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The Consumer Practice of Volunteer Tourism:

A Fine Line between Niche Leisure Practice and New Social Movement

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I. ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate the sociocultural discourses that are ascribed to the fairly new, yet increasingly popular consumer practice of volunteer tourism. Thereby, we aim to examine the extent to which volunteer tourism correlates with new social movements using Melucci (1989) and Touraine's (1981) "three core representational elements" of every social movement: a common goal, common characteristics of an activists' self-identity and a common adversary. Taking a consumer culture theory stance, this study builds on existing theories from both tourism literature and new social movement literature.

Following constructionist and interpretivist research philosophies, we apply a qualitative research approach. Accordingly, we conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews with former volunteer tourists to collect rich data in form of narratives on the consumer practice.

Findings indicate that volunteer tourism shows correlation to new social movements in terms of respective goals and activists' self-identity and, thus, acts within the realm of political consumerism. However, the adversaries identified appear to be multiple and fragmented and do not reflect the 'common adversary' element that is central in the traditional understanding of new social movements. Such notion opens opportunities for further research in regard to shifts within the contemporary manifestation of new social movements.

Keywords: volunteer tourism, consumer culture theory, new social movement theory, political consumerism

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is generally seen as a leisure practice concerned with the realization of holidays and visits to places of interest (Oxford Dictionaries, n.d.). From a traditional stance, tourism is perceived as a time for pleasure and recreation that is separate from social and political obligations (Urry & Larsen, 2011).

Over the past years, Western societies have undergone various changes in consumption behavior. One of the most notable changes is the increasing blur of former boundaries between personal and political life. As a consequence, consumers actively reflect upon the ethical and sustainable impact of globalization in general, and their individual consumption in particular. This phenomenon is defined as political consumerism and shows various manifestations such as, for instance, collective consumer activism and/or personal consumer resistance (Micheletti & Isenhour, 2010). An expression of collective consumer activism is the arrangement of new social movements. Theorists commonly agree that the movements are driven by a collective goal that incites collective action addressed against a collective adversary. As such they contribute to the change of social and/or cultural order of a subject in need (Buechler, 1995). Renowned examples of such subjects are, for instance, mass-consumption with the consequential emergence of the anti-consumption movement or the equality debate with the emergence of the feminist movement.

Political consumerism influences not only everyday consumption practices but likewise spreads towards infrequent consumption practices like tourism. Therefore, the tourism industry witnessed a transformation over the course of the past decades. Travels are no longer mere means to satisfy leisure, pleasure and recreation needs. In this context, the ethical tourism phenomenon emerged. Ethical tourism constitutes alternative forms of tourism and stands in opposition to traditional mass tourism activities. These mostly niche forms of tourism are concerned with an active reflection on the impact tourism has on destinations, in particular Third World destinations (Wearing et al., 2010).

The volunteer tourism phenomenon acts within the realm of ethical tourism. Herein, tourists combine the notion of volunteering with the notion of traveling. Based on the understanding of evangelical mission trips, the contemporary form of volunteer tourism has grown explosively over the past 20 years. In 2007, it was estimated that the volunteer tourism market globally features 1.6 million participants with a further upward tendency (Tourism Research and Marketing,

2008). The volunteer tourists' are predominantly of Western origins, while their regions of destinations mainly constitute Third World or emerging countries (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). As of 2012, India, South Africa and Thailand ranked among the top three destinations that list most volunteer program searches on the internet (Go Overseas, 2012).

The growing popularity of volunteer tourism increases the attention of the public discourse. Participants, industry peers and scholars alike show interest in the consumption practice for different reasons respectively. Consequently, volunteer tourism witnessed a boost in demand, commercialization and theorization. With regard to the latter, multiple scientific domains investigated the practice of volunteer tourism over the course of the past years. Anthropology, Geography, Psychology and Sociology are some of the research platforms that established a principle understanding of the fairly new phenomenon. Nevertheless, many theorists establish the need for further research that investigates particular characteristics of volunteer tourism (Wearing & McGehee, 2013).

Research Gap & Research Purpose

The close connection of volunteer tourism and the realm of political consumerism presents an interesting research topic. Previous efforts to understand the practice of volunteer tourism suggest that the consumer practice can be characterized as a preliminary stage to new social movement participation (McGehee, 2002; McGehee & Santos, 2005). However, in contemporary society, manifestations of new social movements themselves are fragmented and flexible due to an increase in political and ethical awareness. Many consumption practices are seen as political expressions and social movements themselves. Therefore, this research addresses the relevant research gap and investigates in how far the consumer practice is not only a preliminary stage to new social movement participation but a contemporary manifestation of a new social movement itself.

Our research results advance the still limited theoretical conceptualization of the volunteer tourism phenomenon. Furthermore, they contribute to consumer culture as well as new social movement literature. The findings also offer implications for an ongoing characterization of contemporary Western societies. We examine volunteer tourism discourses that range within the sociocultural context of 'Consumer Identity Projects' and 'Marketplace Cultures', both popular disciplines within the research domain Consumer Culture Theory. Therein, our research design and conduction is guided by the following research questions:

INTRODUCTION

- 1.) What sociocultural discourses influence the consumption practice of volunteer tourism and what meanings do volunteer tourists ascribe to it?
- 2.) What notions of volunteer tourism are expressions of contemporary new social movements?

2. THEORY

In the following we introduce the theoretical departure of our research that is determined by the purpose of the study and the domain to which we aim to contribute to. Furthermore, we review and discuss important previous research and theories in the fields of tourism studies, with a particular focus on volunteer tourism, and new social movement studies as well as general sociological concepts that apply to our research domain. The theoretical foundation we establish serves as basis for the empirical data collection and the consequent discussion.

2.1. Theoretical Departure: Postmodernism and Consumer Culture Theory

[Postmodernity] is a world of ephemerality, instability, proliferation, hallucination and, above all, chaos. It is a world where the beating of a butterfly's wings in South America can cause a stock market crash in Hong Kong or swerve the ball into the net at Old Trafford. It is a world of unexpected, unpredictable, uncontrollable, unremitting, some would say unnecessary, upheaval (Brown, 2006, p. 213).

Postmodernism as a term is at once "fashionable yet irritatingly elusive to define" (Featherstone, 2007, p. 1). While some critics perceive postmodernism as internal moves within the intellectual and academic fields, others argue it is a clear indication of "malaise at the heart of contemporary culture" (Featherstone, 2007, p. 1). Hence, this cultural and aesthetic trend, known as Postmodernism, in art, architecture, music, drama, film and fiction can be understood as a reflection of the present wave of "political reaction sweeping the Western world" (Featherstone, 2007, p. 1). Therefore, individuals are now looking for "aesthetic appeal, meaning and values in contemporary society" (Cova & Svanfeldt, 1993, p. 308).

Cova and Svanfeldt (1993) argue that postmodernism is not just a new academic explanation, but a radically new view of culture with new concepts of how we experience and understand the world around us. Postmodernism represents the transitional era of individualism, where the individual can and should act personally to demonstrate his individual existence and differentiation (Cova, 1996). As a consequence of postmodernism, society is both fragmented and isolated, yet strongly linked to common sub-cultures and vision of life (Cova, 1996).

Postmodernism as a phenomenon has given “growing prominence of the culture of consumption”, rather than the mere regard of consumption as being production driven (Featherstone, 2007, p. 13). Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) as a new field of interpretive research provides a “more precise view on consumer behaviour” (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 868). Precisely, CCT refers to “a family of theoretical perspectives that address the dynamic relationships between consumer actions, the marketplace, and cultural meanings” (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 868). Arnould and Thompson (2005, p. 875) state that CCT research highlights that many consumers’ lives are “constructed around multiple realities and that they use consumption to experience those particular realities”.

Since the research that explores the phenomenon of volunteer tourism is still limited from a CCT standpoint, and due to its increasing relevance and rapid growth as a consumer practice, our aim is to contribute to volunteer tourism theory from a CCT perspective. We strive to do so by exploring sociocultural discourses that influence the consumer practice in order to gain a rich understanding of ascribed meanings to it. This understanding will consequently serve as basis for further examination of correlation between volunteer tourism expressions and new social movement manifestations.

We build our research on two leading CCT domains: ‘Consumer Identity Projects’ and ‘Marketplace Cultures’ (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). ‘Consumer Identity Projects’ manifest consumers as identity seekers and makers; and the marketplace as “a preeminent source of mythic and symbolic resources through which they construct narratives of identity” (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 871). Explicitly, we investigate identity goals volunteer tourists are trying to accomplish and how this assists identity construction. Next, we look closer into “conflicts, internal contradictions, and ambivalence” that may occur (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 871). Further, from a ‘Marketplace Culture’ standpoint, consumers are seen as cultural producers (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Herein, we investigate in depth ways in which volunteer tourists forge feelings of social solidarity and create distinctive and self-selected cultural worlds through the pursuit of volunteering interests. ‘Marketplace Cultures’ will highlight how volunteer tourism as an experiential consumption activity fosters “collective identifications grounded in shared beliefs, meanings, mythologies, rituals, social practices, and status systems” (Arnould & Thompson, 2005, p. 874).

Furthermore, well appreciated theories on status and forms of capital, which are often used by CCT allies, are applied in order to obtain rich and valuable data when investigating identity

goals and creation of collective identifications. Accordingly, it has been noted that different forms of an individual's capital are increased and expressed through different consumption practices, therefore assigning that same individual better image and status in society. According to the work of Bourdieu (1984), aesthetic dispositions depict status and in that way distance oneself from other groups of society (Corrigan, 1997). More specifically, class distinctions are determined by a combination of degrees of social, economic, and cultural capital. The term cultural capital refers to non-economic social assets that promote one's social mobility beyond economic means. Some examples of cultural capital are education, intellect, style of speech, dress, or physical appearance (Corrigan, 1997). Social capital consists of expected collective or economic benefits gained from the favored treatment and cooperation between individuals and groups (Bourdieu, 1984). Finally, economic status refers to financial means acquired over an extended period of time using (or not using) cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1984).

A further way to establish distinction is the creation of hierarchies. To construct social order, "individuals fall back upon oppositional hierarchies, in some cases antagonistic oppositions: elite vs. mass, unique vs. common, free vs. forced etc" (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 468). The determination of the oppositional hierarchies is yet again influenced by degrees of perceived cultural capital and "specific combinations of cultural practices" (Corrigan, 1997, p. 27).

2.2. Literature Review of Volunteer Tourism

Many agree that tourism is undergoing a range of "transformations in scale and type; so too is its definitional theorization" (Wearing et al., 2010, p. 20). In the following we present important theoretical concepts within the volunteer tourism phenomenon. As volunteer tourism itself is a fairly recent phenomenon and comparatively untheorized, we borrow some concepts from contemporary tourism literature captured by respected authors and apply them to our research domain to provide a rich background.

