

Developing the Volunteer Tourist Identity through Meaningful Interaction: A
Critical Comparison of the Lived Experiences of Childcare and Animal Care
Volunteers in South Africa

by

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Abstract

This thesis employs ethnographic research techniques to examine the lived experiences of individuals who participate in volunteer tourism projects. Data was gathered over a four month period from two diverse programs in South Africa, one working with children and one working with animals. Using a symbolic interactionist theoretical approach, the analysis of participant observation and interview data reveal an interaction process at the structural, group and individual level through which program participants come to identify self as a volunteer tourist and form volunteer tourist identities appropriate to the social situation experienced within their own particular volunteer project. The findings also suggest program culture and group norms, as well as altruistic and personal motivations, may be influential in affecting volunteer tourist behaviour. Results of this study highlight the need for further cross-comparative ethnographic research on divergent programs to enhance the understanding of volunteer tourist experiences and volunteer tourism as a whole.

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Introduction

Aims and Objectives

This is a study on what has been stylized in the literature as volunteer tourism. Volunteer tourism is a practice involving a person travelling from his or her home country (usually a developed country) to another country (usually a developing country) to volunteer for a period of time while also having time to engage in leisure activities, such as visiting a famous landmark or ecological site. For me as a researcher, this phenomenon is of interest because I have wanted to participate as a volunteer abroad for many years. While I had never engaged in this practice before conducting this study, I had been curious as to what attracted me so strongly to the activity and wanted to know what the lived experience would be like. Thus, I decided to do in-depth research on volunteer tourism in order to get a better understanding of what the experience actually involves and what meaning it holds for people who engage in this activity.

To differentiate my research from the previous volunteer tourist research I found had been undertaken by sociologists, anthropologists, social psychologists, and other researchers in the social sciences, and to add to the research literature on the topic, I decided to conduct a comparative analysis of two volunteer placements. I was interested in how the volunteer tourist experience at one program would be similar to or different from that of another program: would the types of people at one placement be the same as at the other? Would the interactions between the volunteers be similar? Would the meaning of the experience be comparable? I believed being able to critically analyze two

case studies would allow me to get a more holistic picture of the practice of volunteer tourism than had been presented to me in the research studies I had read.

To summarize, the purpose of this research study is to critically deconstruct and compare two divergent volunteer programs in South Africa and to learn how the lived experiences of volunteers who participate in humanitarian aid programs differ from volunteers who participate in animal care programs. The first program I participated in involved working with teachers in a primary school in South Africa to teach children and is referred to throughout the thesis as the “childcare project¹.” The second program involved working on a wildlife sanctuary in South Africa that offers care for orphaned and injured wildlife. That program is identified throughout the thesis as the “animal sanctuary.” Additionally, the participants who volunteered at the childcare project are known as “childcare volunteers” and the participants who volunteered at the animal sanctuary are known as “animal sanctuary volunteers.” Since my data emerge from the study of two diverse groups rather than from a single group, I believe my findings can speak more broadly to the lived volunteer tourism experience as a whole through my comparison of the similarities, differences and distinctions existing among the volunteers, their volunteer activities and their daily social interactions.

Methodology

In order to engage in such an in-depth, comparative study, I employed ethnographic methodological techniques to gather my data. An ethnographic approach allowed me to live and work with my research participants, to observe their daily

¹ For the purposes of confidentiality, I have given each program a pseudonym.

interactions and speech as well as participate in the volunteer tourist social situation myself. Specifically, I used participant observation to record my experiences and observations in the field and conducted interviews with a subset of twenty (20) volunteers to learn more about their motivations for selecting their program and what they hoped to gain from their participation in volunteer tourism. In this way, I was able to actively participate in the social situation in the same capacity as each and every other volunteer, and use my experiences and observations to make sense of the phenomenon of volunteer tourism.

Layout of Thesis Chapters

Following this introduction, chapter one of the thesis provides an overview of previous literature conducted on volunteer tourism. This overview describes the types of research that have already been conducted, the major findings presented on volunteer tourism, and how I use those findings to guide the formation of my own research questions. Chapter two details the methodological choices I used throughout the study and how these choices were guided by the basic tenets of ethnography and participant observation research methodology.

Following the chapter on methodology, chapters three and four present a descriptive analysis of the data that I gathered in the two volunteer tourist settings in South Africa. Chapter three provides an overall description of the two volunteer programs, the volunteers who participated in each program and examples of significant observed behaviour in the field. The chapter also presents an analysis of those field observations using tenets of the symbolic interactionist theoretical approach to explain

how volunteers create meaningful experiences through their interactions and how such experiences shape the volunteer tourist situational identity.

Chapter four supports that analysis through an exploration of the interview data provided by twenty volunteers: ten childcare volunteers and ten animal sanctuary volunteers. Additionally, these volunteers discuss their past travel and volunteer experiences and the personal benefits they hoped to gain through participating in their specific volunteer tourist program. Interestingly, analysis of the interview data relates strongly to the conclusions drawn in the previous chapter on how meaning is created through volunteer tourist work and volunteer interactions.

The thesis concludes with a short summary chapter that compares my data results with those found in the research literature, presents areas for improvement in my research, and makes suggestions for future research on volunteer tourism. Specifically, I offer an exploration of the significance of my data results for understanding the volunteer tourist experience from the perspective of those individuals who engage in these volunteer tourist activities.

Chapter I: The Research Literature on Volunteer Tourism

Introducing Volunteer Tourism

Volunteer tourism is a practice that has been expanding since the 1970's (Wearing 2001) and is continuing to grow (Lyons and Wearing 2008) at a rapid pace (Conran 2011). Many studies such as, for example, those conducted by Coghlan (2008), McIntosh and Zahra (2007), Mustonen, (2006), Stoddart and Rogerson (2004), and Uriely, Reichel and Ron (2003) quote Stephen Wearing's definition of volunteer tourism to convey their understanding of the social phenomenon they are investigating. Given the broad adoption of this definition by other researchers, I also use it to guide my own analysis. To quote Wearing:

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

Wearing (2001:1) has observed that "volunteer tourists are seeking a tourist experience that is mutually beneficial, that will contribute not only to their personal development but also positively and directly to the social, natural and/or economic environments in which they participate." To summarize, volunteer tourists participate in volunteer work while on holiday and view this experience as a benefit to both the host community in which they are volunteering as well as the volunteer himself. Those individuals who participate in volunteerism view it as a more rewarding and meaningful experience than other types of travel (Simpson 2004).

Mustonen (2006:165) states that the altruistic internal motives of volunteer tourists are what differentiate the practice of volunteer tourism from other forms of tourism. Traditionally, travel can be seen as an escape from everyday life; a chance to get away from one's job and routine commitments to explore another place, go on an adventure, or relax (Lyons and Wearing 2008). What is interesting about volunteer tourism is that its participants are choosing to travel but rather than relax or take time off, they offer their labour to help out a cause. They are not only investing their time and skills while on holiday, but are paying to do so as well; often the cost of a volunteer holiday is more than that of a traditional holiday (Wearing 2001). Volunteer tourists are more likely to have high incomes than other travellers seeking a vacation "away from home" (Broad and Jenkins 2008; Wearing 2001) and thereby have higher social capital than other tourists.

Volunteer Tourism as a Postmodern Phenomenon

Volunteer tourism has been characterized as a postmodern phenomenon (Mustonen 2006; Brown 2005; Uriely et al. 2003; Wearing 2001). Postmodernity can be thought of as a time period or era within human history in which certain social and cultural developments took place; however, it is difficult to classify the exact time period in which these transformations occurred (Zima 2010). It should be pointed out as well that there is no clear, agreed-upon definition of postmodernism. Typically, postmodernism is a concept employed by philosophers, sociologists, and other thinkers to describe "our current circumstances" (Cooper and White 2012). While it is difficult to define exactly what postmodernism is, using the typical view that it comprises our current circumstances can help situate volunteer tourism as a product of recent developments in

human social behaviour. From this perspective, the practice of volunteer tourism can be understood as developing out of societal changes to the roles and boundaries that defined tourism in previous eras. Namely, altruistic endeavours have been able to penetrate the sphere of tourism due to individuals' increased awareness of international issues, and tourists are able to participate in increasingly individual types of travel.

Volunteer tourism was studied by Uriely et al. who used a postmodern paradigm to examine the “de-differentiation” between “normative, aesthetic, and institutional spheres of social activity” (2003:58-59). According to these researchers, in modernity, these three spheres involved the horizontal development of separate fields of activity with their own customs and methods of evaluation and a vertical distinction between high and low culture. Postmodernity breaks down the separations existing between these three spheres. Specifically, in postmodernity, the horizontal de-differentiation of tourism, that is, the undoing of previously established patterns and role definitions (Tiryakian 1985), can be seen through the decreasing distinctiveness of the practice of tourism; in other words, the separate elements that make up the sphere of tourism are also engaged within other spheres of activity, such as taking part in adventure trips that include former recreational activities like mountain biking, or vacation tours involving intellectual/educational pursuits, like studying ecology.

Tourism in modernity was also characterized by three forms of exchange relationships: “financial exchange for rights to occupy mobile property, financial exchange for temporary possession of accommodations and facilities away from home, and financial exchange for the ability to gaze at unfamiliar sites” (Uriely et al. 2003:60). In postmodernity, these forms of exchange are not limited to tourism; they occur in many

everyday contexts such as sporting events or shopping. Through mass media and simulated environments, people behave as tourists most of the time, whether they are travelling or not. Furthermore, the sphere of tourism now includes intellectual activities, such as eco-tourism, which consists of tourists undertaking travel for the purpose of experiencing and learning about nature and the environment. In a similar fashion, the occupational sphere includes tourism activities, such as outdoor training exercises, which blurs the boundaries of work and travel. Accordingly, the inclusion of volunteer activities in the sphere of tourism is a clear indicator that tourism is not a distinct field of activity anymore.

Mustonen (2006) also examines the notion of volunteer tourism as a postmodern phenomenon. According to Mustonen, changes to tourism in postmodernity are the result of the following: “First, the Fordist production model has turned into the post-Fordist model. Second, modern has changed to postmodern. Third, from readily packaged tourism the change has been towards individual and flexible tourism. And in addition to these, as social, cultural and ecological responsibility has become more and more the focus of discussion; sustainable tourism is now an increasingly important topic” (2006:166). These changes are evident through the increased importance of sustainability in the tourism sector, the inclusion of social, cultural and ecological responsibility in discourse, and the ability of people to travel more independently and flexibly than in the past, among others. In consequence, premodern and modern types of tourism have taken on new forms such as, for example, conventional backpacking tourism and mass tourism merging into the practice of volunteer tourism.

In summary, new motivations for engaging in tourism exist in postmodernity that contribute to the changing form of tourism from one motivated by personal pleasure and amusement to one exhibiting social conscience and altruism. In the postmodern era, people's increased ability to undertake more individual and less pre-packaged holidays have been combined with their increased awareness of social and environmental issues around the globe and especially in developing nations to blur the borders that delineate tourism as a separate sphere of activity. This process has resulted in a horizontal de-differentiation in the field of tourism to create overlapping and intertwining activities that support customized ways for individuals to merge their travel plans with potential volunteer activities.

Volunteer Tourism versus Mass Tourism

As a social phenomenon, volunteer tourism is defined, studied and analyzed in opposition to mass tourism (Lyons and Wearing 2008; Mustonen 2006; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004; Wearing 2001). As such, it is posited that those individuals who participate as volunteer tourists "give back to," or have a more equal relationship with, the host destination than do other tourists who just "take from" the destination through their sightseeing and recreational activities. Specifically, while still using both environmental and human resources from the host destination, the volunteer tourist offsets his or her usage of those resources by donating labour toward the improvement of the community, whether those be economic, environmental, or humanitarian. Moreover, by paying their own travel costs to get to and stay in these local communities, volunteer tourists pay to donate their labour in exchange for local food and lodging.

In contrast, mass tourism activities consist mainly of the tourist travelling to another community and simply using resources without giving much in return. While the mass tourist pays for his or her food, lodging, and activities at the host destination, often this money does not make it to the host community itself but rather goes to the tour operator who often is not a local citizen, or to restaurants and accommodation which are often also not locally owned. In other words, while opportunity for the host community to help shape the volunteer projects that occur in their community exists in volunteer tourist destinations, mass tourism enterprises are rarely influenced by host communities. Furthermore, mass tourists often only stay for a short time and obtain only a fleeting glimpse of the local culture. As such, that culture becomes distinguished mainly as a commodity to be consumed by the tourist rather than a mutual exchange whereby the tourist comes to gain an intimate understanding by working on a daily basis with local people. (Lyons and Wearing 2008; Wearing 2001.)

The positioning of volunteer tourism as a contrast to mass tourism can mask important power relations between the host community and the traveller. For instance, does the volunteer tourist's labour actually equal the resources used while staying in the community? Does the community believe that the project being implemented is beneficial? Does the community want the help of foreigners? Could the volunteer program be run without the monetary support of the volunteers and if so, does having the volunteers do the work take away potential jobs that the local community members could be doing? Do the volunteers respect the culture of the local community or are the views of the usually western volunteers imposed on the community members? All of these

questions suggest an in-depth study of volunteer tourist projects and the volunteer tourists who are engaged in them.

An example of research conducted on the effects of important power relations involved in the volunteer tourism field is the study conducted by Simpson (2004) who investigates the phenomenon of the “gap year.” The gap year consists of the practice of students taking a year off in between school and university in order to work, travel or volunteer. Simpson’s focus is on international “third world” volunteer projects, which ties her research directly to volunteer tourism. She posited that gap year projects involving volunteer tourism “produce and reproduce particular notions of the ‘third world’, of ‘other’ and of ‘development” (2004:682). To test this assumption, Simpson examined gap year marketing material to review how development and the “third world” are packaged and sold as a commodity to gap year participants. Ethnographic field work was also undertaken with students who were participating in volunteer projects working with children in South America to analyze how the representations of development and “third world” shaped the way the students experienced the “other” on their projects.

As part of her analysis, Simpson demonstrated how a “geography” is produced in the gap program that maintains a simplistic ideal of development and legitimizes the practice of “unskilled international labour” being contributed as a solution to complex development issues (2004:682). Specifically, Simpson’s research project highlights how the practice of travelling to developing nations to volunteer one’s skills for the betterment of the host community is presented as a valid method of “helping the other” when, in reality, such activities may actually be detrimental to the developing community due to the maintenance of an unbalanced power relationship between the volunteer who is a

member of a developed country and the host community which is a member of an underdeveloped nation. In other words, by offering an overly simplistic viewpoint of the developed-developing dichotomy, promoters of the gap program are perpetuating the very types of conditions that their programs are designed to eradicate.

It is not the subject of this research to investigate the complex power dynamics surrounding the relationships involved with volunteer tourism. I bring the issue up here to acknowledge its importance and to assert that it should not be taken as a given that volunteer tourism is a “solution” to the problems of poverty, environmental degradation or capitalist exploitation. Similarly, the purpose of this research is not to debate whether volunteer tourism is better than mass tourism. Rather, the purpose of this study is to investigate the meaning of the experience of volunteer tourism for those individuals who choose to participate in this activity. To gain a stronger sense of how that meaning is likely to unfold, the next section presents the findings of previous studies conducted on the volunteer tourism phenomenon.

Previous Research on Volunteer Tourism

Wearing (2001) states the most popular destinations for volunteer tourists are Central and South America, Asia, Africa, and Europe; however, South Africa has also been identified by others as one of the most popular destinations in the world for volunteer tourists (Cousins, Evans and Sadler 2009). Research on volunteer tourism has been conducted, for example, on participants engaging in volunteer tourism programs in Australia, Madagascar, Spain, and Malaysia (Coghlan 2008), India (Mustonen, 2006), Costa Rica (Campbell and Smith 2006; Wearing 2001), Indonesia (Galley and Clifton

2004), Israel (Uriely et al. 2003), and Thailand (Conran 2001). Notably, not all research on volunteer tourism has been carried out in developing nations. For example, McIntosh and Zahra's (2007) research takes place in New Zealand while Caissie and Halpenny (2003) interviewed volunteer tourists in Ontario, Canada.

Qualitative research methods are used in much of the previous research on volunteer tourism and have been touted as the most appropriate ways to study this social phenomenon (Caissie and Halpenny 2003; Wearing 2001). Many researchers (Gray and Campbell 2007; Brown 2005; Campbell and Smith 2005; Galley and Clifton 2004; Caissie and Halpenny 2003) have used the interview as their principal method of data collection while others (Andereck, McGehee, Lee, and Clemmons 2012; Benson and Seibert 2009; Coghlan 2008; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004; McGehee 2002) have employed questionnaires or surveys to gather larger amounts of quantitative data for analysis. Participant observation has been employed to a lesser extent (Conran 2011; Cousins et al. 2009; Lepp 2008; Matthews 2008; Wearing 2001). Finally, several studies (Smith and Holmes 2009; Mustonen 2007; Uriely 2001) have reviewed previous research and other literature concerning volunteer tourism to try and gain a more holistic understanding of this social phenomenon. A more detailed description of the major findings of some of these studies are detailed below to provide an understanding of what kind of research has been done on volunteer tourism and what the results of such research are.

A considerable amount of the research completed on volunteer tourism focusses on the volunteer tourist as the subject of interest (Andereck et al. 2012; Coren and Gray 2011; Benson and Seibert 2009; Cousins et al. 2009; Sin 2009; Brown 2005; Campbell

and Smith 2005; Galley and Clifton 2004; McGehee and Santos 2004; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004; Caissie and Halpenny 2003). More narrowly, the major topic of interest has been motivations for volunteer tourism participation, that is, what makes a person want to engage in this type of “holiday” activity. For example, working with the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Caissie and Halpenny (2003) used telephone interviews to gather data from ten volunteer tourists. The interviews were conducted after the volunteers had completed their programs and included questions related to the volunteers’ motives and the benefits they received from volunteering.

Through coding and analysis of the data, the motives identified in Cassie and Halpenny’s study were: pleasure seeking, “perks” from volunteering in nature conservation projects, leaving a legacy, attachment to place, and altruism” (2003:42-45). Pleasure seeking refers to the gratification one gets from meeting new people, seeing a new place, overcoming novel challenges, and the desire to have fun at the same time. In contrast, “perks” were specific to nature-based volunteer tourism and included, for example, evening presentations on environmental issues and access to unique ecosystems. Participants were also motivated by a desire to “leave a legacy,” which was conveyed through their sense of loyalty to a landscape and the feeling of fulfillment from being able to help the environment so that others can enjoy it. Attachment to place was expressed through the participants’ desire to be outdoors and experience nature; they chose that particular volunteer program because of its nature-based setting. Finally, altruism was signified by the sense of caring for humans and nature expressed by the participants.

Brown (2005) also looked at the motives and the benefits that volunteer tourists believed they gained from undertaking some kind of volunteer activity while on a leisure trip. She conducted her research by using focus groups and semi-structured, in-depth interviews with members belonging to the Ambassador Travel Club in the United States. The first focus group was composed of nine participants who had volunteered for part of a leisure trip. The second focus group had six participants who were first-time volunteer tourists. Following the focus groups, interviews were conducted with ten participants who had spent part of a vacation trip volunteering. All 25 of the research participants freely chose to be a part of the study, although it is not stated in the article how Brown selected which participants would be in the focus groups and which would be interviewed. However, she does state the interview group was composed of younger people than the focus groups (who were aged 40 to 72) because they were underrepresented in the focus groups and she wanted to include their viewpoints².

Brown outlined four major motivational themes found from her analysis of the data: cultural immersion, giving back and making a difference, seeking camaraderie, and seeking educational and bonding opportunities for children (2005:487-490). Cultural immersion describes the desire to immerse oneself in the local culture and community. Giving back and making a difference refers to participants wanting to help the less fortunate. Participants also wanted to meet and interact with people who share common interests and values, denoted by “seeking camaraderie.” The final motivator, “seeking educational and bonding opportunities for children” was specific to those who travelled

² Brown does not state the interview group or second focus group’s age, only the first focus group, which was made up of participants aged 40 to 72 years.

with their children or grandchildren. These volunteers wanted to spend time with and have educational and bonding experiences with their children so they could impart their value systems to the children.

A third example of a research study that focusses on the motivations of volunteer tourists is one conducted by Galley and Clifton (2004) who looked at the motivational and demographic characteristics of volunteer tourists participating in an Operation Wallacea program. Operation Wallacea is an ecotourism operator based in the United Kingdom that organizes scientific wildlife surveys and community-based conservation work in Indonesia. This work is carried out mainly by volunteers. Although this study considers its participants to be “research ecotourists,” that is, tourists who travel for the purpose of engaging in nature-based conservation or research activities, these participants can also be classified as volunteer tourists because they match the definition provided at the beginning of this chapter: the participants were from the United Kingdom and travelled to Indonesia on their leisure time in order to volunteer their labour for nature conservation and research.

Galley and Clifton interviewed 100 volunteers in the field and asked each interviewee to complete a short, semi-structured questionnaire. Questions related to: “demographic characteristics, previous holiday experiences, motives for travelling, attitudes towards the environment and the meaning of ‘ecotourism’” (2004:74). The demographic findings showed that the majority of the participants were female, most were 20-22 years old, and nearly all were current students. Most had previously engaged in a cultural or nature-based holiday and were highly concerned with ecological issues (2004:74-75). In terms of motivations for joining the program, the most frequently cited

responses were: experiencing something completely new, taking part in a rare opportunity, observing the diversity of animal species, being able to have it stand out on one's curriculum vitae as invaluable experience, and seeking challenging things to do (2004:76).

Other researchers have also looked at the demographic characteristics of volunteer tourists. Stoddart and Rogerson (2004) developed a profile of the volunteer tourist and the volunteer's experience through a case study of a Habitat for Humanity project in South Africa. While investigating the nature of the Habitat for Humanity organization, these researchers had 123 former volunteers from that program complete a short questionnaire designed to collect information on the demographic characteristics of the volunteers such as their age, occupation, and religious affiliation as well as their reasons for participating in the program. Some of the study findings reported are as follows: the largest age group of participants was 50-59 years, or, "early retirees;" the largest occupational groups of participants were students on organized field trips, different types of professionals, and people in general managerial roles in an office environment; and the main motivating factor for participating in the program was a desire to help the poor (2004:314-315).

Additional research that focusses on the volunteer tourist as the subject has looked at the meaning of the experience of volunteer tourism. Wearing (2001), in particular, has examined the meaning of the experiences of volunteer tourism on the development of the self. Using an interactionist perspective, he conducted a study of volunteer tourists engaged in a Youth Challenge International project in Costa Rica so he could understand more fully the symbolic values and meanings the volunteers associated with their

activities. Gathering data through interviews with his study participants, Wearing focussed on the interactions of the participants with all elements of the volunteer tourism experience, including the place itself, and how meanings are ascribed to those experiences based on socially shared phenomena. As such, he noted the experiences of the volunteer tourist are based on meaningful contact with the elements of the space visited as well as the people they meet. This finding suggests one needs to consider both the physical/political/social environment (i.e. the organizational structure) of the volunteer setting and other interactants when assessing the volunteer tourist experience.

Wearing classified the personal development effect of volunteer tourism on the volunteers into four overarching and interrelated categories: personal awareness and learning, interpersonal awareness and learning, confidence, and self-contentment (2001:126). These categories encapsulate the following changes in self noted by Wearing's research participants as a result of their volunteer tourism experience: learning new skills and affirming present personal abilities, increased interest in the welfare of others, increased self-confidence and well-being, increased awareness of international issues, an impact on future tourist activities, learning and behavioural changes including less self-centeredness and being more open and thoughtful, developing more effective interpersonal communication skills, a firmer belief and confidence in one's self, abilities and skills, greater self-assurance and determination, a stronger sense of self, being more relaxed, being more emotionally comfortable, and having more self-contentment (2001:126-131). In summary, Wearing found that the volunteers in his study experienced significant self-development due to their participation in a volunteer tourism project.

Cousins, Evans and Sadler (2009) also looked at the meaning of the volunteer tourist experience; however, their focus was on the role emotions played in participant experiences. These researchers carried out an ethnographic study in South Africa of the emotional responses of 22 conservation volunteers representing four different volunteer tourism programs. Participant observation was the main method of data collection with field notes, photographs and film collected and compiled for analysis. The researchers also held structured focus-group discussions on the third week of each volunteer program to facilitate open discussion among participants. The coding and analysis of the data revealed six major emotional responses expressed by the volunteers across the four case studies: anguish, exhilaration, awe, frustration, disappointment, and compassion (2009:1072). These research findings suggest that emotions help to construct the experiences of volunteer tourists and provide “vital motivating energy” for the volunteers (2009:1078).

While a large number of studies focus on the volunteer tourists as their subject of interest, there are additional studies that include perspectives of other important personalities in the volunteer tourism experience such as hosts, organizers, and community members. One example is a study conducted by Coghlan (2008) who looked at the perspective of the expedition leader in six conservation or “nature-based” organizations located in Australia, Madagascar, Malaysia, and Spain. Through the examination of survey responses, she found that the expedition leader plays a role in the success of the volunteer tourism project and that the project will be more successful if the expedition leader’s perceptions and expectations match those of the volunteer tourist.

In another example, Uriely et al. (2003) included local community volunteers in their research on macro-cultural trends that shape the volunteer tourism phenomenon. Their research paper refers to two previous studies conducted by the same authors but does not give details on the methods used for data collection in those two studies. In the first study, the participants consisted of volunteers from three museums in Jerusalem. These museums employ local and exchange volunteers, or hosts and guests, respectively. In the second study, the participants were host and guest volunteers that participated in rescue activities in Israeli desert areas. Uriely et al. found that in both studies, the host volunteers and visiting volunteers have the same types of motivators for participation. Specifically, both types of volunteers exhibit a combination of altruistic and leisure motivations. Furthermore, both hosts and guests shape the volunteer tourism experience; the encounters between host and guest are complex and may vary depending on the type of setting in which the volunteer activity occurs. These researchers recommend including host volunteers in future analyses of volunteer tourism because both types of volunteers have very similar motivators, both combine work-related with tourism/leisure experiences, and both engage in host-guest relations.

A final example looks at the role of the sending organization, that is, the local or international organization that arranges a volunteer tourism program. Raymond (2008) undertook exploratory research of ten different sending organizations. Focusing on two sending organizations based in the United States, Foundation for Sustainable Development and International Student Volunteers, the results of this study recommend that sending organizations develop a strong relationship with the host organization and maintain that relationship through regular evaluations of the project. The sending

organization should also take an experiential learning approach in organizing their programs thereby enabling the volunteers to think critically about the program and their role as volunteer. Thirdly, the sending organization should have a process for selecting appropriate volunteers for their programs. This would include consideration of the volunteer's skill set, and notably his or her ability to communicate in the local language of the host community. The volunteers should also be provided with pre-departure preparation and in-country orientation so that they have a clear understanding of the program and of the culture and community they will be experiencing, and will have realistic expectations about their experiences with the program. These best practices of sending organizations help to ensure that volunteer tourism programs “‘make a difference’ to both the volunteers and the host organizations” (2008:58).

Research on volunteer tourism is not limited to studies that collect data from participants. There have also been studies that reviewed previous literature on volunteer tourism in order to gain a stronger understanding of what constitutes this social practice. Smith and Holmes (2009) were interested in two types of volunteers: volunteers supporting tourism in their community (host) and tourists who volunteer (guest). As part of their project, these researchers developed a model of tourism volunteer engagements to use as a framework for their analysis of previous literature on the two groups. This analysis was conducted as a means of finding a way to bring the two types of groups together to create a more holistic and inclusive conceptualization of the types of “tourism volunteer (host, guest), the volunteering setting (attraction, destination service, event, tourist destination) and the nature of the volunteer contribution (ongoing, seasonal, episodic)” (2009:406).

When Smith and Holmes analyzed previous studies on volunteer tourism they found that host and guest volunteers have mostly been researched in isolation. Additionally, previous research usually focused on vacations where volunteering is the main activity that takes place at the host destination and is the main reason for travelling to that destination. Significantly, the volunteer serves as the subject of most research on volunteer tourism, whether the focus is on volunteer profiles, motivations, or benefits, and usually the volunteer is travelling from the developed world to the developing world to volunteer. The benefits to the host community from volunteer tourism have been examined to a lesser degree. Qualitative methods are used much more often than quantitative methods to study volunteer tourism and the single case study is the most often employed method. Finally, most research on volunteer tourism takes place at a single point in time.

