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Department of Service Management and Service Studies

Examined by Malin Zillinger

Supervised by Stefan Gössling



## **CONSERVATIONS WITH CONSERVATIONISTS:**

**A Narrative Exploration on the Impact of Conservation  
Volunteering on Careers**

By Isabel May DE JONGE VAN ELLEMEET

Campus Helsingborg

Lund University

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to contribute towards the existing literature of volunteer tourism by evaluating the impacts that volunteering has on career progression. There exists a plethora of research on volunteer tourism, focusing on the various motivations to volunteer and the diverse positive and negative impacts that volunteering has on host communities.

However, there is less research on the impact it has on volunteer's career development post-volunteering. In order to explore this further, this thesis employs the Serious Leisure Perspective, and in particular, the concept of Fulfilment Career to examine the role of volunteering on career development.

*RQ:1. How do Conservationists describe the impact of volunteering on their own professional careers?*

*Methodology:* This qualitative research zooms in on a subset of professionals, namely conservation biologists and those working in the environmental and conservation field, who had previously volunteered in conservation and environmental related projects around the world. It conducted 18 unstructured narrative interviews to understand the volunteer experiences of these professionals and how they perceived the impact of volunteering on their professional careers after that.

*Results:* Volunteering for conservation and environmental projects contributes to the career progression of conservation professionals by developing their skills and knowledge, as well as enhancing networks. The Serious Leisure Perspective is useful to frame the discussion of career enhancement using the concept of Fulfilment Career. However, a heightened sense of social responsibility can also positively influence the interviewees' careers. Lacking from the Serious Leisure Perspective is how volunteering can have an impact on the social world surrounding the volunteer. This thesis contributes to the Serious Leisure Perspective by examining personal fulfilment with career fulfilment and social responsibility.

*Key Words:* Volunteer Tourism, Conservation Volunteers, Serious Leisure Perspective, Fulfilment Career, Social Responsibility.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

Volunteer tourism, and in particular developmental and conservation orientated projects are "one of the fastest-growing niche tourism markets in the world" (Mostafanezhad, 2013, p.111). Volunteer tourism is often understood in opposition to mainstream tourism (Gould & Lewis, 2018). Mainstream tourism is typically understood as a vacation or holiday for pleasure experienced by the majority of tourists worldwide. In contrast, volunteer tourism is a form of international development where tourists dedicate their time, and sometimes money, to accomplish a variety of "socio-cultural outcomes" (Wearing & Grabowski, 2011, p. 193). In 2011, there were 1.6 million volunteer tourists every year around the world, and research shows how this figure continues to increase every year (Chen & Chen, 2011). The act of volunteering refers to doing something freely due to the availability of rewards (Cnaan, Handy & Wadsworth, 1996; Stebbins, 2014). A rise in international volunteer tourism is arguably a result of expanding globalisation coupled with a higher consumer consciousness in Western countries (Conran, 2011, Mostafanezhad, 2013). As more travellers dedicate their time while travelling to "alleviate poverty" or help "mitigate climate change", more research discusses, debates, and even contests the rise in volunteer tourism (Wearing, 2001; Guttentag, 2009).

## 1.1. Research Problematisation

The literature on volunteering exists mainly in the tourism and development discourse. International volunteer tourism is understood as a "cultural exchange with local people" (Brown & Letho, 2005, p. 480) and a form of tourism similar to that of ecotourism, responsible tourism and sustainable tourism (Brown & Letho, 2005). Various research is concerned with tourist motivations to volunteer (Tomazos & Butler, 2005; Caissie & Halpenny, 2003; Degli Antoni 2009). However, the debate is static and few differentiate between altruistic motivations, doing something good for others, and egoistic motivations, doing good for themselves. Other scholars have focused on the encounters between host and tourist in developing countries (Simpson, 2004), more specifically in Eastern countries, such as in India (Singh, 2002) and Thailand (Broad, 2001) as well as Western Countries, such as Canada (Caissie & Halpenny, 2003; McDougale, Greenspan, & Handy, 2011). The number of people from all ages spending extended periods in one location and giving up their time and economic stability to help in a project, be it at an animal shelter, orphanage or coral restoration has gained significant attention. However, such debates often result in the critique of volunteer tourism for its negative repercussions for host communities (Mostafanezhad, 2013; 2014; Sin, 2009; 2010). Having

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Westerners volunteer in 'poor and needy' communities can perpetuate structural inequalities between rich and poor, the 'West' and the 'Rest' (Sin, 2010). Media articles have especially latched on to these issues and in particular, the challenges with volunteering at orphanages and wild animal rehabilitation centres in the so-called Global South (Vrasti, 2013).

Debates on the social impacts of volunteering are integral to understanding the neoliberal dynamics of access and power (Conran, 2011; Mostafanezhad, 2013). However, there is a yet a critical discussion of volunteering in light of modern lifestyles where more and more people work and travel and where the lines between 'work' and 'leisure' are becoming increasingly more blurred (Gallant, Arai & Smale, 2013). In the field of conservation, conservationists rely on volunteer experiences for providing access, knowledge, and networks to sustain a professional career (Conservation Careers, 2020). Conservation projects, in turn, have relied on the motivation and hard work of volunteers to sustain the projects and efforts (*ibid*). Professionals need volunteering experience to attain jobs, and projects need volunteers to conserve. Others volunteer because they 'wish to participate' and do their part in reducing the rate of climate change (*ibid*). The increase in conservation volunteering is essential in times of mass degradation, animal extinction and a stagnating gap between the global economic North and South (Ratton, Eagles & Mair, 2012). It is a valuable time to understand the perceived impacts that conservation volunteering has for professional careers because many professionals search for fulfilling careers that define their lifestyle (Gallant et al., 2013). Understanding the perceived personal impacts volunteering can have on professional careers drives the motivation for this thesis.

## **1.2. Research Approach**

In order to understand the impacts of conservation volunteering on conservationists' career trajectory, this thesis employs the Serious Leisure Perspective (SLP) developed and adapted by Stebbins (1992, 2007, 2014). The SLP perspective is a "frequently cited" theoretical framework used to understand various leisure experiences, such as football fandom (Jones, 2000), dog sports (Baldwin & Norris, 1999), motorsport events (Harrington, Cuskelly, & Auld, 2000) and adult amateur ice skating (McQuarrie & Jackson, 2002). The concept of serious leisure has been "one of the most significant concepts shaping leisure research over the last 30 years" (Lamont, Kennelly & Moyle, 2015, p. 652). It is a useful framework to understand the qualities of volunteering, the relationship between leisure and careers, the motivations to volunteer and the impacts volunteering can have on personal development. Stebbins' reformed concept of Fulfilment Career divides various stages from beginning to end to understand the impacts

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serious leisure has on personal fulfilment. However, the framework is criticised for being too individualistic and not focusing enough on the community (Arai and Pedler, 2013; Gallant et al., 2013; Lamont et al., 2015). In order to build upon this framework and address the beforementioned critique, this thesis utilises the stages of personal development to the research aim: understanding the impacts on a career through personal narratives. It pays particular attention to the macro-level, societal-level, by merging it with existing literature on volunteer tourism and the impact of volunteering on communities (Mostafanezhad, 2013; 2014; Sin, 2009; 2010). This thesis conducted 18 unstructured interviews with professional and non-professional individuals working in the conservation and environmental sector. The focus was on the patterns of events and stories told by the participants to gain an understanding of the impact of volunteering on careers (McAlpine, 2015). The aim is to answer the following research questions:

*RQ: How do Conservationists describe the impact of volunteering on their own professional career?*

This research contributes to the existing literature on volunteer tourism by focusing on the impacts of volunteering on careers, which is less researched compared to the impact on personal development and social impact. Moreover, it provides depth to the abovementioned concept of Fulfilment Career, which to date has not been used as a concept to understand the stages of conservation career development. By doing so, the travel experience can contribute personal benefits to the individual visitor, to society, and the planet. Such benefits "outlive the temporal boundaries of the experience itself" (Falk et al., 2014, p. 922).

### **1.3. Thesis Structure**

The second chapter will set the scene by discussing the existing literature on volunteer tourism, the motivations to volunteer and the impacts of volunteer tourism. It will then discuss conservation volunteering in more depth, introduce the Serious Leisure Perspective (SLP), and in particular the concept of Fulfilment Career. It will conclude this section with an outline of the theoretical framework used to structure the analysis. The third chapter will explain how the research was conducted, including the approach, design and the data analysis process. Here it will discuss ethical considerations and limitations. The fourth chapter will present the results of the interviews and analyse them with existing literature introduced in chapter two. Finally, the discussion will immerse the findings with a broader perspective and outline contributions and further research before concluding the thesis.



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## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND FRAMEWORK

This chapter divides the literature review into two sections- *context* and *topic*—first, the context of Volunteer Tourism: motivations and impacts. Second, on the topic of Serious Leisure: Conservation, Leisure and Careers. Following the literature review, the theoretical framework introduces the Serious Leisure Perspective and in particular, the concept of Fulfilment Career. Here it discusses the previous literature and the theoretical framework used to analyse the data.

### 2.1. Context: Volunteer Tourism

This section presents previous literature on Volunteer Tourism: the motivations to volunteer and the impacts of volunteering on individuals and communities.

#### 2.1.1. Motivations to Volunteer

Motivations to volunteer have taken centre stage in the academic debate on volunteer tourism. Motivations are typically differentiated between egoistic and altruistic motivations (Tomazos & Butler, 2005; Caissie & Halpenny, 2003; Degli Antoni 2009; Mostafanezhad, 2014; Stebbins, 2009). Altruistic motivations refer to doing good for the sake of others or for the greater good, such as helping those less fortunate or alleviating poverty (Brown, 2005; Wearing, 2001), as well as participating in social movements and activism referred to as 'volunteering with a cause' (McGehee & Santos, 2005). Conversely, egoistic motivations refer to volunteering for the sake of reward or for personal benefit such as the ability to travel (Stoddart and Rogerson 2004; Sin, 2009) or expand social networks (Caissie & Halpenny, 2003; Omoto, Snyder, & Martino, 2000). It also refers to the motivation to feel good by helping others (Butler, 2003) which, as discussed in more depth in the next section, is widely contested, with leading academics asserting that volunteering plays a part in perpetuating the postcolonial relations of power between the global North and South (Mostafanezhad, 2014; Sin, 2009). Egoistic motivations also refer to volunteering for career advancement, such as developing technical and leadership skills (Wuthnow, 1998; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004) and for displaying advantage to future employees by placing their experience on their curriculum vitae (CV) (Bruyere & Rappe, 2007; Campbell & Smith, 2006; Stebbins, 2006).

Other scholars have separated motivations into extrinsic and intrinsic motivations (Degli Antoni, 2009; Liarakou et al., 2011) with a particular focus on the social parameters gained through intrinsic motivations (Brown, 2005; Degli Antoni 2009) and participating due to a feeling of social or moral responsibility (Liarakou et al., 2011). Chen and Chen similarly

distinguish between personal, interpersonal and other motivations (Chen & Chen, 2011) where personal motivations refer to the desire for authentic experiences and self-discovery (Wearing, Deville & Lyons, 2008), as well as a desire for challenge or stimulation when travelling. Interpersonal motivations relate to the altruistic values and desire to help interact with local cultures. Academic studies in tourism research have evaluated tourist motivations to volunteer while travelling.

Motivation to Volunteer	Academic Studies
PARTAKE IN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS	McGehee & Santos, 2005
HELP OTHERS	Brown, 2005; Stoddart & Rogerson 2004; Sin, 2009
SOCIALISE/ NETWORK	Brown, 2005; Degli Antoni 2009; Omoto, Snyder, & Martino, 2000; Liarakou et al., 2011
FEEL GOOD	Butler, 2003; Caissie & Halpenny, 2003; Degli Antoni 2009; Mostafanezhad, 2014
SELF EXPLORATION	Wearing, Deville & Lyons, 2008
HAVE AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCE	Chen & Chen, 2011
BUILD SKILLS	Stoddart and Rogerson 2004
TRAVEL RELATED	Caissie & Halpenny, 2003; Chen & Chen, 2011; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004; Sin, 2009
ADVANCE CAREER	Caissie & Halpenny, 2003; Mostafanezhad, 2014; Tomazos, 2009; Wearing & McGehee, 2013; Wuthnow, 1998)
ADD TO CV	Bruyere & Rappe, 2007; Campbell & Smith, 2006; Stebbins, 2006

*Figure 1 Summary of Academic Literature on Volunteer Motivations (by the author, 2020)*

The table above summarises the existing literature on volunteer motivations. The table conveys how there are sufficient studies on personal reasons to volunteer. Yet this is disproportionate to motivations to volunteer for career enhancement or help others and the community. This thesis contributes to research by addressing this gap. While scholars have contested the semantics of volunteer motivations, it is not easy to differentiate between altruistic and ego-centric motives (Mustonen, 2007). Motivations are subject to change over time as well as change from context to context; person to person (Anderdeck, McGehee, Lee & Clemmons, 2012; Otoo & Amuquandoh, 2014). Moreover, volunteers are likely to be motivated by various aspects at any

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one time and often at the same time, so it is not always possible to label them consistently (Brown & Letho, 2005).

