Department of Service Management and Service Studies

Exploring Consumer Engagement in the Circular Tourism Economy in practice of Liminality

Master's thesis 30 credits

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Abstract

This master's thesis focuses on consumer engagement in the circular tourism economy. It is doing so by exploring the underlying 'whys' of consumer engagement in the circular tourism activities and the ways in which tourist situation can affect consumer engagement. The study supplies the liminality theory as an analytical tool through analyzing of 16 semi-structured interviews. The findings introduce eleven accounts of consumer engagement to the academic literature. The factors together with the utilization of the theory, presents a novel contribution to this fairly under-researched area by means of an exploratory qualitative approach.

Keywords: Circular Economy, Consumer Engagement, Circular Tourism Economy, Liminality

1. Introduction

1.1 Circular Economy

If there is only one consensus that scholars came onto after two decades of research, it is the fact that the current linear growth model —excessively dependent on the accessibility of cheap abundant natural resources— is living on borrowed time (Lacy et al., 2014). This downward trend is tied to the fact that our consumption and demand patterns have reached such a high pace that we are rapidly approaching a tipping point, where we surpass our planet's capacity to safely regenerate, let alone thrive (Lacy, Peter, Long, & Spindler, 2020).

Since the late 2000s, with the growing need to transition away from the current linear models of production and consumption, the discussion about more circular models that aims to maximize value to the highest level over the longest time has emerged (Charter, 2018). After the report "Towards The Circular Economy, Ellen MacArthur Foundation" first-launch at the World Economic Forum in 2012, the idea gained considerable attention at a striking rate (Lacy et al., 2020).

Despite the universal consensus on the need to move toward a more circular economy, there is a lack of consensus over the term (Charter, 2018). This study bases its foundation on the definition provided by Prieto-Sandoval et al. (2018, p.613) as such: "circular economy as an economic system that represents a change of paradigm in the way that human society is interrelated with nature and aims to prevent the depletion of resources, close energy and materials loops, and facilitate sustainable development through its implementation at the micro (enterprises and consumers), meso (economic agents integrated in symbiosis) and macro (city, regions and governments) levels."

Whilst the CE (Circular Economy) is not explicitly pinpointed in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is related to number 12 "Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production" (Vargas-Sánchez, 2018). The concept of circular economy is nowadays promoted by the EU[1], several national governments and business organizations all around the world (Korhonen, Honkasalo, & Seppälä, 2018).

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[1] In January 2018, the European Commission adopted an ambitious Circular Economy Package (European Commission, 2018).

The principle that in nature nothing is waste, and everything can become a resource, is the cornerstone of the circular economy concept highlighting the importance of closing loops (Girard & Nocca, 2017). The fundamentally linear model of the current global economy which is very much centered around take-make-dispose (Lacy et al., 2020) and based on the throwaway mentality (Edbring, Lehner, & Mont, 2016) is on a collision course with cycles found in nature. However, the circular economy is restorative and regenerative by intention and design (MacArthur, 2013) which aims for decoupling growth from the use of scarce resources (Lacy et al., 2014) through substituting the 'end-of-life' concept with shift toward reuse (MacArthur, 2013).

According to the Circularity Gap Report 2019, launched at the World Economic Forum in Davos, only 9% of the world economy is circular, leaving 91% still dominated by linearity (Insight, 2019). Considering this large amount of the resources that are extracted never return to the production system to be reused in new products (Lacy et al., 2020), the circular economy might be closest to achieving cycles of nature (Blériot & Johnson, 2013). It takes the environment as a role model to imitate for redesigning the production activities (Ghisellini, Cialani, & Ulgiati, 2016). For now, however, a consumption-based lifestyle remains deep-rooted in our everyday lifestyle (Chamberlin & Boks, 2018), and the circular economy models based on "longevity, renewability, reuse, repair, upgrade, refurbishment, capacity sharing, and dematerialization" (Lacy et al., 2014, p.4), need to be made way more charming to consumers addicted to fast acquisition and disposal (Chamberlin & Boks, 2018).

1.2 Consumer engagement matters

Consumer engagement is a crucial factor since consumers are the actual users of products/services —particularly when it comes to transition toward the circular economy (Charter, 2018). In a linear-based economy, little attention is paid to a product after it is sold to a consumer (Wastling, Charnley, & Moreno, 2018). However, when the aim is to circulate products to the highest level over the longest time in the CE, the customer participation becomes an indisputable part of the process (Wastling et al., 2018). Consumer engagement is especially of great importance in the context of the CE as a transformative process which entails changes in consumer behavior, and not a to-go package implementable overnight (Berndtsson, 2015).

Consumer engagement is a behavioral construct that goes beyond merely purchase behavior

(Van Doorn et al., 2010). For the purpose of this study "customer engagement is a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive, co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object in focal service relationships" (Brodie, Hollebeek, Jurić, & Ilić, 2011, p.260).

Transition to the circular economy necessitates the engagement of consumers in alternative activities that they might not be accustomed to (Chamberlin & Boks, 2018). Recent studies in the field of CE have found that their adoption decreases in the business-to-consumer sector, mainly due to lack of consumer acceptance of new practices (Camacho-Otero, Boks, & Pettersen, 2018; Wastling et al., 2018). Users are mostly required to alter their normal way of behaving to adhere to alternative modes of consumption and this often acts as a barrier for successful implementation of the CE (Schotman & Ludden, 2014). Echoed by several scholars denoting that a wide range of barriers still prohibits the transition to the circular economy (Van Buren, Demmers, Van der Heijden, & Witlox, 2016), most important of all, are consumption issues, particularly consumer and user engagement in new practices as a prerequisite for transition to the CE, which has been underlined as a significant factor hindering the burgeon of circular business models by Camacho-Otero et al. (2018).

Alternative modes of consumption encompass a vast continuum of practices from models for prolonging the lives of products through reselling or refurbishing, and access-based consumption such as renting and leasing, to collaborative consumption exemplified as sharing platforms (Edbring et al., 2016). The need for giving up the ownership, engaging in behaviors such as repairing and using second-hand products and returning used goods back, are other instances of such alternative behaviors (Camacho-Otero et al., 2018).

The prevalence of collaborative and sharing consumption in most circular economy practices is what characterizes the undeniable consumer role in the success of circular economy models compared to linear ones. This has been delicately remarked by Nedyalkova (2016) that consumers will be critical partners of companies in pursuing sustainable lifestyles determined by alternative consumption of goods and services. In the same vein, Accenture has stated that the success of a leading circular company is relying on its capability to engage consumers to use and dispose of products correctly (Lacy et al., 2014).

Majority of the studies in the field of circular economy concentrate mainly on the relationship of the CE with the environment (Ruiz-Real, Uribe-Toril, De Pablo Valenciano, & Gázquez-

Abad, 2018) or business model changes and while this is of great importance, it excludes other essential aspects of the circular economy and has somewhat neglected the notable shift required from consumers to accept these changes (Chamberlin & Boks, 2018). Supported by Wastling et al. (2018) indicating that the most important of all under-researched areas in this regard is the human element of the CE that despite the significance of the role as the 'owner' or 'user' of a product/service, it did not gain ground in the circular economy studies.

An interesting point to mention, based on the results of the study carried out by Cerulli-Harms et al. (2018), is that consumers were willing to engage in CE practices in general despite the fact that the actual engagement was relatively low. However, as remarked by Kirchherr et al. (2017), there is not enough understanding about why consumers would partake in the circular economy or not.

Concisely put, without consumer engagement any progress in the circular economy is unforeseeable. Therefore, development of the circular economy is reliant on a profound understanding of consumer engagement (Hazen, Mollenkopf, & Wang, 2017).

1.3 Circularity in the tourism industry

Looking forward, the current declining trend of linear growth is a reminder of the unavoidable reality that the whole economy is condemned to shift from the linear to the circular paradigm and there is no viable alternative in this process (Vargas-Sánchez, 2018). With the circular economy overspread, the development of the circular tourism economy consequently began to appear (GAO, CHEN, & TUO, 2006). In this vein, the importance of tourism as a major global economic activity makes it impossible to be overlooked in transformation to sustainable development and it can provide a central contribution to the transformation of societies (Sørensen, Bærenholdt, & Greve, 2018).

The tourism industry has a considerable role to play in ongoing economic transformation because of its multiplier effect that underscores its influential impact on the whole economy (Vargas-Sánchez, 2018). The development of the CTE (Circular Tourism Economy) is a sort of tourism development model satisfying three wins: economy, society and environment in tourism (Qing-zhong & Xiao-lin, 2007).

Despite the comparatively newness of the CE concept, it is an inevitable way to contribute to a more sustainable tourism industry, which is part of the overall transformation of the

unsustainable traditional linear economy (Vargas-Sánchez, 2018).

Even though it is easier to investigate how the concept of CE can affect the manufacturing sectors rather than the service sectors as, for instance, the tourism industry, nonetheless, a link between the circular economy and the tourism sector does exist. The tourist starts consumption of tourism ever since after one prepares his/her trip from the time he/she chooses the destination to when reaching it, he/she presumably uses local transports, settles in his chosen accommodation, consumes food and participates in some local activities, until he/she travels back. All steps are compatible with the circular economy. It is worth noting once again in the context of tourism that migration toward the circular economy is not only a producer concern, yet this is the tourist who is the one deciding over the means of traveling, and what to do at their destination (Lopez, n.d.).

Moreover, some of the most environmentally vulnerable regions are areas considered as most touristic attractions, therefore it is equally important for actions to be taken in the tourism industry (Satli, 2019). From a circular outlook, waste produced by the tourism industry can be used as a resource for the city system, if properly managed, and thus be a part of the urban processes optimizing resource utilization (Falcone, 2019).

1.4 Defining the research gap and aim

Tourism sector has been revolutionized by the increasing use of disruptive technology and fast spread of the access-based and collaborative consumption[1] companies active in the tourism service industry such as Airbnb[2], Couchsurfing[3], Homestay[4], Uber[5], GoMore[6], etc., that can be taken as conclusive proof of the fact that the transformation to the new paradigm of the CE in this sector has already begun worldwide (Rather, Hollebeek, & Islam, 2019).

Despite all the developments, however, only a limited amount of research about the circular economy from a tourism perspective exists, and even that little scientific literature mainly concentrates on the supplier side overlooking tourists' role as actual consumers and

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[1] The access-based and collaborative consumption are both types of consumption that aim at amplifying the use of underutilized assets resulting in facilitating the reuse of products (Camacho-Otero et al., 2018), therefore can be considered as practices of circular economy
[2] https://www.airbnb.com/
[3] https://www.couchsurfing.com/
[4] https://www.homestay.com/
[5] https://www.uber.com/
[6] https://gomore.com/

coproducers of tourism experiences in the tourism system (Sørensen et al., 2018).

One of the conclusions offered by Vargas-Sánchez (2018) which was dealt with in the presented study is worth noting here:

"When a search on this topic ("CE" and tourism; "tourism CE"; "circular tourism") is done …, the first features are the scarcity of the literature available and the lack of a common understanding of this concept and a limited scope for its use" (p.652). "Further, there are very few well-documented initiatives on CE in the tourism industry. Therefore, this is still an under-researched area that inevitably will deserve much more attention" (p.654).