These findings highlight gaps in the literature related to volunteer tourism; namely, that there are few studies employing longitudinal or multi-stage research, that there is little comparative research across the whole tourism volunteering setting, that the potential detriments to the host community and the perspectives of others affected by volunteer tourism such as host volunteers and visitors to volunteer sites have been under-researched, and that tourists who travel to participate mainly in leisure and other activities rather than mainly to volunteer have been left out of the research. Specifically, previous research rarely goes beyond investigating travelers undertaking volunteer vacations and gap years and as such has left out volunteers involved in cultural and business events, attractions such as zoos and gardens, destination services such as information centre volunteering, and individual volunteer projects. As a result of such findings, Smith and

Holmes encourage researchers to look at these other types of volunteering, to seek out perspectives of others involved in tourism volunteering rather than just the guest volunteers, and to investigate how tourism volunteering affects society more generally and how it is presented in the media. Additionally, Smith and Holmes encourage more multi-stage or longitudinal research and urge researchers to conduct more cross-case and comparative analysis rather than looking at single case studies in order to advance the field. They believe our understanding of the outcomes of volunteer tourism and our vocabulary for describing voluntary activities is limited until we begin exploring these other issues.

In many ways, my research exemplifies the typical volunteer study identified by Smith and Holmes. It considers “guest” volunteers who travel on vacation and examines the host environment where their volunteer activity takes place. It focuses solely on volunteer perceptions and considers the meaning of the volunteer experience from the viewpoint of that group rather than members of the organization they serve. It also uses qualitative methodology as a means of data collection. However, my research project does offer a comparison of two cases studies and as such, it speaks to one of the suggestions given by Smith and Holmes, which is to conduct cross-case and comparative analysis. Given the time-limited nature of a university thesis project, I could not conduct multi-stage or longitudinal research. Similarly, examining how tourism volunteering affects society more generally is beyond the scope of a Master’s thesis research project. I also decided not to include the voices of the owners and employees or “hosts” of the volunteer programs in my research because it would have been much more difficult to select the research sites if the volunteer organizers were implicated in the research, and

research ethics approval from their organizations may have been more difficult to gain. I was already limited in my choices of volunteer placements based on cost, location, and time and I thought it would be too time-consuming to locate two volunteer organizations in the same general location that would allow me to study their employees. Furthermore, my research interests related to the meaning of the experience of volunteer tourism to those who leave their home countries and travel to a foreign destination to volunteer. I believe this research interest still stands as one of considerable worth. Additionally, my data and my analysis of that data contribute to the small body of literature that Smith and Holmes note exists on multiple case studies of the volunteer tourist experience.

Conclusion

The examples provided above demonstrate that the research on volunteer tourism is quite numerous and varied. Furthermore, the findings of these different studies indicate that, although the main motivations for participating in volunteer programs may differ for individual volunteers, a strong pattern of similarity exists for the majority such as, for example, the aspects of altruism that were found in all three studies on motivation mentioned above. There is also a clear effect on the development of self that occurs from participation in volunteer tourism programs. This effect has been demonstrated through the examination of the meaning that the volunteer tourism experience holds for volunteer participants such as, for example, self-satisfaction from helping others who are perceived to be needier. Still, whether the outcome of the volunteer tourism experience is profound, such as a significant change in self, or more superficial, such as expanding one's skill set and improving the chances of gaining employment, the volunteer experience appears to be significant and tangible for each volunteer tourist.

The characteristics of volunteer tourists have also been examined as a way of obtaining knowledge of the types of people prone to participate in volunteer tourism programs. In addition, studies have been carried out on other people implicated in the practice of volunteer tourism such as host community members and sending organization personnel that provide a more comprehensive and holistic picture of volunteer tourism as an entity. Significantly, the secondary analysis of the research literature on volunteer tourism offered by Smith and Holmes (2009) adds to a more complete understanding of the volunteer tourism phenomenon by identifying gaps in the literature and making suggestions for future research.

As stated previously, my current research is focussed on the volunteer tourist as subject and examines the meaning the volunteer experience holds for its participants. Similar to the study conducted by Cousins et al. (2009), my research is ethnographic in nature. Specifically, I used participant observation as my principal method of data collection. I participated as a volunteer in two volunteer organizations in South Africa to gain a first-hand, lived experience of volunteer tourism from the perspectives of individuals who participate in such programs. Furthermore, I carried out interviews with a small sample of my research participants as a means of gaining insight into the anticipated benefits derived from being a volunteer tourist and to learn about their previous travel and volunteer experience.

In an attempt to fill in a gap noted to exist in the research literature (Smith and Holmes 2009), I observed participants engaged in two separate and very different types of volunteer programs. One program involved helping out in an elementary school classroom to teach children and the other involved feeding and caring for rescued wildlife

at an animal sanctuary. This comparison allowed me to not only substantiate what research has been done previously, but also provided me with a more holistic understanding of the phenomenon of volunteer tourism. Moreover, it is in line with Smith and Holmes' (2009) recommendation to go beyond the single case study and develop a stronger comparative analyses than provided by, for example, Cousins (in Cousins et al. 2009) who participated in four short-term volunteer placements related to conservation. Specifically, I participated in two long-term (two month each) placements in very divergent forms of programs. As such, the data I collected allows me to compare these two diverse programs with a focus on whether the nature of the experience changes depending on the type of volunteer program one participates in and the type of activities required for program success. The next chapter details how I conducted this ethnographic research by laying out my methodology and explaining each of the steps I took throughout the research process.

Chapter II: Methodology

Reflections on Choosing Volunteer Tourism and Ethnography

This chapter details the process of undertaking an ethnographic research study and describes how I completed each stage in my own research project on volunteer tourism. Before beginning this discussion it is important to explain why I made the decision to study volunteer tourism and make clear why I selected ethnography as my methodology of choice. Many researchers stress the importance of reflexivity in social science research given that a researcher cannot entirely separate himself or herself from the research process (Corbin and Strauss 2008). This chapter incorporates a reflexive voice throughout in order to account for my methodological decisions as I designed and executed this research project.

Ethnography is a methodological approach that uses participant observation to gather data about social situations in an attempt to understand and explain the beliefs and meanings held by members of a cultural group (Gains 2011:157). Participant observation as a method of gathering social data necessitates that the ethnographer not only observes the social situation, but also keeps a detailed written record of what she observes. This requires the ethnographer to do fieldwork – to go out and make observations in the real world, and often also to participate in the social situation she is observing. The level of participation may vary depending on the subject of interest of the ethnographer; however, actively participating in the social situation allows the ethnographer to more fully understand the dynamics of the situation as she will be able to better approximate

members' experiences if she has such experiences herself (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995).

Ethnography falls within the qualitative realm of social science research (Jones and Watt 2010) and has even been described as “the hallmark of qualitative inquiry” (Marshall and Rossman 2011:19). Whether a researcher chooses a qualitative or quantitative approach to conducting social science research depends on the researcher’s methodological assumptions which are grounded in his or her assumptions regarding ontology and epistemology. Ontological assumptions are those one has about reality and the nature of existence while epistemological assumptions are those one has about what knowledge is and the nature of knowing. With respect to ontology, the major focus is on whether the researcher believes there are multiple realities that depend upon and are created by humans’ interactions with them or whether there is one reality independent from humans’ experiences of that reality. With respect to epistemology, concern lies with whether a researcher believes that knowledge is gained through experience, whether or not there are multiple ways of knowing, and hence, no one “truth,” or whether one “truth” exists independent of experience and this truth can be learned, for example, by reading about it or being taught about it (Rallis and Rossman 2012). Notably, Emerson et al. (1995:3) state that the ethnographer’s goal is “not to determine ‘the truth’ but to reveal the multiple truths apparent in others’ lives.” Thus, as a qualitative researcher taking an ethnographic approach, I was guided by the ontological assumption that multiple realities exist and, as such, I needed to experience the reality of the social world in which my research subjects carried out their daily activities.

A person's epistemological, ontological, and methodological assumptions are influenced or shaped by that person's characteristics, background, and their assumptions about the social world (Rallis and Rossman 2012). Corbin and Strauss state "we don't separate who we are as persons from the research and analysis that we do" (2008:11). In other words, how a person has experienced the world and what they have learned in the process, as well as how they learned it, and whether they see the social world as stable and orderly or shifting and oppressive will affect their assumptions about the world and their ways of knowing, which concurrently affects their methodological choices. Why I chose to study volunteer tourism and to use ethnography as my methodology depended on my own characteristics and background, my ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions, and how I viewed the social world. Each of these factors is considered below.

To begin, I originally wanted to study volunteer tourism as a research topic because I had been interested in being a volunteer tourist for nearly a decade. What drew me to wanting to be a volunteer tourist is twofold: my love of travel and my desire to work with animals. My love of travel extends from going on family trips throughout my life, which instilled in me a need to seek out new experiences. My parents also were animal lovers and I was brought up to respect and care for animals. I believe this past exposure led me to want to work hands-on with needy animals. I recognize that being able to travel abroad growing up, and being able to have pets are influenced strongly by the fact that my family is somewhat privileged. In other words, the social location of my family in the upper-middle class allowed me to have these experiences, and my parents' interests and beliefs led me to prioritize certain values so that I would continue travelling

and caring for animals into my adulthood. Furthermore, I had been interested in volunteering in a foreign country for many years, and it struck me as interesting that I, and many other people, express a willingness not only to donate our services to a cause in a foreign country, but to pay money in order to donate our services. I do not volunteer often in my home country, but I travel frequently. I was curious to meet others and discover if they also travelled a lot, if they volunteered back home, and why they chose to participate in a volunteer program abroad.

My ontological assumptions are based on my belief that one reality exists separate from humans' interactions, for example, in environmental habitats where humans are not present. However, I also believe that where humans are present, there cannot be a reality independent of those humans' interactions. As such, I believe people's perceptions of, and experiences with, a social reality create and shape that reality. In a similar vein, turning to my epistemological assumptions, I believe that deep understandings of realities come from personal experience. However, since I believe in multiple social realities and that each person's interaction helps create that reality, I believe that my own personal experience is not sufficient to thoroughly understand that reality – I need to understand other people's experiences as well. Finally, I am somewhere in the middle of the spectrum in terms of how I view the social world. For the most part I believe it is stable and orderly, but I also believe people have the ability to influence and shape it through their actions.

Applying these ontological and epistemological assumptions to volunteer tourism, I believe the social world of a volunteer program is influenced by every volunteer's actions and, as such, the social reality forming that social world is created mutually by

each person and their interactions within that social world. Specifically, as a researcher, any involvement I had in the social world of my research participants would also influence their social reality just as each of their interactions would influence my social reality of my research experience. In this way, by taking into account my ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions, I concluded that the most valuable course for understanding the meaning of the experience of volunteer tourism for others would be to acquire the experience for myself and to try to understand their volunteer experiences through a process of daily interaction with those volunteers.

It is clear from the discussion above that for research on volunteer tourism I would need to seek a methodology that allowed me to live the experience myself as well as gain an in-depth understanding of other's experiences. Ethnography focuses on analyzing actions and interactions within human groups in order to understand how they collectively build and sustain a culture (Marshall and Rossman 2011:19). With this type of methodology, "relationships between the field researcher and people in the setting do not so much disrupt or alter ongoing patterns of social interaction as reveal the terms and bases on which people form social ties in the first place" (Emerson et al.1995:3). Employing an ethnographic methodological approach that involves participant observation field research techniques would enable me to meet people, form relationships, and learn my role as a volunteer just like any other volunteer. For example, I would be exposed to the "terms and bases" on which social ties are made in that setting by observing the social construction of those ties between others as well as experience the social process of making such ties myself. In this way, I would gain invaluable firsthand knowledge for developing a sympathetic understanding of the behaviour I observed in my

research setting as well as sensitivity to the perceptions and perspectives offered by the volunteers I would meet.

In sum, an ethnographic methodological approach would allow me to more fully comprehend how these types of volunteers create the social reality of the volunteer program and how their experiences of that reality give meaning to that program. Using the more focused method of participant observation, I would be able to volunteer in a foreign country, live and work with my fellow volunteers, and observe and record what I saw and heard in the field. Additionally, to offer an element of comparison in my research, I decided to undertake two volunteer placements, one working with children and one working with animals. Using the same method of participant observation in both placement settings would enable me to investigate the ways in which the lived experience of being a volunteer working with children would be different from the lived experience of being a volunteer working with animals, and in which ways they might be similar.

Doing Ethnographic Research

It is now clear why I decided to take an ethnographic methodological approach and why I believed it to be the most fitting approach for my research on volunteer tourism. Taking that approach, I used the methodological technique of participant observation to record my experiences and observations in the field. I also conducted interviews with a subset of volunteers to gain insight into the potential influence of various volunteer attributes such as previous travel and volunteer experience and the benefits one hoped to receive from volunteering. The following sections outline the

methodological stages involved in carrying out my research study in South Africa from the beginning of May to the end of August, 2012.

Choosing a Social Situation

Locating an appropriate social situation is a primary methodological goal for any research study and necessitates careful attention (Van Den Hoonaard 2012:58). Spradley (1980:39-42) defines “social situation” in his discussion of the steps required for using effective participant observation methodological techniques. Social situations are made up of a place, actors, and activities. A place is a physical setting, which can be made up of one or many locations. Actors are made up of the people who are present in the social situation but, they can be categorized as “types of actors” through their engagement in particular activities that occur in a specific place. Activities are any and all behaviour of the actors, but patterns of linked sets of activities may be classified as events. In consequence, choosing an appropriate social situation composed of tourists who were located in a specific place and engaged in volunteer activities was imperative to my research interest.

For me, choosing a social situation was dependent on a number of factors. Volunteer tourism often involves individuals from developed countries going to developing countries to do volunteer work; thus, I believed it would be most beneficial for me to participate in programs in a developing country. I chose to go to South Africa because it is one of the most popular destinations in the world for volunteer tourists (Cousins et al. 2009; Cousins 2007) and because there are a large number of organizations which offer a diversity of placements throughout the country. Additionally,

I was interested in comparing the experiences of volunteering with children to that of volunteering with animals and by going to South Africa I was able to participate in each type of volunteer placement within the same country, thereby concentrating on the organizational situation rather than on any variation created by different nation state regulatory standards or cultural distinctions. I opted to spend two months volunteering with children and two months volunteering with animals because those two types of programs were of interest to me personally, and because I believed they offered comparable experiences as well as a critical comparison of distinction.

I also needed to select a timeframe within which to volunteer and conduct my research that presented the greatest possibility for me to encounter the largest number of volunteers. Thus, when I contacted the volunteer organizations to ask if I could conduct research, I asked what time of the year they received the greatest number of volunteers. Given my own status as a student, my data collection was constrained to the four month period of either the summer 2012 semester or the fall 2012 semester of my Master's program. Fortunately, one of the childcare programs received the most volunteers in May and June, and one of the animal care programs received the most in July and August. Consequently I chose those specific months (the summer 2012 semester) to conduct my research. I also chose programs in South Africa because they operate in English. I needed to be able to verbally communicate with the volunteers and felt I was more likely to meet English speaking volunteers in a country where the volunteer program was operated in English. Finally, price was a determining factor for me since I had a limited budget. I was unable to afford very pricey volunteer programs and had to select programs within a certain price range.

It is likely other volunteers were considering similar criteria when choosing their volunteer program. For instance, as mentioned above, the summer months from May through August were quite busy in terms of volunteering. Volunteer availability is likely stronger during this time period because much of the western world is on summer holidays; University holidays usually run from May through August while high school holidays generally begin in June or July and end in August. Notably, the childcare project had the most volunteers in May and June but none of the volunteers were in high school; however, the animal sanctuary had the most volunteers in July and August and many were in high school. Additionally, many volunteers I met had English as their second language and may have chosen English speaking programs because few were offered in their native language and this option gave them more opportunity to choose where to volunteer. Thus, I believe I may have had a very similar experience of selecting a volunteer program as others who participate in volunteer tourism. In this way, my selection process provided me with sound insight regarding the complexity of the process involved in choosing a volunteer tourist destination. In fact, when speaking with volunteers in the field, many said that they came to South Africa during their summer holidays and several stated they were looking for programs operated in English thereby expanding their options of program choice.

Another consideration when choosing where to conduct research involves reflection on the type of activities that will help a researcher understand a phenomenon better. Ethnographers cannot observe everything all of the time, but selecting a social situation in which some activities reoccur frequently allows the ethnographer to discover cultural rules for behaviour (Spradley 1980:50). Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006:240)

stress, “it is imperative that you select a research site that will give you the information you need in order to address your research question(s).” As noted in the introduction to this section, it is also imperative to consider place, activities, and actors carefully in terms of deciding who and what one will observe once one enters the field.

My choice of physical place in which the social situations occurred for my research were: (1) a small town located about twenty-six kilometres south of Cape Town, South Africa where I volunteered at an elementary school, and (2) an even smaller town located near Port Elizabeth, South Africa where I volunteered at an animal sanctuary. Each of these two physical places contained a great number of smaller locations. For example, the elementary school where I volunteered contained the volunteer house where all the volunteers lived, the surf shack that some of the school children went to after school, the beach where the volunteers would spend some of their time off, and the local bar that the volunteers frequented. Comparatively, the animal sanctuary had the lodge where most of the volunteers’ rooms were located, the restaurant area where volunteers ate all their meals, the “chicken dish” hut where the animal dishes were washed, the “prep room” where the animal food was prepared, and the fire pit where the volunteers often spent their evenings. These are just some examples of locations I encountered while doing my research.

The actors involved in my research were mainly volunteers. However, volunteers could take on other roles beyond that of volunteer. For example, at the volunteer placement working with children, the volunteers enjoyed going drinking in the evenings thereby shifting out of their volunteer role and taking on the role of “party goer” or “relaxed tourist.” Additionally, one or more of the volunteers would take on the role of

“responsible one” and make sure that everyone stayed together and got home safe, no matter how much they drank. To give another example, at the animal sanctuary, the volunteers that were staying for several months were given greater responsibilities and took on more of a management-type role, walking around the park at the end of the day and checking that everything was in order. Thus, although each of the participants in my research was an actor in the role of “volunteer,” each could also take on new or enhanced roles beyond that of volunteer thereby revealing to me a much more complex picture of the social world of “volunteer tourism” than I may have formed had I, for example, conducted discourse analysis or survey research (Van Den Hoonaard 2012).

Finally, I learned that the activities involved in being a volunteer tourist extended over an entire day and in a series of developmental stages. The routine tasks of living day to day in the same place with other volunteers, such as eating breakfast, carrying out the required duties of volunteer work, washing up, and so on were easily observable. Notably, I was also able to participate without difficulty with other volunteers in the social processes involved in engaging in these daily activities. Additionally, because I was able to participate naturally in the volunteer tourism experience, I learned that every volunteer also had a beginning point and an end point in the program, exactly as I did, and each of us had to learn the rules and learn how to behave if we wished to fit into the social situation of volunteering abroad. I obtained a firsthand perspective of the experience while similarly witnessing others’ behaviours and experiences. In this way, by collecting data and taking field notes of those events, I took on the role of participant observer who engaged in the same activities as my research subjects and was able to assess those activities from a similar standpoint (Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006).

Entering the Field

Spradley (1980:49-50) notes that a researcher must determine whether permission is required to enter the social situation under study, locate who grants such permission, explain her research to them, and finally gain permission. Free-entry social situations do not require any permission for the ethnographer to enter the situation and conduct research, such as a bus or a restaurant which are public spaces while limited-entry social situations necessitate the permission of one or more people to conduct research, such as when a researcher enters a person's home or a high school classroom. In contrast, restricted-entry social situations such as prisons, hospitals or work agencies have a high probability the ethnographer will have difficulty in obtaining permission to conduct research or be denied access entirely, such as occurs when desiring to study criminal groups who do not have an obvious gatekeeper.

Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006:241) note that the way a researcher goes about accessing a social situation is "critical in determining the type of data, if any, you will be able to collect and how difficult or easy the process will be." I contacted the ethics advisor for the Carleton University Research and Ethics Board for guidance on how to access the volunteer tourism social situation. The advisor confirmed that I needed to seek permission from the volunteer organization to conduct research while volunteering. The social situation of volunteering abroad was a limited-entry social situation.

To locate who would be able to grant me entry, I searched the websites of a vast number of volunteer organizations in South Africa. I then sent an email to each volunteer organization to explain my research to them and ask whether or not I would be able to

conduct research at that location (See Appendix I). All of the volunteer organizations I contacted stated I would be more than welcome to conduct research while volunteering, as long as the volunteers gave their permission for me to do so. Thus, I was granted access to the population of volunteers with minimal difficulty or restriction upon my research project.

This methodological step of initial contact has been described as time-consuming because it involves approaching someone who controls access to a group, in some way, such as by telephone, email, or personal visit, and waiting for a response (Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006; Rossman and Rallis 1998). This person is often known as a “gatekeeper” (Van Den Hoonaard 2012; Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006). Indeed, this step was time consuming for me in terms of obtaining contact names from websites. Many of the volunteer organizations I contacted replied to my email quickly; however, the animal sanctuary I was interested in took two months to respond to my request to conduct research at their organization.

Although I was given access to the field site with minimal restriction, I still had to present myself to the volunteers and gain their consent to conduct my research. Obtaining permission, whether written or oral, is another step to entering the field (Rossman and Rallis 1998:103). Each volunteer I met was asked to sign a consent form allowing me to take notes that included their actions and speech (see Appendix II). In order to obtain this consent, I had to make my presence as a researcher known as soon as possible to the volunteers when they began their placements.

When I started my first placement at the childcare project there was an orientation session the next morning for all new volunteers beginning at the same time as me. I took this opportunity to address all the new volunteers at once, explaining that although I was a volunteer and would be participating in the program like everyone else, I was also studying volunteer tourism and would therefore be taking notes of everything that happened while I was in the program so I could analyze them later. I let them know it was their choice to participate and I would ask them to sign a consent form. I then gave them several days to think about whether or not they wanted to participate before approaching each volunteer with the consent form. Later on in the childcare project and at the animal sanctuary, when any new volunteer started (every two weeks in the first program and every other day in the second program), I approached them within the first twenty-four hours of their arrival to explain my research. I then waited a few days before obtaining written consent. In this way participants were given time to think about their participation and thus were able to provide informed consent.

I took field notes each day that I was in the field including my initial meeting where I discussed the issue of consent. As such, the notes sometimes included participants that had not yet signed the consent forms. However, over the course of my study, all of the volunteers signed a consent form; there were no volunteers that chose not to participate. Had a volunteer chosen not to participate then I would have deleted the notes pertaining to that individual, but I did not have to do this as the volunteers all responded positively to my research. A few participants did have clarification questions while I was explaining my research. The questions participants asked were: was I volunteering as well, who was allowed to read my notes, could they have copies of my

completed research, and what kinds of things would I be observing. In response to such questions, I replied that I would be volunteering the same as everyone else and I would have the same responsibilities and tasks as each of the volunteers. I explained that only I would be able to read the field notes but if someone wanted to see the notes pertaining to him or herself only, they could ask me. Only one volunteer asked to see my notes; he wanted to know what kinds of things I was writing down. After reading a section on himself, he seemed content and expressed no objection to me continuing my research. I also informed the volunteers that I would send each of them a copy of my final research if they gave me their email address, and I told them I would be observing all actions and speech that occurred while I was present. In sum, despite these initial questions, no one appeared to be concerned about my research methodology or the use of my data, or questioned my presence in the field.

Participation versus Observation

Each field researcher must consider the degree to which she will participate in the field (Van Den Hoonaard 2012; Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006). Should the ethnographer be as immersed as possible in the participants' social world or should she maintain a level of distance between herself and her research participants? Social situations that allow for the best opportunities to participate naturally in order to "experience activities directly, to get the feel of what events are like, and to record your own perception" are considered optimal (Spradley 1980:51). As discussed in this section, my study and research methodology fit within this parameter.

Spradley (1980:58-62) lists five types of participation an ethnographer can engage in, ranging on a continuum of involvement. From low to high, the types of participation are: nonparticipation, passive, moderate, active, and complete. Nonparticipation occurs when the ethnographer simply observes without participating at all in the social situation; she has no involvement with the actors or activities such as, for example, when watching people from behind a two-way mirror. With passive participation, the ethnographer is on site but does not engage in the activities of the social situation or interact with the actors. Passive participation occurs, for instance, when the researcher sits on a bench and observes people shopping in a mall or sits at a bus station and watches travellers. In conducting moderate participation the ethnographer must maintain a balance between being an insider and an outsider; the ethnographer participates in the activities at times and observes at others. Alternatively, active participation occurs when the ethnographer begins as an observer but learns the behaviour as she makes observations and increases her knowledge of the actors' behaviours and activities until she is able to participate fully in the research setting. Finally, complete participation occurs where ethnographers study social situations in which they are already ordinary participants.

In contrast with Spradley's model, Rossman and Rallis (1998:96-98) list only four types of participation: spectator, limited participation, immersion, and co-participation. These types fall along the continuum in the same manner as those listed by Spradley, where spectator occurs at the extreme end with nonparticipation, and co-participation is at the other end with active and complete participation. Rossman and Rallis (1998:97) state that "immersion and co-participation enable the researcher to learn the 'language' and norms of the setting and are more likely to yield a deep emic understanding than

simply standing around and watching people.” For these researchers, emic refers to understanding how participants use particular terms and gaining a sense of the language that is meaningful to them rather than meaningful only to the researcher. Rossman and Rallis also point out that the more a researcher stands out the harder it is for her to become a part of the group. The goal is to become as much a part of the research setting as one is able so one’s research participants will be comfortable enough to be “natural” and reveal the underlying reality of their social world.

My ethnographic research in South Africa involved complete participation as described by Spradley (1980) or co-participation as described by Rossman and Rallis (1998). I was not already an ordinary participant, but neither were any of the other volunteers when they first started their placements. We all began as outsiders but quickly became insiders simply by being there and engaging in the activity of volunteering. It is the nature of volunteer tourism that people come and go all the time – at any given time there could be a number of seasoned volunteers who already know their responsibilities and a number of new volunteers who are just learning their responsibilities. Thus, my entry into the social situation was no different than anyone else’s entry. I did not have to observe the movement of other volunteers from the status of insider to outsider, as might occur through the process of active participation described by Spradley because, from the very beginning, I was an insider or “newcomer,” and moved from stage to stage in the same way and with the same knowledge growth that other “new” volunteers experienced. In this way, I gained an intimate understanding of the social experience and identity manifestations occurring for my research participants because I experienced these social processes myself.

I also did not have to exit the social situation differently than any other volunteer. Each volunteer lends a finite amount of their time to volunteering so each volunteer experience has a specified end point; therefore my leaving the volunteer organization was not very different than anyone else's experience of leaving. In a similar fashion, because I was an insider in the same way that all the other volunteers were, and because I did not switch to outsider status throughout the research project (i.e. I remained an active participant throughout my research) I believe my research methodology falls under the category of complete participation. I became a volunteer entirely, in every capacity, and recorded my observations and experiences during my leisure time when I was not expected to participate with the volunteer group. This research stance enhanced my understanding of the overall experience of volunteer tourism and my confidence in the authenticity of the accounts of volunteer tourism given to me by my research participants.

I believe it was necessary for me to be a complete participant, or co-participant, in my research setting because I needed to become fully immersed in the social worlds of the volunteer programs. Importantly, "the more time spent in the field and the more involved a researcher is able to be in day-to-day activities at a site, the less likely it is that members of the setting will react to his presence and will change their behavior as a result" (Rossman and Rallis 1998:97). The goal of my research was to develop an understanding of the meaning of the experience of volunteer tourism from my research participants' perspective. Knowing that my presence would shape the reality of the experience for each participant, it was essential that I be accepted as a volunteer as well; I wanted the participants to act naturally throughout their time with me in South Africa, the same way they would have acted had no one been there to observe their behaviour. Had I

simply sat on the sidelines and watched, or moved from insider to outsider status or only participated in some of the activities, I believe the volunteers would have seen me more as a researcher than as a volunteer. They may have become resentful if I did not do the same work that they were doing and they may have felt uncomfortable around me if I did not join in their social activities. Concerned they might modify their behaviour due to my presence as a researcher, I decided to engage in the field as a complete participant. Notably, in experiencing the same processes of volunteering as they experienced, I could assess their perceptions more easily, that is, I could judge how similar or different their experiences were from mine and from the other volunteers I encountered and develop a stronger sympathetic understanding of the “typical” volunteer experience.

Degrees of Portrayal

A researcher must also decide whether or not to be explicit about her role as a researcher and her research purpose to her research participants. Should the researcher hide the fact that she is doing research in order to blend into the setting without being singled out? Should she be completely upfront about her research and hope she is accepted by the group even though she is studying them? Finding a balance between being close with the participants and maintaining the role of researcher is crucial (Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006:245).

How a researcher portrays herself ranges along a continuum from covert to overt. Covert portrayal occurs when participants are unaware that a researcher is present or that research is being done. A semi-overt portrayal means some participants are aware of the researcher while others are not. Overt portrayal occurs when all participants know who

the researcher is and that research is being done (Rossman and Rallis 1998:98-100). Each portrayal form affects how one's research participants behave and the type of data one may gather.

