but the more we use the greater the experiences will be, states Hanefors and Mossberg (2007:121). Hanefors and Mossberg's model (see figure 3.3) shows that colours, symbols and lights are affecting the way we see objects. Colours are the interpretations of different lights and symbols. Colours often arouse feelings, for example the colour green symbolises stillness and peace. However, these interpretations are different from culture to culture (Hanefors and Mossberg 2007:122-123). This way the traveller through his eyes can interpret events differently than if the traveller would just hear about it.

Example of factors that affect our senses	Vision	Hearing	
	Colour Symbol Light Optical illusion	Noise Music Bell Silence	
	Taste	Smell	Feeling
	Tasty/Disgusting Sour Bitter Salty/Sweet	Natural scent Artificial scent Odour	Temperature Moisture Touch

Figure 3.3 Factors that Affect Our Senses (Our translation Hanefors and Mossberg 2007:131)

Hearing is another sense that is important in the search for extraordinary experiences. Through our ears we communicate with others and it is the most important sense for learning to speak. We can also listen to different music without any personal strains (Hanefors and Mossberg 2007:124).

To taste is the third sense. Food that is garnished and looks tasty usually tastes better. Also, it is important where and how the food is consumed (Hanefors and Mossberg 2007:125). For example, standing up at a stand can contribute to a negative food experience, although it is not necessarily so. A traveller can feel that by standing up the experience is going to be non-ordinary and different from the everyday lifestyle.

To be able to smell our food is also important for achieving extraordinary experiences. For example the scent of smoke can affect our food experience (Hanefors and Mossberg 2007:126). When we barbeque, the smoke has a more positive feeling, but when somebody is smoking a cigarette next to us it is effecting our senses negatively unless if you are a smoker your self. In that case you would rather have the urge to smoke too.

The fifth, and the last sense, is feeling. That is everything that we can touch with our skin (Hanefors and Mossberg 2007:128). A traveller could achieve an extraordinary experience if he is not only listening to other peoples' stories about an event, but actually

travels to that place where the event occurred and experience the place by himself if that is possible. For example, for a person who has never been at the sea it could be a great experience to touch and swim in the salty water.

Using senses is important to create experiences. Whatever the purpose of the travel, the traveller can create extraordinary experiences by using his/her senses. If you choose to make a culinary travel then some of your senses are already triggered. It awakens those senses that are going to be essential for your food experiences. Hanefors and Mossberg mention that the place and the time are going to trigger the traveller's senses and create experiences that the traveller will strongly remember. Pine and Gilmore also mention these as important aspects, but they take it to another level and state that personal features are going to be decisive in creating deeper experiences. In the next part we are going to discuss the different purposes of travel and what kinds of experiences are associated with them and also how commercial products influence the traveller to choose a certain type of travel.

3.4 Choosing a Type of Experience

We invest money and time during our search for experiences (O'Dell 2002:13). Because people are looking for experiences to learn and to get knowledge about something,

Experiences are events that engage individuals in a personal way"
(Pine and Gilmore 1999:12)

companies within the tourism industry want to take part of it and create these experiences for people. To create an experience assumes a restriction in both time and space. There is a beginning and there is an end. What tourist agencies have to decide is where and how these experiences should start and end. By doing this, tourist experiences become restricted and in a way become controlled (Löfgren 2001:23-26). Examples are offering packaged holidays or round-the-world trips. Some kinds of tourism create enclaves of tourist-only space, isolating tourists rather than expanding their experience. For example, packaged holidays often include an air-conditioned bus moving travellers from an airport

to a hotel at a destination. By doing so, the travellers are going to lose the excitement and the adventure of travelling by a local bus or a train (Coleman and Crang 2002:2).

Pine and Gilmore (1999) show with their model (see figure 3.4) that when people are looking for experiences they have to decide if they want to have an active part of their experience or not.

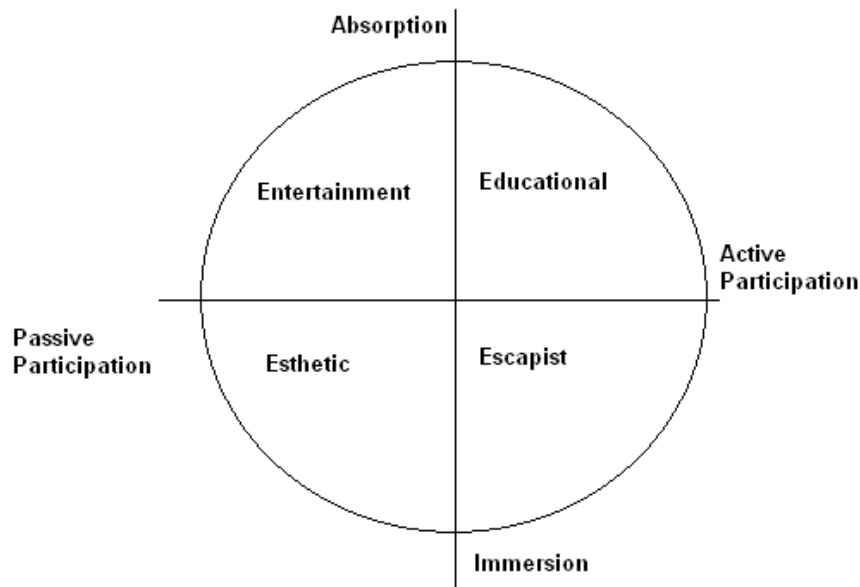


Figure 3.4 The Experience Realms (Pine and Gilmore 1999:30)

If they actively participate in something, they are going to have an improved experience, especially if they use not only their eyes but also their other senses. When a traveller goes to e.g. a concert in Berlin, he is going to have a passive experience, because he uses only his ears and eyes to experience the music. However, if the traveller goes on a ski trip to the Alps, he is going to be an active participant and create his own experiences (Pine and Gilmore 1999:30-38). Previously, it was enough to put the tourists on a bus and drive them from monuments to monuments. However, the new trend is to activate the whole body and use all the senses during a trip. This trend is something that also commercial businesses have adjusted to (Pine and Gilmore 1999). Commercial businesses often offer different kinds of transportation to a destination and tourists have a wide choice of similar

destinations. From Sweden a traveller can choose to travel with Scandorama by bus or with SAS by plane to Hungary. The choice of the transportation is going to decide the kind of experience a tourist is going to have. For example, by choosing European travels by train with tour operator Fritidsresor in Sweden, a traveller is able to travel comfortably, stretch his legs, and see the landscape of different countries (www.aftonbladet.se 2008-02-13).

Making a connection or environmental relationship is the vertical dimension of an experience. There are two different connections. The first one is *absorption*, when the experience goes into someone's mind, for example watching TV. The second one is *immersion*, when someone goes into the experience, for example playing a computer game (Pine and Gilmore 1999:30).