With this backdrop, due to the lack of available literature in the circular tourism economy in particular, the study got help from the relevant literature regarding consumer engagement in the broader concept of the CE. Even then, the majority of existing research in this context considers aspects of business models or consumer engagement in the CE in the case of manufacturing sector on the neglect of service sector (Baxter, Aurisicchio, & Childs, 2017; Cerulli-Harms et al., 2018; Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Edbring et al., 2016; Hazen et al., 2017; Insight, 2019; Lacy et al., 2014; Wastling et al., 2018).

Moreover, considering the nature of tourist consumption which is beyond mere functional consumption (McIntyre, 2012) with tourists' expectations of engaging in an immersive consumption experiences (Taheri, Farrington, Gori, Hogg, & O'Gorman, 2017), the scientific literature on the CE does not seem to address the fact that the tourist situation might play a role when it comes to engaging in the CE practices.

This study addresses this omission by putting tourists – rather than the producers and providers of the tourist industry – center stage. Bearing in mind that despite its importance, consumer engagement is still the weakest point in the circular economy chain (Vargas-Sánchez, 2018). This study seeks to explore consumer engagement in the context of circular tourism economy through consumer's point of view.

The research will investigate its aim through answering the following questions:

1. Why do/ do not consumers engage in the circular tourism economy?
2. In which ways does the tourist situation affect consumer engagement in the circular tourism economy?

In order to proceed with the research aim, in the following chapter, a synthesis of the relevant literature on the CE that addresses issues of consumer engagement and its intersection with tourism together with the theory of liminality that the study got apply as an analytical tool are presented. Chapter three details the methodological approach adopted in this study. Chapter four is devoted to the analysis of the empirical findings in practice of the theoretical framework followed by the discussion and conclusion chapter which brings this study to its end.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Circular economy background and definition

According to Larsson (2018), at this stage, development in society has no way out of these two options: either leading to resource deficiencies and economic collapse as a continuation of the ongoing development, or a change in move and heading toward circular flows and the circular economy, which is the only foreseeable trail forward for our global society.

There are some discussions over the emergence of circular economy in scientific research. Nocca (2017) traces back the concept of the circular economy with the notion of "restorative/regenerative" to the 1960s with Boulding (1966). To Ghisellini et al., (2016) the concept of the CE was primarily introduced by the environmental economists Pearce and Turner (1989). However, Bressanelli et al. (2018) state that the body of knowledge regarding the CE is still in its infancy particularly when it comes to the consumer perspective as highlighted by Chamberlin and Boks (2018).

The circular economy portraits a world in which product life extension via repair, restoration and remanufacturing is the dominant social and economic model (Charter, 2018). It is a vision for how the global economy can function in a regenerative and restorative way (Wastling et al., 2018). However, when a new concept emerges, a certain degree of terminological confusion is expected until a common understanding is achieved and the concept of the CE is not exempt of this lack of consensus over the term (Vargas-Sánchez, 2018).

According to Camacho-Otero et al. (2018), the most popular definition of the CE is the one coined by the Ellen Macarthur Foundation. To MacArthur "Circular economy is based on the principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems" (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2020). The definition seems working fine for the existing supply and production-oriented scientific literature on the CE, however, it lacks considering the role of the consumer. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the definition provided by Prieto-Sandoval et al. (2018) is chosen due to its inclusion of the human axis and consumer role, "Circular economy as an economic system that represents a change of paradigm in the way that human society is interrelated with nature and aims to prevent the depletion of resources, close energy and materials loops, and facilitate sustainable development through its implementation at the micro (enterprises and consumers), meso

(economic agents integrated in symbiosis) and macro (city, regions and governments) levels"
(Prieto-Sandoval, Jaca, & Ormazabal, 2018, p.613).

The latter definition suits the nature of the phenomena under study better, as the circular
economy requires the consumer to modify their routine behavior to comply with alternative
modes of consumption such as renting and reusing (Schotman & Ludden, 2014). This makes
the CE profoundly dependent on consumers' role as active accounts of change which should
not be overlooked in the applied CE definition in the study.

The aim of this change in consumer behavior in the CE is to decouple growth from natural
resources input (Hazen et al., 2017). In other words, the CE strives for "decoupling value
creation from waste generation and resource use by radically transforming production and
consumption systems" (Camacho-Otero et al., 2018, p.1).

2.2 Consumer engagement in the circular economy

Ever since 2001, Gallup started reports in relation to consumer engagement, the concept began
to emerge as a subject of great interest to scholars and managers from various industries due to
its key role to business success (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2016). However,
despite consumer engagement popularity in research, noteworthy confusions still remain,
considering its meaning and conceptualization (Hepola, 2019) and significant differences
concern the question of what constitutes engagement (Dessart et al., 2016).

In definition "customer engagement is a psychological state that occurs by virtue of interactive,
co-creative customer experiences with a focal agent/object in focal service relationships"
(Brodie et al., 2011, p.260) and it is context-dependent meaning that individuals engage with
different foci (Dessart et al., 2016).

Contrasted with other existing definitions, the one provided by Brodie et al. (2011) takes non-
transactional engagement of consumer into consideration which enabled this study to explain
variety of respondents' behaviors regarding their engagement in the CTE. In addition, the
definition also takes co-creative nature of consumer engagement into account which is the
antecedent of many findings of this study as discussed under the analysis chapter.

In relation to conceptualization of consumer engagement -in spite of the absence of a
consensus- this research follows other studies' general approach of "who engages with what",

which posits consumer engagement based on the interactions between a subject (which in this study is the consumer) and an object/agent (which in this study is circular practices) (Hepola, 2019).

Recent studies in the field of CE declaring that circular business models' adoption has not been very welcomed in the business-to-consumer sector, mainly due to lack of consumer engagement (Camacho-Otero, Pettersen, & Boks, 2017; Kirchherr et al., 2017; Pettersen, & Boks, 2017; Wastling et al., 2018). Several authors attributed the root cause of consumer reluctance to the transformative process of the CE, which entails changes in consumer behavior and requires users to alter their normal way of behaving to adhere to alternative modes of consumption (Camacho-Otero et al., 2018; Schotman & Ludden, 2014; Van Buren et al., 2016). Resonated by Hobson and Lynch (2016) and Vargas-Sánchez (2018), promoting the circular economy requires substantial changes in people's routine lives. These requirements for fundamental changes in consumption behavior make it harder for consumers to engage in circular activities.

Alternative consumption modes that the CE necessitates consists of practices such as repairing, returning goods, renting, reselling, purchasing secondhand products, sharing, recycling and a shift from product ownership to product usage (Cerulli-Harms et al., 2018; Edbring et al., 2016; Hobson & Lynch, 2016; and Vargas-Sánchez, 2018) that are deeply rooted in the so called 3R's Principles: "Reduction, Reuse and Recycle" of the circular economy (Ghisellini et al., 2016).

Scientists identified a wide range of factors influencing consumer engagement in the circular economy while confronting the new practices of CE. The research carried out by Catulli et al. (2013) aimed at investigating consumer engagement in access-based consumption of a category of nursery products. Van Buren et al. (2016) and Schotman and Ludden (2014) emphasized on the Dutch logistics industry to study what barriers may exist that might hinder a transition to CE. Edbring et al. (2016) took consumption of second-hand products, access-based consumption, and collaborative consumption to investigate how people engage in these consumption models focusing on furnishing products. Van Weelden, Mugge, & Bakker (2016) and Hazen et al. (2017) explored the factors influencing consumer acceptance of refurbished and remanufactured products. Lately, Chamberlin and Boks (2018) took a marketing perspective in their study to investigate behavioral barriers that affect consumer acceptance of new consumption models. Cerulli-Harms et al. (2018) identify trade-offs faced by consumers when deciding whether to engage in the CE regarding durable goods. Further Hobson and

Lynch (2016), Vargas-Sánchez (2018), Charter (2018) and Wastling et al. (2018) discuss the implications of the transformative agenda of CE. Drawing on these studies, their findings are classified in table 1 to be concisely presented and later be discussed and used in analysis phase.

Table 1: accounts of engagement in other researchers' findings

Accounts of engagement	Reference
Financial incentives/tangible value/ economic reasoning/ price	Camacho-Otero et al., 2017; Cerulli-Harms et al., 2018; Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Edbring et al., 2016; Hazen et al., 2017; Van Weelden et al, 2016
Desire for uniqueness and individuality	Edbring et al., 2016; Van Weelden et al,, 2016
Contamination/disgust/ lack of hygiene	Baxter et al., 2017; Catulli et al., 2013; Camacho-Otero et al., 2017; Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Edbring et al., 2016; Van Weelden et al., 2016; Wastling et al., 2018;
Convenience/availability/ flexibility/ lack of adequately developed markets/ Access	Camacho-Otero et al., 2017; Cerulli-Harms et al., 2018; Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Edbring et al., 2016; Van Weelden et al., 2016
Ownership/ desire to own	Camacho-Otero et al., 2018; Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Edbring et al., 2016; Ghisellini et al., 2016; Hobson & Lynch, 2016; Insight, 2019; Vargas-Sánchez, 2018
Environmental impact/ environmental benefits	Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Hazen et al., 2017
Brand image /intangible value/ social and emotional values	Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Edbring et al., 2016; Van Weelden et al., 2016
Quality/performance	Camacho-Otero et al., 2017; Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Cerulli-Harms et al., 2018; Van Weelden et al., 2016
Customer service/supportive relationship	Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Van Weelden et al., 2016
Warranty	Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Van Weelden et al., 2016
Peer reviews	Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Van Weelden et al., 2016
Trust issues/ mistrust of other users/ seller image	Catulli et al., 2013; Edbring et al., 2016; Insight, 2019; Van Weelden et al., 2016
The perceived degree of intimacy in their use	Edbring et al., 2016
Lack of information	Cerulli-Harms et al., 2018; Van Weelden et al., 2016

Echoing Chamberlin and Boks (2018) academic literature on the circular economy is still nascent, especially when it comes to the consumer perspective. There are, however, a number of studies that address consumer reactions to practices that form the CE (see table 1). In this study, accounts of engagement refer to consumers' major concerns when it comes to participating in the CE practices. As shown in table 1, various authors have used diverse terminology to address resembling factors. Using different terminology was not only about labeling the factors but in a broader context, some scholars called them as barriers to engagement, some other named them as motivators or antecedents of consumer engagement and so on. Disregarding labeling, what is important, is the concentration of majority of the studies on production and supply side and on the neglect of services (Baxter et al., 2017; Catulli et al., 2013; Cerulli-Harms et al., 2018; Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Edbring et al., 2016; Hazen et al., 2017; Insight, 2019; Van Weelden et al., 2016). This absence is surprising while the world is rapidly moving toward a service-oriented economy (Schotman & Ludden, 2014). Additionally, considering the booming market of access-based consumption, collaborative consumption and sharing platforms globally, services are considered to be a necessary antecedent of the CE that merit scientists' attention.

