Working Tourists:
Identity Formation in a
Leisure Space

Tara Julie Catherine Emma Duncan

PhD

UCL

ABSTRACT

Young budget travellers who work as they travel the world have often escaped academic attention. This thesis will begin to correct this omission by illustrating how the working and travelling practices of these young budget travellers affects their perception and construction of self. Taking an empirically grounded approach, this research will build these views into wider theoretical debates around identity, work, place and transnationalism.

The thesis is based on an intensive period of fieldwork undertaken in Whistler, British Columbia, Canada. Drawing on data from in-depth interviews, participant observation and secondary sources, this thesis will suggest that it is through work and travel experiences that these young people construct a sense of self. It will be argued that working adds value and meaning to experiences, creating memories and stories in which to construct identity. Furthermore, company culture and ideas of adventure continuously complicate how these young people utilise their working and travelling experiences and so, how they (re)define their sense of self. Finally, the relationship between identity and place will be considered in connection to the emerging literature on backpacker enclaves.

This research on these working tourists aims to provide insights into current debates on backpacker travel, identity and tourism, both within the academic community and across wider business and social arenas. The ways in which young working tourists use their experiences to increase cultural capital and gain informal qualifications in order to increase career and life chances will be explored. Thus this thesis will demonstrate the need to understand the motivations, travel patterns and travel careers of working tourists in order to better forecast future tourism demands and trends.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

> Tourism is perhaps the quintessential globalised or transnational activity…
> (Bianchi, 2000: 115).

1.1 Introducing

This thesis stems from my own experiences. Between 1997 and 2000, I lived and worked in a community of 'working tourists' and often found myself asking questions about who they were, how they got there, why they came and what they did when they left. It was only as I considered returning to academia that I realised that the questions I had been asking myself could be worthy of study and so I began to lay the foundations that have led me to this final point.

Overall, this thesis is broadly about tourism geographies, and more specifically, about those of young people. I will argue that it is also much more than that. The working and travelling practices of young people who have taken time out from their education, career or other home life, illustrate more than (what could be classed as) non-institutional travel practices. Their experiences provide them with a way of (re)constructing their sense of self, of defining themselves in order to move forward with their work and personal lives. Space, place, time, technology, work and play are all part of this process and so, in the end, this thesis is about much more than tourism. It is about the cultural, social and economic aspects of these young people's lives and about how their everyday experiences affect their future life chances.

As I have been working in this area, there has been a tremendous growth in the literature that looks at this group of young people. At the start of this project, there was little in the way of research to be found on backpackers, gap year travellers, or young people who worked their way around the world (for the exceptions see Desforges 1997a and b; Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995; Murphy, 2001; and Uriely et al, 2002). Since then, and especially in the last two years, a plethora of articles, books, reports and conferences[1] have covered many different aspects of the subject (see for example, Clarke, 2004, 2005; Conradson and Latham, 2005c; Jones, 2004b; O'Reilly,

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[1] September 2005 saw the second Atlas Special Interest Group Meeting by the Backpacker Research Group. This conference was held at the Kasetsart University in Bangkok, Thailand - what better place to hold a backpackers conference? In January 2007, a Gap Year Study Day, sponsored by the British Sociological Association was held at the University of Surrey in Guildford.

2006, Richards and Wilson, 2003). It is now, with both conviction and also some trepidation, that I put forward my own thoughts on this group of young budget travellers.

This chapter will outline the research project in more detail, setting it in the context of the history of tourism, and specifically youth tourism. I will then begin to critique the definition of 'backpacker' and explore the reasons behind my use of the phrase 'working tourist'. I then put the research into its wider context by discussing Whistler, British Columbia – where the research took place – before concluding with an outline of the chapters that follow.

1.2 Leisure and Tourism Studies

Leisure, recreation and tourism are in many ways related. Tourism is often defined as a type of leisure (see Urry, 2002) yet, for many, tourism and leisure are still seen as distinctly different. In separating the two terms out, tourists generally undertake leisure activities whilst away from their home environment, whilst recreation and leisure studies concentrate on some or most of these same activities as they are undertaken in a familiar or home environment/area. I do not intend to dissect the intricate arguments that separate or combine leisure, recreation and tourism here. Instead, I aim to provide a brief introduction to the idea of leisure as related to tourism before going on to look briefly at the history of tourism within academia.

1.21 Leisure

The Oxford English Dictionary Online defines leisure as 'the state of having time at one's disposal: time which one can spend as one pleases; free or unoccupied time' (OED Online, last accessed 21 July 2004). Leisure is often seen as having no 'use' value, so it provides personal satisfaction and pleasure, rather than things done for use (Hill, 2002: 6). This eventually leads to the most common assumption about leisure; that leisure is defined in opposition to work, or rather waged work (Hill, 2002; see also Urry, 1990). I expand this point in the next chapter but want to suggest here that if leisure is defined in opposition to work, then the phrase 'working tourist' is inherently contradictory, a contradiction I will come back to at regular intervals throughout this thesis (see Abram and Waldren, 1997).

The academy and society more generally have been preoccupied with leisure since at least the mid nineteenth century. It might perhaps be more accurate to say that middle class intellectuals became more preoccupied with aspects of leisure as it ceased to be monopolised by what Veblen (1994) calls the 'leisure class' (see Hill, 2002). Instead, there was a worry that the 'masses' should spend their leisure time wisely so that is was generally 'improving'. The Victorian ideal of leisure and recreation contrasted harshly with some of the new leisure pursuits emerging, such as music halls, sport and popular literature[2]. This worry that the leisure was not being taken seriously, or that it was a 'sensuous and preferable alternative' to work (Hill, 2002: 7) continued into the twentieth century. That leisure was defined by time, money and energy (Hill, 2002: 9) has allowed the more affluent to worry about the leisure activities of those with less time and money.

This generalised view of leisure contains many problems. As I suggested above and will expand on in the next few chapters, this view of leisure does not consider those for who work and leisure are fused. Nor does it explain the many people who, at some point in their lives, have experienced a period of enforced leisure. As Hill (2002: 8) suggests, '[un]employment, as enforced leisure, remains one of the greatest uncharted territories …'. It also ignores the fact that for many people, leisure does not exist. For instance, many of the early discussions on leisure were solely from a (white) male perspective. The term 'lady of leisure' suggests a woman who has free time or is free from the obligation of others (OED Online, last accessed 22 July 2004), yet feminist literature has shown that very few women throughout twentieth century have benefited from the increased leisure time that so many theorists have discussed (for example, see Green at al, 1990).

Leisure has thus often been looked at from the point of view that it is shaped by something else. However, I want to argue that leisure, in a broad sense the time that one can spend as one pleases (OED Online, last accessed 21 July 2004), is not secondary to work but rather it is something from which meaning may be derived. Hill (2002: 2) says that leisure activities are

> activities [that] are inscribed and structured habits of thought and behaviour which
> contribute to our ways of seeing ourselves and others, to a making sense of our

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[2] One needs only to go as far as some of Jane Austen's novels to realise the extent to which popular literature was disparaged, although other modern day fictional authors (such as Quick, 1999) seem to suggest that popular literature (in the form of, for instance 'horrid' novels) were often read by all levels of society, just hidden from public view in those levels of society where it would not 'do'.

social relationships, and to the piecing together of some notion of what we call 'society'.

As such, leisure can be seen as a process through which we can begin to 'know' the world 'in so far as it is possible to know it at all' (Hill, 2002: 2, see also Geertz, 1973).

1.22 Tourism

Tourism, as an area of academic study, is said to be a relatively recent arrival with many writers claiming the field has come into its own only since the 1960s (Pearce, 1993). Tourism and tourists have now permeated even the most remote communities, suggesting '[t]heir presence can no longer be ignored' (Boussavain, 2002: x). Yet the academic community has been slow to see tourism as a serious area of study. Tourists are themselves often embarrassed by each other's presence (Nuttall, 1997: 223) and this may perhaps relate to why academia has long resisted seeing it as a serious area of study. Baranowski and Furlough (2001: 1-2) suggest that

> the enduring stereotypes of tourists as herdlike, superficial gazers, doggedly seeking amusement and guided by mass-produced guidebooks has hampered serious scholarly investigation of tourism.

Crick (1985), reflecting on tourism and anthropological fieldwork, suggests that academic temperaments are not predisposed to seeing leisure as an object of serious study (see also Hughes, 1998: 19). So, whilst going into the field (i.e. travelling away from home) is seen as 'worthwhile', as having depth, and is classed as work, tourism is seen as superficial, inauthentic and simply about play (see Clifford, 1997; Coleman and Crang, 2002; Crick, 1985). Yet as Coleman and Crang (2002: 9) point out, this 'still remains within a game of taste and distinction' and they go so far as to suggest that MacCannell's (1999) idea of the tourist questing for authentic knowledge better fits academics than tourists.

As the last few decades have witnessed the exponential growth of tourism worldwide (Ringer, 1998), so too has academia witnessed the growth of the study of tourism. Tourism is now a massive global industry and it has been suggested that it is perhaps the world's largest service industry (see Cloke, 2000; Ringer, 1998). As such, the study of tourism now considers not only the tourist itself but also the economic, social and cultural impacts of tourism within the local and at a global scale. Tourism, then, is no longer seen as a subject to be avoided. However, and this is simply a comment

worth considering, tourism studies often seem to forget that tourism, for the tourist, is a leisure activity and it is not often that you will find a study that includes ideas about pleasure, fun and excitement within its confines.

1.23 A Definition of Tourism?

Generally, there seems to be no widespread agreement on a definition of tourism (Pearce, 1993, Przeclawski, 1993). The World Tourism Organisation (1993) defines tourism as 'the activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes (cited in Cloke, 2000: 840). Others have defined tourism as 'a special form of play involving travel' (Graburn, 1989: 22); a tourist as 'a temporarily leisured person who voluntarily visits a place away from home for the purpose of experiencing a change' (Smith, 1989: 1); and travel as

> an inclusive term embracing a range of more or less voluntarist practices of leaving "home" to go to some "other" place. The displacement takes place for the purpose of gain – material, spiritual, scientific. It involves obtaining knowledge and/or having an "experience" (exciting, edifying, pleasurable, estranging, broadening) (Clifford, 1997: 66).

The Oxford English Dictionary Online (OED Online, last accessed 21 July, 2004) defines tourism as 'the theory and practice of touring, travelling for pleasure' and defines a tourist as 'one who makes a tour or tours; esp. one who does this for recreation; one who travels for pleasure or culture, visiting a number of places for their objects of interest, scenery, or the like'.

1.3 A Brief History of Tourism

Although tourism tends to be thought of as quite a 'modern' phenomenon (in both senses of the word), it does in fact, have a long history[3]. For instance, the two centuries of peace brought about by Imperial Rome allowed a travel infrastructure to develop as it became possible to travel from Hadrian's Wall to the Euphrates without crossing a hostile border (Urry, 2002: 4). Even then, travel was about searching for

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[3] This history was, of course, limited to the affluent and aristocratic (see Hill, 2002; Rojek and Urry, 1997 and Urry, 2002). Hill (2002: 77) suggests that the holiday was a socially exclusive leisure pursuit for the wealthy, clearly and effectively designating social class.

different distractions as men were 'fickle, tired of soft living, and always seeking after something which eludes them' (from Feifer, 1985 cited in Urry, 2002: 4).

By the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, pilgrimages had become a widespread phenomenon, often including a mixture of religious devotion, culture and pleasure – if the pilgrims could afford it (Urry, 2003). Hindley (1983) suggests that the first package tour was probably organized in the mid fifteenth century, providing passage to the Holy Land, regular, if insufficient, meals and admission to the principle holy places. Certainly, businessmen in Venice in the fifteenth century recognised the value of the pilgrims. They

> recognized the considerable revenue they derived from the pilgrim traffic and set up a special department of state for the welfare of the travellers. This employed twelve full-time guides, who were decently paid and forbidden to accept tips. They conducted sightseeing tours and could be consulted on problems of accommodation and currency (Hindley, 1983: 28-29).

Then, as now, pilgrims were also susceptible to cons and dupes. Those who had not read the appropriate guides or travelled with other followers were often sold phoney relics, misguided about holy places and generally swindled and conned (Hindley, 1983: 32).

For many pilgrims, their journey constituted a *'rites de passage'* (Urry, 2002: 10). This rite of passage has three stages: the pilgrim is firstly separated from their normal place of residence, second is the direct experience of the sacred or supernatural and thirdly is the reintegration of the person into their home community, often at a slightly higher social status (Urry, 2002: 10-11). This is one of the most significant aspects of the study of pilgrimage as other authors have illustrated by drawing out its implications for more modern forms of tourism (see for instance Cohen, 1988; Urry, 2002).

For the purposes of this thesis, however, I will now concentrate on the various forms of tourism that have existed since the early nineteenth century. The main reason for this is that these later (and more 'modern'?) forms of tourism will lead into the discussions of how youth tourism has developed over time.

1.31 The Grand Tour

The beginning of the Grand Tour can be used as a marker for the beginning of tourism[4] and can be dated 'quite precisely from 1763' (Inglis, 2000: 14). Intermittent hostilities in Europe had lasted almost a century by this point and it was finally in 1763 at the Peace of Paris, that treaties were signed to conclude this disruptive period (Hill, 2002; Inglis, 2000). Despite the continued intermittent warfare between Britain and France and 'assorted revolutions on either side of the Atlantic' (Inglis, 2000: 14), the first modern holiday form developed - in the form of the Grand Tour (Hill, 2002: 77) (Hill, 2002: 77). At this point, tourism, or holidaymaking[5] was restricted to the affluent and privileged – Veblen's (1994) leisure class.

The Grand Tour was encouraged by the Tudor monarchs and their successors who promoted a more secular view of travel and the world (Aitchison et al, 2000: 31). According to Hibbert (1987), the original aim of the Grand Tour was to 'prepare young gentlemen for diplomatic careers' and so a degree of familiarity with European people and sites gained whilst undertaking such a tour was a prerequisite (see also Craik, 1997; Harkin, 1995). It became seen as a way to round off one's classical education (Hill, 2002) and so increase one's sophistication, worldliness and social capital (Aitchison et al, 2000: 32; Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995: 820). The Grand Tour was a 'life-enhancing experience for wealthy and largely aristocratic men and women'[6] (Hill, 2002: 77) and allowed them to see first hand the architecture and artistic treasures of, for instance, Italy, and specifically Florence and Rome[7].

Craik (1997) suggests that two stages of the Grand Tour have been identified. The first is classed as 'the age of reading and speaking' (Craik, 1997: 119) where the tourists engaged with guides, locals, and each other. The second and later stage was 'the age of observation' in which people learned by 'visually taking in the vistas and splendour of continental culture' (Craik, 1997: 119, see also Adler, 1985). This coincides with the rise of the Romantic Movement and its emphasis on nature (Hill, 2002). Thus, the Grand Tour not only provided 'nourishment of the intellect' (Hill,

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[4] The word 'tourism' is said to have come from the Grand Tours (Inglis, 2000: 14).
[5] The Oxford English Dictionary Online (OED Online, last accessed 14 September, 2004) suggested the origins of the word tourism are not found until the early nineteenth century, whilst the word holiday – defined as taking time away from work, a vacation – originates in the early fifteenth century.
[6] Aitchison et al (2000) suggest that the Grand Tour was dominated by young men as travel was seen as compromising to young women's reputations (see Richter, 1995: 73). There are well known and well-documented exceptions to this (see for instance Birkett, 2004; Dolan, 2002 and Robinson, 1994).
[7] Aitchison et al (2000: 32) note that although some of those undertaking a Grand Tour might spend a month or so exploring their own country, this generally lacked the status, excitement and stimulation of foreign travel.

2002: 78) but also added 'Nature's invigoration of the soul' (ibid: 78). The motivations for embarking on a Grand Tour grew more diverse through the early nineteenth century. Perhaps more importantly though, these 'lofty' motivations - the quest for knowledge, culture and cross-cultural intermingling – were often not fully realised and as Craik (1997: 119) suggests, 'contemporary accounts record less serious motivations and indecorous behaviour on the part of some of these travellers'.

Inglis (2000: 16) says of Grand Tour motivations

> Their reasons for going where they went were scholarly and historical: they went to Italy to see classical antiquity. Or they were aesthetic: they went to Rome and Florence to admire the great buildings and paintings. Or they were cultivatedly acquisitive: the collectors bought for their collections. Or they were healthful: … they took the horrible-tasting waters for the sake of their skin or their digestion and because Germany was more daring than Scarborough. Or they went for sex: they went, like Boswell so ardently did, to indulge what was, in his case, an unslakeable sexual appetite and they did so because, well, on the Grand Tour as a young blade, anything goes. It was hard to damage a reputation in foreign parts.

Inglis' (2000: 20-21) brief account of James Boswell's Grand Tour illustrates how the grand motivations imagined by his father, Lord Auchinleck, were often quite different in reality.

> But he had come not only with the paternal admonition to get educated but also with the licence of the gentlemanly tourist and he was going to enjoy himself. He was going to eat too much, drink too much, and take as many women to bed as he could. … and after zealous gaming and bouts of remorse, he would view the educative sights of antiquity, which would restore a little sacred incense to his enthusiastically profane world (Inglis, 2000: 20-21).

So, in the end, for some, the Grand Tour became something more than a type of finishing school. It became 'an education of the feelings' (Inglis, 2000: 23) where there was a 'jumble for desire - desire for the good, the true and the beautiful inextricably mixed with the desire for the forbidden fruits of freedom, ecstasy, excess,' (ibid: 23).

1.32 The Rise of Mass Tourism

> mass tourism has become widespread within much of Europe, north America and increasingly within most other parts of the world. To be a tourist is one of the characteristics of the 'modern' experience. Not to 'go away' is like not possessing a car or a nice house. It has become a marker of status in modern societies and is also thought to be necessary for good health (Urry, 2002: 3-4)

Mass tourism is a nineteenth century invention (see Figure 1.1). This substantial increase can be linked to the advent of the railways (see Hill, 2002; Hindley, 1983; Inglis, 2000), although by the early nineteenth century, holiday pay legislation and changes to the working week (Hill, 2002) also encouraged massive growth in tourism.

Thomas Cook, with his first chartered train service from Leicester to Loughborough in July 1841, is often seen as the 'premier innovator of the age of mass tourism' (Inglis, 2000: 47)[8]. Thomas Cook, born in 1808, was a mission worker for the Baptist church and was a vehement campaigner on behalf of the Temperance Society (Inglis, 2000; see also Hindley, 1983). His first short journey took 570 people to a grand temperance gala in Loughborough (which was a dry town), and included a tea of ham and loaves (Hindley, 1983: 211). Although this first trip was not for profit, Cook soon began running trips to other destinations – to New Brighton in 1845 and to Glasgow in 1846 (Inglis, 2000: 47)[9]. To these he added London when in 1851 he

> laid on a grand series of excursions to the Great Exhibition … No fewer than 165,000 clients took advantage of the cheap fares he offered and the success of packaging touring was clear (Hindley, 1983: 212).