By combining these two dimensions, we can place experiences into four categories; entertainment, educational, esthetical and escapist. Entertainment occurs when travellers passively absorb the experiences through their senses and mostly have a visual connection with an event. Examples are listening to music or going to an opera (Pine and Gilmore 1999:31).

On the other hand, an educational experience involves the active participation of the traveller (Pine and Gilmore 1999:32). When we travel, we are always looking for places that we can recognize from guidebooks, flyers or commercial on TV (Coleman and Crang 2002:116). Travel book writers search for all the local characteristics that would differentiate the traveller from his own environment and culture. Guidebook writers usually do not include all the city events and sites and in this way the guidebook reduces the city into a few sites. Lots of stories are also created to make a place more attractive (Mossberg and Johansen 2006:36-37). However, acquiring knowledge of a place makes people interested in it, e.g. when watching a travel channel. Many believe that films are a realistic description of reality and that is why they want to visit particular places (Emmelin 1990). There are also combinations of the categories, e.g. to be able to find

your way out of a maze could be both educational and fun. An individual can develop his orientation skills and at the same time enjoy the game (Pine and Gilmore 1999:32).

The third experience is the esthetical experiences. These experiences are about integrating with the environment in a passive way. For example, a traveller visiting a castle could get a feeling of going back in time (Pine and Gilmore 1999:35).

Escapism is an activity that involves escape from reality and the visitor plays an active part in an event. Holiday makers, who are tired of being passive and just lying on the beach, can activate themselves by trying different water sports, like diving, to create more exciting experiences. The escapist is also an individual who wants to escape from the everyday life to a different and more exciting life (Pine and Gilmore 1999:33-34).

Pine and Gilmore's model tries to predict the type of experience a traveller will have, based on the knowledge of the traveller's purpose for travelling. This is going to be helpful when we try to determine what kind of experiences travellers are looking for during their travel by InterRail and in what way travelling becomes an experience. The chances of succeeding in creating own experiences depend on how well a traveller can distance himself from commercial products. The more the traveller distances himself from commercial products, the more non-ordinary experiences a traveller is going to have. However, some commercial products, like travel books, are arousing curiosity in people and they might want to experience the stories they have heard about.

These models above show that histories and stories often contribute to how travellers reconstruct, talk about, and give meaning to their experiences. To some stories people can relate more than to others. Mossberg and Johansen believe that stories form the values and principles of people. Stories tell about whom we are and what we have done (Mossberg and Johansen 2006:21-22). They also mention that people express stories in a different way now than many years ago. This is because of the economical and the technical developments in the world. Mossberg and Johansen also believe that when people talk to each other about a commercial product or mention a brand name, they

often share their experiences with others and the listeners get influenced by what they hear. The more attached and engaged people get about a product or a brand name, the more they will interact with people who share the same interest (Mossberg and Johansen 2006:169-172). Muniz and O'Guinn's research shows also this aspect, but they take it to another level and state that people, who share interest for the same, will create a sort of imaginary community. These communities have their own rituals and traditions that are often circulated around shared experiences (Muniz and O'Guinn 2001:419-422). Travellers can also place into groups, for example mass tourists or travellers by train. Belonging to a group is going to show what kind of values and principles group members have.

3.5 Final Thoughts

In this chapter, we have illustrated in what way travellers create their own experiences. The theories were chosen to present experiences from different perspectives. As they complete each other, we will be using all of them in this thesis, because we want to have a broader spectrum of theories. We have chosen four models, but we have also completed these models with several other theories, so they together can create a full picture of this research field.

We started off with explaining human needs by introducing Maslow's pyramid. We have connected Maslow's need for self-actualization to a demand for travelling. Jafari goes deeper in this and says that during a travel, one behaves in a different way to get closer to his/her self-actualization. By being liberated from the stress of everyday life, travellers feel freedom and their experiences are therefore going to be different from the daily routine experiences. Hanefors and Mossberg's model completes Jafari's train of thoughts, as they say that by using different senses a traveller creates his own experiences. The more actively used senses are going to have a greater influence on the traveller's experiences and these experiences will be more strongly etched into the traveller's memory. Feeling the freedom to use all five senses is an important factor for creating

unplanned experiences and freedom is one of the factors that are central for travellers when creating own experiences.

Applying Pine and Gilmore's model we argue that the traveller himself has to decide if he wants to be an active or passive part of creating experiences. Being active means to create experiences yourself and being passive means that you let somebody else, for example a tourist agency, arrange everything. By being active, travellers can enhance social contact, according to Mossberg and Johanssen. Social contact is another central factor for travellers when creating their own experiences and an important factor for reconstructing experiences, because a story always includes an object. This could be a person, but also other animate or inanimate objects. Mossberg and Johanssen further argue that storytelling is a way to show that the traveller has experienced something, but also a way to influence other travellers, which we also regard as an important factor.

4. Method

This chapter aims to describe how we have collected our empirical data. We will present the choice of our study as well as primary and secondary sources.

4.1 Choice of Topic

Because we were interested in traveller experiences we began to search for literature within this topic. We could discern that striving after more freedom and spontaneity during travel, making social contact with locals and other travellers, and share and experience traveller stories were central for travellers' experiences. As these factors have been researched in earlier studies we were interested if this was still the case. When we formulated our interview guides we focused on these factors.

4.2 Choice of Empirical Material

We decided to perform an empirical study, to be able to understand and learn more about experience when travelling by InterRail. Our primary sources, the interviews, were used to illustrate *what is central for travellers in creating their own experiences when travelling by InterRail*. To get a deeper and more thorough notion about experiences, we decided that the best suited way would be qualitative interviews. According to Jacobsen (2002), this approach is best suited for the purpose of our thesis, because this method helps us to find out how different travellers interpret and understand situations and experiences. A qualitative method is more open than a quantitative, and allows us to see important details and what is unique about every interviewee. This approach also allows us to be more flexible as the purpose of the thesis can change as we collect more and more information from our interviewees (Jacobsen, 2002:142). A quantitative survey would likely have given us too shallow answers and less opportunity to understand the underlying opinions, feelings and details that all contribute to a traveller's experiences. We have also used secondary sources as a complement to our empirical material. These sources were found on the web and in traveller magazines.

4.3 Primary Sources

4.3.1 Research Design

Our interview objects were Swedish travellers that at the time of the travel were under the age of 30. Before the interviews we made an interview guide (see appendix 8.1) with questions for our interviewees as a help to structure our interviews. As Bryman (2001) mentions, the interview guide is used as a reminder of which questions we need answered. At the time of the interview we adapted our questions to the given situation to get as detailed answers as possible. We used questions like “Why?” and phrases such as “Elaborate”. We had a tape recorder during the interviews to be able to transcribe and translate to English, as all the interviews were conducted in Swedish. During our translation, some of the phrases might have changed their meaning slightly, because of the differences between the languages. Each interview took approximately 40 minutes and took place at a university building in Lund.