In the same vein, scientific literature leaves out the consumption side. Several authors have pointed to a lack of research focus on everyday role of the consumer in the circular economy (Chamberlin & Boks, 2018). Ghisellini et al. (2016) denoted that the existing literature on circular economy contemplates consumers as passive recipients when making decisions. Whereas the market has shifted from passive consumption to a more engaging service space (Taheri, Hosany, & Altinay, 2019).

Despite the significance of the consumers' roles as final users of a product/service, there seems to be a lack of comprehensive accounts of the human element of the circular economy in the scientific literature (Wastling et al., 2018). Knowledge about consumer attitudes in this regard is scarce (Edbring et al., 2016) and not enough is known about why consumers would partake in the circular economy or not (Kirchherr et al., 2017).

2.3 Consumer engagement in the circular tourism economy through the liminality lens

Although the CE is a rather new concept, it is an inescapable paradigm whose application will contribute to a more sustainable tourism industry (Vargas-Sánchez, 2018). Regarding the substantial role that tourism plays in economic transformation —its great capacity to intensify circular flows among its suppliers and consumers— results in the multiplier effect of tourism on the whole economy (Vargas-Sánchez, 2018).

To achieve circularity in contemporary competitive tourism economy, perceiving tourist behavior is imperative and it deserves even more attention as it seems to be more variable, showing sophisticated preferences patterns (Kozak & Decrop, 2009).

The sophistication of tourists' behavior stems from the fact that oftentimes individuals' behaviors contrast from back home, yet researchers have also found that tourists hold some home behaviors while on vacation (Currie, 1997). Currie and Gagnon's (2000) explained that individuals are not only seeking or escaping something while traveling, they are also seeking to enter the liminoidal state (Currie & Gagnon, 2000). "Tourists are in search of enjoyable, engaging and transformative activities, frequently surrounding temporary modes of being" (Taheri et al., 2019, p.463). Thus, the nature of tourist consumption goes beyond mere functional consumption to multisensory explorations of place and space (McIntyre, 2012). Well-informed tourism consumers are demanding, with expectations of engaging in an immersive consumption experiences (Taheri et al., 2017). Meaning that in considering tourists engagement in the CE, we are dealing with a transitional between the mundane exotic called liminoid region (McIntyre, 2012).

To explain individuals' tourist behaviors compared to their home-based behaviors it has been suggested by many scholars that whenever the chance to avoid the regular routine is provided, the individual will seek an opposite activity (Burch Jr, 2009). This is the core argument of so-called compensatory theory. However, not all tourists behave hedonistically, and some may show similar behaviors while on vacation as in their home environments. As a result, the desire for newness may thus be satisfied not in new activities but in new locations in which to involve in familiar activities (Sthapit & Björk, 2017). The theory of spill-over is concerned with such desires.

While both presented approaches can be used to describe some leisure behaviors, there is still no explanation for those of whom responding to a compensatory need while at the same time following routine (Currie, 1997). Van Gennep (1960) coined the term "liminal" (Zhang & Xu, 2019) to propose supplementary explanation for the conflicting behavioral styles in the tourism environment, from which the liminoid concept was derived (Currie, 1997).

Liminality has been main**ly** defined as the metaphorical passage of spatial or temporal borders from the familiar to the unfamiliar, where the rules of society are temporarily suspended, resulting in the experience of freedom from the day-to-day lives boundaries (Foster & McCabe, 2015). This separation is a shift in time that is outside of normal routines followed by transitional stage, which comprises entry into the new routine without conventional routines; this is called the limen phase or threshold (Severt & Tasci, 2020). The limen is an imaginary space that separates the home and tourism environments (Foster & McCabe, 2015). Once individuals have crossed the limen, they are liberated from society rules; therefore, they are able to strip themselves of their home environment and create their own rules for the time being (Currie, 1997). The liminal state is when the individual does not belong to neither the previous experience nor to the new status, or lifestyle (Czarniawska & Mazza, 2003).

The cross from one to another status is often coupled by a parallel cross in space, a geographical displacement from one place to another (Turner, 1974). The physical separation facilitates transgression from the routine 'mode of being' (Foster & McCabe, 2015). Once individuals are mentally and physically transformed, they switch to tourist mode in order to cherish their tourist "time" from a different reference point (Currie, 1997). In other words, for tourists to show prosaic and inversionary behaviors, they must enter liminoid state (Bright, 2008).

The term liminoid coined by Turner (1974) as a state in which both inversionary (opposite) and prosaic (similar) behaviors are expected as it offers individuals the chance to show contradictory behavioral styles (Currie, 1997).

The liminal provides opportunity only for rebellion followed by a return to the previous status (routine life), while the liminoid has the potential to produce revolutionary change (Spiegel, 2011). While liminal is part of society concerning traditions and ritual based practices, liminoid is leisure-based social acts as break from society which with the emergence of leisure in post-industrial societies gained more popularity (Turner, 1974).

Over the past decades there has been growing engagement with the concept of liminality and

liminoid states, particularly within tourism studies (Cody & Lawlor, 2011) showing that the concept can be extensively applied to tourism (Foster & McCabe, 2015) and how the magic of spaces can guide consumer engagement in different activities (Preston-Whyte, 2004).

The findings of the "liminoidal consumption" study done by Koc (2013) were evident of the inversionary behavior resulting in people who go on all-inclusive holidays and excessively engage in food and drinks consumption. Some other scientists applied the concept of liminality to comprehend how specific spaces provide the basis for consumers engagement in sanctioned behavior that lies beyond social conventions (Foster & McCabe, 2015), such as the discussion about sexual behaviors in the study done by Preston-Whyte (2004), who took surfing and nudist beach as liminal spaces.

While exploring the research aim, many times interviewees referred to their contradictory engaging behaviors in the CE while traveling in contrast to home environment. Inspired by the mentioned findings in this section, the study got help from the liminality theory to gain a better understanding over the underlying meanings of consumer engagement in the CTE. In this way, the research bids new insights regarding the influence of tourist situation on consumer engagement in the CE, presented in the last two chapters. However, before the methodological approach outlined in the next chapter detail how the research exploration was carried out, there are a few points of concern that merit attention.

2.4 Questioning social and environmental gains of the CE

CE seems to be a novel combination of old concepts of reusing, sharing and repairing with potential to influence toward a paradigm shift, however, in order to reach its potential, it has to keep sustainability as a goal and be supported with new policies (Berndtsson, 2015).

In short, the CE is the next big political and economic project for the EU, despite the social and political aspects of it are not given enough consideration to Hobson and Lynch (2016). When one is seeking to garner public and political attention selling sustainable development promises, a catchy framework such as the CE often comes in handy even though there is still the potential for further rebound effects (Hobson & Lynch, 2016)

Recently, researches have questioned the core of the circular economy, whether closing material and product loops does actually hamper primary production (Zink & Geyer, 2017). Zink and Geyer (2017) in their article argued that circular economy activities can enhance

overall production, which can partially or fully offset their benefits and name this effect 'circular economy rebound'.

This is not to fully negate the positive advances at the heart of many CE intervention, but as Julian Allwood phrased it, circular economy could be achieved only if global demand for both the volume and composition of products stabilized (Zink & Geyer, 2017).

This dissertation has not had the space to involve in these certain aspects of the CE in any meaningful way, however, this is to show that the study is aware of critical considerations in relation to the circular economy.

3. Methodology

In order to provide the reader with a possibility to evaluate the trustworthiness and authenticity of the study at hand as quality assessing criteria of qualitative research, this chapter is presented doing so by detailing the steps taken and the methodological tools used to carry out this research.

To commence the account for the implemented methodological approach in the research at hand, a discussion about the nature of the studied phenomenon is set forth. In this phase it is sought to identify what is to be studied in order to be able to subsequently define how to study it appropriately.

3.1 Scientific approach

Consumer engagement is a social product, which is constructed through co-creative customer experiences by other social actors, who are in the process of fashioning it in focal service relationships. Therefore, from the social ontological[1] perspective, the research follows a constructivist position. As in the adopted approach, social phenomena and their meanings have no existence independent of social actors (Bryman, 2012).

Since the study is concerned with the empathic understanding of individuals' engagement in the circular economy in the context of tourism, the epistemological[2] position of the research rests toward interpretivism. Interpretivism as opposed to positivism implies understanding human beings and their institutions form the inside through empathy and shared experience rather than solely from the outside like physical objects (Hammersley, 2013). Thereupon, the taken approach is significantly tied to the methodology and process of this dissertation considering its focus on human interests and their meanings within its complexity of the context. It enabled the researcher to transcend extant knowledge through the attempted interpretation of consumer behavior (Blichfeldt & Kessler, 2009) and grasp the subjective

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[1] social ontology is concerned with the nature of social entities questioning whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities having an external reality to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions made of the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman, 2012).

[2] Epistemological considerations raise questions to answer whether the adopted scientific approach is the right stance to address the research questions (Bryman, 2012).

meaning behind it (Bryman, 2012).

For this dissertation it was determined to be qualitative as the study is concerned with why consumers do or do not engage in the CTE and how tourist situation can affect consumer engagement. Knowing that quantitative studies are not designed to answer "whys" underlying behavior and disclosing what goes on in their minds that make them behave in specific ways, suited the aim of the study best to be qualitative (Blichfeldt & Kessler, 2009). The qualitative lens also helped the author comprehend the studied phenomena more in depth within its complexity of the context from participants' perspective rather than the author, which is more in line with the ontological orientation of the research (Silverman, 2013). In addition to that, consumer engagement has mostly been treated in qualitative researches (Dessart et al., 2016).

Finally, in regard to linking data and theory, an inductive approach pleased the exploratory nature of the study to grasp realities as they are discovered benefiting from the pivotal advantage of inductive analysis that uncovers realities that could not be foreseen prior (Blichfeldt & Kessler, 2009). At the same time, the researcher was informed by several theoretical ideas before the analysis phase commenced which later some of those conceptual theories got applied in the practice of analyzing and discussing findings driven from the data. From this perspective the study took an abductive approach, as there was a back and forth procedure in connecting theory and findings, while it was constantly attempted to remain open to any findings by conducting an inductive analysis.

3.2 Research design and method

Following Bryman (2012), if a researcher is attracted to a subject in which no or virtually no research has been done in the past, a more exploratory stance is preferable as there is little prior literature from which to draw leads. This was the case in this study supported by the presented theoretical framework. In this connection, the qualitative approach satisfied the research's requirements in the way that it is more associated with the generation rather than the testing of theory (Bryman, 2012).

Considering the constructionist ontological positioning of this study, viewing the social world as the product of individuals and its interpretivist approach in epistemological orientation, emphasizing on meaning from the individual's point of view (Bryman, 2012), the research method for this study determined to be based on semi-structured interview technique to be able

to enter the interviewee's world and look at the studied phenomena from their standpoint.

Compared to structured interview, the loser structure of semi-structured interview technique let the author seek clarification and elaboration in regard to the answers by asking follow-up questions, at the same time allowed participants to respond more on their own terms (May, 2011). The deployment of this method is also more advantageous than unstructured interviews as it provides a greater structure for comparability of findings (May, 2011).