The Paris Exhibition in 1855 gave Cook the opportunity to expand on to the continent[10]; this first European tour going to Paris via Brussels, Cologne, Heidelberg, Baden-Baden and Strasbourg (see Hindley, 1983; Inglis, 2002 and Thomas Cook website, last accessed 16 Sept, 2004). Cook's tours continued to grow; in 1869 the first Thomas Cook Nile cruise was organised and later that same year, another was

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[8] Although Thomas Cook is seen as the founder of mass tourism, various organisations had already organised the odd group excursion before 1841. For example, the Leicester and Nottingham Mechanic's Institute ran exchange excursions in July of 1841 and it was from the media reporting of these excursions that Thomas Cook began to plan his first excursion (Hindley, 1983: 211).
[9] This first trip to Glasgow also advertised a special stop at Gretna Green, should any of his passengers desire the services of one of the two blacksmith's (Hindley, 1983: 212)!
[10] Cook's continental tours were very popular with women, to the point that women often outnumbered men on these tours. These tours were one of the first opportunities for single women to travel unchaperoned (Urry, 2002: 24).

organized to the opening of the Suez Canal (Thomas Cook website, last accessed 16 Sept, 2004). By 1919, Thomas Cook was a family business and they were the first to sell airline tickets, they introduced the hotel voucher and the Thomas Cook credit note (a forerunner to traveller's cheques) (Thomas Cook website, last accessed 16 Sept, 2004).

Besides continually promoting the temperance movement through his business, Cook also promoted the desirability of mass tourism, saying

it is too late in this day of progress to talk such exclusive nonsense … railways and steamboats are the results of the common light of science, and are for the people … The best of men, and the noblest of minds, rejoice to see the people follow in their foretrod routes of pleasure (quoted in Feifer, 1985: 168-169).

There were many others who also supported this type of tourism. Hindley (1983: 213) quotes Charles Dickens as a proponent of the holiday

Now surely, this is a good kind of thing, that a hardworking man can, in his fortnight's holiday, betake himself to some place as far away from his ordinary abode as lies with the reach of his purse (Dickens, 1860s cited in Hindley, 1983: 213).

Chronology of Events

1841   Thomas Cook's excursion for temperance reformers from Leicester to Loughborough.
1851   The Great Exhibition … attracted millions of visitors, a large proportion on day excursions …
...
1889   Savoy Hotel, London, opened.
1894   National Trust founded.
1911   Automobile Association published its first hotel guide.
...
1919   Daily air service London-Paris introduced.
...
1930   Founding of the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) [in the UK], which had 80,000 members by the late 1930s …
1937   … Butlin's holiday camp opened at Skegness.
1938   Holidays With Pay Act introduced to extend paid holidays to workers not already covered by collective bargaining agreements.
...
1949   Labour government's Countryside Act designated National Parks
1950   First 'package' holiday organised by Horizon to Corsica.
...
1958   Introduction of economy-class airfares.
1968   Countryside Commission established
1969   Development of Tourism Act set up the British Tourist Authority (BTA) and the English, Scottish and Welsh Tourist Boards. ...

Figure 1.1 Chronology of Tourism Events (from Hill, 2002: 92).

Furthermore, by the 1870s, with the help of Cook's tours and excursions, travel had been opened up to the masses. Not only were the middle classes now travelling to Europe, following the routes of the Grand Tours of earlier decades and centuries, but also the lower classes were making the most of railway excursions to take holidays at seaside resorts, such as Blackpool. Thus, status was now drawn between the different classes of the traveller rather than between who could or could not afford to travel (Urry, 1990: 16).

1.33 The History of Youth Travel

In many ways, the Grand Tours of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, combined with the rise of mass tourism through the second half of the nineteenth and into the twentieth century go some way to explaining the rise of a specific type of tourism; that aimed at the youth or young adult market. However, there are also many other aspects that need to be taken into consideration and this section will look more closely at a few of these.

Backpacking and gap year travel today is still, for most young people, about exploring other places, peoples and cultures. Although bearing little relation to the 'rather more serious business of exploration that ushered in the period of European colonialism' (O'Reilly, 2004a: 1) these ideals are stereotypes that continue to dominate this type of travel and even those unaware of the history of the Grand Tour make use of the notions of a trip around the world being an educational experience (of some sort).

Loker-Murphy and Pearce's (1995) diagram of the origins of backpacker travel (see Figure 1.2) examines the basis of backpacker travel and they provide a valid explanation of how the modern form of this type of travel may have developed over the last few centuries. By providing a pictorial view of how this type of travel has developed, it is possible to view the modern backpacker as having developed not only from the more middle and upper class traditions of travel but also through various types of working class travel experiences. The literature I have read does not dispute any of their comments, nor does it call into question the diagram in Figure 1.2; yet I have a few reservations about their overall interpretation. As with any representation this somehow seems too staid in its interpretation. For instance, it does not take into account the rise of mass tourism and the effects this would have on the cost of travel, the ease of travel and to some extent at least, the preliminary destinations of many of the travellers. Nor does it consider the role of work in these young people's travels and as this is one of the main tenets of this thesis, I believe that it should be included

Key Motives

Educational/self-development | Employment/Training Subsidiary, Leisure | Temp escape from urban life/ health & fitness

17th Century

The Grand Tour (travel as education)

18th Century

Craft Guilds

↓

Tramping for work

19th Century

Youth Movement/ Wandervogel
↓
Youth Hostel Association
↓
YHA in Australia

Tramping for touristic purposes

1910

1930s

Hitchhiking – Student and Middle Class Youth

Defining feature
Activity/Transport Mode

1950s

Drifters and Wanderers

Defining feature
Low social/spatial organisation

1960s

Long-term budget travellers

Defining feature
Money/Extended time

1970s

1980s

Modern Youth Tourism ←→ Contemporary Backpackers

Defining features
Age/Increasing degree of independence from family

Defining features
Preference for budget accommodation
Emphasis on meeting other people
Independently organised/flexible travel schedule
Longer than brief holidays
Emphasis on informal/participatory recreation activities

1990s

Figure 1.2 The Backpacker Phenomenon: An Evolutionary Framework (from Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995: 821).

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to some degree in any discussions about young budget travellers. Thus, I think this diagram is a useful starting point and I will discuss in further detail a few points from it. However, I would like to take this diagram as a starting point only. Also, I believe that the second half of the twentieth century has been the most influential in defining youth or young adult travel and so it is this period that I will concentrate on in this brief historical overview.

Adler (1985) suggests that 'tramping' could be a forerunner to the youth travel that developed in the second half of the twentieth century. This labour-related travel consisted mainly of working class men following specified circuits in search of work (see Adler, 1985; Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995). This type of travel originated as young working class men developed and learnt a trade, travelling often being an important part of their learning curve. It was not limited only to tradesmen as soldiers were also often found on and within some of these circuits. However, this type of travel seemed to peak in the nineteenth century (see Adler, 1985; Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995; O'Reilly, 2004a) although it was still in existence in the decade after World War I. Its demise seemed to come about at the same time that its focus shifted from employment based travel to something 'more like pure tourism' (O'Reilly, 2004a: 1; see also Adler, 1985). This tramping tradition is, I think, a more important historical thread to some of the forms of youth travel that have developed in the last decade or so, partly as volunteering and working whilst on a year out have become a more consistent part of youth travel and partly as backpacking has now come to include a wider range of young people (i.e. not only the Western upper middle classes) as travel has become more affordable and acceptable.

Youth movements such as the YMCA (founded in the UK in 1844), the YWCA (founded in 1855) and the Wandervogel in Germany are also important contributors to the history of youth travel. They developed as a reaction to the growing harshness of the urban environments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and encouraged young people to discover and spend more time in the countryside (Desforges, 1997b; Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995: 822). This led to the formation of the Youth Hostel Association in Germany in 1910 which today has over sixty member countries, ten associate member countries and over 5,300 hostels (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995: 822-823). The development of youth hostels is also important as, for instance, one of the factors in defining whom a backpacker is, is that they spend at least one night of their trip in a youth hostel of some description. Perhaps without hostels, then, we would not have backpackers?

Youth travel has, for much of its history, been dominated by young men. Whether on the Grand Tour or tramping, they were the ones who had the opportunity to undertake travel for sightseeing, adventure and/or work. Whereas, young women were rarely lone travellers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries[11], during the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the rise of mass tourism and in particular Thomas Cook's package tours began to allow young, single women to travel unchaperoned around Europe (Urry, 1990: 24). The increasing accessibility of the opportunity to travel therefore, not only began to even out the balance of who travelled in terms of gender, but also, I have suggested above, opened up travel to a much broader (class) audience.

Eric Cohen's (1972, 1973, 1979) work of the 1960's and 1970's traces 'perhaps a more direct precursor of at least some of today's backpacker travel' (O'Reilly, 2004a: 1). His work on the 'drifter', often characterised as 'hippie' travel in places such as India, can still be seen as a stereotype of the backpacker that some young people aim to be. For Cohen (1973: 89), the drifter was defined as the 'most individualistic and least institutionalised type' of tourist. He saw the drifter as 'the type of [international] tourist [who] ventures furthest away from the beaten track …' (ibid: 89). The drifter shunned touristic establishments in favour of local culture and the 1960's saw a revival in the places and routes visited in the early days of travel, a type of "New" grand tour (Alderson, 1971 cited in Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995: 820). By the 1970's this type of travel was very much associated with the hippie counter-culture and had gained a somewhat derogatory reputation with writers such as Cohen (1973) and Vogt (1976) associating it with an explicitly drug counter culture.[12]

Drifter travel continued throughout the 1970s but is generally seen to have declined with the end of the hippie era. The 1980's saw the renewal of Cold War hostilities, making many of the more traditional overland routes through Asia too dangerous for Western travellers and this, coupled with economic recession and high unemployment rates in many western countries limited this type of youth travel through much of the 1980s (see O'Reilly, 2004a: 1). Nonetheless, the late 1980s saw the growth of long-term international youth travel once again expand with regions such as Southeast Asia, and especially Thailand, becoming popular (O'Reilly, 2004a). Riley (1988) suggests that by this time, long-term international youth travel had lost the hedonistic,

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[11] Although women may have accompanied men when travelling as missionaries, in government liaison roles and as the wives/assistants on expeditions, this was not their usual role. For exceptions to this, see Dolan (2002) and Robinson (1994).
[12] Both Cohen (1973) and Vogt (1976) intimate that this association with a drug culture may have helped to popularised terms such as 'going on a trip' – as in to go travelling.

anarchistic and drug-related characterisations associated with Cohen's (1973) drifters and says that they could now be characterised as a lone traveller who is 'educated, European, middle-class, single, obsessively concerned with budgeting his/her money, and at a juncture in life' (ibid, 1988: 313).

1.4 What is a Backpacker?

A recent review of the book, '*The Global Nomad*' edited by Greg Richards and Julie Wilson (2004) says,

> the ability of the book to take backpacker research forward is undermined by the
> lack of a clear definition of what a 'backpacker' actually is (Carr, 2006).

Herein lies one of the current dilemmas for researchers who consider the backpacker an important component of the contemporary tourism industry. This section aims to 'unpack' the backpacker. The discussion that follows is not, however, exhaustive, nor does it attempt to 'reveal' a definitive definition of what a backpacker is. Instead, it will aim to highlight the many arguments, debates, thoughts and views on this particular tourism segment, outline some of other terms used to describe these young people and begin to paint a picture of who this group of tourists are and how they might be changing.

1.41 Backpacking: a recent phenomenon?

Section 1.33 outlines the long history of youth travel, however the phrase 'backpacker' and in particular, the study of this group of tourists is a fairly recent phenomenon[13]. A bibliography compiled by members of the Association of Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) Backpacker Research Group (BRG) found that 'of 76 dated references relating to backpacker and youth travel, only 11 were published before 1990' (Richards and Wilson, 2004: 6) and it is in this year - 1990 - that the term 'backpacker' is first found in academic literature (see Pearce, 1990)[14].

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[13] Generally, tourism research has lagged behind the growth of the tourism industry (see also Section 1.22 above). Research on backpacking in particular has been slow to pick up this growing phenomenon and Cohen (2003: 95/2004: 43) suggests that this is perhaps due to the lack of support for this type of travel within the tourism industry, although Australia has proven to be the exception when in 1995 the federal government launched a 'National Backpacker Tourism Development Strategy' (see Jarvis and Peel, 2005).
[14] I t is also interesting to note, that in a UK context, Blackburn et al (2005: 33) found that between August 1998 and August 2002 *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Independent* and *Guardian* had a total of 1365 references to gap years.'

Pamela Riley (1988) used the term 'international long-term budget travellers', which as O'Reilly (2006) suggests, seems to be a more accurate but somewhat awkward description. As such, and '[i]n spite of its limitations, it [backpacker] is useful shorthand for long-term international low-budget travellers' (O'Reilly, 2006: 999). The term 'backpacker' is, after all, 'well-known and accepted by the tourism industry, travellers and the community' (Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995: 819).

The backpacker is a stereotype[15]. It is a mental construct that is maintained over time by '[i]mpressions that are similar, or that occur together, or that are spoken together' (see Allport, 1954 cited in Wilson et al, 2004a: 14). Although the lone independent drifter of the 1970s is no longer characteristic of the majority of backpackers, it remains a popular ideal even as the idea of backpacker travel has filtered out to be picked up by people with different backgrounds, experiences and expectations (O'Reilly, 2004b). Stereotypes, over time, become widely shared generalisations about members of a social group, and backpackers can be considered as an identifiable social group (see Fiske and Taylor, 1991, Wilson et al, 2004a).

It is worth noting, however, that there are a number of other phrases in use that can also relate to this particular type of travel. For instance, in the UK, a year out or more recently, the 'gap year' has become a well-known and relevant phrase in both the media and academia (for academic examples see Jones, 2004b; Mackay, 2005; Simpson, 2005). In New Zealand, one tends to go on the Big OE – the overseas experience (see Myers and Inkson, 2003; Wilson et al, 2003, 2004a and b). Uriely and Reichel (2000, see also Uriely, 2001) use the term 'working tourist' whilst, if we interpret Richards and Wilson (2003: 16) correctly, most 'backpackers' would actually define themselves as travellers.

1.42 The Backpacker

> Backpacking is … a subculture of generally youthful travellers exploring the planet
> on a limited budget. They refer to themselves as backpackers because they can
> be roughly defined as travellers that travel with a rucksack (a large backpack)
> instead of a suitcase. … United in having a slim wallet as well as a passion for the
> exotic, they seek out low-cost options such as standby flights (…), youth hostels,
> free hospitality services and buying food at supermarkets abroad instead of going
> to restaurants. They often collect in beautiful places with low costs of living …

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[15] The website, www.Bootsnall.com, has a section entitled, 'Travellers we've all met' which I read as a humorous look at some backpacker stereotypes and have included in Appendix 1.

They are generally very social, and a highlight for many backpackers is meeting others on the road. They are quick to share advice on great sites, cheap accommodations and e-mail addresses. Many strive to meet locals wherever they visit but find the loose network of backpackers makes them feel at home instantly in a foreign country (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Backpacker, last accessed 21 July 2004).

The image of the backpacker has long been popularised in cinematic and literary worlds (see Richards and Wilson, 2004b). Alex Garland's (1996) novel, '*The Beach*', the film version starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Jack Kerouac's (1957) '*On the Road*', to name but a few, have all influenced how the backpacker is perceived and defined by those 'on the road', by other tourists and by the rest of society. Other literary works such as those by Michael Palin (1999, 2004), Bill Bryson (1996, 2001) and Alain de Botton (2002) have also influenced backpacker culture as those who read them or see the various television series also perhaps image exploring these places and peoples.

Definitions of what a backpacker is, or who they are, are harder to come by. The above definition from Wikipedia came after searching through various on-line dictionaries and encyclopaedia. Britannica Encyclopaedia Online defined backpacking as the '[s]port of hiking while carrying clothing, food, and camping equipment in a pack on the back'. Even Wikipedia said that backpacking had two forms, the first 'a complete combination of hiking and camping… A backpacker camps in one place, then packs all of his or her gear into a backpack and hikes off to a different location'; it was only in the second form (above) that the popular youth traveller emerged.

Loker-Murphy and Pearce (1995: 830-831) offer one of the earliest academic definitions when they say,

> Backpackers are travellers who exhibit a preference for budget accommodation; an emphasis on meeting other people (locals and travellers); an independently organized and flexible travel schedule; longer rather than brief holidays; and an emphasis on informal and participatory recreational activities[16].

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[16] It is interesting to note the similarity of Mintel's (2004) definition of a backpacker to Loker-Murphy and Pearce's (1995). Mintel (2004) say,

> Backpackers are defined as travellers who prefer budget accommodation, enjoy meeting other travellers, have an organized and flexible schedule, experience long holidays, and emphasis informal participatory activities.

Murphy (2001: 50-51) has expanded this definition slightly by adding that backpackers are 'young and budget-minded tourists'. Sørensen (2003: 851) says,

> Both popularly and in the research literature, backpackers are most often characterized as self-organized pleasure tourists on a prolonged multiple-destination journey with a flexible itinerary, extended beyond that which is usually possible to fit into a cyclical holiday pattern.

The Bureau of Tourism Research in Australia define backpackers as 'international visitors who spent at least one night in hostel type accommodation' (BTR, 1997 cited in Kinnaird, 1999: 40) while Ateljevic and Doorne (2004: 60) say that the term 'backpacker', 'has over the last decade become synonymous with a travelstyle that emphasises freedom and mobility'.

These definitions begin to illustrate some of the main characteristics of a backpacker although trying to find numbers of backpacker tourists remains almost impossible[17]. In many ways, Cohen's (1972, 1973) original non-institutionalised tourists can still be seen as the most identifiable categories. However, as the independent travel sector continues to grow, with the help of low-cost airlines, competitive pricing and easier access (through on-line booking for instance) and with the commercialisation of many traditional backpacker destinations (for example, Thailand, see Braddock, 2005; Rojek, 1998), so the ability to distinguish between backpackers and other tourists becomes more difficult. The lines between the backpacker and ordinary tourist become fuzzy (see O'Reilly, 2004c).

It is worth noting that backpackers, while still craving Cohen (1973) and Vogt's (1976) drifter/wanderer ideals and the 'off the beaten track' experiences associated with these, now tend to travel on clearly identifiable circuits. Thailand and Indonesia in Asia, Israel, India, Mexico and Peru are all popular destinations, as are Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the USA, Eastern Europe and the UK. However, recent media coverage (see Jackson, 2005) suggests that perhaps for some, the new 'off the beaten track' places are the countries and areas that government organisations (such as the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office) advise us to avoid.

And on a final note, generalising such a large a group of tourists is fraught with tensions. The above does not take into account that backpackers from different

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[17] Most countries do not record information specifically about backpacker tourism, the one exception to this is Australia (see O'Reilly, 2004c).

countries may act in different ways. For instance, backpackers from Israel and Japan tend to be more likely to restrict their interactions to co-nationals (see Cohen, 2004). There are differences between young(er) backpackers and older backpackers, and here we can even be talking about the differences between the 18-24 group and the 25-35 group, and not just between the 18-30 group and the 40+ group. For instance, the length of time spent in any one place seems to vary (see Cohen, 2004) and also how they travel can vary; a recent newspaper article has called these "older" travellers 'flashpackers' because they spend more per trip and occasionally opt for more comforts as well as packing 'decent clothes, credit cards and high-tech gadgets' (Sawers, 2005; see also Cochrane, 2005; Pursall, 2005). Cohen (2003: 99) also suggests that there are sub-cultures within the sub-culture of backpacking. He suggests musical fashions as one differentiation and also wonders about the 'possibility of sub-cultural differences between the middle-class backpackers and that of the growing number of backpackers of working class origin'.