There are different aspects that could have affected our reliability, i.e. how trustworthy the empirical collected material is (Halvorsen 1992:41-42). One aspect is the number of our collected interviews. Can we be certain that our interviews are representative for others as well? In order to be reliable, we have interviewed two men and two women. Furthermore, we made sure that all our interviewees had travelled after the year 2000. We did this to sustain that our primary sources were suitable for our purpose, i.e. to study 21st Century InterRailer experiences. Furthermore, at our second interview we interviewed two people at the same time, because they had travelled together. This could have affected some of the answers, since they could have been influenced by each others answers. For example, at some times they answered “Yes, I agree” or “Yes, I think the same way”. However, we made this choice to be able to get more in-depth answers from them. This sometimes resulted in deeper discussions and dialogues that we would have not been able to capture otherwise.

Another aspect that can affect the reliability is the so-called interview effect. This can emerge when for example the interviewee does not answer what he/she actually thinks,

but instead what he/she thinks we are expecting him/her to answer (Bryman 2006:132). We did not tell our interviewees about the purpose of our research, which should decrease the risk of this being an issue.

4.3.2 Interviewee Information

We decided to let our interviewees be anonymous. Although, to avoid being impersonal, we chose to mention their first name and age. All our interviewees are living in Skåne and are studying different courses at the University of Lund.

The first interview was conducted on 21 April, 2008 with Lisa, 21 years. She travelled with a female companion in March 2008. They travelled through the following cities during a 10 day period with a ten-day InterRail pass with five travelling days:

By train: Lund – Copenhagen – Hamburg – Köln – Antwerp – Brugge – Paris - Switzerland via Bern - Interlaken – Milan – Rome. Afterwards, by plane from Rome to Frankfurt, and by train again: Frankfurt – Hamburg – Copenhagen – Lund

The second interview was with Daniel, 24, and David, 23, and took place on 21 April, 2008. The time of their travel was August, 2007. They travelled as companions, which is why we decided to interview them together. They also had two other male companions that travelled with them. They bought a global pass and travelled to:

Lund – Copenhagen – Hamburg – Paris – Barcelona - Nice - Monte Carlo – Venice - Rom – Trieste – Partio – Munich – Copenhagen - Lund

The third interview was with Petra, 20, on 22 April, 2008. She travelled with 150 other students in 2006. They bought a group pass and they travelled during a one week period through the following cities:

Lund – Berlin – Prague – Berlin – Lund

4.3.3 Approach during the Interviews

First, we decided which people we will interview for this study. The only requirement for the interviewees was that they had to have travelled by InterRail in recent years. We used our network of friends and acquaintances in order to get in contact with suitable interviewees. This restriction might have limited the validity of the results. However, since our interviews are about subjective, personal experiences, we believe that this is not a problem.

The questions were not shown to the respondents prior to the interview, which made the interview answers spontaneous. We had not decided beforehand how many travellers we were going to interview. After the fourth interview, however, we saw patterns in the answers and therefore decided not to interview more people. We are aware that additional interviews might have affected our final results.

4.4 Secondary Sources

Our secondary source consists of web pages, articles in magazines, blogs and mail correspondence. We used these sources to get a deeper and broader analysis. The first secondary source that we came in contact with was the InterRail Soap Series. This is the official InterRailing blog where travellers can share his/her stories and thoughts about travelling. Secondly, we looked at Swedish blogs to find out more about InterRail experiences. We used specific texts out of different blogs that we felt were relevant for our analysis. We understand that we might have missed some important texts and that using blogs has its boundaries. For example, we could interpret the context of the text in a different way than the blogger meant, but we still believe that we used only those blogs that would contribute to our analysis.

We have also used articles from the magazine Kupé. This magazine is available for free on Swedish trains. The articles that we chose contained relevant facts that we could use in our analysis. Furthermore, we had mail correspondence on 11 February, 2008 with Jan

Svensson, Manager of International Sales and Marketing at the Swedish national railways, SJ, who provided us with statistics about InterRailing.

These sources were a complement to our interviews to enhance our reliability.

5. Results of Empirical Findings

This chapter aims to show the results of our empirical findings. We will present all our interviews with David, Daniel, Petra, and Lisa and combine them with our secondary sources. We will divide the empirical findings into three parts. As was pointed out earlier in this paper, spontaneity and freedom, social contacts, and storytelling are all central for creating traveller experiences.

5.1 Spontaneity and Freedom

David and Daniel were travelling in a group of four through South and West Europe to create new experiences in their lives. They decided that choosing train travels was going to minimise the risk to feel too tied up with following a schedule. When we asked the question: *In what way do experiences differ between travels with InterRail compared to a bus/car/plane?* They answered that travelling by plane or bus does not give the same satisfaction of spontaneity as the train. They perceive flying as “boring” and too restricted, for example this is how David expressed his thoughts about flying:

“Flying feels extremely planned; you almost have to be there a day in advance”

Furthermore, David and Daniel said that travelling by InterRail meant to feel freedom by getting away from the everyday life and at the same time see different cities in Europe. However, they soon got tired of always having to spend time on arranging rooms and booking tickets. David said that he would rather make more detailed plans if he ever would travel with InterRail again in the future, which would defeat the initial purpose of travelling by train – spontaneity.

Choosing to travel in a group made David and Daniel also feel safe during travel. Even if freedom was an important aspect of their travel they wanted to feel safe. On the other hand, as David expressed, this contributed to meeting less people outside of the group,

because some of the group members were afraid, that they would be for example mugged when sleeping.

Even if freedom and to be spontaneous were two of the main reasons to choose travelling by InterRail, it seems like this perception of freedom was not really as David and Daniel had expected. David explained that he thought the most positive aspect about InterRailing was the freedom it gives. However, he also expressed how additional and unexpected costs meant he had to impose more restrictions on the freedom he had imagined before the travel.

After our interviews we wanted to find out if there were other InterRailers who felt the same way as our interviewees. A traveller explains for example how these new passes with all the different restrictions that apply, ruin so much of the spontaneity with InterRailing (Blog 3). Also, travelling during the night hours might sound adventurous at first, but one InterRailer expressed this as follows:

“InterRailing during the night seems really genuine and cosy, but in reality it is quite uncomfortable” (Blog 1)

A third traveller, on the other hand, tells the positive things about InterRailing:

“What I like about Interrail is the ability to get to know a lot of new people, places and have a lot of fun, it is just one ticket!” (InterRail Soap Series, Meet RailDancer Maria 2007-10-02)

Petra’s travel destination was Prague. She travelled with her school mates in a large group. Her journey was fixed and the plan of the travel was predetermined. As our interview continues, we find out that she likes to feel secure during her trip, which she solved by planning ahead. However, when we asked; *In what way do experiences differ between travels with InterRail compared to a bus/car/plane?* Petra emphasized that travel

by train is an experience of a different type. In order to escape all the noise of the city and enter a calm environment, the train was very important for creating her own experiences:

“...there are different experiences, but I don’t think that depends on the train so much, but more on the people that travel, different cultures, different way [...] you get out to the nature in a different way and it is spacious and you can talk to people without a lot of noise around you...”