2.2.1. Assessing Volunteer Tourism

The consumption practice of tourism is constantly expanding and evolving. Most obvious shifts appear to be simultaneous development of mass tourism on one hand, and niche and alternative forms of tourism on the other. Having said that, it has been reported that more and more people do not travel only for the sake of a holiday (Wearing et al., 2010). The volunteer tourism

phenomenon reflects this tendency to a high degree. We established that it is a fairly new phenomenon that continuously receives increased interest, both from a participatory as well as from a theoretical perspective. Even though there prevails a notable growth in publication of volunteer tourism studies and journal articles over the past 15 years, there exists no universal term that refers to the consumption practice. 'Volunteer tourism' is most commonly used; other propagated terms are, for instance, "voluntourism", "volunteer travel", "goodwill tourism" or "new moral tourism" (Wearing & McGehee, 2013, p. 121). McGehee (2012, p. 86) acknowledges that in fact "the lines between volunteer tourism, eco-tourism, backpacker tourism, sustainable tourism, and even mainstream mass tourism are difficult to draw." Thus, there does not exist an universal definition of the consumption practice in tourism literature. As one of the first, Wearing defines volunteer tourists as:

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

McGehee (2012, p. 85) conceptualizes volunteer tourism as a "system with three primary stakeholders: volunteer tourists, hosts/residents and various volunteer tourism organizations". She establishes that within the system of volunteer tourism exists "an interplay of different power relations" (2012, p. 87). Volunteer tourists and volunteer tourism organizations are commonly said to have more power than their local counterpart. Thus, a wide range of authors classifies the phenomenon as a "new form of colonialism" (Wearing & McGehee, 2013, p. 122). However, Butcher and Smith (2010) argue that the notion of colonialism is by no means part of a volunteer tourist's motivation. Potential negative effects of volunteer tourism such as Westernization are merely deplorable, yet unintentional by-products.

2.2.2. The Middle Class Traveler

According to Cohen (1972), contemporary tourists can be classified as follows: "the organized mass tourist, the individualized mass tourist, the explorer and the drifter" (Wearing et al., 2010, p. 23). Mass tourists are content to enjoy the comfort of an environmental bubble while explorers and drifters wish to immerse themselves in host cultures.

In the following, we further explore the culture around explorers and drifters. This segment of travelers, often also referred to as backpackers, consists of 'new middle class travelers'. They

are characterized as young, well-educated and having flexible itineraries over an extended period of time as their travels often precede education and/or employment (Wearing et al., 2010). New middle class travelers are independent and as such moving away from the standardized package holidays (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 56). Consequently, they are active creators of their travel experiences.

Thereby, they value authenticity, learning about other people and communities and/or gaining insights into themselves (Wearing et al., 2010). The notion of self-identity redefinition is most commonly associated with the youth who experience anxiety and possibility to change. According to Elsrud (2001), they are accredited with “increased knowledge, strong sense of identity and social status” (Wearing et al., 2010, p. 48). In addition to that, Graburn (1983) argues that the search for experience of difference depends on an individual’s cultural confidence (Wearing et al., 2010). Finally, “the relationships that tourists form with people and places as part of experiences”, are “linked to the construction of the traveler self” (Wearing S. et al., 2010, p. 12).

2.2.3. Volunteer Tourism Discourses

The Tourist Gaze

The tourist gaze is a “socially organized and culturally filtered perspective that tourists apply when they are confronted with a touristic reality” (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 2). When encountered with the potential ‘otherness’, the tourist gaze “provides a sense of competence, pleasure and structure” (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 14) and is thus an important instrument for the tourist to make sense of his/her reality. Urry & Larsen (2011) differentiate between different discourses of gazing. In the context of volunteer tourism, we identified that the ‘romantic gaze’ and the ‘anthropological gaze’ are of particular relevance (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 19). The ‘romantic gaze’ applies to touristic experiences of private nature (Urry & Larsen, 2011). We established that volunteer tourism is generally a private, individual practice and therewith opposes notions of mass tourism. The romantically gazing tourist is at most surrounded by few “significant others” and thus able to fully savor the touristic experience (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 19). The ‘romantic gaze’ is comparatively considered as elitist and requires significant cultural capital (Urry & Larsen, 2011). The ‘anthropological gaze’ is characterized by its intrusive nature and applies to tourists that “stay for lengthy periods within the host community” in order to get to know it authentically (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 20).

Authenticity Quest

Authenticity itself is a subjectively interpreted and “existential state of Being” that describes a particular kind of relationship with the self (Wearing et al., 2010, p. 29). MacCannell claims that the modern man has been condemned to look elsewhere, and everywhere, for his authenticity in order to see if he can catch “a glimpse of it reflected in the simplicity, poverty, chastity, or purity of others” (MacCannell, 1999, p. 41). This is achieved through tourism activities that appear as outside the constraints of everyday life. Particular niche types of tourist interaction and travel have been perceived as more authentic than others. As such volunteer tourism represents a differentiated market segment and an ideological opposition to mass tourism (Wearing et al., 2010). In contemporary society leisure and tourism experiences are being increasingly acknowledged as sites for the construction of individual identity. Thus, the role of long-term travel, such as volunteer travel, in providing ‘authentic’ experiences of the other and of the self consists of a series of opportunities for escaping previous identities and providing opportunity for reconstruction of self-identity (Wearing et al., 2010).

MacCannell (1999) differentiates between front and back region in regard to the authenticity discussion. The front region is usually staged to meet touristic authenticity expectations. However, the staged performance does not necessarily reflect the societal reality but merely depicts truth markers - semiotics which indicate authenticity (Corrigan, 1997: 141). The back region on the other hand, reflects the authentic societal reality of a destination but is generally “closed to audiences and outsiders” (MacCannell, 1999, p. 93). This ‘mystifies’ authenticity and reinforces tourists’ motivation to gain access to the back region to “see life as it is really lived, even to get in with the natives” (MacCannell, 1999, p. 94). The movement from one, front region, to the other, back region, corresponds to growing touristic understanding (MacCannell, 1999).

Tourist Distinction

It is commonly argued among tourism theorists that forms of travel improve one’s status. Tourists flag identity through separating them from the others and, thus, creating touristic hierarchies (Urry & Larsen, 2011). Therewith, the notion of cultural capital is of particular importance. “Once museums have been central to the touristic experience, especially for tourists with high cultural capital” (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 149). More recently, thorough research has been conducted to question if the search for the ‘real’ and ‘authentic’ in travel is motivated by personal fulfilment, or if it is an expression of pursuit of cultural capital (Wearing et al, 2010). As a result, it has been

reported that the 'authentic' encounter with the 'otherness' forms the basis for the development of experiential knowledge of "cultural capital which is accumulated in the articulation and narration of self-identity" (Wearing et al., 2010, p. 103).

Motivation: Altruism versus Self-Interest

An important aspect featured in volunteer tourism literature is the psychological discussion about pre-trip motivations. The most common underpinning motivations are i.a. cultural immersion, making a difference, experiencing something different and broadening one's horizon (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Within the motivational research field, a main concern is the debate about the contrasting motivations of 'self-interest' versus 'altruism' (Wearing & McGehee, 2013).

Callanan and Thomas classify volunteer tourists according to three types: "shallow, intermediate and deep volunteers" (2005, p. 196). Shallow volunteers are motivated by personal interests and are generally interested in sensations, whereas deep volunteers are foremost concerned about the host community and about making an impact (Callanan & Thomas, 2005). Intermediate volunteers accordingly range in between, influenced by both notions (Callanan & Thomas, 2005). Generally, there exists a correlation between age and predominant motivation. The younger the volunteer tourist is, the higher the possibility is that he/she is influenced by self-interest motivations (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). However, it is commonly acknowledged that the motivational typology is not fix but flexible over the course of the volunteer experience (Wearing & McGehee, 2013).

Volunteer Tourism as Catalyst for Social Movement Participation

McGehee (2002, p. 124) establishes that volunteer tourism potentially manifests a "possible catalyst for social movement participation". Social movements refer to organized effort outside the mainstream system that aims at changing major aspects of society (McGehee, 2002); see chapter 2.3. The theoretical foundation based upon Knoke (1988) and Klandermans (1992) sees two important predictors of participation in and support for social movements: social networks and consciousness-raising (McGehee & Santos, 2005).

McGehee emphasizes that social network ties are of particular importance and reinforce potential social movement participation (2002). Social network ties serve as a "source of information

and inspiration for participants” and thus, facilitate the introduction to social movement participation (McGehee, 2002, p. 127). As supported by previous findings of social movement scholars, social networks are described as extending beyond racial and cultural boundaries, and as “enlightening,” “eye opening,” and “life changing” (McGehee & Santos, 2005, p. 769). Furthermore, it has been reported that after a volunteer tourism experience, volunteers view their existing social networks differently as a consequence of changed values. The volunteers’ perceptions about global as well as local societies are altered due to direct confrontation with environmental, cultural and/or social problems (McGehee & Santos, 2005). After conducting an empirical study, McGehee confirms the “potential power of [volunteer] tourism to change individuals and to provide ways to create and establish relationships that extend beyond the brief experience itself” and claims that this form of tourism therewith improves “global citizenship” in a sustainable way (2002, p. 139).

McGehee and Santos (2005, p. 761) subsequently argue that individuals must become aware of “issues and inequalities” prior to social movement participation and that volunteer tourism offers this precise consciousness-raising experience. On the contrary, Klandermans (1992) sees consciousness-raising as an important tool, since organizers understand that during episodes of collective action, a participant’s consciousness is raised considerably (McGehee & Santos, 2005). Additionally, McGehee and Santos’ findings present participants that engaged in a variety of social movement activities, many of which they did not participate in until after their volunteer tourism experience (2005). As such, volunteer work may transform an individual in a way that can last for many more years (McGehee & Santos, 2005). Consequently, volunteer tourism experiences are likely to predict or promote further activism, and are “expected to draw together like-minded individuals from enabling the establishment of networks and idea exchange” (McGehee & Santos, 2005, p. 764). As a result, these new networks may encourage participation in and support for social movements (McGehee & Santos, 2005).

2.3. Literature Review of New Social Movements

2.3.1. The Traditional Perspective on New Social Movements

The term of new social movements refers to a “diverse array of collective actions” that bases its logic of action on political, ideological and/or cultural issues (Buechler, 1995, p. 442). New social movements draw from the neo-Marxian tradition and commonly stand in opposition to societal

totalities prone to notions of criticism and thus “provide a context for the emergence of collective action” (Buechler, 1995, p. 442). According to Buechler (2000), the social order of capitalism in particular tends to evoke new social movements as it regularly produces crises when “the system fails to meet economic needs, or when it fails to attend to social integration” (van Dyke, 2004, p. 69). There exist as many different manifestations of new social movements as, for instance, anti-nuclear movements, LGBT movements or ethical consumption movements. However, they are usually related by their oppositional attitude and “attempt to transform various elements of the social order” that surrounds their topic of interest (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004, p. 691). Furthermore, Melucci (1989) and Touraine (1981) conclude that all new social movements share the same “three core representational elements”: a common goal, common characteristics of an activists’ self-identity and a common adversary (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004, p. 691). The three elements are stabilized by the underlying ideology that negotiates and legitimizes the degree of new social movement involvement (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). Based on this notion, and following the outline of the above theoretical construct, we introduce an array of main concepts from new social movement theories that are of particular importance for our research purpose.

The Goal

As previously stated, new social movements are concerned with altering the social order to reduce shortcomings in societies. Therewith, new social movements can claim political or cultural goals (Buechler, 1995). In accordance with the purpose of this research, we address mainly cultural goals, yet recognizing the overlapping nature of certain features.