3.3 Participants

In most qualitative research participants are chosen based on a purposive selection of some kind (Bryman, 2012) and so does this research for the reasons mentioned below.

What makes this approach in qualitative research fruitful is the fact that the purposive selection is conducted with reference to the aims of the research and allows the researcher to select the units of analysis in terms of criteria that helps the research questions to be answered (Bryman, 2012). For the same reason, purposive selection seemed to usefully fit in the work at hand. Hereupon it was assured that participants who were chosen from the researcher's network, shared specific attributes that were designed for the purpose of this study. More precisely, they were all:

- *Frequent independent travelers*: a person who almost always arrange their own travel plans having taken at least 3 separate trips involving an overnight stay during the last year.
- *Technology friendly*: a relatively knowledgeable and technique-oriented person who at least uses a smartphone and knows how to employ modern technology to explore surroundings.

Worth noting here is that independent does not necessarily mean traveling alone. Moreover, the reason and motivation of traveling is not of this research interest, to avoid unnecessary complication, unless it is not traveling back to a hometown on a regular basis.

These qualities have been sought for in the selected members as the study decided to explore consumer engagement from relatively independent travelers' perspective that had all the possible options (sharing platforms and collaborative consumption offers) in front them but chose one over the other so the study could look for the underlying whys. If there would have

been participants who rarely traveled or mostly traveled in organized tours, the study could not see to acquire needed amount of qualitative data in the context of CE to satisfy the aim of the research.

When it comes to the number of participants, there is no set size in qualitative studies according to Bryman (2012). Considering the time and living in the challenging period of Covid-19[1] outbreak in self-quarantine while writing this dissertation - which will be discussed more in detail under 'ethical considerations and limitations' section- satisfying the university's requirement of conducting at least 15 interviews was the main concern, however, sixteen interviews has been executed for the sake of having an equal numbers of each gender's perspective to further be able to investigate if there was any meaningful trend as other studies has shown (Insight, 2019; Luchs & Mooradian, 2012).

The age range of the participants rested between 23 to 41 years old coming from 11 different nationalities namely: Sweden, Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Italy, Spain, Russia, Germany, Taiwan, China and the Netherlands. However, there is no specific intention behind the age span and nationality as they were not considered to be criteria to achieve the research aim.

3.4 Data collection and analysis

The reviewed literature provided a background for this research which was the base for designing the interview questions and helped building a bridge between this project and current state of knowledge on the topic.

Sixteen semi-structured interviews with selective sample members were conducted in addition to two pilot interviews within the time span of three weeks including the last week of March and first two weeks of April 2020 as that was the allocated time for it.

Due to the self-quarantine and keeping social distance which the special period of Covid-19 outbreak required, the majority of the interviews were conducted over video call. It is said that it can be more difficult for the interviewer to establish rapport[2] in online interviews compared to their face-to-face counterparts (Bryman, 2012) which to some extent was felt in this project as well. Even though more emphasis was placed on the video call as the closest alternative to

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[1] The pandemic of Coronavirus disease, (COVID-19) outbreak 2019-2020 (Wikipedia contributors, n.d.)
[2] Rapport means that a relationship must be established between interviewer and interviewee in order for respondent to feel courageous to participate in and persist with the interview (Bryman, 2012).

face-to-face interview for the mentioned reason, five interviews completed over voice call in accordance to the interviewees' preferences. Finally, two interviews were done in person as the situation allowed.

Interviews were performed exploring the interviewees' engagement in the CE through their participation in circular activities such as sharing, renting, leasing, reusing, buying second-hand and eco-labeled products, repairing and recycling in practice of tourism. Process of designing the interview guide encompassed discussions with the supervisor and several peers over the first draft. Further two pilot interviews were completed and after collecting all feedback and modifying the questions accordingly, finally the interview guide was ready as a flexible framework to assure that all the interviews would follow the same outline (See appendix 1).

The process of interviewing started with asking demographic questions as a simple way to open the conversation. The first questions were purposefully designed to address broader issues for the sake of two key reasons. First, they were served to provide the interviewees with more latitude to share their experiences and the whys and hows of their activities. Second for establishing rapport with the respondent in this way. Follow-up questions were asked whenever more elaboration was required to the aim of extracting more data from the interviewee that were not necessarily included in the interview guide.

Talking about the rest of the questions, in the pursuit to cover the main areas of traveling entailing transportation, accommodation and activities, it has been tried to bridge them with the 3R's principles in order to exploratively address the aim of the research. It is worth mentioning that one of the main challenges in this step was to focus the questions on the context of tourism. There are many circular practices that are easily applicable to daily life, but not to the times during which people are traveling. One of many examples can be questioning the reselling used items. Therefore, a lot of thought has been given to find the applicable occasions of participating in the CE in the context of tourism.

All interviews were done in English language and lasted on average 42.5 minutes and were audio recorded with the consent of the interviewees and later transcribed.

The data analysis process consisted of two phases to address the two research questions. To

shed light on the 'why' asked by the first research question, qualitative content analysis helped the researcher to recognize meaningful repetitive patterns in different sixteen interviewees' answers. As qualitative content analysis stresses the role of the investigator by allowing categories to emerge out of data based on the researcher's interaction with the data within the field and research question (Bryman, 2012).

The consecutive coding steps started with putting together contents that were conveying the same core meaning in an Excel file under a representative title encompassing key words (table 2). Then comparing the categories resulted in re-coding and or grouping codes. Finally, eleven themes emerged as presented under the analysis chapter.

With respect to the second research question, the data were analyzed through a hermeneutic approach in application of liminality theory as an analytical tool to understand in which ways tourist situation might affect consumer engagement in the CTE. The hermeneutic approach let the researcher to interpret the data from the interviewees' perspective (Bryman, 2012).

To ensure dependability and to avoid misinterpretation of the data, several discussions took place with the two peers who were auditing the research together with the supervisor. In three occasions the interviewees were contacted again to elaborate their statements more in detail.

The most challenging part of the analysis was the overlap between the meaning of the used words by interviewees along with the usage of similar terminology to describe dissimilar factors or vice versa. This was often the case in relation to the four presented factors namely: safety, trust, comfort and convenience. Concepts that are highly subjective and intertwined. It was especially challenging for the researcher who was trying to distinguish between words that are interchangeably being used in daily conversations. However, it was also the most rewarding phase of carrying out the research indeed. Hereupon, the study got help from definitions, previously conducted scientific researches and discussions with peers as helping tools to grasp the subjective meaning behind consumer engagement in the CTE. After all, the presented analysis is based on the researcher's contextual understanding of how different interviewees approached the questions and not necessarily the usage of words per se. This was in line with the role of the researcher in the taken interpretivism epistemological approach.

To assure the credibility of the research 'member validation' techniques was applied with informants. Interviewees were provided a report of the findings using direct quotes of their words in the interview to be sure that the findings are in line with the message they inclined to

convey. Moreover, to enhance the merit of the research in terms of dependability an 'auditing' approach was adopted (Bryman, 2012). The mentioned approach was applied by keeping complete records of all phases of the research process including interview transcripts, data analysis decisions and so on in a reachable manner. During the research, the initial draft of the project and entire data set were submitted to two peers with the minimum of master's degree who were asked to audit and provide feedback on the project at hand. The research was modified in accordance with the received feedback on an ongoing process. Finally, as the researcher inferred the implications of the findings, the theoretical framework was laid out after the theories got applied in the analysis.

3.5 Validity and reliability in practice of qualitative research

Among qualitative researchers there have been debates concerning the relevance of validity and reliability to qualitative types of research (Bryman, 2012). In this connection, credibility has been introduced as an alternative criterion to qualitative research which parallels internal validity in quantitative studies and is sought to ensure that the study examines what is actually intended (Krefting, 1991). One attitude to establish credibility is called 'respondent validation' or 'member validation', for validation that the researcher has accurately understood that social world (Bryman, 2012). This study benefited from mentioned technique in the process of research as the procedure of doing so is provided under the previous section.

To establish the merit of this research in terms of dependability the auditing approach was implemented which the process of doing so is detailed under the previous section as well. The aim of this technique is to assure the consistency of the research findings and the extent to which research procedures are documented, allowing someone outside the research to pursue and critique the research process (Moon, Brewer, Januchowski-Hartley, Adams, & Blackman, 2016). Dependability parallels reliability in quantitative research.

Since the role of the researcher as an interpretivist in this study requires to grasp the subjective meaning behind consumer engagement in the CTE, confirmability is a considerable factor. Confirmability is an accurate means through which to verify that the researcher has not clearly allowed personal values to influence the findings driven from the research (Bryman, 2012). The implication of the auditing approach also serves the research with enhancing its 'confirmability' of the qualitative research. Two peers together with the supervisor, who went through the research findings from a critical viewpoint, did not report any noticeable inclination

of such.

3.6 Ethical consideration and limitations

This being a qualitative research, due to the nature of the study process which requires the researcher to interact deeply with the participants, ethical considerations have a particular resonance (Arifin, 2018). This section is set up to discuss ethical issues that should be addressed.

At the beginning of each interview and before the process of questioning commenced, the fact that the whole interview will be recorded was explicitly announced and recording did not start without consent of the respondent. The interviewee got informed about the anonymity of the answers and for this reason the name of the interviewee has not been disclosed. Instead a number was allocated to each interviewee to be used whenever it was needed to quote directly to their words. It was made clear that all data collected will be used only for the sake of this master thesis.

Talking about limitations of the study, all interviews were carried out in English and given that it was not the native language of any participant nor the interviewer - even though they all could communicate in this language in a high proficiency - the role of the language barriers should not be overlooked. Sometimes the interviewees were looking for a term in English that could best explain their opinions which resulted in using several synonyms. This challenged the analysis process.

Above of all challenges that the study faced which other limitations stemmed from it, was the outbreak of the COVID-19. The COVID-19, also known as Coronavirus. An ongoing pandemic (starting December 2019), which has engulfed the whole world. As a result of the pandemic, people were advised to keep social distance and self-isolate themselves. Hereupon, the researcher's preferred face-to-face way of conducting the semi-structured interviews could not take place and instead online alternatives were substituted. Online interview even via video-call effects establishing rapport with the interviewee negatively. Sometimes the interview process suffered from the matter of poor internet connection which caused disturbance in the flow of the conversation. It was felt sometimes that these disturbances decreased interviewees' willingness to share their experiences in detail. To mitigate this, it has been tried every time to get the interviewees back to the interview mood so to keep up sharing their experiences.

Last but not least, the study could benefit from a greater credibility by triangulation of methods that would enrich the research. Such as mixing the already implemented method with a case study, however, arranging meetings with a company active in the CTE seemed far beyond doable considering the pandemic situation and deadline of the project as well.