Nonetheless, the scholarship does agree on how motivations to volunteer are uniquely different from motivations to engage in mainstream tourism (Blackman & Benson, 2010; Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Volunteer tourists are motivated by several reasons pre-trip (Brown & Letho, 2005; Knollenberg, McGehee, Boley & Clemmons, 2014; Wearing & McGehee, 2013). However, a large proportion of the literature has solely discussed the motivations pre-international trip and have researched the impacts of volunteering post-trip on career development far less. This is important as many argue Western culture increasingly demands that individuals do something 'worthwhile' in gap years (Ferguson, 2015). As mentioned, this thesis addresses this gap. First, it is crucial to discuss the body of research on the impacts volunteering has on local communities.

### **2.1.2 The Social Impacts of Volunteering**

Plenty of research exists on negative impacts on the host communities (Guarasci & Rimmerman, 1996; Mostafanezhad, 2013; 2014; Sin, 2009; 2010). Tourists typically have to pay money to volunteer, which can perpetuate the gap between rich and poor, developed and developing, aid-giver and aid receiver, resulting in the tourists, despite their motivation for doing good, feeling superior, by helping the inferior (Sin, 2009). Through Sin's qualitative research on the motivations of young volunteers in African aid organisations, they pitied those they were helping and felt they needed to give in order to relieve their feeling of superiority and privilege. However, she proclaims how this does not help to change the system of existing power hierarchies between the West and South (Sin, 2010). Volunteer tourism, in some cases, accepts or reproduces the same structural inequalities, much to the volunteer tourists oblivion (Guarasci & Rimmerman, 1996). It is often argued how volunteer tourism is a form of neo-colonialism because it reinforces "unequal power relations and cultural stereotypes between tourists and hosts" (Pastran, 2014, p. 45) and a "dependency on primarily Western volunteer tourists" (Mostafanezhad, 2014, p. 117). Currently, this rhetoric fuels the public debate on volunteer tourism perpetuated by the media (Schwarz & Richey, 2019). While it is crucial to consider the multitude of negative impacts volunteering has on host communities, it is nonetheless essential to also shed light on the positive aspects of volunteer tourism (Fee & Mdee, 2011, p. 226).

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In other cases, volunteering creates cohesion between cultures due to intercultural interactions and conversations (Guttentag, 2009). Moreover, awareness as a volunteer on aid can contribute to the funding of vital projects such as medical aid (Mguyen 2012; Ellis, 2007) and for devastatingly under-funded conservation projects, in particular (Brightsmith, Stronza, & Holle, 2008). Furthermore, volunteers have a significant impact in spreading conservation awareness to other non-volunteer tourists (Ratton, Eagles & Mair, 2012). They can mobilise social action despite being privileged and from Western backgrounds (McGehee & Santos, 2005). In a post-colonial world, these inequalities exist, so it is crucial to mobilise the youth and provide opportunities and organisations where they can contribute to positive environmental and social change (*ibid*). Volunteers can be acknowledged for their contribution to environmental quality over the last three decades (Ryan, Kaplan & Grese, 2001) and for promoting environmental education initiatives that support tourists to make sustainable choices (McKercher, 2015). Rather than fixate on weighing the positive and negatives, it is important to also focus on how volunteering can also be a vehicle for environmental change and impact tourist ethics (Burns, 2017; McGehee & Santos, 2005). In Sin's critique of volunteer tourism as a vehicle for perpetuating power inequalities, she suggests redefining volunteering in terms of "international service-learning" (Sin, 2009, p. 482).

Ingrained in the definition of 'international-service learning' are the elements of active learning and personal development. Volunteering is a service where volunteers learn new skills and gain new experiences from the people around them. There is a discrepancy in how volunteering is discussed in tourism studies and the leisure discourse. Volunteer tourism typically refers to volunteering and travel outside one's home country and volunteering in a leisure sense refers to voluntary activities taken in free time but can be alongside daily life (Clary & Snyder, 1999). Volunteering when discussed with leisure indulges in the personal development of volunteers and the elements of fun and satisfaction, social interaction and sentiments when contributing to a larger group (Pearce, 1993). This thesis is an exploration of volunteering as a form of Serious Leisure in which volunteering consists of acquiring and developing specialised training and specific skills as opposed to casual leisure: intrinsically rewarding and relatively short-lived activities. According to Stebbins, volunteering as serious leisure is:

*"un-coerced, intentionally-productive, altruistic activity framed in a distinctive context and engaged in during free time. It is also altruistic activity people want to do and, using their abilities and resources, actually do in either a satisfying or a fulfilling way (or both)"* (Stebbins, 2013, p. 342).

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The definition by Stebbins is widely cited yet also contested (Veal, 2017). By intentionally-productive, Stebbins refers to the "beneficial social consequences" volunteering as serious leisure can have in a particular setting. However, what is lacking from his explanation is the negative repercussions volunteering can have on receiving communities (Sin, 2009; 2010). Secondly, it has been critiqued that not all volunteers are motivated by altruistic concerns for the benefit of others. However, by this, he also refers to self-interested motivations in this definition (Stebbins, 1996). Thirdly, the distinctive context refers to the social and geographical space that volunteering takes place in and highlights the history and local context. However, it is argued that he does not take into consideration the macro level in the analysis (Gallant et al., 2013). Uncoerced refers to voluntarily activity where people do not feel obliged to participate. However, this term is the vaguest (Veal, 2017) since there are also times when 'marginal volunteers' feel coerced due to internal or external pressures to volunteer. While critique exists, it is an in-depth explanation of volunteering from a leisure perspective and is used as a backbone for contextualising conservation volunteering as a serious leisure pursuit. This thesis extends the definition and accounts for the critiques above. Stebbins' SLP is useful for understanding the different types of volunteering, motivations and qualities. The next section explores this in more depth before indulging in the theoretical framework used to analyse the data in this thesis.

## **2.2. Topic: Volunteering and Leisure**

According to Stebbins, serious volunteer activities are motivated by one or a variety of interests involving (1) people, (2) ideas, (3) things, (4) flora, (5) fauna (animals) or (6) the natural environment (Stebbins, 2009). Volunteers pursue activities based on their sphere of interests, be it with animals, in humanitarian aid or with gardening. They develop various skills which can eventually lead to a career in a similar field. This thesis concentrates on conservation volunteering which is closely linked to environmental volunteering (6) because it relates to the "monitoring or changing a particular set of external conditions affecting people, flora or fauna" (Stebbins, 2011, p. 145).

## The Serious Leisure Perspective

(version February 2013)

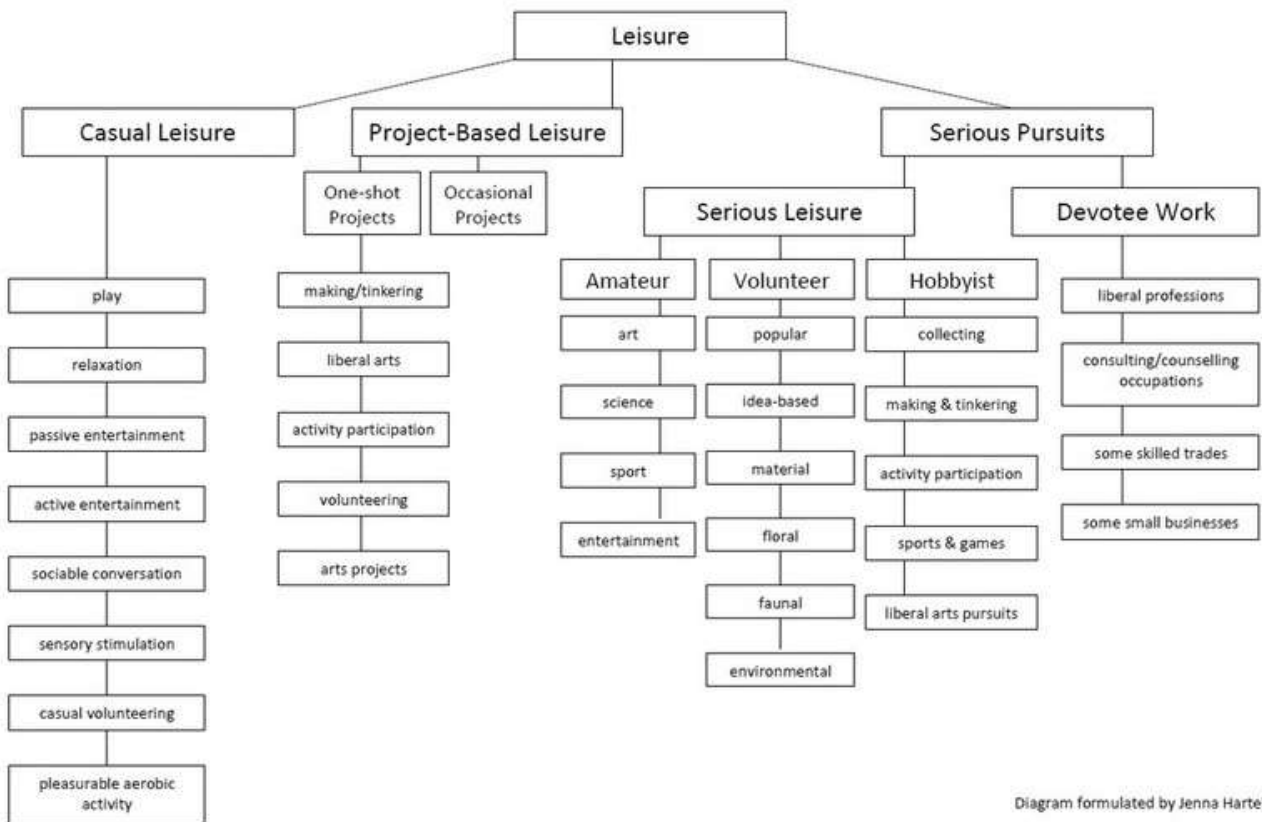


Diagram formulated by Jenna Hartel

*Figure 2 The Serious Leisure Perspective (Stebbins, 2011)*

The Serious Leisure Perspective (SLP) offers the terminology and framework to discuss volunteer motivations, the rewards for volunteering, costs and challenges as well as the stages of career volunteering from leisure to paid work (Stebbins, 1996; 2009; 2014). Research into serious leisure has grown exponentially since its conceptualisation in the 1980s (Lamont, Kennelly & Moyle, 2015). The Serious Leisure theoretical framework is useful to connect varying levels of intensity within leisure, from causal, to project toward serious leisure and to identify various types of participants: amateurs, hobbyists and volunteers (Gould, Moore, McGuire, Stebbins, 2008). It has been used to explain a variety of different leisure activities with different degrees of intensity. For example, concerning serious leisure, Stebbins' original ethnographic research studies amateur scientist and artists (Stebbins, 2001) and has later been applied to different sporting activities. For example, football fandom (Jones, 2000), dog sports (Baldwin & Norris, 1999), motorsport events (Harrington, Cuskelly, & Auld, 2000) and adult amateur ice skating (McQuarrie & Jackson, 2002). Before going into depth conservation

volunteering, this section explains the Serious Leisure Perspective and the qualities of serious leisure.

### 2.2.1. The Qualities of Serious Leisure

Stebbins distinguishes seven major qualities of serious leisure pictured in the table below, which he claims to differentiate them from casual leisure activities.

QUALITIES OF SERIOUS LEISURE	DEFINITION
BENEFITS/ REWARDS	Eight durable benefits or personal and Social Rewards
COSTS	Drugged and hard work resulting in challenges such as Burnout
SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION	Significant personal effort based on the acquisition of specialised knowledge, training and skills
SOCIAL WORLD	The special social world within which enthusiasts in a particular field pursue their interests
IDENTIFICATION	Participants tend to identify strongly with their chosen pursuit
PERSEVERANCE	The positive feelings which materialise when having stuck through thick and thin, conquering adversity and overcoming costs
CAREER	Occupation (Economic Devotion) + Leisure (Moral Career)

*Figure 3 The Qualities of Serious Leisure. Adapted from Stebbins (1996;:)*

Stebbins SLP qualities are useful to see conservation leisure as a serious leisure pursuit and the rewards and challenges therein. This section explains each quality in more depth. First, Stebbins distinguishes between 8 durable benefits and personal rewards (Jones, 2000). They include self-enrichment, self-expression, a feeling of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image; renewal of self, a sense of belonging, and physical products (such as financial gain), and self-gratification. The last of the benefits is most in common with casual leisure (Stebbins, 2011). However, a common aspect differentiating serious leisure from work and casual leisure is the costs associated with serious leisure, such as physical or mental burnout and the pursuit of the activity nonetheless (Stebbins, 2014). For Tedrick and Henderson (1989) volunteering is a link between the work and non-work spheres of life due to the development of personal rewards from work such as problem-solving (cited in Cuskelly & Harrington, 1997).