Culturalist movements are to a lesser extent concentrated upon altering state power and political or economic strategies, but more interested in the discussion of personal lifestyle issues (Buechler, 1995, p. 452). Kauffman (1990) argues that this discussion leads to “an introspection of a culture’s attitudes, values and ‘politically correct’ lifestyle” (Buechler, 1995, p. 452). As such, culturalist movements play with symbolic discourse, whereas political movements have more concrete, tangible goals (Buechler, 1995). Activists are united by a strong sense of changing culture’s ideology. Kozinets & Handelman (2004, p. 696) compare culturalist movements with religions and puritanism since activists are “inspired by deep convictions, premonitions of doom, heartfelt human connections, and sudden realizations of sinful consumption”.

Melucci (1989) emphasizes that culturalist movements, though appearing to have an anti-political stance, are able to “pose major challenges to existing social realities” and thus, be “more effective than conventionally political movements” (Buechler, 1995, p. 452).

The Self - The Activists’ Identity

The class base of new social movements is generally conceptualized as ‘new middle class’. As the name suggests, new social movement participants mostly stem from the middle class. Generally however, class, status, race, gender, ethnicity and nationality only play a tangential role in the construction of collective identity (Buechler, 1995). Instead, the collective identity is defined by common values and goals. However, it is noticeable that activists mostly belong to “the younger generation of social and cultural specialists” (Buechler, 1995, p. 455). Kozinets & Handelman (2004, p. 702) add that new social movement participants commonly characterize themselves as “high-minded and noble citizens of society who [know] right from wrong”.

It is widely acknowledged among theorists that through collective actions social movement participation contributes to an activist’s identity construction (Buechler, 1995). In this context, Habermas (1984-1987) introduces the concept of ‘lifeworlds’. It describes the personal sphere in which “meaning, identity and cultural norms are created” (van Dyke, 2004, p. 69). ‘Lifeworlds’ stand in constant opposition to the prevalent political system; the system trying to invade the impartial ‘lifeworlds’ (Buechler, 1995, p. 445). On the same note, Melucci (1989) highlights the “importance of free spaces between the level of political power and everyday life” (Buechler, 1995, p. 446). In sum, both theorists argue that new social movement participation contributes to defending one’s ‘lifeworld’ and creating essential ‘free space’, and thus strengthens the activist’s identity construction. Additionally, Kozinets and Handelman argue “the epiphanies and spiritual linkages of the activists could be interpreted as strategies of social distinction intended to enhance their personal status” (2004, p. 696).

The Adversary

According to Melucci (1989), a defining characteristic of new social movements constitutes the “expression of oppositional tendencies” (Buechler, 1995, p. 446). Oppositional tendencies are directed against an adversary. Adversaries represent “obstacle[s] to general good” that, according to Melucci (1996), generally stand in “irreconcilable opposition” to the new social movement’s ideals and beliefs (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004, p. 693). Habermas (1984-1987) con-

templates that these adversaries are usually less concerned with aspects of material reproduction and more concerned with aspects of cultural reproduction, social integration and socialization (Buechler, 1995). Furthermore, Buechler (1995) adds that activists perceive the adversaries as actively threatening societal and cultural order. Thus, culturalist movements are formed in defensive reaction (Buechler, 1995).

According to Bourdieu (1984), the distribution of political opinions between right and left corresponds fairly closely to the distribution of the classes and class fractions in the space whose first dimension is defined by overall volume of capital and by the composition of that capital. The positioning of an individual's adversary thus indicates another element that serves social distinction.

2.3.2. The Contemporary Perspective on New Social Movements

In similar vein to Habermas' 'lifeworlds' and Melucci's 'free space', Giddens (1991; 1994) introduces the concept of 'life politics'. It describes the sphere between personal issues and political issues that influence identity and lifestyle creation and define the individual's relationship with society (Butcher & Smith, 2010). Thereby, political perspectives are flexible and not restricted to traditional discourses of Left versus Right or Capitalism versus Socialism (Butcher & Smith, 2010). Contrary to Habermas' and Melucci's concepts that focus on collective identity construction, 'life politics' favors the notion of 'global citizenship' and consequential political consumption practices on an individual level. Political consumption is defined as "conscious consumer use of the market as an arena for politics" (Micheletti & Isenhour, 2010, p. 133). In fact, the rise of political consumption enlarges the playground of political actions (Butcher & Smith, 2010) and thus, makes political action more feasible for individuals; one does not necessarily have to adopt an activist's stance. Hence, the contemporary growth of 'life politics', and thus individuality of politics, "represents a [direction] away from collective solutions to social problems towards individual life choices" (Butcher & Smith, 2010, p. 31). In this connection, Buechler (2000) argues that life politics challenge the traditional understanding of new social movements because the focus increasingly shifts towards interpersonal interaction and individual action (van Dyke, 2004).

Given the extensive literature review of consumer culture theory, volunteer tourism discourses as well as new social movement theories, we come to the understanding that our study will contribute to different fields of research. Investigating the phenomenon of volunteer tourism from a sociocultural standpoint, we will contribute to its theorization and categorization as a new social movement. Furthermore, we expect to come to a closer understanding as to how new social movements are manifested in contemporary consumer society.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter we argue for this research's methodological approach, both philosophical and strategic, and the resulting data collection methods. Furthermore, we introduce the applied research design, the sampling choice, selection criteria and data collection process. Moreover, we elaborate on the data analysis methods and conclude with considerations about methodological limitations and ethics regarding the chosen data collection method.

3.1. Research Philosophy

Before creating a research design, it is important to understand the nature of the research that will be conducted and the research's underlying assumptions. This will guide all further work processes, introduce possible methods at hand and reveal strengths to build on and weaknesses to offset (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 15).

The nature of the research question hints towards certain theoretical and philosophical considerations. In our case, the research is concerned with consumer culture theory (CCT) as it aims at studying sociocultural, experiential, symbolic and ideological aspects of volunteer tourism (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). Thus, we apply a research philosophy that is aligned with common CCT research conventions and that is explained in the following.

3.1.1. Ontology

Ontology refers to the nature of reality and existence and the assumptions researchers hold towards understanding and perception of what is said (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). We draw from a constructionist ontology that assumes that social phenomena and their ascribed meaning depend largely on social actors, social interaction and social revision (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Accordingly, we regard volunteer tourists as social actors and consider their social interaction with each other and 'outsiders' as well as the social revision of their motivations and experiences. According to the constructionist position, reality and existence are socially constructed, depending on an individual's background and behaviour (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Therefore, constructionism acknowledges the concept of reality but argues that this reality is "object to constant change and multiple perspectives of truth" (Rubin & Rubin, 2012, p. 15-16).

3.1.2. Epistemology

Epistemology refers to methods of knowledge acquisition regarding the nature of reality and existence (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Generally, CCT applies an interpretivist stance that focuses on understanding of human behavior and “the subjective, subconscious meanings of social phenomena” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 17). Consequently, we assume that the behavior of volunteer tourists is influenced by their respective backgrounds, attitudes and previous experiences that must be taken into consideration when interpreted.

There exist different intellectual traditions within interpretivism, each emphasizing different aspects of inquiring acceptable knowledge (Bryman & Bell, 2011). In this research, we apply the hermeneutic-phenomenological tradition. It focuses on an individual's experiences and their underlying cultural viewpoints that are “implicitly conveyed through language” (Thompson et al., 1994, p. 432). Language functions as a system of meaning that provides a cultural frame of reference (Thompson et al., 1994). It works “performatively and constitutively” (Moisander et al., 2009, p. 338). Thus, textual or narrative data is a common way of acquiring knowledge when applying a hermeneutic stance. In our case, narratives about experiences with volunteer tourism are the preferred form of data, as they enable us to gain insights on the subjective world view and, thus, to interpret meanings ascribed to the practice of volunteer tourism from the volunteers' perspective. It is important to understand and interpret the data with regard to their respective context and contingency (Moisander et al., 2009).

3.2. Research Strategy

The interpretative framework chosen for this research suggests a qualitative strategy as the most suitable research strategy (Rubin & Rubin, 2012).

Qualitative research builds on broadly formulated research questions that aim to explore a social phenomenon or construct (Creswell, 2009). Correspondingly, we examine the social phenomenon of volunteer tourism and correlate it to the construct of new social movements, probing their compatibility. This approach aims to contribute a new perspective to both volunteer tourism literature and new social movement literature. Furthermore, it contributes to an aspect of contemporary society that demands further exploration.

The next step in qualitative research is an “exhaustive review of the literature” (McCracken, 1988, p. 12) that is framed by research purpose and research questions. It contains the exploration of existing “theoretical traditions and current thoughts” on the research phenomenon and previous, related empirical research (Creswell, 2013, p. 63). Ultimately, the literature review provides theoretical concepts, defines problems and discloses potential research gaps that guide all further research (McCracken, 1988). Accordingly, we explore previous research in the fields of CCT in general and tourism studies as well as new social movements in particular. The main traditions and constructs important for our research are introduced in the previous theory chapter.

Methodologically, qualitative research is mainly concerned with words (Bryman & Bell, 2011) and is therefore common among CCT research as data in the form of text is richer, and thus more applicable for interpretation, than data in the form of numbers. Relevant data is commonly collected through multiple methods to capture “complexity and contradictions in the data” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 390). We collect empirical data with the help of in-depth interviews with former volunteer tourists and photo elicitation; see chapter 3.3.

Eventually, qualitative research is concerned with theory creation (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Creswell (2013, p. 45) argues that deductive and inductive logic alternate during the research process, departing in a thorough literature review and thereon “working back and forth between themes and the database”. In accordance with the iterative process, our literature review is followed by conceptualization of theory that we constantly check back against our data collection. Thus, in alignment with the constructivist-interpretivist philosophy, qualitative research results in a holistic account of volunteer tourism, allowing multiple perspectives and painting a “large picture” rather than a simple “cause-and-effect” chain (Creswell, 2013, p. 47). In order to investigate the correlation between volunteer tourism and new social movements, our findings on volunteer tourism experiences will be discussed in terms of the conceptual framework that describes new social movements as summarized by Kozinet & Handelman (2004). Occurring overlaps or differences evidence the degree of the correlation at question.

3.3. Research Method

3.3.1. Data Collection

Ethnography and interviews are common data collection methods in CCT research (Moisander et al., 2009). Time and budget restrictions prevent us from applying an ethnographic approach, namely becoming part of the volunteer tourist group to gather inside understanding of meanings and behavioral significances through participant observation (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

According to McCracken, long interviews are a suitable way to get into another person's mind and therefore see and experience as they would themselves (1988). As such, we have decided to use semi-structured in-depth interviews for the purposes of this research. Qualitative interviews focus on the participant's point of view, one's narratives and attitudes regarding the research phenomenon (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Narratives are of particular importance within the tourism discourse. In this context, Martin (2010, p. 372) endorses for McCracken's long interview method because it provides a solid "understanding for international tourism behaviour". In accordance with our research philosophy, we use 'phenomenological interviews' to gather data. This interview type emphasizes the importance of "personal experiences as the starting point" of understanding the research phenomenon (Moisander et al., 2009, p. 330). Our participants are encouraged to give rich descriptions of their volunteer tourism experience as those narrated experiences indicate towards the phenomenon, its social texts, complex cultural, social and psychological products that construct a certain reality (Moisander et al., 2009).