According to Rossman and Rallis (1998:98-100), portrayal of the research purpose rests on a similar continuum ranging from false to full explanation. If a researcher gives a false explanation of her research or deceives participants, it is false explanation. Covert explanation occurs when she gives no explanation and participants do not know about her research goals. With partial explanation, participants know a small amount about the study's purpose but have a limited understanding of it. Full explanation occurs when all participants know about the study's purpose; they are fully informed.

Degree of portrayal relates to the methodological implications mentioned above; my presence as a researcher would have an impact on the volunteers and, as such, it was clear to me that overt portrayal of both my role as a researcher and the purpose of my research was necessary. I strongly believe research participants have the right to know that someone may not only be watching their actions and listening to what they are saying but also writing it down in order to analyze it. (Ethical considerations such as this are discussed below but I mention it here because this belief helped shaped my decision to tell participants about my research.) Accordingly, the degrees of portrayal involved in my research were overt both in how I portrayed myself and in how I portrayed my research.

The volunteers appeared to be comfortable with my presence as a researcher. Since I was also a volunteer I engaged in all the same activities that they did – I helped

out with the volunteer duties, I went on excursions with them, I watched movies with them, and so on. The only obvious difference between me and the volunteers was that I was taking notes about these activities. However, many of the volunteers were keeping diaries and saw what I was doing as a similar sort of action. They understood that my notes would be used to inform my research after I left the field but were assured that if anything occurred that they did not want recorded, they could ask me to exclude the incident and I would do so. Interestingly, no participants requested that anything be excluded from my notes. Additionally, some participants said they enjoyed being the subject of observation. They liked that I was paying attention to them and told me it made them feel special that they could be part of my research.

Gathering Data in the Field

There are different methods a researcher can use to collect data while she is conducting research in the field (Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006:257). I decided to gather data through participation and observation as well as through interviewing. In order to record my observations I decided to take field notes. I took field notes pertaining to each day that I was volunteering and tried to keep track of what happened, what conversations I had, and with whom. I wrote in the same language throughout my notes, in my own voice, describing the situation. For the most part, I wrote down conversations based on what the volunteers and I talked about, who said what, and what was going on while we were having the conversation. I also wrote down conversations I overheard when not interacting with others.

Van Den Hoonaard (2012:70) states that it is necessary to distinguish between words participants actually use and a researcher's paraphrased notes; quotation marks can be used when recording a participant's words verbatim. I did not take many verbatim notes mainly because my memory was not strong enough to remember word for word what people said and I did not use a tape recorder in the field, outside of the interviews I conducted. If someone said something forceful or really interesting I was better able to remember the statement and was able to include it verbatim in my field notes in quotation marks, but this note-taking limitation is typical of most fieldnote data (Emerson et al. 1995; Spradley 1980).

With respect to native terms, that is, terms I learned in the field that were particular to that social situation, I placed them in quotation marks as a means of referencing them more clearly. For example, "chicken dishes" was the term used at the animal sanctuary to describe the task of washing all the food plates and bowls used to feed the animals. This task was called chicken dishes because the original place where the dishes were done when the sanctuary first started taking volunteers was in a chicken pen and the chickens would surround the volunteers as they washed the dishes. Now, the dishes are washed in a hut near the parking lot, but chickens still surround the hut when the volunteers wash the dishes. Distinguishing such terms as "chicken dishes" in quotation marks in my notes, recording the term and its use by the volunteers provided me with data that I could use to develop an emic understanding; the words were meaningful to the participants and helped me understand the social situation from the perspective of their language, not just my own.

Rossman and Rallis (1998:137) state there are two major components to field notes: the running record, which contains details about the physical space, activities, and interactions witnessed, and observer comments, which are the emotional reactions a researcher has, her analytical insights, and questions and thoughts about the research. The first component, the running record, is made up of “thick descriptions.” Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006:258) define thick description as everything that can be remembered about what exactly took place while in the field. I tried to keep track of each day and all the details I could remember in order to record thick descriptions of my time in the field in my running record.

Spradley (1980:69) highlights the fact that it is not possible for an ethnographer to write down absolutely everything she observed, heard, or otherwise encountered in her field research. A condensed account of what was experienced, of important events and key things people say, must be recorded during each period of fieldwork or directly after in order to retain the details of what the ethnographer observed. The ethnographer then expands on the condensed account by filling in recalled details in her condensed notes. This technique describes my typical field note taking practices. When I was typing up the notes at the end of each day, some things came back more easily than others so I recorded those details first. Later on, usually at the end of the week, I went back and tried to fill in the missing information from that day and expand on the details I had already recorded.

My field notes contained mostly grand tour observations, that is, observations that capture the most general features of the social situation – they provide an overview of the situation (Spradley 1980:78). I tried to keep my field notes factual, stating what I saw, heard, and experienced while in the field. I recorded the day-to-day places, actors,

activities, actions, events, time, and goals. Mini tour observations, that is, observations dealing with a unit of experience much smaller than that of grand tour observations (Spradley 1980:79), are mixed in with the grand tour observations in my field notes. When I recalled a particular incident in detail while writing up my field notes, my description of that incident was highly detailed. I was able to include more detail about more elements of those situations than with most of my descriptions of day-to-day activities.

I did not record the feelings of others often, unless the person seemed to be experiencing strong emotions. When I did record someone's feelings, I used my own thoughts to write the description rather than state it as fact, since I did not know how someone felt; I only knew my own perspective on their outward indicators of emotions, such as facial expressions and body language. If someone specifically told me how they felt, I recorded their statement in my field notes. I also did not record all of the objects involved in each situation, apart from those directly involved in the action or event. For example, I did not record the background objects, such as items appearing in the physical setting because it was already extremely time consuming writing up the happenings of the day without including all the objects around me. I had to remove myself from the field to take my notes, which meant I missed many experiences because I was not present for them. I could only record those "missing" experiences based on summaries other people described to me.

Observer comments should be distinguished from the running record, such as by using brackets, creating a separate column in the same file, or having a different file altogether, so that personal thoughts and feelings are not confused with what was actually

observed (Van Den Hoonaard 2012:70). I did not capture in detail my feelings and thoughts during my experience. Some of my feelings come through in my field notes, however, where I included my responses to other people. For example, if I told someone my thoughts or feelings, that conversation was recorded in my notes and as such, my feelings were recorded as well. Furthermore, throughout my notes I kept track of my actions, my motivations for these actions, and my accompanying feelings/response to those actions. For instance, if I had to redo one of the tasks another volunteer was responsible for and was frustrated about it, I recorded the action and that I was frustrated about doing it. I also kept track of some of the problems I encountered in the field, such as having difficulty finding people to interview. These difficulties were not recorded separately from my regular field notes but were included in my record of that particular day. Therefore, my running record and my observer comments were included in the same document; however, my comments are distinguishable from my running record because I explicitly state “I thought” or “I felt” when recording my comments. I also did not take any analysis and interpretation field notes while in the field. This step was undertaken separately, after leaving the field during coding and analysis of the data. I did not want to prematurely investigate what I was observing in the field as my feelings about the incidents and observations may have led me to judge the volunteers involved, or I may have read into the incidents before having all the information I needed to fully analyze them. I did not want to classify an observation without being able to examine its place in the overall volunteer tourism experience.

Exiting the Field

Once research has been completed, the researcher must leave the field. How a researcher leaves the field depends on where on the continuum of portrayal she was located. Nagy Hesse-Biber and Leavy state that there are degrees of exiting the field where a researcher can depart abruptly or can choose to maintain ties with some or all participants by continuing to visit even after leaving the field (2006:255-256). With overt and full portrayal, a researcher can leave the field more easily than if her presence as a researcher was unknown to participants since the participants would be unaware that the research has come to an end; a covert researcher would have to give participants a different reason for leaving than telling participants the research had finished (Jones and Watt 2010:121). In contrast, I employed overt and full portrayal throughout my time in South Africa and I could be more honest in my exit strategy; however, this is not the only reason my exit was very straightforward. As mentioned previously, it is the nature of volunteer tourism for volunteers to come and go all the time. Some people undertake a placement for a few weeks, others for several months or years. Those who stay for several months or years see many people leave. In this way, my departure from the volunteer placement was the same as any other volunteer's departure. I did not have to give a reason for my exit. I did not have to explain the end of the research. I just packed up my belongings, said goodbye to the volunteers, and left in the same way as any other volunteer. Still, while it was socially and physically easy for me to leave the field, it was emotionally difficult since I had spent so much time with some of the volunteers and had many new and interesting experiences during my time there. Indeed, as Jones and Watt

(2010:120) note, “Ethnographers rarely fully leave the field in an emotional or spiritual sense.” I found my research experience supports this claim quite strongly.

Interviewing

In addition to taking field notes, I conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews with a subset of twenty volunteers. Van Den Hoonaard states that the purpose of conducting in-depth interviews is to give participants a space in which to “explain their experiences, attitudes, feelings, and definitions of the situation in their own terms and in ways that are meaningful to them” (2012:78). She goes on to state that the hallmark of qualitative interviewing is the recognition of the importance of the participant’s perspective. I wanted to get a deeper knowledge about the volunteers’ backgrounds and motivations for joining the program. By participating in in-depth interviews, the interviewees were able to describe to me in their own words their previous travel and volunteer experience, talk about their motivations for joining the volunteer program, and explain to me what benefits they hoped to get from their volunteer tourism experience. Thus, it was the participants’ own perspectives on why they chose a specific volunteer tourism program and what they hoped to get out of it that I was recording in my interviews. The interviews were open-ended so the participants could talk as much or as little as they wanted about each of my subject areas. The overall subject areas that I explored in my interviews were: everyday life back home (employment, education, living arrangements, and so on), previous travel experience, previous volunteer experience, why the particular volunteer program was chosen, what the volunteer hoped to get out of the program, and goals for the future. Due to space constraints, the topics of previous travel

and volunteer experience, reasons for choosing that particular program, and desired benefits only are examined in detail in this thesis.

The Participants

After identifying one's research questions, a researcher must design an interview guide and identify participants to interview (Van Den Hoonaard 2012:83). The interview guide contains open-ended questions listed in a logical order and follow-up questions or probes which help the researcher elicit more detail about something the participant has talked about. My interview guide is attached in Appendix III. Van Den Hoonaard specifies that there are many ways to identify interview participants and that being persistent and creative can help a researcher locate enough people (2012:85). For my research, I wanted to interview ten participants from each volunteer placement. As such, my interview sample was made up of volunteers that were willing to be interviewed. However, my research goal was not to achieve representativeness or generalizability. It was to gain a sympathetic understanding of the social experience of volunteer tourism from the perspective of individuals who engage in this activity.

I had set no specific criteria for who would be interviewed from each research site. Rather, during the process of discussing my research project at the initial volunteer meeting where I notified the volunteers of the consent process, I also mentioned that I wanted to interview some of them and explained what the interview would entail. I explained that since I wanted to understand their motivations for joining the program before they were potentially influenced by their experiences during the program, I needed to conduct the interviews as soon as possible after their start date. Most volunteers

seemed keen to be interviewed at first, but when a few days had gone by and none had responded to my request for an interview, I began pursuing volunteers more aggressively by singling out volunteers I was more comfortable with personally and asking when a good time to conduct the interview was or by asking a volunteer what they were doing that week, finding an opening where they had some free time, and telling them we could do the interview at that time.

While no volunteer gave a specific reason for not wanting to be interviewed, I felt as though the volunteers did not want to take time out of their day to step out of the volunteer tourist social situation and talk to me. The reason I came to this conclusion was because many of them said they were busy and would do it later, or made statements that they did not want to miss out on what the other volunteers were doing at the time. It seemed the volunteers wanted to experience as much as possible while in South Africa. For example, when asked to arrange an interview time, one potential interviewee replied that she did not know what the other volunteers were doing that afternoon and wanted to wait and see if anything was going on before saying yes to an interview.

As a result, most of the people I interviewed were people I had developed closer initial relationships with from the start. They were people I connected with on a personal level and because we had more of a friendship than an acquaintanceship or a researcher-participant relationship I was more comfortable intruding on their leisure time. However, these people may have felt more obligated to say yes to an interview simply because they felt they were my friends. Thus, these were non-random samples of volunteers and some of the responses may contain bias due to an attempt by my “friends” to assist me in gaining a more favourable picture of how they spend their time back home and why they

chose to participate in a volunteer tourism program. On the other hand, our friendship may have elicited a more realistic picture due to their sense of comfort with me and their lack of fear in being misjudged. As such, the interview data I collected offers a picture of the interviewees' previous travel and volunteer experience based on what they chose to tell me and of their overt reasons for choosing a specific volunteer tourism program. For example, some interviewees spoke in detail about what their previous volunteering activities entailed while others simply gave me a general idea their volunteer work, such as: "I've done like soup kitchens and stuff." Still, in terms of their reasons for participation, I could compare the interviewees' overt responses with my observations of their behaviour to get a better overall picture of why they were volunteering in South Africa and whether they achieved their expected benefits from participation.

Using persistence, I managed to achieve my desired sample of twenty interviewees, ten from each volunteer program. Four males in total were interviewed; two from each placement. The rest of the interviewees were female. This gendered pattern of response reflects the volunteer gender bias existing in the volunteer programs overall. I found the majority of volunteers in both programs I studied was female, which is akin to previous studies on volunteer tourism such as that by Campbell and Smith (2005), whose sample was about 75 per cent female, and Benson and Seibert (2009), whose sample was 85 per cent female.

Transcribing the Data

I conducted the interviews throughout my time in South Africa and recorded each interview electronically so I could transcribe them and code the data when I returned

home. A researcher must decide what aspects of the recorded interview to transcribe (Van Den Hoonaard 2012:91). Should the interview be transcribed word for word, or should she only transcribe the speech that is directly related to her study? McLellan, MacQueen, and Neidig (2003:65) note, “At some point, a researcher must settle on what is transcribed...despite all best intentions, the textual data will never fully encompass all that takes place during an interview.” I chose to transcribe everything I could hear on the recordings, including the “um’s” and “like’s,” the pauses, and the laughter so that I would be able to analyze all speech that transpired during the interview, including my own. However, what were left out of the transcription were things such as velocity of speech, intonation, and body language and gesture.

Van Den Hoonaard (2012:82) notes that an interviewer must pay close attention to what participants say as well as to how they say it and to their behaviour in relation to the interviewer. Thus, I listened to the recordings repeatedly while transcribing the data and at various times while coding the data so that I could pay attention to how the interviewee was speaking in addition to what he or she was saying. Notably, at times I could envision the interview setting in my mind and visualize the interaction existing between myself and the interviewee thereby adding to my sense that the interview quotes I transcribed reflected the interview situation I experienced.

Still, in terms of the interviewees’ behaviour during the interview I had to rely on memory. My interviews were conducted in informal settings and felt more like conversations than a question and answer session. Since we were living and working together, I already had a relationship with each of the volunteers. Consequently, I was comfortable conducting the interviews and felt the participants were comfortable with

me. All of the interviews contain joking around and laughter (some interviews more than others), and most involve the interviewee going off on one or more tangents because the flow of the interviews was very conversational. My voice is heard a lot throughout the interviews, saying “mhm” and “right” throughout to signify my active participation in the interview in probing for clarification or in acknowledging my interviewee’s perspective. I also briefly shared my own stories and thoughts at times during the interviews. This revelation of self may not be typical of interviews, but Van Den Hoonaard points out that “social reality is constructed through interpersonal interactions as much as it is through words” (2012:82); my interactions with the participants in the interviews was more like a friendship than a researcher-participant relationship and the information elicited from the interviews was likely influenced by this type of interpersonal interaction. I believe my interview approach was positive, however. The participants were comfortable talking with me and I felt a sense of trust in me that they may not have possessed if I were simply a researcher rather than a fellow volunteer and friend/acquaintance. I also believe my extension of the friend or acquaintance relationship that existed in the everyday social situation of our volunteer placements allowed for more open and honest discussion within the interviews because it was a more natural form of conversation than what a question and answer or researcher-participant interaction might achieve.

Ethical Considerations

When conducting ethnographic research, a researcher must consider a number of ethical principles because she is dealing with human participants as research subjects. Every Canadian student researcher must submit their research plans to the research ethics board of their university if they are conducting research involving humans. The research

ethics board then reviews the research plans in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS), which lays out the ethical considerations for researchers conducting studies with human participants (Van Den Hoonaard 2012:165-166). This project received approval from the Carleton University Research and Ethics Board before I began my research in South Africa.

There are three core ethical principles described in the TCPS: respect for persons, concern for human welfare, and justice. Respect for persons involves recognizing “the intrinsic value of human beings and the respect and consideration that they are due...it incorporates the dual moral obligations to respect autonomy and to protect those with developing, impaired, or diminished autonomy” where autonomy includes “the ability to deliberate about a decision and to act based on that deliberation” (Van Den Hoonaard 2012:167). Concern for welfare considers the quality of a person’s experience of life in all its aspects. These aspects of welfare include physical, mental, and spiritual health in addition to physical, economic, and social circumstances. Justice means treating all people fairly, with equal respect and concern, and equitably, where the benefits and burdens of research participation are distributed “in such a way that no segment of the population is unduly burdened by the harms of research or denied the benefits of the knowledge generated from it” (Van Den Hoonaard 2012:167). Notably, I believe these principles are exacerbated by ethnographic research due to the close interpersonal relationships created through participant observation techniques. As such, I took a stance of always trying to maintain these ethical values during both the fieldwork and interview stages of my research as well as when presenting my data analysis. Rossman and Rallis (2010:384) state “perhaps most important in making ethical judgments is the need to

recognize that such judgments are not merely matters of personal opinion and preference; they are, rather, judgments, and therefore must be transparent.” In an attempt to be transparent with respect to the ethical judgments I made in the field, this section discusses how I considered the three ethical principles described above during my research.

To respect participants’ autonomy, I made sure all the volunteers were thoroughly informed of my research interests. As stated earlier in this chapter I told each volunteer toward the beginning of his or her volunteering stint that I was there not only as a volunteer, but also as a researcher gathering data for my thesis. In this way, I portrayed my role as researcher overtly rather than hiding it or letting it remain ill-defined. I also explained that I was taking notes on all the activities and speech of all the volunteers so that I could examine the notes later to try and understand the meaning of the experience to the volunteers thereby presenting, as much as possible, full portrayal of my research purpose. The volunteers were each provided with a consent form a few days after I explained my research interests to them in order to provide them a period of time to reflect on what I told them and to decide whether or not they were comfortable being a participant in my research study. I also told each volunteer their name would not be used in the field notes in order to keep the information confidential, and that the information was being protected so that others could not read it. I informed them that I would be available at any time to answer any questions they might have and that if they were uncomfortable with anything they could talk to me about it. I also explained what was written on the consent form, since many of the volunteers chose not to read it but just to sign it. In this way, the volunteers were able to make their own decisions about whether or not to be involved in the research at any point in time. Furthermore, they were able to

withdraw at any time from the research and if any incident occurred that they did not want included in my notes, they could ask me not to record it and I would not include it in my notes. Those volunteers who were interviewed had to sign a separate consent form (see appendix IV) and were also able to end their interview at any time or request that certain parts of the interview be omitted from my research. I believe these steps ensured my research participants' rights and dignities were respected because they were able to have some ownership of their own data and they had the final word whether an observation that implicated them or interview comment was included in the study or not. Significantly, no participants asked that anything be left out of my field notes or interviews at any point during the study.

I did not want my research to inflict any harm on a person's welfare during their time in South Africa or after returning home from their volunteer placement. This means that I wanted the participants to have the same quality of experience of the volunteer placement while I was there conducting research as they would have if no researcher had been present. Thus, I presented myself both as a volunteer and a researcher. I wanted the other volunteers to see me as one of them; I wanted them to understand that I was there to have a volunteer experience as well as try to understand their own experiences. I was not there simply to observe, I was also learning the duties of the volunteer, participating in leisure activities with other volunteers, sharing volunteers' concerns about lack of hot water or bland food, and so on. By participating as a volunteer, however, my presence as a researcher was less obvious than perhaps it might have been had I stood off to the side and taken notes.

I wanted to respect each volunteer's right to participate autonomously in my research. I therefore communicated my research objective, which was to understand the meaning of volunteer tourism, to the volunteers each time a new volunteer joined the organization. I also continued to restate my researcher role throughout the entire time I was volunteering, to make sure the volunteers remembered that I was there with a dual purpose. Most of the volunteers were fairly young (aged sixteen to twenty-four) and often made jokes about me being a researcher (for example, telling a new volunteer "she stalks us and learns all our secrets" or doing something funny and then telling me "that better be in your notes!"), thereby enabling me to be an insider with the group rather than a detached "outside" observer. Notably, these types of jokes and statements made by the volunteers helped me restate my role as researcher at the same time as it demonstrated that they were comfortable with me in such a role. It also made me more comfortable taking notes as I began to realize that the volunteers really did not mind what I was doing and were therefore more likely to be acting the same way with me there as a researcher that they would be if no researcher was present.

It is possible that my presence as a researcher may have impacted individual participants' ability to exercise autonomy. By knowing everyone else was involved with my research project new volunteers may have felt pressure to be part of it. I hoped that by giving volunteers a few days between being told about the research and signing the consent form that they would have time to choose for themselves whether or not to participate and that any subtle pressure presented by other volunteers when they first arrived would be lessened. I also tried to alleviate any potential peer pressure by telling "new" volunteers that their consent forms would be kept locked up so nobody else could

see them and that I personally would not share with others who was participating in the research or not, so if a volunteer chose not to participate then the other volunteers would not know. Although I could not tell for certain whether these volunteers felt obligated to participate in my study, I believe the efforts I took to alleviate such constraint was demonstrated through the lack of complaints received about my research presence and the overwhelming sense of support I received from the volunteers I worked with in each of my research settings.

The right to remain anonymous was given to each participant in my study. I did not use personal identifiers in my field notes and names were not used in the interviews I conducted. No personal information of any of the volunteers was stored anywhere except in the interview data where a participant states where they are from or what university they attend. The people I interviewed had the right to tell others that they had been interviewed but I did not inform others who I had interviewed. The details of my field notes and the interview data were also not shared with any of the participants or anyone else. Consent to use a recording device was received before beginning any of the interviews. Once the interviews were transcribed, the tapes were erased.

All informants in my research were offered a copy of my completed thesis after its approval. Several people specifically asked if they could receive a copy, and reminded me as they were leaving the volunteer program that they wanted to read it when it was done. I also offered the volunteer organization staff and owners a copy, and some of the volunteer organizations that I contacted before selecting my final research organizations asked to receive a finished copy. I will send an electronic copy of my final research paper to each person who requested one. Such requests demonstrated to me both the more

universal relevance of my research topic and the overall support of my research presence by the volunteers with whom I worked.

Further to treating participants equitably, I also tried my best to treat them fairly, that is, to follow the ethical principle of “justice.” Each volunteer was treated as a participant in the same manner. What this means is that while I developed closer friendships with some volunteers than others, I had a researcher-participant relationship with each volunteer and each volunteer had the same burdens of the research. All volunteers signed a consent form and notes were taken involving all volunteers: all volunteers were participants. For me, “justice” also fell under the rubric of what Rossman and Rallis (2010:383-384) describe as an “ethic of care,” which necessitates mutual respect between the researcher and her participants. Developing and maintaining mutual respect with each of the volunteers involved being sensitive to their needs. An ethic of care in the field meant, for example, being there to listen when someone needed to talk, doing extra work at the animal sanctuary when someone was having a bad day and needed help, or even walking to the ATM with someone because they could not safely go alone. Treating participants with respect and concern also meant including the participants’ viewpoints in my field notes. For me, the volunteers were co-researchers in the sense that the relationships I developed with people beyond that of researcher-participant allowed me to understand the importance of experiences through talking with others. I was able to learn how others felt about what was happening rather than having to make inferences based solely on observation because we talked about it. Was a night out at karaoke just a fun time or did something meaningful take place? It was not just me

making an interpretation of an event; all those involved had input as well. Together we decided what was significant.

This section is by no means a thorough investigation into the ethical considerations involved in ethnographic research. However, keeping in mind these three ethical principles helped me, as a researcher, to keep the informants at the forefront of my mind so that any potential risks resulting from being implicated in the research were analyzed and minimized to the fullest extent possible.

Conclusion

This chapter began with a detailed section on why I employed an ethnographic methodological approach to conduct my research on volunteer tourism and how this choice was a product of my ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. Next, I outlined the important steps involved in undertaking an ethnographic research project and utilizing the participant observation method of data collection, and stated how I addressed each of these steps in my research project. The subsequent section examined why and how I conducted interviews with a subset of twenty volunteers. Finally, I explored some of the ethical principles one needs to consider when conducting social research with human participants and how I considered these principles in my own research.

The following chapter describes the two volunteer programs I participated in and provides basic demographic data of the participants in my study. Examples of volunteer interactions gathered throughout my time in the field are then given to provide a description of the similarities and differences existing between volunteers engaged with

each volunteer program. My fieldwork data is analyzed using a symbolic interaction theoretical approach to examine how the volunteers I worked and lived with experienced the everyday life of volunteer tourism and the meaning the volunteer tourism social situation held for them.

Chapter III: Field Observation Analysis

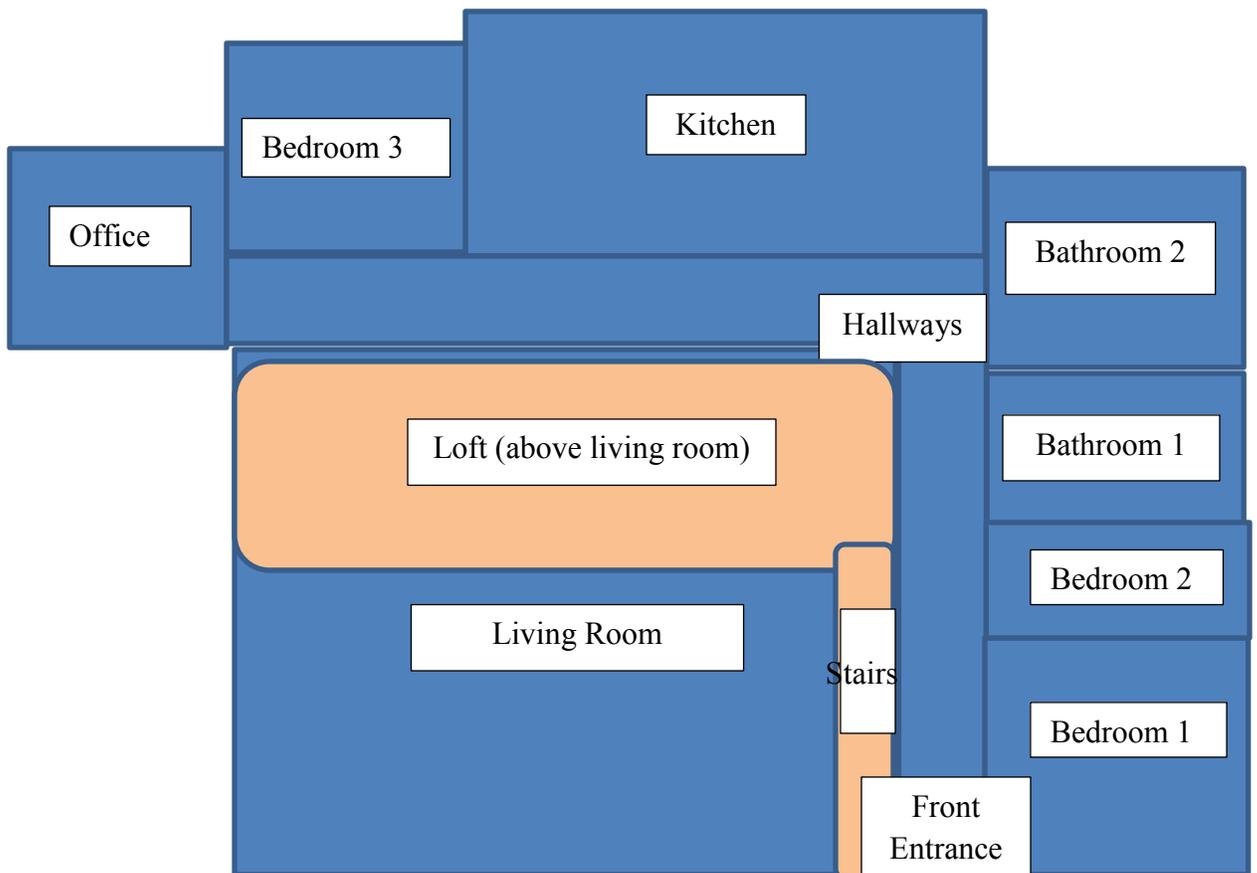
This chapter describes my experiences and observations in the field and analyzes them using a symbolic interaction theoretical approach in order to develop an understanding of the meaning the volunteer tourism experience has for its participants. To begin, I briefly detail the two volunteer placements in terms of location and volunteer demographics. Next, I describe my arrival at the two volunteer programs and the typical routine of each program in order to give a sense of the overall volunteer tourist experience. The chapter ends with some examples of volunteer interactions that demonstrate how participants give meaning to the volunteer tourism experience and compares the findings with those appearing in other research studies on volunteer tourists.