Lisa was travelling through central Europe with a friend. Her journey was unplanned and she often described it as adventures and exciting. Lisa decided to InterRail only one day ahead, yet she had a good notion about where to travel. When asked what was positive about InterRailing, she said:

“It would be that you don’t have to plan ahead a lot, because it is very easy to do that and afterwards it feels like you have to stick to the plan, which doesn’t really feel like the point of the whole travel. The nicest, I think, is to take a map and maybe a guide of Europe and then read a little bit about the places that seem to be fun and just go there.”

For Lisa, InterRailing was a way to escape the stressful everyday life:

“It happened when we were going to a suburb of Malmö to buy some curtain fabric, and we were busy with the student’s comedy play, and there was a lot to do, and it was boring, so suddenly we felt like travelling. It was such a nice spring day [...] so we decided to travel somewhere and wanted to travel by train.”

When we asked her why she chose the train instead of taking for example a plane, she answered:

“It depends on where you want to fly, if you want to fly to Europe, what kind of a travel you want to do, if you want to visit somebody then it is quite nice to travel fast, but if you want to travel to different places it is definitely more fun with train.”

5.2 Social Contacts

In David and Daniel's journey they made involuntary social contact that left an ever lasting impression on them. David told us a story about when they were travelling on the night train in Italy:

“It was in Italy, when we booked a carriage on a night train, they said that there were only four beds. But we knew that it was always six beds, so when we were ready to go to sleep, an Italian man came in to our carriage and was talking a lot in his sleep.”

David told us also that without looking for contacts with other travellers they were surprised over meeting Swedish tourists and other InterRailers. Both in Paris and in Barcelona they met travellers who were InterRailing. The main conversation topics were “Where are you going?” and “Where have you been?” and no deeper conversations took place.

When asked whether they would travel by InterRail again in the future, the response from David was that he would be interested, just not right now. He pointed out that he in that case would travel to Eastern Europe, because he has already seen the big cities in south-western Europe.

Petra made social contact with others outside of her own group. She told us about an interesting meeting on the train:

“What comes to mind directly is the train conductor [...] He was very eccentric. He was very feminine and also a little bit aggressive... so he must be one of the characters I remember the most, including [the people I met in] Prague. He was an experience by himself.”

When we asked; *What do you think is the most positive about InterRailing?* Petra answered that the environmental perspective is the most positive. Even if she would not think of that aspect she would choose travels by train before other transportation methods

anytime. For Lisa, train travelling is a way to create experiences that are outside her everyday environment. She describes her everyday life as constant problem solving. Traveling takes her focus off these problems and gives her some time to escape.

Social interactions were important to Petra. She pointed out that traveling in a group makes a journey better, because a group can make collective experiences that contribute to telling and discussing different stories and events. Creating social interactions with people outside of her group was not an important part of her travel. Petra emphasized that the reason for her travel was to be together with her group and to do things together during their whole stay in Prague. She did, however, meet with other InterRailers. She said that these meetings mostly occurred during travel on the train and that these meetings were sometimes unpleasant. She tells the story about travellers from the US, who had occupied their cabin on the train from Prague. They refused to move, after asking them to leave, and the situation became worse, when two Germans appeared and started to laugh at them instead giving them a helping hand.

Social contact often occurred during Lisa's travel, because she was actively looking for contact with other InterRailers. This was made easy, as she was often staying at hostels, where many InterRailers sleep. However, spontaneous contacts were sometimes weird. She told us about an incident when she and her friend wanted to find accommodation. They accidentally went through the wrong door in a building, but at the time they did not know that. They ended up with an old lady wearing a pink robe. She was suspicious about how they found her and who they were, but finally she let them into the flat and showed them their room, which was also decorated in pink. The morning after, when leaving the old lady in pink, they found out that the hostel they actually were looking for was on the floor below. Lisa said that it was a very odd situation and experience. Another social contact Lisa had during her trip:

“We met some Asian people who were also travelling. It was very nice, but most of them did not speak any English at all. One of the first we met, could not say anything but hello and goodbye, and did not understand if you asked if he wanted some chocolate”

5.3 Storytelling

We also asked David and Daniel; *In what way did you come in contact with Interrail?*. The answer from Daniel was that he had planned travelling by InterRail since high school and that it was something he wanted to try for a long time. Daniel and David thought that travelling from city to city and not knowing where to go next or where to sleep during the night was exciting. The reason to choose to travel by InterRail is that they wanted to experience the stories they heard through the media and their families. Daniel told us the following:

“[about getting in contact with InterRailing] it was a thing that you already wanted to do in high school. To InterRail. [...] It was a lot on the news long before, just last summer it was extremely hyped, I saw it on the news, and everybody was travelling by InterRail.”

David said:

“I assume I just knew since way back that there were these InterRail tickets... [why they wanted to InterRail] just to do that thing [...] this was the original thought, to experience this [InterRailing], to take each day as it comes.”

When we asked David and Daniel what they found most interesting in the places they visited, they pointed out that sightseeing as an important factor. To visit all the famous buildings and monuments was rather a “touristy” way to experience new places, but they also mentioned partying and going to the beach.

When we asked Petra how she got knowledge about InterRailing, she answered that she heard a lot about it from her father. When she was a child, he used to tell her stories about his train travels and she always thought that it was a nice way to get out to a calm and quiet nature.

When we asked what Lisa and her friend were most interested in, she pointed out that sightseeing was important. She wanted to experience what others had also experienced.

After our interviews we wanted to find out in what way travellers get in contact with InterRailing. We found that stories are circulating not only by word-of-mouth, but travellers nowadays often take photos or write diaries of their trips on the Internet to show their families, friends and other curious people. For example, InterRail Soap Series (<http://www.interrail-station.eu>) or Resedagboken (www.resedagboken.se) are two of these sites, where all travellers can share their experiences with everyone. While plane charter tourists can only reflect over if the plane was late or not, train travellers can tell exciting stories and events from the actual travelling and not only the destination. One traveller wants to explain that Italy is much more than one single destination, in this case Verona:

“Italy oh Italy, where art thou.... Whenever I think of Italy, the famous play Romeo and Juliette comes to mind. The city of Verona plays an important part in the play! But Italy has a lot more to offer than dramatic love sceneries.” (InterRail Soap Series, InterRail tips...Italy 2007-07-26)

When travelling, there will be stories that enhance certain prejudices and there will be stories that contradict them. A traveller tells a story where he had a social contact experience on the train from Irun, France to Lisbon, Portugal:

“We booked a 6 persons couchette so we had to share our compartment with 4 other people. We were excited what kind of people these would be. Soon we heard an African woman shouting to her kids. We hoped that they would pass our compartment. And they did... After a while, 4 young noisy people entered our compartment. Oh my god, we thought... oh... and they were Dutch too.” (InterRail Soap Series, The bloopers continue even further 2007-11-15)

Another way to acquire knowledge about these travels is from the media. We read an article in Kupé (February 2008), about that the climate changes of the world makes companies think “green”. Some Swedish travel agencies, like Fritidsresor, started to package train charter and sell it as a “green” alternative to flying or travelling by bus. We

also got the same result from our email correspondent, Jan Svensson, International Sales and Marketing Manager at SJ, (2008-02-11). InterRailing is now more attractive and popular, because the “InterRailing product” has developed in recent years. The climate debate and environmental aspect in today’s society make train travelling more attractive. Svensson continues that it is also possible that InterRailing is considered to be “retro” nowadays, and a new trendy way to discover Europe. Also, there is a large group of people that have never tried to travel by train, or those who InterRailed in their youths, and now want to re-live this experience. Svensson also says that InterRailing becomes not only a way to transport oneself, but also a part of the travel and experience.