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Additionally, Stebbins states three social rewards relating to group accomplishment, belongingness and social contribution. Both personal and social rewards contribute to people developing their passions into careers (Cuskelly & Harrington, 1997). However, the social rewards are most vague in the theoretical framework and are critiqued for being individual benefits rather than "benefits for the collective or to society more generally" (Gallant et al., 2013, p.322)

Second, Stebbins notes how the acquisition of specialised knowledge training and skills is a contributor to serious leisure fulfilment and leads to careers in the same path. For example, studies have identified various technical skills developed through volunteering such as outdoor first aid and also the ability to deal with strong emotions in demanding missions (Lois, 2004 cited in Davidson and Stebbins, 2011)

However, there is more to discuss on skill and knowledge training applied in the travel context in conjunction with the SLP. For example, Falk, Ballantyne and Packer measure the impact of travel on skill acquisition by using the theory of Aristotle to understand the basis of learning: theoretical, practical, wisdom (moral virtue, morality) and life-long learning. They divide the acquisition of knowledge and experience into Episteme (knowledge), Techne (skills), and Phronesis (practical wisdom). They conclude that in many instances, we do not remember the facts but remember the experience. Conversely, travel can have negative impacts on cultural understanding and learning. Travel can perpetuate the material culture and distance ourselves from responsibility (Gössling, 2017). It can reinforce racist stereotypes and imperialistic social structures which can implicate certain groups more than others (Caton and Santos, 2008). "Tourists often 'see what they believe' rather than 'believe what they see'" (Falk et al., 2012). Nonetheless, by understanding what people learn, what they enjoy during travel, and what information they retain is relevant for tourism operators and managers to devise better strategies that maximise sustainable learning outcomes (Falk et al., 2012; Gössling, 2017). Similarly, this thesis uses the division episteme, techne and phronesis to delve deeper into the 'gains' of volunteering on both personal careers, personal lives, and on broader community which is a loud contribution of volunteering.

Third, the social world according to Stebbins is described as the "unique ethos; a central component of this is the special social world within which enthusiasts in a particular field pursue their interests" (Orr, 2006, p. 199). Some studies have employed the concept of serious leisure and the theoretical framework to understand how volunteers become immersed in a



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social world (*ibid*). There is no centralised authority structure; it is amorphous in structure and diffused (spread over several people). There are no clear-cut boundaries, but internally, there are recognised boundaries. It encompasses a "constellation... of organisations, groups and actors which come together to form a sphere of interest and involvement for participants" (Unruh, 1979 cited in Orr, 2006, p. 199). The social world offers space for participants to find meaning and identity for themselves and also find solidarity with others (Rojek, 2001).

Fourth, identification relates to the strong identity with chosen pursuits. Participants tend to identify strongly with their chosen pursuit, which distinguishes it from casual leisure because it is "too fleeting, mundane and commonplace to find a distinctive identity" Stebbins, 1982, p. 258). Through the use of narrative interviewing, it is possible to understand how identity and emotions impact one-another (McAlpine, 2015) and to understand how people develop an identity with their chosen activity of interest (Baldwin & Norris, 1999)

Fifth, perseverance is typically discussed as a "commitment sustained involvement" in career volunteering "as opposed to the sense of obligation or moral coercion found in marginal volunteering" (Cuskelly & Harrington, 1997, p. 12). Such a commitment is voluntary and can reveal how participants identify with their devotee work (overcoming boundaries despite transparent costs). Career volunteering and marginal volunteering are often juxtaposed in the SLP (Stebbins, 2014), yet the results from this thesis will show otherwise. From a quantitative perspective, serious leisure can help understand the correlations between motivations to volunteer and their levels of commitment over time (Cuskelly, Harrington & Stebbins, 2002). According to Cuskelly et al., Serious Leisure is beneficial to track changes in volunteer motives and to comprehend the complexity of changing volunteer' motives (*ibid*).

Lastly, as the table indicates, the term career is not restricted to an economic definition related to remunerative payment. However, Stebbins incorporates the moral career adapted from Goffman whereby the boundaries of work and play are blurred (Stebbins, 1982). Goffman's moral career encompasses "work, leisure, deviance, politics, religion and interpersonal relationships" (Davidson & Stebbins, 2011, p. 11). This thesis utilises the definition by Stebbins to understand careers as both a professional field which the volunteers chose, and how their chosen careers are an extension of their personal lives (Gallant et al., 2003). The serious leisure perspective has evolved since 2014 as Stebbins reframed Serious Leisure careers as Fulfilment Careers to reflect the role of serious leisure as a vehicle for achieving self-fulfilment (Lamont et al., 2015).\_Volunteering contributes to career-related benefits such as developing or

maintaining skills (Stebbins, 2004). Many people find a career from their volunteering experience and even develop and fulfil their potentialities which he calls career volunteering, later adapted to Fulfilment Career (Stebbins, 2014). This aspect is the least analysed in-depth and rarely concerns conservation volunteering. The impacts conservation volunteering has on careers in the conservation sector motivates the thesis.

### 2.2.2. Conservation Volunteering

The Serious Leisure Perspective has been employed in the conservation volunteering context to explain the motivations, challenges and benefits of combining work with enjoyment in the Amazon Rainforest in Peru (Davidson & Stebbins, 2012). Following Stebbins definition, Liarakou et al. classify environmental volunteerism as a "non-activist pro-environmental behaviour (Liarakou et al., 2011, p. 664) whereby conservation volunteering is a 'conscious decision involving active citizenship to help solve and mitigate related environmental issues (Liarakou et al., 2011). Conservation volunteers are dissimilar to ecotourists or voluntourists because they have an "epistemological commitment to science" and an "ethical commitment to making a difference" (Whatmore & Thorne, 2000, p. 132). Accordingly, more and more young people are environmentally conscious and are contributing to the restoration and well-being of the natural environment through conservation volunteering (Lorimer, 2010; McDougale et al., 2011). Many of the motivations to participate in conservation volunteers are similar to other types of volunteering, such as humanitarian aid. Nevertheless, there are specific additional motivations, such as being outside (Bruyere & Rappe, 2007) as well for some, a moral obligation to protect the natural environment (Shultz & Zelezny, 1998) and to become more environmentally active (Galley & Clifton, 2004). There are many personal, social and environmental motivations for participating in conservation volunteering.

Motivation	Academic Studies
An ethical commitment to making a difference	Whatmore & Thorne, 2000
Spread awareness and environmental literacy	Ratton, Eagles & Mair, 2012
Being outside and close to nature	Bruyere & Rappe; Liarakou et al., 2011
To be more environmentally active	Galley & Clifton, 2004
Contribute to the well-being of the natural environment	Lorimer, 2010; McDougale et al., 2011
A moral obligation to protect the natural environment	Shultz & Zelezny, 1998; Whatmore & Thorne, 2000

In addition to the motivations mentioned above for volunteering in figure 1, Figure 4 represents additional motivations to volunteer in the context of conservation taken from qualitative and quantitative studies on conservation volunteers. There are additional motivations which are arguably less egoistic because they are concerned with the natural environment, beyond one's ego-centric world-view. For example, in figure 1, the motivation to 'make a difference' is argued for its ability to make one feel good to make a difference (Tomazos & Butler, 2003). Here it is considered a social development because ethical commitments drive the motivations for environmental protection (Whatmore & Thorne, 2000). Various studies have assessed how those with more 'biospheric' values orientations (the commitment to the protection of the environment) are more likely to volunteer for environmental projects than those with more selfish and competitive value orientations and act in an environmentally friendly manner (Kollmus & Agyeman, 2002; McDougle et al., 2011; Strzelecka, Nisbett, & Woosnam, 2017). Especially McDougle et al. study make a notable contribution to this claim, who state how biospheric value orientations impact the likelihood of participating in environmental projects in correlation with the same study on those who act more sustainable in their homes are more likely to engage in environmental projects (McDougle et al., 2011). In sum, this section has discussed what conservation volunteering and the motivations behind volunteers' contribution to environment-related projects is.

### **2.2.3 Volunteering and Careers**

Few retrospective studies have measured the impacts of volunteering on career transition and progression (Chen, McAlpine & Amundsen, 2015; McAlpine, 2016; McQuarrie & Jackson, 2002; Rodell, 2013). In these articles, careers are understood mainly in the professional sense such as a chosen industry, yet there is a fine line between careers and leisure as the SLP conveys (Gallant et al., 2013). A study conducted by the Volunteer Service Overseas organisation in Britain and Australia has shown that the projects "had influenced their personal development and career progression positively (Hudson & Inkson, 2005, p. 305). Many volunteers reported that the experience had changed their career projection into professional aid work (ibid). However, Hudson and Inkson claim that these studies are "shallow" and "general" because they are too general and study a large pool of people without regards to individual personal developments (p. 305). The reasons for volunteering to improve their employment prospects have also been widely discussed (Carlin, 2001; Day & Devlin, 1998; Gunderson & Gomez,

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2003; Menchik & Weisbrod, 1987; Segal & Weisbrod, 2002). Volunteering has proven to expand social networks, improve technical and leadership skills, expand their social contacts which can improve their job prospects (Wuthnow, 1998). Through qualitative narrative analysis, McAlpine and colleagues have published various research on the correlation and chronology between PhD students job trajectories after completing their post-doctorate. Their 2016 article examined the journey from PhD graduation to first jobs in research as principal investigator (PI) through narrative-based documentation. She interviewed how 16 scientists in three different universities worked towards their aspired role and how they dealt with achieving this aspiration.

Moreover, Transitions in career paths have been discussed with extracurricular activities (Chen, McAlpine & Amundsen, 2015) as well as with leisure activities (McQuarrie & Jackson, 2002). First, Chen et al. analysed the career decision-making process of social scientist PhD career progression into non-academic careers through interviews and narrative analysis to understand how they finalise their positions post-graduation. She collected narrative data over a 12 to 18-month cycle repeated three times. Using multiple narratives enabled her to understand the "career intentions, decision making and chronology of individual experiences" to answer how did individuals manage a post PhD career during their degree and how did their career intentions change over time. The article by Chen, McAlpine and Amundsen discusses PhD students preparing for their job post-doctoral in social science. They conclude that personal daily activities were found most prevalent factor for influencing "career preparation and decision" (Chen, McAlpine & Amundsen, 2015, p. 1083). They used narrative analysis to enhance understanding in postdoctoral experience and training (p.1083) by exploring which activities to intentionally engage in their leisure time which has facilitated or constrained them in preparing them for the desired career. Also, McQuarrie and Jackson discuss how varying constraints and the impact on career transition can result in individual progression to another career stage or transition to another career path completely (2002). Despite a stable link between serious leisure volunteering and careers, there is not, to the best of current awareness, much academic research on the relationship between conservation volunteering and careers, despite ample research on the motivations to volunteer to enhance careers and bulk CV. There are a handful of professional conservationists participating in volunteering to aid their professional careers (Conversation Careers, 2020) but how exactly it helps their careers is limited in scope (Cuskelly & Harrington, 1997). In order to comprehend the impact of volunteering on conservationists careers, this thesis employs the serious leisure perspective, and in particular,

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the concept of Fulfilment Career, which was later adjusted from the concept of career discussed above in the Qualities of Serious Leisure.

### **2.3. Theoretical Framework**

The serious leisure perspective has evolved over 30 years (Lamont et al., 2014). Stebbins reframed Careers from the quality of SL to Fulfilment Careers in his 2014 book *From Dabbler to Devotee*. He defines Fulfilment Career as "living, which leads to many opportunities for reaching your potential" (Oliveira & Doll, 2016, p. 142). A long-term career is "developed through the pursuit, with stages of achievement or reward" (Davidson & Stebbins, 2011, p. 11). He combines the concepts of career and the SL framework to examine the characteristics of Fulfilment Career. By doing so, he understood how devoted individuals identified with volunteering and how volunteering as part of their livelihoods, and to understand why participants who engage in these activities fall in love with their activities and to pinpoint various motivations leading volunteers to do these activities. The concept conveys the difference between casual and serious leisure, between amateurs and devotees to their leisure activity. The concept of Fulfilment Career describes the path from volunteering to paid employment and the personal and social fulfilment found along the way (Stebbins, 2011).

In particular, career volunteering lays the foundation for movement into paid employment and the concept encapsulates the "development and fulfilment of his potentialities as a human being throughout this movement within serious leisure activities" (Stebbins, 2014, p. 13). The focus is on personal development, the fulfilment to one's personal goals. Focusing on personal development is significant because an enhanced notion of self and the development of self has been a relevant topic in tourism research (Matthews, 2008; Sin, 2009; Wearing, 2001). Stebbins also emphasises the fulfilment to social goals, like helping communities, which result in personal fulfilment as well as social fulfilment (*ibid*). However, this aspect is less researched and criticised for focusing heavily on personal gains and not enough on a shared goal, cooperation, and "mutuality" (Arai & Pedler, 2003, p. 191).

The stages of personal development offer a clear path to realizing the development and fulfilment of the potentialities as a human being. Each stage helps to visualise the path from volunteering to a professional career and the devotion found along the way, as well as the expression of personal fulfilment. There is no indication as to how long each stage lasts because

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that differs from person to person. Within environmental volunteering, people typically begin their path with some skills and knowledge already acquired, either through academic skills or also love for animals and nature (Stebbins, 2014). The development phase is characterised by career progress. Mostly it revolves around gaining further knowledge and experience. Somewhere in the course of acquiring knowledge, the enthusiast passes from beginning into development – the line separating the two stages being imprecise at present levels of research. Their sense of fulfilment grows in parallel, and as such, their personal development grows, which advances popular career volunteering. They express an appreciation for a job well done. Establishment phase refers to the stage when they are still learning, and profit from experience, yet are in demand, and this can result in risks such as mental or physical burnout. Feelings of coercion or obligation are discussed in this phase. Maintenance and decline can either relate to maintain and stick through it and persevere or decline and quit, which will be evident in the interview responses. There are "volunteers who simply want to explore the nature of work there or believe that volunteer experience will look good on their résumé there are also those who manage to find an occupation worthy of their devotion and devote their time to these missions. This is what we will see in different interview responses discussed in *the analysis*.