Additionally, we decided to integrate photo elicitation into our semi-structured in-depth interviews, a somewhat unusual form of qualitative data collection (Creswell, 2013). Here, participants are asked to explain or reflect on photographs, "their depicted places, objects, individuals or events and the emotions" they associate with them (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 222). According to Bryman & Bell (2011), the researcher usually provides the photographs. However, we decided to ask our research participants prior to the scheduled interviews to provide us with 'their favorite' photograph taken during their volunteer tourism experience. Photographs are an important touristic medium as they produce tangible memories and "evidence of experiences, out-lasting time and space" (Urry & Larsen, 2011, p. 155.). They are rich in semiotics and connected to narratives and meanings that are important for the individual's identity construction (Urry & Larsen, 2011). In our case, the participants' favorite photos indicate towards the importance of certain features during their volunteer tourism experience (e.g. social networks, travels etc.).

3.3.2. Participant Selection Criteria

While quantitative research requires set sample sizes and types, this is not the prevailing condition in qualitative research. Here the focus lies on the quality of the sample, which means reaching out to the right individuals willing to provide rich and quality data. According to the long interview principle “less is more” (McCracken, 1988, p. 17), we decided to follow the ‘rule’ and interview not more than eight respondents. Due to the time and budget limitations, the decision was made to have six participants that are experienced in volunteer tourism and have enough valuable insights that will provide thick and valuable stories regarding the research questions. The participants were chosen through personal social ties and further snowball effect. Initially, personal contacts that have been involved in volunteer tourism have been reached and offered an interview on the topic. Furthermore, these contacts were used to reach out to other people equally passionate and experienced in volunteer tourism. The snowball effect led us to many more respondents, but due to the time and budget limitations, no more than six interviews were conducted. All of our participants gained experience with different types of volunteer tourism at least once. To ensure sampling diversity, we selected participants with as many different nationalities as possible.

Name	Gender	Age	Nationality	Education	Volunteer Destination	Volunteer Type	Photo Provided
Ana*	Female	22	Spanish	Undergraduate, University of Seville	Peru	Medical, Humanitarian	Yes
Isabelle*	Female	23	German	Graduate, University of Southern Denmark (USD)	Bolivia	Humanitarian	Yes
Radek*	Male	22	Czech	Graduate, Lund University	Zanzibar, Tanzania	Humanitarian	No
Britt*	Female	23	Dutch	Graduate, Lund University	Brazil	Humanitarian	No
Johanna*	Female	23	German	Graduate, USD	Columbia	Educational	Yes
Emma*	Female	21	British	Undergraduate, Leeds University	Kosovo, Israel, India	Humanitarian, Environmental	Yes

Table 1: Participant Profiles (* = Pseudonyms)

3.3.3. Designing and Conducting the Interview

“The research purpose determines the interview structure” (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012, p. 127). Qualitative research refrains from interviews with a tight structure as this inhibits flux and flexibility (Bryman & Bell, 2011). McCracken (1988) proposes loosely structured interviews as the most suitable for qualitative research. Accordingly, we designed an interview questionnaire, framed by only a few grand-tour questions that were derived from the research problem and theoretical concepts found during the literature review, leaving room during the interview for prompts based on the participants’ responses (McCracken, 1988) This way, our interviews are designed to stimulate conversation and respondents to tell us their stories, feelings and lived experience regarding their respective volunteer trips. As interviewers, we tried to be neutral in order not to influence, distract or confuse respondents. Thereby, being inexperienced interviewers, the frame of our semi-structured interview design proved to be helpful.

As suggested by numerous researchers (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Silverman, 2012) all the interviews were conducted in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere. The interviews took place during three weeks of April 2014. Four out of six interviews were conducted face-to-face, always in separate study rooms at Lund University, in Lund and University of Southern Denmark, in Odense, Denmark. The remaining two interviews were conducted via Skype due to the budget limitations and the geographical inability to encounter the respondents in person. At each interview one researcher and one respondent were present.

In order to secure pleasant and trustworthy interviews and make respondents feel comfortable, we were cautious early in the interview. Easy, simple and straight-forward questions were asked in order to start a conversation. These questions of biographical nature were to provide elementary information about the participant. Furthermore, so called grand tour questions, that reflected our extended literature review, were raised. We have, however, restricted ourselves from asking straight-forward “why”, “how” questions but tried to let the respondent tell its story about the volunteering experience. This was done in order to keep the conversation simple and not frighten, or for that matter reveal our intentions as to what we actually tried to investigate. One such grand tour question that stimulated the story but was of high importance regarding our literature review was: “Tell me how you felt when you were volunteering?” To take the most out of our respondents and get richer data, we have reacted to their stories in such a way that it stimulated them to say more about it; how and why it made them feel the way it did. This way we have en-

couraged interviewees to say more about their emotional state while volunteering, to express political opinions and oppositions as well as to reflect upon themselves as individuals.

Lastly, all the interviews were recorded, as suggested by McCracken (1988) and further transcribed which produced approximately 35 pages of rich data; see Appendix. All of our participants were ensured with confidentiality and anonymity regarding their identity.

3.4. Data Analysis

Qualitative research commonly results in an abundance of data volume. This presents an opportunity as it entails richness and attractiveness of descriptions; at the same time, applying a suitable analysis strategy is crucial in order to make good use of the abundant data (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Grounded theory is a popular analysis strategy in qualitative research (Bryman & Bell, 2011). It constitutes an “open approach” to analysis that identifies key categories, themes, patterns and interlinks them to create a “holistic theory that makes a contribution to knowledge in a particular field or domain” (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012, p. 342). In this context, grounded analysis is aligned with the constructionist stance, as it also highlights the importance of categories “that people employ in helping them to understand [that] the natural and social world are in fact social products” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 22). Explicitly regarding interview analysis, McCracken (1988, p. 42) also reasons that the objective is to “determine the categories, relationships, and assumptions that informs the respondent’s view of the world in general and the topic in particular”. Thus, it is notable that coding is overall considered to be an essential process as it structures and manages the data volume and thereby constitutes “an important first step in the generation of theory” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 578).

Correspondingly, we categorized our interview data using simple, yet precise codes (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). The codes are based on important theories that resulted from our thorough literature review as well as unprompted ideas that emerged during the course of interview conduction, seeing coding is a “constant state of potential revision and fluidity” (Bryman & Bell, 2011, p. 578).

We incorporated the computer aided qualitative data analysis software NVIVO. Due to the time restriction, the virtual analysis aid saved valuable time as it made structuring and managing our data volumes easier and understanding the data instantaneously clearer.

The hermeneutic-phenomenological stance suggests beneficial interpretation of data that applies an “continuous part-to-whole and whole-to-part movement” (Thompson et al. 1994, p. 435). Thus, we firstly examined all of our six interviews on an idiographic level. We contextualized each interview(ee) and produced concepts through the process of open coding. As a next step, we related the six interviews, elaborating our concepts and subsuming them under common categories through the process of axial coding (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Following the natural process of theory creation, this analysis strategy departs in the particular and moves towards the general (McCracken, 1988).

3.5. Primary & Secondary Research

In order to find relevant and reliable primary information regarding volunteer tourism and new social movements, the Internet was used as our starting point. We used our own knowledge and that of our acquaintances to initiate the search. Collection of information was, however, continuous and on-going since we wanted to stay in accordance with theoretical base relevant for our research. Primary sources such as journal articles were mainly used as they gave us relevant insights into the latest acknowledgments regarding our research topic. These articles are peer reviewed, meaning that two or more experts approved the article before being published, guaranteeing its reliability (Fisher, 2007, p. 81). These primary sources were found through academic databases that ‘Lund University School of Economics and Management’ has access to such as Emerald, Ebsco and JSTOR.

Regarding secondary sources, we decided to include as few as possible since these sources analyze and interpret information from primary sources (Princeton, 2010). As such, information may be misinterpreted by the authors. If we could not find the primary source, yet the textbook was printed by academic press, we considered these to be reliable enough for our study. One such example is Kozinets and Handelman’s use of Melucci and Touraine’s theoretical conceptualization of social movements ideology (2004). Similarly to the authors, we discuss the findings of our research in terms of said framework in order to ease the examination of our research questions and evidence the degree of correlation between volunteer tourism and new social movements.

3.6. Methodological Limitations

Qualitative research is mostly criticised for being too subjective, difficult to replicate, hard to generalize and lacking transparency (Bryman & Bell, 201). It is therefore essential to warrant reliability and validity. One of the most important criteria thereby is sensitivity to context and research setting (Bryman & Bell, 2011); in particular when the data collection methods involve hermeneutic-phenomenological interviews (Moisander et al., 2009). This sensitivity requires the researchers to be aware of the social setting in which the research is conducted and from which the research's participants originate from. Consequently, we contextualized every interview(ee) to picture our research setting accurately.

Additionally and as customary in qualitative research, we as researchers are responsible for the process of data collection and data analysis. This implies "engagement and interchange between the researcher and the research setting" (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012, p. 38). Thus, the research may be influenced by our own experiences, participant-relations and sociocultural interpretations (Spiggle, 1994).

According to Creswell (2013), qualitative researchers tend to seek out their informants in their natural setting to increase the understanding of their context. In our case, this was not a feasible option due to geographical and temporal barriers. We therefore rely on our informants' retrospective narratives that - over time - may have shaped into a distorted perception of the phenomenon.

4. ANALYSIS

In the following chapter we provide the findings of our empirical data collection. We start by contextualizing our interview participants to provide a brief background and summary of their experiences. Next, we present detailed findings derived from the data collection. We conceptualize common themes by applying important theoretical constructs to our participants' volunteer tourism narratives. Thereby, we aim to answer our research questions, namely identifying underlying social discourses and meanings that surround the volunteer tourism practice and expressions of a correlation with new social movement characteristics.

4.1. Participant Contextualization

According to Moisander et al. (2009), contextualization of interview participants is of great importance as individual experience, social order and practical realities are reflexive, subjective and highly depending on their respective setting. In the following, we introduce each of our six interview participants in detail. We present their backgrounds, their respective volunteer tourism experiences, their personal meanings ascribed to them and their general attitudes in regard to lifestyle and society. The in-depth descriptions of each participant help to familiarize with their narratives and to set the frame of context for the further analysis.

Ana - The Genuine Volunteer

Ana is a 22-year-old Medicine student from Seville, Spain. She is studying at the University of Seville and is two semesters away from graduation. One of Ana's biggest hobbies is to travel, often and independently, with friends, strangers or by herself. She comes from an upper-middle class Spanish family; occasional traveling is therefore affordable for Ana. Even though she stems from upper-middle class, Ana likes to organize and book trips by herself and therefore has full insights and control over the traveling process. Visiting places where she knows the locals is the best way for her to experience the country and culture. Having said that, her last trip, two weeks prior to the interview, was to Sicily where she visited a friend. During this trip, Ana traveled with another nine girls studying there which she has never met before. For her, this was a "great opportunity" to see real Sicily. Ana herself has studied abroad in Lund, Sweden for a semester during Fall 2013.