One of the InterRail travellers shows how travelling could be influenced by stories:

I've never been to Budapest myself so I don't know a whole lot about this city. Although I did hear a lot about Budapest from people who went there and I got to tell you, I think it's worth the trip! (InterRail Soap Series, Interrailing to Budapest 2007-08-15)

Another InterRailer also shows in what way stories influence people:

“One of the things most people do when they visit Vienna is taking a ride in one of the horse-drawn carriages (Fiaker). So that’s what I did, too.” (InterRail Soap Series, Malou's view on Vienna 2007-08-23)

6. Analysis of Empirical Findings

In this chapter we are going to present the analysis of empirical findings by connecting our findings to the theory. At the end of this chapter we will answer our central question.

6.1 Creating Experiences

6.1.1 The Meaning of Spontaneity and Freedom

Jafari (1987) says that our desire to feel free makes us travel, because during a travel we do not need to deal with the stresses of everyday life. This, however, creates other kinds of stress, such as missed or late departures, long queues to attractions, food poisoning, etc., but Jafari does not discuss that. Jafari explains how we take a distancing step away from real life and enter what we perceive to be desired life. Some travellers might after a while get the notion that the perceived desired life could be too challenging if it were to be real and therefore try to re-evaluate the situation. For example, the freedom that David and Daniel had imagined was not quite as it turned out to be. They wanted to be more spontaneous during their travel, but they felt that too much spontaneity could be dangerous. They wanted to create experiences, but they also had to put some limitations on what could be done and what could not. As it turned out, their desired life had certain prerequisites that they had not considered. For example, when booking hostels in advance, instead of spending time on finding accommodation at the destination and to lose time looking for a place to sleep at night. Without booking a hostel in advance they might jeopardise their safety and comfort, but pre-booking would take away a great part of the spontaneity.

David and Daniel mentioned that their desire was to freely travel through Europe with one ticket and to see the cities that they had not visited before. Andersson Cederholm (1994 and 1999) states that travellers create their own experiences by not following the steps of the tourist, i.e. creating their own traveller experiences. During our interviews we could notice that even if our interviewees wanted to create spontaneous experiences they

still thought that taking part of for example a city tour like any other tourist would do, did not affect their mood.

Jafari (1987) mentions that in waiting for the new reality, i.e. the desired lifestyle that travelling gives, we take a step away from the social and sociological structures in our life. How big this step is up to each and everyone, depending on how much they want to blend into the environment. For example, for Petra this meant blending into the physical environment that surrounds her in a picturesque way. She talks about the green and peaceful landscapes that she can see during her travel and in this way she creates a distance from the noisy life of the big cities. Andersson Cederholm (1999) also mentions that the more a traveller blends into the new environment the bigger step he takes from prearranged experiences to more genuine experiences. Lisa wanted to leave the stressful life behind and do something that does not require any planning. She wanted to liberate herself from the everyday life structure by just letting everything happen spontaneously.

Jafari (1987) puts a lot of weight on how tourists leave their everyday life and transfer to a more liberated life where their behaviour changes. He connects travelling with time and space in his model where experiences could occur at any instant. During our interviews we noticed that experiences occurred continuously during the travels, i.e. on the train or at the different destinations. Examples are when Petra told us about the problems with other train travellers or when Lisa cordially pointed out the difficulties with communicating in different countries.

Furthermore, we also noticed that travellers remembered the experiences that happened spontaneously to a greater extent. Hanefors and Mossberg state that experiences occur in that certain time and place that the traveller is in. It is the time and place that are going to trigger the traveller's senses and create the experiences that the traveller will strongly remember. The experiences that occur in everyday life are more difficult to remember, as they are in the "normal" setting. The experiences that we remember after a long period of time can be labelled as extraordinary experiences.

To interact with others is the way to achieve extraordinary experiences as Hanefors and Mossberg (2007) mention. In this way, when travellers no longer feel captivated by their everyday routine and cultural constraints, they could interact with people more freely and thus create their own experiences. This is due to the fact that they are in a non-ordinary state during their travel, and, knowing that they will only stay there for a limited time, they act differently from when at home. All their actions are more intense and concentrated, as the travellers know that the travel is limited in time and therefore everything must be experienced before that time expires.

6.1.2 The Meaning of Social Contacts

Hanefors and Mossberg (2007) indicate that place and time are going to trigger the traveller's senses and these are going to affect the experiences. By choosing InterRailing as a big part of the travel, it was given that the travellers' senses are going to be activated, because they will be exposed to different people and cultures on the way.

Our interviewees' spontaneous ways of travelling through cities lead them to interact in different social contacts. Hanefors and Mossberg (2007) imply that to interact with others is the way to achieve extraordinary experiences. We noticed during our interviews that the most memorable experiences we heard of occurred during interaction with other people. When we asked David and Daniel they mentioned a person they met on the train and at night he was snoring. They were not as open to communicate with others and instead they let themselves get annoyed by them. Their "social interaction" experiences were mostly negative and they did not see the interactions as a positive effect on their travel. On the other hand, these interactions became one of their most memorable experiences.

David and Daniel could not loosen up during their travel as Jafari (1987) states when he talks about being away from everyday life and truly feeling free. Lisa acted in exactly this way. Lisa's social interactions with other travellers and locals played an important part in her travel. She took every instant to make a connection even if this was not always

successful. For example, when she told us about a traveller they met on the train, who could not speak any English. She felt disappointed because she wanted to interact with people. She really tried to make the best of her travel.

Petra acted in the same way as Lisa and pointed out that when she is abroad she dares to interact with people more than when she is at home. She meant that in other countries it is easier to make a connection with a complete stranger than at home in Sweden. Her social interactions were, unfortunately, mostly negative. She did not start a conversation, because she was really interested, but because it was necessary. An example of this is when she told us the story about the travellers from the US, who had occupied their cabin on the train from Prague and refused to move.

Other travellers also told their stories about social interactions, e.g. the person who shared his experience on the train from Irun, France to Lisbon, Portugal. The excitement for social interaction was based on where those people were coming from. In this way social interaction becomes an uncertain, yet exciting event.