*Figure 5 The Stages of Personal Development. Adapted from Stebbins (2014)*

While the SLP and the concept of Fulfilment Career have been widely cited and employed for various disciplines and different activities, it does not come without complications. Yet Stebbins touches upon social responsibility and moral cohesion yet is vague in terms of an obligation or moral coercion to help others or protect the environment (Liarkou et al., 2014), or collective social responsibility. The focus has often remained on the individual benefits and less on the social benefits, and thus fails to address issues relating to the community and social justice (Gallant et al., 2013). In part, this is due to the individualism rhetoric prevalent in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when serious leisure was first formed: "individualism fails to acknowledge interdependence and obligations in society" (Arai & Pedler, 2013)

Nonetheless, the term is useful to understand the motivations, satisfactions and emotions to gain a deeper insight into the particular serious leisure activity (Murray, 2009). Murray, for example, used the concept when he measured the correlation between satisfaction and motivation with the likelihood to continue home brewing as a serious leisure pursuit (Murray, 2009). Other scholars have used the concept to understand travel behaviours of surfers (Barbieri & Sotomayer, 2013). For their analysis, serious leisure is a framework to research the effects of serious leisure on identity enhancement, self-expression, and for personal fulfilment in order to ensure how a leisure career can turn into a work career. Pi et al. use surveys to understand the differences in motivation such as it looks good on resume vs passion and gain a sense of fulfilment when executing these tasks (Pi, Lin, Chen, Chiu, & Chen, 2014). These scholars indulge in the stages of Fulfilment Career: from beginning to decline to understand the path to personal development. This thesis uses the stages to display and structure the results with help of existing literature in the field of volunteer tourism, tourist learning, and conservation volunteering. The table below adapts Stebbins Fulfilment Career with existing literature to add depth and nuance to the perspective. This table is used to analyse the results.

Fulfilment Career	Qualities of Serious Lesiure	Complementing themes	Academic Literature
BEGINNING	MARGINAL VOLUNTEERING	MOTIVATIONS TO VOLUNTEER	Brown, 2005; Chen & Chen, 2011; Wearing, 2001
DEVELOPMENT	SKILL AQUISITION and CAREERS	CAREER ENHANCEMENT	Wuthnow, 1998; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004; Bruyere & Rappe, 2007)
ESTABLISHMENT	PERSONAL AND SOCIAL REWARDS	SOCIAL IMPACTS OF VOLUNTEERING	Ratton et al., 2012; McGehhe & Santos, 2005; Sin, 2009; Stebbins & Graham, 2004
MAINTAINENCE	PERSEVERENCE	SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	Arai & Pedler, 2003; Falk et al., 2012; Gallant et al., 2013

*Table 6 Theoretical Framework: The stages of Fulfilment Career and existing literature and themes*

In order to create contingencies between conservation volunteering, personal fulfilment, and social responsibility, this thesis will use the Fulfilment Career and stages of Fulfilment Career in conjunction with the literature on the social impacts of volunteer tourism. By doing so, it sheds light on the impacts of volunteering on careers, as well as the perceived contribution of volunteering on the social world and natural environment.

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## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Research Approach

This thesis studies a social phenomenon, in particular, the social world of conservation volunteering and the impacts volunteering has on personal and career developments, as well as the social impacts. It investigates the subjective meanings from the volunteer's experiences and focuses on the diverse descriptions participants give to their volunteering experiences. When dealing with experiences, descriptions and perceptions, qualitative research is appropriate (Bryman, 2016). In particular, interviews convey the diverse constructions people give to social phenomena, and they can be analysed using theories, embedded within a broader context to interpret different processes and meanings (Silverman, 2019; Wearing and Neil, 2001).

Following the aim of this qualitative research, the researcher approaches the topic adhering to the philosophical branch of constructivism. Constructivism is a philosophical position that invites researchers to question how reality is constructed and assembled rather than experienced as real from the subjects point of view (Silverman, 2019). From a constructivist perspective, how one identifies with their career or volunteer experience exists only in their mind and varies from person to person. They actively create their identity in different contexts using different voices depending on who is listening. The goal of constructivism is to understand those diverse voices and compare them to one another and the broader context. The knowledge, therefore obtained by the researcher is constructed in the process of social interchange using interviews and perspectives from previous scholars. The interviewer plays a part in constructing meaning from the interviewees. Knowledge has social functions and using the epistemological position of interpretivism (Flick, 2014). The writer acknowledges the various ways people interpret the topic subjectively and the interpretations of the researcher can influence the data collections and meanings made therein. The researcher's reflexivity is considered throughout the thesis process, where the impressions, irritations and feelings are crucial in the interpretation of the data were noted in research diaries (Bryman, 2016).

Theories and empirical research were collected and analysed in a continuous exchange to resemble the social construction of reality (Belgrave & Charmaz, 2014). It builds on existing intellectual knowledge from the Serious Leisure Perspective and on the literature on Volunteer Tourism to help explain the new information gathered through empirical and a posteriori knowledge (Flick, 2014). The researcher built a solid theoretical foundation while also



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remaining open to new insights gained in the qualitative interviews. It has not employed the SLP as an expression for deductive empirical data analysis but rather as a toolbox with concepts to illuminate the analysis (Silverman, 2019). As with most qualitative research, the analysis stages have remained 'open' to nuances within the data rather than merely "applying concepts imported from the literature" (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

## **3.2. Research Design**

### **3.2.1. Unstructured Narrative Interviews**

Due to the philosophical underpinnings in interpretivism, unstructured and participant-lead narrative interviews were conducted over Skype Video Call. Unstructured narrative interviews are employed because they help to understand the words and meanings people use to describe underlying societal issues from the individual perspective, as well as bring to light the interaction between narrator and researcher in co-constructing meaning (McAlpine, 2016). The focus of this thesis is on the individual experiences the interviewees give to their conservation volunteering experience and what they believe impacted their personal lives and careers after volunteering. In order to capture the richness in the data, narrative analysis is employed to deconstruct meaning in how they say things, what meanings are provoked, and the impact they have (McAlpine, 2016). The focus is on how social actors make sense of what happened in their lives, concerning social, cultural, economic and political factors, and the multiple ways of interpreting those events (Caine, Estefan & Clandinin, 2013). Narrative interviews require attentive and engaged listening from the researcher who also pays close attention to the setting of the interview (Riessman, 2008, p. 26) There was a list of open-ended areas of interest and a few questions to guide the research. However, not all questions were asked in a specific order nor to each participant to allow them to express their experiences (Flick, 2014) freely. Interviews provide rich insight into people's biographies and experiences, opinions and values. The interview focused on the way people describe events and relationships and the reasons they offer for doing so. Questions asked were explicit enough to nudge the respondent but general enough to avoid the interviewer structuring the correlations. Usually, this type of interview technique is useful because researchers are less involved in the interview and so cannot determine how to answer or what to talk about or impose their frame of reference (Flick, 2014).

It can also diverge from the specific topic itself to reveal something new, which can yield a greater understanding of the subjects point of view. The loosely constructed subject areas in the interview included:

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- About the interviewee: age, nationality, current occupation
  - Experience of Volunteering: What, where, when, challenges and gains
  - Perceived impact of Volunteering on personal lives
  - The Learning Environment: skills learnt and impact of people around them
  - Perceived impact of Volunteering on careers
  - Perceived impact of the Wider socio-cultural context on careers
  - Perceived impact of volunteering on identity

While the interviews were taking place, the researcher placed attention on specific formal requirements integral for narrative analysis:

- What kind of story does a narrator place herself?
- How does she position herself with the interviewer?
- How does she position herself to herself, make identity claims?
- What is the context of the story?
- How is the story told? Structure and sequence?
- What purpose does the story have? (Reissman, 2011; Silverman, 2019)

For many of the interviewees, they had to unlock memories of their volunteer experience. Thus, all interviewees were pre-prepared with the four interview topics in order to freshen their memory before the interview. Narrative interviews were employed because interviewees were asked to recall events in personal history and to communicate about issues in their experiences. They are telling their stories of their volunteer experience and what impact it had on their career choices, career progression and career transitions. Narratives are a useful form of data collection to understand individual life histories better. Narrative interviews start unstructured and do get more structured as they go on (Reissman, 2008). They have an open-ended character, and the interviewees can answer within their frame of references. In turn, this can reveal something about their forms of understanding and allows the researcher to deconstruct the meanings they attribute to events and relationships. Here we get a greater understanding of the subject's point of view and follow up and sum up questions that have been asked by the interviewer to accommodate for further elaboration and clarification (May, 2011). This thesis is a retrospective study because it asks individuals to look back on their histories and their perspective on the unfolding of events. It is a process perspective on events that have already begun. It includes some overlapping of the past with the present (Bude, 2004). More on Narrative Studies is explored in the *Analysis Process* (3.3)

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### **3.2.2. Interview Setting**

The interviews were conducted online using Skype Video Call because many interviewees were living all over the world, and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic made it challenging to meet face-to-face. Online interviews were useful because there was a high response rate, and have a lower cost in terms of time, effort and money. However, at times the interviews were challenging due to slow internet connection and video delays. This made interpreting body language more difficult due to a limited look on visual cues (Babbie, 2001). Nonetheless, the interviewees were asked several times if they felt comfortable during the interview, and being in their own homes contributed to their comfort and allowed them to speak more freely (*ibid*). Moreover, all interviews were conducted in English due to the diverse nationalities of interviewees. An interview guide was given before the interview took place with a short overview of the interview topics. At the beginning of the interview, there was an exchange of small talk and the research description. This helped to build rapport (mutual trust) between the interviewee and interviewer. It was then asked whether they understood the interview guide handed out before the interview. During the interview, questions and follow up questions were asked based on their responses rather than following a strict interview guide. This made the interviews themselves flow smoothly and were relaxed for both parties involved. Anonymity was ensured before asking if the interview could be recorded for the research purposes. It was also ensured that participation is of their volition, and they could exit the interview at any time (Bryman, 2016).

### **3.2.3. Interview Population and Sample**

This research implemented a purposive sampling method whereby specific people were interviewed based on their relevance to the research topic (Bryman, 2012). Purposive sampling forced a critical look at the "parameters of the population" in order to carefully choose suitable cases (Silverman, 2014) The nature of this research is of impacts of conservation volunteering on their professional careers. Thus, people who now work in the conservation field were the necessary target group. Members were contacted from various Facebook groups such as International Coral reef society and Careers in conservation careers as well as on the Conservation Careers portal. The Conservation Careers website was established in 2013 as an online job portal, with 22,489 conservation-related job listings in 2019. They provide career advice from leading professionals based on the interviews with over 500 professional conservationists who share their work, career stories, and advice tips. The website's founder graciously shared the thesis research on their social media platforms, and many people

contacted me directly. Participants were chosen after conversations through email to determine their suitability for this research.

What kind of experience constitutes conservation volunteering? Since the participants were global in scope, their activities differed entirely. Activities included diving and coral restoration in Seychelles (Chang); lake water testing and sanitation, in the US (Melly) and in Kenya (Lai); Conservation Education and environmental awareness in both Tanzania (Leo) and in Germany (Sarah); Tour Guiding in a National Park in Belgium (Roma); and different work with endangered species, such as chimpanzees in the Congo (Indi), and orphaned Joey's in Australia (Charlie 2020), vultures in Spain (Pamela) and non-endangered species animal tracking such as Badgers in the UK (Sef). Some of the participants have researched remote areas such as the Antarctic (Turku; Camile) while others were volunteering in their local animal shelter (Alana). Many of the volunteers were volunteering for international and national organisations, such as a Biomimicry EU funded NGO (Tilla), Humana (Karen) and the Wildlife Trust in the UK (Su). Roles included research assistant positions, such as on an island in the southern Atlantic Ocean (Camile, 2020). The duration of the volunteering time differed from person to person. Indi stayed for two years finishing research on Chimpanzees, while Su did just six months with the Wildlife Trust to gain enough experience to find a paid job. Others continued volunteering- one after the other even now, while others stopped due to external pressures. Such chronologies and patterns will be explained in more depth during the analysis.

pseudo-Name	Sampling	Nationality	Age	Occupation	Volunteer Experience
Leo	Facebook Careers in Conservation	Tanzanian	45	Director of NGO Fohuso and Stripes Tour, Tanzania. Ecologist and environmental educator	Volunteered in Serengeti national park when younger and with an NGO to learn how to manage Volunteers
Lai	Facebook Careers in Conservation	Kenyan	38	Nurse and fulltime volunteer at a local school	Participated in many volunteer projects including International Waterways: The Clean water initiative and