1.43 The Gap Year

The term 'gap year' tends to be associated with UK based young budget travellers. These young budget travellers also tend to be seen as students who are either taking time out between finishing higher education and beginning university education or are taking time out after finishing university education. In short, a gap year,

> corresponds to a specific time out of formal education, training or employment, or
> a combination of these for people under the age of 25 years (Jones, 2004b: 25).

Although the phrase 'gap year' suggests a clear twelve month period, often corresponding to the time between finishing school and beginning university, gap year travellers can be engaged in activities for any period of time, though again, Jones (2004b: 24) defines it as any period between three and twenty-four months.

For many young people, the gap year is still a chance to opt for the 'conventional beach-dominated backpacker itinerary' (Bentham, 2005). However, helped by the dramatic growth of commercial and charitable organisations willing to organise and facilitate support programmes abroad, an ever increasing number of young people are choosing altruistic 'holidays'[18] (see Bentham, 2005; Prest, 2005 for related media

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[18] It must be remembered that a volunteering gap year is not a cheap undertaking and can cost anywhere from £500 to over £4000 depending upon where the participant wants to go, what they want to do there and what company they use to help them achieve this.

stories; see Simpson, 2005 for an academic account of volunteer gap years). Recent events, such as the devastating tsunami in Asia in December 2004 and the Live8 Concerts in July 2005 have further encouraged young people to consider volunteering in their gap year, usually in less-developed parts of the world.

1.43a Who takes a gap year?

In trying to define whom this group of young budget travellers are, it is worth noting the difficulty in quantifying how many young people take a gap year every year. For instance, Mintel (2003) suggest that only about 90,000 students will take a gap year in 2005. However, the recent report published for the Department of Education and Skills (Jones, 2004b: 46) suggests total annual participation of between 60,000 and 250,000. The report goes on to propose that a 'reasonable estimate of participation for all types of gap year activities is in a range from 200,000 to 250,000 young people' (Jones, 2004b: 46, see also Mackay, 2005).

The reason for such discrepancy in numbers is in part due to a lack of a comprehensive national data source for this type of data. Jones' (2004b: 45) report, for example, identified five potential data sets that provided data on participation levels. These were UCAS data, ONS Labour Force Survey, Organisation participation figures, University data and existing research surveys. Secondly, the data providers do not necessarily agree; Jones (2004b: 45) found that whilst university admission tutors estimated about 60,000 to 80,000 young people were currently engaged in gap year activities, interviews with providers suggested this figure was much higher, closer to 250,000. And thirdly, discrepancies within data sources may distort figures. For instance, UCAS data only records students who have applied and deferred. Therefore, in using UCAS data to estimate gap year participation levels, anyone who applies during their gap year is not recorded and therefore excluded in their estimates.

Mintel (2003) suggest that one in five students consider taking a gap year and that it is now almost impossible to profile a typical student that would take a year out. Part of the reason for this, they suggest, is due to the increased media attention surrounding famous 'gappers' such as Princes William and Harry (see Curtis, 2004; Kay, 2004 and Prigg, 2003 for examples of this media attention, also see Appendix 2). So, is it possible to say who takes a gap year? In part, no; however, a few factors can be identified.

To begin with, some factors will influence who has access to information about gap years. For instance, within schools and universities, the gap year has become a much more widely supported phenomenon[19], through both institutional careers services and through long-standing relationships between gap year organisations and educational institutions. Family backgrounds, peer relationships, How-to-guides (see for example Student Survival Guides, 2002; Vandome, 2005) and increased internet access can all also play a role in who has the information available to them and so will take a gap year.

Although determining how many young people participate in gap year programmes of some description remains difficult, Jones' (2004b: 49-50) report has identified a number of characteristics of gap year participants. As a social group, gap year takers tend to be

- Predominantly white with few ethnic minority participants[20]
- Female: women out-number men
- From relatively affluent 'middle-class' backgrounds
- Over-representative of private and grammar school backgrounds[21]
- Under-representative of disabilities

1.43b When do they take a gap year?

Instead of considering who takes a gap year, perhaps it is worth considering when the gap year occurs. In the UK, a gap year often consists of time away from education. This means there are a number of times in a young person's life when they may decide to undertake a gap year, including between school and some form of higher education or training, between higher education and university, between university and post graduate education and after university and before starting a career (see Figure 1.3 below). Gap years can also form part of the university experience if a course involves vocational or course-related activities outside the university context. A final and growing group of gap year takers (see for instance Hindle et al, 2005; Sawers, 2005) are taking some form of career break, whether in the form of a

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[19] Jones (2004: 17) says that in the 1980s taking a year out was relatively rare whereas the 1990s saw a substantial increase in popularity.
[20] Manzoor (2004) talks about why some ethnic minorities may not undertake gap years (see this article in Appendix 2).
[21] This varies from the Mintel (2003) report which suggests that there is near parity between the number of students from the independent sector and from state schools who take gap years.

sabbatical, or with 'permission' from their employer or because of redundancy, lack of promotion opportunities or some other 'crisis' in their current career.

What all these characteristics do is begin to provide a picture of who gap year participants might be. Further analysis of data is required to provide better estimates of the numbers of annual participants leaving the UK, but again, do we need to differentiate between gap year participants and backpackers, or perhaps even between the different types of gap year participants? The altruistic and volunteering elements of the gap year do differ from some of the (current) stereotypical images of a backpacker, yet many of the other characteristics outlined above and including the age range – generally under 25 (although Jones, 2004b: 25 acknowledges that there is growing evidence that people between the ages of 25 and 65 are now taking gap years) point towards the gap year becoming a particularly British phrase for what, in other parts of the world, is termed a backpacker.

Training Route

| Structured Training FE MA | Gap | Employment | Gap |

Higher Education Route

| School | Gap | | 6th Form/ College | | Gap | Year 1 | Gap | Year 2 | Gap | Year 3 | Gap | | Post Grad | Gap | Post Grad | Gap | Employment | Gap |

Employment Route

| Employment | Gap | Employment | Gap | Employment | Gap |
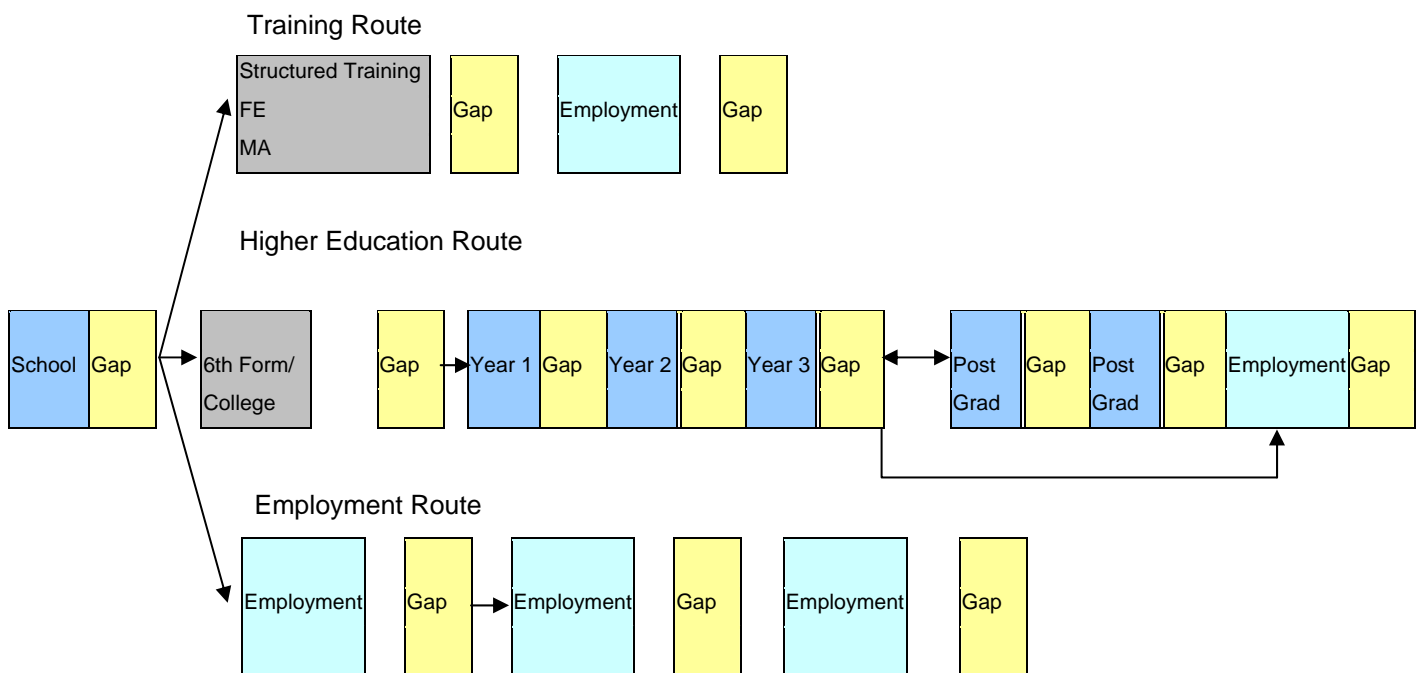
Figure 1.3 Diagram of Career Path Breaks in relation to different categories of Gap Year (taken from Jones, 2004b: 27).

1.44 The Kiwi Overseas Experience (OE)

> OE typically stretches across years of experience rather than summer vacations
> and involves long periods of improvised employment as well as short episodes of
> holiday fun (Myer and Inkson, 2003: 3)

Little is known about the specifically Kiwi experience of OE; Myers and Inkson (2003) suggest that this is surprising given the potential economic significance to not only the New Zealand economy but also to the economies of countries, such as the UK, where these OEer[22]'s spend considerable time. The popular stereotype of the OE tends to involve a period of time spent travelling and working overseas but the variety and complexity of the OE experience then makes it hard to consign those on OE to a specific, or single, tourist category (see Wilson et al, 2004a). Myers and Inkson (2003: 4) say of the interviews they conducted with people who had undertaken an OE, that the 'data' they collected was highly individualistic, complex and messy.

Young New Zealanders not only expect to go on their OE, there is a belief that it is their right to do so (Wilson et al, 2004a: 7). The OE has achieved almost iconic status in New Zealand (Wilson et al, 2004a); in fact Myers and Inkson (2003: 9) go so far as to say,

> It is indeed a national icon, a jewel embedded in our folklore and in the messages
> our young people learn. Long may we promote it.

Perhaps, most importantly, the OE illustrates some significant challenges to more general typologies of tourism as well as to backpacker stereotypes. For instance, those on OE are often away from home for much longer than fits most traditional definitions[23]; with trips varying in length from two years to twenty. OEer's are therefore away from 'home' for much longer than young people from the UK who take a 'year out' – literally. Secondly, for most OEer's, a considerable portion of the time away is spent working. This again challenges traditional notions of tourism as tourism is often defined in opposition to work (see Urry, 1990). And finally, for many OE participants, the experience of being away involves significant times of travel. Thus, within the OE

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[22] It is interesting to note how the phrase OE has gained a degree of conceptual integrity (Pawley, 1986 cited in Wilson et al, 2004a: 7) and been incorporated in New Zealander's language, to the point where it is now used as a noun; so one does an OE and is an OEer (see Wilson et al, 2004a: 7).

[23] For example, as I state in Section 1.23, the World Tourism Organisation's definition says that tourism is 'the activities of people travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business or other purposes (cited in Cloke 2000: 840).

they engage in a myriad of different tourist experiences (see Wilson et al, 2004a: 6), from city breaks, to package holidays to independently organised excursions.

1.45 The 'Big Trip'

The 'big trip' is the name that has begun to be used for an emerging group of young backpackers who are specifically from Israel (see Maoz, 2005, 2006). This backpacker type of tourism has begun to become normative and institutionalised in Israel and normally occurs after young people have finished their National Service. Maoz (2005) suggests that for these young people, many are trying to escape their immediate past and the often frustrating, despair-causing and horrific experiences that came with their time in the army.

These young people tend to travel in groups of up to 20 or 30 backpackers and tend to settle in Israeli enclaves where they form a tight community. They are often seen by other backpackers as more aggressive than western backpackers and tend to extend their Israeli life whilst abroad, so Maoz (2005) found that in India

> Most of the food in their enclaves is what the backpackers consider Israeli, the menus are written partly in Hebrew, … The backpackers read Hebrew books, listen to Israeli music, surf the internet in Hebrew, speak only Hebrew,

Israel has seen an emerging literature on backpacker travel (see for instance Noy and Cohen, 2004; Uriely et al, 2002) over the last few years and this body of work has challenged the somewhat Anglo-centric notions of backpacker travel (see also Muzaini, 2006 as an example of non-western backpacking experiences).

1.46 The Working Tourist

Work and tourism have generally been viewed as two separate and even contradictory fields of study. This perspective has even been embedded within definitions of tourism. Graburn (1989: 22, see also Uriely, 2001) for instance, suggests that tourism is a special form of play involving travel and that 'our conception of tourism is that it is *not work*' and Urry (1990: 2) says that tourism 'is a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organised work'. Thus there is an inherent contradiction, a semantic confusion, in the phrases 'working tourist' and 'working holiday-maker' (see Abram and Waldren, 1997).

Uriely (2001) does show that Pape (1965) first highlighted the interaction between work and tourism with his use of the term 'touristry'. 'Touristry', Pape said, involved young professionals who engaged in 'a form of journeying that depends upon occupation, but only in a secondary sense in that it serves the more primary goal, the travel itself' (Pape, 1965 cited in Uriely, 2001: 2). Cohen (1974), on the other hand, saw these professionals more as combining travel-for-work rather than work-for-travel. Both these interpretations assume that those travelling are professionals. Today's working tourists or working holidaymakers are, like many of the young people in the categories already explored, in flux. They may not yet have started upon a career or they may be taking a career break. They may therefore be combining travel-with-work rather than work-with-travel. Recent changes to working holiday visa regulations have also changed the context in which many young people work. For instance, in the UK, it used to be that working holiday makers were not allowed to undertake work related to their chosen professions in order to allow them to fully appreciate the culture of the UK. However, in the last eighteen months, the rules have been relaxed to allow young people to undertake their chosen careers whilst here on working visas. This now allows them the option of working-with-travelling as they can continue to develop their career paths whilst away from home.

Types of travellers				
	Working tourists		Travelling workers	
Dimensions of comparison	Working-holiday makers	Non-institutionalised working tourists	Migrant tourism workers	Travelling professional workers
Work and touristic motivations	Work is grasped as a recreational activity that is part of the tourist experience	Work in order to finance a prolonged travel	Travel in order to 'make a living' and 'have fun' at the same time	Travel in order to exercise work Engage in tourist-related activities as a by-product of the excursion
Work characteristics	Unskilled but usually recreational manual labour. Extraordinary work Unpaid work	Unskilled and usually unpleasant manual labour Occasional work Low-paid and non-prestigious work	Skilled or semi-skilled work in the tourism economy Repetitive seasonal employment Unsecured and low-paid employment	Professional, official role, or business-related work Repetitive, career-related work Prestigious and well-paid work
Demographic profile	Middle-class young adults	Middle-class young adults	Lower middle-class, or working class single and unattached adults Periodically unemployed in their home societies	Middle, or upper-middle class adults

Figure 1.4 Types of 'travelling workers' and 'working tourists' (from Uriely, 2001: 5)

Uriely and Reichel (2000: 268) first coined the phrase 'working tourist', defining it as 'tourists who engage in situations that combine work with tourism' in order to allow the inclusion of all types of traveller who engaged in situations that combined work with tourist-related activities. Following on from this, Uriely (2001) has defined four main types of working tourists. These are the travelling professional workers, the migrant tourism workers, the non-institutionalised working tourists and the working-holiday tourists (see Figure 1.4). Differentiating between working tourists and travelling workers may be useful, however this classification system is not without its gaps. For instance, if we consider the OEer who will spend a number of years abroad and often continue or develop their career whilst away from home, where do they sit within this typology? Many of the "older" backpackers and gappers would be classed as one of the working tourists' categories, yet the work they undertake whilst away may not be unskilled. Do they then cross into the travelling workers category?

Uriely (2001: 7) admits that his typology only illuminates some aspects of the scope and variety of the interactions between work and tourism and suggests that further research needs to be done in order to 'assist in solidifying the current typology'. He also says that working tourists have hardly been recognised as a distinct phenomenon requiring conceptualisation and this therefore becomes one of the key justifications for this thesis.

1.47 The Traveller

A major concern with the definition of the term 'backpacker' is about who is doing the defining. Youth travellers are often labelled as backpackers yet are rarely asked if this is the way they would describe their travelling.

Richards and Wilson (2003) explored this question in their recent research on independent youth and student travel. They (2003: 16-17) found that of the 2,500 young people surveyed over half of them identified with the label 'traveller' compared to almost a third who called themselves 'backpackers' and under 20% who considered themselves tourists.

These definitions were not static however. For instance, self-designation tended to change with travel experience. Respondents who had taken numerous trips tended to call themselves backpackers or travellers rather the tourists. Self-designation also varied by country of origin of the respondent. For example,

Almost half the respondents based in Slovenia called themselves backpackers, compared with a third of those in Canada and Mexico and just over a quarter of respondents in Hong Kong and the Czech Republic. South African-based respondents were particularly likely to see themselves as travellers (65%), whereas Hong Kong-based respondents were much more likely to call themselves tourists. (Richards and Wilson, 2003: 16).

Richards and Wilson (2003: 17) also found that an association with the backpacker label tended to be greater in areas where the development of a backpacker infrastructure was strongest, so for example, in South East Asia and Australia. One final factor was that age determined self-designation (Richards and Wilson, 2003: 17). Older respondents tended to call themselves travellers and it is suggested this may be an attempt by this group to distance themselves from some of the stereotypes associated with the 'backpacker' label.

1.48 What should Backpacking be called then?

future research should desist from referring to backpacking as if it were a homogenous phenomenon, and should pay attention to its diverse manifestations, in terms of difference in age, gender, origins and particular subcultures. The complex relationship between the domestic, class, ethnic, national and cultural backgrounds of the backpackers and their trip should be given much more systematic attention than it has received up to now (Cohen, 2003: 106/2004: 57)

Backpacking is not a homogenous phenomenon and research is needed to explore the aspects Cohen (2003/4) raises above and many others, including backpacker's relationships to work. In some ways, the media have already begun this process by popularising different terms for this sort of travel. So, for instance, the use of the terms 'gap year' and 'flashpackers'[24] (see Bleach and Schofield, 2004; Sawers, 2005) is one way in which the UK media has differentiated between the twenty something budget travellers and the thirty something budget travellers.

The aim of the above discussions is not to critically analyse what or who the 'backpacker' is. Rather, the aim is to highlight some of the similarities between the various categories, definitions and thoughts on backpacker type travel as well as some of the inherent problems. There is a need to challenge conceptions of what a backpacker is. However, I am also wary that such a challenge could become bogged

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[24] The term 'flashpacker' is also pervading academic literature as two papers at the 2005 Atlas SIG Meeting – Backpackers Research Group conference illustrate (see Cochrane, 2005; Pursall, 2005).

down in a somewhat navel-gazing academic debate. The focus on young budget travel, under whatever phrase it is called, needs to be widened. It needs to go beyond the backpacker to the communities they interact with; it needs to look beyond the Western middle-class backpacker and it needs to consider how world-wide changing life-courses are accelerating and changing the growth of a particular travel style that is no longer limited to young adults. I will expand on some of these comments in my closing chapter as I consider how this thesis fits into the existing academic literature and how it may help to shape future research agendas.