6.2 Choosing a type of experience

Maslow (1943) points out that just because humans are motivated to do something it is not easy to point out all the motivations behind this act. What is most important is that every act has several motivations that might not always be easily revealed. Motivations for travel could be because of the stories people hear about different places. Choosing a type of travelling experience also has some motivation behind it. David wanted to fulfil his curiosity for travels with InterRail. Even if he had some negative experiences, his curiosity for travelling to Eastern Europe was awoken. Lisa has already travelled twice and she is not planning any more travel by InterRail in the future. However, we know that she is spontaneous and she could change her mind at any time. Petra has not been travelling “freely” by InterRail and she could not say if she would travel in the near future, but she did show interest.

Our interviewee's experiences illustrate what kind of choices a traveller makes. The experiences, which Lisa created spontaneously, were the greatest for her. Even if there were experiences that seemed to be negative at the beginning, it turned out to be the most memorable ones. For example, when she told us about an incident when she and her friend wanted to find accommodation and how the old lady wearing a pink robe contributed to their experiences and left a lasting impression.

By actively choosing what kind of experiences she wanted to create, Lisa participated to a high degree in order to welcome and take part in spontaneous events. This is exactly what Pine and Gilmore (1999) point out with his theory. Their experience model shows that when people are looking for experiences they have to decide if they want to play an active part in creating their experience or not. If they actively participate in something they are going to have an improved experience. By combining two dimensions we can place experiences into four categories; entertainment, educational, esthetical and escapist. For all our interviewees, travelling by train was a way of escaping from the everyday life, but at the same time they wanted to learn about different cultures. The red star in Pine and Gilmore's model below shows our interviewed InterRailers' position in the model (see below, figure 6.1).

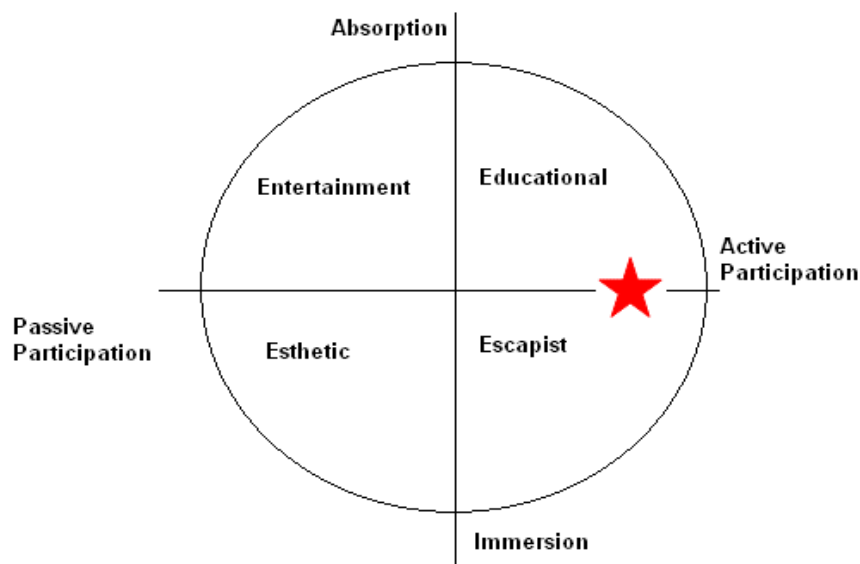


Figure 6.1 Pine and Gilmore's model applied to InterRailers

6.2.1 The Meaning of Storytelling

What is connecting our travellers to each other is that they saw something in InterRailing that could give them the experiences that they were looking for. We do not know for certain if they all found what they were looking for, but as Löfgren (2001) mentioned, commercial products, in this case the InterRail pass, have effects on how travellers experience and set restrictions. The InterRail global pass is a commercial product that implicates unlimited travel throughout Europe. This is exactly what InterRail wants to sell through selling all kinds of travel packages and by creating stories about places and events.

As Coleman and Crang (2002) mention, commercial companies are stimulating people's senses to buy products. Our interviewees were looking for freedom that they believed they could find in InterRailing. David and Daniel's stories seem to reflect this. InterRailing has always been a way to discover Europe and many people shared their stories and thoughts about InterRailing. Our interviewees already had knowledge of InterRail and they wanted to experience the stories they had heard for themselves. For David and Daniel freedom meant to be free from standing at the railway stations and buying tickets every time they wanted to travel, but also to spontaneously travel wherever they wanted in Europe. Another traveller has also described in her blog how the possibilities are virtually unlimited with an InterRail pass (Blog 2).

Mossberg and Johansen (2006) are convinced that what commercial companies want to achieve with their stories is to stimulate people to buy their products, i.e. guidebooks and maps are a way to awaken interest in people to travel. To make a place more attractive, storytelling also plays a big part. As Jan Svensson, International Sales and Marketing Manager at SJ, (2008-02-11) said it is possible that InterRailing is considered to be "retro" nowadays. It could be the reason why our interviewees choose InterRailing at first, but we noticed that this view changed after the travel. InterRailing might be not as stimulating as it seems to be at first glance. Lisa considered travelling by train to be romantic at first, but found out that it was not as romantic as she had thought. She felt that InterRailing was just the same as travelling with train in Sweden. However, she was

very surprised to find out that people are allowed to smoke on the trains. On the other hand, she wanted to make the best of the travel and she also saw the positive sides of InterRailing and she warmly recommends it. Her negative experiences turned out to be positive experiences, because she learned from them and did not see them as an obstacle for future travels. Another traveller felt the same way about InterRailing and expressed that InterRailing is *the ability to get to know a lot of new people, places and have a lot of fun, it is just one ticket!*" (InterRail Soap Series, Meet RailDancer Maria 2007-10-02).

As Mossberg and Johansen (2006) mention, storytelling is about stimulating people, but everybody interprets stories differently, because people can relate to certain parts of the story more than to other parts. For example a traveller reflects over Italy and says that when she thinks of Italy, the story of Romeo and Juliette comes to her mind. However, she continues by pointing out that Italy has so much more to offer than dramatic love sceneries (InterRail Soap Series, InterRail tips...Italy 2007-07-26). This traveller interprets stories about Italy as a part of a manuscript that she can relate to, but she is aware of the fact that there are other things to see in Italy. This shows us how much storytelling affects the people who hear the stories. A traveller tells us how stories about Budapest affected her and even though she has not been there, she recommends it to other travellers (InterRail Soap Series, Interrailing to Budapest 2007-08-15).

Lisa saw the romanticism in train travelling, while David and Daniel only saw a practical way of travelling, and Petra showed genuine love for train travelling. As Svensson (2008) expressed, InterRailing becomes not only a way to transport oneself, but also a part of the travel experience, which we think is partially true. David and Daniel did not see the actual travelling as an experience, but as a necessity in order to reach all their destinations at an affordable price. What David and Daniel did not realise is that parts of their most memorable experiences occurred on the train. The fact that our interview questions are built around InterRailing experiences could affect our interviewees' answers, i.e. they shared experiences that regarded only train travel.