					EcoFinder. A local recycling project with children
Alana	<i>Conservation Careers Website</i>	Colombian	25	Animal behaviour research assistant	Volunteered for various dog and animal shelters and zoos
Tilla	Facebook International Coral reef society	Cuba/ U. S	30	Plant Scientist, Biomimicry Expert	Many volunteer experiences including <b>biomimicry</b> and circular economy Start-up
Camile	<i>Conservation Careers Website</i>	Germany	32	Conservation biology Master Student and now Translator	Research assistant and songbird specialist
Indi	<i>Conservation Careers Website</i>	Argentina	37	Worked for two years with white chimpanzees for an institute in Germany. Then started working as a site manager in Congo at a gorilla research centre	Chimpanzees volunteering in Africa and tracking wild Animals in Gabon and Congo
Sarah	<i>Conservation Careers Website</i>	Germany	29	Environmental education in local NGO	Various volunteering projects with environmental education and national parks
Su	Conservation Careers Website	UK	24	Conservation consultant, research assistant	Volunteer for the RSPB (Royal Society for the Protection of Birds)

Karen	Facebook International Coral reef society	Greece	25	Owens her business for environmental sustainability and recycling	3 months for Humana Organisation
Melly	Facebook International Coral reef society	USA	51	Pennsylvania dept of environmental protection	Volunteer work for NOAA water sampling
Turku	Conservation Careers Website	Turkey/ Canada	50	Switch jobs. Started own business for land redistribution	Australia marine conservation in the Antarctic
Pamela	Facebook careers in conservation careers	Portugal	24	Currently working on PhD in animal behaviour- with Birds	Volunteering work with vultures and in a wildlife rehabilitation centre.
Sef	Facebook careers in conservation careers	UK	55	the director of not for profit company called Ambios which is involved in nature conservation training.	Volunteer tracking beavers and volunteer with communications for Devon Wildlife Trust
Roma	Facebook careers in conservation careers	Belgian	24	Bachelor's degree in Biology. NOT WORKING in conservation	nature conservation traineeship at Ambios and part time volunteer nature guide
Chang	Conservation Careers Website	UK	54	Education and Communications Manager for Wise Oceans	Marine conservation and diving scholar in Seychelles
Charlie	Conservation Careers Website	Australian	30	the Director of an Outdoor Education Centre and Field	Worked with cobras in Thailand; care of tree kangaroos in Thailand

				Assistant roles on varying conservation projects	
Lilly	Facebook careers in conservation careers	Belgian & Swiss	25	Works for the Biodiversity Research and Monitoring Intern with WWF-Cambodia	Volunteered at Kwantu Private Game Reserve in South Africa and Volunteered at The Wildlife Habitat in Australia
Zariah	Facebook International Coral reef society	British	25	A marine biologist in Malaysia and the Maldives working on turtle nest relocation, plastic pollution, monitoring of marine life, coral planting and presenting about ocean issues.	She volunteered in education and events teams at a local wildlife trust centre, helping with school groups.

*Table 7 Interview Participants*

### **3.3. Data Analysis Process**

Data was analysed with consideration to previous research on the topic of volunteer tourism and the SLP. The thesis contributes to the literature by adding nuance and fresh insight into serious leisure and volunteering by giving voice to people to "express their life experiences through storytelling" (Silverman, 2014, p. 5). Since the focus was on the descriptive perceptions and experiences from the interviewees, the analysis process followed a narrative approach and in particular, a plot analysis (Boje, 2001). Narrative analysis "provides a way to study personal narratives of experience systematically" (p. 5). The focus is on how individuals construct their sense of self through the narratives they tell. Narrative research is a broad umbrella term incorporating various methodological stances and ways to collect data, analyse

and report it (McAlpine, 2016). One approach is the plot analysis which is described by Boje as "comparing plot lines between different subjects and pinpointing various improvisations and omissions" (Boje, 2001, p. 14). He goes on to say how the focus is not meagerly on the chronology events, but merely on the links that connect events into a holistic narrative structure. Boje builds on the work of Ricoeur who analysis various poetic prose and literacy work focusing on ethics and identity in particular (flood, 2000). Boje applies the three phases to understanding the office supply chain. The three phases are:

<u>MIMESIS 1</u> : The pre-narration, what we need to know to affix a plot.
<u>MIMESIS 2</u> : "emplotment", a method of connecting selected events, characters and actions into a plotline.
<u>MIMESIS 3</u> : Reconnecting the parts to the whole into the hermeneutic circle: a process of understanding the totality from the individual sections (Boje, 2001).

An outline of how data was analysed in relation to the plot analysis is described below. The central plot for this thesis is how volunteering impacts the careers of conservationists and people working in the field.

- 1) **PRE-NARRATION**: This step looked at the 'facts' found in the transcriptions in relation to the qualities of serious leisure.
  - a) What is the social world of conservation volunteering? What experiences did they have?
  - b) What personalities they have and identity with their serious leisure?
  - c) What did they learn while volunteering? What did they enjoy and dislike?
  - d) What academic or none backgrounds did they have before volunteering?
  
- 2) **EMPLOTMENT**: The second step structured the chronology of individual events in relation to the Stages of Fulfilment Career within the Serious Leisure Perspective- the theoretical framework used to grasp "selected events, characters and actions" (Boje, 2001, p.5). It is split into 4 sections: beginning, development, establishment and maintenance. An outline of the stages can be found in Appendix C. The following chapter 4 will discuss the stages in more detail while analysing the interview transcripts.
  
- 3) **HERMUNUTIC CYCLE**. The third step underlined central components in step 2 related to major themes to reconnect the parts to a whole. These include:



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- a) The impact of volunteering on careers
  - b) Beyond professional careers: how changed them in personal lives
  - c) The feeling of social responsibility to volunteer due to western background and perseverance to help communities and the environment

The *Discussion* in chapter 6 will examine the key points found in step 3, the hermetic cycle, in relation to the literature introduced in chapter 2. It will also answer the RQ and provide critical perspectives.

### **3.4. Ethical Considerations and Research Quality**

First, all research needs to be carried out ethically without causing harm to participants, ensuring anonymity, and obtaining informed consent (Silverman, 2014). This thesis has hidden the identities of all participants and used pseudonyms. At the beginning of the interview, each participant was asked for their consent of recording. They were told they have the freedom to withdraw from the interview at any time and were not coerced or bribed to participate in any way. Furthermore, the collected data and the video recordings were not shared with anyone except for the interviewees upon request. Last, this topic is not seen as a sensitive issue in which could harm them in any way (Flick, 2014).

Second, reflecting on the limitations and quality of this thesis are pertinent to decipher the interpretations and conclusions made throughout (Booth & Williams, 2003). The online interview technique represents one limitation of this thesis. Arguably online video calls create a barrier between the researcher and the interviewee and make it challenging to interpret emotions and meanings due to the lack of visual cues. However, this could not be avoided due to the current global pandemic and due to the international pool of interviewees. This results in two more limitations. First, English was not always the native language for the interviewees. Sometimes it could be difficult to transcribe the interviews. However, transcriptions were made the same day as the interview in order to recollect as much as possible. Second, the sample size was small to represent a big data set. It was also diverse, and the link between them was that they worked in conservation and had previously volunteered in conservation-related projects. It is not the aim to generalise the findings based on their country of origin and age. These comparisons go beyond the scope of this thesis. Another limitation of the study may have resulted from the length of time between the participant's volunteer experience and when the study was conducted. To address this problem, the researchers sent the interview schedule to

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the participants in advance of the interview in order to stimulate the volunteers' memories about their experience.

Despite these limitations, the research was conducted to conform to qualitative research quality standards (Bryman, 2012). In order to ensure credible results, claims made in the analysis were situated both in the theoretical literature and with direct quotations from the data in which the connection between data and theory have been clearly articulated (Creswell, & Poth, 2018). Supplementary information was used to understand the participants' lives, their careers and volunteer experience in the form of websites and pictures and constant communication with the participants during the research process in order to learn as much as possible about the relevant chronology of life events and to identify recurring themes to understand how contextual factors may influence their career choices. To assist in the transferability of the results to other contexts, every step of the research process has been documented and made transparent (Bryman, 2012). The narrative analysis process was adapted from the research of various scholars and can be employed in further research. To the best of the researcher's ability, the writing is objective, unambiguous and transparent so other researchers can confirm the results (Whatmore et al., 2003).

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## 4. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

This chapter applies the stages of the Fulfilment Career (FC) by Stebbins to structure the interview results and implements literature to build on the analysis. Fifteen narrative interviews and three written interviews constitute the raw data. This chapter has five sections: The Beginning, Development, Establishment and Maintenance. This FC framework is employed because it clarifies the chronology of events from volunteering to careers in order to visualise the perceived impact of volunteering on their professional careers and pinpoint moments where volunteering contributed to personal fulfilment and had significant social impact. This chapter represents the second step of the narrative plot analysis: "Emplotment" – the grasping of selected events- before reconnecting the parts to a whole in the Discussion Chapter.

### 4.1. The Beginning: Multifarious Motivations to Volunteer in Conservation

Motivations to volunteer in conservation projects are vast. Similar to previous research on volunteer motivations, the interviewees equally were inspired to volunteer in order to travel (Karen, 2020); to learn new hobbies (Chang, 2020); and simply do what they love (Indi, 2020; Turku, 2020). First, as with all Serious Leisure activities, the participants are motivated and passionate about the topic or field they wish to pursue (Stebbins, 2014). For example, Tilla explains how the motivation to volunteer commences with a deep desire:

*"So, to me, volunteerism especially starts usually with a deep desire of something that I know needs to exist in the world for whatever reason, and therefore, I am going to support that in whatever way possible"* (Tilla, 2020).

Tilla feels passionate to support something that she feels needs to exist in the world. She later discusses how volunteering allows her to try something out before she dedicates her career to it:

*"But it [volunteering] gives me the opportunity to test out and to experience something that maybe I might not have had an opportunity to experience had I thought about it immediately as a as a job or as a or as a skilled, you know, something else...And as a volunteering situation, especially at the beginning, it opens new doors and allows us to kind of allows you to really step in without having to worry about where exactly you're going"* (Tilla, 2020).

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Volunteering provides opportunities she would not otherwise have to test the waters before committing herself fully. She can worry less about her career whilst still gaining new and meaningful experiences. Moreover, volunteering shows the participants what they like and dislike, allowing more freedom and flexibility transition from one career to another. For example, Alana thought she wanted to work in zoos until she volunteered in one:

*"I appreciated the experience. I appreciated the interaction. I appreciated learning how like actual zoo life and zoo conservation of works. But that's not my thing. My thing is being on the field, collecting data, going to the lab and analysing it. It's more like a lab work and fieldwork rather than just husbandry. And I realize that I didn't want to be like zoologist. I don't have to be like animal science. I don't want to be with the farm animals" (Alana, 2020).*

Whilst she speaks fondly of the experience, and appreciated her time there, she appreciates most the opportunity to show her what she prefers to do instead- a revelation only offered through the volunteering experience. Likewise, Chang never imagined herself working in conservation before her volunteering experience in coral restoration. She was spontaneously looking for something meaningful to do whilst travelling, and now she works full time with a British marine conservation organisation:

*"I kind of engineered my own redundancy and took redundancy with no big plans and was kind of thinking, oh, well, I might I might travel. And then I thought, well, you know, maybe volunteering or doing something like that would be, you know, a more constructive use of my time (Chang, 2020).*

The volunteering opportunity impacted Chang's career drastically. She transitioned from one field to another. In sum, volunteering therefore impacted the careers of participants in various ways, either by opening new doors, showing them what they like and dislike, and supporting them in their transition from one field toward the field of conservation.