This thesis looks specifically at young budget travellers who work and travel. As such I have used the term 'working tourist' as defined by Uriely and Reichel (2000: 268). In using this phrase, I am applying an academic definition rather than a popular stereotype. My respondents tended to call themselves either backpackers or travellers and as such, the reader will find that throughout the thesis the phrase 'working tourist' is used interchangeably with 'young budget traveller' and occasionally with 'backpacker'. If we take Neil Carr's (2006) assertion that we need a clear definition of the backpacker, perhaps then I am also at fault as I have not tried to clearly define the group of young people I spoke to. In part this is because there was little agreement on whether they were backpackers, travellers or occasional tourists and in part because by focussing on their working experiences, many of the 'traditional' definitions of travelling and backpacking did not 'fit' and I am cautious of trying to either update or add to existing typologies when their usefulness has already been called into question[25].

1.5 Whistler : the Sea to Sky Corridor[26]

> Whistler is about the people who built houses, waited tables, lived in squatter shacks and sought peace in the mountains, just as much as it is about the businessmen and visionaries who foresaw the day when people from all over the world would flock to Whistler (Barnett, 2000c: 5).

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[25] This research started as a piece of fieldwork to determine the effects of the working experience on young budget travellers. In many ways, it was to be an extended case study (after Burawoy, 1998). In the end, it has become a much more an exploratory piece of research that highlights the situatedness of the backpacker experience. In the conclusion I will aim to critically examine how, in the light of this research, backpacker definitions are being challenged and I will aim to show that research into budget travel of this sort is still very worthwhile, however it may be defined.

[26] This section on Whistler provides a very brief background to the resort (see Barnett, 2000 and Vogler, 2000 for more in-depth background on the resort). In their first season induction, all Whistler Blackcomb employees are given a brief history of the resort and quickly learn about many aspects of Whistler's history through their personal and work experiences. I believe that providing my reader with this same background is important, and explain why in more detail in Section 3.5 of Chapter Three.
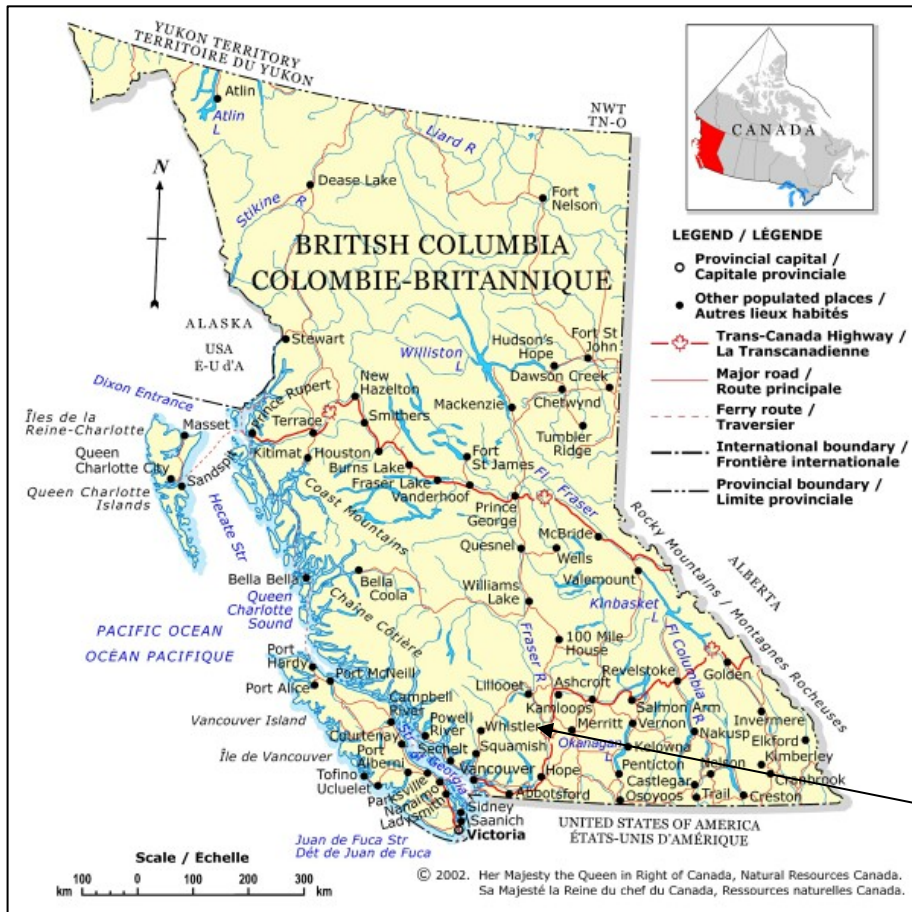
Figure 1.5 (above) Map of British Columbia (Source: www.about.com/d/gocanada, last accessed 10 December 2006)

Figure 1.6 (above) Map of Whistler (Source: www.tourismwhistler.com/getting-here/driving, last accessed 21 October 2004)

The town of Whistler is situated 75 miles north of Vancouver in the Coast Mountains of British Columbia. The highway between Vancouver and Whistler, called the Sea to Sky Highway, winds along the edge of Howe Sound, through Squamish, before gradually climbing into Garibaldi Provincial Park. Once past Whistler, the road continues on for another 35 miles to Pemberton, the largest producer of potato seed outside of Iowa.

Whistler is a town that has only evolved since the 1960's yet it attracts over two million ski visitors a year. What follows is an outline of the history behind the growth of this resort town. Yet Whistler is much more than just a resort and I want to try and reflect how the idea to build a ski resort in order to put a bid in for the 1968 Winter Olympics has since grown not only into an internationally recognised ski, golf, mountain bike and adventure resort, but also into a community.

1.51 The Lil'wat

The Lil'wat people have occupied the valley area now known as Whistler for the past ten thousand years (Vogler, 2000: 31). The valley is usually portrayed as a trading route to the coast for the Lil'wat, and as the no-man's land between the Lil'wat people of Mount Currie to the north and the Squamish people to the south. However, the Lil'wat spent large parts of their summers gathering berries in the valley and catching fish (Vogler, 2000: 33) and burial sites throughout the region suggest that settlements in the valley did exist at one time (see Vogler, 2000).

Early pioneers into the Alta Lake area however, saw little evidence of any settlements. Unfortunately this was due to the introduction of smallpox and other diseases to the Lil'wat people, combined with the reserve schemes implemented by Governor James Douglas in 1858 (Vogler, 2000: 34). The Lil'wat people were moved north to Mount Currie after being told it was for their own safety. The Lil'wat still reside in Mount Currie and, due to treaty negotiations and the hard work of local community members, the Lil'wat (and Squamish) peoples are now much more active and prominent members of the Sea to Sky community.

1.52 Logging and Tourism

The valley in which Whistler is now situated has long been utilised for logging. In the 1950's a number of logging operations existed between what is now Function Junction

(to the south of the village), up to the community of Parkhurst, the largest settlement on Alta Lake (Crosby, 2000) and on to the north end of Green Lake. Parkhurst probably housed 60 or 70 loggers and their families through the summers; the school serving as the social centre, showing movies on Friday and Saturday nights. Locals say that at one point, there was even a small store, although running water was in short supply and stoves were run with sawdust from the logging operations (Crosby, 2000: 80). What is often forgotten is that at this point, there was only a train line running through this valley; the highway that now connects Whistler with Vancouver to the south and Pemberton to the north was not built until a decade later. Logging continued into the mid 1970's. However, as the area began to attract more and more ski visitors throughout the late 1960's, so logging began to fall away until now 'it seems there are more limo's on the Sea to Sky Highway than logging trucks' (Crosby, 2000: 83).

Yet tourism has never been absent from this area. Alex and Myrtle Philip built the Rainbow Lodge on the shore of Alta Lake in 1914 (Vogler, 2000: 54, www.mywhistler.com) and over the course of the next half a century or so, tourists made their way up from Vancouver[27] to enjoy the alpine summer and all the recreational activities available including fishing[28], swimming and sailing. Winter activities, including snowshoeing and cross-country skiing also became popular, although winter weather often made the trip to and from the area an adventure in itself.

1.53 The Growth of a Resort

The Squaw Valley Winter Olympics of 1960 inspired a group of Canadians to pursue the vision of holding a similar event somewhere on the Canadian west coast and so the Garibaldi Olympic Development Association (GODA) was established (Christie, 2000). This small group of businessmen began looking for a location in which to build a ski resort to put forward for the 1968 Winter Olympics.

Winter sports did already exist in the area; the Diamond Head Chalet in Garibaldi Park was set up in the 1940's by Joan Matthews and the Ski-jumping Norwegian brothers,

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[27] The Great Pacific Eastern Railway (now BC Rail) was built up to Alta Lake in 1914 and so access to this valley expanded. However, it was not until 1964 that a single lane gravel highway was extended from Squamish (the gravel road from Vancouver to Squamish was only built in the 1950s) to Alta Lake and the road was not paved until 1966 (www.mywhistler.com/about/history.asp, last accessed 24 August 2004).
[28] In the early to mid twentieth century, Alta Lake was known as a renowned trout fishing lake. Trout populations have since dropped dramatically and efforts are currently being made to restore damaged habitats so that trout can once again thrive throughout the valley's lakes (Vogler, 2000: 160).

Ottar and Emil Brandvold (Christie, 2000: 8). The GODA team expressed misgivings about further developing this site and it was suggested they look further north to London Mountain (later changed to Whistler Mountain[29]). As Christie (2000: 8) says, '[o]ne look and the committee quickly made up their minds'.

However, developing a resort is an expensive business. In order to cut a few ski runs, build the first four lifts[30] and a daylodge at the base, over CDN $800,000 needed to be raised. Plus there was the issue of access as at the time there was no road link up to Alta Lake. To help achieve their goal, GODA published a limited edition book outlining its proposal. Copies sold for $1,000 and this alone raised over CDN $350,000. They also managed to convince the provincial government to build a paved highway up to the area and, only months before the resort opened, the Power Corporation of Montreal bought the final balance of shares. The company, Garibaldi Lifts Ltd, was set up to work in conjunction with GODA and while GODA concentrated on the Olympic bid and the raising of funds, Garibaldi Lifts developed the ski area. Whistler Mountain finally opened over the Christmas and New Year period of 1965-66.

Figure 1.7 Emerald Express, Whistler (Source www2.flickr.com/photos/good_day/129235199/, last accessed 10 December 2006)

In the end, the 1968 Olympic bid was unsuccessful[31]. Nevertheless, Whistler became an alternative weekend ski resort for many in the lower mainland. Instead of heading south to Mount Baker in Washington State or eastward to the Interior Mountains (see Barnett, 2000a), the skiing exodus began heading north. However, this in itself caused problems. Weekends on the mountains were crowded (or rather, the queues to get on to the mountain were always huge) yet there was little to no mid week business. Garibaldi Lifts Ltd could not justify additional chairlifts and added to this, summers

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[29] Supposedly, the name Whistler Mountain came about because of the whistling sound made by the marmots in the area.

[30] The construction of the lift lines in Whistler was unique at the time as they were the first North American resort to use helicopters to install the lift towers. As an illustration of the changes in cost (and to some extent, technology) between the late 1960's and today, the summer of 1999 saw two new high-speed quad chairs installed on Whistler mountain, at a total cost of CDN $12 million (Employee Handbook, 1999/2000).

[31] As were bids for the 1972 and 1976 Olympics. The area however, did not give up and Vancouver and Whistler were awarded the 2010 Winter Olympics on July 1st (Canada Day) 2003.

were almost totally deserted. Many thought Whistler had potential but they were unsure as to how to turn this weekend getaway into a destination resort.

Whistler's development to this point had been fairly ad hoc as the area did not have its own planning authority or local government. Local developers and speculators had been buying large tracts of land with the aim of developing them themselves. For instance, Norm Paterson had developed large parts of Alpine Meadows and Emerald Estates and had been negotiating with the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District for zoning to build a commercial development which would include condominiums, a theatre, and a shopping centre (Barnett, 2000a: 13). A study conducted in 1974, however, suggested that Whistler needed at least a single focal point as a centre and went so far as to select a site for this centre[32]. The benefits, as the study saw it, were that the site was central (to all the areas so far developed), it was adjacent to both Whistler Mountain and Blackcomb Mountain, which they saw as having potential for development and finally, (and more importantly) it was Crown Land. It saw Whistler as a 'resource for all British Columbians' (Barnett, 2000a: 13).

In 1975 Whistler became a municipality in the province of British Columbia (see Barnett, 2000a; Employee Handbook 2001-2002). This allowed the local area to elect officials to govern the growth of the resort and oversee the day-to-day running of the community, whilst allowing the provincial government a part in the process (Barnett, 2000a). What is important to note, as the 1974 study realised, was that Whistler, even then, was unusual. In the normal course of things, only permanent residents would participate in determining the future for the area. However, the 1975 statute stated that *property owners* and residents could elect the officials that would represent their interests. This allowed those who owned property but did not live full-time in the area to have a say in the future of the resort.

The legislation set wheels in motion. Basic administrative and zoning bylaws were adopted, a sewer system was engineered and public support for the growth of the village and the development of Blackcomb was soaring (see Barnett, 2000a). The village plans were finalised in the summer of 1978 and incorporated 'a sense of place through view corridors, secondary seating, and the feeling of "discovering" the mountains as you walked up the curving Village Stroll' (Barnett, 2000a: 17)[33]. At the

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[32] The site selected was "… in the vicinity of the present garbage dump" (Barnett, 2000: 13a). As Vogler (2000: 109) says, it is a 'favourite bit of homespun lore' to tell newcomers that Whistler was built on the site of the former garbage dump. He says, '[t]he tale is usually followed by a moment of silence in which both teller and listener savour the irony and try and find in it some strange truth about Whistler'.

[33] It is ironic that the same person (Eldon Beck) who felt that Whistler needed a 'sense of place' would, in a visit to the village in 1997, comment that 'everything seemed a little too in place, a little drab and

same time, Fortress Mountain Resorts Ltd[34] won the rights to develop Blackcomb Mountain which eventually opened on December 6th, 1980 (Barnett, 2000a; Employee Handbook 2001-2002).

1.54 Where do the Squatters fit in?

Squatters are a part of Whistler's history. Vogler (2000: 154) suggests that '[t]he back-to-the-land movement was big. In Whistler, it had more to do with the skiing and the hangin' by the lake than farming and eating homegrown lentils, but it was the same idea'. Like today, Whistler in the 1970's had a shortage of affordable accommodation and so the cabins and housing left over from the old logging mills often made ideal homes for those who could not find anything affordable in Whistler. It has been suggested that in 1975, when the Municipality of Whistler was first set up, up to 10% of the town's population were living in some form of squat (Maxwell, 2000c: 85).

Maxwell (2000c: 85) describes the people living in the squats as 'young, idealistic, cheap, hard-working, lazy, entrepreneurial, shiftless, good-for-nothing, upstanding citizens'. Other locals felt that the squatters did nothing to contribute to the growing infrastructure of Whistler; that they enjoyed 'everything the valley had to offer without contributing in any way' (Maxwell, 2000c: 85).

What squatting did do for a number of the residents was allow them to save the money to buy land or property in Whistler. As one former squatter, and 30 year resident of Whistler says, 'I don't know if I'd still be here if I'd have had to pay rent during those years' (Doyle cited in Maxwell, 2000c: 86).

The legacy and myths left behind by this group of people are more than a part of Whistler's history. The infamous Toad Hall poster – a picture of a (naked) group of 14 squatters who lived at the north end of Green Lake in the old Soo Valley Lumber company cabins is one of only a few visual memories of this time and was used as a marketing image for the Reunion 2000 celebration (the village celebrated 25 years since that first stature by inviting old employees and tourists back to take part in a week long series of events) (see Maxwell, 2000b: 63). The poster still has relevance

lacking some indescribable element' (Vogler, 2000: 122). As Vogler (2000: 122) goes on to say, 'I think what Eldon was looking for was simply some character'.
[34] Fortress was the Canadian subsidiary of the Aspen Ski Company. In the process of developing the village plan, the steering committee had organized think tank sessions with the Aspen Mayor and representatives from Vail and Boulder, Colorado (See Barnett, 2000a). I have to wonder at the connections between these think tank sessions (and all the proposals for quite massive development that they illustrated) and the bid proposed by the Canadian subsidiary of the Aspen Ski Company.

today, not least because most of the group are even now, active residents in Whistler. As Maxwell (2000c: 88) says

It's hard not to enjoy the irony of who these "undesirable" squatters are today, almost 30 years later. Lawyers, builders, small businessmen, realtors, contributing members of the community. While the time was very different, it's stunning to hear their motivation was, to a large degree, the same tight housing market facing the young fun-seeking undesirables who trek here every fall and without whom Whistler couldn't function.

1.55 The Growth of Intrawest

In 1986, Intrawest Properties Ltd bought Blackcomb Mountain and between 1987 and 1991 invested over CDN $59 million in on-mountain improvements, a new base area and three new high speed quad chairs (Employee Handbook 1999/2000). During this time, the Garibaldi Lift Company sold Whistler Mountain to the Young and Baker families of Vancouver and the late 1980s and early 1990s saw the two mountains consistently spend money on upgrades and improvements in order to keep up with each other. This resulted in Whistler Blackcomb being recognised as the number one ski resort in North America in 1991 by Snow Country magazine (Employee Handbook 1999/2000), the first time this award had gone to a resort outside of the USA. Since then, the resort has regularly been recognised as one of the top national and international ski destinations and prides itself on maintaining this reputation.

Intrawest, owned by Joe Houssian, were property developers, not ski resort operators, but Houssian saw the potential of the sales pitch he was given (Maxwell, 2000a); that it was not about selling real estate, it was about selling a resort. Intrawest, by buying Blackcomb in August of 1986 'morphed from a sophisticated real estate development company into a resort developer and operator' (Maxwell, 2000a: 44). During the 1987/88 season, Blackcomb saw the largest increase in skier visits in the history of North American skiing.

"Doubled our revenue, doubled our employees, doubled everything. I'd never experienced anything like that in my career. In one year we overtook and surpassed Whistler" (Smythe cited in Maxwell, 2000a: 45)

Blackcomb went from having fewer than 40% of the annual skier visits, to over 54% and continued to grow. Each new season seemed to add new lifts, runs and

restaurants until in 1993, Blackcomb peaked with 59% of skier visits[35] (Maxwell, 2000a).

In 1994 Intrawest decided to sell all of its urban assets in order to concentrate solely on resort development (Barnett, 2000b: 124), having already begun to acquire other ski areas in North America.

The 'friendly competition' (Maxwell, 2000a) between the two mountains continued until December 1996 when Intrawest purchased Whistler Mountain from the Young and Baker families. As Maxwell (2000a: 46) says, '[r]umoured for years, the unimaginable yet inevitable finally happened'. The merger finally occurred in the spring of 1997 and formed the largest skiing, snowboard and resort experience anywhere in North America (Barnett, 2000b). It also meant that Intrawest was now the single biggest employer in the municipality, and is often said (accused) to have turned Whistler into a one company town (Vogler, 2000: 158). Intrawest's vision was now about creating a mountain village that would make the resort a year round destination – the end result has been an 'extremely well co-ordinated mountain playground with lift access for the snow-riding winter crowd and the summer downhill biking community' (Barnett, 2000b: 125).