Prior to Ana's semester abroad, she went to Peru to volunteer for a month, teaching children basic hygiene and spending quality time with them. She had some experience volunteering at her high-school but now she wanted to take it to a different level. Ana always wanted to do something related to volunteering abroad but could never find programs on the Internet that she perceived as reliable. For this reason, when she heard from her friend about the program in Peru and how this friend "was really happy about it", she felt comfortable enough to do it herself. According to Ana, it was important for her to get the first hand opinion and hear about someone else's experiences. After she has decided to go volunteer abroad and got accepted to the program in Peru, she was even more encouraged by her friends who recognized this as a "cool thing to do" and her being "great for doing this".

While in Peru, Ana spent most of her time with the children, as she always wanted to please them and could not say no to them. She recognized how these children were grateful and happy to have her and that is where she found the energy to get up at six a.m. every day to teach them and to play, dance and draw with them.

"Sometimes I would wake up at 6 and think: 'Oh my God' this is not what I should do during my holidays'. But then at the end of the day I was so happy, even when exhausted."

According to Ana, she went to Peru primarily to help, contribute and see how the reality is. To her, traveling was secondary and only after she realized that she will have five days off, she decided to travel with other volunteers to Machu Picchu.

Regarding fellow volunteers, Ana stated that in her opinion most were good volunteers because a good volunteer says "yes to everything". However, some had too unrealistic expectations, thinking they could change the community and contribute a lot more than they actually could.

Ana's favorite picture shows everything that reminds her of her volunteer trip: happy children, mentors and other teachers/volunteers as well as the school.



Figure 1: Ana's "Happy" Host Community

When back home after the trip, Ana could see that the recognition of her experience was high, her friends saying they wanted to be like her and also do volunteering abroad. Personally, Ana grew a lot through this experience:

"I could see everything in a different way because I saw so much poverty there. I realized how lucky we are to live in this side of the world. I think [about] what is really important. So I think I changed a lot after this."

Moreover, Ana emphasizes her post-trip commitment to a new humanitarian cause in Seville, Spain. She said that during her time in Peru she discovered how good she is with children and therefore she decided to contribute to her local community over the school year, until she gets the chance to go volunteer abroad again.

Isabelle - The Metamorphosed Volunteer

Isabelle is a 23-year-old German 'M.Sc. Marketing, Globalization & Culture' student at the University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark. Prior, Isabelle studied 'B.A. Tourism Management' in Germany. She grew up in Bremen, Germany in a middle class household. At the time of the interview, Isabelle was just back from a cruise to Riga and revealed that when she travels, which she does frequently, she looks for everything online including hostels and flights.

Traveling is her big passion and therefore she is experienced in finding good deals. Her last big trip to Japan, where she spent a couple of weeks, was booked “all online”. Besides currently living abroad for education, Isabelle already studied six months abroad in Hawaii during her bachelor studies. During her gap year, she lived and worked in Cyprus.

Before her volunteering abroad, Isabelle had some voluntary experience at her undergraduate university. She describes it as not a too relevant experience, but as one that stimulated her to do more in the future. Isabelle’s first volunteering abroad was not entirely planned however. She mainly wanted to follow her passion and travel through South America. Due to her budget limitations and desire to do something useful during the trip, she decided to do a study-related internship there. As this did not work out, Isabelle learned at an AIESEC information meeting about the volunteering opportunities in South America. She was immediately thrilled that she could travel and contribute at the same time. Isabelle spent four months in Bolivia after she graduated from her bachelor studies.

Even though Isabelle’s own interest and curiosity led her to attend the AIESEC meeting, she admits being influenced by her friends after the meeting. As she puts it, a group of her friends influenced each other after the meeting to participate. Eventually, although many did apply, Isabelle was the only one that actually did volunteering abroad.

When in Bolivia, she was faced with some difficulties during the first couple of weeks. As she was volunteering in an orphanage for sexually abused girls, she had a hard time being close to the girls and staying strong. There were not enough volunteers with whom she could have shared her thoughts.

“Sometimes I needed 10 minutes to lock myself in my room and be alone. Girls would be knocking to come out but I needed some time for myself not to freak out. But after a while I handled it better and better. It was tough.”

Isabelle points out that the girl in her favorite picture represents only one among many other girls that she became close with while volunteering. Their unfortunate destiny of young sexually abused girls, gave Isabelle strength to help them and become their support.



Figure 2: Heartfelt Human Connection

Furthermore, Isabelle states who is a good volunteer in her opinion. She says she does not necessarily consider herself one, but her friend Elena was a good volunteer according to her.

“She was totally on fire with the topic, going from school to school trying to make students interested in sustainability. She was very passionate. I wouldn’t say for myself that I was the perfect volunteer because I took stuff personal and got not angry but sometimes I couldn’t stand them fighting all the time, shouting at me even, sometimes I shouted back. People just have to be patient, especially with children.”

When back home, Isabelle first encountered cultural shock that was manifested in her happiness for being back home. As she explains it, never before has she had such a feeling after a trip. She felt extremely happy and grateful for where she was coming from. She points out that this experience has taught her more than university degrees, as now she could appreciate and be happy with little things such as “hot water or water at all”.

Even though Isabelle did not entirely enjoy her experience, she stayed in contact with her mentors from the orphanage and even organized charity events dedicated to support the orphanage like a Christmas event at her current university.

All in all, the volunteering experience taught Isabelle who she wants to be in the future and who she does not want to be. She says that little things that she can do to make other people happy, fulfill her. Moreover, studying within the business field, she learnt that she does not want to be that “strict business person”.

“I mean I am studying business and marketing so it is really different way I'm going from my studies. And it's funny but the more I study the more I know I don't wanna be strict business person later on in my life. I wanna use my education to maybe even go into developing work...”

Instead, she wants to go back to traveling and volunteering, doing projects in each country she visits, and along the way discover who she really is. Until then, on a daily bases Isabelle tries to encourage more people to travel and volunteer because for those who cannot afford to travel this is the best way.

Radek - The Different Volunteer

Radek is a 22-year-old ‘M.Sc. Globalization, Brands and Consumption’ student at Lund University, Sweden. He is born and raised in the Czech Republic and comes from an upper-middle class family and is interested in traveling. Even though he stems from an upper-middle class household, Radek calls himself a price-conscious traveler who always takes care of his bookings personally because he prefers to understand how everything works and who gets commission. His last trip was to England, but Radek points out that this trip was for the sake of business and visiting an old friend and not for experiencing culture or something new.

Previously, Radek has been traveling a lot and studying abroad in the United States and Australia. Not too long before his first volunteer trip to Zanzibar/Tanzania he was back from Australia where he stayed for 13 months. Radek believes that in a post-communist country like the Czech Republic all traveling is related to some sort of social recognition, and especially traveling for volunteering.

Besides being seen as a sign of social status, Radek’s volunteer trip was recognized as a rather unusual experience by many of his friends. Yet, a minority has shown prejudices towards Africa as “a dirty naked place”.

Radek did not have extensive volunteer experience earlier in his life. While in the United States and Australia, he volunteered now and then, but it was not until he went to Zanzibar/Tanzania

that his real volunteer work began. He has always been thinking about volunteering somewhere in India or Nepal for the sake of experiencing something new and contributing.

“I was thinking about teaching [English] for the sake of living in a country, doing something interesting, sharing some knowledge, being able to understand local perception, understanding local culture and connecting it obviously with traveling.”

This has not happened until he actually knew someone with volunteering experience. He calls his volunteering different than others' because he is a close friend of a girl who runs an NGO in Zanzibar. This gave him opportunity to work with the NGO's projects, help manage administration and other similar tasks. He also points out the fact that for six months prior to his arrival to Zanzibar he worked on the NGO's website and marketing from home. When he eventually got there, he spent a month working with the NGO administration, teachers and students regarding information technology education. He describes his experience as unique because of all the time he spent with locals and the friendships he made with them as they were hosting him in their houses for meals. Even though he pointed out that he was volunteering for the sake of traveling, he did not mind the fact that he could not travel the region as much as he first imagined.

While there, Radek understood that some volunteers could not fully distinguish how much they could actually contribute and this annoyed him.

“I believe there needs to be a humble approach because the worst volunteers are those who come to save the world, all cocky and arrogant, misunderstanding local conditions.”

According to him, coming from the Western world with an idea to change their lives and make them “awesome” is somewhat ignorant because one individual cannot change things rooted deep into one country's culture. They can contribute and help but not change radically. Unlike these “cocky and arrogant” volunteers, other volunteers, he calls “backpackers”, come humble and realistic in their achievements. They have greater understanding of how and what is happening in different cultures.

“When we take someone who traveled much more and been through more, understood various life situations, that person can much easier understand the problematic of the country and has less frustration.”

After the trip, Radek recognized in his friends the desire to do the same volunteering in order to be “good people”. Moreover, he could not help to notice that people in Africa were much more happier in their non-mass-consumption society versus those back home. Radek even questioned himself as he is not happy with his life entirely. Even though he will not be able to go back anytime soon because of future plans to get a job, he mentions a girl who went back to Zanzibar to live there and adds that if the idea of helping some more stays in his mind, as he thinks it will, he will go back. Meanwhile, he continuously helps his community in Zanzibar/Tanzania as they have become his family.

“I always help them whenever they contact me.”

Britt - The Adventurous Volunteer

Britt is a 23-year-old ‘M.Sc. Globalization, Brands & Consumption’ student at Lund University, Sweden, born and raised in a small village in the Northern Netherlands. She originates from a middle-class family and takes an interest in yoga, various social activities and travelling. She describes herself as a very flexible traveler, always ‘on-the-go’ rather than staying in just one place. She values independence and spontaneity, mostly opening the travel guide on the plane to “see what’s interesting”.

Further, she values the authentic sides of countries and tries to travel ‘off the beaten track’. Doing so, she usually follows advice from friends or family who have previously been to the same places.

“I find it really nice when someone travels and tells you: “Ah, I had the most amazing experience here”. So mostly listen to other people around you and follow their advices because that mostly brings you to the nicest places, the most local places for example. That’s something I really value, not necessarily the very touristy places, I try to avoid them.”

Whenever possible, Britt travels the world for an extended period of time. She has stayed in Central America for two months, followed by a nine month trip to South East Asia with her boyfriend.

Her volunteering experience constitutes at the same time her first “big” travelling experience. At the age of 16 she spent three weeks in Brazil helping with a humanitarian cause. The trip was initiated by an acquaintance from the village she grew up in. After travelling to Brazil himself and

seeing poverty and misery with his own eyes, he decided to stay and to set up an aid project. By the time Britt decided to volunteer, the project has already become rather renowned in her village. The idea to get involved initially was triggered by her mother, and together the two of them decided to go abroad. Britt indicates that her initial motivation was guided by the thought of tackling a “big adventure”. In retrospect however, she realizes the true value of her trip - both in regard to the good cause and her personal development.

“I really liked it and when I look back I’m really... well, maybe not proud but you have a really happy feeling that you experienced it because it does make a lot of impact. And especially at such a young age I think it is really good for your development to do something like that because you also see the other side of the world.”

In the same context, Britt argues that the volunteering experience as well as her further travelling experiences have shaped her as a person. She reflects more actively on everyday life decisions and does not take things for granted too easily. The correlation between materialism and happiness that she encountered during her volunteer experience also influences her study interests. She is currently writing her Master thesis about a topic concerning precisely this correlation.

In the future, Britt would love to go back to Brazil to help the aid project once again and also to travel more within Brazil. Until this opportunity arises, she supports the cause financially.