3.7 Critical considerations of taken approaches

Opting purposive selection enabled the study to attain the needed qualitative data as discussed before, however, this was the main advantage and disadvantage of the chosen method. Implying that it is easier to make generalization within the purposive sample itself, compared to a random sample where not all participants have the characteristic you are studying. This is at the cost of the findings not being generalizable to other situations as purposive selection comes from the non-probability approach and it is not feasible to do (Bryman, 2012). Nevertheless, this does not contradict the aim and nature of this dissertation as it is not aiming to generalize the findings, rather this exploratory study is aiming to present a novel contribution to the discussion by means of a qualitative approach presented in the following chapters. This is also in line with the interpretivism approach of the study aiming to gain a deeper understanding of phenomena within its complexity of the context rather than generalize the findings to other contexts (Pham, 2018).

The taken interpretivism approach is oftentimes criticized by being highly subjective (Mack, 2010). In this regard, the author deeply agrees with Pham (2018) arguing that all research is subjective via choosing the orientation toward way of doing research. One cannot distance oneself from the perspective as researcher especially in qualitative research that there is no hypothesis and the researcher is involved in the research. However, interpretivists still take an objective stand when analyzing the data by bracketing their assumptions and looking at the data thoroughly to be informed by the data about what is going on in the social environment, instead of the researcher's own preconceptions (Pham, 2018).

4. Analysis

The data analysis process was two-folded in addressing the aim of the study. In the perspective of the research questions, transcriptions were thoroughly reviewed. In so doing, a qualitative content analysis was opted as a tool. This analysis supplied a foundation for discovering patterns and generating insights based on the researcher's interaction with the data.

Addressing the first research question, the author identified meaningful repetitive patterns and similarities in different sixteen interviewees' answers that formed the basis of the following presented factors. The process of categorizing was performed in the following consecutive coding steps. First contents conveying similar core meaning were put together in an Excel file under a representative title encompassing key words (table 2). Then comparing the categories resulted in re-coding and or grouping codes into eleven themes as discussed in the following section.

The second phase of the analysis sought to explore the second research question. This time, the data were analyzed through the liminality concept as an analytical lens, holding a hermeneutic approach to interpret the meanings of taken actions by respondents from their standpoint. Heeding the context-dependent meaning of engagement for consumer, this step of analysis enabled the researcher to understand the social world from the social actor's viewpoint.

Table 2: Keywords used in coding

Factor	keywords used by interviewees
Financial incentives	Cheap, price, affordable, cost, money, save, finance issue, budget, discount
Authenticity	Authentic, local, feel the place, native, culture, unique, old, weird, historical, personal touch, romantic, the spirit/vibe of the city
Trust	Transparent, be sure, suspicious, comfortable, pretend, never know, doubt, trick
Convenience	Best option, convenient, easy, not bother, fast, hard, available, flexible
Novelty	Experience, adventurous, fun, just to see, new, cool, try, idea, exciting, out of comfort zone, for the first time, exotic, learn, stranger
Socializing	Like minded, bond with people, open mind, make friends, meet people, nice people, good company
Time efficiency	Time, fast
Morality	Feels good, ethical, moral, support, nicer, environmentally, caring, share, compromise, not for money, give back, feel better, appreciate, for free, help, caring person, contribute for the good, proud of yourself, not for money
Safety	Safe, dangerous, careful, familiar, risk, scared, lock, alone,
Comfort	Easier, homely, homey, comfort, comfortable, easier
Peer influence	Read, heard, suggested, friend, reviews

4.1 Part I

Referring back to the conceptualization of consumer engagement concept, accounts of engagement emerged from the implemented "who engages with what" approach.

- **Financial incentives**

Borrowing the title from Chamberlin and Boks (2018) one of the main stimulating reasons to participate in circular practices is financial incentives as noted by interviewees in several instances. Previous studies (see table 1) also acknowledged that participants' willingness to engage in the circular economy was driven by financial motives to a great extent.

> "It was really spontaneous that I did (bought a second-hand surfboard at the travel destination) because of the price." (Interviewee 1, male, 29)

> "You can travel cheaper (by using public transport), and it is more local" (Interviewee 3, female, 25)

> "I think one reason maybe because of the price, usually Airbnb is cheaper, but not always is cheaper so I compare the price first." (Interviewee 6, male, 27)

The CE is benefiting from the shift in market toward collaborative consumption and shared use of resources which by taking advantage of the Internet facilitated matching suppliers with consumers and have drastically reduced costs (Edbring et al., 2016).

> "Airbnb in the same locations (as hotels) would be a little bit more affordable. That's what I liked about Airbnb." (Interviewee 5, male, 27)

> "So why do I choose Airbnb or not, depends a lot on my budget. And if it's cheaper than the other options. …But I think I would consider it (Couchsurfing) if I wanted to travel somewhere and I was on a low budget, and I wanted to spend more money on some other things then I would actually consider it." (Interviewee 11, female, 26)

Due to the facilitated interaction between suppliers and consumers, while sharing resources within the immediate family is as old as human history, nowadays it is becoming more common for strangers to share and exchange resources with different motives such as financial issues.

> "When I travel by myself... then I often choose Couchsurfing because it is maybe not super convenient because you always kind of never know what you get. But it's cheap

and, then that's just enough." (Interviewee 10, male, 27)

"The first reason (I do it) is a finance issue, Couchsurfing is a way that you can save money." (Interviewee 13, female, 29)

With respect to financial statues, since the interviewees were coming from the researcher's network, they were mostly students (14 out of 16), thereafter, many of them considered themselves as budget travelers. It was noticeable that the bold role of financial incentives in this study might be the result of this fact.

"I am a budget traveler, I just want travel as cheap as possible, whatever. For example, maybe I have my budget for this item … then I would have probably in this budget, I will choose the one that I liked the most. Yes. Not the ecofriendly the most." (Interviewee 6, male, 27)

Thus, the extent to which the financial status has an effect on this factor requires further investigation.

- **Authenticity**

Disappointed social actors of their everyday life, in order to escape or at least resist alienation, might follow authenticity through tourism (Tribe & Mkono, 2017). Since tourism activities are supposed to be non-ordinary and free from the restrictions of daily life (as limonoid spaces) that enables tourists to distance themselves from secular obligations and look at their lives from a different viewpoint (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). From this perspective, some scholars have reached the consensus that authenticity in tourism refers to: "the need to experience a different way of life" (Petroman et al., 2010, p.2).

It was observed that at times interviewees participated in circular practices to fulfil their quest for authenticity and experience the destination like a local rather than a tourist. In pursuit of authentic experiences, they partake in behaviors such as staying at Airbnb or Couchsurfing, shopping from secondhand stores and using public transportation as circular behavior examples at their travel destinations.

"I like to use buses or, actually, I also sometimes use underground's or trams, because it shows a lot of the culture and a country. It's nice to know how the local community travels rather than only a tourist." (Interviewee 3, female, 25)

"If you're in a city, it's a really good way to get to know the spirit of the city of the people. So … you get to feel kind of the vibe of the city. Taking a subway in New York is different than taking a subway in Malmo or in any other city." (Interviewee 7, male, 38)

"We love getting apartments that fit the city like the vibe or the image that we think is authentic or true to that city... There's a kind of a romance behind that idea." (Interviewee 7, male, 38)

"I prefer the public transport because I get an authentic experience of the place and of the destination." (Interviewee 15, male, 34)

Perceived tourism authenticity can result from destinations, attractions, places, or lived experiences which reflects the extent to which such object/experience is perceived as genuine, real, or true (Rather et al., 2019).

"I go to these places (secondhand store at destination) because you can find more unique items because I don't like these standardized souvenirs ... they are not really unique." (Interviewee 4, male, 27)

"When I go to big cities, I try to find like the biggest market or the secondhand market. That's super interesting because you have huge markets, which the locals use, because then you're seeing the culture." (Interviewee 7, male, 38)

More recently, the transformational movement of tourism toward being circular contributed more to the socially engaging encounters between host/provider and tourist/consumer. This close interpersonal relationship characterizes this sector being reliant on co-creation of 'authentic experiences' (Manniche, Topsø Larsen, Brandt Broegaard, & Holland, 2017).

"When I tried Airbnb it was in Paris when it just appeared at the market... And it seemed to be really nice and interesting option that offered an authentic experience to stay as a local and back then it was great… if you know where to stay, and you can really choose a more authentic, more like local location ... And sometimes … you think, Oh, I would love to live here even like for a weekend and Airbnb gives you this option... another thing that if you can get the like personal touch of the apartment … you can see if someone... has been decorating it for him or herself and so on." (Interviewee 5, male, 27)

"I can get... more of a feel where you stay, since hotels are very anonymous. As Airbnb

you sort of get into somebody's home for example... if you're in Italy, you live like an Italian, for example" (Interviewee 2, female, 27)

Studies suggest that customer-perceived authenticity is conducive to fostering tourists' specific behavioral consequences, including purchase (Rather et al., 2019). The findings of this study revealed the same evident of the fact that the quest for authenticity guides consumer engagement in the CTE.

- **Trust fusion, the so-called Russian roulette!**

Trust is the cornerstone of any relationship, including consumer and provider relationship (Wang, Law, Hung, & Guillet, 2014). The study introduces the definition of trust proposed by Moorman, Despande, and Zaltman (1993, p.315) in which consumer trust is defined as "the willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence" (Wang et al., 2014).

> "Mostly I stay at hotels. I tried Airbnb several times. But it is always so-called Russian roulette! you never know." (Interviewee 5, male, 27)

> "I don't think I've ever fixed anything (broken item while traveling) … I guess maybe some part has to do with that you're in a different country... you're not really sure that you might get scammed." (Interviewee 1, male, 29)

Trust is of crucial importance when it comes to tourist situations due to the uncertain and risky nature of the tourism environment (Wang et al., 2014). In this regard, an interviewee's statement as a person who had the experience of both renting a place from Airbnb to stay at and renting out his own apartment through Airbnb is noteworthy here.

> As a tourist: "For some reason, I still feel almost always suspicious that this could be something tricky behind it. It's like ... yeah, I'm never 100% comfortable with the reviews anyways… So, for some reason to rent a house (through Airbnb) is more uncomfortable for me (compared to renting out my house), since I'm going to a destination that I'm not really familiar with" (Interviewee 1, male, 29)

> As a host: "So, it feels good that you could read other reviews of the people who want to rent your house, if they have good reviews and you can trust them and stuff like that. So that was one thing that made me do it." (Interviewee 1, male, 29)

It is quite interesting to read this contrast between situations. Being in an unfamiliar

environment as a tourist feels uncertain and makes it hard for the interviewee to trust versus being a host in his own country.

However, trust in the general concept of circular economy has also been recognized to have a role to play in previous researches (see table 1). Insight (2019) remarked people are not eager to interact with strangers due to trust issues involved in this social interaction which restricts the sharing activities in the CE profoundly.