The success that Intrawest has found in Whistler has now been repeated. The company has taken 'the Whistler formula of a pedestrian village and year round activity' (Barnett, 2000b: 125) and now owns or is involved in 16 other North American and European destination resorts, including Mammoth in California, Tremblant in Quebec, Sandestin in Florida (a golf resort only), Copper in Colorado and Les Arcs in France (Employee Handbook, 2002-2003).

When Intrawest first merged Blackcomb and Whistler Mountains, the company was more or less unknown. In the intervening seven years, Intrawest has grown into one of the North American leaders in the design, development and operation of mountain, beach and golf resorts, employing over 20,000 staff. Their vision now states

… Intrawest is committed to building a network of destination resorts and resort clubs that are second to none.

Intrawest's network of resorts will include getaway places; romantic places; healthy places; and learning places. Places not only for adventure and discovery,

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[35] Since then the average skier visits to Blackcomb have averaged about 56%.

but for self-discovery as well. Places with a level of service and a standard of hospitality that can best be measured by the frequency of visiting smiles.

Intrawest will continue to demonstrate a great respect for nature and for the uniqueness of the cultural and geographical setting of each resort … (Employee Handbook, 2002-2003: 19).

1.56 Whistler: A Community?

Whistler is a resort that attracts over 2 million skier visits every winter[36]. It employs thousands of young people from around the world for the winter season and watches most of them leave in the summer. It has a permanent population of approximately 10,000 and has grown from its original roots as a logging community into a ski bum's paradise into the international destination it has become today. Nonetheless, a distinct sense of community does exist.

> Whistler has always been a vibrant and changing community; change is one of
> the very tenets of its character. It's a unique place that operates as a kind of
> experiment. Changes that are now sweeping across the province and the country
> - like the shift from a resource-based economy to one of tourism and recreation -
> were pioneered here first, and found successful. … In many ways the valley is a
> microcosm of the changing world around it. Whistler is an intense and unique
> place with a good share of creative souls and generally wacky personalities to
> boot' (Vogler, 2000: 16).

This community exists in numerous forms: the community of young people who work every winter; the community of slightly longer term employees – the two to five yearers; those who have worked and lived in the village for a decade, two decades or more, and the property owners and weekenders, a community in themselves. There are those who religiously come up from the lower mainland every weekend, winter and summer. Whistler has two junior schools, a large high school, an arts centre, library, industrial area and all the other components of a normal town. It is not unusual for these services to have developed away from the focus of the village centre and so, they are somewhat hidden from the average tourist experience.

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[36] Including the 2001-2002 season immediately after September 11th.

1.57 Why all this talk of Whistler? How is it relevant?

Whistler's huge growth since the 1960s in many ways mirrors the growth of the backpacker. It too had its 'hippie' stage where institutionalisation was pushed aside and free thinking and free expression were 'all the rage'. Whistler has also witnessed the transformations through the 1980s and 1990s as changing societal and cultural norms made budget travel 'easier', more acceptable and viable. Whistler has seen commercialisation affect its shape and form. While backpackers routes and spaces are now seen as much closer to, if not the same as those of mass tourists, so Whistler has welcomed international business, from McDonald's to Starbuck's, from Gap to Intrawest.

Whistler is a unique community. First and foremost it is a resort – whether known for its winter sports or the growing summer pursuits of golf and mountain biking. It is rarely seen as a space where thousands of young budget backpacker's congregate seasonally in order to find work and 'live the dream'. Secondly, it is a North American destination. When we talk of backpacker routes, where are the first places that spring to mind? Bangkok – specifically Khao San Road and the Banglamphu area? The Thai islands? Bali? India? Maybe Sydney or Bondi Beach in Australia? For those from the UK, maybe Peru or another country on the South American 'circuit'? North America – Canada – is certainly on the international backpacker circuit (just go to Whistler and read the nametags![37]) yet it is not in our imaginations. This by itself is, for me, one reason to look here[38]. This thesis is not a comprehensive piece of research about the backpacker scene in Canada or the USA. Rather it aims to look at the specific site of Whistler and examine if/why/how this place can affect the lives and experiences of the young budget travellers who go there.

My personal knowledge of Whistler (see Appendix 3) has, of course, influenced why this place was chosen as a research field. Whistler does provide a 'captive' audience of young budget travellers to talk to – especially in the winter season, but not exclusively. Whistler also provides the opportunity to talk to these young people about their specific experiences in this one place. Yet, as this thesis progresses, I think one of the important points to note is that Whistler is not a 'bubble' (Judd, 1999) and that,

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[37] Every employee at Whistler Blackcomb is issued with a name tag that has their first name and where they are 'from' on it.
[38] In the closing remarks at the 2005 Atlas SIG Meeting in Bangkok, I reiterated to the group that North America is a destination for backpackers (both Western and the growing non-Western backpacker community) as only one paper (out of 25) specifically mentioned North America (and this was to say that it should not be forgotten!)

in talking to these young people what emerges is a picture of how Whistler is ingrained in the routes of work and travel and in the imaginations of travel and work.

1. 6 An Outline of What Follows

My purpose in briefly outlining a history of tourism, youth travel, backpacking and Whistler has been to provide a contextual base for the rest of the thesis. This final section will briefly outline the structure of what is to follow.

Chapter Two offers a literature-based examination of the theoretical traditions and debates that surround this piece of research. The chapter looks briefly at identity, work and place before going on to consider some of the more recent literature on transnationalism. The chapter concludes by reiterating that this thesis is about the everyday practices and experiences of young budget travellers.

Chapter Three offers an autobiographical look at the methods employed through this research process. It argues that research is a 'messy' process (see Rose, 1997) through which we hope to gain insight into our chosen subject. Through an understanding of ethnographic and qualitative research methods, this chapter portrays the research process as a dialectic relationship in which both the researcher and the respondent play important roles and concludes by reiterating the personal but not individual nature of the research process.

Chapters Four, Five and Six are the empirical chapters. Chapter Four considers how the young budget traveller's identity is defined and constructed through telling stories. It uses the thoughts, opinions and perspectives of young budget travellers to examine who goes travelling and why before using three specific examples to consider how transnationalism can affect identity formation and stories. Chapter Five considers the role of work in the lives of the young budget traveller. It widens the theoretical basis outlined in Chapter Two and considers issues of seasonality and emotional labour in relation to the work these young people undertake in Whistler.

Chapter Six considers the role of place for young budget travellers. It asks why they chose Canada/Whistler and how they perceive of this space. It considers if there is a community in Whistler and questions whether Whistler is a 'backpacker enclave'. It concludes by suggesting that being a part of the community of Whistler plays an

important role in defining the sense of place (and self) these young people take away with them.

The final chapter draws out some conclusions from the research and returns to debate about what a backpacker is by considering if or how the young people who come to work and play in Whistler can be 'slotted' into any of the existing typologies. The thesis concludes by challenging ideas of what the 'Gap Year is before suggesting some future research avenues.

CHAPTER TWO:

TRAVELLING THE WORLD: EXPLORING THE THEORY

From academic research to Hollywood films, backpackers have become new symbols of über-mobility' (Gogia, 2006: 364-365).

2.1 Introduction

Chapter One introduces the topic of research for this thesis, providing context by looking broadly at the history of tourism and youth travel. It also outlines the problematic nature of the term 'backpacker' and offers various alternative definitions to what overall, is travel undertaken on a budget, by young people. Chapter One then presents a background to Whistler and offers a few reasons as to why this location was chosen for the research before concluding with an overview of the rest of the thesis.

This chapter will consider the theoretical debates that underpin this piece of research. From the start of the research process, three strands have remained constant, identity, work and place. Added to these has been an emerging awareness of the roles transnationalism and mobility play in the lives of young budget travellers. This chapter does not aim to be a comprehensive review of all of these literatures, rather it is an exploratory account that will provide context and background for the empirical chapters and the concluding remarks.

2.11 Continuing the Background: Leisure Part II

The role of leisure in young people's lives has taken on a much greater significance over the last few decades. The term leisure can cover a multitude of activities, from sitting at home watching television to travelling the world and has, until recently, been seen as a concept that had no 'use' value (Hill, 2002: 6). As I suggest in Chapter One, leisure is often defined in opposition to work (Adler and Adler, 1999; Hill, 2002; Urry, 1990) and is seen as free or spare time, a secondary role after work where an individual may choose what activities to do (Hill, 2002). Yet, this does not take into account those for whom work and leisure are fused, nor does it explain enforced leisure, such as unemployment.

Leisure, more recently, has come to be defined by post-modern society. Young people's understanding of leisure, especially in relation to its supposed opposite – work - has therefore shifted. A 'job for life' is generally assumed to be a thing of the past (Hill, 2002: 8); nor can young people assume that higher education will allow them automatic entitlement to a job at the 'right' level (see Marginson, 1999 cited in Wyn and Willis, 2001: 4). Instead, the relationships between these factors – career, education and leisure – have grown more complex. Young people today face uncertain career progression paths as the boundaries between education and training and work and leisure become blurred. Wyn and Willis (2001) suggest that as a result, young people develop a more flexible attitude toward career progression and so define themselves in terms of mixed patterns of job and life commitments; where work and leisure compliment each other profitably and where leisure is not the part of life on which they mean to miss out.

One of the outcomes of these complex relationships between career, education and leisure faced by young people has been the growth of the youth tourism market over the last few decades. The history of tourism and specifically, youth tourism has already been explored in Chapter One; from the Grand Tours of the seventeenth century onwards to tramping traditions of the early nineteenth century to the development of youth associations and the YHA in the early to mid part of the twentieth century. It is the work of Erik Cohen (1972, 1973, 1979) that I now want to look at more closely in order to provide a wider picture of this particular type of tourism.

2.12 Typologies of Tourism?

Cohen (1972) originally devised a typology of tourism which consisted of institutionalised tourism on the one hand and non-institutionalised tourism on the other (See Figure 2.1; see also Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Uriely et al, 2002).

Within institutionalised tourism, he identified organised group and individual mass tourists. The former group were defined as the least adventurous where the entire trip was meticulously planned by a tour agent; the latter were not tied to a group and had some control over their itineraries but generally did not go off the 'beaten track'. Non-institutionalised tourists consisted of explorers, who, whilst arranging their own itineraries and getting off the beaten track, still preferred reliable and comfortable

accommodations and means of transport. The drifter was the final category of tourist within this group and was defined as the 'most individualistic and least institutionalised type' (Cohen, 1973: 89) of tourist. He saw the drifter as 'the type of [international] tourist [who] ventures furthest away from the beaten track …' (Cohen, 1973: 89) and characterised the drifter as 'predominantly a child of affluence on a prolonged moratorium from adult, middle-class responsibilities, seeking spontaneous experiences in the excitement of complete strangeness' (ibid: 89). It is the drifter that is often seen as the original backpacker, with iconic literary texts such as James Michener's (1971) '*The Drifters*' and Jack Kerouac's (1957) '*On the Road*' still inspiring young budget travellers today.
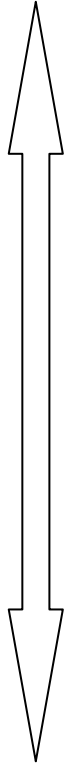
		Familiarity
The organised mass tourist Low on adventurousness he/she is anxious to maintain his/her 'environmental bubble' on the trip. Typically purchasing a ready-made package tour off-the-shelf, he/she is guided through the destination having little contact with local culture or people	Institutionalised tourism Dealt with routinely by the tourism industry – tour operators, travel agents, hoteliers and transport operators	
The individual mass tourist Similar to the above but more flexibility and scope for personal choice is built in. However, the tour is still organised by the tourism industry and the environmental bubble shields him/her from the real experience of the destination		
The explorer The trip is organised independently and is looking to get off the beaten track. However, comfortable accommodation and reliable transport are sought and, while the environmental bubble is abandoned on occasion, it is there to step in if things get tough.	Non-institutionalised tourism Individual travel, shunning contact with the tourism industry except where absolutely necessary/	
The drifter All connections with the tourism industry are spurned and the trip attempts to get as far from home and familiarity as possible. With no fixed itinerary, the drifter lives with the local people, paying his/her way and immersing him/herself in their culture		Novelty

Figure 2.1 Cohen's classification of tourists (Source: Boniface and Cooper, 1997 (adapted from Cohen, 1972) cited in Cooper, 2005: 61).

Cohen's 1973 paper remains significant today when considering the development of identifiable youth tourism categories as he further expanded the classification of the drifter by segregating it into full-time and part-time drifters (see Figure 2.2 below).

He saw the full-time drifters as those he originally identified – as travellers shunning all tourist establishments and venturing furthest from the beaten track. The part-time drifters he identified as the 'mass-drifter', an outwardly focused traveller whose concern was with experiencing the host culture; and the 'fellow traveller' whose primary concern was to associate with the youth-culture of their fellow travellers (Cohen, 1973: 100). The mass drifter was usually a 'college youth, who spent a limited amount of time to see the world, meet people and 'have experiences', but tended to stick to the drifter-tourist establishment of cheap lodgings and eating places and cut-rate fares' (Cohen, 1973: 100). The fellow traveller is associated with the hippies and original drifters, adopting and modelling their behaviour on these roles but never fully integrating with this counter-culture before returning home.

Vogt (1976) expands on Cohen's idea of the drifter – terming them 'wanderers' as he suggests this was a more romantic and less derogatory phrase. Wanderers therefore

> are embarking upon a quest of personal growth – learning about and understanding themselves, other people, and other cultures. The travel experience is seen as providing the necessary challenges and opportunities to expand oneself in areas valued by adventurous youth: independence, adaptability, resourcefulness, open-mindedness to name but a few (Vogt, 1976: 28).

The drifter/wanderer has continued to evolve. Adler and Adler (1999: 381) in their study of resort workers in Hawaii, talk of 'seekers [who] sought to maximize their immediate life satisfaction' and of 'escapists' whose desire was to 'rid themselves of the routine, scripted monotony of the everyday world' (also see Cohen and Taylor, 1976; Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995). They also defined two groups of short-timers, the 'time-outers' who were 'taking a break from normative paths with the intention of returning to them shortly' and the 'transients' who tended to move from one time out to another (Adler and Adler, 1999: 384). These categories, like those of earlier generations, illustrate how the phenomenon of youth travel is continually developing (see Section 1.4 in Chapter One). Perhaps, more interestingly, is the thought that all these definitions are really only sub-definitions of what today is called 'the backpacker'.

The "*Adventurer*" The original drifter – no connections to the tourism industry and attempting to get as far away from familiarity as possible. No fixed itinerary, living with local people and immersing him/herself in local culture.	Full-Time Drifters
The "*Itinerant Hippie*" The travelling drop-out, drifting aimlessly from one "hippie" community to another.	
The "*Mass-Drifter*" Usually a college graduate, who spends a limited time travelling the world, meeting people and "having experiences". Tends to stick to the drifter establishments of cheap lodgings and eating places.	Part-Time Drifters
The "*Fellow-Traveller*" Inwardly orientated, the young person who associates with the "hippies" and models his/her behaviour on this sub-culture. He/she frequents the "hippie" communities for short periods of time before returning to his/her ordinary pursuits.	

Figure 2.2 Cohen's Full and Part-Time Drifters (adapted from Cohen, 1973).

As I suggest in Chapter One, many of the now common phrases for the phenomenon of backpacker travel, including some of those discussed above, seem to be used interchangeably. Elsrud (1998: 310) discusses how she does exactly this; defining the young people she has studied as a group of tourists that travel 'for long periods of time, travelling and living on a 'tight' budget', who may or may not work (legally or illegally) as part of their journey. These young people extend their travels beyond normal brief holidays and so face the necessity of living on a budget (see Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995; Riley, 1988) and are 'most often characterized as self-organized pleasure tourists on a prolonged multiple-destination journey with a flexible itinerary' (Sørensen, 2003: 851).

However, before I move on, I want to consider one other of Cohen's typologies. In 1979, Cohen (1979: 183) proposed a 'phenomenological typology of tourist experiences' which analysed the individual traveller's interest and appreciation in the culture, social life and natural environment of 'others'. He proposed five main modes of tourist experience (see Figure 2.3 below) which range from mere pleasure in the strange and the novel to the quest for meaning through immersion in another culture (Cohen, 1973: 183).

			Recreational and Pleasurable Experiences
This experience is akin to other forms of entertainment such as cinema, theatre or television. The tourist enjoys the trip because it restores physical and mental powers and engenders a sense of well-being. The tourist may find the trip 'interesting' but will it will not be personally significant. This tourist may not be a stickler for the 'authentic' (although they may well be aware of the inauthenticity of their experiences) as he/she is only seeking recreation, entertainment and relaxation.	The Recreational Mode	Mass or institutionalized tourists	
This group of tourists are liable to feel alienated from their society. Their trip is then about escaping the boredom and meaninglessness of routine and everyday existence. They may be looking to 'heal the body and sooth the spirit' in order to make alienation endurable.	The Diversionary Mode		
This tourist is in search of 'experiences'. He/she is looking to finding meaning in everyday life and by travelling, recaptures meaning by vicariously experiencing the authenticity of other's lives. However, as MacCannell (1999) points out, the tourist may well encounter 'staged authenticity' in his search for otherness. This tourist does not appropriate the lifestyles of this otherness and as such their experiences are primarily aesthetic.	The Experiential Mode	Non-institutionalized tourists	
This type of tourist is related to the more serious of the drifters as they are pre-disposed to try out alternative lifestyles in their quest for meaning in everyday life. This traveller engages in the authentic life he/she finds but refuses to fully commit to it, rather he/she samples different alternatives hoping to eventually find one to suit his/her 'real' needs and desires.	The Experimental Mode		
The tourist is fully committed to the authentic lifestyles he/she encounters. This comes phenomenogically closest to a 'religious conversion' though the content of the values accepted do not need to be in any way religious. What makes this a touristic phenomenon is that many of these tourists are unable or unwilling to move to their authentic centre and so live in two worlds, the world of their everyday lives and the world of their newly-found authentic values.	The Existential Mode		Quest for Meaning

Figure 2.3 Five Main Touristic Modes of Experience (adapted from Cohen, 1979: 183-191).

These typologies remain important in the context of this thesis for a number of reasons. Firstly, they demonstrate the ways in which the 'young budget traveller' entered the academic literature, highlighting some of the stereotypes whose echoes can still be seen in backpacking ideology today (the drifter seeking enlightenment

through experiencing other people, cultures or drugs for example). Secondly, that current dilemmas concerning the definition of the backpacker have a basis in the many typologies and modes outlined both above and in Chapter One. And thirdly, although it is worth keeping these typologies in mind when reading through the empirical chapters that follow, I believe we need to move beyond them and allow a picture to emerge of the fluid nature and practices of young budget travel.

2.13 A Theory of Motivation?

Differences in attitudes, perceptions, images and motivation have an important influence on travel decisions (Cooper, 2005). The typologies above, combined with the discussion of backpackers in Chapter One already suggest that these young people tend to travel in specific ways for specific reasons. What then needs to be considered is why they travel.

Maslow's (1970) theory of motivation suggests that there is a hierarchy of needs through which people move (see Figure 2.4 below).