The Volunteer Programs – Description of Place and Demographic Characteristics of Volunteer Tourists

I participated in a volunteer program working with children for eight weeks in May and June 2012. The childcare project is located about 26 kilometres south of Cape Town, South Africa. Its volunteer house provides accommodation for approximately twenty volunteers at a time, but beds can be added to hold a few more volunteers when necessary. The house has a main level with three bedrooms, two bathrooms, a kitchen, a living room, and an office, as well as a loft that is accessible by a flight of stairs. My bed was in the loft. When I started the program the loft contained seven beds but by the time I left there were eleven beds in total. There is space in between each bed for the volunteer's suitcase but no additional furniture. Two of the rooms on the main level have

two bunk beds each while the third room has one bunk bed. None of the rooms have additional furniture or space for unpacking so the volunteers tend to live out of their suitcases. One of the bathrooms has a shower and a sink while the other has a bathtub with a shower, a sink, and a toilet. There is also a small stone courtyard accessible through a door in the kitchen with an enclosed third bathroom with a sink and a toilet. The kitchen has all the necessary amenities, such as fridge, oven, stove, sink, and microwave. The living room has two long, L-shaped couches and a non-working fireplace. The office is used only by the volunteer coordinators and is kept locked when they are away.

Figure 3.1 – The Childcare Volunteer House



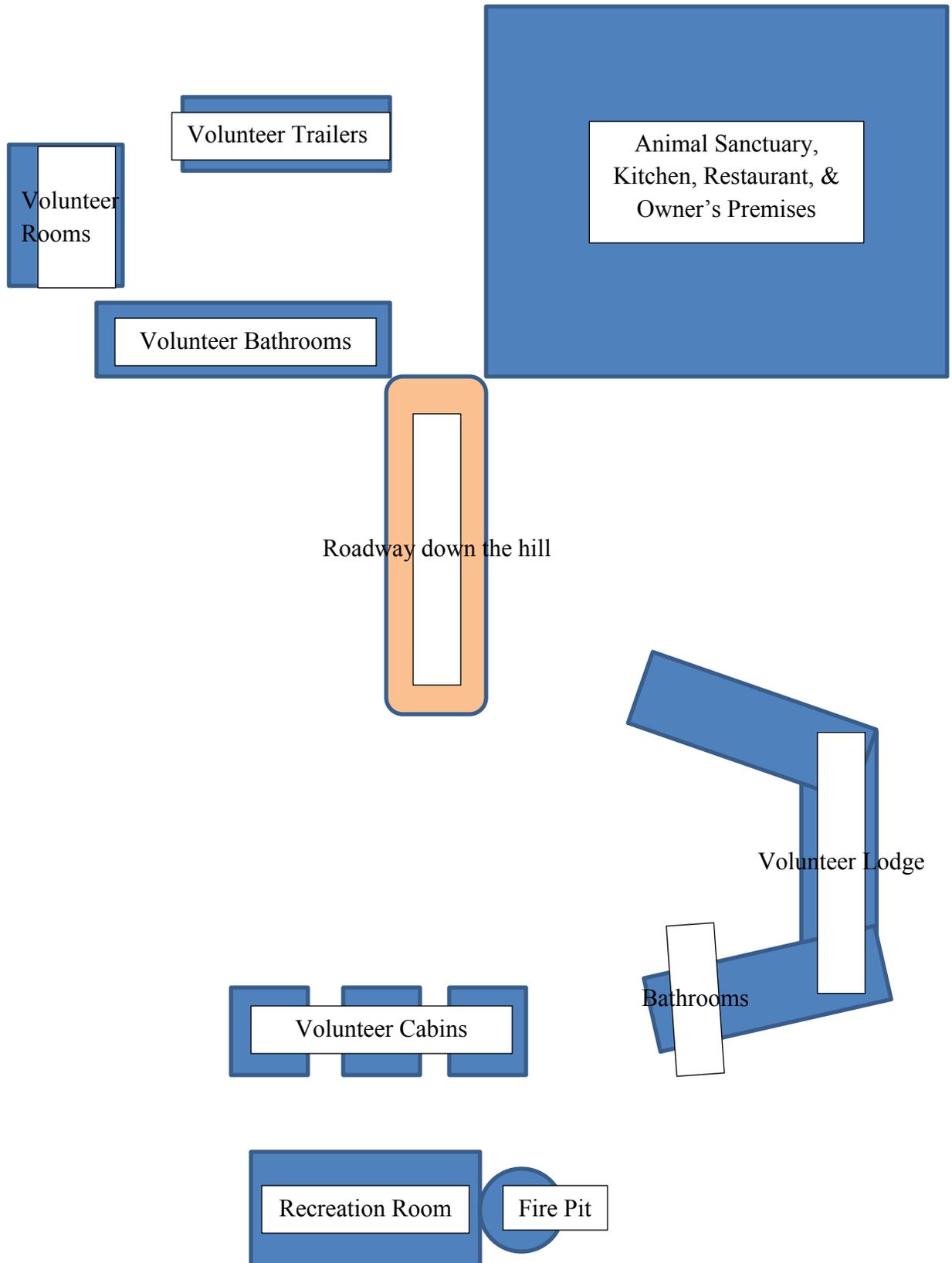
The second program I volunteered at was also for eight weeks. The wildlife care program is an animal sanctuary located approximately 42 kilometres west of the city of Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. The sanctuary has a front reception area, office, kitchen, restaurant, and back kitchen, called the “prep room,” where the animal food is prepared. Unlike the school setting of the childcare project which does not cater to tourists, visitors to the sanctuary can access the front reception area and restaurant as well as the sanctuary grounds where the animal enclosures are kept. The main housing for volunteers is located down a hill from the sanctuary itself on the same property; a road leads from the sanctuary to the volunteer quarters. There are eight wooden bedrooms attached to each other forming a sort of lodge, with two bathrooms at one end of the lodge; one for males and one for females. Each bathroom has one sink, two toilet stalls, and three shower stalls. Two of the bedrooms have one single bed each, one bedroom has one double bed, three bedrooms have two single beds, one bedroom has two bunk beds, and one bedroom has three bunk beds and one single bed. Each of the single beds can be turned into a bunk bed to accommodate additional volunteers.

In front of the lodge there is a yard with a picnic table and a tree that has a swing on it. At one end of the lodge is a guinea pig enclosure and at the other end there are three separate wooden cabins containing two single beds each. There is a small hill behind these three single cabins at the top of which there is a small building containing a recreation room for the volunteers. This room has several armchairs and mattresses in it, a television with DVD player, and an indoor fire pit. There is also an outdoor fire pit and a pile of wood outside the building. I began my placement living in one of the three

rooms in the lodge with two single beds but I moved to one of the separate cabins after eleven days when its occupants finished their placements.

Also at the top of the hill next to the sanctuary are the owner of the sanctuary's house, the animal clinic for sick and newly admitted animals, and additional housing for volunteers. The long term volunteers mostly stay in this housing because it is closer to the sanctuary, but these rooms are also used when the sanctuary has a large influx of volunteers and cannot house everyone in the lodge down the hill. There are several trailers that individual volunteers or couples can stay in as well as a few rooms in a small wooden building. I did not get to know this area of the sanctuary very well and I am unsure how many rooms there actually are or how many beds each room has. There is one large room that has single beds for eight volunteers, which was used for a few weeks during my stay at the sanctuary to house eight female volunteers. There are four individual bathrooms each containing a toilet, sink, and shower that the volunteers who live in this housing can use.

Figure 3.2 – The Animal Sanctuary



These descriptions are significant because the two volunteer locations create physical space that shapes volunteers' interactions. From the two descriptions of location, the living environment offered to volunteers in the childcare project was less spacious and less inviting than at the animal sanctuary. As such, childcare volunteers were forced to live in closer proximity to each other and had less privacy. They were required to almost constantly interact with each other; for example, even when a volunteer went to his or her room for a nap, other volunteers were present either in the room or in one of the common areas shared by the volunteers. In contrast, the majority of the animal sanctuary volunteers had only one roommate and therefore had more opportunity to be alone. Furthermore, the animal sanctuary was located on a large amount of property and volunteers could roam about, whereas the childcare volunteers only had one house to occupy and little outdoor space. Thus, the animal sanctuary volunteers were much more capable of removing themselves from the presence of other volunteers and selecting both with whom and when they would interact outside of volunteer hours.

Thirty-six volunteers were part of my study during my eight weeks of volunteering in the childcare project. Each volunteer signed a consent form allowing me to take field notes of them. Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below display the area of origin and ages of the childcare and animal sanctuary volunteers. Most of the childcare volunteers (31 or 86.1%) were from North America; 17 were Canadian and 14 were American. The majority (34 or 94.4%) were between 18 and 24 years of age. Thirty (83.3%) were female and six (16.7%) were male, but, as noted below, this gender pattern is consistent with the gender distributions found in previous studies on volunteer tourism (Benson and Seibert 2009; Campbell and Smith 2005).

Sixty-one new volunteers started their programs while I was volunteering at the animal sanctuary. Each of the 61 volunteers agreed to be a part of the research and signed consent forms. These volunteers originated from a much wider variety of countries than the childcare volunteers; however, more than half (33 or 54.1%) were from England. The majority (33 or 54.1%) were also much younger than the childcare volunteers and reported being between 16 and 18 years of age. Again the sample was gender biased; 46 (75.4%) were female and 15 (24.6%) were male.

Table 3.1 – Area of Origin

Country of Origin	Number of Childcare Volunteers	% of Childcare Volunteers	Number of Animal Sanctuary Volunteers	% of Animal Sanctuary Volunteers
Australia	1	2.8%	1	1.6
Brazil			1	1.6
Europe			24	39.3
India	1	2.8%		
North America	31	86.1%	2	3.3
United Kingdom (England only)	3	8.3%	33	54.1
Total Countries	5	100%	16	99.9%³

³ Difference is due to rounding.

Table 3.2 – Age of Volunteers

Age	Number of Childcare Volunteers	% of Total Childcare Volunteers	Number of Animal Sanctuary Volunteers	% of Total Animal Sanctuary Volunteers
16			6	9.8
17			8	13.1
18	5	13.9	19	31.1
19	5	13.9	4	6.6
20	10	27.8	5	8.2
21	3	8.3	3	4.9
22	2	5.6	3	4.9
23	7	19.4	2	3.3
24	2	5.6	1	1.6
25			1	1.6
26-29			1	1.6
30-39	2	5.6	2	3.3
40-49			1	1.6
50-59			2	3.3
60-69			3	4.9
Total	36	100	61	99.8
Mode Age	20	27.8	18	31.1
Age Range	18-39		16-69	

Previous research on volunteer tourism has also found that volunteer tourists come mainly from developed countries. For example, the majority of Stoddart and Rogerson (2004)'s sample came from the United States while a smaller group originated from Europe. Both Galley and Clifton (2004) and Cousins et al.'s (2009) participants originated mainly from the United Kingdom. One of the two groups implicated in Coren and Gray's (2011) study, which compared two volunteer tourist groups, also originated mainly from the United Kingdom while the second group was mostly of European origin (60% and 87.5%, respectively).

Additionally, the gender patterns I found are consistent with the gender distributions found in previous studies on volunteer tourism (Andereck, McGehee, Lee, and Clemmons 2012; Coren and Gray 2011; Benson and Seibert 2009; Cousins et al. 2009; Campbell and Smith 2005) so, although gender biased, my volunteer population is appropriate for my topic of research.

The age distributions reported in my study differ slightly from other research studies. For example, Stoddart and Rogerson (2004) found the largest age group (approximately 26.8%) to be between 50-59 years of age with the second highest age group (23.6%) between 20-29. In comparison, Galley and Clifton (2004) found a majority between the ages of 20-22, while Andereck et al. (2012) report the largest age group (40%) between 20-30 years of age, and Coren and Gray's (2011) comparative research study indicates a majority between 26-47 and 18-24 years of age (60% and 62.5% respectively). My research participants were younger than the volunteers in these studies: at the childcare centre the volunteers were mostly aged 18-20 (55.5%) while at the animal sanctuary the majority (54.1%) were aged 16-18. This variation in study findings indicates no specific age group is more likely to participate in volunteer tourism than another; however, similar to my findings, it seem that most volunteer tourists are under the age of 30.

The Volunteer Programs – Being a New Volunteer and Learning the Typical Volunteer Routine

The Childcare Project

My experience as a volunteer tourist began when I arrived in South Africa on May 6, 2012 to work with the childcare project. After the plane landed, I retrieved my suitcase and looked for a person holding up a sign with my name on it. I found this person quickly and waited with him for the other three volunteers that would be coming to the volunteer house with me. After the three volunteers arrived over the next ten minutes (all from Ottawa and all female), we got into a van and were driven past the Cape Town city centre and Table Mountain to the volunteer house, about thirty minutes away. The four of us had not known each other beforehand except for two of the girls who were travelling together. During the taxi ride we talked about which program we were going to be working with and for how many weeks. During most of the ride however, we were listening to the taxi driver tell us about Cape Town and looking at the different sites he pointed out to us.

We were shown around the volunteer house by one of the coordinators when we arrived and put our belongings in the upstairs loft where we would be living for the duration of our programs. After our tour, we joined some of the volunteers who were already living in the house to explore the Sunday market on the beach. There, we met other volunteers who were already at the market and I later had dinner with them at one of the local restaurants. The day passed quickly in a blur of meeting people and hearing about our new home and the volunteer programs.

Personally, I found this initial day to be overwhelming and disheartening as demonstrated in the following excerpt from my field notes:

We went to the Sunday market on the beach that sells a bunch of crafts and clothes but also different household things like shampoo, batteries, and children's toys. I wasn't really interested in going but the other girls wanted to check it out. They seemed a lot more excited than I was and didn't seem to be tired at all after the long flight. I insisted on showering before going to the market because I was dirty after such a long journey but the other three didn't look dirty at all and were impatient with me. They didn't want to wait for me but told me they would anyway. We walked to the market but I didn't really say anything to them because I didn't know what to say. They talked about meeting different people and one of the girls really wanted to meet boys. At the market we ran into other volunteers and everybody said their ages. I was the oldest person by far and when I said my age everyone else fell silent. It was really awkward until someone changed the subject. (Childcare Fieldnotes, May 7, 2012, p. 2)

Although I felt uncomfortable with the other volunteers and sensed that I did not fit in, it did not seem to me that the other volunteers disapproved of my presence. They were all talking and laughing throughout the day and seemed to be very excited. Thus, I am not sure my first impressions were typical of the volunteer tourist experience. I may have had a different initial impression due to the fact that I was older than everyone else and therefore felt out of place and because I was there with a dual purpose; I needed the other volunteers to agree to be a part of my research study and was nervous about them saying no. Developing trusted relations between a researcher and the participants is important for developing a trustworthy report (Rossman and Rallis 1998:104) so I knew I had to be accepted by the volunteers if they were to be comfortable being a part of my research. However, Rossman and Rallis (1998) also state that entry to a social situation requires time. Therefore, I tried not to become discouraged and told myself that it was only the first day and that it would take a little more time to develop relationships. In fact,

I later realized that being seen as different by the volunteers due to my age ended up helping me maintain my identity as a researcher because I came across as older and therefore wiser to the volunteers.

The next day all new volunteers attended an orientation session where we were informed about many topics such as rules for living in the volunteer house, safety, the logistics of the volunteer program, and tours and activities we could participate in while on the program. I also took this opportunity to explain my research to the volunteers. Although we all appeared to be overloaded by the amount of information provided during the session, most responded to my explanation positively. For example, my fieldnote entry of this discussion reads:

After the presentation about the types of activities we could do in Cape Town we were all standing around waiting to be taken to the metro. Since everyone was already standing together in the kitchen I decided it was a good time to tell everyone about my research. I called out asking if everyone could listen for a minute and told them I was studying volunteer tourism for my Master's thesis. I told them volunteer tourism was what we were doing there, volunteering and travelling at the same time. A lot of people said it was cool that I was studying it and thought it was a great topic to be researched. I then told them that studying it meant I needed to take notes on what happened while I was there, which meant I would write down everything we did and said. Before anyone really had a reaction to this I told them they would be able to decide whether to be in the study or not and that I had consent forms for each of them. I said they could think about it for a few days and I would bring them consent forms later if they were okay with it. Some people laughed at the idea of being watched while another said it sounded like keeping a diary. A few people starting saying yes but I told them not to answer yet and I would ask again in a few days for them to sign a consent form. (Childcare Fieldnotes, May 7, 2012, p.5)

After this meeting, we took the metro to Cape Town with two volunteer coordinators who showed us a bit of the city centre and explained how and where we

could take care of necessary business such as changing money and getting medicine. We arrived home in the early evening so we could have dinner and get some rest to start our first day as volunteers the following day. We all went to bed early so we could get enough sleep after our long journeys and because we knew we had to be up early in the morning. It seemed that our sense of self as tourists had not overridden the obligations we felt as volunteers who would be working at the project.

On our first “official” volunteer day, a taxi picked up the teaching volunteers from the volunteer house around 8:15am. We were dropped off at the elementary school and left to our own devices; there were no volunteer coordinators with us to show us what to do. One of the volunteers who had been on the program for a few weeks took the new volunteers to the principal’s office to introduce us and then escorted us from classroom to classroom, knocking on each door so that we could meet the teachers. Most of the teachers did not want us interrupting their classes so we only went into two classrooms to introduce ourselves to the children. We were then left to stand alone outside and figure out what to do with our time. We were all confused by the fact that the teachers did not want us in their classrooms and that there was nobody there to tell us what to do or where to go. It seemed that we would not be allowed in most of the classrooms so three of us decided to join the grade seven class because the teacher was very nice and welcoming. We left the other volunteers and went to his classroom. Throughout the program, the teaching volunteers often discussed the fact that most of the school teachers did not support the presence of volunteers in the classroom and expressed frustration that they were unable to get the teaching experience they wanted. We all wanted to know why the volunteer organization was associated with that school if we were not actually able to do

work at the school. However, these types of experiences tended to serve as a bonding force for the volunteers who turned to each other for guidance and support rather than hired staff/teachers at the childcare project and in consequence, the volunteers were able to maintain a sense of self as a volunteer tourist despite their inability to be fully engaged in the classroom, as will be discussed more fully later in this chapter.

The rest of my time volunteering at the childcare project followed a basic routine. Weekday mornings were spent getting ready and taking a taxi to the elementary school where I would sit in the grade seven classroom with one to five other volunteers and occasionally help out the teacher. Mostly our duties involved helping to keep the children quiet, distribute materials, read lessons to them, and grade their work. We had a lunch break where most of the volunteers would eat in what was called the “TA trailer” (teaching assistant trailer) that was an attached outbuilding containing all the sporting equipment for the sports volunteer program, a few chairs, and a computer. After eating, volunteers would usually play with children in the schoolyard until the bell rang. School ended at 2:30 pm and we would take a taxi back to the volunteer houses.

In the evenings dinner was prepared for us by one of the volunteer coordinators. On weekends we had free time to do whatever activities were of interest to us. Typical tourist and leisure activities included going on sightseeing trips to nearby places of interest such as the Cape Town city centre, Table Mountain, and Simon’s Town where penguins could be viewed in their natural habitat, watching movies on someone’s laptop, taking taxis or the metro to local bars or clubs, and visiting local markets. During these time periods volunteers broke off into groups to go on tours, to take care of errands such as going to the bank or the Laundromat, or to relax/have fun. Volunteers preferred to

spend their free time with those volunteers with whom they had developed close relationships. However, as a default, anyone who was available would do. For example, if a volunteer needed to get money out of the ATM, she asked everyone who was around to go with her and whoever was free would accompany her. Thus, volunteers organized their free time in various ways with different volunteers depending upon the situation; as such, “free time” allowed volunteers to experience different things together and get to know each other on an individual as well as a group basis. Specifically, the volunteers relied on each other and, although “old” volunteers left and “new” volunteers arrived at the childcare project bi-weekly, a sense of comradeship and solidarity developed among them as a volunteer support group.

The childcare project had four volunteer programs in addition to the teaching program: daycare, sports, surf, and computer. Each program had different start and end times. The sports program usually started a bit later in the morning than the teaching program and ended earlier because the sports volunteers ran the physical education classes at the elementary school and those classes only took place at certain times throughout the day. However, sometimes there were soccer games or practices for the older male students after school and the sports volunteers would work late those days. Computer program volunteers worked the same hours as teaching volunteers and had the same routine; the program involved showing two children at a time how to use a computer. This program was only in operation for a few weeks while I was there because there were no computer volunteers the rest of the time. Daycare volunteers went to a local daycare, or crèche, each morning at 9:00am to play with the children and help out with their meal times. They returned to the volunteer houses between 11:00am and noon each

day. Finally, the surf program began after school. The children in the surf program were picked up by a taxi after school let out at 2:30pm and were driven to the beach where they were met by the surf volunteers. The volunteers surfed with the children and gave them snacks until around 5:00pm when a taxi arrived to take the children home.

Having five distinct volunteer programs meant the daily routines of many volunteers were different and they had to structure their time differently; which created sub-groups of volunteers. For example, the surf and childcare volunteers were able to make sandwiches for lunch together at the volunteer house because they were home during the afternoon while the rest of the volunteers ate lunch together in the TA trailer. As such, these sub-groups had two different social spaces in which to bond with each other over lunch. However, even though the daily activities of the sub-groups of volunteers were different, once the volunteer work was completed all the volunteers were able to spend their evening and weekend leisure time together and formed relationships across the volunteer group as a whole.

The Animal Sanctuary

I arrived at the animal sanctuary in the early evening on July 5, 2012. When I finished my eight weeks of volunteering on the childcare project, I took a five day bus tour to visit some of the major tourist sites along the East Coast of South Africa. The driver on my tour was able to drop me off right at the entrance to the animal sanctuary at the end of the tour where I was greeted by one of the volunteer coordinators who showed me around the sanctuary and to my room. I felt more comfortable arriving at the animal sanctuary than I had arriving at the childcare house because I had already spent eight

weeks living with other people. I felt I had better interaction skills after that experience and was more confident in my research since the volunteers in the childcare project had fully supported it. When I introduced myself to people I was more confident. I also was personally more motivated to work with animals than to work with children and was very excited to be around animals for the next eight weeks. I did, however, feel somewhat anxious because I feel anxious in any new social situation, but this anxiety was not as strong as when I began the childcare project.

After looking around, I met my roommate and the other volunteers who had already begun their volunteer placements at various times over the previous few weeks. Unlike at the childcare project, no other new volunteers began their stay at the same time as I did so, essentially, I was the “newcomer” in the group. However, similar to my previous posting, on the first night I had dinner with the volunteers and volunteer coordinators in the sanctuary’s restaurant. I quickly learned that dinner was always prepared each night by a volunteer coordinator and served in the restaurant. The restaurant had five tables of various sizes for people to sit at as well as a television and bar (for use by the sanctuary visitors, not the volunteers as alcohol was prohibited). I would begin volunteering the next morning so I unpacked right after dinner and went to sleep.

There was no orientation meeting at the animal sanctuary like the one I experienced at the childcare project because there were no set dates for volunteers to begin the program. The childcare project admitted new volunteers every two weeks but volunteers started any day of the week at the animal sanctuary. Consequently, I had no

single opportunity to inform the volunteers about my research but rather had to approach them individually.

I was paired up with a seasoned volunteer for my first few days volunteering so I could learn procedures. Volunteers worked in pairs and were assigned a specific feeding route for the morning and one for the afternoon. A typical volunteer day at the animal sanctuary started at 7:30am where we would retrieve the prepared animal food from the prep room and bring it to each enclosure on our assigned route. The dirty food plates were brought to a washing area outside and then the prep room was cleaned. After this, usually between 8:30 and 9:00am, we had thirty to sixty minutes for breakfast and then a volunteer coordinator or seasoned volunteer would read out a list of tasks that needed to be done around the sanctuary. Volunteers in their assigned pairs would sign up for each task so there was a more or less equal distribution of work. These tasks included activities such as raking enclosures, cleaning food and water stations, and emptying trash bins from around the park. There were additional daily tasks of “chicken dishes” and “clinic” that the volunteer coordinators assigned pairs or groups of three to fulfill. “Chicken dishes” involved washing all of the dirty food plates and bowls used in the preparation and feeding of animals in a big, blue tub housed in a makeshift wooden hut next to the visitors’ parking lot. “Clinic” required feeding the animals in the clinic and cleaning their cages. These tasks were worked on after breakfast until they were all completed; if one pair finished all their assigned tasks it was expected that they would do additional tasks that had not yet been crossed off the list.

Normally the tasks were completed between 11:30am and noon. Lunch was prepared and served to the volunteers at 1:00pm (this changed to noon about four weeks

into my program) and then at 2:00pm we began our afternoon feeding routes which we would finish around 3:00pm. There were four additional tasks to be performed each day after the feeding routes were completed. These tasks were assigned by the volunteer coordinators and included chicken dishes and clinic again, as well as changing the water and nectar in the largest aviary at 4:30pm and cleaning the seed trays and bringing the seed bins inside at 5:00pm. Dinner was prepared for the volunteers for 5:30 or 6:00pm. Unlike the childcare project, the animal sanctuary program was more structured in terms of the volunteers' daily routine. At the animal sanctuary, the volunteers knew exactly what was expected of them and when and how to complete the required tasks. We had a clear purpose for being there – to feed the animals and keep their enclosures clean. The animal sanctuary volunteers did not question whether or not their presence was helpful to the animals whereas the childcare volunteers questioned the value of their presence in the classroom. However, both groups were satisfied with certain aspects of their programs and disappointed with others. For example, while the childcare volunteers in the teaching program were dissatisfied with their lack of classroom participation, some of the animal sanctuary volunteers were disappointed there were not more large animals at the sanctuary, such as lions, and that volunteers were not allowed to take care of the cheetahs because they were too dangerous. It appeared that the organizational structure and the organizational needs of each individual volunteer centre affected the sense of satisfaction with the volunteer experience as well as the variety and range of activities/experiences volunteers encountered.

Animal sanctuary volunteers worked five days a week and had two days to spend at their leisure. Activities that volunteers participated in during their time off included

watching movies in the recreation room or watching them in someone's room on a laptop, taking a taxi to a nearby surf mecca that offered restaurants, shops, and a large beach, visiting local tourist attractions such as bungee jumping and a lion park, and walking around the game park that was part of the sanctuary. The sanctuary was fairly isolated because there was no accessible public transportation for the volunteers, except for a single taxi driver that was made available to volunteers.

In comparing my two volunteer experiences, I noted childcare volunteers had more diverse work activities in which to form personal bonds than did animal sanctuary volunteers. The childcare volunteers were also able to structure their leisure time in various ways to spend time together and make more individual selections in forming friendships. Alternatively, the scheduled mealtimes at the animal sanctuary and being paired together for tasks created work situations in which the animal sanctuary volunteers could form stronger individual connections. Yet, despite the distinctions brought on by the two very different locations and formats of the volunteer programs, the volunteers bonded through talking and getting to know each other through a process of discussing their homes and families, past experiences and their future goals. Notably, they bonded strongly through mutual discussion of their volunteer work and their in-country tourist experiences. Thus, for example, I recorded the following in my fieldnotes:

When Michelle⁴ and Chris got home [from a day of sightseeing] they told me about their day. Michelle accused Chris of speaking German the entire time just like she had been afraid of and said she was really mad. He denied that he spoke German the entire time and they argued because she kept insisting that he did. She said at lunch she hadn't been able to talk at all because everyone else was speaking German. I asked if she had fun despite not being able to speak English to anyone

⁴ All participants have been given a pseudonym.

and she said yes, she loved the elephants and being able to actually touch and walk with them. Chris agreed. Both of them didn't like Monkeyland as much as the elephant sanctuary. They had taken pictures of each other with the elephants and wanted to show me their pictures later. I was jealous I didn't get to go with them and told Michelle if I had gone then she would've been able to speak English to someone. She said she wished I had been there as well and again berated Chris for speaking German. (Animal Sanctuary Fieldnotes, August 15, 2012, p.2)

This mutual discussion of their tourist experience and arguing about what had happened during the day with respect to language allowed Michelle and Chris to bond. Though Michelle was upset with Chris for spending most of the day speaking German with the other two German volunteers who had gone on the trip with them, she enjoyed being with him while visiting the sanctuaries. Michelle and Chris had the shared experience of walking with elephants and taking pictures of each other to commemorate the experience, and were both excited and happy when they returned to the animal sanctuary. Arguing over the language issue also demonstrated their closeness as Michelle was comfortable enough with Chris to genuinely get mad at him and expect their relationship to surpass this obstacle. Notably, they both repeatedly referred to this experience throughout the coming weeks at the animal sanctuary.