Johanna - The Doubtful Volunteer

Johanna is a 23-year-old ‘M.A. International Business, Language & Culture’ student at the University of Southern Denmark, Odense, Denmark. She was born and raised in Eastern Germany and comes from a middle-class background. Her main interests comprise “normal things” such as going to the gym or reading a book. Additionally, Johanna likes travelling which she organizes regularly all by herself. She combines her love of travelling with educational and self-development purposes. In this context, she spent a semester abroad in Spain to gain international experience and to improve her Spanish language skills.

The aim to improve them even further influenced her decision to do volunteering abroad in Colombia. Several hours a week, she taught English at an elementary school as well as at university. The remaining time, Johanna tried to travel as much as possible. Her favorite memories of her time in Colombia contain travels within the country.



Figure 3: A Volunteer Trip with “Family Feeling”

Johanna highlights the importance of establishing a social network while volunteering abroad. As her favorite picture shows, she bonded with fellow volunteers and refers to that as growing a “family feeling”. Furthermore, Johanna emphasizes the importance of getting out of the “volunteer bubble” and having made local friends as they open doors to otherwise unseen aspects of the country and the lifestyle.

Johanna acknowledges that, due to her rather high amount of leisure time, she did not have a particularly intense volunteer experience and doubts its effectiveness.

“[...] I didn’t have the impression that I was doing much, you know? Of course I was teaching. But it was teaching. It was not really that I helped people with their daily lives. And I got food for free, housing for free. And then I was travelling so much, and, of course, at that time not teaching. So I had the impression that so much was done for me instead of the other way around.”

However, Johanna admits all the same that the trip changed her attitude towards everyday life. She now reflects stronger on the predominant materialism in society.

“I think it really changes you to go abroad and [...] see a different lifestyle but I can’t really put my finger on it. I don’t know... it’s mostly when I see how much money [is] spent

on unnecessary things that I think back to the ways people live there. I don't know... maybe I got more aware of material things and their values."

Emma - The Discerning Volunteer

Emma is a 21-year-old Politics student at Leeds University, Leeds, United Kingdom. She grew up in an upper-class family in a small village near London, United Kingdom. As daughter to a diplomat and a foreign language teacher, Emma was brought up with a certain understanding for cultural and societal differences. She is interested in current affairs and human rights but as well in exercising and reading books. Furthermore, Emma is an active member at her university's charity society. For the second year in a row she participates at the 'Bike to Berlin' event, a fundraising event that involves students cycling from Leeds to Berlin for a good cause.

Emma is an experienced volunteer as she has made three volunteer experiences over the course of the last four years. In this regard she considers herself a "nerd" and argues that it might be connected to her field of study and her interests, as Politics students are "pretty conscientious" and "maybe [...] more into it than most people". Emma values having made the experiences and describes various positive effects of the phenomenon.

"[...] you fundraise, you travel, you do something good, you feel good about yourself, you see a bit of the country... like 'everyone is a winner', that sort of thing. And it is increasingly popular, I think. As well, we were all brought up being told that if you didn't have these kinds of things to put in your CV, your CV is useless."

Due to her rich experience, Emma is able to compare different designs of volunteering and judge them according to their value.

Her first experience involved working with an NGO in Kosovo during her gap year that was occupied with environmental, educational and tourism projects. Her tasks involved administration, organizing events and setting up their Social Media. She describes this as a positive experience because she felt thoroughly "useful".

Later that same year, Emma went to Israel to live and work in a Kibbutz for two months. It was an agricultural project that focused on growing and selling fish. She values the model of Kibbutz work and also the opportunities for traveling the country that she encountered.

Another two years after that, Emma went to an Indian village. The humanitarian project - installing toilets and educating locals about hygiene - was part of a British government scheme and entirely funded by such. Beforehand, Emma was rather fond of the idea at participating.

“The scheme sounded so good! Because it was like: “Work with people in the country. Work with local NGOs. You go out there as a team, you got funding. The villages get what they want and what’s gonna be useful to them. And it all sounded amazing!”

Her favorite picture shows Emma with two local girls shortly after her arrival at the village. They played “a series of silly games” to get accustomed to one another.



Figure 4: “The Universal Language of Thumb War”

In retrospect however, Emma criticizes the design of the scheme and questions its effect.

“I think part of the reason the whole India thing pissed me off and got to me was that the whole focus of it was wrong. It was about the volunteers and “what are we gonna learn about ourselves?”... You know? Apparently it cost 8000£ per person to send us to India. If you’d have invested that in an Indian child in a village, they’d be fine for the rest of their lives. I just find it crazy.”

If Emma were to choose future volunteering projects, she would choose one similar to her first experience because there she felt “most useful” and “it wasn’t a waste of money, it wasn’t a

scheme, [she] met loads of people and got a much better feel for the country.” Indeed, Emma already made future plans that involve volunteering abroad.

“I’ve got some work lined up with my dad in Nepal. [...] There are some charities out there that need an English speaker to do some of their admin for them, to teach their staff English, computer literacy skills and that type of things. [...] And the people who run the charity are the people who benefit from the charity. It is quite good to provide jobs in that region. And they fund a school which is based on that and feeds into the business. It’s really, really amazing actually! So that’s what I want to work for most because the model is quite unique.”

4.2. Findings

Our findings will be discussed in terms of the three core elements of new social movements as summarized by Kozinets and Handelman (2004): the goal, the self and the adversary. Doing so, we will provide evidence of the degree of correlation between volunteer tourism and new social movements.

4.2.1 The Goal: Endeavors amidst Altruism and Authenticity

The goal constitutes a central element of new social movements that reinforces an activist’s motivation to participate in social development (Buechler, 1995). The pre-trip motivation of volunteer tourists is an important element of the entire experience. Our participants’ goals and motivations are influenced by various notions.

“[I volunteered] for the sake of living in a country, doing something interesting, sharing some knowledge, being able to understand local perception, understanding local culture and connecting it obviously with traveling.” – Radek, 22, Czech

In this vein, they echo what Callanan and Thomas categorize as intermediate volunteers as they “directly [contribute] to the project but still [ensure] that they have some ‘holiday time’ for exploring the destination” (2005, p. 196)

In the following we present common themes that determine our respondents' motivation to participate at the volunteer tourism phenomenon.

The Pursuit of Contribution

The first motivational dimension comprises altruistic goals. According to Kozinets and Handelman (2004, p. 691), they are dominated by the concern to alter societal aspects within a topic of interest that are "flawed and aggravate society's well being". As such, volunteers' altruistic goals are concerned with aiding their respective host community in particular, and problems of Third World societies in general. Our participants phrase this notion as "doing something good", "helping", "contributing" or "making the world a bit better". Johanna mentions that she actively reflected about the level of impact she felt capable to make.

"I wasn't sure if I could work with real social problems, like drug addicts or homeless children. I didn't really know if I could take it for two months because it is quite heavy. But I really liked the thought of teaching and giving something to them. It sounded most appropriate to me." – Johanna, 23, German

Although volunteers state that the will to contribute is primarily altruistic, our findings detect that they are aware of the social recognition of their planned actions which, subconsciously, adds to their motivation to contribute.

"I wouldn't think just: 'Oh yeah cool... volunteering cool, social recognition...' But I would still say that it is definitely there. When I talk to someone it is definitely there, I see the recognition. But my motivation was to travel, experience and contribute." – Radek, 22, Czech

The Pursuit of Personal Growth

The second motivational dimension comprises self-interest goals. According to Wearing et al. (2010), forms of alternative tourism such as volunteer tourism provide an opportunity for reconstruction of identity. Identity construction is likewise a central concept acknowledged by many new social movement theorists (Buechler, 1995). Our participants indicate that they saw their volunteer tourism participation as a "good experience" and a unique opportunity to "learn". The phrase of 'learning' itself is used in various contexts. Radek describes the goal to understand different cultures, Emma mentions the goal to get along as a team of volunteers while Johanna

refers to the goal of improving her language skills. Isabelle mentions that she stumbled upon her volunteer work by coincidence but immediately recognized the potential it offered for her personal growth which eventually convinced her; even though she was simultaneously intimidated by the prospect.

“I couldn’t find any marketing internships and I ended up applying for a project in an orphanage. It wasn’t even a normal orphanage, but those with sexually abused little girls so it was even harder but I thought it can be a good challenge for myself. I was actually scared of the project before I left. But I always challenge myself so I was looking forward to it.” – Isabelle, 23, German

The Pursuit of Experience

Lastly, the third motivational dimension comprises also self-interest goals, yet on a different level. This level focuses mainly on hedonistic goals that circle around “traveling”, experiencing “something new” and “adventure”. Our findings indicate that the concept of ‘authenticity’ is thereby of particular importance. According to MacCannell (1999, p. 91), the individual is increasingly concerned with gaining insights into “the real life of others” while at the same time losing attachments with markers of his own. In the same way, we recognize that volunteers are overall interested in experiencing the “reality” and “being with locals”. This echoes the will to apply the ‘anthropological gaze’ that, according to Urry and Larsen (2011), tourists apply when they emerge into a host community over a lengthy period of time. To Ana, the aspect of experiencing authentic life in her host community was more important yet than seeing various sides of her host destination through travels.

“[My motivation was] to try to help, or at least see how the reality is. [...] the main purpose was to see how people there live.” – Ana, 22, Spanish

Moreover, volunteer tourism poses an opportunity to gain said experiences in a price-conscious way. Our participants mainly either organized their volunteer trips independently or with the help of student-run organizations. They highlight the affordability of the volunteer tourism concept and point out that one of the reasons they participated was the value for money.

“There is a good balance between contributing and traveling, because otherwise I couldn’t have afforded to travel through South America. In this way it was cheap and great.” – Isabelle, 23, German

The Multitude of Possibilities is a Unique Opportunity

Our findings suggest that, while altruistic goals constitute an important part of the volunteer tourism experience, they are only part of the bigger picture. This echoes the popular “altruism versus self-interest” debate that is prevailing in established volunteer tourism literature (Wearing & McGehee, 2013, p. 123). Our participants argue that these two notions that are commonly perceived as contrasting, are in no way “exclusive things”. Similarly, the contemporary perspective on new social movements emphasize a shift in focus from mainly self-less goals that are concerned with altering societal aspects (Buechler, 1995) towards an ambivalence of goals that allow for personal lifestyle goals within the new social movement realm (Butcher & Smith, 2010). Our participants characterize their motivation as “a whole package” of goals and openly admit to motivation that circles around self-interest; an acknowledgment that usually tends to be unspoken of among consumers. From a volunteer’s perspective, the altruistic goals “justify” potential travel expenses and time exposure and therefore allow self-interest goals.

Furthermore, the juxtaposition of collective goals serves as social distinction from ‘normal’ tourists. Emma argues that while volunteer tourism still contains the travel aspect, it is not as “self-indulgent” as other forms of tourism.

“[Volunteer tourism] doesn’t feel like a luxury... like if you said: “Oh Emma, let’s go and spend three months surfboarding in France – that feels quite self-indulgent or whatever because that is all I’m doing.” – Emma, 21, British

This leads to the conclusion that volunteer tourists perceive the multiple possibilities of volunteer tourism as unique because “everyone is a winner” which stands in strong contrast to, for instance, exploiting mass tourism practices.