> "Usually because I travel a lot alone. So, I never usually take over it (Uber) because I don't feel I can trust them." (Interviewee 2, female, 27)

> "(has never tried Couchsurfing) Since you can't really, just from reading profile, know the person." (Interviewee 2, female, 27)

> "I think it's also a matter of trust in that sense. Like if I'm going to stay at some stranger's house and sleep there (doing Couchsurfing)". (Interviewee 11, female, 26)

Consumer trust is a multidimensional concept (Wang et al., 2014) and interpersonal trust is only one dimension of it. Three types of consumer trust have been significantly discussed by scholars namely expertise, integrity and social benevolence trust (Park, Lee, & Kim, 2014) that seems relevant to some of interviewees' concerns. In brief, expertise trust is the consumer's belief that a provider has the competence to deliver what is promised, whereas integrity trust is about the consistency between suppliers demonstrated values and behavior and social benevolence trust refers to consumers' belief that a provider is genuinely concerned with the preservation and enhancement of the welfare of society (Park et al., 2014).

> "you can never be completely sure that ... (Airbnb) place is as nice as it looks on the picture." (Interviewee 1, male, 29)

> "I don't always trust these eco-labeling..., I not always believed that they are actually better. They just try to pretend to. So, it's also like a lot of marketing." (Interviewee 4, male, 27)

> "In most of the cases is just greenwashing (eco-labeling). Can we really trust this? I doubt this." (Interviewee 5, male, 27)

> "Hotels doing eco labeling and stuff like that. I don't take that too seriously, because a lot of that is marketing and tricks of the trade." (Interviewee 7, male, 38)

When respondents hesitate to stay at an Airbnb place since they are not sure that the actual accommodation is going to be the same as it has been presented in the pictures, demonstrates the lack of consumers' trust in service providers' expertis. On other occasions, it seems that respondents' considerations regarding not finding eco-labels trustworthy stems from lack of integrity and social benevolence trust. Since consumers do not believe in the companies' promises about being environmentally friendly. Consumers think what providers do is not for preserving the social welfare but is simply marketing tricks for seducing users meaning that there is no consistency between the providers' portrayed values and actual behaviors.

Trust can be facilitated by mutual disclosure.

> "I used a lot (Uber)... And you can also see the prices, how much it's going to cost and you can see the routes where you're heading to. Yeah, everything is very transparent. So, I trust it." (Interviewee 6, male, 27)

The provision of transparency made available by the implementation of technology in circular tourism helped to consumer trust development. Given engagement's interactive core that occurs during focal interactions, the level of customer trust is expected to lead consumer engagement as confirmed by Rather et al. (2019).

- **Convenience**

Oxford Learner's Dictionary (n.d.) define the word convenience as "the quality of being useful, easy, or suitable for someone".

> "I would rather take an Uber rather than the public transportation because I know it would be more convenient and faster." (Interviewee 5, male, 27)

> "I think it's convenience (that I mostly take taxi) ... And then, if there is an option to sort of rent a bicycle, then I would also do that (at travel destination)." (Interviewee 14, female, 41)

This finding extends the work of prior done researches as shown in table 1. Availability and flexibility have been also used to address these range of concerns of consumers by other scholars when it comes to the CE engagement.

> "It depends on what is available at the place where I go. But yeah, I always try to keep this in mind. If I can recycle, I will definitely do that." (Interviewee 7, male, 38)

"I find an Airbnb place a bit based on the location in the city…(also) the hospitality of the host and how fast they reply and how flexible they are. So I mean, yeah, flexibility and hospitality, I think are the most important factors." (Interviewee 14, female, 41)

"I went to Stockholm and we booked these bicycles. You can go anywhere, they are pretty useful. We often use that if you go like for cities. There's this option as you can just take one and put it into a place and go to the next place." (Interviewee 4, male, 27)

The promise is that the circular tourism offers the benefit of convenience taking advantage of sharing platforms and access-based consumption benefiting from technology.

"I used a lot (Uber). Yeah, it's because it's very convenient … you just click on your phone and they will come and you can see where are they now and how many times they will be there to pick you up... And then you don't have to pay like cash and just connecting with your credit card or your bank account." (Interviewee 5, male, 27)

"I love technology. So, if it's something that's technology or smart, I would usually use that like an app where I can hail a cab or an Uber or something like that. I will definitely use over the convenience of having to call someone... it's very easy to use the app." (Interviewee 9, male, 29)

A bright future for more engagement in the circular tourism economy from the convenience perspective is foreseeable.

- **Novelty**

Tourists are fascinated to explore new environments and peoples (McIntyre, 2012). The unfamiliar environment of tourism that makes it hard to trust and therefore sometimes acts as a barrier of tourist engagement in the CE, seems to act as an encouraging force, provoking individuals to engage in circular tourism practices in the guise of novelty.

"I like to use buses, actually, I also sometimes use underground's or trams, … it feels more adventurous…. you learn more about your travel" (Interviewee 3, female, 25)

"Sometimes I do it because ... it's a really nice and entertaining experience … to see a secondhand store… And it was a cool experience and also because it was a new thing for me…I'm always ready to try new things. It doesn't really matter if I would like it or not, but it leads to try. It's always fun." (Interviewee 5, male, 27)

"It is an experience (flea markets) ... So, both New York City and Berlin especially …
I guess it's a nice experience ... It's kind of exotic to see what local products they have
at different destinations... (and if I do not like it) too bad! Then we tried it."
(Interviewee 14, female, 41)

Novelty implies the quality of being new and unusual, something that has not been experienced
before (Mak, 2014).

"It sounds exciting (Couchsurfing). Just going a bit out of your comfort zone. Like,
hotel is just so standard. So that's something new… yeah, I guess that just sounds like
an adventure to me." (Interviewee 8, female, 25)

"This also the scooters that I like to use a lot. I've been trying to use them more and
more in big cities. Just because they are fun... I don't mind paying the price for a little
more fun, especially when I'm on vacation." (Interviewee 9, male, 29)

CE is a fairly new concept that introduced new modes of consumption to the tourism industry
(Vargas-Sánchez, 2018) such as sharing scooters, a room or a couch in a local host's house and
so on. As from the findings is pronounced, the CTE's newness is the foci of consumer
engagement. This finding contradicts the already mentioned discussion about the new modes
of consumption that the CE necessitates, which has been identified as a barrier to consumer
engagement in the CE. This might be due to the nature of tourist consumption as being beyond
only functional.

- **Socializing**

Marijana Novak, data strategist at circle economy believes that in addition to the reduced
environmental impact, the CE has positive social benefits as it inherently aims to create positive
social externalities and is oriented toward a human-centered collaborative approach (Insight,
2019). Accordingly, the application of the CE principles into the tourism industry has resulted
in the provision of services that are extensively based on consumer-to-consumer interaction.
However, the report of Insight (2019) contended that people are not eager to interact with
strangers which restricts the sharing activities due to trust issues involved in this social
interaction in the general field of CE. As the findings of this study depicts, it seems that
interaction with strangers is of less strength as a preventive factor in the context of CTE. This
can be due to the fact that meeting new people is deeply rooted in travel motives generally as
specified by different researches under various labels such as "connection" (Beckmann, 2017)

or "socialization" (Correia, do Valle, & Moço, 2007).

> "So, you have availabilities to talk with the locals and communicate with them. So, it's kinda like something that you can know, Airbnb can gives you extra instead of just hotel." (Interviewee 6, male, 27)

> "I think I mean, (Couchsurfing is) a good way to meet new people." (Interviewee 8, female, 25)

> "So, it's mainly students (my passengers when I share my car through GoMore while traveling by car) ... I think, oh, that's just good company. … It's just that it's nice company." (Interviewee 14, female, 41)

In an increasingly networked society where users can interact easily with other users/firms, non-transactional customer behavior is becoming more important (Verhoef, Reinartz, & Krafft, 2010). This is supported by the study at hand that non-monetary motives such as socializing is a point of engagement of consumer in the CTE.

> "Just want to make some new friends, meet some cool people. And you know when you're doing the Couchsurfing, someone very interesting was writing to you and you check their profiles and was like, Oh, this is a very interesting person ... Yeah… surfing is a place where you have more focusing on the sharing experiences, meet the locals." (Interviewee 6, male, 27)

Even though it occurred less frequently, there were instances that socializing factor had a prohibitive role to play.

> "I feel like in a car when I would share a car with strangers… that sounds stupid- but then I think I would need to be social the whole time (that is why I do not join)" (Interviewee 10, male, 27)

> "So, when I take GoMore… I prefer if we talk but they don't expect talking all the time. Most of them expect a nice three hours talk. And sometimes that's not what I really wanted. Sometimes I even decided not to use GoMore because of that." (Interviewee 16, female, 23)

This time not because of trust issues as discussed above, but due to individuals, not being keen on participating in the social interactions per se.

- **Time efficiency**

Time is an important factor in tourist situation, as tourist are constrained by the limited amount of time they have to achieve certain things (McCabe, 2005).

> "Time that I don't want to use that kind of way (repairing a broken item while traveling)." (Interviewee 1, male, 29)

> "When I'm traveling, I don't have that much time for it (recycling)." (Interviewee 4, male, 27)

> "Like if time is not an issue, I could consider taking trains more often between destinations and not flying." (Interviewee 11, female, 26)

As it became evident, here comes the matter of being efficient to make the most out of limited time while on vacation. This is when the social actors enter the trade-off between time and other factors. For one to be efficient in time, he/she might need to give up over other concerns.

> "I guess since you don't really pay for your stay (Couchsurfing), feel like you're paying with your time and your day because you're supposed to hang out and bond with this person… I'd rather spend the money just like, so I can do what I want with my time when I'm at the destination." (Interviewee 2, female, 27)

> "But I don't care that much about recycling for example, that is probably less of a thing that I worry about when I'm on vacation. When I'm home, I think about it much more… I have the time for it and I have the mental capacity. I just don't have that when I'm on vacation... There you value time, I value time over recycling." (Interviewee 9, male, 29)

> "I don't think I will even bother to look on Google (to find a place for repairing my broken item). Places to fix it and prices because then it's gonna take my time of my vacation. So, no, then I would buy a new one." (Interviewee 16, female, 23)

Energy and material efficiency have been pointed out in some studies as motivators for consumers to engage in the circular economy (Cerulli-Harms et al., 2018) but not time. This can be explained by the fact that the majority of scientific research in this context considers aspects of consumer engagement in the CE in the case of products rather than services (Baxter et al., 2017; Cerulli-Harms et al., 2018; Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Edbring et al., 2016; Hazen et al., 2017; Insight, 2019; Lacy et al., 2014; Wastling et al., 2018). As products are more

associated with tangible concerns, whereas services are more intangible oriented. Thus, it makes sense that time efficiency is more considered when it comes to service industries such as tourism, while energy and material efficiency are more relevant to products.

- **Morality**

Moral considerations of some sort, appear to foster the decision of the consumer regarding engagement in the CTE as such:

> "I guess it is ethical and moral aspect (to support eco-labeled restaurants and hotels). It feels good to support those kinds of places." (Interviewee 1, male, 29)

> "I feel like nice… if I support them (eco-labeling) I'm also kind of, nicer person. Make me a nicer person, a more like environmentally friendly, caring person … and you are kind of proud of yourself." (Interviewee 6, male, 27)

> "I've been accommodated by others and I could take advantage of this Couchsurfing community. So, I really like to give back." (Interviewee 10, male, 27)

> "I think that is just makes me feel better. In one way to help someone out instead of just getting money from it (being a host in Couchsurfing) ... And yeah, just think it's nice to help people because I know that I really appreciate it when I did it. So, I would like to give it to other people then." (Interviewee 12, female, 27)

Intentions like giving back not for money, supporting the environment and for the betterment are the core inclinations of this cluster. This factor also resonates the importance of non-transactional customer behavior in the era of networked society (Verhoef et al., 2010).