The Volunteer Tourist Experience and Formation of a Volunteer Tourist Identity

Studying social situations necessitates attempting to understand the meanings people define as important (McCall 2003:227). How do they define the situation? How do they perceive reality? This section attempts to understand the meanings of some of the actions and conversations of the volunteers that help construct the identity of volunteer tourist. I did not approach the coding of my field notes with particular themes in mind,

but certain activities and speech seemed to be repeated over and over again in my notes, thereby signifying their importance. Further coding of these interactions highlighted elements related to identity; they described ways in which volunteers co-constructed the identity of the volunteer tourist. These interactions are described in this section while the subsequent section explores how such interactions give meaning to the volunteer tourism experience. I have categorized the interactions as: (1) Commitment to the Volunteer Role, (2) Making Time for Play, and (3) Coping with the Negatives.

(1) Commitment to the Volunteer Role

One theme that emerged in my fieldwork observations involved the activity of taking on additional responsibilities or spending more time volunteering than was required. These were not regular occurrences; rather, only a handful of volunteers from both placements chose to spend more time than necessary at work. I also noticed other volunteers who tended to “skip” their program responsibilities due to “illness” or to travel. Thus, there appeared to be a continuum of commitment to volunteer work in both placements, ranging from participating at the required minimum level to taking on additional tasks beyond those mandated by the volunteer organizations. Both volunteer groups looked at those who skipped work days with displeasure. Examples of these actions are detailed below.

I mentioned earlier that there were five different programs a volunteer could participate in with the childcare project. However, many volunteers participated in more than one program at different times throughout their placements. For example, although not a formally assigned activity, several of the teaching and daycare volunteers began

helping out with the surf program. There are several reasons for this participation. Firstly, the volunteer activities did not last the entire day so much of the day was available for other activities. It was very easy to go to the surf shack after school or daycare and spend more time with the children because the surf program began right after school let out for the day. A taxi van also drove the surf children to the beach right from the school and many times the teaching volunteers were in the same taxi as the children so they could be brought back to the volunteer houses. The teaching volunteers could therefore get out of the taxi at the beach with the children and go to the surf shack. In a similar fashion, daycare volunteers finished their programs before lunch time so could go back to the volunteer houses, eat, relax and then walk to the surf shack, which was less than ten minutes away by foot. In consequence, volunteers could combine leisure (i.e. going to the beach) with additional volunteer responsibilities (i.e. monitoring the children at the beach). For example, when I asked another volunteer why she was at the surf shack after school, she replied that she did not have anything else to do. Another volunteer said she wanted to go to the beach anyway so it was easy to get out of the taxi with the children and visit the surf shack at the same time.

It should be noted that the surf program cost more than the other volunteer programs so volunteers who had not signed up and paid to participate in the surf program could not actually surf with the children. However, similar to many others, even though I did not surf, I still liked to go to the surf shack after school to spend time with the children and surf volunteers. While there, we “non-surf program volunteers” would take on the responsibility of doing things like helping get the children into their wetsuits, handing out sandwiches when the children were done surfing, and keeping the children

occupied until the taxi came to take them home. Several volunteers also paid a reduced wetsuit and board rental fee to surf with the children. My fieldnotes describe two such volunteers:

I saw Kelly and Lillian at the surf shack again this afternoon. They had wetsuits on and were helping the children get into their own wetsuits when I arrived. I asked if they had paid to surf that day and they said they had bought a package so they could surf for a few days at a reduced rate. They bought the package so they could actually be in the water with the children instead of on the beach watching them. One of the children ran out of the changing room then and jumped on Lillian's back, screeching and laughing. Lillian laughed and reached back to hold her closer, and told her she was silly. (Childcare fieldnotes, June 6, 2012, p.4)

Likewise, some of the surfing volunteers helped out with the teaching program during the day. When I asked one volunteer why he did this, he stated it was because the surf program did not start until late in the day and he had nothing to do until then. He was bored and wanted something to do. However, even though he made this claim, I frequently saw him playing with children during recess and trying to get to know children in the classroom by talking to them. He later told me that he began going to one of the daycares rather than to the elementary school because he got "more hands on time" with the kids. He liked their personalities and described them as "awesome." He said he liked the daycare program better because you actually got to play with the children whereas with the teaching program you mainly just sat in a classroom and were not a very active participant in the children's daily lives. Thus, although most surf volunteers slept in each day and relaxed or spent time at the shops or restaurants before going to the surf program in the afternoon, similar to the young man I describe, others used their volunteer status to take on more responsibilities, spend more time with the children and gain a richer volunteer experience than their formal program designation offered.

In contrast, the animal sanctuary provided a fairly even distribution of volunteer work and there was little opportunity to take on additional responsibilities. However, depending upon his or her initiative, sometimes a volunteer was able to find something extra to do. For example, one volunteer expressed an interest in a baby grysbok (a small antelope native to South Africa). This grysbok required special attention in the mornings and in the evenings by a volunteer coordinator who, upon returning to her home country, asked the volunteer to take over this responsibility. Acceptance meant the volunteer needed to get up earlier than the other volunteers to feed the grysbok before doing her regular volunteer duties, and to feed him and put him to bed in the evening after finishing her regular volunteer duties. Despite this additional commitment, I never heard the volunteer complain or saw her flinch at the extra workload she had taken on.

Additionally, three animal sanctuary volunteers – my roommate, another female volunteer, and I – were asked to take on an additional task during the last half of our programs. Once or twice a week we were scheduled to walk around the park after the afternoon feed to make sure all of the animals had food and water, and that the water taps and enclosures were shut. I personally enjoyed this extra work because I got to visit each of the animals in the park and when I talked about it with my roommate, learned that she felt the same way. Rather than feeling burdened by this extra work, we both felt privileged that we were asked to take on such a role when other volunteers who were staying a long time were not asked. We felt that the volunteer coordinators trusted us and that this trust reflected our work ethic and our commitment to the animals.

For a few weeks while I was at the animal sanctuary, the volunteers were split into two groups with the majority being responsible for regular feeding duties of the

animals and a smaller group (known as the “project group”) being given special tasks for the day. This split occurred because there were more volunteers than necessary to cover all the feeding routes and there were other tasks that needed to be done around the sanctuary. These tasks included loading logs onto a truck, building an animal enclosure, and raking the cheetah enclosures. These tasks involved physical labour and were disliked by the majority of the volunteers who had come to the sanctuary to work with animals. However, while the majority of the volunteers put in a minimal effort, there were several volunteers who worked very hard at these tasks. Some volunteers also helped out even though they had not been selected to be part of the project group. One person in particular repeatedly helped out on these tasks after he was done his feeding route and continued working on some of the tasks on his own time. Thus, for example,

I saw Greg bringing firewood up the hill to add to the pile next to the fire pit and on his way back to get another load, I asked him why he was working so hard when we’d already finished work for the day. He told me that he came to South Africa to work, not to sit around. He thought we would spend more of our days doing volunteer work and was disappointed by how much free time we had compared to how much time we spent working. (Animal Sanctuary Fieldnotes, Aug 15, p.2)

On the opposite end of the commitment continuum, each of the programs had volunteers who chose to “skip out” on work parts of the volunteer program. Missing a day or more from one’s program sometimes occurred because of illness. Volunteers were not obligated to work while ill and although several volunteers stayed home when they were sick, others still went to their programs. Skipping out on a day of work because a person was sick was not frowned upon, but if a volunteer missed several days or if they did not appear to be sick, they became the subject of discussion among the other volunteers. Did the person look really sick? Was she still going out to the bar or to

restaurants even though she was absent from her program? Was she doing anything to get better so she could go back to her program as soon as possible? Volunteers appeared to be trying to justify a person's absence by judging whether he or she had a valid reason for missing the program. If she appeared physically to be sick, such as by sneezing, having a stuffy nose, throwing up, etcetera, or if she demonstrated that she felt unwell by spending her time in bed or on the couch at the volunteer house, then she was viewed as having a valid reason to miss her placement. However, if she still engaged in social activities regardless of whether she looked ill or not then it was seen as inappropriate for her to miss her program.

To give an example, one surf volunteer at the childcare project missed several days of her placement, was late to her placement on multiple occasions, and opted not to get in the water at all for the first week or so of her placement. In particular, she ran every day as a way to stay in shape and was late for her placement several times because she needed to run. She had not been able to run earlier in the day because she was sleeping since she felt unwell. This volunteer was the subject of much discussion. Her fellow volunteers questioned how she was able to run if she was sick. If she could run could she not also surf? Why had she signed up for the surf program if she felt too unwell to be in the water with the children? The verdict was given that she did not have a valid reason for her behaviour. The volunteers were upset that she was missing her program and seemed to be insulted personally by her actions. However, despite there being a lot of talk about this volunteer, I did not witness anyone actually ask her or confront her about her behaviour. Thus, although the volunteers strongly disapproved of her behaviour and even

seemed hurt by it, she was not reprimanded publically. She was not ostracized or talked down to; she was treated the same as everyone else.

In contrast, while absence gained social disapproval, absence for travel purposes was widely accepted. If a volunteer wanted to take a day off to go on a tour or to climb Table Mountain, it went unquestioned by the other volunteers. Each volunteer was there for a limited time and it was understood that a person had to organize his time so that he could see everything he wanted to see and do everything he wanted to do. Taking time off to sightsee was questioned only if the person missed more than one day at work. Additionally, if the person was only volunteering for a two week period but was missing three days to sightsee, others questioned why the person was even participating in the program in the first place. Why not just travel around rather than sign up to volunteer? These types of questions signify that, in some cases, tourist activities were secondary to volunteer responsibilities.

My field observations at the childcare project indicate implicit standards existed among volunteers regarding appropriate volunteer tourist behaviour. Whether a childcare volunteer worked in the classroom or the surf shack, it was expected all volunteers would be committed to a minimal standard of volunteer work and any violation of this standard received social disapproval. Illness was acceptable but only if it was perceived to be a “real” illness. Travel was always viewed as a valid reason to miss out on volunteer work, except by a small subset of childcare volunteers who believed travel should take place only during one’s leisure time. Typically, however, volunteers who missed a day of work for reasons other than illness or travel were viewed as not fulfilling their volunteer

responsibilities, and as such, demonstrated to their peers a lack of commitment to the volunteer role.

Taking time off due to illness was treated in a similar manner by the animal sanctuary volunteers as the childcare volunteers. If it was clear by looking at a volunteer that she was sick, she could legitimately take time off from work. If, however, the claim of illness was questionable then the volunteers discussed the situation and came to a verdict of whether missing work was acceptable or not. The work schedule was always posted well before the beginning of the week so volunteers knew what routes they would be responsible for on which days. If a volunteer became ill, he or she would tell the volunteer coordinators who would then try to rework the schedule to cover that volunteer's responsibilities. During my time at the sanctuary, there was only one instance where a person failed to show up for work without giving a reason. Her roommate reported that she was still in bed and did not know when she would be getting up. She never arrived for her shift and explained to everyone later that she was not feeling well because she did not sleep during the night due to excessive noise from the other volunteers. The other volunteers then discussed this reason and concluded they had not been excessively noisy; her excuse was judged to be invalid. Again, I did not hear anyone speak to her personally about the group's disapproval of her behaviour but she became increasingly defensive over the next few days when her absence was repeatedly brought up in conversation so it does seem she was disciplined socially for her "unacceptable" absence.

In contrast, the animal sanctuary volunteer coordinators regulated travel activity time. Due to the needs of the animals, they had a written schedule of responsibilities and

always had to know when a volunteer would not be at work. Volunteers were able to request two days off per week by writing them down on a sign-up sheet; the coordinators used the sheet to schedule absences into the rota. Additionally, if a volunteer wanted an extra day off, he needed to put in a special request. This request would be honored, but the volunteer had to make up for this day off by taking only one day off in a different week. In this way, tourist activities were always second to volunteer responsibilities. Despite this scheduling formality, animal sanctuary volunteers discussed their responsibilities often and I recorded considerable dialogue on the topic of whether or not a volunteer adhered to the minimal level of commitment required of the volunteer role.

Another subject of conversation related to the commitment theme revolved around “client” commitment (i.e. commitment to the children at the childcare project and commitment to the animals at the animal sanctuary). For example, at the childcare project, volunteers frequently discussed their relationships with the children. In the evenings at the volunteer house the volunteers would share with each other what they had done during the day – which children they had spent time with, what they did with the children, and how they felt about their interactions. During these conversations, volunteers offered many details about the children they spent time with, such as the child’s name and age, what his home life was like, what his goals in life were, what his hobbies were, how he felt about the volunteers, and so on. The following fieldnote excerpt exemplifies a typical interchange of this kind:

In the evening we sat around the living room, talking. Marie told everyone how she had spent the afternoon chasing *child* around because he would not get into his wetsuit. In the end, she had convinced him to put on his wetsuit and get in the water and he’d hugged her. Angela mentioned that same child often puts up a fight

before getting into his wetsuit because he likes the attention. Stacey agreed with her and said that *child* wants the volunteers to hug him and pay attention to him so he misbehaves to get their attention. She wasn't sure whether to give him the attention or to try a different tactic. Marie said he was too cute and that she had to hug him even if it was only encouraging his behaviour. (Childcare Fieldnotes, June 7, 2012, p.4)

In comparison, animal sanctuary volunteers had favourite animals but they also had animals they did not like. It was acceptable for volunteers to dislike an animal if the animal had engaged in unwelcome behaviour, such as biting them. The important point was that the volunteer had paid enough attention to the animal to learn enough about the animal's personality to form an opinion. Volunteers also talked about how physically close they got to the animals. Having the squirrel monkeys sit on your knee or the bush baby jump on your shoulder were occasions to boast about. The closer a volunteer was able to get to the animal the better; physical contact was the most valued form of interaction. For example, volunteers spent much time in the enclosure of the two squirrel monkeys waiting to have contact with the monkeys. Each volunteer had at least one story about how long they waited and whether and how they were rewarded for their wait, such as by a monkey putting its paws on their leg or curling up in their lap to have a nap. The other volunteers reacted to these types of stories with signs of delight, "oooooh, so cute!"; expressions of jealousy, "I wish the bush baby would jump on my shoulder!"; or statements of understanding, "Isn't it great being able to get so close to an animal like that?".

In sum, volunteers from both groups expected a minimal level of commitment from each other with regard to volunteer responsibilities. They expected all volunteers to show up for work each day and to only miss work for a valid reason such as illness.

However, the volunteers highly valued tourist activities and considered sightseeing a valid reason to miss work. This preference was demonstrated more obviously in the childcare project but not the animal sanctuary where planned absences were regulated by the volunteer coordinators. Despite such regulation disparities, no volunteers were expected to commit more time than necessary to volunteer activities. Only a handful of volunteers in each program chose to spend additional time volunteering. These volunteers appeared to need a greater connection to the children or to the animals than was required of their formal volunteer program activities. Still, a significant portion of leisure talk that occurred between volunteers was related to either the children or the animals. It seemed volunteers needed to share stories about their relationships and interactions with the children or animals and to demonstrate a connection which would be understood and accepted by the other volunteers. It was this connection that validated their sense of self as a member of their volunteer group and sense of connection to the volunteer program. As will be discussed in the next section, volunteers from both programs also talked a lot about travel and tourist activities. These discussions followed a similar format as the discussions about volunteer activities. Significantly, these discussions also indicate the relative importance of tourist activities in the maintenance of a volunteer tourist identity.

(2) Making Time for Play

Volunteer tourists participate in volunteer tourism not only to volunteer but also to travel and “see the sights.” Thus, volunteers from both programs engaged in a wide variety of tourist and leisure activities during their placements. Given their geographical location, childcare volunteers participated in activities such as cage diving with sharks, going on wine tours, climbing Table Mountain, and taking tours of the Garden Route.

The Garden Route is an area along the East Coast of the Eastern Cape in South Africa stretching from Cape Town to Port Elizabeth. There are many tourist attractions along the Route, such as whale watching, game drives, and emu farms. Groups of childcare volunteers took one to three days off at a time for sightseeing. Day trips were generally taken on weekends but sometimes volunteers took a day off during the week because the weather was nice or because they were only volunteering for a few weeks and did not have enough time on the weekends to partake in all the tourist activities made available to them. The Garden Route tour was three days in length so volunteers had to take the tour on the weekend thereby also missing a day of work. As stated previously, missing work to sightsee was viewed as a valid action because it was considered to be part of the contractual commitment made with the volunteer organization.

Apart from actually engaging in these tourist activities, much time was spent in planning them. Volunteers spent a great deal of time talking to each other about which places they wanted to go the most and how they could allocate their time in South Africa “to see everything.” A lot of conversations also focused on finding someone else with whom to share the activity. For example, many childcare volunteers wanted to tour the Garden Route but, because they were in the volunteer program for varying lengths of time, volunteers who were only staying a few weeks had to pick a weekend to travel together while volunteers staying longer could wait and plan their trip with other volunteers who had not yet arrived.

The weather was also an issue. The weather at the childcare project was different from the weather in Cape Town and around Table Mountain, so it was difficult to plan trips into the city centre or to climb the mountain. Backup plans were usually made in

case the weather was poor in Cape Town. For example, I planned to climb Table Mountain with two other volunteers and we decided that if there were a lot of clouds around the mountain when we arrived, we would spend the day in Cape Town instead. It took much time to agree on this compromise; I did not want to climb the mountain if it was cloudy because we would have no view from the mountaintop over Cape Town but the two other volunteers were experienced mountain climbers and wanted to climb the mountain simply for the experience, not the view. They did not care if it was cloudy at the top. Childcare volunteers negotiated continually with their peers to decide travel destinations, schedule travel times/dates, make travel arrangements and address individual sightseeing desires.

In contrast, animal sanctuary volunteers engaged in activities such as bungee jumping, going on game drives, going surfing, visiting a lion park, and visiting other animal sanctuaries nearby. Unlike the childcare volunteers, those who were only staying a few weeks could not take off additional time from their program to travel and had less choice when to do certain activities and with whom. Animal sanctuary volunteers also had less leeway when it came to weather. Their days off were scheduled in advance and if they had booked a trip on one of those days, they went on the trip regardless of the weather. The following excerpt from my field notes demonstrates one such example:

I walked with Amy and Emily to dinner and on the way asked them what they were planning to do on their days off that week. They said they were going to the lion park and on safari. I asked if anyone else was going with them and they said no. They'd had to book their days off when they first arrived and hadn't asked anyone else to book the time off with them. I mentioned that was a shame because it would be cheaper to go with other volunteers so they could split the cost of the taxi. They agreed but said since they were there for such a short time

they wanted to see everything they could so it didn't matter if it cost a little more. (Animal Sanctuary Fieldnotes, July 9, 2012, p.4)

In addition to talking about which trips to go on and planning sightseeing trips together, similar to childcare volunteers, animal sanctuary volunteers spent a great deal of time talking about travel in general. They spoke about previous trips they had taken and places they wanted to go in the future. Many also talked about doing another future volunteer tourism trip. Notably, several childcare volunteers made the point that being a volunteer tourist was a "better" form of travel than other types of tourism because the traveller developed a more intimate knowledge of the place they were visiting. Comparatively, most animal sanctuary volunteers did not discuss these types of differences but talked about wanting to be able to see more animals on future travel.

Both types of volunteers engaged in leisure activities other than tourism. A very significant leisure activity for the childcare volunteers was karaoke. Childcare volunteers took a taxi to a local restaurant that hosted karaoke every Tuesday. While not all volunteers went to karaoke every week, every volunteer went at least once and most went almost every week that they were participating in the volunteer program. On these nights, many volunteers drank a lot of alcohol, sang on stage, and danced. Several times volunteers ended up kissing each other or local people. On some weekends and sometimes during the week the childcare volunteers also liked to take taxis to a nearby town that had many dance clubs and bars all located on the same street. They would dance and drink on these nights and sometimes end up becoming intimate with another person. Most nights, however, volunteers watched movies on each other's laptops or went to a local bar that was within a minute's walking distance from the volunteer house. Interestingly, there was only one day in the entire eight weeks that I was in the field

where some childcare volunteers did not go to their placements the next day after a night out at the bar or club.

The animal sanctuary volunteers behaved quite differently than the childcare volunteers when it came to drinking. They were not able to go to a bar in the evenings, nor were they able to visit clubs, bars, or restaurants very easily because the closest town offering such establishments was more than a half hour taxi ride away; the taxi had to be booked in advance and was not cheap. Volunteers did not think it was worth the money to go into town for a few hours to drink. Generally, trips to the nearest town were booked on volunteers' days off when they could stay overnight in the town and not have to come back to the animal sanctuary to work. These overnight trips were few and far between and most volunteers did not actually participate in them. Those who did go to town went out drinking and dancing during the night and then spent the next day shopping and eating in the local restaurants. However, most animal sanctuary volunteers simply spent the day in the local town to go to restaurants, shop, and use the internet but did not stay overnight to drink.

Where the childcare volunteers spent many evenings at the local bar down the street, the animal sanctuary volunteers spent many evenings around the campfire. Nights around the campfire were spent mostly playing a game called Wolf, which involved the players being given a secret identity and then acting out a part and collectively voting on which player to kill off at the end of each round. Both groups of volunteers enjoyed watching movies with other volunteers. Engaging in these activities helped volunteers in both programs get to know each other better and form stronger relationships.

In summary, volunteers in both programs highly valued engaging in tourist activities as well as planning and discussing tourism possibilities. In both cases, the tourist activities the volunteers chose were those activities closest to where the programs were located. Childcare volunteers had more freedom in how much time they spent touring while animal sanctuary volunteers were restricted to two days per week. The animal sanctuary volunteers were also more isolated and not able to take part in many leisure activities away from the sanctuary unless they used their free days to do so. Finally, both groups of volunteers enjoyed watching movies together in their respective volunteer houses. As such, both types of volunteers created a group identity through a mutual sharing of leisure and tourist activities. These interactions contributed to a sense of “fun” in being a volunteer tourist. While volunteers had fun together during their time in the volunteer tourism program, they also had to deal with negative aspects of the placement setting. As will be seen in the next section, dealing with these negative aspects gave the volunteers other opportunities to form a sense of group cohesion and solidify their volunteer tourist identity.

(3) Coping with the Negatives

Although volunteers enjoyed their volunteer placements and desired to engage in future volunteer tourist activities, they expressed some negatives about the experience. The list of negatives presented by the childcare volunteers was longer than the list of negatives presented by the animal sanctuary volunteers. This distinction was partially because the location of the childcare project was in a dangerous area with much crime, whereas the animal sanctuary was in a very remote location with a negligible possibility of criminal activity. For example, the childcare volunteers were not able to walk to the

ATM or grocery store by themselves due to the high rate of muggings in that area. In fact, one female volunteer was mugged at the beginning of her placement. She had her phone and camera taken away by a man who had threatened her by pressing a screwdriver to her neck. This incident occurred when several other volunteers were present thereby leaving all volunteers with a sense of anxiety over safety.

I witnessed a mugging incident personally. At the beginning of my program, the volunteer coordinators decided we should walk home after school rather than take a taxi. On my second day walking home a man tried to mug one of the volunteers. Although I was in a group of four female volunteers, the man had two other males with him. He reached into the volunteer's pants pocket while passing by to take her camera but she grabbed his arm before he could retract his hand. She managed to get him to let go of her camera by digging her nails into his arm while the other two volunteers and I surrounded him. He then ran away and his two companions left so we were successful in stopping the mugging. However, the existence of two other men in his group may have resulted in a different ending and we were all much more cautious in future outings. The volunteer coordinators had us travel to and from our programs by taxi from then on. Volunteers coped with the danger of muggings by never walking alone. All supported the volunteers who had been involved in the mugging incidents by offering emotional support, in particular the volunteer who was actually mugged was given hugs and soothing words almost constantly for the six weeks she was in the program.

Another negative of living in the volunteer house at the childcare project was lack of hot water; it only lasted long enough for two to three people to have showers. The lack of hot water was a daily topic of conversation among the volunteers. Apart from

complaining about not having hot water, volunteers described to each other in detail when exactly during their showers the hot water ran out and how they coped with it. For example, a volunteer said the water was lukewarm at the beginning of her shower so she tried to finish as quickly as possible but it was no use, the water turned freezing cold a minute later. She had shampoo in her hair and had to rinse it out in freezing water; if she had known the hot water was going to run out she would not have washed her hair.

Volunteers also strategized about what time during the day they should shower in order to increase their chances of having hot water. For example, another volunteer and I got up each morning earlier than everyone else so we could have hot water. Other volunteers rushed home after school to be the first ones in the shower; they theorized that the hot water tank would be full again by that time of day. This panic over hot water created a sense of urgency during the volunteers' leisure time.

Lack of hot water was viewed as a negative by the female animal sanctuary volunteers as well. (There were not enough male volunteers to use all the hot water in the male bathroom.) Most volunteers did not want to shower in the mornings for two reasons. First, it was very cold out and they had to walk outside to get to the showers. Second, volunteering with animals is dirty work; volunteers usually ended up sweaty and covered in dirt and other unpleasant substances. In consequence, the volunteers wanted to have a shower after completing their volunteer duties for the day but there was only hot water enough for four or five female volunteers. The volunteers often raced each other to the bathroom and those who did not make it first generally opted to wait a while for the hot water tank to fill again. This situation was not ideal because they sometimes had to wait

until after dinner when the sun was down and the temperature had dropped before they could get clean from their day of volunteering.

Another major negative for the childcare volunteers was the food. Food did not appear to be an issue for the animal sanctuary volunteers. Meals at the animal sanctuary were diverse; there were constantly different meals offered at lunch and dinner throughout the eight weeks I was in the program. At the childcare house, however, the same meals were served at dinner each week. The childcare project also did not provide dinner on the weekends even though it was stated in the volunteer handbook that all meals would be provided. This was the source of frustration for many childcare volunteers because they now had to spend money on food when they had not allocated travel money for food expenses since they thought all meals would be provided. In addition, many of these volunteers became tired of the same meals being provided all the time and opted to buy food or go to a restaurant during the week. In particular, teaching and sports volunteers frequently bought food at lunchtime either because there was none available at the house in the morning or because they did not want to eat the same thing every day. They were disappointed that more options were not provided and again had to spend more money on food than they had planned.

Both groups of volunteers complained about the cold and rainy weather. This was much more of an issue for the animal sanctuary volunteers because they had to work outside. The animals required food every day regardless of the weather and they needed to be fed at the same time every day so volunteers did not have the luxury of waiting for the rain to stop before doing their tasks. To help cope with the cold and wet, volunteers often huddled together after their duties were finished. It was common to see groups of

volunteers hugging each other in the restaurant during lunchtime. They made light of the situation by telling jokes and making fun of each other for how wet they all looked. They also shared stories about different ways the weather and cold was affecting them. For example, one volunteer said the raindrops on her trailer kept her up all night while another told me a story about taking the taxi into town to buy waterproof gear only to find out the hat she had purchased was not actually waterproof when she wore her gear the next day during a downpour.

Finally, the activity of “chicken dishes” was the most hated task of the animal sanctuary volunteers. This was because the water used to wash the dishes was freezing and filthy. The volunteers’ hands were often red and chapped after spending thirty to sixty minutes washing the dishes in water filled with various animal and bird faeces, chicken meat and blood, and leftover fruit and seed pieces. Despite the physical unpleasantness of this task and the fact that it had to be done after all the other tasks were finished so volunteers on chicken dish duty had to work later than everyone else, doing “chicken dishes” offered a great way for the volunteers to get to know each other. Volunteers worked in pairs or trios to finish the task and consequently spent the time talking to each other. For instance, when I did “chicken dishes” with other volunteers we mostly talked about our lives back home and different travel experiences. In consequence, I got to know more about these volunteers than I did the others. For example, there was a couple volunteering together along with their foster daughter. They explained to me during our time washing dishes that their foster daughter really wanted to do this type of volunteer work but she was young and they did not want her travelling alone. So they decided to forgo a traditional vacation and take her to South Africa. I may

not have learned this fact elsewhere as they mostly kept to themselves or were with their foster daughter during other times.

Giving Meaning to Interaction and Perceiving Self as a Volunteer Tourist

Although I have touched upon some of the social interaction processes involved in helping volunteers adjust to the role of being a volunteer tourist in the descriptions presented above, I now offer a more theoretical analysis of the impact that each work setting and each volunteer community had on that transition. Using a symbolic interactionist perspective that sees human life as intersubjective, I argue that, “*humans derive their (social) essences from the communities in which they are located, and human communities are contingent on the development of shared (or intersubjectively acknowledged) symbols or languages*” (Prus 1996:10; emphasis in original text). To better understand these communities, I have presented in the previous sections in this chapter some of the shared actions and shared language existing among volunteers within each volunteer tourist program. Those particular interactions also highlight elements of the volunteer tourism experience that were attended to by all participants; they held meaning for perceiving self as a volunteer tourist and also allowed for a sense of intimacy between volunteers.