Social Network Ties Reinforce Motivation

Social networks describe connections of family, friends and other associates that share an individual's beliefs and goals (McGehee & Santos 2005). They often serve as a “source of information and inspiration” (McGehee, 2002, p. 127). Correspondingly, all of our respondents mention that in some way or another they were influenced by their social circle to participate at volunteer tourism. They mention connections to like-minded family, friends or acquaintances who have had prior experience with volunteer tourism. These connections take on the role of ‘volunteer tourism influencer’ and inspire and “involve” our participants.

Further, Ana and Emma argue that their fields of study, Medicine and Politics respectively, affect their beliefs and their motivation to volunteer abroad, in particular concerning altruistic goals, as they are more “conscientious” than fellow students due to expert knowledge in humanitarian and developmental issues.

In general, our participants recognize that the notion of volunteering is collectively spread among contemporary Western society. Britt describes it as “something of this time” and Emma confirms that volunteering is “quite common among university students”, especially because her generation is “brought up being told that if you didn’t have these kinds of things to put in your CV, your CV is useless”. Nevertheless, even though our participants recognize this collective societal goal, they still emphasize the importance of individual ties as triggers to undertake volunteer tourism.

Our findings in relation to ‘The Goal’ show that volunteers value the possibility to pursue multiple goals, those of altruistic as well as of hedonistic nature, through the single consumption practice of volunteer tourism. Traditional new social movement theories recognize altruistic goals that are concerned with societal transformation in favor of a stable social and cultural environment. Being part of creating such an environment is seen as prerequisite for the enhancement of life quality and the creation of individual ‘life worlds’ (Buechler, 1995). As such, self-interest goals likewise influence new social movement participation. Therefore, we recognize a correlation between the practice of volunteer tourism and new social movements. Only the notion of hedonistic goals that is apparent within volunteer tourism does not echo the traditional new social movement conceptualization.

4.2.2. The Self: Creation of a Conscious Life Project

Similarly to the class base that characterizes new social movements, our volunteer respondents originate from European middle class families with stable household incomes. They are in their early/mid-twenties, currently all enrolled at universities and thus well-educated. As such, they echo the notion of belonging to the ‘new middle class’ (Buechler, 1995; Wearing et al., 2010). Our participants show disposable resources of time and income that are used to realize their volunteer tourism experiences, evidencing the importance of free space between political and everyday life (Buechler, 1995). They spend lengthy periods abroad, mainly university sum-

mer/winter leaves or gap periods, with independent and flexible itineraries that provide them opportunities to immerse in destination cultures (Wearing et al., 2010).

According to Habermas (1984-1987) new social movements are said to contribute not only to specific social change but also to identity-construction (Buechler, 1995). Likewise, many argue the same when theorizing the practice of traveling (Wearing et al., 2010). While our participants undertake volunteer practices for altruistic and self-interest purposes, they all claim to have discovered the 'new self'. This 'new self' is found portrayed in increased cultural and social capital. Our participants acknowledge such increases, yet almost never state it directly because they struggle to "really put [their] finger on it". As argued by McGehee & Santos (2005), active immersion in host communities allows participants to better understand cultural differences and contemporary Third World problems. Thus, our participants were able to better appreciate 'Western' societal conditions, increase their touristic understanding which subsequently changed their worldview and social ties.

The Pursuit of a Knowledgeable Lifestyle

Confrontation with the authentic 'other' forms the basis for the development of 'cultural capital' accumulated in the articulation and narration of self-identity (Wearing et al., 2010). Throughout elaborated answers, our participants show that no matter what their initial motivation for the trip was, through consciousness-raising experience they have all come to understanding of local conditions of the host communities (McGehee & Santos, 2005). Similarly to new social movement activists (Buechler, 1995), they understood the importance of social change on the spot as all of them referred to the country they were in as "very poor" which made them feel sad and obliged to help as much as they could while there; even when they felt "sick and tired". Subsequently, they argue to have experienced identity transformation as some theorists argue to be possible when undertaking volunteer work (McGehee & Santos, 2005).

All of our participants have expressed host communities' gratitude for contribution they have made in terms of time and energy spent. They claim that even during "hard time[s]" that gratitude was what helped them get through and make their contribution even more outstanding. We detect a correlation between achievements of self-assigned goals and perceived value of the volunteer experience. The more "useful" our participants felt during their trip, the more valuable they evaluate their volunteer work.

Faced with difficult and striking local conditions, our participants have come to better comprehension of cultural differences between Western and Third World countries. As a result, they show increased appreciation of their origins and the societal conditions of their home countries.

“I was grateful for where I came from, [for] being able to go travel, study now here in Denmark. Because those girls [in Bolivia], they have no choice, some of them ended up going to college but still I was so grateful.” – Isabelle, 23, German

In addition to Isabelle’s insight, Ana emphasizes that after she has seen the poverty in Peru, she is grateful and thankful for living “on this side of the world”. Being aware of the advantages Western societies offer, our participants compare the two different worlds and question how much they and other people in their lives appreciate dominant prosperity of the Western world. Doing that, almost all of our respondents acknowledge that local people or children in their respective host destinations appear to be happier than people back home, who on the contrary have all given conditions to be content.

“My first impression [when I was back] was to compare how people in Africa were happy to live the lives they had, in their anti-consumption society. Not anti-consumption but [anti-]mass-consumption. I asked myself what am I doing with my life, using all this crap and I’m still not happy with myself.” – Radek, 22, Czech

Furthermore, as MacCannell (1999) indicates, our participants appear to have reached greater touristic understanding. In this context, volunteers value the proximity to locals. Wearing et al. (2010) state that experiencing ‘the local’ through meeting local people and engaging with the cultures of destinations is an important travel motivation for alternative tourists. In particular when volunteers and locals share the same age, they establish a relationship on equal terms that is often described as “friendship”. Local connections additionally function as what Corrigan (1997, p. 140) calls “backstage passes”, giving volunteers the “pretty fortunate situation” to leave their “volunteer bubble” and to enter the host destinations’ back stages that are refused to normal tourists and that “motivates touristic consciousness” (Goffman, 1973, p. 598).

“I was really, really lucky to make friends with some locals from my student group. It was so awesome. They were taking me around town. They were taking me to their families in the countryside and I saw so many places I would have never been able to see without knowing them.” – Johanna, 23, German

It is however questionable that volunteers experience the real backstage according to Goffman (1973), and that the discursive effect of authenticity can be achieved through volunteer tourism practices. Whereas the volunteers are granted exceptional insights into everyday life, they still remain temporary gazers rather than full members of society. Britt, for instance, describes “intense” encounters with locals who “didn’t trust the situation” and only permitted the presence of the volunteers due to their connection with a renowned member of the local community.

Nevertheless, our participants believe to have gained authentic insights into their host communities. Consequently, they no longer believe in traditional way of traveling. None of our participants can imagine to pursue traditional mass tourism activities in their near future. Instead, they want to “see more of the world”, “see more hidden places” and “go all by [themselves]”. As such, they continue to seek authenticity (MacCannell, 1999).

In conclusion, the new self is constructed through the authentic encounter with the ‘other’ as well as social change that volunteers aimed to accomplish. When referring to their volunteer experience they use attributes such as the “most growing” and “changing” experience of their lives. According to Bourdieu (1984) this transformation simultaneously leads to increased cultural capital.

The Pursuit of a Lifestyle that Stands Out

Besides the acquired cultural capital, our participants show significant increase in social distinction and social capital as defined by Bourdieu (1984). In our study, this is reflected in a differentiated social image among and towards already existing, homebound social ties as well as upon newly acquired social networks consisting of other volunteers acquainted during the volunteer trips.

Existing social networks at home, more specifically family members and friends, refer to volunteers with admiration and pride. Moreover, they express shame and will to contribute to the society in a similar way. Some of our participants emphasize the earned admiration and respect from their family and friends, pre-trip as well as post-trip. According to Ana, her friends would use terms such as “cool” and “great” to describe their admiration. To her, this led to reinforced encouragement. In addition to that, they inquired how they can do it in order to be seen as “cool” themselves. Furthermore, Britt’s family perceived her volunteering as a “good thing” while her friends that wanted to volunteer but could not were “jealous”. On a more general note, it is noticeable that our participants acknowledge social recognition for their volunteering trips.

“When you talk about it now, many people see it as a good thing that we have done it. Maybe that’s something of this time, I’m not sure. But they are really like: “Ah, it’s so good that you have done that and so good that you have helped.” – Britt, 23, Dutch

In the same context, Radek mentions that volunteering abroad is not only a practice that is positively recognized by society but to a certain extent even required to be perceived as a “good person”.

While our participants’ families and friends showed admiration, jealousy and some a will to undertake the action of volunteering themselves, the participants admit to looking upon their friends in a different way after completed volunteering. As McGehee and Santos (2005) introduce, and this study confirms, existing social networks at home are looked upon differently after such life changing experience. Radek confirms it in a shy but dramatic tone when says that his friends were “at least” willing to listen about his valuable work.

Moreover, volunteer participants also distinguish themselves from ‘others’ to which they now refer to as ‘normal’ tourists. It is well-known that tourists flag identity through separating them from the others, therefore creating touristic hierarchies (Urry & Larsen, 2011). In general, our participants come to the conclusion that their volunteer experience stands out against normal tourist experiences.

“Yes, I definitely travel differently. I don’t want to do the normal tourist stuff anymore, not unless I get very old. I am thinking about doing some backpacking trip. [...] I think it is a much nicer situation going to another country and not sitting in your hotel [...]” – Johanna, 23, German

Regarding new found acquaintances, all of our participants state that they established relationships with fellow volunteer tourists. Usually they share the same cultural background and face the same prospect. This way, they are likely to bond over their experiences. Johanna explicitly states that from the moment she met other volunteers a “family feeling started”. Furthermore, in order to explain their positively connoted relationships, the participants use the words or expressions such as “friends” and “brother and sister”. Similarly to previous social movement scholars’ attributes for newly created social networks, those described by our participants were equally striking (McGehee & Santos, 2005).

“But you put someone in a situation like that, where it is hard and you only got each other. And you feel like brothers and sisters. You fight like brothers and sisters. You laugh like brothers and sisters too.” – Emma, 21, British

To summarize, our findings identify that volunteer tourism as a practice creates differentiated social status and increases one’s social capital. Within existing social circles of friends and family it leads to an increase of the perceived value of the volunteer tourists’ experiences and, thus, a differentiated social position that creates hierarchies among volunteers, friends and family. Additionally, volunteer tourism accumulates segmented social networks that serve as a point of reference regarding this consumer practice. As a consequence, such differentiated and increased social capital contributes to the creation of what Habermas conceptualizes as ‘life-worlds’ where meaning, identity and cultural norms are created (van Dyke, 2004).

In relation to ‘The Self’, our findings indicate that volunteer tourism can be seen as a manifestation of new social movements. Even though driven by multiple goals, volunteer tourists collectively contribute to social change in a way similar to new social movement activists (Buechler, 1995). When confronted with the conscious-raising practice of volunteering, they begin to understand the importance of their work and the impact it has on both themselves and their host communities. As a consequence, they refer to their experience as “most growing” and “life-changing” and cannot continue their former lives afterwards. In accordance with theoretical argumentation that participation in new social movements can influence identity-construction, the practice of volunteer tourism confirms such notion (Buechler, 1995).