While searching for a representative labeling for this group of considerations of consumers, the theory of "moral balancing" appeared in the research. The moral balancing theory indicates that individuals keep account of their image over time and infers how they deal with deviations from that moral image (Ploner & Regner, 2013).

> "I think if people try to be really sustainable in their daily life, I see nothing wrong for them to be less sustainable while having vacations. ...When I'm traveling, I wouldn't find myself guilty (not recycling) because I know how good I am in my daily life." (Interviewee 5, male, 27)

> "I haven't paid any attention to… eco-labels ... But I mean, I did for instance … A

compensate your flights! co2 emissions! ... *I know flying is one of the worst causes for global warming, but I still want to travel and see my friends and family so by paying that I can compensate to the society[1].*" (Interviewee 8, female, 25)

"I do pay my 20 kroner when the airline company asked me do you want to contribute to the CO2 (compensation) and then I say, okay, 10, 20 kroner, okay I pay. *It is not a big expense and I would be helping the environment[2].*" (Interviewee 16, female, 23)

Ploner and Regner (2013) conclusion contending that moral balancing appears to be an important factor in individual decision making, is supported by the findings of the study at hand in the context of the CE in tourism.

- **Safety**

According to Cambridge, safety is defined as: "a state in which or a place where you are safe and not in danger or at risk" (Cambridge English dictionary, n.d.). Therefore, safety can be a state of mind, without necessarily being physically exposed to an external danger.

"You can never be completely sure that it's safe (Airbnb)." (Interviewee 1, male, 29)

"(Couchsurfing) I want to feel safe when I sleep. I want to lock the door ... I think it would be dangerous." (Interviewee 11, female, 26)

"I seldomly do that (take Uber). I think most of time in the destination if I don't feel I'm familiar with the destination. I prefer not to take a taxi since you don't know the route." (Interviewee 13, female, 29)

"(Car sharing) Generally unless I know the people, I don't share it with other people. For safety reason, because you never know... Unless I'm pretty sure of the destination I prefer to avoid it." (Interviewee 15, male, 34)

Interviewees in many statements referred to the matter of not feeling safe as a preventive factor hindering them from participating in circular activities such as taking Uber or staying at Airbnb or Couchsurfing. The higher level of interpersonal interactions between tourists and local hosts in the circular tourism actions functions as a double edge sword. Along with the ambiguities

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[1] The sentences in *italic* were not mentioned during the interview, so it is not included in transcriptions. Later because there was a need for further clarification, the interviewee was contacted and asked to elaborate more on her intention.

[2] The same as footnote 1

that it brings with itself, some are more motivating in the shape of authenticity and socializing factors and some other are less motivating such as trust and safety issues.

- **Comfort**

Comfort was another recurring concern of interviewees affecting their engagement in circular practices. The psychological definition of comfort "a relaxing physical and mental state that allows the visitor to develop the expected recreational activity" (Viñals & Teruel, 2014, p.485) contributes to grasp the underlying meaning behind the word comfort when used by the informants.

> "I like to choose hotels just because you know, you get your room cleaned and breakfasts are included often, so I don't usually go for Airbnb or other types of accommodation." (Interviewee 1, male, 29)

> "I don't think I recycle when I travel. I recycle at home. I find that easier than when I travel. Yes, it's easier at home." (Interviewee 14, female, 41)

Bothering oneself over recycling seems disruptive to the expected relaxing moments of taking a vacation and comfortable state of mind. Accordingly, the interviewee opts not to engage in the CTE.

An interesting point to mention in relation to comfort is, tourists are sometimes still looking for the comfort of home while on travel which seems a bit contradictory.

> "If you have your own place it's nicer, when you feel like you can get home somewhere rather than a hotel room and you can prepare your own meals whenever you want… Homey feeling and that's what you want to have with Airbnb. That's the reason why you go to an Airbnb. It's the feeling that you're still in a home rather than being just a tourist in a hotel room." (Interviewee 3, female, 25)

> "You can actually find Airbnb apartments that are nicer than hotels and also the homely feeling I mean, I've made my own breakfast, yeah, the homely feeling I would say." (Interviewee 14, female, 41)

This reminds the notion stated by Cohen (1972) that tourists travel in search of new things; yet, most of them prefer to stay in their comfort zone at the same time (Mak, 2014). This was evident from the respondents' attempt to get the homely/ homey feeling as a reason to choose

Airbnb over hotels.

- **Peer influence**

"Sometimes it depends on whom I am traveling with" or "I have heard/read about it" were frequent recurring answers based on which respondents made decisions. With the growth of the Internet and its fusion with the tourism industry, online reviews along with personal networks and travel mates are important sources of information that steer consumer engagement. This has been noticed by leisure firms as they increasingly pursuing strategies activating non-transactional behavior and proactively ask consumers to leave ratings and comments on independent comparison websites (Verhoef et al., 2010).

> "I am choosing hotels over Airbnb… Because Yeah. I've heard or read stories about people go into Airbnb places that are not really as good as it looked like." (Interviewee 1, male, 29)

> "Well, I think that if they hadn't suggested it, I don't think I would have tried it. Maybe, I've heard both good and bad about Airbnb." (Interviewee 2, female, 27)

> "I only use Airbnb when I am traveling with friends" (Interviewee 10, male, 27)

> "It depends who I'm traveling with. So, I go to Airbnb with friends." (Interviewee 16, female, 23)

This observation is resonating Gram-Hanssen (2010) suggestion that engagement emerges out of social relationships and consumers are influenced by others with whom they relate or sympathize. This finding is supported by other studies as shown in table one under the 'peer reviews' title.

4.2   Part II

The nature of tourist consumption is a multi-sensory exploration of place and space as the extension of tourists' desire to explore new things according to McIntyre (2012) which goes beyond merely functional consumption. This was clearly resonated by interviewees' in their explanations of engagement in different activities while traveling.

Awareness of this shifting nature of consumer consumption when it comes to tourism, brought this study to this thought that how it can affect consumer engagement in the CTE. As individuals should first engage to then consume. Following the inductive approach of the project, the researcher got help from the liminality concept as an analytical tool to address the question. The implication of the theory contributed to gain a better understanding over the complexity of the tourist behavior in relation to place and space, which seems the unique nature of tourist consumption is driven from this relationship. The theory enabled the study to take a further step in analyzing the tourist situation more in depth.

According to the presented theoretical framework, individuals switch to tourist mode once they are mentally and physically transformed. Physical transformation cooperates to disconnection from everyday social regulations and results in being surrounded by a new environment which is governed by different rules than the ones in the home environment. This enables individuals to strip themselves of their everyday-self and mentally cross the limen and step into the liminoid state.

As the findings of this study supports, the liminoid state affects consumer engagement in the CTE as such:

> "But I think when I'm at home, I think more about environment. whilst when I'm out traveling." (Interviewee 2, female, 27)

> "Sometimes when you're traveling you don't want to think too much about it (repairing and renting)." (Interviewee 6, male, 27)

> "When I'm home, I think about it much more. So, I might have a plastic bottle and drinking something. And instead of just throwing in the trash or leaving it somewhere, I was trying to recycle it because it makes sense doing it when I'm home. I have the time for it, and I have the mental capacity. I just don't have that when I'm on vacation." (Interviewee 9, male, 29)

The fact that respondents distinguish the tourist situation as different from ordinary life which evidently affects their engagement in the CTE confirms the liminoid aspect of the tourist consumption. The change in mindset to liminoid state cause the change in consumer engagement which is echoed in statements like "not wanting to think about" or "not having the mental capacity for" doing routine circular practices like recycling, renting or repairing while traveling.

According to Koc (2013), only after entering the liminoid state, travelers can momentarily generate their personal rules of behavior unlike those within the home environment. Thereupon, the so-called tourist mode, helps them to cherish their tourist time from a different stand view.

> "I think if people try to be really sustainable in their daily life, I see nothing wrong for them to be less sustainable while having vacations ...When I'm traveling, I wouldn't find myself guilty (not recycling) because I know how good I am in my daily life." (Interviewee 5, male, 27)

> "Not so much to be honest (I consider eco-labeling while traveling). If I want to go somewhere and it looks nice, I go there because in my general lifestyle when I'm home and not traveling, I do think of my ecological footprints. Like I never drive a car, I always bike as much as I can ... So, I know I could be better. And in many aspects, I could be better, but I do think that I kind of incorporated into my lifestyle to be like, somewhat environmentally friendly. So, when I travel, I don't want to like constantly think about that, no, it has to be low CO2." (Interviewee 11, female, 26)

In light of Koc's (2013) viewpoint, the abovementioned disclosures by interviewees are examples of generating a new regulatory framework by respondents while on vacation such as: not feeling guilty of not recycling the waste similar to the times at home (pre-liminoid state), or -while on vacation- not wanting to constantly think about being environmentally friendly like always. These new regulations are accustomed to interviewees' new priorities and new modes of being which enable them to enjoy and cherish their vacation time in the preferred manner, by engaging in different consumption patterns.

Living up to these newly generated frameworks are acceptable by individuals themselves within the timespan of being a tourist, even though the social actors are actually undertaking an inversionary behavior, which is contradicting what they are used to doing in the home environment. Yet through acknowledging that they know how good they are in their daily life

regarding recycling and being sustainable, shows that there is also an awareness of the temporal nature of this experience, and the generated framework expires once the traveling is over and they are back to the pre-liminoid state or daily life setting, as they switch back to their normal habits.

From the perspective of the latter discussion, it seems that being in the liminoid state of the tourist situation changes the individual's foci according to which he/she engages in different activities. Pre and post liminoid states require their own points of engagement, generated by the social actor in accordance to the place and space.

From the findings of the study, it is perceivable that the accounts of engagement discussed in the first part of analysis sometimes provoke prosaic behaviors and some other occasions stimulate inversionary manners in the context of the CTE.

> "That has become something that I've done more of, after I use it more in my daily life. So now when I go somewhere if I see bicycles for rent or these kind of stations where you can pay and pick up a bike and leave it somewhere else, I think I use it more now because I've started to use it more in my daily life. So, come to think of it, I think it's kind of a chain reaction becomes the norm. So, I do it wherever I go." (Interviewee 7, male, 38)

> "I definitely walk more often when I am on vacation, much more often. Yeah, when I'm home I prefer to, to get to my destination much faster. I don't like to just walk there … in my daily life, I just had to get from A to B, I'm not trying to see the scenery or try to do anything." (Interviewee 9, male, 29)

Interviewee 7 routinely chooses biking as the main means of commuting regardless of the location and following the same habits while traveling. For interviewee 9 different means of transportation, depending on the situation, took precedence over each other in the matter of efficiency and novelty.