It is not only companies that create stories around their products, even consumers tell about how they have experienced certain products. Mossberg and Johansen (2006) point out that word-of mouth plays an important part when choosing experiences. Petra told us about her father travelling a lot by train and she heard lots of stories about his travels. In this way, travelling by train became special for her and she feels calm and free like she imagined her father did. Petra had also heard on the news about the climate change and how cars, planes and busses influence the climate. In many ways, media has a great influence on her. Storytellers, like Petra's father, often share their experiences with others and the listeners get influenced by what they hear. The more attached and engaged Petra got about train travels, the more she wanted to interact with her father who shares the same interest. This is something that Mossberg and Johansen (2006) also expressed.

Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) express that people like Petra in time might build communities, where they create their own rituals and traditions that often circle around shared experiences. For example, an InterRailer expressed his thoughts about Vienna and he said that taking a ride in a Fiaker is what other people do and that is why he did that as well (InterRail Soap Series, Malou's view on Vienna 2007-08-23). Petra said during the interview that she has difficulties to talk about her experiences and love for train travelling with her friends and acquaintances, because she feels there is a lack of interest among them. On the other hand, by sharing the stories with others, Petra and other travellers could show that they have experienced something exciting that they would never have done at home.

6.3 Conclusion

We have through this thesis found several models that describe in what way traveller experiences are created. These models were based on earlier studies and we thought that a new study is needed. We chose InterRailing as our study object, because InterRail is a topic that has not been studied in the last decade. This resulted in the formulation of a question; *What is central for travellers in creating their own experiences when travelling by InterRail?*

Through our interviews we found that there are different aspects of creating experiences when travelling by InterRail. We found three central aspects as follows:

- **Freedom**, because it is all against the schedules of everyday life. Travelling by plane or bus did not give the same feeling of freedom as travelling with InterRail. Escaping from the stressful environment of everyday life was a way to feel free.
- **Spontaneity**, because planning ahead would ruin the feeling of freedom. Unplanned, spontaneous travel in this way liberates travellers and they are going to have a better chance to feel free from the structures of life.
- **Social contacts**, because social boundaries seem to diminish or even disappear when travellers are not at home. Our interview results show that social interactions are among the experiences that travellers remember the most and are central in creating experiences.

Furthermore, we found that there is a reason why these aspects are central in creating own experiences:

- **Storytelling**, because travellers want to acquire knowledge about new cultures and people, so that they themselves can say “been there, done that”. Products, like guidebooks and maps are a way for companies and media to awaken interest in people to travel.

7. Discussion

In this chapter we will discuss our analysis and conclusions. Thereafter, we are going to summarise our thesis to be able to present our reflections about the choices we made and what this meant for our results. Finally, we are going to present our proposal for future studies.

7.1 Discussion

During our work we put together questions about the freedom that InterRailing gives and the spontaneity that the global pass reflects. As we wrote in the analysis, our travellers had at times encountered problems when on the train. This is because by being on the train, the travellers' space is limited and this makes them having to interact with other travellers. There are different notions about what is considered free and spontaneous about InterRailing. For a traveller it could mean free from the everyday structures of life as Jafari (1987) implies, but on the train the traveller is forced to behave and interact with other people. These interactions might be creating memorable experiences and leaving lasting impressions, as our interviews showed.

Another thought that we had was in what way InterRail could develop their global pass image. Our interviews show that there are travellers who consciously choose a pass based on the notion that they can experience something exciting or unique, with the help of that pass. However, there are restrictions, and the name global pass is misleading. Even if InterRailers follow the advice of Pine and Gilmore (1999) and Hanefors and Mossberg (2007) and actively take part in making their own choices, they are misled by the name of the product. In this way the travellers were restricted and the freedom that they were looking for in their pass was not found.

InterRail has no need to change their marketing yet, because they are alone with their product and there is a lack of competition in the railroad market. However, their image could be hurt if other travellers will also feel misled by them. What happens if a

competitor arises? Can they still keep their leading position and distinguish themselves from others? These are questions that might be answered in future studies.

Our hopes, now that we have finished our study and presented what we have found, are that our conclusions can contribute to the research about in what way traveller experiences are created, i.e. focussing on what is central for travellers when they create their own experiences.

7.2 Summary

The purpose of this thesis was to understand in what way travellers create their own experiences. We were looking for answers for the following question: *What is central for travellers in creating their own experiences when travelling by InterRail?*

To be able to answer this question we have presented different models about how travellers create their experiences. We then applied these theories on travels by InterRail. Our analysis is pointing towards four different aspects and we believe that these aspects are the answers to our question. InterRailers found their experiences through *freedom*, *spontaneity*, and *social contacts*. The more spontaneous their interactions with people were, the more likely for them to create experiences that were memorable. Freedom had contributed to spontaneous actions and events. These actions and events had contributed to personal achievements or personal realisations, i.e. in this case *storytelling*.

7.3 Reflections

We know that the models that we chose to present in this thesis have influenced our results. If we had used different models, we would have applied these to our results. As we believe that other models in a future study could show different results, these studies would complement each other.

We have also found that there is a different way to approach this topic and we feel that a future study would be suitable. For example, focussing on different train travels could be interesting. In this study we deliberately limited our thesis to only train travels by InterRail. It would have been interesting to study and compare our findings with what was regarded as central for travellers to create their experiences in the 1980s and the 1990s.

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Trans Siberian railways, 2008-03-28:

<http://www.trans-siberian.co.uk/site/P2960.html>

8.4 E-mail Correspondence

Svensson, Jan 2008-02-11, Manager International Sales and Marketing, SJ AB

8.5 Interviews

Lisa, 21 April, 2008, qualitative interview, Lund

David and Daniel, 21 April, 2008, qualitative interview, Lund

Petra, 22 April, 2008, qualitative interview, Lund

9. Appendix

9.1 Interview Guide

In English

Introductory

Sex:

Age:

Date and extent:

From - To:

Company during the trip:

Questions about InterRail:

- In what way did you come in contact with InterRail?
- Why did you choose to travel with InterRail? What were you looking for/wanted out of this travel?
- How did you picture the travel with InterRail? Did this perception change after the travel? If yes, in what way?
- How did you experience travelling by train in general? Why did you choose to travel by train in the first instance?
- Do you think the experiences differ between travels with InterRail compared to a bus/car/plane? If yes, how?
- What do you think is the most positive about InterRailing?
- What do you think is the most negative about InterRailing?

Questions about the trip

- Did you actively seek contact with the local inhabitants?
- Did you seek contact with other InterRailers during the trip?
- Where did you stay during your trip? Was it good, bad, comfortable, nice, cheap, etc?
- What activities did you engage in during your trip?
- Is InterRailing something you could consider doing again? Why or why not?