Anderson and Taylor state that social groups employ interactional and rhetorical techniques in order to “maintain alignment or consistency among their individual and social acts, important cultural objects, and their own conceptions of themselves” (2010:47). Techniques such as discussing another volunteer’s absence from work or planning trips together help volunteers define each other’s actions and classify their own

behaviour to form a socially acceptable volunteer tourist identity. The interactions described above exemplify how the volunteers in my study worked together to give meaning to different actions and speech to perform the role of volunteer tourist and to take on a volunteer tourist identity.

The “volunteer tourist identity” is a situational identity. Vryan, Adler, and Adler (2003:369) claim, “Our situational identities are emergent from our joint behaviors and meaning-making during face-to-face interactions, in the context of socially constructed notions of situationally appropriate roles” and are “constrained by cultural norms associated with given definitions of situations and identities.” The volunteer tourist social situation existed before any of the participants in my study arrived; the framework for the development of the volunteer tourist identity was previously constructed for them. Thus, for example, there were cultural norms already in place associated with volunteer role expectations and proper performance of the volunteer tourist identity. My data indicate, however, that one’s identification of self as a volunteer tourist emerged more fully during the process of social interaction between volunteers and through the creation of meaning within the confines of the volunteer tourist social situation. Moreover, as the volunteer tourist situation changed from that of childcare to animal care, the organizational rules and social norms changed and different variations of the volunteer tourist identity surfaced.

To summarize, the “role” of the volunteer tourist already exists in descriptions offered in advertisements, brochures and volunteer tourism choices. A more precise definition of this role is also given to volunteer tourists through program websites before they arrive at their program; volunteers have an understanding of what they will be

expected to do while participating in the program. For example, the website for the animal sanctuary lists some of the jobs volunteers will be involved in such as feeding animals, preparing food for the animals, washing dirty dishes, and checking the park to make sure there are no problems. In addition to having a general idea of the work responsibilities they will have during the program, volunteers are provided with some understanding of the parameters of their leisure time. For example, the website for the organization that coordinates the childcare project states that volunteers will have weekends off to relax or explore and that they can take long weekends if they need to travel to farther away places. Both programs make it clear on their websites that volunteers will have work responsibilities but will also be able to travel and sightsee. Consequently, the role of the “volunteer tourist” had already been broadly defined for my research participants before they arrived. This role included two major elements of the volunteer tourist identity – volunteering and travelling.

Vryan et al. (2003:373) state further that the formation of identity involves identification, or naming. Volunteers take on the role of the volunteer tourist, that is, they “name” self simply by joining the program. Committing self to this role helps them identify self as volunteer tourists; they know how to act because they know the role expectations of being a volunteer tourist and, by acting within the parameters of those role expectations, their behaviour becomes accessible to others, especially, the other volunteers. Thus, as well as identifying self as a volunteer tourist they are identified through their actions as a particular type of volunteer tourist by other members of their volunteer community.

Still, while volunteers may have an understanding of their role as volunteer tourist before entering the volunteer tourist social situation and can use this understanding to help guide their behaviour upon arrival at the volunteer tourist setting, their behaviour does not rest solely on commitment to that role. “Behaviour is the result of a sequence of social experiences during which the person acquires a conception of the meaning of the behaviour, the perceptions and judgements of objects and situations, all of which make the activity possible and desirable” (Becker 1967 as quoted in Dolch 2003:396). Accordingly, only through social interaction can a person develop an understanding of the meaning of his or her behaviour and through this understanding guide his or her future behaviour. Thus, for example, the childcare volunteers tended to accept heavy drinking at the pub after work because this activity was acceptable within that social setting and animal sanctuary volunteers lodged minimal judgement against those who appeared at dinner without showering when, in another social setting, they might otherwise have been critical of such behaviour. Both types of behaviours were formed in response to the volunteer setting, became integrated as part of their volunteer tourist experience, and incorporated as part of their volunteer tourist identity.

In sum, situational identities are established during social interaction; a person announces his situational identity in various ways and others make placements of him through these announcements. In the particular case of volunteer tourism, a volunteer acts within the parameters of the rudimentary role of volunteer tourist provided by public literature and project websites. The volunteer shapes future behaviour and develops a stronger sense of self as a volunteer tourist, however, from the responses of the other volunteers to his or her initial enactment of that role and through the performance

expectations set out by others within the particular volunteer tourist situation he or she encounters. The examples I provided in the previous sections of this chapter demonstrate how my research participants formed situational volunteer tourist identities based on the types of actions and communications experienced by them in their own particular volunteer tourist setting.

Using a symbolic interactionist theoretical perspective to examine the volunteer tourist experience is not new. Wearing (2001:3) used the approach in his ethnographic fieldwork/interview study with participants of a community-based volunteer project known as the Santa Elena Rainforest Reserve and concluded that “the self is enlarged or expanded, challenged, renewed or reinforced” through interactions occurring within the volunteer tourism experience. What Wearing’s study has in common with mine is that it also indicates how interactions are shaped by the structure of place and how the participants of volunteer tourism create meaning from their experiences. In this way, our mutual use of symbolic interactionism as a theoretical perspective facilitated an analysis of how social interactions on an individual, group and structural level within particular settings affected changes in self leading to the development of a volunteer tourist identity.

In a similar way, Conran (2011) used participant observation and semi-structured interviews to investigate notions of intimacy for 40 volunteers, 10 Non-governmental organization (NGO) coordinators, and 25 host community members associated with volunteer tourist projects in Thailand. Significantly, Conran (2011:1459) notes that, “The consumption of intimate experiences is at the heart of volunteer tourism” and sharing experiences with each other allows volunteers to feel close enough to one another to develop a “shared story” about these experiences. However, despite stating that volunteer

tourism is positively and intimately experienced, Conran also posits that “the overwhelming focus on intimacy in volunteer tourism overshadows the structural inequality that volunteer tourism seeks to address and reframes the question of structural inequality as a question of individual morality” (2011:1467). Although I did not seek to investigate the moral implications of the practice of volunteer tourism, I did find that specific interactions created shared experiences between groups of volunteers, such as working in a trio to complete the “chicken dishes” task, and accordingly, a sense of intimacy was an outcome of the volunteers’ interactions. This sense of belonging, that is, being an active participant in the volunteer setting, supported the volunteer tourist identity formed by the volunteers I met. In other words, interacting with each other in the various ways described in this chapter allowed volunteers to develop shared rules for volunteer behaviour that guided their actions and fostered a sense of group membership.

Conclusion

In this chapter I described the two volunteer programs I participated in. The first program involved working with children near Cape Town, South Africa and the second program was working with animals near Port Elizabeth. First, I described the location of the volunteer houses and the volunteer demographics as a way of “setting the stage” for understanding the social situation engaged in by the volunteers I studied. Next, I discussed my entry into each program and the typical volunteer tourist routine. Following this discussion, I outlined some of the ways in which the volunteers from each program co-constructed the identity of volunteer tourist and gave meaning to the volunteer tourism experience. These interactions were categorized into three themes: (1) Commitment to the Volunteer Role, (2) Making Time for Play, and (3) Coping with the Negatives.

Both childcare and animal sanctuary volunteers appeared to be engaged in what they perceived as equally meaningful volunteer tourist experiences. Members of both volunteer groups also used similar types of behaviour and language to identify themselves as volunteer tourists, such as discussing a person's reasons for missing work, sharing stories about bonding with children or animals, planning tourist activities, and adapting to negative aspects of the volunteer tourist social situation. Differences between the two groups were related to leisure activities and mealtimes; childcare volunteers spent more time socializing in drinking activities than the animal sanctuary volunteers while animal sanctuary volunteers spent more time socializing during mealtimes. The differences in these activities stemmed mainly from the differences in location of the volunteer programs and the organization of the volunteer work. The animal sanctuary volunteers did not have the same access to alcohol and bars/clubs as the childcare volunteers. Similarly, unlike the childcare volunteers, animal sanctuary volunteers had planned mealtimes, worked in precisely scheduled teams, and had a restaurant area that enabled everyone to sit together as a group. Yet, despite the fact that the two groups of volunteers spent much of their leisure and work time differently, both types of volunteers formed meaningful relationships that led them to develop a sense of self as a group member and a situational identity as a volunteer tourist.

The importance of interaction on the creation of meaning in the volunteer tourist social situation has also been investigated by Wearing (2001) and Conran (2011). Wearing studied the impact on self-development resulting from meaningful interactions between volunteers while Conran looked at the feelings of intimacy that arose through interactions of volunteers with each other, NGO coordinators, and host community

members. The findings of my analysis support those of Wearing and Conran, especially their observations that the volunteer tourist social situation impacts how participants create meaningful volunteer tourism experiences through their interactions with other volunteers.

The following chapter discusses these issues in an alternate way through an exploration of the interview responses provided by twenty volunteers who discuss their previous travel and volunteer experiences, their reasons for choosing specific volunteer programs, and the goals they expect to achieve from participating in volunteer tourist activities.

Chapter IV: Interview Analysis

In addition to taking notes of my observations and experiences in the field, I conducted interviews with a subset of twenty participants – ten from each program. The purpose of the interviews was to help me develop a deeper understanding of the reasons one might become a volunteer tourist and to obtain a stronger sense of the perceived benefits of volunteer tourist participation. This chapter describes the criteria used by these 20 volunteers in selecting their particular program, their previous travel and volunteer experience, and what they hoped to achieve from participating in their volunteer tourism project. To enable an easier distinction in describing my interview findings with this subgroup and the total population of volunteers described in the previous chapter, I refer to these specific research participants as “interviewees,” with those volunteers who participated in the childcare project designated “childcare interviewees” and those who participated in the animal sanctuary program designated “animal sanctuary interviewees.”

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 display the interviewees’ countries of origin and ages. All interviewees originated from Western countries and most (85%) were in their late teens (age 16 to 19) or early- to mid-twenties (age 20 to 25). Comparatively, all but one of the volunteers I met during the observation stage of my study reported coming from Western (i.e. developed) countries and 94.4% of the childcare volunteers and 85.2% of the animal sanctuary volunteers were between the ages of 16 and 25. Overall, the age and country of origin patterns reported by my interview sample reflect the larger population of volunteers described in the previous chapter as well as those reported in other studies

(Andereck et al. 2012; Coren and Gray 2011; Cousin's et al. 2009; Galley and Clifton 2004; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004).

Examination of Table 4.1 reveals most (8 or 80%) of the childcare interviewees were from North America with half (5 or 50%) coming from the United States, three from Canada, one from Australia, and one from the United Kingdom. In contrast, the animal sanctuary interviewees came from more diverse locations with only one (10%) reporting to be American and three (30%) saying they were from the United Kingdom, although one had relocated to Spain after retirement. As can be seen from Table 4.1, this “country of origin” pattern does not differ dramatically from the pattern found to exist within the larger population of volunteers I met while conducting fieldwork (see Table 3.1). It also supports the findings of other studies which note that volunteer tourism tends to attract participants from westernized countries who travel to a part of the world that is in more of a development phase than their homeland (Wearing 2001). Hence, I believe the interviewee reports in this chapter provide a fair illustration of the volunteer tourist perspective.

Table 4.1 – Country of Origin

Country of Origin	Number of Childcare Interviewees (10)	Total Childcare Volunteers (36)	Number of Animal Sanctuary Interviewees (10)	Total Animal Sanctuary Volunteers (61)
Australia	1 (10)	1 (2.8)		1 (1.6)
Austria			1 (10)	1 (1.6)
Brazil			1 (10)	1 (1.6)
Canada	3 (30)	17 (47.2)		1 (1.6)
Denmark			1 (10)	1 (1.6)
France				2 (3.3)
Germany			1 (10)	5 (8.2)
India		1 (2.8)		
Italy				3 (4.9)
Jersey				1 (1.6)
Lithuania			1 (10)	1 (1.6)
Republic of Ireland			1 (10)	4 (6.6)
Spain				2 (3.3)
Switzerland				3 (4.9)
United Kingdom (England)	1 (10)	3 (8.3)	3 (30)	33 (54.1)
United Kingdom (Scotland)				1 (1.6)
United States of America	5 (50)	14 (38.9)	1 (10)	1 (1.6)
Total Countries	4	5	8	16

Table 4.2 reveals little differentiation between the two interviewee groups in terms of age. Childcare interviewees were between the ages of 18 and 24 with one interviewee over the age of 35 and the animal sanctuary interviewees were between the ages of 16 and 24 with two interviewees over the age of 50. Notably, two interviewees from each program were male. This sample is also similar to previous studies on volunteer tourism whose participants were mainly female and under 30 years old (Andereck et al. 2012; Benson and Seibert 2009; Campbell and Smith 2005; Galley and Clifton 2004). Again, the close similarity between my interview sample, previous

research samples, and the larger population of volunteer tourists I met during the fieldwork portion of my study gives me stronger confidence that the findings reported for the 20 interviewees are representative.

Table 4.2 – Age

Age	Number and (%) of Childcare Interviewees (10)	Total and (%) of Childcare Volunteers (36)	Number and (%) of Animal Sanctuary Interviewees (10)	Total and (%) of Animal Sanctuary Volunteers (61)
16			1 (10)	6 (9.8)
17				8 (13.1)
18		5 (13.9)	2 (20)	19 (31.1)
19	1 (10)	5 (13.9)	1 (10)	4 (6.6)
20	3 (30)	10 (27.8)		5 (8.2)
21		3 (8.3)		3 (4.9)
22	2 (20)	2 (5.6)	3 (30)	3 (4.9)
23	3 (30)	7 (19.4)	1 (10)	2 (3.3)
24		2 (5.6)		1 (1.6)
25				1 (1.6)
26-29				1 (1.6)
30-39	1 (10)	2 (5.6)		2 (3.3)
40-49				1 (1.6)
50-59			1 (10)	2 (3.3)
60-69			1 (10)	3 (4.9)
Total	10 (100)	36 (100)	10 (100)	61 (98.8)

Motives for Choosing their Program

I asked each interviewee to explain to me why they chose their specific volunteer tourism program. The reason I asked this question was because there were many volunteer tourism programs operating in South Africa, and I wanted to know what factors made these two programs stand out over other, similar programs. The main motives given

by each interview group are listed in Table 4.3, in order of most cited to least cited, with common motives between the groups highlighted.

Table 4.3 – Interviewee Motives for Choice of Program

Childcare Interviewees	Animal Sanctuary Interviewees
Cost of program / Value for money (8)	Working closely / hands-on with animals (7)
Diversity of volunteer roles (6)	South Africa as an optimal location (4)
Program was recommended by a friend (5)	Variety of animals (3)
Accommodation (2)	Accommodation (2)
	Allowed under 18's to volunteer (2)
	Was safer than other programs (2)
	Cost of program / value for money (1)
	Need volunteer help more than other programs (1)
	Work with only animals, not people (1)

The childcare interviewees gave four reasons for choosing the childcare project. One of the main reasons given was “the diversity of volunteer roles,” that is, the variety of childcare choices and the potential range of experiences offered through participation in teaching, daycare, sports, surfing, and computers. Specifically, the volunteers were attracted by the idea that they were able to choose one of the five options most suited to their own interests. For example, one interviewee said, “the idea of surfing with kids just seemed to strike a nerve because it seems like a lot of fun,” while another remarked, “Well the surfing for one was the huge one that like you got to, you got to be like interacting with kids and at the same time you got to learn kind of how to surf too.”

Comparatively, a third had been drawn to the sports program because “the selection of activities was more specific [than other volunteer placements] as well. So the, you know the sports and that kind of thing is what interested me.”

Other childcare interviewees liked that they were able to live with other volunteers rather than with a local family, as was the case in some of the other volunteer tourism programs operating in South Africa. Notably, one of these interviewees also mentioned the issue of safety in a foreign country and feeling safer in a group of volunteers when she stated, “I feel like the way that they kind of promote it online...it was like you could stay with a group of volunteers and everything. So I felt like that was the thing, like I felt safe with a group of people that came to do the same thing.”

The childcare project was organized through a large, international organization based in New Zealand that runs a variety of volunteer tourism programs all around the world. Some childcare interviewees noted their program choice had been influenced by previous knowledge of this organization and/or a friend’s recommendation. For example, one interviewee stated she chose the childcare project because, “I knew that my friend went there before.” Another replied, “Well I went with *international organization* before, like two years ago to, um Costa Rica. And I really liked that.” Comparatively, an interviewee that was participating in the program with a friend who had volunteered through the international organization before stated, “She recommended them [international organization] so that was enough for me.”

Significantly, the most frequently cited reason for choosing the childcare project was its low cost; eight out of the ten childcare interviewees mentioned price or value for

money. The program was highlighted as being cheaper than other, similar programs and I received comments such as, “This program was really good value, like considering the others I looked at was so expensive” and “There are other programs but they were super expensive.” To quote an interviewee who stressed the fact that, because she was paying for the trip:

I just kept looking around and I knew I was going to pay for it for myself, so as much as I wanted to do it, I wasn't going to do it if it was really going to put me back. I can't afford to do that. So this was by far the cheapest one that I found. Um, so that's basically why. I researched it for a while though to make sure, but I've never seen prices as cheap as this so...

In a similar fashion, another interviewee pointed out that other programs give you the same things but charge more money: “They're the cheapest like all the other ones you just, you get like the same amount of stuff and you just pay like massive amounts; it's thousands of dollars. I don't get it. So yeah I was happy that *international organization* just it's like so cheap.”

In contrast, animal sanctuary interviewees gave more variety in their reasons for participating in the animal care program. Moreover, unlike the childcare project where volunteers did not identify a specific desire to work with children, the most frequently cited reason for choosing the animal care program was “to be close to animals” and to be able “to work hands-on with animals.” For example, one animal sanctuary interviewee said, “it's just kind of the whole concept, meeting new people, getting to see these unusual animals and work up close with them. It just really kind of gave me... I got a big interest for it rather than going to see them in the touristy spots. It's more actually getting to be with them and seeing what they are like in real life.” Another stated,

I just wanted to volunteer somewhere with animals and I just looked everywhere on the Internet. I looked at something in Costa Rica, I looked at dolphins in Australia and I looked at um great white sharks in Cape Town I think, and then I looked at this one because I know that I wanted to do something with the animals. And then I'd just like thought about it and the other three possibilities were like conservation work whereas this one was more hands-on work with the animals. So that's why I chose this one.

Several animal sanctuary interviewees were influenced by the variety of animals residing at the sanctuary; however, the animal sanctuary's location in South Africa was also a draw. Many said they had wanted to work with animals abroad and thought South Africa was the safest or most optimal location to do so. Notably, two interviewees observed the sanctuary had been their only option because it was the only program allowing people under the age of eighteen to volunteer without adult accompaniment. One stated, "We found quite a lot of different places but loads of them wouldn't take people under the age of 18" while the other said, "I looked at about 120 projects and this was the only one that said they would allow 16's."

In one particular case, although she prioritized contact with the animals as her major reason for selecting this program, an animal sanctuary interviewee noted she also wanted to improve her English skills and, as an English-speaking country, South Africa was more appealing than other countries: "I didn't want to choose like Costa Rica because I think they would [speak] Spanish or something? And that's just not what I speak. I'm trying to learn English so I wanted to go places where I could improve my English skills as well. But that's not the main reason though. It was more the animals."

In a similar fashion, another interviewee mentioned the accommodation stating: "I thought yeah boarder lodging, okay so you work hard, you get to... but it's easier in a

way. You haven't got to worry about that kind of thing, you know going to the shops, buying food, cooking it, all of that as well as working hard. So, you know, although you're working hard for *volunteer organization* you're also benefitting because they're looking after you so well."

To summarize, as a group, the childcare interviewees offered more practical reasons for choosing to be a volunteer tourist in South Africa than did the animal sanctuary interviewees. It was the cheapest option available, the placement organization had a good reputation, the volunteers got to live in a house with other volunteers and have their meals prepared for them, and there were five different programs for volunteers to choose from when selecting volunteer activities. Significantly, "value for money" was cited as the number one reason these interviewees chose the childcare project. This particular finding suggests the childcare volunteers wanted to spend their money wisely. In fact, it appears as a group childcare interviewees chose this specific childcare project over other, more expensive programs in different townships in South Africa mainly because it was less expensive and offered more volunteer program options.

Notably, despite this expressed concern over money, I observed both the childcare interviewees and other childcare volunteers spending a great amount of money participating in tourist activities, drinking, going to bars, and eating at restaurants. This spending activity appeared to contradict the interviewees' stated desire to use their money wisely when making their placement choice. An apparent disregard for expense once childcare volunteers were at the project may have been influenced by the fact that the value of the South African Rand was quite good compared with the Canadian Dollar. Childcare volunteers may have also chosen the cheapest volunteer tourist program

available so they could have more money to spend on tourist activities. Given my field observations and interactions with the childcare interviewees, I would suggest, however, that they found these activities important and enjoyable so they did not mind spending money on them. Such behaviour fell within the realm of the volunteer tourist identity and, at such times, being a “tourist” took on more significance than being a “volunteer.”

Comparatively, despite telling me that “working closely / hands-on with animals” had been the main motivating factor for choosing to volunteer at the animal sanctuary, I recorded few of the animal sanctuary interviewees spending extra “work” time with animals while in the program. Instead, they generally spent their “free time” socializing with other volunteers at the lodge or in the restaurant. However, I did record many instances in my fieldnotes where volunteers (including the interviewees) went into the animal enclosures informally to spend time with the animals and/or would sit and watch the animals from outside the enclosures. The interviewees said they were motivated to volunteer at the animal sanctuary because they wanted to be around animals and my fieldnote observations of animal sanctuary volunteer behaviour reflects this desire. It also indicates the majority of volunteer leisure time at the animal sanctuary was spent talking and interacting with other volunteers, often while watching or interacting with the animals simultaneously. Once again, it appears volunteers had a strong, unspoken motivation to be together as “tourists” and, for animal sanctuary volunteers, part of their tourist experience included being with animals.

Perhaps the initial motivation of being around animals became secondary to being with each other as the interviewees spent more time in the program; that is, the novelty of feeding the animals wore off and the volunteer placement activities became more of a

“job” than may have been anticipated. When such thoughts occurred, the interviewees’ sense of self as a “tourist” became more dominant than their sense of self as a “volunteer” and they sought the company of others to relax and engage in such tourist activities as watching the animals and socializing together. Because animal sanctuary volunteers in general (not just these ten interviewees) seemed to prefer to spend their leisure time with others watching and interacting with the animals, I would suggest the volunteer tourist social situation at the animal sanctuary supports a culture in which it is acceptable for volunteer duties to be put aside when the work day is done and tourist interests are allowed to predominate. Specifically, the animal sanctuary volunteer behaviour I observed indicates an unspoken, general agreement that spending the work day, and occasionally some leisure time with the animals, was part of the acceptable behaviour involved in the role of being a volunteer tourist along with socializing, sightseeing, and shopping.

Previous Travel Experience

The majority of interviewees (18 out of 20, or 90%) reported other travel experience before embarking on this specific volunteer tourist trip to South Africa. These eighteen interviewees spent a great deal of interview time enthusiastically telling me about the places they had travelled to, who they had gone with, and why they had gone to a certain destination. Interestingly, the interviewees separated their descriptions of family travel from other types of trips thereby distinguishing the two as distinct types of travel. Only one childcare interviewee and two animal sanctuary interviewees did not mention whether they had travelled with their families growing up, while one childcare

interviewee stated she had not travelled with her family. The remaining 16 interviewees all had previous travel experience with their families.

Upon examining the childcare interviewee data, I found the American and Canadian interviewees' family travel experience was mostly around the United States or Canada, usually on camping trips. Some had travelled elsewhere in North America and others had visited one or two foreign countries. For example, one childcare interviewee stated, "I've travelled around like the West Coast of the United States a lot and I guess the West part of Canada, um a little bit of Mexico..." while another said she had only been on camping trips within her own state: "If we traveled it was like in the car with a camper in Wisconsin. It was a blast and I had like the ultimate childhood but it was never 'let's go to Disneyland,' like I've never been on a plane with my family." The one exception to this family travel pattern occurred when a Canadian interviewee claimed, "I went around the world with my family." In contrast, the childcare interviewee from the United Kingdom remarked:

We've been to like Canada and America and then Europe. We've never been to like Asia or Australasia, but we probably will at some point. And a couple years ago we went on like a kind of South Africa like a tour, we were with like ten days doing Botswana and Zambia and South Africa and stuff like that, and that was really cool.

Apart from travel experience with their families, every childcare interviewee had travelled either alone or with friends. Three had gone on school trips throughout their adolescence, while one travelled with her church and one went to Israel with her camp. Others began travelling independently of family in their late teens. For example, one had completed an exchange trip to Australia from where he was also able to visit Bali and

New Zealand while another had gone on an organized bus tour of Europe and also took several cruises with her friends. Two had worked with an organization that led expeditions for teens around the world and travelled around the United States and other countries with this organization as chaperons. One interviewee had travelled to Cuba and one to the Bahamas with groups of friends. Three others had been on previous volunteer tourist trips. Clearly, this sample of childcare volunteers had extensive experience managing both the joys and stresses of travel abroad.

The animal sanctuary interviewees indicated a similar pattern of childhood/family travel experiences as the childcare interviewees. Two, who were much older than the general group of volunteers (in their fifties and sixties), did not speak about their childhoods but rather talked about their travel experience as part of their life routine; however, the remaining eight animal sanctuary interviewees spoke about travelling with their families. To quote one volunteer from the United Kingdom:

Last year we went traveling around Asia. We went um, we started in Singapore and then went, where'd we go, Singapore then Hong Kong then Vietnam then Cambodia then this little island in Thailand and then back to Singapore. Which was incredible... I went to Las Vegas. We were going to visit family who lived in Virginia. Um, I somehow, I think it was just like you know Las Vegas, you gotta see what it's like... Then I've been to like, one year we went to Cyprus.

Eight of the ten animal sanctuary volunteers had additional travel experience apart from travelling with their families. The American animal sanctuary interviewee had travelled repeatedly to Canada and Mexico, but had also visited London and Paris and had been to Africa three times on volunteer tourism trips. Two other interviewees, one Irish and one Austrian, had completed previous volunteer tourism trips – both with the same program involved in this study. Apart from those volunteer tourism trips, one of this

pair had travelled to the United Kingdom and Europe by herself stating, “I just love to travel in general. I think I’ve been to maybe 10-15 countries in the last couple years.” The other had travelled frequently to Ireland with her friends and had also taken the train around Europe.

The animal sanctuary interviewee from Germany had studied in Russia for a year and had taken a six week long trip to Ecuador. The interviewee from Denmark had taken the train around Europe but had never been outside Europe until her trip to South Africa, and one of the United Kingdom interviewees had gone to Washington D.C. on a school trip. The Brazilian interviewee had been to Europe four times and travelled around a lot while she was there, but she has also travelled around Brazil backpacking with a friend. One interviewee had worked with various airlines during her life and was able to visit many different places. She noted:

I used to work with, um, the airlines and so I traveled quite a while. I lived in Vancouver for three years and worked for Canadian Pacific as it then was, and they had amazing routes down to Mexico and South America as well as to Europe so I took advantage of all of those, and then when I went back to England I worked for another airline and did more trips with them. With them we went to Australia, we went to South America again, went back to Canada obviously, to visit. Um, so yeah I’ve done a fair bit of travelling.

As mentioned previously, two animal sanctuary interviewees had never travelled before going to South Africa. One said: “I’ve never been on holiday. The most traveling I did was to college. That was an hour and a half in a car.” while the other stated “I’ve not traveled anywhere. Uh, I used to take bus rides from Lithuania to England travelling there and back but most of the time it’s just by plane and by plane it’s boring, but by bus it’s like you get to see a bit of France, a lot of Germany.” Both expressed an interest in future

travel. The first mentioned a desire to return to South Africa to visit Cape Town and possibly the animal sanctuary again while the second said “I want to travel quite a lot; I love a lot of places like China, I would love to go to China, Australia, I’ve been to South Africa that’s, that’s the one done.”