Lower	1. Physiological – hunger, thirst, rest activity
	2. Safety – security, freedom from fear and anxiety
	3. Belonging and love – affection, giving and receiving love
	4. Esteem – self esteem and esteem for others
Higher	5. Self-actualisation – personal self fulfilment
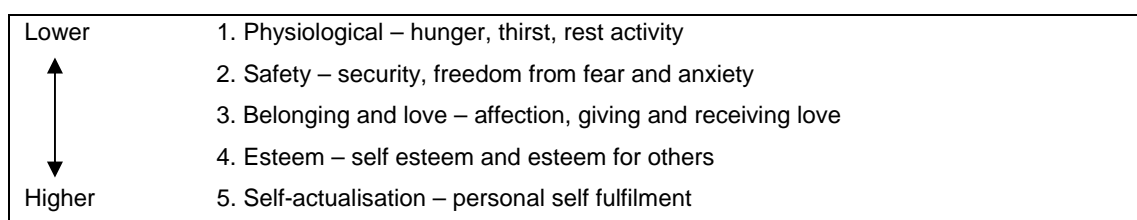
Figure 2.4 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (cited in Cooper, 2005: 54)

This model suggests that as needs are satisfied, so individuals aim for the next level. Thus, self-actualisation remains at the higher end of the hierarchy and is a 'need' to be aspired to. Cooper (2005: 54) maintains that Maslow's hierarchy is holistic and dynamic and can be applied both to work and non-work spheres of life. He also suggests that these levels of needs are of 'such instinctual weakness' (Cooper, 2005: 54) that they can be modified, accelerated or inhibited by the surrounding environment.

Yet, although this model provides a premise on which to suppose that, given the right circumstances, people will grow out of a concern for the materialistic, it does seem too simplistic. Cooper (2005) discusses two other key approaches to the study of tourism motivation which I believe are more applicable when considering young budget travellers.

Dann (1981, cited in Cooper, 2005: 55-56) suggests that there are seven elements within the overall approach to motivation whilst McIntosh et al (1995, cited in Cooper, 2005: 56) utilise four categories of motivation (see Figure 2.5 below).

Dann 1981
1. Travel is a response to what is lacking yet desired. This approach suggests that tourists are motivated by the desire to experience phenomena that are different from those available in their home environments.
2. Destination pull in response into motivational push. This distinguishes between the motivation of the individual tourist in terms of the level of desire (push) and the pull of the destination or attraction.
3. Motivation as fantasy. This is a subset of the first two factors and suggests that tourists travel in order to undertake behaviour that may not be culturally sanctioned in their home setting.
4. Motivation as classified purpose. A broad category which invokes the main purpose of a trip as a motivator for travel. Purpose may include visiting friends and relatives, enjoying leisure activities, or study.

5. Motivational typologies. This approach is internally divided into:
    a. Behavioural typologies such as the motivators 'sunlust' (search for better set of amenities that are available at home) and 'wanderlust' (curiosity to experience the strange and unfamiliar) as proposed by Gray (1970); and
    b. Typologies that focus on dimensions of the tourist role.

6. Motivations and tourist experiences. This approach is characterised by the debate regarding the authenticity of tourist experiences and depends upon beliefs about types of tourist experience.
7. Motivation as auto-definition and meaning. This suggests that the way in which tourists define their situations will provide a greater understanding of tourist motivation than simply observing their behaviour.

McIntosh, Goeldner and Ritchie 1995
1. Physical motivators: those related to refreshment of body and mind, health purposes, sport and pleasure. This group of motivators are seen to be linked to those activities which will reduce tension.
2. Cultural motivator: those identified by the desire to see and know more about other cultures, to find out about the natives of a country, their lifestyle, music, art, folklore, dance, etc.
3. Interpersonal motivators: this group includes a desire to meet new people, visit friends or relatives, and to seek new and different experiences. Travel is an escape from routine relationships with friends or neighbours or the home environment or is used for spiritual reasons.
4. Status and prestige motivators: these include a desire for continuation of education (i.e. personal development, ego enhancement and sensual indulgence). Such motivators are seen to be concerned with the desire for recognition and attention from others, in order to boost the personal ego. This category also includes personal development in relations o the pursuit of hobbies and educations.

Figure 2.5 Categories of Motivation, after Dann (1981) and McIntosh, Goeldner and Ritchie (1995) (Source: Cooper, 2005: 55-56).

By approaching motivation as a series of factors (as in Figure 2.5 above) rather than as a ranking system (as in Figure 2.4 above), a much wider of range of motivators can be employed. Unlike Maslow's (1970) hierarchical model, the other two approaches suggest that the various elements can act in conjunction with each, thus blurring Maslow's needs into a larger, more flexible motive.

These categories then link closely to other literature on tourism motivation which suggest that recurrent themes emerge. The need to escape the every day for purposes of relaxation (physical motivators), the ability to discern new places, exotic peoples, authentic nature (cultural motivators) and the discovery of self (interpersonal/status motivators) are all cited as reasons for travelling (see Baranowski and Furlough, 2001; Boissavain, 2002; Ryan, 1997a). MacLeod (1997: 136) in his work on alternative tourists in the Canary Isles says that '[e]xperiment, experience, excitement, change: all of these become part of many holiday experiences'. Richards and Wilson's (2003:17) recent report on independent youth and student travel suggests that for young people, a mixture of exploration, excitement and increasing knowledge are the main motivational factors for travel.

Nonetheless, for some young people, their motivation has little to do with the skills they could learn whilst away and much more about escaping 'the dullness and monotony of everyday life, including decisions pertaining to their careers and marriage' (Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995: 825, see also Adler and Adler, 1999; Cohen and Taylor, 1976). Yet, also, as suggested earlier (see section 2.11), young people often now face uncertain career choices and demands upon leaving education (Wyn and Willis, 2001) and one of the responses to this uncertainty has been the increase in youth tourism. The year out can be seen as a time to relax mentally and find oneself[39] (Richards and Wilson, 2003). The transition from school/college/university life to professional life with all of its associated responsibilities, which can seem daunting and difficult (see Keane and Brown, 2003), is therefore put on hold by taking a year (or more) out, by taking time away.

Without doubt, the motivations of young people who decide to travel are a complex amalgam of many of these factors. Jones (2003:2) suggests that young people today are more '[s]avvy… and motivated to equip themselves for life in a global society' and see travel as one way in which to do this. Travelling then, for many young people, has become a self-imposed 'rite of passage' (see Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995; Sørensen, 2003); one which they take part in specifically to gain diverse experiences whereupon they enrich their sense of self. They see travel as giving them a type of 'informal qualification' which they can use upon their return home to further their personal and professional careers (see Desforges, 1997a; Munt, 1994). Thus, the informal qualifications which they hope to gain anticipate some amount of self-development.

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[39] Relaxing mentally scored 4 out of 5 in importance in Richards and Wilson's (2003: 18) study of motivations for travel; finding oneself scored 3.5 in the same chart.

2.14 The Benefits of Travel?

Many of the motivators that young people use as reasons to travel are described as beneficial – either in terms of self-development, or professional development or both. As I suggest above, travel, for young people, is seen as a way of allowing personal growth, of (re)discovering the self and developing new social skills (Adler and Adler, 1999; Vogt, 1976). This perspective is further corroborated within wider literatures. Jones (2003: 2), in the preface to a report on international student and youth travel says '[s]ocietal support for the value of student and youth travel is increasing. Education institutions, potential employers and parents ... recognise travel as an important personal development experience and a way of creating greater international understanding in our world.' Jack Straw, the former U.K. Foreign Secretary has stated '[t]aking a Gap Year is a great opportunity for young people to broaden their horizons, making them more mature and responsible citizens. Our society can only benefit from travel which promotes character, confidence, decision-making skills' (cited in Hogg, 2001: 1) and Tony Higgins, the former Chief Executive of the U.K. University and College Admission Service (UCAS) has said, '[t]he benefits of a well-structured year out are now widely recognized by universities and colleges and cannot fail to stand you in good stead in later life' (cited in Simpson, 2003: 5; http://www.yearoutgroup.org (last accessed 24 February 2004)).

In spite of these endorsements, recent U.K. newspaper headlines have suggested that young people may learn little from such travel experiences. The London Evening Standard asserted 'Official: gap year travel is just one long holiday' (Prigg, 2003, see also Appendix Two) in an article that suggested that the young people taking part in gap year tourism[40] learned little about the cultures they were volunteering in and that they spent most of their spare time with cohorts rather than exploring the peoples and cultures around them[41]. The Guardian entitled an article 'Mind the Gap'; the subtitle, 'Most gap-year students fail to learn anything about different cultures' (Roberts, 2003). This article in fact talked less about what young people learn or fail to learn whilst travelling and concentrated instead on the various courses now being run to prepare young people for their travels (see also Harris, 2003). The Daily Mail used youth tourism as a way of covering its favourite topic, royalty - 'Topless models, nightclubs and a visit to a brewery … so much for Prince Harry's 'mind improving gap year!' (Kay, 2004). What these often sensationalist headlines do is illustrate the tension

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[40] This article came out of a paper presented to the RGS/IBG by Kate Simpson in September 2003.
[41] Sørensen (2003: 854) also suggests this when is says that 'a majority of [backpackers] spend most of their time in the company of other backpackers'.

between official representations of the value of youth travel and the media-hyped reality (see, for example, Hares, 2004).

What this tension fails to recognize is the difference in expected outcomes between the officials and the media, between the young budget traveller and their parents, and between the solid 'proof' of having learnt something (i.e. a new language or professional skills for instance) and less tangible (even tacit?) outcomes of learning, such as tolerance, patience and openness.

> The mere business of getting yourself to the other side of the world, not losing your passport or return ticket, avoiding rapists, pickpockets and murderers, and managing to get yourself home again without unwittingly packing 10 kilos of heroin is evidence of initiative, curiosity and a survival instinct that will prepare you well for adult life. At least, this is what students tell their parents (Merritt, 2000).

Perhaps this quote begins to hint at why there is this discrepancy in viewpoints about the value of youth travel. Merritt's (2000) quote suggests that travelling is very much about the self – about 'self-growth and maturity' (Noy, 2004: 90). As such, it can be said that changes to the self are firstly not easily seen – they are not easy to quantify on a C.V. for instance – and secondly, these changes are often located within the commonsensical and the obvious – the (re)construction of a sense of self is combined within the travelling experiences.

Noy (2004: 90) suggests that changes to the self 'typically include wide, undifferentiated personal traits, and only seldom mention specific traits. … Such descriptions point at the romantic, impressionist language register, by which the self-change is experienced and narrated'. Self-development could be said then, to be an understated facet of travelling. Thus, the personal development aspect of travel experiences, whilst seemingly dismissed by the media, is one of the main tenets of this thesis.

2.2 Constructing an Identity

2.21 Introduction

Up to this point, I have been discussing the self-development of these young people. This self-development is part of a broader process that they are undertaking, that of

constructing a sense of self/identity. I want to suggest that these young people construct their self-identity through the understanding of their travel and work experiences.

Any discussion of identity formation is multi-faceted and complex. For instance, Urry (1994: 142) suggests that as 'people's tastes, values and norms are increasingly less determined by 'societal' institutions such as education, family, culture, government or the law' so individuals are being forced to develop identities less attached to these mainstream institutions. One can also consider the 'self' as a place; one that moves and is connected with other places, people and things (Cook, 1998: 22) and so identity formation occurs due to the interconnections between places, peoples and things. It is problematical to fully encompass many of the debates surrounding the construction of identity. Below I aim to explore those debates most relevant to my arguments and begin to consider how the theoretical literature relates specifically to the young people under scrutiny.

2.22 A More Traditional View?

That human beings are unique self-contained individuals is one view ingrained in Western traditions of thought (Burkitt, 1991). This however, causes a dichotomy between society and the individual as it does not allow for the view that individuals are socially based, nor does it allow us to see humans in terms of their social relations with others (Burkitt, 1991: 2). These views, as encapsulated within Cartesian Dualism, see the human (rational) thought process as separate from bodily and worldly experience (Burkitt, 1991; see also Madanipour, 2003). What these views cannot account for is how human beings are able to bring these two modes, thought and bodily experience, together in order to create a unity in which to experience the world.

Thus the modern self appears alienated from society. Simmel (1978) suggests that individuals in mass society are bound together by abstract relations, such as money, rather than personal and emotional ties. This, he says, is why, although individuals are interdependent because of these monetary and abstract relations, they are isolated and alienated, part of the 'lonely crowd' (Simmel, 1978 cited in Burkitt, 1991: 10)[42]. Social learning theory, in contrast, highlights the importance of the reciprocal interaction between the person and their environment. However, what it does not do is analyse how the social relations through which people learn determine the structure of

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[42] There are ties here to discussions about the flâneur and the practice of flânerie (see Frisby, 1994 and Shields, 1994).

personality (Burkitt, 1991: 24-25) and so the conscious individual is still left in isolation from other aspects of their own personality and from other people (society).

These views, then, do not connect the conscious mind with the body, and the individual with the social. Cultural-historical psychology of the 1960s, on the other hand, saw the self develop in two ways, firstly through the relations of the individual with the physical world and secondly through the way in which individuals communicated with others (i.e. through language) (Burkitt, 1991: 137-138). As such, self-identity is based upon social relations between individuals, and it is 'only in relation to others and to the material world in which we live, that humans come to realize their separatedness from all that surrounds them' (Burkitt, 1991: 189). So, there is a dialectical relationship between society and self, where social interaction and discourse help to create the self-consciousness of the individual through the co-ordination of group communications.

2.23 Self vs. Other?

Nonetheless, this self-consciousness can manifest itself in opposition to society so that the construction of self is considered in relations to an 'other'. Identity, then, is 'largely constituted through the process of othering' (Trinh, 1994: 18). The self is defined in relation to or against something or someone else (Crang, 1998). It is based on a differentiation from others (Massey, 1995:67; Trinh, 1994) and as such 'for every act of identification involved [there is] a "we" as well as a "they"' (Epstein, 1978 cited in O'Reilly, 2000: 89).

The touristic self is thus articulated by boundaries that are constantly being repositioned in relation to various points of reference. Trinh (1994: 20) suggests that '[t]he meanings of here and there, home and abroad, third and first, margin and centre keep on being displaced' as the tourist negotiates through the maze of positions available, native or adopted culture, home or away, same or different. How one positions oneself whilst travelling then defines the 'other', but as one's position changes, so too does this 'other'.

For Trinh (1994: 22), not only do tourists find the 'other' in different places, but travellers aim to differentiate themselves from tourists;

> Therefore, in order not to be confused with the tourist, the traveller has to
> become clandestine. He has to imitate the Other, to hide and disguise himself
> in an attempt to inscribe himself in a counter-exoticism that will allow him to be
> a non-tourist – that is, someone who no longer resembles his falsified other,
> hence a stranger to his own kind. (Trinh, 1994: 22-23)

As such, all other travellers could be said to be tourists; the traveller maintains a difference only 'by despising others like himself' (Trinh, 1994: 22). By positioning themselves as travellers, they are situating themselves in opposition to 'other' tourists who, they believe, find conspicuous ways to travel (see Cheong and Miller, 2000). Thus, by trying to be positioned closer to the native 'other' and away from the tourist 'other', they encounter an 'identity crisis' where they unsettle their own identity, the 'I become[s] me via an other. Depending on who is looking, the exotic is the other, or it is me' (Trinh, 1994: 23)[43].

Rather than the constant re-positioning of the boundaries of self and other, Bondi (2003) sees the boundary between the self and the other as permeable. She suggests that '[p]sychoanalytically, identification is a process through which the … subject absorbs and incorporates aspects or attributes of others, metabolising this material to generate his or her own identity' (ibid: 68). This presupposes the separateness of self and other. The boundaries between the two are however, flexible and so attributes of self and other can permeate these boundaries in either direction. Going back to Trinh (1994), it is worth noting that these boundaries can equally be about material practices as well as spatial and emotional ones (see also Smith, S. 2001).

Travelling can also turn out to be a process by which the self loses its fixed boundaries (Trinh, 1994). The traveller sees things 'differently from what they are, differently from how one has seen them, and differently from what one is' (Trinh, 1994: 23) and so attributes can begin to permeate between the boundaries of self and other. The idea of this type of permeability is appealing, yet seems overly optimistic. Rather than having a permeable boundary of self, the idea of a 'double approach to identity' (Trinh, 1994: 23) seems much more likely. Here 'one is being-for-other, but also a being-*with*-other' (ibid: 23, italics in original), where self and 'other' exist relationally and where the possibility of change to one's boundaries is likely.

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[43] The Khao San Road in Bangkok may be the exception to the tourist looking at the local, as it now seems that many local Thais also go here to look at the backpackers (see Howard, 2005).

2.24 The Self as Story

a) <u>Introduction</u>

Self-identity is often told as a type of story where everyday activities and experiences are related to others through dialogue. The individual is then a type of story-teller who has formulated their everyday experiences in their own words and so has produced their own personal narrative (see Finnegan, 1997). By telling a story, individuals are conveying both ideas of time and sequence and 'an element of explanation or coherence – some kind of *plot…*' (Finnegan, 1997: 72, italics in original). This story usually conforms to accepted conventions about form and content and so can be recognised as a type of culture genre or sub-culture (Finnegan, 1997; see also Sørensen, 2003; Noy, 2004).

I propose that the construction of personal narratives or autobiographical accounts through both travel and work is one of the most important parts of the young budget traveller's experience (see Desforges 1997a). It has been suggested that this type of tourism is linked to a moment in their lives when their identity is most open to question (Desforges, 2000; see also Mackay 1997); or that participating in this type of tourism constitutes a "fateful moment" (Giddens, 1991; see also Maoz, 2005; Noy, 2004) where the time travelling is constructed as formative or transformative for the young people involved. However, when taking into account some of the literature on motivations for travel (see Section 2.14 above), these ideas seem to simplify the discussion about identity. Therefore, whilst further discussion will be given to these suggestions within the empirical chapters, the sections below will concentrate not on whether their experiences are linked to some 'fateful moment' but rather will outline some of the wider considerations necessary when discussing the construction of self through personal narratives.

b) <u>Personal Narratives</u>

Personal narratives can, according to social-constructionist approaches, 'constitute the *core experience* of personal identity' (Noy, 2004: 83, italics in original). As such, telling stories allows the individual to describe and construct who they are and how their various experiences accumulate to form an intelligible, communicable story of identity (Noy, 2004: 83, see also Gergen, 1994, 1999; Giddens, 1991). Personal narratives then, are not just about describing the here and now, but '*are* people's

identities … the story *is* one's identity, a story created, told, revised and retold throughout life' (Lieblich et al,1998 cited in Noy, 2004: 84, italics in original).

It is only, therefore, through the creation of an ongoing narrative about the self that an individual can maintain a sense of continuity about their self (Giddens, 1991). Aspects of time and space have to contribute to this ongoing narrative and so too does reflexivity. From a hermeneutic perspective, the interpersonal communicative nature of personal narratives allows for self-reflection on both psychological and social levels.

From this, a number of points emerge. Firstly, that this biography is only one story of many potential stories that could be told about the individual's identity development (Giddens, 1991: 55). Secondly, that individuals, by choosing to adopt a particular narrative (or narratives?) may, to some extent, be reacting to the perception of others, and so they aim to 'preserve a division between their self-identities and the 'performances' they put on in specific social contexts' (Giddens, 1991: 58). Thirdly, that an individual, as part of their self-identity, will create an 'ideal self' to which they will aspire; and finally, and concurrent with point number two, that individuals may define their self-identity in relation to something or someone else – an 'Other'.