4.2.3. The Adversary: Fragmented Opposition and Diverse Reaction

The expression of oppositional tendencies is an important characteristic of new social movements (Buechler, 1995). Our participants show resistance against adversaries that “stand in irreconcilable opposition” to their ideas of a conscientious lifestyle (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004, p. 693). Their resistance is markedly reinforced post-trip due to their consciousness-raising experiences and mainly addressed against prevailing Western ideologies. Isabelle, for instance, opposes the profession prospects she faces as a Business student and points out that she “doesn’t wanna be a strict business person later on in [her] life”.

“We had a speech from an influential person the other day at the university. He was talking so much about how awesome he is, spending all his money on crap instead of on

charity events. He pissed me off so much! He and his 4 billion dollars. I get so annoyed with rich people who don't care." - Isabelle, 23, German

Furthermore, our participants express oppositional tendencies directed towards materialism and "what it does to people". Both Radek and Britt explicitly state that they found their comparably poor host communities to be genuinely happier than Western societies that indulge in practices of mass-consumption. Our participants all claim to have learnt to be happy with little things in life such as "hot water or water at all". They have become more aware of material things and their values and consequently are more conscious when spending money on "unnecessary things" and squandering of resources.

"And I mean, now and again when I'm at a big party or something and it's really extravagant, it makes me feel like:" This is really extravagant, we don't need this!" – Emma, 21, British

In addition to that, volunteers express oppositional tendencies against status and attitude ideologies of Western societies. Thereby, our participants criticize the behavior of some fellow volunteers being "cocky and arrogant", not understanding local conditions, yet thinking, "they change someone's life". Emma thinks strongly about the cost-benefit ratio of some volunteer designs. Even though she admits that she learnt a lot during her volunteer tourism experience and that she does not regret doing on-site volunteer work, she opposes volunteer programs that focus first and foremost on the volunteer, the Westerner.

"[Volunteer programs] take groups out there all the time, and they all paint the same wall and think they change someone's life. And every time the villages are like: "Why are you painting the same wall? Just to feel like you've done something." They fly out one group to paint this, then they fly out another group to paint this... stupid! In the meantime all the volunteers who are used to their Western standard of living and nutrition eat all the chicken in the village that would usually last the village a year because they eat it once a month or something. And so the villages are actually suffering for it. I think that's really stupid." – Emma, 21, British

Our findings indicate that volunteers do not oppose one singular adversary. In accordance with a postmodern understanding of a fragmented and isolated society (Cova, 1996), our participants utter fragmented oppositional tendencies, addressing multiple adversaries. It is notable however, that they don't necessarily see them as actively threatening the societal and cultural order

(Buechler, 1995) and thus, none of our participants takes radical defensive action. However, in accordance with Butcher and Smith (2010), they regard their adversaries as incompatible with their desired lifestyle and their 'life politics'. Consequently, our participants take individual action within the realm of political consumption. In the following, we will introduce three manifestations of the volunteers' individual post-trip action.

The Influenced Becomes the Influencer

As previously mentioned, this study shows no clear adversaries or entities our participants fight against. It does however draw relevant insights into what these adversaries may appear to be. It has been argued by respected authors that volunteer work is likely to promote future social movement action (McGehee & Santos, 2005). Likewise, after completed volunteer work, our participants see themselves as 'volunteer tourism influencers'. Similar to the persuasion and help they received prior to their trip, they offer guidance to others in order to increase the amount of volunteer tourists worldwide.

"I try to encourage people to go travel and volunteer. They complain it's is expensive, I tell them go fucking do the volunteering." – Isabelle, 23, German

Similarly, Ana takes time to respond to questions such as "How can I do it?" Isabelle remarks that she responded to admiration by trying to encourage her social circle in participating and contributing themselves. At the same time she expresses incredulousness that volunteer tourism is still a niche form of tourism.

"Then, I am like: "Why don't you do something like that?" It didn't cost me anything, just some time." – Isabelle, 23, German

Isabelle managed to include her friends in volunteering and have them contribute financially to a charity event she organized while in Bolivia.

"So I collected 2000€ or something from my friends. Students were donating 50-100€ when I knew they did not have any money but they still wanted to support something like that." – Isabelle, 23, German

Whereas the adversary in volunteer tourism is not clearly defined by our participants, they all show immense will to act as influencers in order to incite more people to take action; just like they were once influenced.

The Desire to Continue Contribution to the Host Community

Following the trip, our participants do not stress the importance of a singular adversary, but instead use newly created social ties as point of references for future charity work. In most cases, participants stayed in touch with newly acquired friends not only for their self-interest purposes but also in order to continue contributing to the community (McGehee & Santos, 2005). Isabelle and Britt continue to support their host communities because they still feel part of it and are, thus, interested in its future development. Radek declares his intention to engage in further volunteer tourism activities. He especially highlights established firm networks with his host communities and fellow volunteers who are his “friends” now and that, when asked, “[he] could never say no to them”.

Isabelle proudly states the continuation of her contribution after the volunteer work has finished.

“[...] I try to help even when I am here. I really care about them. I also did another charity here in Denmark. I sent them a Christmas package. I was baking cake and collecting money and also collecting Christmas presents at the school. They really appreciated it, and it was so great to see how much I achieved with no effort.” – Isabelle, 23, German

Consciousness-raised during collective volunteering action, resulted in even more action. Isabelle did not only help her community when back home, she also organized a fundraising among family and friends while volunteering. As she sadly expresses, she could not stand seeing “all those poor people for long time”. Instead, she acted and organized a charity event during her stay in Bolivia that provided for ten kidney stone surgeries.

To summarize, similarly to McGehee and Santos’ findings, followed by consciousness-raising experience, this study confirms the notion of volunteers who act and continue contribution to their host community (2005). Additionally, as presented in the following, they initiate work on new social movement projects.

The Desire to Commence New Volunteer Projects

Even if faithful to their host communities, our participants show interest in expanding their social ties within the volunteering community by getting involved in many other charity projects. As proven by McGehee and Santos, post-trip involvement with other social movement actions is present (2005). Ana, for instance, started working for a local charity project in a poor area of her hometown that helps children with their homework. While being abroad, she discovered her

talent for working with children and her “love” for it. Consequently, she understood that she wants to incorporate similar work into her everyday life.

“When I finished my first experience, I thought why didn’t I do this before. This is why I’m helping here in Seville. Meanwhile I’m looking for something to do next September. I’m trying to find something new, I would love to do it. My friends from Peru as well wanna do it.” – Ana, 22, Spanish

Emma intends to activate her extended social network and to put her father’s Nepalese connections to use to find future volunteering opportunities such as “working with victims of acid attacks” or “Bhutanese refugees”, all of them having a “social conscious type side to it”. Isabelle, on the other hand, explains that she wants to use her education to go into charity work and even though her friends and family do not approve of that, she will not be applying for jobs any time soon. Instead, she wants to plan more trips where she can do different humanitarian projects in different countries and along the way travel, grow and develop more.

“I know I wanna go back into volunteering. I wanna help people every day, even when they are old and cross the street. I have a really good friend here into these things and we discuss that a lot, how other people don’t see how easy it is to make a change and contribute.” – Isabelle, 23, German

In sum, our volunteers’ motivation has increased altogether after the volunteer experience. Besides staying faithful and contributing to their first host-community, they now immerse themselves in further social movement actions, while planning future ones.

In relation to ‘The Adversary’, our study shows no close correlation with the traditional conceptualization of new social movements. Theorists argue that new social movements show clear opposition towards an adversary that is an obstacle to a general good (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). Our respondents however, show no clear opposition as there is no mention of one single adversary but multiple ones that are not compatible with their desired lifestyle and ‘life politics’. As a consequence, volunteers do not necessarily call for collective action to fight an adversary they encountered during their extended stay in their host communities, as the underlying traditional understanding of new social movements would suggest (Kozinets & Handelman, 2004). Instead, they direct their efforts towards further contribution to the community and/or new humanitarian projects.

5. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

Our research contributes to the still limited theoretical conceptualization of the volunteer tourism practice. Further, we add to consumer culture theory and we advance new social movement literature. Moreover, our study participates at the ongoing characterization of contemporary Western societies.

Shift from ‘Collective Goal / Collective Action’ to ‘Collective Goal / Individual Action’

We have come to conclusion that the consumption practice of volunteer tourism shows correlation with new social movements in terms of respective goals and identity perception of the activists themselves. Altruistic and self-interest goals of volunteer tourism relate to the discourse of new social movements that emphasizes the transformation of societal order to create an environment that favors improved quality of life and identity formation. However, differences in regard to new social movements are expressed through the manifestation of the adversary and reaction to such. Volunteer tourism in terms of a new social movement recognizes a complex, fragmented picture of adversaries; yet we do not detect particularly strong oppositional tendencies towards them. We do, however identify a shift from reactionary emergence of collective action towards strong reactionary emergence of individual action.

Political consumerism acknowledges the traditional notion of collective activism, however additionally introduces different manifestations of individual actions that impact alteration of contemporary societal order (Micheletti & Isenhour, 2010). Therefore, we conclude that the examined consumption practice of volunteer tourism and its correlation with contemporary new social movements can be perceived as a manifestation of political consumerism that emphasizes the notion of individuality. This acts in accordance with the notion of postmodernism and echoes contemporary social theory that argues for an increased focus on the individual, his expression of existence and his differentiation from the respective other (Cova, 1996). Such individual action contributes to Gidden’s concept of ‘life worlds’ (1991; 1994) as it determines identity, shapes personal lifestyles and defines the personal relation with society (Butcher & Smith, 2010).

Whereas we argue for the presence of fragmented individual action, we however simultaneously recognize the notion of an underlying collective goal that stimulates such action. This likewise echoes the notion of postmodernity and contemporary social theory as the fragmentation of life

designs, yet aligned individually, is strongly connected to a collective vision of life (Cova, 1996). Similarly, volunteer tourists collectively do not fight against perceived singular adversaries but their goal is to continue unselfish contribution to those in need on a fragmented level. Moreover, we find that this collective vision is determined by cultural upbringing and social network ties. Social network ties in particular impact individual action aimed towards a collective goal in terms of inspiration, source of information and point of reference. We detect the presence of an 'influence domino effect': the individual undertakes action based on social ties to an influencer and respectively becomes an influencer for further individuals.

In conclusion, our research indicates that the consumer practice of volunteer tourism expresses characteristics that evidence the correlation with new social movements. At the same time however, a holistic correlation only applies when acknowledging a shift in contemporary new social movement manifestations from the traditional 'collective goal / collective action'-dynamic towards a 'collective goal / individual action'-dynamic.

Research Limitations and Future Research

Investigating the correlation between volunteer tourism and new social movement, we have stumbled upon several difficulties in regard to existing literature and theory. These limitations are relevant to acknowledge as they will provide a meaningful starting point for future research. Firstly, existing peer-reviewed volunteer tourism literature to this day is very limited. Only few respected authors have published on the topic in regard to new social movements. This being the case, we cannot underestimate potential bias.

Furthermore, the identified notion of contemporary new social movements is based only on the practice of volunteer tourism and as such should be further researched in regard to different consumer practices. This should be done in order to further confirm or dismiss the detected shift in contemporary new social movement manifestations from the traditional 'collective goal / collective action'-dynamic towards a 'collective goal / individual action'-dynamic.

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