To summarize, only two animal sanctuary interviewees (10% of the sample) had no travel experience in any capacity. Additionally, although travel patterns differed slightly when comparing the past travel experiences of individual interviewees, as a group, childcare and the animal sanctuary interviewees revealed a similar range and type of travel experience. There were interviewees from both programs who had travelled with school, who had gone on trips with friends, and who had travelled alone. Two childcare interviewees and one animal sanctuary interviewee had travelled for their jobs. In sum, what the interview data reveal is that, no matter the source of their previous travel experience, travel had become an important part of the majority of interviewees’ lives. They were excited to talk about where they had been; they were passionate about their travel experiences and recalled them fondly. Furthermore, it appears the majority had continued the practice of travelling after having been exposed to it by their families while growing up; they were motivated to seek new travel experiences outside their own environments from a relatively early age. Significantly, they had been prepared for the requirements of tourism and the pressures of living in foreign places before taking on the challenge of engaging in the volunteer tourist experience offered to them by the childcare and animal sanctuary programs.

As mentioned previously, the “role” of volunteer tourist is defined mainly through descriptions of volunteer programs in the media, such as on advertisements and in

brochures which highlight an interest in travel. The interview data demonstrates the interviewees not only possessed that interest but a majority had acquired a wide range of previous travel experience. They were prime candidates for volunteer tourism and quite capable of fitting into the volunteer tourist role. However, apart from expressing an interest in travel, the culture of the volunteer tourist social situation also permits “making time for play,” that is, engaging freely in social activities with other volunteers. The volunteers I interviewed adhered to the volunteer tourist cultural norm of socializing and engaged freely in conversations, social events, group activities and visiting local sites with other volunteers. Travel had been defined as an explicit priority in volunteer tourist advertisements and brochures. Because the interviewees in my study were able to draw upon their previous travel experience and share stories about their past travel adventures as well as plan future trips with other volunteers, they were able to signify an overriding commitment to travel that supported both their membership in the volunteer tourist group and their identity claims of being a volunteer tourist. The next section considers how previous volunteer experience influenced volunteer tourist identity development.

Previous Volunteer Experience

One childcare interviewee and four animal sanctuary interviewees reported having no previous volunteer experience. Thus, the data outlined in this section deals mainly with the majority (75%) of the interviewees who possessed that experience. Although this interview data is exploratory and the sample is extremely small, the disproportionate number of volunteer interviewees with previous volunteer experience suggests that helping a cause is important to volunteer tourists. The volunteers I met during my fieldwork support this assumption; a noticeable number told me they had

engaged in previous volunteer activities before coming to South Africa. Additionally, my fieldnotes indicate both childcare and animal sanctuary volunteers engaged in unpaid work activities during their leisure time while participating in their volunteer tourist program, such as, for example, the childcare teaching volunteers who went to the beach with the children and helped out with the surf program after work. Furthermore, as noted in the previous chapter, volunteers who did not dedicate the appropriate amount of time to their volunteer work were judged negatively by the other volunteers while stories about spending time with the children or animals were viewed positively. These findings signified to me that participation in volunteer tourism was not solely related to an interest in travel. For the people I met, ‘helping out’ was an important part of being a volunteer tourist and a valuable component of their volunteer identity.

The childcare interviewees described a wide range of previous volunteer experiences which had a variety of impacts on them before they came to South Africa. For example, one childcare interviewee said she had volunteered in her church and high school but could not recall what she did. Another mentioned she volunteered back home but that most of it was for high school or church and did not give examples of what the volunteering entailed. However, this interviewee was more descriptive about her volunteer work with Habitat for Humanity and her involvement both with building houses and with educating the public about that organization. Another childcare interviewee discussed the volunteer work she performed through her university sorority noting,

We do a lot of philanthropies and like volunteering and stuff like that. It's just like a way to get involved. Mostly what we do is like SPCA kind of thing. It's not really SPCA but it's like animal shelters where

we just go and play with the dogs and stuff. And then also we, ah, we used to, we don't really anymore, we donate to Children's Miracle Network, which is like a hospital. So we do stuff like that and then we'll just volunteer at the zoo...we'll just play with the kids and some of the people will put on costumes and like run around and stuff.

Two childcare interviewees had volunteered with organizations that helped disabled children through sports. One said, "During the ski season we do um, it's called *organization*, it's an adaptive ski program so helping kids with disabilities learn to ski. It's awesome like they work with every disorder and disability I can think of pretty much. That's probably my like favourite thing." These two childcare interviewees were also both involved with other volunteer activities such as working at soup kitchens and the Make-A-Wish Foundation. One emphasized the impact her previous volunteer activities had on her future career decisions claiming, "I do that [volunteer with the Make-A-Wish Foundation] which is why I started wanting to be a child life specialist cause through that I got to know people who did child life – cause it's basically like a lot of our clients, well I only volunteer, but a lot of their clients were like cancer, um kids with cancer so I do that."

Other childcare interviewees revealed more subtle associations between their past volunteer experiences and their current decision to come to the childcare project. For example, a male volunteer said, "I volunteered in Costa Rica, I like led a volunteer trip in Costa Rica. It was um, it was a Costa Rican humanitarian foundation and I brought 16-year-olds from the states; it was like me and one other person and we were with about 15 kids." Similarly, another male volunteer observed, "I always volunteered. I always thought it was a good way to meet people and just kind of give back." Later, he discussed being part of a group that was involved in social entrepreneurship and described that

experience as “starting businesses to promote social good. I learned a lot about like thoughtful volunteership, and like thoughtful charity so. It’s an important concept.”

Four childcare interviewees had completed previous volunteer tourism trips; three with children’s programs. One had volunteered to teach children English in Romania for two weeks and taught children in Uganda at a local school, while another had taught English to children in Costa Rica. Comparing that experience to her current childcare placement, she noted, “...it was different. It was like more like a childcare place and we were just supposed to kind of teach them but like we weren’t at an actual school there.” The third interviewee had volunteered in Fiji where, “We had to buy cement and material to build a school so literally all of our profit went towards that and Fiji water.” The final interviewee had worked with an orphanage in the Philippines and cleaned beaches in Iceland.

In comparison, three animal sanctuary interviewees reported completion of previous volunteer tourism trips working with animals. Two of these three interviewees also participated in other types of volunteering when “at home.” Notably, both volunteered where they could work with animals. For example, one replied that she had given talks at her eldest grandchild’s school to educate the children about endangered species, but also remarked that, “Back home I volunteer in a chimpanzee sanctuary that’s an hour and a half from where I live. And it’s home to seven chimpanzees that were all rescued from laboratories. Right now I go about once a month until I get back from Africa and I do, I do chimp laundry and I do, I do food prep. I do anything they need me to do.” The other said she worked with multiple charities doing fundraisers but also volunteered at a local animal shelter.

The remaining three animal sanctuary volunteers described a range of previous volunteer experiences. Notably, one had been heavily involved in volunteering with her family since she was ten years old:

In my city I always volunteered because all my family, we have an institution that's really big but it's just with people that have mental disease. So they are like 600 in one place. And they really need help. So when I can, when I have free days from work or something I go there but my mom and my grandma, my grandfather he always, they always go, they worked there so I always help and has another, it's a local for orphaned kids but it's just kids until six years old. And I'm going sometimes some weekends with my aunt we go there. We feed them and we spend time with the kids that are with mental [disabilities]... And Christmas then ALL my family go and everyone help and then we have a lot of volunteers.

The second had volunteered for four years helping out with camps for people from his country who were going abroad. The third had volunteered at both an animal sanctuary and a kennel near her home as well as at a residential home, was a Cubs leader and Scouts instructor, and helped a friend instruct children on different outdoor activities such as wall climbing, archery, and canoeing.

One-quarter of the sample (four of the ten animal sanctuary interviewees and one childcare interviewee) said they had no previous volunteer experience before coming to South Africa. Interestingly, none of the five gave reasons or discussed why they had never volunteered before. However, the one childcare interviewee and two of the animal sanctuary interviewees mentioned wanting to engage with a similar volunteer tourism trip in the future. For example, one said “Well I’m thinking of if I do ever save up enough money I would love to come here [the animal sanctuary] again. If not here somewhere, somewhere similar cause I love being here now and it’s nice but I would love to go see

other places.” Beyond such comments, there was no further discussion about volunteer work by these five interviewees.

The topic of previous volunteer experience is important because, like previous travel experience, possession of this knowledge enables one to adapt more easily to the “role” of volunteer tourist. Many volunteer expectations are quite similar no matter the volunteer circumstance, such as accepting menial tasks with good humor, working odd hours and interacting in a helpful manner with organizational clients. As such, assuming the situational identity of volunteer tourist becomes easier because volunteers can devote more energy to learning the organizational structure and the culture relevant to the particular volunteer setting rather than to learning how to be a volunteer. In other words, people who have previous volunteer experience before engaging in a volunteer tourist program have a foundation upon which to build the volunteer tourist identity required of them when residing in another country.

To exemplify this situation, I offer the case of the animal sanctuary interviewee who had been volunteering with her family since she was ten years old and who was highly dedicated to the volunteer work at the animal sanctuary. She was one of the three volunteers who I recorded in my fieldnotes as taking on the extra responsibility of doing the park checks after the afternoon feed and spending much of her leisure time visiting the animals. This interviewee had expressed disapproval frequently when other volunteers complained about the work or did not put in as much effort as she thought they should. Clearly, she was highly committed to the volunteer role at the sanctuary and adhered strongly to the situational identity of animal sanctuary volunteer. She maintained the volunteer group’s cultural norms and frowned upon others who did not. I believe her

previous volunteer experience facilitated her acceptance of the volunteer tourist identity because she referred to those various experiences often during her interview. For example, she stated: “It’s [volunteering with mentally disabled children] nice. I like this” and then went on to explain that volunteering with her aunt at an orphanage was also nice and influenced her decision to volunteer with animals:

We do, I do it [volunteering] I think since I was like 10. My aunt always went to this place with orphan kids and I always was with her...and it was really nice. But I’m not good with child’s...I’m not very patient so I prefer stay with the babies or with kids under two years old because the others I’m really not patient. That’s why I came here, and it’s safe, animals. Not kids. I love animals.

This quote highlights how the previous experience of volunteering with her aunt at a young age influenced the interviewee to consider volunteering with animals because, although she enjoyed the experience, she realized she was “really not patient” with children. Specifically, her previous encounters with volunteering had given her a sense of enjoyment from being a volunteer as well as a sense of her strengths and weaknesses, that is, what she could bring to the volunteer role personally.

Of particular interest, the five interviewees who reported no previous volunteer experience did not discuss wanting to volunteer when they returned home. This absence was noticeable because three of these five interviewees expressed an interest in possibly participating in volunteer tourism again. Additionally, unlike their discussions of previous travel, few interviewees provided detailed descriptions of their previous volunteer experiences. In fact, only one childcare interviewee and one animal sanctuary interviewee tended to be very informative. Notably, these two “more descriptive” interviewees possessed the most amount and greatest range of previous volunteer

experience. Lack of detail did not, however, suppress the pleasure the interviewees expressed toward their earlier volunteer experiences. For example, the childcare interviewee who volunteered with the ski program to help disabled children described that program as “awesome” and her “favourite thing.” In this way, the act of volunteering came across as an important undertaking for the interviewees, but, in comparison to the detail and excitement expressed in their discussions of previous travel experience appeared to be less important to them than travel.

It is interesting that more childcare interviewees reported having previous volunteer experience than did animal sanctuary volunteers. The interview sample is extremely small and this finding may be the product of accident. Another reason for this outcome may be due to the fact that half of the childcare interviewees reported volunteer placements that were a requirement for their university degree or for credit when they were in high school while none of the animal sanctuary interviewees said their past volunteer activities had been mandatory. However, four of the five childcare interviewees who had been exposed to volunteering in school reported additional volunteer experience. This finding suggests that being exposed to volunteer work in school may motivate interest in additional volunteer activities and, when combined with previous travel experience, may make volunteer tourism an attractive option. Previous travel experience and a “love” of animals may also stimulate volunteer tourist participation for individuals desiring contact with more exotic breeds. These types of issues are explored more fully in the following section.

What the Interviewees Hoped to Gain From their Volunteer Tourism Experience

The childcare interviewee who had the most amount of volunteer experience stated in his interview: “You’ll notice a theme; a lot of my volunteering is so that I get some sort of benefit out of it.” He was motivated to volunteer not only because he wanted to help people, but also because volunteering offered him personal value. This perception supports the claim that volunteer tourism is a practice that people participate in for both altruistic and personal reasons (Mustonen 2007; Campbell and Smith 2006; Wearing 2001). Another childcare interviewee spoke in detail about this perspective when he replied,

I think that this kind of volunteering is really, like 90% for us, 10% for them. You don’t really do much for them generally speaking. If we, we could’ve just sent like a quarter of the money that we spent on this trip here and it would’ve had a much bigger effect. In my previous volunteer tourism trip it was like a big thing we talked about, like we were always talking about whether it was worth going for ten days and doing little projects here and there. After the conclusion everyone came to was that like it changes you a little bit and makes you do things that might in the future have more of an effect. Like it might make you more, like, one of the examples is like you know you see those things on TV asking for money and like maybe after visiting a township when you see those things you associate it with sort of like a kid that you worked with even if it’s for a day, instead of it just being kids with mosquitoes on them and stuff. And then that might have some effect on you and it also might change what you end up doing with your life.

This interviewee observed that the volunteer tourism childcare project had more of an impact on volunteers than it did on the children the program was meant to help.

Other childcare interviewees supported this point of view. For example, when asked what she thought the volunteer tourist experience would mean to her, one childcare interviewee stated: “I wanted to have fun, meet new people, see a different city and get

more independent like that before university and stuff.” Another said, “I’ve already like feel like my life has been changed so much like it’s just putting so many things into perspective for me. And it’s like, it’s such a humbling experience...I guess what I want to get out of it, or what I’ve already gotten out of it is just like putting things in perspective and like, there’s no reason to cry if you can’t buy a \$100 purse.”

Two childcare interviewees expressed a more balanced perspective and argued that, although they wanted to get something out of the volunteer tourism experience, they also wanted to make a difference through their participation. One stated:

I feel like every day like when we’re at home we just find something to like complain about like a new Facebook. Everyone like gets into an outrage over it and then like when you come here it kind of just puts things into perspective for you, like where you kind of really see how lucky you are at home; in Canada it’s so different. Also you get away from like, um, like Internet every day, TV every day, like it’s kind of nice to take a break from all the technology. So yeah I’m just hoping like, just hoping to see, hoping that we could like you know make the kids’ days a little bit better.

The other said:

I wasn’t really sure what to expect from it so I’m not really sure, I don’t really have an expectation to meet, but I’m kind of hoping like yeah that at least, at least one of the kids or a couple of the kids, you know, you have an impact with too, just kind of adding joy or you know something, something positive, that’s probably the biggest thing I think that you want to do. I think a lot of people, that’s why they chose to do this. And then also just like you know adding to yourself just kind of being in a new place, and a new environment, in a new culture and everything, you know.

Overall, nine out of ten (90%) childcare interviewees said they hoped they would make a difference by volunteering in South Africa. In contrast, only one (10%) of the animal sanctuary interviewees said she wanted to “give something back.” This

interviewee described the personal benefit of “getting a new perspective on life” while, simultaneously, noting:

Um, just a, a rather nice, warm feeling of having given something back. You know, just a little bit. And even though the animals don't know that. You know, you do, you know that you have actually given of your time to do something a little bit selfless for a change. I think we get very selfish in our lives and the older you get and, I live on my own and so I don't have to worry about anybody else and so this is kind of nice that you think, there's a priority here. You, you feed the animals first and then you can have breakfast. And it just puts things into perspective a little bit and, and you realize what a lucky life you have, you know. How blessed you are really what you've got. Yeah you do I think appreciate what you've got in life after you've done something like this.

In this way, the majority of both childcare and animal sanctuary interviewees expressed the desire for some type of personal change to occur as a result of volunteering. Although half also wanted to “give something back,” the desire to have a transformative experience served as a major motivation for their participation in volunteer tourism. As many noted, the expense of participating in their volunteer program was considerable and, often, much more than mere travel costs to visit the country would entail. They believed the cost of volunteer tourism was justified because it was also an investment in self.

This sense of investing in self became more obvious to me when I analyzed the interview responses to the question, “What do you hope to get from the volunteer tourist experience?” Table 4.4 shows the interviewees' individual responses to that question, with equivalent responses between the two groups highlighted. In general, personal benefits were cited 16 times in the interviews with the childcare volunteers and 25 times by the animal sanctuary volunteers with personal development being the main benefit

animal sanctuary volunteers hoped to get from their volunteer tourism experience. Notably, altruistic benefits, that is, “making a difference and giving something back” were cited nine times by the childcare interviewees but only once by the animal sanctuary interviewees.

Table 4.4 – Interviewees’ Desired Benefits from the Volunteer Tourism Experience

Childcare Volunteers	Animal Care Volunteers
Making a difference (9)	Personal development (5)
Getting a new perspective (3)	Being around animals (4)
Connecting with place (2)	Experiencing something new (4)
Experiencing something new (2)	Getting a new perspective (3)
Having fun (2)	Helping achieve future school or work goals (3)
Helping achieve future school or work goals (1)	Gaining independence (2)
Personal development (1)	Spending time outdoors (1)
Good use of my time (1)	Improving English skills (1)
Gaining independence (1)	Giving something back (1)
Meeting new people (1)	Meeting new people (1)
Getting away from technology (1)	Being able to come back without paying (1)
Learning to surf (1)	

In the previous chapter, I established that volunteers had to demonstrate a certain level of commitment to their volunteer work. It appeared to me that meeting this requirement was enough for the bulk of childcare volunteers to feel they “made a difference” since most of the volunteers I observed did not go beyond the basic volunteer

commitment required of them. For example, the majority of volunteers in the teaching program expressed dissatisfaction with their program because most of the school teachers did not want volunteers in their classrooms and the volunteers did not get the experience they had anticipated. However, very few took significant action to improve their classroom experiences. Some talked to different teachers about how they might be able to help out, but the teachers were largely unsupportive and the situation did not change throughout my eight weeks of participant observation with the program (there was one exception where an interviewee convinced a teacher to let her actively participate in the classroom). Additionally, only a small number of volunteers participated in a second program to gain more volunteer time with the children. These types of incidents suggest that “making a difference” did not constitute doing more than fulfilling basic volunteer responsibilities.

My interview data matches my observational data; only one-third of the childcare interviewees (three of the nine) who said they wanted to make a difference put in extra effort to change their volunteer situation. One interviewee had convinced a teacher at the school to let her into the classroom so she would be able to lead classes and teach the children. Another had switched from the daycare to the teaching program because she thought she would have more of an impact on the children in a school setting. The third interviewee was a daycare volunteer who also participated in the surf program most afternoons. When these three interviewees felt they were not doing enough to “make a difference” they took action. In contrast, the other six interviewees seemed content to accept the volunteer work assigned to them. In this way, both my interview and observation data indicate that, despite claims to the contrary, the desire to “make a

difference” was not strong enough for most childcare volunteers to overcome the obvious lack of support provided by the teachers and staff and the persistent message that their volunteer work was relatively unimportant.

In contrast, the animal sanctuary interviewees highlighted “personal development” rather than “making a difference” as the major benefit of volunteering. Their volunteer program situation was also structured very differently. Unlike the childcare project, the animal sanctuary can only stay in operation if it has volunteers. There are too many animals for just the volunteer coordinators to manage and the sanctuary does not make enough money to hire local help (they had a small number of full-time, local staff to take care of the domestic duties but could not afford help beyond that). Volunteers serve as the sanctuary’s main source of income and labour; without volunteers the sanctuary could not exist. In other words, volunteers “make a difference” just by being there; the animals are kept alive due to their volunteer work. Given this situation it is likely that a relatively easy ability to “make a difference” may have made the animal sanctuary volunteers more dismissive of the relevance of this volunteer benefit and prioritize the benefit of personal development in their response to my interview question. Further research is needed to test whether or not this assumption is true.

In the case of animal sanctuary interviewees, personal development meant “becoming more mature,” “gaining more self-confidence,” and “improving people skills.” For example, one animal sanctuary interviewee stated: “I think I’m going to learn so much from it, not about animals though...but I think it’ll give me so much like for my personality. Em, maybe something more outwards to people more than I am,” while

another said, “This experience I hope like helps me become like a more confident person. Cause at home I’m very shy while here, I don’t know I just get to be a different me.”

Notably, two of the animal sanctuary interviewees had volunteered with the same animal sanctuary previously; they were each at the sanctuary for a third time and indicated in their interviews how much they loved both the animal sanctuary itself and their experiences at the sanctuary. They liked the relationships they had formed as well as the personal transformations that took place for them. For example, one volunteer stated: “here I get to speak out more and because I’ve been here before a lot of the newer people kind of look to me to ask questions and to ask advice on where things are. Well I kind of know a lot cause I’ve been here so long. Emm, but overall I just, I like the feeling of being needed.” These two animal sanctuary interviewees seemed to enjoy their original volunteer tourism experience and were looking to recreate it year after year. This finding indicates that volunteering at the sanctuary can have an impact on one’s personal development.

Overall, despite the pattern of distinction between “making a difference” and “personal growth and development,” both groups of interviewees prioritized personal benefits over altruism. Table 4.4 indicates childcare interviewees listed 16 personal versus 9 altruistic benefits and animal sanctuary interviewees listed 25 personal versus 1 altruistic benefit. The majority of interviewees said they wanted to “get a new perspective,” “have fun,” and “experience something new.”

The fieldwork data presented in the previous chapter indicate how volunteers fulfilled the personal benefits they desired. Whether a childcare or an animal sanctuary

volunteer, the people I met participated enthusiastically in pleasurable “on site” activities as well as numerous tourist adventures. They spent most of their “off work” time socializing, watching movies, reading, shopping, and visiting tourist sights. In this way, by engaging in leisure and tourist activities, as well as through accomplishing routine tasks such as going to the Laundromat or doing the dishes together, volunteers were able to form relationships and engage in meaningful interactions that encouraged personal growth and development – they met new people, had new experiences, learned to surf, spent time outside, and so on. From this perspective, “off work” hours were more important for the development of self than volunteer work hours and the apparent “lack of interest” in increasing one’s volunteer work responsibilities becomes more understandable.

Motivations, Personal Benefits, Social Interaction and the Meaning Volunteer Tourism Holds for Self

Volunteer tourism is not merely an altruistic pursuit. In fact, as the two childcare interviewees quoted at the beginning of the previous section observed, volunteering and volunteer tourism offer personal benefits to their participants. It was clear in both my fieldwork and interview data that volunteers seemed more interested in interacting and socializing with other volunteers than in their volunteer responsibilities. Less than half a volunteer’s day in both the childcare and animal sanctuary programs was spent “at work” (significantly less for the daycare and surf volunteers who only had to dedicate three and two hours each day, respectively, to their programs) and yet the vast majority of the volunteers did not choose to devote much of their leisure time to working with the children or animals. Rather, they chose to spend their leisure time with each other. As

such, the personal benefits of volunteer tourism were more likely to occur through meaningful interactions between the volunteers.

Being together, whether it was “at work,” running errands, relaxing, or travelling, offered a major way for the volunteers to construct meaning about their volunteer tourist experience. As Sandstrom, Martin, and Fine (2003:139) note, “The more frequent, extensive, intimate, and enduring our interactions with others, the more likely it is that they will become patterned by relatively stable expectations. As we engage in ongoing exchanges with other people, we establish shared ideas about the identities we will occupy, the goals we will pursue, and the roles we will perform.” The frequent and extensive social interactions among volunteers allowed them to establish shared ideas about their volunteer tourist identity and satisfactory performance of the volunteer role, as well as to establish common attitudes about how to achieve the anticipated benefits of participating in their volunteer program. Thus, for example, while 90% of the childcare interviewees cited making a difference as an altruistic benefit to be derived from the volunteer tourist experience, they soon learned that minimal contact with children was considered to be acceptable volunteer behaviour by teachers, childcare project staff, and other volunteers and, as such, may have been influenced in their perception of having achieved this benefit without needing to do anything “extra” beyond their mandatory work duties. Again, more study of volunteer tourism is required to test this assumption effectively.

Some of the personal benefits outlined by the interviewees in Table 4.4 are “tangible” (i.e. they could be physically observed), such as achieving future school or work goals, learning to surf, and improving one’s English. Others, such as gaining

independence or getting a new perspective are related to the development of self and the attainment of such benefits can be attested to only by the volunteer personally. My field observations are not sufficient to determine whether or not the interviewees actually achieved these benefits and I had to rely on the interviewees' claims alone. However, other research has studied the association between social interaction, personal development and volunteer tourism. Wearing (2001), for example, found that social interactions among volunteers influenced the meaning individual volunteer tourists attached to their experience and, as such, the social interaction process was a major influence on personal growth and development. Many of the personal development benefits discussed by my interviewees were found in Wearing's study, such as increased self-confidence, learning new skills and affirming present personal abilities, having an impact on future tourist behaviour, developing more effective interpersonal communication skills, and a firmer belief and confidence in one's self, abilities and skills (2001:126-131). In this way, Wearing's results support my conclusion that the volunteer tourist experience became meaningful for my study participants through the social process of interacting with others in the volunteer project setting and through the development of intimate relationships with other volunteers. Moreover, it is highly likely these experiences allowed the interviewees in my study to achieve the personal benefits they had set for self before participating in their volunteer program.

I chose to focus on the perceived benefits gained by volunteers through their participation in a volunteer tourism experience because the motivations or reasons why individuals engage in volunteer tourism have been examined extensively by other researchers (Sin 2009; Broad and Jenkins 2008; Campbell & Smith 2006; Brown 2005;

Galley and Clifton 2004; Caissie and Halpenny 2003; Wearing 2001). In taking this approach, I hoped to gain a stronger understanding of what volunteer tourists thought the experience would mean to them rather than on what they believed it might mean for others. I recognized that perceived benefits also act as motivators for participation in volunteer tourism (Sin 2009:488; Broad and Jenkins 2008:78). However, I believed a separation of “personal benefits” from the larger topic of volunteer tourist “motivators” would help me uncover the personal value volunteer tourism holds for its participants. Still, given the close relationship between the two concepts, my research findings on perceived benefits compare strongly with previous research on volunteer motivations.

To give an example, in their study on the eco-tourist volunteer motivations of a randomly selected group of volunteers aged 17 to 63 who had previously worked on projects with either the Nature Conservancy of Canada or the Federation of Ontario Naturalists, Caissie and Halpenny (2003) found their research participants were motivated by: nature-based “perks” such as access to unique ecosystems, pleasure seeking, attachment to place by being outdoors and experiencing nature, leaving a legacy by helping the environment, and altruism by caring for humans and nature. Similarly, in looking at the motivations of 100 Operation Wallacea volunteer eco-tourists, Galley and Clifton (2004) noted the most frequently cited motivations to be: experiencing something completely new, taking part in a rare opportunity, observing the diversity of animal species, being able to have it stand out on one’s curriculum vitae as invaluable experience, and seeking challenging things to do. A third example is Brown (2005) who, in studying both the perceived benefits and motivations for 25 volunteer tourists belonging to the Ambassador Travel Club in the United States, identified the

motivational themes of: immersing oneself in the local culture and community, giving back and making a difference, interacting with people that share common interests and values, and seeking educational and bonding opportunities for children.

The perceived benefits identified by the 20 interviewees in my study are akin to the motivational factors found by these other researchers (Sin 2009; Brown 2005; Galley and Clifton 2004, Caissie and Halpenny 2003, Wearing 2001). Specifically, the interviewees identified similar altruistic and personal desires and, in many cases, even mentioned the same motivations, such as the nature-based “perk” of being around animals, experiencing something new, a desire to help a cause, personal development, getting a new perspective, and gaining independence. Moreover, both my observational and interview data speak to Wearing’s (2001) position that people who engage in volunteer tourism undertake such activities not only to help others but also to derive personal benefit. Given the close similarity between the demographic characteristics of my sample and those found in these other studies as well as stated motivations and benefits, I maintain that, despite differences in where volunteering takes place and who the volunteers may be, volunteer tourists tend to have common reasons for engaging in this activity, that is, they want to help people/communities at the same time as they want to fulfill goals of personal growth and development (Brown 2005; Galley and Clifton 2004; Cassie and Halpenny 2003; Wearing 2001). Moreover, the major distinction between volunteer groups stems more from the type of volunteer activity chosen and the volunteer tourist’s personal interest in engaging in that activity than from any particular social characteristic such as country of origin or socio-economic status (Caissie and Halpenny 2003; Galley and Clifton 2004).

My analytical focus on the perceived benefits of volunteer tourism adds to the theoretical analysis of the motivational literature on volunteer tourism through provision of an intimate understanding of the social behaviour exhibited by volunteers participating in two distinct volunteer programs in South Africa. Although most childcare interviewees in my study wanted to make a difference and most animal sanctuary interviewees desired personal growth, the majority did not perform more than the required number of volunteer work hours to achieve their goal. In fact, no matter an interviewee's stated desire, he/she tended to behave in the same way as others in his/her program setting. This finding suggests that the motivations for participation in volunteer tourism have a similar impact on in-program behaviour regardless of what these motivations are and as such, volunteer behaviour appears to be shaped more by devotion to group culture than by the desired benefits of program participation.