Second, volunteering is crucial to find and progress in conservation-related jobs. It is especially useful for career advancement (Stoddart and Rogerson 2004). Knowing this, many people volunteer because it helps them find a paid job. For Indi, her dream was to work with sloths and volunteering is an "entrance into Latin America" (Indi, 2020):

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*“To find a paid job in Latin could be more difficult. And because I don't want to waste so much time, I just start as a volunteer. And I know that once I'm volunteering, I will start seeing what is going on in this case America in Costa Rica and conservation and how to how to face it. ... “Because if I would look now for a paid job, it would take me probably much longer” (Indi, 2020)*

For Indi, volunteering is less time consuming and less stressful than finding a paid job. It also provides her with the opportunity to work in Latin America afterwards. She does not mind volunteering her time because “it is a dream” (Indi, 2020). However, this struggle to find a paid job without volunteering dissatisfies some participants more than others:

*“I just got into volunteering because I was struggling so much to find a decent job in conservation. It's a highly competitive field and I'm not someone who has a lot of money to buy them opportunities. I'm also not someone who knows all the right people and is brilliant and networking. I definitely chose volunteer projects based on things I'm interested in and conservation projects often have at least a part of them that focuses on climate change... but, yeah, volunteering has been a means to an end for me and it's very much paid off even though I hate that I had to do a year plus of unpaid work to start to seem competitive for paid roles” (Charlie, 2020).*

For Charlie, she disliked the fact that she had to work for free. She was not passionate like some of the others to volunteer her time for free but felt it necessary to volunteer in order to get a job in the competitive field. Stebbins discusses this obligation to volunteer in terms of ‘marginal volunteering’ (Stebbins, 2014). He discusses the moral coercion referring to the external pressures felt by participants needed to volunteer as opposed to wanting to volunteer out of interest. While it is common for people to feel obliged volunteer in order to fulfil a program or internship for school credits (Stebbins, 2014), it was not the common reason conveyed in the interview results. The majority of the interviewees felt moral coercion to volunteer due to the specialised knowledge they possessed and felt an internal pressure to utilise this knowledge for the greater good. For example, when prompted by the interview question, *do you feel obliged to volunteer?* They responded in intriguing and somewhat similar ways:

*“Absolutely. If I could prevent something that's going to make someone from being sick or a whole lot of people being sick, then absolutely. I have the tools. I have the skills to be*

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*able to help. If you have the skill set that you should be able to or want to protect where you live and keep it for your kids. My kids” (Melly, 2020)*

Melly volunteers for an organisation alongside her professional job which samples lake water for bacteria and feels that her “tools and skillset” is important to help protect others, especially “the kids” (Melly, 2020). Other interviewees were motivated to teach kids and protect kids. Such as Lai, despite not having a professional background in conservation, felt it her responsibility to educate mothers and children about the dirty lakes in her area in Kenya. Such internal pressure to help others was integral within the interview interviewees. Pamela also felt a similar responsibility to educate kids and volunteer with kids due to her academic background:

*“Absolutely. Because I have all this knowledge So I have to share it and I guess I would be a hypocrite if I didn't try to Reduce our impact in the world, even if some people say, oh, you are not enough, but, well, if we all work together, maybe we are. And that's why I. I also love to teach little kids. They are the future. So” (Pamela, 2020)*

Pamela feels “hypocritical” if she did not share her knowledge or try to reduce her impact on the world. She feels that if people ‘work together’, such impacts can be reduced. This “collective responsibility” (Sef, 2020) and “shared consciousness (Tilla, 2020) are important concepts here and represent a significant motivation for participating in conservation volunteering. Such as the “responsibility to share knowledge and work together” (Roma, 2020) for the greater good. In the academic literature, many discuss the motivation to volunteer as part of a social or moral responsibility (Liarakou et al., 2011) and link this to noble values, such as to help those less fortunate and alleviate poverty (Brown, 2005; Chen & Chen, 2011). This social responsibility to volunteer is seen throughout the participants. For example, Lai, a local Kenyan, felt it her responsibility to “make a child smile” (Lai, 2020) due to the current economic situation in her country where most people are “living under a dollar a day” (Lai, 2020). Besides, volunteers from Western Backgrounds feel that it is their responsibility due to their “privileged position to help others” (Camile, 2020). Lilly felt as “a citizen of western, first-world countries” (Lilly, 2020) it is her responsibility “to help and try to fix the mess previous (and current) generations of westerners have created in developing countries” (Lilly, 2020). This internal and external pressure to begin volunteering and keep going is a huge motivator to volunteer in conservation to help the local communities, the animals, and the environment as a

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whole due to the climate crisis. In relation to the climate crisis, when Sef was asked why he thinks volunteering is important, he responds with:

*“So those three things linked together, social responsibility, the need to deal with a climate crisis and to enhance biodiversity and a left of centre politics. So, in my mind, they all linked together....it is about challenging the capitalist system. It is about the emergency kind of emergency that we have at the moment. And it is about being kind and collectively responsible” (Sef, 2020).*

Volunteering for Sef is a way to be kind and collectively responsible and challenge the capitalist system. As seen above, many felt the pressure, internal and external to give something back- and volunteering is one way to do this. By volunteering, it is not just a way to give back to society, but it is a way of balancing ones’ negative impact on the environment and turning it into a positive contribution. Obligation here is not necessarily an unpleasant moment as seen typically in Stebbins concept of marginal volunteering, but it inspires people to keep going, to outweigh their impacts. Some participants see volunteering as necessary, as not to have the money taken away from “important research” (Camille, 2020).

In sum, professionals in conservation and conservation enthusiasts involve themselves in conservation volunteering for several reasons, including egotistic reasons such as to travel, meet new people and to learn new hobbies. Others because of the opportunities that arise in which volunteering can open doors into paid employment. Most prevalent are the majority who felt an internal pressure to volunteer to help people, the planet and animals. This moral coercion to protect the environment, endangered animals and the local communities is a theme explored throughout the analysis and discussion. Knowing what motivates them to commence a serious leisure pursuit, what skills, knowledge and experiences do they receive when volunteering?

#### **4.2. Developing Skills, Knowledge and Experiences**

The development stage is the second stage of Stebbins’ Fulfilment Career. It is characterised by the development and acquisition of skills, knowledge and experience (Stebbins, 2014). During this stage, volunteers develop a devotion to their chosen activity, identify with it strongly and start to progress in their professional careers. The Serious Leisure Perspective distinguishes between skills, experience and knowledge, which is similarly delineated as *Techné*, *Episteme* and *Phronesis* in the context of travel and learning (Falk et al., 2014). This

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section explores the skills (techne), and knowledge (episteme) developed and acquired through volunteering. Phronesis (practical wisdom) is considered as an outcome of the volunteering experience and therefore discussed in the final maintenance stage.

Naturally, the volunteering experience provided many specific skills required for a job in conservation. Practical skills enabled them to progress in their jobs, such as animal handling, animal measuring, how to work with farm animals and how to identify plants and sampling bacteria, working with camera traps as well as “discipline and follow protocols” (Alana, 2020). Such skills gained through volunteering are all considered a “big plus on your CV” (Su, 2020). We see how similar to previous studies, career enhancement, and the possibility to brag to future employees is a huge motivator to volunteer (Bruyere & Rappe, 2007):

*“It was a month and a half. It gave me animal handling experience, which is something that if you work in wildlife biology is a big plus if you have that on you on your CV” (Camille, 2020).*

While the experiences look great for the CV, they are also important jobs that might not get done without the help of volunteers. For example, Melly volunteers and works in sampling and testing lake waters in the US, in which some of the work relies completely on the free support of volunteers:

*“But if you have volunteers who go from system to system, you're not only getting volunteer work and conservation work because we work hand-in-hand with the local conservation districts. We're also building this database of where the cyanobacteria are being found and what's causing it.... A lot of the volunteer data goes towards that, this database that the EPA then pulls from so they can see what's all going on and if they need to tighten up those regulations” (Melly, 2020).*

Melly explicitly states how volunteers contribute massively to data collection, which goes on to enforce local regulations about lake water safety. It is easy to ignore the hard work of volunteers, yet in conservation, especially, some organisations would not be running without them (McGehee & Santos, 2005). While the specific job-related skills assisted with finding a job in a similar field and progressing in conservation jobs, the major skills learnt were improved people management and communication. First, people management skills are a broad term and,



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in this instance, refers to working with a broad range of people of different nationalities and ages, “backgrounds and attitudes towards nature and conservation” (Lilly, 2020). For Lilly, the most important skills in her volunteering were people management skills, which enabled her to progress in her job and better manage other volunteers to have a good time and get the work done (Lilly, 2020). She enjoyed working with different nationalities, and this inspired her to keep working in the field. Similarly, Leo volunteered in order to learn:

*“how to manage the NGO, how to work with the community, how to deal with this, and also there were receiving volunteers. So, I learned from them. How they manage volunteers, how they organize a job description for the volunteers”* (Leo, 2020).

Such people management skills have benefited the volunteers’ career because they can better manage and organise people, and evaluate and be more critical toward the different management styles of chiefs or leaders (Pamela, 2020). Moreover, many of the interview interviewees stressed the positive impacts of volunteering on their communication capabilities. Such as the ability to have effective conversations with people who have completely different views (Roma, 2020). Roma discusses this skill when reflecting on a conversation she had with an older gentleman on one of her tours:

*“My first tour was actually a climate change tour and one of the people there, it was like an elderly man. And of course, he was like three, four times as old as I was. So, it was really hard to convince him. But now I know that whenever I go, I have to take like evidence and graphs and stuff like that”* (Roma, 2020)

She learnt how to engage this man with different views and opinions. Similarly, as Sarah discusses how she learnt to communicate better, she mentions how clarification is key. To question “what is the project, what is the aim, are we ready?” Communicating with clarity is important in any volunteer setting and thus enabled her “to communicate better and with clarity” (Sarah, 2020). Moreover, for Charlie, learning to communicate better “In a very diplomatic and non-argumentative way helped her confront employees when talking about minority groups” (Charlie, 2020). Likewise, it made Karen think more ‘inclusively’ (Karen, 2020). Not only communication skills but also “listening skills” were improved due to volunteering. The ability to actually hear what people say and “then think about collectively what a good response would be” (Sef, 2020). For Sef, these communication skills enabled him to progress in the

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Wildlife Trust he initially volunteered for and went from a leisure career to a paid career. For Sef, learning to communicate better is a skill that helped him progress in his job. In comparison, communicating and standing in front of people is beneficial for communities too. For example, it helped Lai address her community and

*“create awareness on some stuff about the environment and the importance of keeping our environment and protecting our waters” (Lai, 2020).*

It seems that the skills and knowledge gained through volunteering not only helped their professional careers but also helped them personally as well as for the society around them. Mixing cultures is integral to the volunteer experience, how to cook different foods, learn new languages and gain insight into how to do things differently by “sharing notes” (Lai, 2020) and “exposed to many different people and ways of thinking” (Turku, 2020). Such first-hand knowledge sharing provides them knowledge on “how to do things currently and how each of us can change things” (Karen, 2020). Moreover, they learnt how organisations are run as well as the negative impacts they may have on animals, such as in shelters and zoos:

*“My view of the rehab centres, I would say before that they were perfect as well in this case specific, that they were perfect. And now So, I am not sure. I'm sorry I am not sure if I should day this. I wouldn't necessarily bring an animal there. It depends on the situation. So, I think I can evaluate that part” (Pamela, 2020).*

Volunteering in animal shelter gave her the knowledge to critically assess the conditions of animals in the shelter. Gaining and sharing of knowledge is crucial to a successful volunteering experience. One of the greatest assets to volunteering is the ability to foster change in people's mindsets and network with like-minded people in protecting the environment:

*“Before I came back, I wasn't so much networked on that topic. And now I started building a whole network of community-related with circular economy-related with exactly how to do things correctly and how properly and how each of us can change a thing” (Karen, 2020).*

Possessing the knowledge that both furthers your career (Melly, 2020) and has a great impact on the community is one of the most highlighted benefits of volunteering expressed by the

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participants. In sum, volunteering in different projects provides many skills and knowledge that impacts the careers of conservationists working with animals in particular. Nevertheless, it is not limited to animal conservation skills. It is also people management and communication skills that can benefit their personal lives and the community around them. Moreover, it is also the knowledge to speak up against injustice and critically examine the condition of conservation. In this section, it was revealed how volunteering is integral in many different conservation fields, and volunteers constitute much of the work in conservation. However, what are the personal and social costs and rewards of volunteering?

#### **4.3. Establishment: The Personal and Social Costs and Rewards of Volunteering**

During this stage, the volunteers are well established in their chosen pursuit. They are well immersed in their activity, providing a knowledge-based service for one or more different organisations (Stebbins, 2014). The participants volunteer routinely, and it becomes a prominent feature of their leisure lifestyle (*ibid*). During the establishment stage, the participants weigh the social and personal costs and rewards. First, these show reasons for why they continued in the profession due to their contribution to society and the planet and various personal and career rewards. Second, they portray the costs that impacted them and reasons for transitioning jobs or stop volunteering. This section is structured using the relevant personal and social gains outlined by Stebbins in the SLP. It was very clear how the volunteering experience impacted their careers in vast ways. For example:

*“filling a CV with diverse experiences makes you stand out to recruiters. Being eye-catching, interesting and adaptable seems to be just about as important as having the actual skillset a recruiter is looking for. Life experience is important and I gained plenty of that... think that’s a great example of my ability to learn on my feet, my tenacity and my ability to succeed in whatever setting by simply throwing myself into the work.”* (Charlie, 2020).

The life experiences gained from volunteering makes them stand out and be ‘eye-catching’ for recruiters because of her ability to think critically and be persistent. In comparison, Alana can show employees “she is a good worker” (Alana, 2020) and the “2-page resume” with “experience from a lot of different places helped me get the job” (Alana, 2020). Volunteering can boost their CVs and help them with getting a job (Bruyere & Rappe, 2007). However, there were more personal and social gains that the interviewees spoke about more enthusiastically.

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First, the interview interviewees spoke of the gratification they had towards their volunteer experiences. They were doing what they love (Chang, 2020; Turku, 2020) which felt “amazing” (Lai, 2020) and changes how you “see things from a different lens” (Sef, 2020). When reflecting on volunteering, it was “such a valuable experience” (Su, 2020). Reaching people and having an impact on them “feels so good” (Sarah, 2020) and some got a “lot of satisfaction about it being able to help organizations and individuals (Zariah, 2020). By comparing the various responses, they received satisfaction and joy when they were doing what they love and helping others which also made them feel good (Butler, 2003). Lai sums up nicely the pleasure she receives from volunteering and helping her community:

*“There the benefits I get from volunteering. I feel very encouraged like everyone, maybe my friends, they drive me. They push me to continue doing this job like they encouraged me and so people are so glad of all of the steps that I've taken. And so, like, it's amazing. And I feel like I feel my heart is so touched and I'm so grateful for maybe what I'm doing. And also, can see maybe somebody can smile, a kid can smile at the end of the day” (Lai, 2020).*

Lai mentions the benefits like the encouragement she gets from people around her and the gratitude she feels from contributing to making kids smile. However, in contrast to the gratification felt, some endured emotional burnout and physical exhaustion from volunteering too much, and for many coinciding activities (Alana, 2020). Alana expressed an obligation she felt when being needed by the animal shelter she volunteered for. Stebbins defines burnout as the “physical and emotional exhaustion stemming from long-term stress, frustration, and excessive obligation in a volunteer activity (Stebbins, 2014).