Firstly, that young budget travellers may tell many different stories in order to define their identity is understandable. In the simplest terms, the stories they tell their parents and family about their travels will differ quite significantly to the stories they tell close friends, acquaintances and even other travellers. I also want to suggest that part of the possibility of developing a multitude of potential narratives is related to a collective identity of youth travellers. For young budget travellers, friendships are often created rapidly and travel groups are formed and dissolved almost instantly (Sørensen, 2003: 854). As such,

> norms, conduct, values, etc. among backpackers are continuously negotiated, challenged, manipulated, and upheld or changed through social interaction. The opportunity for this is enhanced by the combination of, on the one hand, the continuous replacement of backpackers within the community, and on the other, a near absence of institutions that can hold and transfer meaning over time (Sørensen, 2003: 855).

The community is ever changing and so an individual can belong to various social groups over short spaces of time and in different places. Therefore, identity could be said to be as much about 'flitting *between* groups than of membership *per se* of a

group or community' (Malbon, 1997: 280, italics in original). In this way, identity is much less forged by dualistic categories such as society/individual or male/female, self/other, black/white, or tourist/non-tourist (see sections 2.22 and 2.23) and is much more about the making of multiple roles and interactional identities (Crang and Malbon, 1996; see also Maffesoli, 1996; Malbon, 1997). What this does, is suggest that perhaps it is a process of identification rather than of construction of identity that provides these young people with the potential for multiple narratives. Identification varies from identity in that

> It takes account of the fact that we wear many different hats at different times and in different surroundings. We present ourselves differently and identify with different thing in various contexts. The logic of identification emphasises the sympathy (in the purest etymological sense) that we feel with others when we share situations with them (Malbon, 1997: 283).

Constructing a narrative or story does not only reflect an individual's experiences. An individual will formulate their experiences through their knowledge of stories of others as well as telling their own stories (Finnegan, 1997: 76). Individuals will draw on, manipulate and copy others stories in order to both gain a sense of control over their own stories and in order to conform to various cultural norms. However, as much as belonging to different groupings and therefore developing multiple narratives reflects the highly temporal and spatial nature of much of youth tourism's social interactions, developing a personal narrative is still very much a reflexive process. Hence, young budget travellers can identify with many different groups and people but, I believe, the construction of their identity is an individual action.

Secondly, that young budget travellers may react to the perception of others and so adopt a particular narrative seems realistic. This relates to the idea that having multiple narratives allows them to adopt particular narratives at particular times and in particular places. However, there is also an element of performance in these multiple narratives. Interaction within a group requires information about that group. Knowing an individual will enable others to expect certain behaviours and actions and allow an individual to react in this specific way and so give a type of performance (see Goffman, 1959). In a situation that differs to an individual's norm, they will aim to glean clues about appropriate behaviours through observing others within the group. They may well then adopt actions and behaviours in order to become a member of the group and so perform a specific identity within that group.

As such, the 'individual's initial projection commits him to what he is proposing to be and requires him to drop all pretences of being other things' (Goffman, 1959: 22). Young budget travellers may take up specific narratives in order to develop social relationships in a given situation. Rather than dropping all previous narratives, I believe that these young people add to and modify these narratives in order to build up relationships. This allows them to undertake a variety of social roles and Goffman suggests

> that a social role will involve one or more parts and that each of these different
> parts may be presented by the performer on a series of occasions to the same
> kinds of audience or to an audience of the same persons (Goffman, 1959: 27).

The young budget traveller is therefore performing their identity within a known community – that of backpackers – yet is often performing this identity to unknown groups and individuals in a similar position[44]. This type of performance suggests that the young budget traveller's narrative is (re)constructed through continual self-presentation. Goffman (1959) suggests there are two extremes to this type of performance; that an individual may be taken in by their own act or that they are cynical about it. He suggests that these are at either end of a continuum and that this often becomes cyclical - 'the cycle of disbelief-to-belief' (Goffman, 1959: 31).

There is then an awareness that the self is always on display and so the self is separated by a me/I division (see Giddens, 1991; see also Burkitt, 1991). The individual is performing the 'I' whilst keeping the 'me' behind the act or front. The front is 'the expressive equipment … intentionally or unwittingly employed by the individual during his performance' (Goffman, 1959: 32)[45]. The front includes, not only an individual's emotional and linguistic self but also the bodily self. So, factors such as age, race, sex, clothing, gestures, posture, and visible piercings and tattoos, all identify this individual in particular sorts of ways and also allow the individual to construct their identity through (and because of) these factors (see also Mackay, 1997; Veijola and Jokinen[46], 1994).

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[44] An individual adopting a particular social role will often find that it already exists in some form and so they are merely upholding that particular role, one which may 'incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society' (Goffman, 1959: 45) in which they are involved.

[45] See also MacCannell's (1999) discussions on front and backstage areas with relation specifically to tourism.

[46] Veijola and Jokinen (1994) suggest that the body has often been left out of tourism studies and that identity is set not only against a temporal and spatial frame but also has a bodily frame, a specific travelling body.

Thirdly, through the use of all of these narratives, young budget travellers are manipulating and modifying their self-identity. As has already been suggested (see Section 2.14), these young budget travellers anticipate that their experiences will lead to a type of 'informal qualification' (Desforges, 1997a; Munt, 1994) which will enhance their personal and professional careers. Reflexively looking back on their experiences then becomes an important part of building an idealised personal narrative (see Desforges, 1997b; Giddens, 1991). Their experiences are seen as positive and generate sought after and valuable personal changes (Noy, 2004) which they build into stories comparing past and present in order to realise a new, manageable sense of identity.

Fourthly, and finally, young budget travellers use their personal narratives to define themselves in relation to some type of 'other'. As Ryan (1997b) says,

> we know who we are, not solely in terms of a sense of personal integrity, but also in comparison with others, and the way that others regard us (or as we perceive and value that evaluation).

This has been discussed in various ways above (see Section 2.23) and in the second point earlier where it was suggested that young budget travellers also use performance as a way in which to react to the perception of others. Young people tell stories of their experiences in relation to 'others'; these others can be local (native?) people, mass tourists and perhaps even other backpackers and travellers (see Noy, 2004; Sørensen, 2003).

c) Social Interaction

Engaging in social interaction is one of the highest motivational aspects of young budget traveller's experiences (Richards and Wilson, 2003). Young budget travellers spend a majority of their time in the company of other young budget travellers (Sørensen, 2003) and so it would be expected that these social interactions would be an essential part of any travel experience. Riley (1988) suggests that the intensive social interactions and communications among this group of tourists are defining features of modern back-packing and Murphy (2001) has also suggested that frequent social interactions are the primary motivators for travelling; 'constituting a central experiential attribute' (Noy, 2004: 81; see also Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995).

The exchanges of information and stories before the trip, along the journey, and upon the return home, allow these young budget travellers to 'reconstitute[s] their social construction as identity' (Sørensen, 2003: 858). The ability to both narrate and listen to stories involves reflexivity, self-presentation and self-perception. It also involves peer recognition; as Sørensen (2003: 862) says '[t]he main dimension of peer recognition is the social interaction with other backpackers, through which the backpacker identity is concomitantly formed'. So, for example, by using the backpacker grapevine[47] (see Murphy, 2001; Noy, 2004; Sørensen, 2003), young budget travellers are reaffirming one of the norms of this cultural group, confirming and constructing their identity within the group.

Due to the nature of this type of tourism, young budget travellers form friendships and travel groups rapidly and these are often as quickly dissolved (Sørensen, 2003). These friendships and groups are still regulated by the norms and values of the 'backpacker' travel culture. These are continuously negotiated, challenged, manipulated, upheld and changed through social interaction specifically because of the continuous replacement of young budget travellers within this community as well as by the fact that there is an absence of institutions (such as school/college/university) that can hold and transfer meaning over time (Sørensen, 2003). Consequently, the individual is given an active role in ensuring the continuity of this culture; thus they are (re)producing this culture rather than simply absorbing or representing it (Sørensen, 2003). Implicit within this is that at the same time they are producing this community culture, so they are also actively utilising this same culture to construct their own identity.

In many ways, by listening to other travellers tell their stories and by telling their own, they find value within them and convert it into cultural capital. This cultural capital (in the form of narrative capital) gives them 'admittance to a subculture, thereby giving them a valid claim for a collective identity' (Noy, 2004: 82; see also Clifford, 1997; Elsrud, 1998; Urry, 1995). These individualist stories are often created within tight social guidelines; part of the collective subculture and so infused with socio-cultural themes and tensions (Noy, 2004: 82). This cultural capital becomes one of the informal qualifications young budget travellers hope to gain from their experiences. Furthermore, they thread this same cultural capital through their stories and so the norms and values of backpacker culture are continually re-told – though of course the

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[47] By backpacker grapevine, I mean the extensive word-of-mouth network that exists among the backpacker /traveller community (see Murphy, 2001). See also Ireland (2005) on how modern technology is influencing and changing this word-of-mouth network.

re-telling allows for discrepancies, manipulations and changes to occur. This leads to a cyclical relationship between the social interactions of young budget travellers and culture which has developed around and with this group of tourists.

d) Story-telling

What lies behind many of these young budget travellers' narratives, is their story of how they have constructed their 'selves' or identities (Noy, 2004: 79). The stories often sound like they are about exciting adventures and new accomplishments, but this is simply the overtone, the nuances behind this convey the real story; that of the (re)construction of identity. This also reflects the way in which these narratives describe the internal changes - the changes to identity – whilst talking about the external undertakings - the adventures - that helped to encourage and promote these changes.

So, the stories they tell consistently describe profound personal change as a result of travel experiences (Noy, 2004: 86)[48]. They are described rhetorically in terms of the significant positive changes that have taken place and are often added into the story as commonsensical and obvious changes (Noy, 2004). This is perhaps one of the most understated yet most powerful ways of portraying these changes to the self. By locating them inconspicuously within their stories and biographies, accusations about the relevance and applicability of youth tourism, such as those levelled by the UK press recently (see for instance, Barrow, 2007; Hares, 2004; Kay, 2004; Prigg, 2003; Roberts, 2003), seem pertinent. However, these young people have learnt a great deal specifically through stories and story-telling. In fact, the travelling environment and the social status of such experiences, creates an environment which is totally suited for the telling and retelling of these types of stories, of comparing stories with other veteran travellers, and for sharing insights and learning experiences with would-be travellers, parents, potential employers and peers.

There are two other points that I would like to consider. The first, as Noy (2004: 90) suggests, is that these young people's descriptions of identity change are broad and undifferentiated and this points to the 'romantic, impressionist language register, by which self-change is experienced and narrated'. Romanticism is a reoccurring theme in many ways. Not only through language – in the telling of stories and specifically, in the ways stories are romanticised, but also through perceptions of places, peoples

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[48] As Noy (2004:90) says, it is worth noting that all narratives, stories and descriptions 'refer exclusively to positive and beneficial changes.' This point will be discussed in further detail in the empirical chapters.

and cultures, as will be discussed in further detail below. Secondly, these stories can be seen to constitute the telling of 'fateful moments' (Giddens, 1991). These are moments that are seen as (trans)formative and are specific moments which young budget travellers depict as ones which have (re)defined their sense of self (Noy, 2004, see also Wheaton and Gotlib, 1997). Using less spectacular language, Desforges (1997a and b) talks of how the decision to go travelling often occurs at a moment in life where transition is imminent, such as upon leaving higher education. Wyn and Willis (2001) have discussed how young people's career future's are no longer certain and so perhaps this time in life could be described as the first 'fateful moment' in the travelling career of a young tourist?

e) <u>Authenticity</u>

Seeking authenticity is not unique to young budget travellers (MacCannell, 1990; Urry, 1990). However, the non-conventional nature of their travels (such as the length of the trip, and the flexibility of their itinerary) and the oft desired wish to be 'off the beaten track' (see Desforges 1997a and b; May, 1996) suggests that they are 'absorbed with seeking experiences of adventure and authenticity' (Noy, 2004: 84; see also Desforges, 2000; Elsrud, 2001).

MacCannell (1999) suggests that the modern tourist's primary motivation is to seek authentic experiences. As the world becomes more alienated and mechanised, so the individual romantically seeks out a pure 'original', whole – an authentic destination. This place will enrich the tourist with a sense of 'realness' and so authenticity becomes an existential desire which the tourism industry can then commodify (see Noy, 2004: 85).

Although Bruner (1991) suggests that authenticity is much more in the minds of Western social theorists than the tourists, young budget travellers do look for distinct values and features within their travels. By positioning themselves in opposition to mass tourists whose consumption practices they see as utterly conspicuous, young budget travellers often insist on seeking "untouched" or "unspoiled" destinations (which are nonetheless, within touristic regions). In travelling to these places and authentically experiencing them, they not only fulfil this desire for the authentic but at the same time, use these experiences to determine their authentic selves (Selwyn, 1996 cited in Noy, 2004: 85). Thus, tourism for these young people is a 'persistent quest for [authentic] experiences of the self and its pleasures' (Baranowski and Furlough 2001: 10).

In many ways then, for these young people, it is about participating in these authenticating experiences, not simply experiencing them (see Elsrud, 1998). Thus, for these young budget travellers, the authenticity of experience and perhaps more importantly, the ability to tell and re-tell these experiences of authenticity are important aspects of their trip. This leads to a cyclical relationship between the experience of authenticity, and the authenticity of the experience (Noy, 2004: 91). For young budget travellers, authentic experiences are promoted as a valued commodity which they then consume. This consumption allows them to define themselves with distinctive qualities, so allowing them to continually develop their personal narratives. These factors then reinforce one another, allowing the young people to return home with a redefined sense of self, a sort of personalised authenticity (see Cederholm, 1994 cited in Noy, 2004: 91).

f)   Adventure and Risk

Along with authenticity, young budget travellers seem to expect some sort of adventure[49]. It has been suggested that encountering danger and hardship are now necessary parts of a trip (see Sørensen, 2003; Trinh, 1994) and so risk taking and risk assessment have almost become the norm[50]; becoming part of the self-imposed rite-of-passage. Stories told of risk taking and adventures, whether real or imagined[51], seem only to be told in a positive way (see Elsrud, 2001; Noy, 2004) and are yet another way of describing how their quest for self knowledge and insight are achieved (see Walle 1997; Weber, 2001).

Adventure has grown into an important part of the travelling experience, both as a motivational factor and as one which directly affects how these young people view themselves and so define themselves. It is not only about physical challenges but also about social and psychological ones (Weber, 2001) and these must be overcome in order to gain new skills, demonstrate competence and construct a personal narrative. Taking risks and having adventures, whether it be extreme sports or simply the

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[49] I have put these two points together as, for these young people, it is often through taking a risk that an adventure occurs. There is obviously a whole body of literature on risk and risk management and although I make passing reference to some of this, it is in the context of 'having an adventure' that I discuss risk.

[50] Various newspaper articles (Harris, 2003; Roberts, 2003) discuss courses that are now being run to prepare young people for their year away. The awareness of risks to young budget travellers has increased greatly since September 11th, and especially since the bombing in a nightclub in Bali in October, 2002 (see also Atherton, 2003 and Bartley, 2003).

[51] Elsrud (2001) discusses how a bus ride in India may be no more or less dangerous than a similar journey in England or Germany. Rather, the bus ride in India has a certain risk mythology associated with it and so the telling of the story about the bus ride illustrates there was a risk factor and allows for a development within the sense of self in order to overcome this risk.

adventure of living in a new culture (including western cultures), is about engaging in activities that invite the participant to "become a better person" (Heald, 2003: 6). For these young budget travellers, it is the idea that they are 'living the dream' (see Keane and Brown, 2003) and engaging in a lifestyle that allows them have these adventures, tell their stories to others and define themselves in relation to the risks they have taken.

g) <u>Pleasure</u>

One other aspect about the ideas of risk-taking and adventurism stems from a word that seems to be little used in the literature on tourism – pleasure. There are two points here that I want to raise. Firstly, that there is "a semantic confusion in the idea of a working holiday" (Abram and Waldren 1997: 2) as tourism is often defined in opposition to work (see Urry, 1990) and so how can a young person working and travelling have a pleasurable experience? There are numerous debates that could be had on this subject; working for some is seen as a necessary hardship but one that will greatly add to their personal narrative as they regale others with work related stories and use these same stories to construct a successful work self. For many others, working is an adventure in itself and so offers the experiences in which to construct and define a sense of self.

My second point is that adventures and risk-taking for these young people are often about pushing the boundaries of and about themselves and disrupting their normal everyday lives. For some, this happens simply by leaving home; for others, it occurs by choosing to take part in activities that are beyond the norm. Barthes (1975) distinguishes between pleasure and bliss, where pleasure gives you what you expect, whilst bliss disrupts (Heald, 2003: 8). In many ways, this is what these young people are setting out to achieve, disruption to their lives in order to achieve 'bliss'. Thus underlying many of their motives is their belief that by encountering risk, hardship and adventure in their travels, they will be able to re-define their 'selves', and so, be able to better equip themselves for the global marketplace.

2.25 Space and Time

Story-telling, for these young people, can cross spatial and temporal boundaries. By telling a story, they are recreating a time and place that does not exist in the here and now, they are 'infusing the latter with its [the former] unique aura' (Noy, 2004: 83). With this comes also the reaffirmation of their construction of identity. As suggested

earlier, the stories they tell are nuanced with the (re)definition of their self-identity. By re-telling these tales, again and again, they are reaffirming these definitions and consolidating and confirming their current identity.

Travelling is often seen as an event 'in time' which allows the young people to view the trip as a purposeful stage in their lives (Elsrud, 1998: 313). This temporal dimension is most clearly seen upon their return home when they can tell the stories about their adventures. However, these young people can also imagine how this time - this stage - will be purposeful both before the event i.e. before they go travelling and also during the event, so that, although their travelling is not yet over, they can already foresee a time when they will be able to look back on this temporal experience.

Within this temporal event, they further construct their identity through experiences of 'time standing still' and 'time flying by' (Elsrud, 1998: 314). And still further, bodily sensations, performance and time are interlinked as hard work, strenuous travelling and aching muscles are used to describe times and places where adventures (and identity changes) occurred (Elsrud, 1998: 322). Thus, young budget travellers are not so much taking time to experience adventures, places, peoples; rather they are creating time by recontextualizing, at a later date, time with space (Elsrud, 1998: 329). As they then recount their travels, so they can begin to weave in a changed self-narrative which this recontextualization of time and space has created.

2.3 The Role of Work?

> All workers look for ways to reconcile the work they do with an identity they can accept, either by interpreting the work positively or by discounting the importance of work as the basis of identity (Leidner, 1991; 154)

2.31 Introduction

Studies of work, until fairly recently, tended to separate into those that looked at production and those that looked at consumption. However, in part due to the massive growth in and of service industries, there has been a realisation that consumption and production are not so easily separated. There is no longer a dominant productionist bias in social science studies (Du Gay, 1996); instead there has been much more emphasis on the analysis of 'the connections and disconnections, the blurrings and

disjunctions' (Crang and Malbon, 1996: 708) between the role of production and the role of consumption.