The liminoid space provides tourists with the chance to show contradictory behavioral styles as well.

> "because I don't like to wear other people's used clothing, … I just feel it's (second-hand item) old and when I realize that okay, someone's wore it and I don't know what occasions they used it, things like that. So, I don't feel like physically or mentally comfortable with it." (Interviewee 6, male, 27)

"Last time I didn't have snow pants. Because it costs lots of money if you want to buy it, pretty much. So, I didn't buy it, but I have to take some activities (at the travel destination) that you must wearing that kind of pants to participate. But then I was contacting with the travel agency … So I just rented it from there." (Interviewee 6, male, 27)

The same interviewee who was not keen on buying secondhand items and felt uncomfortable with the fact that someone has used the item already, when it comes to tourist activities, opted for renting the used pants. Even though the financial incentives were claimed as the main reason of doing so, however, the mental state is also altered. This can be translated as consumer engagement is dependent on the context, resonating Dessart et al. (2016). Implying that, the same foci of engagement does not always result in the same consumption behaviors.

The predominant view is that implementation of the right economic instruments and the provision of suitable information will motivate people to change their behavior (Gram-Hanssen, 2010). However, several of the cases in this project echo the Gram-Hanssen (2010) finding that rationality alone cannot explain consumer engagement in the circular tourism activities. Meaning that it is not certain that individuals will change their habits with respect to engagement in the circular tourism economy considering knowledge or financial incentives.

"They're a little more pricey (renting scooters). But I would like to, I don't mind paying the price for a little more fun, especially when I'm on vacation." (Interviewee 9, male, 29)

"After reading a lot of articles on how bad it is for the environment to go by airplane or go by a big bus… in the desert and stuff like that. I thought of that I did. It's not good. But it hadn't stopped me from doing it… because I want to go there and I want to experience it, in those kind of ways, which not always are very environmentally friendly, which I'm aware of, but I kind of push it away and it is like no, I can go it doesn't make any difference." (Interviewee 1, male, 29)

It seems like the quest for limonoid experiences in tourism defeats individual's rationality in their engagement in the CE. Even though the social actor pinpoints the awareness of the negative impacts of taken actions, but still this knowledge cannot make any difference in behavior, because wants to go travel and wants to experience it, in special kinds of ways. This reminds of the finding reported by Taheri et al. (2019), that tourists are in search of engaging in transformative activities to enter the liminoidal state of being.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Consumption has been a dominant pattern of the 20th and 21st centuries in which the exponential consumption of scarce natural resources has been normalized by our values, symbols and stories (Chamberlin & Boks, 2018). However, in the circular economy, the aim is to decouple consumption from resource usage through transforming economic systems by following 3R's Principles: "Reduction, Reuse and Recycle". In doing so, circular solutions necessitate radical changes in consumer behavior through engagement in alternative modes of consumption such as renting and repairing, which makes the CE heavily dependent on the engagement of consumers.

Surprisingly, despite the recognition of the fact that, the lack of consumer engagement in new modes of consumption is the main barrier to the CE prevalence, the majority of the scientific attention has concentrated on the production side and business models. Echoed by Wastling et al. (2018) the most important of all under-researched areas in the circular economy is the human element despite its vital role.

In the meanwhile, over the past few decades, the global tourism sector has been marked by phenomenal growth, thereby revealing its increasing economic importance in transformation toward sustainable development worldwide (Rather et al., 2019). Moreover, the tourism industry sector has been revolutionized by collaborative-based and access-based consumption in sharing economy-based applications such as Airbnb, Couchsurfing, Uber. Illustrating that the paradigm shift in the tourism industry toward circularity has already begun. However, despite the multiplier effect of the tourism industry on the world economy and its transformative capacity in contributing to sustainable development, tourism has not gained ground in the circular economy studies either.

Inspired by these findings, in this study, it has been sought to address the existing research gap by exploring the intersection of consumer engagement with the circular economy in tourism.

In order to focus the current study on specific concerns that consumers have when engaging in the circular tourism practices, a qualitative approach was taken to sixteen semi-structured interviews with selectively chosen participants. The implied method served the aim of the research by producing needed qualitative data in the form of respondents' detailed answers to the interview questions. The study achieved its aim by means of addressing two research

questions.

With respect to the first research question, the study on the CTE provided fresh insight for why consumers do/do not engage in the circular tourism economy. Concisely put, the afore discussed "financial incentives, authenticity, trust, convenience, novelty, socializing, time efficiency, morality, safety, comfort and peer influence" were identified as accounts of consumer engagement in the CTE.

While 'financial incentives, trust, convenience and peer influence' have been widely discussed by the previously done research in the field of CE (see table 1), other factors seem to be more applicable to the particular context of tourism. In connection to this, 'authenticity, novelty, socializing and morality' factors showed strong connections to the nature of the tourist consumption.

'Engaging, transformative, multisensory, and immersive' are attributes characterizing tourist consumption, which in accordance to the findings, consumers could satisfy these quests in engaging with the CTE through seeking for 'authenticity, novelty, socializing and morality' qualities.

Among factors, there is a finding that is present through its absence. As the CE proposes rethinking of ownership in favor of alternative solutions, where products are leased to customers, who convert to be only users of a service (Ghisellini et al., 2016); several scholars identified the matter of giving up ownership as a barrier to the CE spread (Camacho-Otero et al., 2018; Chamberlin & Boks, 2018; Edbring et al., 2016; Ghisellini et al., 2016; Hobson & Lynch, 2016; Insight, 2019; Vargas-Sánchez, 2018).

This study did not find convincing evidence of the ownership factor playing a role in the context of CTE. It can partially be explained by the service-based nature of the tourism industry. As tourists/consumers are already used to being users of services when it comes to tourist situations rather than being an owner of a purchased product. However, considering the exploratory nature and the number of the participants of the study, this observation needs to be backed up by further research.

With respect to the second research question, a reflexive approach to consumer engagement in the CTE, through the lens of liminality was developed. It has been widely discussed in the tourism world that tourism activities intrinsically entail the liminoid state stemming from its

anonymity of environment which shifts the norms and urges people to step out of regular behavior (Severt & Tasci, 2020). Thereupon, an expanding body of scientific literature in the tourism context has sought to conceptualize tourist situation as liminal/liminoid states (Foster & McCabe, 2015). Meaning that in considering tourists engagement in the CE we are dealing with a liminoidal consumption (McIntyre, 2012).

The liminoid state of tourism as several showcased examples revealed, affects consumer engagement in the circular tourism practices by provoking contradictory behaviors. The study attributes the underlying reason to the shift in consumers' mindset due to being in the liminoid space of tourism. As a result of this, the generated foci by the social actor, according to which he/she engages in consumption behaviors, changes. In other words, individuals generate different accounts of engagement, depending on the place and space. In connection to this, a comparison to make based on the findings is illustrative. For instance, using public transport at the hometown has never been reported to be an authentic experience by the interviewees, rather they used it as a matter of functional consumption. However, the same activity at the travel destination is perceived authentic which is the reason for the consumer to engage in this activity. This can be attributed to the context-dependent nature of consumer engagement and the nature of tourist consumption as a multisensory exploration of place and space. Tourists are seeking for new experiences, even through engaging in similar activities. The implication of this discussion to this study is that, the accounts of engagement in the CTE can be different from the CE due to the tourist situation.

Finally, as the findings of the study supports, it seems that the liminality concept is an insightful analytical tool to explore the influence of tourist situation on consumer engagement in the CTE.

The study provides the business owners and decision-makers with a novel insight into the consumer behavior. From the practitioners' perspective in the hospitality industry, the study reveals that the market has a great potential to be more circular. For circular business models to achieve a greater consumer engagement, their offers need to satisfy the mentioned factors in the eyes of the consumers. Another message to the researchers and managers that can be conveyed from the findings of this study is that, tourists are looking for new ways to engage with tourism circular behaviors.

5.1 Research contribution, limitation and future path

While myriad researches investigate circular business models and products in the CE literature, less attention has been paid to the consumer role, and lesser on tourism. A growing number of voices are calling for more detailed analysis into the implications of the circular economy on the consumption side rather than the production.

Considering the remarkable lack of scientific research on consumer engagement in the CE in the context of tourism, this dissertation provided an initial understanding of this relatively under-researched area. The existing research gap was addressed by transcending extant knowledge via attempted interpretation of the data to elucidate the meanings rooted in consumer engagement in the CTE.

Despite its contributions this research is also subject to limitations that suggest interesting avenues for future research.

In the undertaken research, the main concentration was put on situational factors rather than contextual factors such as culture and gender. However, it is expected that culture and gender play a role when it comes to consumer engagement in the CE (Insight, 2019, Luchs & Mooradian, 2012). This is an important issue for future research. Another interesting area of research is the notion of ownership in the circular tourism economy. Further, the matter of contamination is of high relevance to the collaborative and access-based consumption of the circular tourism to be considered in future studies. Especially when a crisis such as Covid-19 outbreak appears. It is not unrealistic to foresee this factor playing a tremendously influential role in the future of consumer engagement in the CTE. This has already been identified as a barrier to consumer engagement in the circular economy (see table 1), despite this study did not find a meaningful pattern of such, in the context of tourism.

Finally, even though the liminality theory is a helpful tool to grasp the meaning of the tourists' behavior change, it is recommended to use other theories in studying consumer engagement in the CTE to bid new insights into the field.

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Appendix 1: Interview guide

Thank you for your time and your participation. Please know that your responses are anonymous and there is no correct or incorrect answer. Whatever the answer is, it only helps me to gain a better understanding over my research topic. Moreover, all data that I am gathering from this research will explicitly be used for my Master thesis and will not be shared or sold to any third-parties.

To start with:

How old are you?

What do you do as your profession?

The following questions are in the context of you while traveling, however, please feel free to contrast your experience with the time you are not traveling, when it is relevant.

1. How do you choose the type of transportation to get to your destination?
    a. Have you also considered car-sharing?
2. How do you choose the type of transportation to get around at the destination?
3. How do you choose the type of accommodation you stay at, at the destination?
    a. How frequently have you rented your accommodation from Airbnb or any other private local host? If yes, why did you choose it? If not, why?
    b. Have you ever tired Couchsurfing? (It yes) How would you describe your experience about it?
    c. Have you ever rented out your apartment to a tourist?
    d. Have you ever been a host of a couch surfer?
4. How do you plan the activities that you want to do at the destination?
5. How frequently have you borrowed or rented a needed item for traveling?
6. How frequently have you bought a travel related second-hand item?
    a. Do you check second-hand stores while traveling? why?
7. How much do you consider the durability of a travel related item that you buy?
8. What would you do if an item that you need breaks while traveling?
9. How frequently have you bought local products while traveling? Why?
10. How much do you pay attention to eco-labeling when shopping or dining or any other activity?

11. To what degree do you recycle while traveling?

12. Have you ever considered changing your travel behavior to be more environmentally friendly?

13. To what extent has the COVID-19 virus (coronavirus) changed your travel behavior?

Thank you for all the answers. I do not have more questions. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Thank you again.