Second, a major reward from volunteering came from the re-creation of oneself through serious leisure activities (Stebbins, 2001). Many interviewees recreated themselves as someone more environmentally friendly and more appreciative towards nature. For example, volunteering for Change filled her up with a newly found “fantastic love of more marine life and skill in diving” (Chang, 2020). She even transitioned to a job in marine conservation after the volunteer experience. After she saw the value of volunteering in her personal life, she “also volunteers here at the local hospital” (Chang, 2020). Similarly, Leo discusses how being a volunteer changed him and the impression people have of him:

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*“You know it changed me, because the people in the society, they also see me as another image, like somebody who is a mentor. And it’s very impressive so they also love what I’m doing. And they always tell me to keep up the good work that I’m doing” (Leo, 2020).*

Volunteering changed the way people viewed him in society and his status. Leo appreciated what he is doing more, and he continued helping his community in other ways. This is inexorably linked to the self-fulfilment they feel when realising to the fullest their gifts and character potential in the path from volunteering toward Fulfilment Career (Stebbins, 2014). Stebbins in previous research found that serious leisure participants found personal development with 1) greater tolerance, 2) more compassion and 3) gaining global perspective and insights in other ways of life (Stebbins & Graham, 2004).

Likewise, volunteers recreated themselves as more tolerant people of other cultures and religions. For example, during her volunteer experience, Karen learnt “how to do things, about how to talk about more vulnerable people...It is not about political correctness per se, it is just inclusive thinking” (Karen, 2020). She thought more inclusively and would speak up against injustices at her workplace. She mentions how this impacted her experiences at work and how she communicated with people in her workplace from different backgrounds. Moreover, Lilly’s volunteer experience “made me really tolerant of other people’s viewpoints, while simultaneously teaching me to stand up for myself and for what matters” (Lilly, 2020). She was more likely to stand up for herself, to speak their mind and “defend” her viewpoints. They realised their fullest potential, which made them more adaptable and confident in the workplace. Delineated above is how volunteering can impact both the participant's careers, by providing unique experiences for job progression, and personal development such as changing behaviours to be more tolerant and inclusive. We also see how, upon reflection, they are passionate and speak fondly upon their volunteering experience. Despite some emotional burnout at times. Nonetheless, what became most apparent in the results was how this personal fulfilment to better oneself coupled with a personal fulfilment to contribute and do good for the society. Perhaps the most significant reward from volunteering in conservation projects is positively contributing toward the environment and community members. Many discussed the importance of ‘doing something’ and “developing a passion” to help the current situation (Lai, 2020). Volunteering for serious leisure is more than personal rewards. It is about changing behaviour, and learning, re-learning and adapting (Karen, 2020). Contributing to the community and

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environment is a way to give back to the community (Leo, 2020). Sef believes this is one of the most important aspects of volunteering which encourages him further:

*“What I think it probably comes out of a perhaps a sense of helping to earn a social responsibility, that kind of awareness of contributions to society. Social conscience, if you like. I think that's that. It's interesting because I think that is that that sense of social responsibility is the key thing...So I think that's yeah it is not an obligation. But as part of social responsibility or collective social responsibility” (Sef, 2020).*

Conservation volunteers are crucial to “move the organisation forward in some way” (Turku, 2020). They spread awareness to other non-conservationists (Ratton et al., 2012). Charlie, for example, states the importance volunteering has on her life, and in turn, the contribution to the field of conservation:

*“It has made me try to reach out to more people to impact their behaviours, such as sharing easy and simple methods to be more eco-friendly and promoting the same values as the organisations I volunteer for” (Zariah, 2020).*

Zariah is more inclined to reach out to people around her and promote values related to eco-friendliness. Volunteers have a huge impact on the communities and the organisations providing conservation:

*“Volunteers are the unsung heroes of so many things. I've contributed to multiple Masters & PhD projects, even though the highest education I have is a BSc (Honours). Through this, I've helped people receive impressive accolades and I've also contributed to knowledge in the scientific community. I also know that putting in a lot of unpaid hours can help take the pressure off of stressed individuals and non-profits” (Charlie, 2020)*

Charlie's unpaid hours contributes to the knowledge for the scientific community and helps reduce the pressure from non-profits and others working there. Conservation projects are not well funded and they need volunteers to contribute their time, knowledge, skills for free (Turku, 2020). In the establishment stage in the Fulfilment Career, volunteers are well immersed and often the organisations they volunteer for cannot run without them which can sometimes lead to emotional and physical burnout (Stebbins, 2014). One frequent complaint of volunteering is

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with the organisations themselves. One subject discussed the “resentment” she sometimes felt toward volunteering organisations because of the vicious cycle perpetuated with ‘free labour’:

*“A vicious cycle where I am volunteering to help my career, but volunteering is also taking away opportunities that might otherwise be paid” (Zariah, 2020).*

Nonetheless, according to Indi, experts and conservationists “normalise it” (Indi, 2020)- talking about working for free- they normalise it because it can further their professional careers and can help the community. Some volunteers would not want to take money for the wages which would “take from otherwise important work” (Charlie, 2020). There is not enough money in conservation as it is, and so volunteer work is highly important.

However, contradictory, as already discussed in the literature review, scholars have stressed the negative issues of volunteers in host communities. This holds especially true when volunteers leave after a while and perhaps are not contributing to the long-term development of poorer communities. Lai explains how in Kenya, when the volunteers come, the kids “are afraid of them” but “when they are leaving, the kids get a lot attached” (Lai, 2020). The kids become lonely, “they cry and miss them” because “it is also a bonding time” (Lai, 2020). While these social and personal costs and challenges are acknowledged and represented, the interviewees for this thesis seem more positive of their contribution of volunteering on the community than the problems they bring with them. This is a significant contradiction explored further in the Discussion chapter.

In sum, volunteering can have huge impacts on career progression, personal fulfilment, animal and social welfare. While there are many problems introduced with volunteers, especially when they come for a short period, their contribution is tremendous and often ignored (McGehee & Santos, 2005). Despite the emotional and physical burnout and complications with conservation organisations, why do the interviewees persevere in their quest for conservation jobs? How did volunteering lead them to where they are now in their careers?

#### **4.4. Maintaining a conservation career and persevering for the greater conservation cause**

The final stage of the Fulfilment Career is set in the current time (Stebbins, 2014). It explores what the participants did after their volunteer experience. It looks at whether they continued a job in conservation after their volunteering or whether they quite due to various costs. While

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most were volunteering in their personal lives alongside their careers or instead of a career, some quit volunteering due to the economic crisis which does not put enough money into conservation projects (Turku, 2020). Others do not volunteer anymore because volunteering was treated as a gateway to get a paid job in the same field (Su, 2020; Sarah, 2020). For example, Charlie was offered a full-time position after volunteering for a kangaroo sanctuary in Australia:

*“After a month of volunteering 6-7 days a week, I was offered a fulltime paid position (the first paid position they’d ever offered anyone) and stayed there for a further six months, training other volunteers, doing all the same husbandry tasks and helping with fundraising and social media outreach. (Charlie, 2020).*

She worked tremendously hard and was rewarded for her efforts. Likewise, Lilly’s experience as a Research assistant in Costa Rica led her to a job at the WWF:

*“My experience in Costa Rica, especially the fact that I was used to living in basic conditions, helped me get my job with WWF in Cambodia. The fieldwork here is very intense, with mobile hammock camps and line transects walked every morning and afternoon. (Lilly, 2020)*

She mentioned how the experience of basic living conditions landed her the job more than the actual technical skills she learnt conducting biodiversity surveys. Prominent in the interviews were how they persevered to reach their career goals to finally get a career they are proud of and are fulfilled. They believe in the mission, and the mission is more important than themselves (Tilla, 2020). Indi says she is a “fighter”; she fights for her dreams in wildlife conservation until she achieved them (Indi, 2020). “It is hard” (Indi, 2020) but it “gives you much more than you would have thought at the very beginning” (Indi, 2020). They reflect positively to their experience because they have persevered through thick and thin, “conquering adversity and overcoming costs” (Stebbins, 2014). Volunteering can be emotionally draining, difficult and frustrating. However, for Turku, it was too hard, and she no longer could volunteer or work in conservation because of the lack of funding (Turku, 2020).

Other than landing a job with what they volunteered for, others have continued to volunteer or start their projects based on the values they learnt during volunteering. As mentioned, Chang now “volunteers in a local hospital” (Chang, 2020). Moreover, Karen praises volunteering for helping her to “create my own projects, start-up project, and soon company to do with



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*environmental sustainability here in Estonia and about consumerism and about recycling”* (Karen, 2020). Similarly, Lai introduced the knowledge she receives from eco-finder, where she volunteered to provide health awareness to her community. Alongside her occupation as a health care nurse, she volunteers in conservation education for the local kids:

*“Like the kids, we teach them, even the health and what about the environment, we see in the kids, like now our small kids, they can plant trees. They know the importance of planting a tree. And so, we see it from there. And also, when maybe we have like we can make even a forest, our manmade forest, and then we can plant trees. And this tree, we can use them even in future cause for other benefits. We can sell the trees. Or, we can also use it for the purposes. Maybe tourists still come, come and see the forest”* (Lai, 2020).

Volunteering is so integral in Lai’s life that she could not imagine going without it. Many of the interviewees feel it their duty to teach children. Leo, for example, established a non-profit organisation providing conservation education to the local children near the Serengeti National Park. Similarly, Pamela now volunteers in education programs because kids are the “next generation” and feels it her duty to the knowledge she possesses as a conservation biologist. This perpetuates the fact that volunteer work provides meaning for the volunteers involved, and encourages them to benefit the community further.

Furthermore, after volunteering, many have maintained lifestyle choices that are more environmentally friendly. **They transfer the wisdom FALK understanding the role of travel in supporting visitors’ learning Accumulating ‘life experience’ but acting in the right way, for the right reasons and at the right time (Saugstad, 2005)** and virtues to try and be a ‘better person’, one who is more environmentally conscious, such as, going vegan (Karen, 2020) or using eco-friendly products (Roma, 2020; Pamela, 2020). Others have become less consumerist (Chang, 2020; Indi, 2020), more aware of climate crisis (Sef, 2020) and more aware of actions on the environment such as composting and thus are more likely to educate herself on the issues (Karen, 2020), as well as others around them (Zariah, 2020). They start to identify with their chosen pursuit as being “more caring” (Sarah, 2020) more helpful (Tilla, 2020) and a responsible citizen (Karen, 2020).

In sum, this section shows how volunteers persevered with serious leisure because it provided them with paid job opportunities in their chosen field. Yet what we see is it is more than that. Most participants volunteer not for their careers, but because they want to contribute to the

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community around them. Volunteered provided them with values that they utilised in their personal lives and changed them to more environmentally friendly.

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## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The final chapter for this thesis summarises the interview results, answers the research question and analyses the findings with literature presented in chapter 2. It then addresses the limitations of the research study and recommendations for further research. Finally, it summarises the complete research paper.

First, to summarise the findings and answer the research question, volunteering impacted the subject's careers in multiple ways seen throughout the stages of the Fulfilment Career. The experiences opened new doors and revealed what type of job they would like, and what they did not like. Thus, volunteering was seen as less time consuming and less stressful than searching immediately for a job. Diverse volunteer experiences were seen as a tool to find the job of their dreams and transition from another field completely. While some interviewees did not like the fact they had to volunteer to get a job, others saw volunteering as a major way for career progression and CV enhancement. Volunteering gave them more diverse experiences for their CV and provided them with communication skills, especially with people from different nationalities and cultures. It also improved their people management skills that enhanced their ability to attain jobs in the sector and especially higher-paying management jobs. Also, they could demonstrate that they were persistent and hard-working to future employers. Moreover, volunteering opened their eyes to a more minimalist lifestyle which helped in securing remote jobs.

Using the framework outlined above, this thesis uses the fulfilment career in conjunction with other literature because the Fulfilment career alone was not enough but rather a useful tool to structure the results. First, this thesis shows how the participants were inspired to volunteer for both personal benefits such as to travel (Stoddart and Rogerson 2004; Sin, 2009) and expand social networks (Caissie & Halpenny, 2003; Omoto, Snyder, & Martino, 2000). It also develops literature on the motivation to volunteer for career enhancement (Wuthnow, 1998; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004) and for bulking CV experiences (Bruyere & Rappe, 2007; Campbell & Smith, 2006; Stebbins, 2006). This thesis shows how personal activities influenced career preparation and decision (Chen, McAlpine & Amundsen, 2015, and how constraints (costs) can hinder progression or transition to another career path completely (McQuarrie and Jackson, 2002). This thesis complements existing literature on tourist motivations and applies it within conservation volunteering and the link with professional careers. The Fulfilment Career is a useful concept to show the flow of movement into paid

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employment and visualise moments of personal fulfilment when executing these tasks (Pi et al., 2014). It highlights the satisfaction and motivation with conservation volunteering which is useful to encourage more people to volunteer and develop a fulfilling career (Murray, 2009). This thesis promotes ways for effective personal and social development through the narratives of conservationists.