When I probed my interview and observational data further I realized the strongest benefit sought from volunteer tourism was a change in self, that is, the development of a new perspective, increased self-confidence, or enhanced interpersonal skills through program participation. This type of change in self occurred mainly through interacting with others in the volunteer setting, especially the creation of meaningful interactions with other volunteers who supported one's personal growth and development. Whether motivated mainly by altruistic aspirations such as "helping others" or through individual interest such as "gaining independence," all volunteers appeared to achieve personal benefit from interacting with other volunteers. Thus, they spent more time engaging in these types of activities than in extra volunteer work.

My fieldnote data indicates that all of the volunteer tourists I met exhibited behaviour associated with both altruistic and personal motivations. For example, I found the majority of volunteers demonstrated their commitment to helping out a cause (i.e. altruistic motivations) by performing their volunteer responsibilities as required. On the other hand, most volunteers spent the majority of their free time engaging in leisure and tourist activities with each other (i.e. a personal benefit). A few spent some of their spare time with the children and animals they were in South Africa to help (i.e. altruistic motivations) but the majority focussed on having fun and engaging in new experiences with new people (i.e. personal benefit). In these ways, my observation findings tend to support and reaffirm the findings provided by other studies where it is noted that personal benefits, including those related to travel, were stronger motivations for volunteer tourist participation than altruistic benefits (Sin 2009; Broad and Jenkins 2008).

Notably, in conducting fieldwork with National University of Singapore students who participated on a community service and cultural tourist trip to South Africa, Sin (2009) found that the motivations expressed by his 11 participants were most often related to travel. Only 2 of the 11 participants mentioned volunteering and contributing to a local community as a main motivational factor. Other motivations included being challenged by the volunteer work and the practicality or convenience of joining the volunteer trip rather than travel in another manner, such as individually. Similar to the volunteer tourists in my study, personal development benefits, including travel, were stronger motivational factors than making a difference for Sin's participants.

As part of his analysis, Sin compared the stated motivations of these 11 volunteers with how they emphasized different aspects of self during their time in South Africa. He

reported, for instance, that often the volunteers displayed “a ‘self’ that is sensitive towards the locals, different from ‘other’ mass tourists who are often deemed to be insensitive” (Sin 2009:493) but at other times displayed a “tourist self” such as by taking pictures of everything they saw. As a result of these observations, Sin concluded, “Volunteer tourists do not necessarily shed all characteristics of mass tourists, and are constantly at the crossroads of negotiating and performing their identities as a volunteer and as a tourist” (2009:493). This finding compares significantly with my own observations that the volunteers in my study manifested different elements of the volunteer tourist identity at different times throughout their participation in the volunteer programs.

Sin also observed that volunteers who had performed “self as a savvy traveler with a verbalized sense of social awareness and openness towards volunteering” (2009:493-494) were unable to commit to additional volunteer activities after the volunteer tourism trip was completed although they still tended to travel. In fact, he noted that only 4 of the 11 participants volunteered substantially after their time in South Africa compared with all 11 participants engaging in travel. Thus, Sin concluded that travelling and going overseas is a stronger motivator than volunteering or helping a cause through volunteer tourism. The observational and interview data in my research support this claim. Comparatively, two animal sanctuary interviewees in my study who had never travelled before claimed an interest in future travel; however, the interviewees who had never volunteered before expressed no interest in volunteering when they returned home from this volunteer tourist trip. In fact, all of my interviewees discussed a potential for future travel whereas only a few expressed a desire to volunteer apart from engaging in

future volunteer tourist trips. However, despite the similarity of perspectives between my interviewees and Sin's (2009) findings, I did not seek out or identify "savvy travel" characteristics as part of my study and suggest it may be a possible target of study for future volunteer tourist research.

My interview data on motivations for volunteers' program choice also compares strongly with the findings of Broad and Jenkins (2008) who asked 40 volunteer tourists participating on an animal rehabilitation project in Thailand to identify why they chose to work with that specific project (The Gibbon Rehabilitation Project) instead of other, similar programs. The responses given in Broad and Jenkins' study included: knowing someone who had volunteered with the organization, its low cost, its location in Thailand, and being able to work hands-on with primates (2008:81-82). These responses are nearly identical to those cited by both the childcare and animal sanctuary interviewees in my study and suggest that volunteers participating in diverse types of projects are motivated by the same practical factors, such as cost, reputation of the organization, and volunteer responsibilities when selecting a specific project. Once again, personal benefits appear to take priority thereby indicating a more subtle self-interest in volunteer tourist participation than may be revealed in studies that only investigate motivations for participation in volunteer tourism rather than also including motives for program choice.

Conclusion

In this chapter I looked at the interview data resulting from questions on a volunteer's motives for choosing a program, his or her previous travel and volunteer experience, and what volunteers hoped to get from their volunteer tourism experience.

My interview sample indicated specific programs were chosen for a variety of reasons. The childcare interviewees' reasons were practical and logical, such as cost and variety of program options while the animal sanctuary interviewees were motivated by the opportunity to work with animals. It is possible that the animal sanctuary interviewees looked at diverse animal programs and chose the one most suited to them personally, while the childcare interviewees looked at programs that were very similar in outward appearance and chose the one that had the most value for money. During my observations in the field, however, I found the childcare interviewees exhibited behaviour that contradicted their primary motivation for choosing the program; they spent money rather recklessly even though they had taken care to ensure that the cost of the program itself was as low as possible. In contrast, the animal sanctuary interviewees revealed behaviour that matched their main motivation for choosing their program (i.e. working closely / hands-on with animals), but also demonstrated that spending time with other volunteers was more important than spending time with the animals.

Both groups of interviewees possessed extensive travel and volunteer experience before entering their program and were well-prepared to perform the "role" of volunteer tourist. Personal experience with these two main elements of the volunteer tourist role before participating in their volunteer tourism program ensured the interviewees were well positioned to assume the "volunteer tourist" identity more easily. They were able to share their passion for on-site travel with the other volunteers in part because they could share their previous travel experiences, and they were able to commit to the volunteer role because they already had experience committing part of their leisure time to volunteer activities. Finally, the two groups of interviewees' revealed a different

hierarchy of motivations for participating in volunteer tourism; the childcare interviewees wanted to “make a difference” while the animal sanctuary interviewees hoped to achieve personal development. Significantly, only three out of nine childcare interviewees who wanted to make a difference went beyond the base level of commitment to the volunteer role required in the volunteer tourist social situation to accomplish this goal.

Despite the motivational distinctions existing between the groups, interviewees listed more personal than altruistic benefits when stating what they hoped to gain from their volunteer tourist experience. They also appeared to achieve personal growth and development by spending a majority of their time in South Africa creating meaningful relationships with other volunteers who helped them have new experiences, meet new people, and become more independent. The observations made in my fieldnotes match the descriptions provided by my interview sample and supported their claims. The desire for personal growth and development appears to outweigh the desire to make a difference.

The findings in this chapter substantiate previous research on volunteer tourist motivations; namely, that volunteers are motivated by a combination of personal and altruistic benefits and that the differences in motivations between volunteer groups relates mainly to the type of volunteer activity chosen and the volunteer tourist’s personal interest in engaging in that activity. By combining observational data with interview data, my analysis adds to that body of literature through its demonstration of how interactions with other volunteers helps one achieve personal benefit from being a volunteer tourist and in my finding that diverse types of volunteers behave in largely the same ways. Given this evidence, I suggest that the benefits of program participation desired by

volunteer tourists do not influence their behaviour as strongly as adherence to program culture and group norms.

Previous research on the motivations of volunteer tourists indicate that personal or tourist factors are stronger motivators than altruistic factors (Sin 2009; Broad and Jenkins 2008; Wearing 2001). These reports are akin to my own research findings. The example of Sin (2009) elaborates on these results by comparing participants' stated motivations with their future behaviour and noting that participants manifest different elements of "self" to embody the tourist or the altruist at different times. As such, the behaviour of Sin's research participants suggests tourist motivations are much stronger than volunteer motivations. My comparative data on the expression of desired benefits by volunteers and their actual behaviour in the volunteer programs supports Sin's claims. However, I did not take specific note of the volunteers in my study exhibiting different elements of the volunteer tourist identity at different times, especially, the identity of "savvy tourist." The recommendation to include such possibilities in future research are explored more fully in the next, final thesis chapter where I summarize the main findings of my research study. That final chapter also describes areas of improvement and suggestions for future research.

Discussion and Conclusion

This thesis explores the social phenomenon of volunteer tourism. Specifically, I used a participant observation methodological approach to gather data on the everyday activities and social behaviour of volunteer tourists participating in two diverse volunteer programs in South Africa; one working with children and one working at an animal sanctuary. I also conducted in-depth interviews with a subset of 20 volunteers who discussed the criteria they used in selecting their particular program, their previous travel and volunteer experience, and what they hoped to achieve from participating in their volunteer tourism project. Using a symbolic interactionist theoretical approach, my analysis of both types of data reveal an interaction process at the structural, group and individual level through which program participants come to identify self as a volunteer tourist and form volunteer tourist identities appropriate to the social situation experienced within their own particular volunteer project.

A large body of research exists on the volunteer tourist as a subject of interest (Andereck et al. 2012; Coren and Gray 2011; Benson and Seibert 2009; Cousins et al. 2009; Sin 2009; Brown 2005; Campbell and Smith 2005; Galley and Clifton 2004; McGehee and Santos 2004; Stoddart and Rogerson 2004; Caissie and Halpenny 2003). The symbolic interactionist theoretical approach has also been used by other researchers (Wearing, Deville and Lyons 2008; Wearing 2001). In many ways, the data findings presented in the thesis replicate the findings reported in those other studies. The power of my work exists in its demonstration of how my study participants' interactions with other volunteers helped them form socially acceptable volunteer tourist identities. My findings

also suggest program culture and group norms may be influential in affecting volunteer tourist behaviour, as are altruistic motivations and/or a desire to achieve personal benefit.

It is important to note that volunteer tourists come into their volunteer tourist social situation with volunteer role expectations that have been presented to them by advertisements and project websites. But, it is only through a process of interacting with others within the volunteer setting, especially other volunteers, that the volunteer tourist culture becomes known and the meaning of being a volunteer tourist is fully understood. Specifically, volunteers learn from other volunteers what is required of them to fit effectively into their volunteer project setting and are able to signify their volunteer tourist identity by adhering to group norms and program standards. In other words, the volunteer tourist identity emerges in response to the social activities and the actions of others encountered through participation in the volunteer program. Given this finding, it is expected that continued participation in additional programs will add complexity and sophistication to individual volunteer tourist identities.

Taking into consideration the results of this research project and other research studies on volunteer tourism, it can be seen that volunteer tourism is indeed an important social practice occurring in our postmodern society. In postmodernity, the roles and boundaries that previously defined tourism have become blurred enabling volunteer activities to penetrate the previously separate sphere of tourism. A heightened social conscience developed through increased awareness of global issues has given people new motivations for travelling. Combining these new motivations with the increased ability to engage in more individual and less pre-packaged holidays has allowed individuals to merge volunteer activities and travel activities to form volunteer tourism projects

(Mustonen 2006; Uriely et al. 2003). As such, participants involved in volunteer tourism reflect postmodern practice. Additionally, my research sample matches samples found in other research studies which indicate volunteer tourists are mainly young, independent travelers who are influenced to participate in volunteer tourism by a combination of both personal and altruistic motivations. The relative youth of the volunteer tourist population points toward the potential for an increased development and future growth of this social phenomenon thereby supporting and extending the postmodern standpoint.

My research findings reveal interactions between volunteers are full of meaning; volunteers interact in ways that help shape a culture of shared values and beliefs used to guide the behaviour of group members. The differences in the group behaviour I observed stemmed mainly from “place.” Each project location constrained the volunteers’ social interactions in distinct ways to create unique expressions of the volunteer tourist identity. Thus, for example, engaging in alcohol consumption and related activities (such as singing karaoke) became an important means of developing relationships for the childcare volunteers but this process did not occur at the animal sanctuary because alcohol was not easily accessible. The second element of “place” identified in my study consisted of volunteer work assignment procedures. Volunteer coordinators were much more involved with the animal sanctuary volunteers and animal sanctuary volunteer activities were much more structured than at the childcare project. Given these findings, I believe further ethnographic research of additional case studies could add to the understanding of how “place” shapes volunteer tourists’ experiences.

Connection to Previous Research and Recommendations for Further Study

As previously mentioned, my study sample shares similar characteristics with volunteer tourists found in previous research. Specifically, the sample consisted mainly of women from North America and the United Kingdom, and between 20 and 30 years of age. As such, my research provides evidence in support of profiling the typical volunteer tourist as a young, female, educated individual of western origin. I did, however, observe a number of male volunteers when conducting my fieldwork and interviewed four of them for my study. It may be advisable when considering future research to focus on male volunteer tourists as a distinct group if a stronger understanding of volunteer tourism is desired. Furthermore, my research findings correspond with Wearing's (2001) theoretical claim that interactions between volunteers have an impact on the development of self as well as the findings of Conran (2011) who observed that intimacy is a significant aspect of the volunteer tourist experience.

The volunteers in my research study exhibited the same types of motivations and perceived benefits for participating in volunteer tourism as previous research on volunteer tourism; namely, altruistic and personal factors. My data also support the position that personal or tourist factors are stronger motivators and/or benefits than altruistic factors (Sin 2009; Broad and Jenkins 2008; Wearing 2001). The study I conducted adds to the body of knowledge on motivations mainly through its comparison of interview data with field data and its provision of detailed descriptions of the volunteer tourist experience, especially the development of a volunteer tourist identity. Significantly, my analysis of perceived benefits and volunteer motivations reveals a more subtle and complex influence of these factors on volunteer tourist identity than portrayed

in other studies. However, I did not specifically examine how volunteer tourists emphasized different elements of the volunteer tourist identity at different times. I believe doing so would have helped me gain a more holistic picture of the volunteer tourist identity through the comparison of volunteers' stated motivations and desired benefits with their actual in-program behaviour. Given my findings, the limited time period I was able to spend on participant observation, and the small amount of data I was able to collect through 20 in-depth interviews indicates a need for more extensive future research using these methodologies, especially in differentiating the influence of motivations and desired benefits on the process by which volunteers learn the role of volunteer and form a volunteer tourist identity.

My study results do not support the conclusions of other researchers (Lyons and Wearing 2008; Wearing 2001) who found volunteer tourists develop an intimate understanding of the host community's culture through their volunteer work. I did not examine interaction with host communities because: 1) the volunteers lived together in volunteer housing rather than with host community members and 2) it was too dangerous at the childcare centre to go out into the community, while the animal sanctuary was isolated geographically. Thus, I was unable to gather enough data on this topic.

Interestingly, Lepp's (2008) study comparing the motivations and benefits of community development volunteers with conservation volunteers revealed the majority of volunteers from both groups did not want to do anything "touristy." In fact, Lepp (2008:90) states "there was an anti-tourism theme evident in every interview." The volunteers in Lepp's study interacted much more heavily with the local hosts and community members than the volunteers in my study and this interaction may have allowed them to feel more like

“locals” and less like “tourists.” Again, more extensive ethnographic work over longer periods with a larger variety of project sites is needed to explore to what extent contact with host cultures may affect volunteer social interactions as well as the formation and expression of volunteer tourist identities.

Uriely et al. (2003) recommend host volunteers be included in analyses of volunteer tourism as they help shape the volunteer tourist experience. These researchers included local community volunteers in their own study and found both host volunteers and visiting volunteers possessed the same types of altruistic and personal motivators for their participation. I mentioned in chapter one that I did not include host volunteers in my analysis due to the complications related to finding two organizations that would allow me to conduct research on their “employees;” however, I believe it would have been a worthwhile comparison. I did observe, for example, that the interactions of the volunteers with the volunteer coordinators at the childcare project were significantly different than those at the animal sanctuary. Had I been able to secure the support of the organizations to include the coordinators in my field notes, I would have been able to include another level to my analysis; specifically, how the volunteers interacted with the coordinators and how these interactions affected the development of the volunteer tourist identity. As such, my statements regarding the impact of the organizational structure are more tentative than those made concerning the effects of volunteer interactions. Once again, more extensive ethnographic work over longer periods with a larger variety of project sites and project participants is needed to further explore these types of effects.

Other researchers, such as Raymond (2008) have recommended examination of the role performed by the sending organization. With respect to my research study, I

observed the sending organization had an impact both on volunteers' reasons for selecting the specific program and on their expectations and experiences of the program; the organizations also offered a pre-defined role of volunteer tourist. Comparatively, Raymond suggests that sending organizations should provide volunteers with pre-departure preparation and in-country orientation in order to provide a clear understanding of the program, the host culture and the host community so volunteers will have a more realistic expectation about their future experiences with the program. In my case, neither program offered an in-country orientation and although the childcare project emailed a pre-departure booklet to all volunteers, volunteers from both placements experienced disappointment related to their program expectations. Thus, I agree with Raymond's recommendation that having best practices for sending organizations will help ensure that volunteer tourism programs have a positive impact on both volunteers and host organizations. I further suggest that an extensive examination should be conducted on how such practices affect volunteer expectations, volunteer program adjustment and the development of volunteer tourist identities.

Another topic I did not investigate was the role played by emotions. Cousins et al. (2009) completed an ethnographic study of 22 volunteers involved in four different conservation programs in South Africa and found six major emotional responses to the volunteer experience: anguish, exhilaration, awe, frustration, disappointment, and compassion. They concluded that emotions help to construct the experiences of volunteer tourists and provide "vital motivating energy" for volunteers (2009:1078). While I did record some emotions in my field notes, I did not focus on them when coding and analyzing the data; I chose to focus on the strongest themes that consistently appeared.

Given the volume of data, it was impossible to examine all potentially influential factors on volunteers' behaviour. Had I more time and space to do so, I believe gathering specific data on emotions may have offered further insight into volunteer behaviour and the choices volunteers made, especially in how emotions affected their perception of self as a volunteer tourist. Moreover, it would have been interesting to note whether emotions affected volunteers who worked with children differently than volunteers who worked with animals, and whether the childcare and animal sanctuary volunteers' emotional responses in the field were similar to or different from those demonstrated by Cousins et al.'s (2009) conservation volunteers. This research interest must, I fear, be left for another study.

Future research should go beyond investigating volunteer motivations and the perceived benefits of volunteering and focus on how these benefits are achieved, as occurred in both my own and Wearing's (2001) study. For instance, do volunteers gain more personal benefits through interpersonal interaction with each other, or do more personal gains occur from engaging with the cause or with the local community? I also recommend that data on volunteers' motivations be collected either before volunteer participation begins, or, close to the beginning of placements and then again at the end of the placement in order to analyze whether or not the volunteer tourist experience influences a participant's initial motivations. For example, many animal sanctuary participants in my study stated they wanted to be close to animals, but over time they demonstrated a stronger motivation to spend time with each other. It would be interesting to note whether the volunteers themselves would indicate a change in motivation at the end of their programs.

Given my research experience, I agree with Smith and Holmes' (2009) recommendation for future examination of volunteer tourism to include longitudinal or multi-stage research, comparative research across the whole tourism volunteering setting, the perspectives of hosts and others affected by volunteer tourism, and different types of volunteer tourists such as those who volunteer at zoos or events. In particular, longitudinal or multi-stage research using participant observation would allow researchers to see in what ways the experiences of volunteers change at different times. For example, if I conducted the same research with the same two programs the following year, would the culture of the groups be the same? Would the volunteers still mainly be educated students in their late teens and early twenties? Alternatively, if I stayed for longer at each volunteer program, would I find the characteristics of the volunteers to be different at different times throughout the year (are there less students outside of the summer months, for example), and would group size impact the group's culture? Furthermore, an examination of the perspectives of the hosts and others implicated in volunteer tourism would help determine what kind of impact the volunteer program is having on the community and in what ways the community members influence the volunteer tourist experience for the volunteers.

My current study addresses one of Smith and Holmes' (2009) recommendations, which is to conduct comparative research. In this way, my data analysis creates a more comprehensive picture of volunteer tourism because it highlights how the everyday lived experience of being a volunteer can be similar or different depending upon the volunteer program structure and setting. Importantly, although the volunteer tourist experience was

constrained in different ways by place, volunteers from both programs interacted with each other within these different places in largely similar ways.

In conclusion, I was interested in volunteer tourism as a research topic because I had a personal desire to be a volunteer tourist and I wanted to meet other volunteer tourists and find out what they were like. Was travel a significant interest for them? Did they volunteer back home? Why did they want to participate in volunteer tourism? I decided to undertake an in-depth ethnographic study of volunteer tourism to help answer these questions. As a volunteer tourist as well as researcher, that is, as a participant observer in the field, I was able to live and work with my fellow volunteers to not only study their behaviour but also learn personally how to form a volunteer tourist identity appropriate to the particular volunteer project social situation. Besides providing me with the sympathetic understanding I needed to appreciate the social phenomenon of volunteer tourism personally, I believe my experiences in the field and the subsequent analysis of my observations and interviews contributes much to the body of knowledge on volunteer tourism and raises valuable points on the direction of future research.

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Appendix I – Letter to Volunteer Placement Organizations

Good afternoon,

My name is Jennifer Perry and I am a current graduate student at Carleton University in Ottawa, Canada. I would like to undertake a volunteer position at one of your programs in South Africa. I wanted to ask a few questions before filling out my application. My research topic for my Master of Arts degree is volunteer tourism. I'll be looking at the participants of volunteer tourism and their motivations for doing such a program. I intend to interview my fellow participants in the program as well as make observations of them during my participation. Each person would be asked to sign a consent form giving their permission for me to do so. **Name of Organization** will not be implicated in the research apart from a description of the program (organization name won't be included) since my interest is solely with the participants. I am currently seeking approval from my university's ethics board.

Of course, I will fully participate in the volunteer work and all the responsibilities that come along with it. Volunteering in South Africa has been something I wanted to do for a long time, and is what led me to choose this topic for my research. In this way I would be able to both undertake research and participate in something I am highly passionate about! Please let me know whether or not **Name of Organization** would allow me to do this research on the participants while participating in the volunteer program.

If I am able to do this research, I would apply for a two-month volunteer placement. I would like to know when the best time of year to go is, with respect to number of volunteers. Are there more volunteers in May-June, July-Aug, Sept-Oct, or Nov-Dec?

Thanks very much for your help!

Jennifer

Appendix II – Consent Form for Participant Observation



Consent Form

Title: The Voluntourism Experience: A Critical Comparison of two Case Studies

Date of ethics clearance: April 23, 2012

Ethics Clearance for the Collection of Data Expires: May 31, 2013

I, _____, choose to participate in a study on the practice of volunteer tourism. This study aims to understand the experiences of the people who participate in a volunteer tourism project. The collective data will be used to help situate the practice of volunteer tourism within the broad category of volunteer work. The researcher of this study is Jennifer Perry.

The participant has the right to end his or her participation in the study at any time. Participants who withdraw from the study will have the notes that refer to incidents which involve them erased. The participant also has the right to request that specific incidents be excluded from the study and to ask questions about their involvement at any time.

Participants will remain anonymous in this study. Names and other personal identifiers will not be attributed to the observations noted. The researcher's supervisor may have access to the field notes but no one beyond the researcher and her supervisor will have access. Confidentiality will be stressed at all times.

The notes will be kept locked in a storage box accessible by code only by the researcher while on the project and upon return to Canada. The notes will be kept on the researcher's person at all times while in transit to her home country.

The notes will be archived after completion of the research project. This means that the notes will be kept in a locked cabinet should any further research be done by the researcher on this topic. The data will not be used for any purpose beyond a study of volunteer tourism.

The participant has the right to review the notes pertaining to her or himself upon request. The findings of the research can be sent to the participant upon the completion of the project and its acceptance by the University. The findings can also be sent to the organization running the volunteer project. The findings will be sent via email at request.

This project was reviewed by the Carleton University Research Ethic Board, which provided clearance to carry out the research. Should you have questions or concerns related to your involvement in this research, please contact:

Professor Antonio Gualtieri, Chair
Research Ethics Board
Carleton University Research Office
Carleton University
1125 Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6
Tel: 613-520-2517 E-mail: ethics@carleton.ca

Researcher contact information:

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Supervisor contact information:

Prof. Karen March
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University
613-520-2600, ext. 1122
Karen_march@carleton.ca

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of researcher

Date

Appendix III – Interview Guide and Sample Questions

Introduction of who I am, what my research pertains to, and the format of the interview.
Explanation of the ethical considerations.

Questions related to the person's history

- Tell me about your family
- What schooling have you done so far? Do you plan to do any future schooling?
- What do you do back home (such as job, school, etc.)? If currently have a job, do you like your job? What about your job do you like and what don't you like? If in school, what are you studying? Do you like your program? What about your schooling do you like and what don't you like?
- Describe your work history (first job, all previous jobs)?
- Tell me about your social life back home
- What do you like to do with your time?

Questions related to previous travel experience

- Where have you travelled to so far?
- What was your favourite trip so far and why?
- What do you like about travelling?

Questions related to previous volunteer experience

- Please describe any previous volunteer experience you have
- What do you like about volunteering?
- If no experience, why did you choose to volunteer in South Africa?
- Would you like to volunteer in the future?

Motivations for choosing South Africa and the specific volunteer program

- Describe how you chose South Africa and this particular program.
- Tell me about why you chose to do this program.
- Explain what you hope to get out of your time here. What will this experience mean to you?

Feelings about volunteering/travelling in developing countries

- How do you feel about conservation? How do you feel about humanitarian work? What are your thoughts on organizations like the Peace Corps or Mercy Corps?
- What are you interested in besides teaching/animal care?
- How do you feel about volunteer tourism in general?

Future aspirations

- Describe your goals/wishes for the future

Conclusion thanking them for their participation and instructing them where to go

if they have questions or to withdraw from the research after the fact.

Appendix IV – Consent Form for Interviews



Consent Form

Title: The Voluntourism Experience: A Critical Comparison of two Case Studies

Date of ethics clearance: April 23, 2012

Ethics Clearance for the Collection of Data Expires: May 31, 2013

I, _____, choose to participate in a study on the practice of volunteer tourism. This study aims to understand the experiences of the people who choose to participate in a volunteer tourism project. This study further seeks to identify the histories of such people, including their educational background, previous tourist and volunteer experience, and work history. The researcher of this study is Jennifer Perry.

The questions will be open-ended and with my permission, will be audio recorded. Should I decline to be audio recorded the researcher will take handwritten notes. I understand that I have the right to decline answering questions during the interview, to end the interview, or to withdraw from the study altogether. Should I decide to withdraw from the study my data will be destroyed. Withdrawal must be made within three weeks after the date the consent form is signed. I have the right to ask questions about my involvement in the study at any time.

I understand that the risk to me by participating in this study is minimal. I understand that I will not be identified by name or any other identifier in the researcher's thesis or any other presentation of the research. My name will not be attributed to the answers given in the interview. The interview data will be transcribed and reviewed by the researcher. The researcher's supervisor may also have access to the interview data but no one beyond the researcher and her supervisor will have access.

Confidentiality will be stressed at all times but could be compromised because of the nature of working together on the volunteer project; the volunteers may share with one another what they said during their interview. The researcher will not divulge participant's names or content of the interview.

I retain the right to review my audio tape as well as the transcripts of my interview. They can be reviewed upon request.

There are some possible benefits to me from participating in this study. Volunteer tourism is an activity people engage in often times for self-development purposes. By

participating in the interview, I may learn more about and may gain a new or clarified perspective on my future goals and reasons for participation in the volunteer program.

The data will be kept on a password protected electronic device that will be kept in a storage box accessible by code only by the researcher while on the project and upon return to Canada. The electronic device will be kept on the researcher's person at all times while in transit to her home country.

The audio data will be destroyed within three months of the completion of the research project. This means that the data will be erased permanently from the electronic device. Transcripts of the data will be kept in a password protected file on a password protected computer should any further research be done by the researcher on this topic. The data will be kept for future research on this topic.

I understand that the findings of the research can be sent to me upon the completion of the project and its acceptance by Carleton University. The findings may also be sent to the organization running the volunteer project. The findings will be sent via email at request.

I understand that this project was reviewed and has received ethics clearance from the Carleton University Research Ethics Board (CUREB.) Questions or concerns related to my involvement in this research may be addressed to the CUREB chair Professor Antonio Gualtieri, Carleton University Research Office, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Drive Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5B6 Tel: 613-520-2517 E-mail: ethics@carleton.ca

Researcher contact information:

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Jennifer_perry@carleton.ca

Supervisor contact information:

Prof. Karen March
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Carleton University
613-520-2600, ext. 1122
Karen_march@carleton.ca

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of researcher

Date