- After the trip, do you have any memories or other thoughts you would like to share with us?
- Do you have any thoughts or opinions about why InterRailing is getting popular again?
- Other thoughts or comments about InterRailing or about your trip?

Questions about experiences

- What does an experience mean to you? (How do you define it?)
- Were experiences an important reason or motive to your travel? If yes, in what way? If no, what was the most important reason for you to InterRail?
- If you travelled in company with others, how do you think this influenced your experiences?
- If you travelled by yourself, was this a consciously made choice? Why?

In Swedish

Inledande frågor

Kön:

Ålder:

Resans datum och omfång:

Från - Till:

Sällskap under resan:

Frågor om InterRail

- På vilket sätt kom du i kontakt med InterRail?
- Varför valde du att resa med Interrailing? Vad ville du få ut/vad sökte du utav Interrailing?
- Hur föreställde du dig resan med InterRail? Ändrades denna föreställning efter din resa? Om ja, på vilket sätt?

- Hur upplevde du resan med tåget generellt? Varför valde du resa med tåg i första hand?
- Tror du upplevelsena skiljer sig åt mellan en resa via Interrailing och buss/bil/flyg genom Europa? Hur i så fall?
- Det bästa med Interrailing enligt dig?
- Det sämsta med Interrailing enligt dig?

Frågor om resan

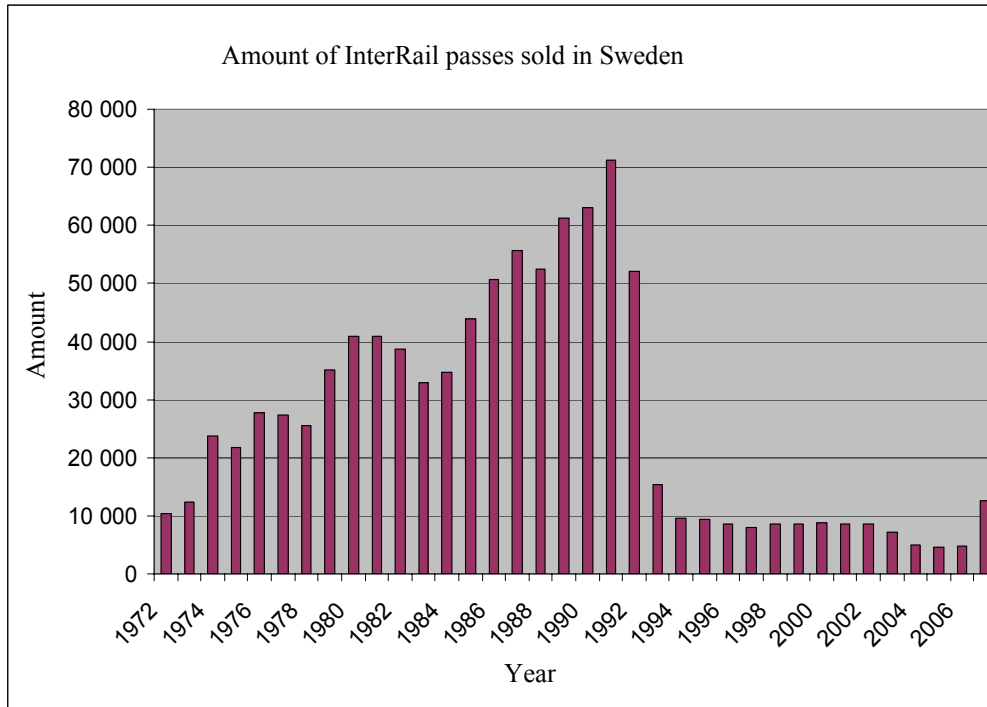
- Sökte du (aktivt) kontakt med den lokala befolkningen?
- Sökte du kontakt med andra Interrailare under resan?
- Var bodde du under resan? Hur var det, bra, dåligt, bekvämt, trevligt, billigt?
- Vilka aktiviteter gjorde du under resan?
- Hade du velat göra om en liknande resa med Interrailing idag? Varför, varför inte?
- Efter resan? Minnen?
- Har du någon åsikt eller tanke om varför tågresandet har blivit populärt igen?
- Andra tankar och funderingar du vill nämna?

Frågor om upplevelse

- Vad betyder en upplevelse för dig?
- Var upplevelser en viktig del av/orsak till din resa? Om ja, på vilket sätt? Om nej, vad var det viktigaste under din resa?
- Om du reste i sällskap, hur påverkade detta resan tror du?
- Om du reste själv, var detta ett medvetet val? Om ja, varför?

9.2 Amount of InterRail Passes Sold in Sweden

Jan Svensson , Manager of International Sales and Marketing at Statens Järnvägar (i.e. Swedish Railway),



Exact amount passes sold:

1993	15 333	1978	25 464
1994	9 661	1979	35 160
1995	9 315	1980	40 888
1996	8 663	1981	40 800
1997	8 051	1982	38 665
1998	8 655	1983	32 872
1999	8 639	1984	34 666
2000	8 823	1985	43 959
2001	8 540	1986	50 581
2002	8 512	1987	55 689
2003	7 175	1988	52 538
2004	4 951	1989	61 241
2005	4 542	1990	62 989
2006	4 819	1991	71 237
2007	12 576	1992	52 044

9.3 InterRail Passes and Prices

Global pass:

Validity	1 st Class Adult	2 nd Class Adult	2 nd Class Youth
5 days travel in 10 days	€329	€249	€159
10 days travel in 22 days	€489	€359	€239
22 days continuous travel	€629	€469	€309
1 month continuous travel	€809	€599	€399

One country pass:

Austria, Benelux, Finland, Italy, Republic of Ireland, Spain, Switzerland:

Validity	1 st Class Adult	2 nd Class Adult	2 nd Class Youth
3 days travel in 1 month	€147	€109	€71
4 days travel in 1 month	€188	€139	€90
6 days travel in 1 month	€255	€189	€123
8 days travel in 1 month	€309	€229	€149

Bulgaria, Czech Republic, FYR Macedonia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey:

Validity	1 st Class Adult	2 nd Class Adult	2 nd Class Youth
3 days in 1 month	€66	€49	€32
4 days in 1 month	€93	€69	€45
6 days in 1 month	€134	€99	€64
8 days in 1 month	€161	€119	€77

Croatia, Denmark, Greece, Hungary, Poland, Portugal, Romania:

Validity	1 st -Class Adult	2nd-class adult	2nd-class youth
3 days in 1 month	€93	€69	€45
4 days in 1 month	€120	€89	€58
6 days in 1 month	€161	€119	€77
8 days in 1 month	€188	€139	€90

France, Germany, Great Britain, Norway, Sweden:

Validity	1 st -Class Adult	2nd-class adult	2nd-class youth
3 days in 1 month	€255	€189	€125
4 days in 1 month	€285	€209	€139
6 days in 1 month	€363	€269	€175
8 days in 1 month	€404	€299	€194