Above all, this thesis found many altruistic motivations such as doing good for the sake of others or for the greater good, such as helping those less fortunate or alleviating poverty (Brown, 2005; Wearing, 2001). Most of all, “epistemological commitment to science” and an “ethical commitment to making a difference” (Whatmore & Thorne, 2000, p 132) and a moral obligation to protect the natural environment (Shultz & Zelezny, 1998). Results show difficulty to differentiate between egoistic and altruistic motivations (Brown & Letho, 2005), ‘due to feeling good by helping others’ (Butler, 2003). Some interviewees felt pressure to volunteer due to knowledge and western privilege. This collective responsibility to help was considered as a shared consciousness inherent in conservation volunteering and a major aspect of the social world of conservation volunteering. Believing in the collective responsibility and sharing this obligation became part of their lifestyle and also a way they defined their personality as more helpful, more caring, and more eco-friendly. They felt a self-gratification by helping and seeing progress in society and the planet around them. While naturally, burnout occurred during highly involved serious leisure activities, they realised their full potential as they volunteered, and especially when helping move the organisation forward. They persevered, and this helped them start their own business based on the values they inherited from volunteering, and most continue to volunteer even today. While arguably, the interview results show that residents of the ‘Global South’ also volunteer due to lower average incomes they do not have the money but still see it as their responsibility to help others (Lai, 2020).

Nonetheless, this feeling of superiority and privilege (Sin, 2009) did more help than harm. For example, volunteering enables the spread of conservation awareness to other mainstream tourists (Ratton, Eagles & Mair, 2012). It helped mobilise social action (McGehee & Santos, 2005), and contributing to environmental quality (Ryan, Kaplan & Grese, 2001). Volunteers promoted environmental education initiatives that support tourists to make sustainable choices (McKercher, 2015). Many came from western backgrounds and had the financial security to volunteer (McGehee & Santos, 2005) which can benefit the host country by contributing to the funding of vital projects such as medical aid (Mguyen 2012; Ellis, 2007) for devastatingly

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under-funded conservation projects (Brightsmith, Stronza, & Holle, 2008). This thesis contributes to knowledge on how volunteering can be a vehicle for environmental change and impact tourist ethics (Burns, 2017; McGehee & Santos, 2005).

While the Fulfilment Career had been useful, the focus has often remained on the individual benefits and less on the social benefits. It thus fails to address issues relating to the community and social justice (Gallant et al., 2013). However, there is a movement to reframe serious leisure to understand the “variety of outcomes for the person, social world, and communities within which the person is immersed” (Arai & Pedler, 2003, p. 193). They are bonded together by shared norms and duties, brought together around “practices of shared meaning” (Borgmann, 1992, cited in Arai & Pedler, 2003). Here the “rich are not helping the poor; they join them” (p.142). Using the SLP has been useful to structure the results but limited in this social aspect. Thus, this thesis contributes to stimulating further discussion on social responsibility and travel, conservation, and responsible tourism. According to Falk, “What is needed is a broader understanding of what satisfaction entails” (Falk et al., 2014, p. 920). In this context, fulfilment can coincide with collective fulfilment and social responsibility. This is relevant information for conservation NGOs on how to deliver meaningful experiences.

However, a limitation of the study is the single perspective of volunteers and less from the community perspective. While the aim was to figure out the impact on their careers, if time and scope had allowed this research could have been extended to include the impact on careers in conjunction with the impact of conservation volunteering on the communities and the conservation projects themselves. While some of the interviews were considered locals in areas which receive western volunteers, further research, could flesh out and compare the interviewees more on their demographic features such as their nationality. At the same time, it was not an aim of the thesis to generalise the findings based on these demographic features, and further research could benefit from comparing the different perspective and opinions of the perceived impact of volunteering based on their age and ethnicity. Situational factors like culture and gender play a huge role, and further studies could implement survey data to understand perceived contributions to conservation. It is also recommended that further research analyse the perceived impact of volunteering on different professions, other than conservation volunteering. The results from this thesis serve as an illustration for the perceived

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impacts on conservation roles, but what about other serious leisure activities? It is hoped that the rich subjective data offered here stimulate further research in this regard.

In conclusion, this thesis contributes to growing body of research on volunteer tourism, one of the most expanding niche tourism markets worldwide. In particular, this thesis explores conservation volunteering, a form of participatory tourism that focuses on protecting endangered species and decreasing environmental degradation. This type of volunteering is especially vital in global times of climate change and animal extinction. Moreover, on a personal level, when professional conservationists need volunteer experience to get paid jobs, and in turn, conservation projects rely on the motivation and hard work of volunteering to preserve and fund the projects. This thesis explored the various motivations of professional conservationists, marine biologists and also environmental enthusiasts. They volunteered in conservation-related projects and found out what motivated them to participate in the various projects, and also what made them persevere too. This illustrated the various impacts that conservation volunteering had on their professional careers, such as new knowledge and experience, and their personal lives, such as lifestyle changes. By doing so, it shed light on modern lifestyles and the blurred lines between 'work' and 'leisure' where more and more people work and travel and find personal fulfilment/ meaningful experiences through travel and contributing to the communities and conservation around them. This thesis also showed how volunteering could have greater contributing to people's career than the current literature entails. As Falk argues, "the quest for knowledge and understanding, enacted through travel, will continue to be a dominant theme of the new century." (Falk, et al., 2014, p. 922). Understanding volunteering as improving personal, career and social developments can advance the quality of the experiences, customise them and make more transformative experiences for individuals searching for meaning while travelling.

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# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

- About the Interviewee:
  - age, nationality, current occupation. Knowledge on conservation
  
- Your experience of Conservation Volunteering: Satisfaction, Challenges, Motivations, Gains,
  - What did you enjoy most about volunteering?
  - Why did you volunteer?
  - What have you gained personally by volunteering?
  - What do you feel you contribute by volunteering?
  
- Impact of Conservation volunteering on professional careers
  - Career choice
  - Career transition
  - Career progression
  - Generally what you do differently now.
  
- Impact of Conservation volunteering on Personal Fulfilment
  - Positive and negative feelings of your contribution on self and community
  - What did it teach you? Morally.. do you have greater appreciation for wildlife or environment now?
  
- Impact of wider socio-political factors
  - Climate change
  - Tourism problems
  - Poverty
  - Western vs southern
  
- The learning Environment:
  - Other peoples impact on career choices, behaviours and attitudes (enculturation)
  - Emotional attachment to animals, plants?
  - Other stimulation. What was it that helped you learn , as well as tangible aspects

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- How would you describe your knowledge on conservation before volunteering? Or did you learn more during volunteering ?
  - Impact of volunteering on Identity
    - Volunteering contribute to concept of citizenship, active responsibility beyond yourself?
    - Changed perception of yourself?
    - Has other people contributed to a change in how you see yourself?

#### Appendix B. Categorising Interview Results to SLP

##### \*Green- Serious Leisure Qualities

##### \*Yellow- frequent codes and connected to many aspects→ themes

- Narrative storytelling: Why they volunteering and their jobs now (chronology)
  - Sequencing
  - Order of events
  - Sentiment and opinions
  - Cause and effects
- Individual Demographic Features and Comparisons
  - Nationality
  - Location
  - Age
  - Position
  - *Education*
- Characteristics of volunteering
  - *Duration*
  - The type
  - Their position
  - Patterns in relation to career
- Ability to volunteer due to access, privilege, financial security.
  - Why their privilege is important for feeling of helping
  - How they have opportunity and how they use this opportunity
  - Whether living in rich or poor country impacts ability to volunteer
- The volunteering social world
  - How do I define the social world (facebook, location of posts)
  - How is it experienced by the members
    - As professional vs slow and inefficient



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- As minimalistic
  - As educational space for sharing knowledge on conservation which does good things
  - Filled with passionate people dedicated to saving animals and protecting climate. A collective desire to help→ **obligation**
  - Impact of volunteering on behaviour, attitude changes, values, habits.
    - **Awareness**
    - **Character changes** - More confident; resilient; grateful; tolerant; adaptable; solution focused
    - **Values** of conservation in communities and more **critical** to existing structures
    - **More minimalist/ less consumerist . and more environmentally friendly**
    - Personal and community perception
    - More appreciative of life
  - Impact of? Volunteering on Identity
    - How do they relate to themselves (privilege, knowledge, education)
    - How do they relate to themselves in relation to others
    - In relation to volunteering and impact
    - How do the participants identify with their chosen pursuit ?
      - As “tarzan”
      - Active helper in society
      - “Part of my ethos”... “Core to my being”
      - “Fighter”-- **perseverance**-- normalize it- reduce **costs**
  - The **durable benefits** of volunteering
    - Personal rewards
      - Personal Enrichment “doing what I love”
      - Regeneration “new love of diving” “Broadens horizon”
      - Self Actualisation (dev skills and knowledge) vs Self Expression
      - Self Image “status in society”
      - Financial return - “richness in life experiences”
      - **Self Gratification/ fulfillment- realizing full potential**
    - Social gains
      - Group Accomplishment “mission bigger than you”
      - Social Attraction/ participating in social world”mutually beneficial friendships”
      - **Contribution to a group**

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- With conservation know how and skills
    - Due to environmental crisis and economic situation
    - Altruistic vs egoistic debate
    - Smaller organisations= more meaningful work
  - Career gains---> focus: see 'Career'
  - Costs of volunteering
    - Organisations don't pay back- but normalised it
    - Lack of education training
    - Burnout
    - Not enough money invested into conservation (lack of funding) - Broader socio-cultural context
      - Impact of Volunteering on Skill , knowledge acquisition (benefit but own category)
  - Knowledge (episteme): History, culture, social skills, conservation organization
  - Practical Wisdom→ how to be more environmentally friendly , being more helpful, less consumerist
  - Soft skills: Communication, decision making, problem solving, inclusive thinking,
  - Hard Skills: People management, discipline, environmental know how, languages
  - Experiences: How to live remotely, how to get more out of life
  - Training: Specific skills for job : eg electric fences, solar panels, health and safety
    - Obligation? To volunteer.
  - Feel obliged
    - Due to western background vs non western background (socially vs individually?)
    - Due to responsibility for poor communities
    - As a leader/ manager/ in charge
    - Due to climate crisis
  - Don't feel obliged→ part of identity
  - Knock on effect to volunteer elsewhere
    - Impact of Volunteering on Careers
  - Career choice: Opens new doors, leads to a job
  - Career progression: skills and knowledge learnt
  - Career transition: Test waters, go into conservation from other career path
  - The analysis of fulfillment careers . the stream of personal development
    - How has attitude changes impacted career progression and transition?
      - Perseverance during volunteering
  - Examples of perseverance during Volunteering

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- Despite not knowing outcome
  - Going home 'extra work'
  - Reasons to Persevere
    - To reach career goals
    - To reach personal goals (to see those character changes)
    - Because people around you are passionate (social world) encouraging
    - To fight for what you believe in (greater cause/ egoistic) and your own dream (altruistic) but it doesn't really matter. Why?
      - Macro: Impact of wider socio political context
  - Climate change: protect water, protect ecosystem
  - Back to basics living- collective responsibility, challenging capitalist system,
  - Collective thinking and contribution as member of society
  - Privilege- opportunity, access. Western perception and challenges to this
  - Consumerist capitalist
  - Government corruption (Africa and South America). and to help people to help others
  - Not enough money invest into conservation (Turku,
    - Micro : Me as a researcher constructing meaning
  - Me: not a conservationist,
  - PURPOSE- what they have done is relevant, has contribution, selling themselves?  
Asking for help?
  - Structure: monologue at first, then deepend as related to giants, motivations, costs, identity, social world.
  - Omitted: problems with Volunteering despite prompt, other impacts on career,

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Appendix C. Mimesis 2: the Emplotment/ data analysis

- a) **Beginning stage:** motivations to volunteer
  - i) For school/ internship
  - ii) To gain experience
  - iii) For helping the community and environment
  - iv) The pressure to use knowledge “responsibility”
- b) **Development stage:** Development and acquisition of skills, knowledge and experience
  - i) Skills acquired: people management, communication, practical skills
  - ii) Experiences gained from other cultures
  - iii) lifestyle changes-- later relate to Falk in the discussion ?
- c) **Establishment stage:** The personal and social costs and rewards of volunteering
  - i) Fully immersed in the activity, how do they discuss the benefits and rewards following from Stebbins classification of personal and social gains
    - (1) Self-gratification= satisfaction toward volunteering and experiences and skills gained
    - (2) Regeneration= recreation of oneself through volunteering
    - (3) Financial return= get something back and western background
    - (4) Self fulfilment= realise your gift and potential
    - (5) Helping the community = social rewards
- d) **Maintenance phase:** How volunteering led them to where they are now
  - i) Where they are now:
    - (1) At their desired careers
    - (2) Continue volunteering elsewhere
    - (3) No longer volunteering (due to various factors)
  - ii) Perseverance
    - (1) In order to maintain new lifestyle
    - (2) To reach career goals
    - (3) To help community and feeling of social responsibility