2.32 Working and Identity

Interest in service industries has led to the realisation that these industries can highlight the extent to which the roles of production and consumption adopted by individuals do blur. Consumption practices, then, are bound up with production processes. The two may be practised in the same space but by different people, or perhaps, may be both produced and consumed by the same individual, but over time. Mackay (1997: 5) has suggested that 'people's sense of identity is bound up with consumption as well as work roles'. Du Gay (1996: 65) suggests that both employees and consumers are searching to add value and meaning to their experiences. As such

> 'paid work and consumption are just different playing grounds for the same
> activity; that is, different terrains upon which the enterprising self seeks to master,
> better and fulfil itself. (Du Gay, 1996: 65).

The blurring between consumption and production therefore reverberates through other spheres including how individuals define themselves. I will now go on to briefly explore how, specifically in service industries, the site of consumption is often also the site of production. It will illustrate that consumption, far from being opposed to production, increasingly involves production (Miller, 1995: 27).

2.33 Tourism as Service Work

Tourism, as an economic process, is seen as consisting largely of service industries; it is viewed as providing something for a customer to consume, whether literally, visually or physically, rather than being seen solely as a production process. This then exposes the dichotomous relationship between production and consumption as any experience has to be produced before it can be consumed.

Without doubt, leisure and tourism are seen to have played significant roles in the emergent culture of near simultaneous production and consumption (Aitchison et al, 2000: 23). As Urry (1990: 1010) says '[t]he pleasures of tourism stem from complex processes of both production and consumption'. Therefore, tourism service industries can be useful in demonstrating the extent of debate.

Service work therefore, cannot be conceptualised as only an economic phenomenon. The consumption of services tends to occur simultaneously with the production of those services. Services are often produced and delivered at the same time and in the same place as they are consumed (Urry, 1990; see also Crang, 1997). As such, the quality of the social interaction involved in the production and consumption of a service is now very much a part of the production process. Continuing this argument means that the type and quality of service work, no longer just an economic phenomenon, has to be understood in terms of cultural interactions (Du Gay, 1996);

> 'an important feature of much service work is the more or less direct relationship between one or more service providers and one or more service consumers, …
> The inherently 'social' nature of much service work could therefore involve a distinct change in the cultural relations of the workplace,' (Du Gay, 1996: 4)

As much as Crang (1997: 137) suggests that 'an unhealthy 'myth of uniqueness'' has grown up around much tourism-related employment,' obscuring the extent to which this type of service work differs from similar work in heavier industries, there are two points intrinsically implied by earlier comments. Firstly, that the expectation of quality in both service provision and consumption suggests a very different relationship as both consumer and producer are involved in the final experience (see Miller, 1995). Secondly, the discussion so far has focussed upon the experience of the consumer. However, I want to suggest that the experience of the worker/producer is different to that of many other industries in that these workers are often also consumers of the same services they produce, and that their work experiences, while reflecting managerial influences (see Crang, 1997), are also affected by their desires to construct an ideal self-narrative.

2.34 The Tourist Consumer

The tourist consumer is 'looking for the *extra*ordinary' (Urry, 1990:40). However, the tourism product, as a combination of services, culture and geographic location (Aitchison et al, 2000: 126) has to be consumed in situ. An important part of what is consumed is 'in effect the place in which the service producer is located' (Urry, 1990: 40). The successful production and consumption of many of the services is context dependent (Urry, 1990: 72) in that it is the relationship between the social interactions (between worker and tourist) and the physical setting which determines this success. As tourists increasingly become aware of themselves as consumers (Miller, 1995) so the experiential aspect of their holiday becomes even more important. This

experience is place dependent (as they chose a certain location to travel to) but also strongly service dependent. Tourism, more than most other service industries, elicits a pervasive emotional and experiential reaction from consumers (Otto and Ritchie, 2001: 168), though it must also be remembered that the service worker will also have an emotional and experiential reaction, whether this reaction is 'performed' or real. The quality of service provided is expected to be exceptional, as tourists (and managers) can be highly critical if their expectations are not met.

2.35 The Working Tourist

The working tourist, therefore, has to provide a quality of work compatible with both consumer and managerial expectations whilst pursuing their own purpose, i.e. to seek out new cultures, peoples, places, adventures and experiences. For instance, Richards (1996:33) suggests;

> 'Many skiers seek to further their passion for skiing by gaining employment in ski
> resorts, allowing them to combine work and pleasure…'

However, as Crang (1997) points out, there is a danger in romanticising tourism employment that ignores the fact that much of this work is repetitive, poorly paid and emotionally and physically demanding (see also Sharpe, 2005; Urry, 1990). Yet this is also where tourism industries vary from most other service industries;

> 'more frequently the discursive construction of 'service' or 'tourism employment' is
> used to legitimate forms of managerial surveillance that set themselves up in
> opposition to those of routinisation and tight monitoring. Pre-eminent here are a
> range of Human Resource Management strategies which emphasis control over
> more autonomous jobs and workers through the latter's adherence to
> organisational values and 'culture' (Crang, 1997: 140).

Urry (1990) has suggested that service workers often have little or no involvement or attachment with the companies they work for. Tourist industries differ. Company 'culture' becomes an important aspect as it aims to engage the worker and give them responsibility for their actions. The activity of working becomes an empowering and fulfilling activity (Du Gay, 1996) with the aim that the workers will feel included, involved, attached and perhaps even feel as though they are not really 'working' at all (Urry, 1990). Company recruitment policies become focused on looking for the right 'fit'. Emphasis is placed on personality and talent as much, if not more so, than on

technical skills (see Crang, 1997). These companies are not just utilising the identities of their employees; to some extent they are also forging them as they encourage and even police conformity with the company culture (Crang, 1997). Tourist service industries are producing and selling employees' selves as part of the tourism package (Crang, 1997). By making work 'fun', with work ethics such as 'work hard, play hard(er)' and with social events hosted by these companies, the lines between work and play become blurred (see Grugulis et al, 2000). Yet, for many of these companies, there are economic reasons behind the ethic that employees come first[52] as, for instance, it encourages loyalty. Loyalty does two things; firstly it can keep employees with the company so, especially in seasonal tourist industries, it saves money on constant recruitment and training (for an example of the indicators that retain ski industry employees, see Ismet and Petrick, 2004). Secondly, loyalty can ensure quality of service interaction and so, the consumer's high expectations are met.

These service jobs encourage a type of 'performative labour' (Crang, 1997: 153) where it is the encounter with the worker which is being sold to the consumer. The company and the worker are involved in 'a particular discourse of the self – that of the performed self' (Crang, 1997: 153) where

> the precise persona sought, the understanding of what kind of performance it entails, and the personal resources used to achieve it, vary according to the definitions, spatial structuring and materials of the tourism setting (Crang, 1997: 153).

This, however, has two implications (Crang, 1997). The first is that these workers can contest the meanings behind the discourses of self they are assigned to play. Secondly, these settings are unlikely to provide tightly specified roles and scripts for the producers and consumers interacting with them (Crang, 1997: 146). There then exists a complex dynamic between consumer, producer and company (see Aitchison et al, 2000). This dynamic is further confused as the working tourist is not only the producer of the touristic experience, but by choosing this work, is often also involved in the consumption of this experience.

The working tourist has then to work within two sets of practices; they are driven by the dual motivations of work and play – or perhaps production and consumption (Adler

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[52] See Freiberg and Freiberg's (1996) study of Southwest Airline's for an example of a company whose success is solely based on the premise that employees come first.

and Adler, 1999). If contemporary service work can be seen to involve new articulations between work and consumption, then these articulations can lead to the creation of complex work- and self-identities for these working tourists (see Du Gay, 1996); thus linking the problematised relationship between consumption and production back to the debates over working tourist's construction of self-identity. However, the spatiality of these touristic practices, whether it be producing or consuming the experience has yet to be drawn into the equation.

2.4 The Construction of Place

> While the landscape as text metaphor has been used widely in human geography
> to assess critically diverse kinds of human-environmental interaction (…), tourism
> landscapes have remained almost immune from theoretically informed textual
> analyses. Yet such textual landscape readings may help to cast tourism more
> fully as leisure and labor, … (Squire, 1998: 84)

2.41 Introduction

The construction of place in tourism often focuses on the concept of 'selling' place (see Hall, 2005a; see also Aguiar et al, 2005). Place therefore, has become a commodity to be promoted in order to attract capital and people (including tourists). Selling 'place' involves promoting the 'pull' motivating factors for the town/city/community in question. So, perhaps for Whistler

> "We need to sell skiing and snowboarding like cocaine, not bread. It's an
> addiction," (Turner cited in Vogler, 2000: 177).

Yet, in marketing place as a commodity, the very people who live, work and play in that place have been more or less ignored. And in ignoring the people, so the idea that places can have multiple identities (Massey, 1993) is ignored. Place is never a 'bubble'. Places are made and remade through their relationships with the global. Places are made, imagined and lived in through their economic, social and emotional attachments to other places (see Massey, 1993; Urry, 1994).

Place plays a significant role in this thesis. Already in Chapter One I have examined the growth of the resort town of Whistler; I situate a specific place in space and through time. In talking about the young budget traveller, place becomes important, where are they from, where are they going, where do they go to work, live, play,

relax? When discussing how they use their working and travelling experiences to define a sense of self, how important is place in these definitions?

Briefly below I discuss a number of points relating tourism to the construction of place. I first suggest that a sense of (touristic) place can be seen to be actively constructed through the actions of businesses, tourism boards, government bodies as well as individuals. Secondly, that touristic places are often imagined and constructed by individuals even before arrival and thirdly, that this sense of touristic place can be used in the development of a personal identity and biography. I will conclude by considering the emerging literature on backpacker enclaves and question whether Whistler can be classed as such.

2.42 Marketing Tourist Places

Hughes (1998: 18) suggests that 'the rhetoric of tourism has been stretched' in order to contrive geographical distinctiveness as places have begun to look more and more alike. Rojek (1998: 35), following Lefebvre, sees the expansion of tourism and leisure industries as a commodification of space. These arguments are both suggesting that 'place representation is an *active* form of spatializing' (Hughes, 1998: 20, italics in original). As such, a sense of place can perhaps be said to be intentionally constructed. Thus, a sense of place is no longer 'simply' a passive outcome of economic activities such as, for instance, mining or manufacturing (Hughes, 1998).

It is suggested that many places are managed and marketed specifically to appeal to a tourist market. Packaging cultural images provides an easily recognisable 'brand' – places are reduced to well-known images. These images then become powerful tools for inducing tourists to come visit. As such, tourism can act as 'both agent and process in the structure, identity and meaning of local places, embedded as they are within larger regions and economies' (Ringer,1998: 3).

As place is sold, marketed, re-imagined and reinvented through tourism practices and professionals, place construction can often reflect a self conscious involvement by various interest groups. These groups consist not only of the tourists who visit, but more importantly include tourism businesses such as hotels, attractions, restaurants and transport companies as well as travel writers and local and national government agencies (Hughes, 1998). The level of involvement of each of these groups and the amount of dialogue between the groups can either provide a harmonious working environment or can lead to economic, environment and cultural differences between

these various groups. The relationships that exist between these groups will lead to constructions of place that are particular to that space and time (Hughes, 1998).

2.43 The Preconceived Place?

So, tourist preconceptions and expectations are;

> shaped by "maps of meaning" (Jackson 1989) that are often created by broader forces exogenous to the tourism industry (e.g. film, literature, the education system etc …). The tourist industry also creates images of place via advertising, and these in turn create expectations on the part of the visitor… (Milne et al, 1998: 102).

As such, tourist spaces are marketed not as a particular place or product, but rather 'a projected interpretation or mediated image of a place' (Young, 1999: 375). For example, Squire (1998) discusses the Canadian Rockies saying that they are marketed as the currency for international tourist recognition for western Canada. She also suggests that the mountains as a destination are a social construction (Squire, 1998: 80) as they appeal to preferences and values for 'wilderness', which she believes reflects cultural influences originating in European Romanticism.

Meanings of places have become caught up in media and marketing representations (Thrift, 1997). This then leads on to Crang's (1998: 44) 'simple point' that 'most people's knowledge of most places comes through media of various sorts, so that for most people the representation comes before the 'reality'. Returning to Thrift (1997: 161), his argument suggests that media representations then become the reality of the place, that the place itself becomes incidental. Giddens (1991) believes that this may often produce a feeling of reality inversion where the real place, when encountered, will seem to have a less concrete existence than the media representation the consumer has been exposed to.

However, this seems to suggest that media and marketing representations almost dupe the tourist into constructing a certain vision of place. Rather, I suggest that although "once a certain idea of landscape, a myth, a vision, establishes itself in an actual place, it has a peculiar way of muddling categories, of making metaphors more real than their referents, of becoming, in fact, part of the scenery" (Schama, 1996 cited in Milne et al, 1998: 102). Massey's (1995) notion that we 'actively make places, both in imagination (the 'olde worlde' village) and in material practice' is perhaps more

realistic and can be illustrated by the poet, Dionne Brand, who said, 'America was a world already conceived in my mind, long before … I ever saw it. In fact, when I saw it I did not see it: I saw what I had imagined' (Brand, 2001 cited in Heald, 2003: 4). This argument can be sustained as tourist places are also sites where cultural ideologies, expectations and traditions are found, perceived, expected and contested by different tourist and interest groups. Thus destinations invite a 'multitude of readings and interpretations' (Squire, 1998: 84).

Young (1999) distinguishes between organic or long-term everyday knowledge versus induced, or, for instance, as seen through advertising, knowledges. He recognises that people use 'a wide range of information sources, and bring their own ideas, interpretations, and understandings to places they visit. So, almost all place consumers have a huge store of existing information, feelings and expectations about places without necessarily having been to them' (Young, 1999: 375, see also Ringer, 1998).

Although tourists may use brochures as a guide to actual destination choice, they tend to interpret place by drawing on previous experiences, as well as socio-cultural backgrounds, and even preferences for particular environmental settings (Young, 1999). It is the idea that they already know about these sites before visiting them (see Veijola and Jokinen, 1994). Young (1999: 384) also suggests that '[t]ourist[s] often interpret place meaning in the social context of particular psychological needs and so benefit, albeit psychologically, from their own processes of place construction as much as from the actual place or space itself'. As such, the meanings attributed to place by tourists vary as much according to pre-visitation variables as to on-site factors (Young, 1999: 387).

2.44 Place as Self-Identity?

Rose (1995:88) suggests that senses of place pervade everyday life and experience and develop from 'every aspect of individual's life experience'. Therefore, a sense of place is the result of the meanings people actively give their lives (Rose, 1995). If, as I have already suggested, a sense of place is not necessarily bound to one location (Rose, 1995), perhaps it is then the 'ability to leave, to travel, to return' that is important in establishing a personal identity (Massey, 1995: 65).

Crang (1998) suggests that people often feel an attachment to the spirit of a place. It is the idea that they experience something beyond the physical or sensory properties

of a place. As such, they are interpreting it from particular social positions and for particular social reasons (Rose, 1995). Places then bind people to them through both real and imagined pasts, presents and futures (see Crang, 1998). This allows them to define themselves in connection to these senses of place, as the expression and acquisition of their experiences allows them to use their particular view of the world, made possible through travel (see Ringer, 1998), in order to create their own personal biography.

For instance, if we consider Cohen's (1979) existential tourist mode (see Figure 2.3), then tourists will most likely define themselves through the newly found 'authentic' centre even when they return to their everyday life. Desforges (2001) suggests that young budget travellers define themselves by the economic restraints imposed upon them by their chosen means of travel. Therefore, their consumption of place is often symbolically and purposely reinforced or constrained by monetary value. It can allow them to feel as though they are buying access to the 'real' place (see MacCannell, 1999) or conversely, it can make them feel that they are merely 'tourists' who have not been able to 'genuinely' engage with a particular place (Desforges, 2001: 359).

2.45 Backpacker Enclaves

The term 'enclave' is a relatively recent addition to the backpacker literature[53], although it has been applied to a wide range of other tourist phenomena ranging from conventional tourist places (such as the Spanish Costa's, see for instance, O'Reilly, 2000) to cruise ships to the tourist bubble (see Judd, 1999; Weaver, 2005; Wilson and Richards, 2005).

Simply put, a backpacker enclave seems to conceptualise those spaces with a visible domination of backpacker related activities (see Wilson and Richards, 2005). The growth of an enclave needs some particular features. It, of course, requires an abundance of backpackers. The reasons for their congregation and so the growth of a specific backpacker space then include natural and/or cultural attractions, employment opportunities and a dedicated backpacker infrastructure (Wilson et al, forthcoming). Unlike the perceived relative conformity of other forms of tourism enclave, backpacker enclaves are distinctive because of their diversity. This diversity can include rural paradises such as Ubud in Bali, chaotic commercial districts such as Banglamphu (Khao San Road area) in Bangkok, temporary enclaves such as the

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[53] Both Riley (1988) and Sørensen (2003) mention 'budget traveller ghettos' but do not analyse these spaces in any further detail (Hottola, 2005: 4).

Glastonbury Festival or Oktoberfest in Munich or city localities such as King's Cross or Bondi Beach in Sydney (see Wilson and Richards, 2005; Wilson et al, forthcoming).

Wilson and Richards (2005: 5) suggest that the backpacker enclave space develops through a process of interactions between 'locals' and 'backpackers'. However, they also suggest, that like the backpacker journey, the enclave reveals the tensions between the ideology and practice of backpacker travel as the enclave space is also re-shaped by this same process of interaction. The enclave then provides the place in which a dialectic relationship between space and experience can be shaped (see Wilson and Richard, 2005: 5). As they say,

> The backpacker enclave is not so much a tourist space (an extension of home for the tourist) or a local space (a reversal of tourist experience), but rather a space suspended in the field created by a series of apparently opposing forces (Wilson and Richards, 2005: 5).

They suggest that the permeability of these spaces allows supposed opposing forces (such as rest-leisure-work, rural-suburban-urban, core-marginal-peripheral, East – hybrid-West) to produce this state of suspension, or perhaps this place of suspension and they explore three dimensions of this suspension (Wilson and Richards, 2005: 6).

The first, spatial suspension, suggests that in the backpacker enclave, the Western backpacker is suspended between two cultures and as such are neither 'here' nor 'there'. The young budget traveller is not 'here' because the 'real' experience is outside the enclave but neither are they 'there' because they are surrounded by the familiarity of the enclave. The spatial context of the enclave becomes important in this context as the local and regional context will help determine the relative positions of 'here' and 'there'. For instance, an Australian backpacker staying on the Khao San Road is going to have a very different experience of 'here; and 'there' than that same backpacker staying in the King's Cross area of London.

Secondly, that there is a temporal suspension as the backpacker journey consists of a series of encounters with local cultures followed by a series of retreats into the metaworld of the enclave (see Hottola, 2005[54]). The enclave can therefore be a place

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[54] Hottola (2005: 5-6) discusses five categories of metaspaces where travellers segregate themselves (private spaces reserved for travellers, semi-private spaces of restricted access, public spaces of restricted access, spaces of temporary Western domination and wilderness areas). These spaces all vary from the spatial suspension outline by Wilson and Richards (2005) above yet infer powerful spatial relations between public and private and self and other (both exotic 'Other' and other travellers/Westerners).

and time of leisure as opposed to the 'cultural' work undertaken through travelling and the 'real' work waiting at home. And thirdly, there is a behavioural suspension as the enclave provides a space in which to manage 'personal contradictions that emerge from shifting identities' (Wilson and Richards, 2005: 6). This space may also then allow the backpacker to engage in behaviour that challenges their accepted norms (see for example Josiam et al, 1998).

Backpacker enclaves are generally seen as places that cater solely for the backpacking community or scene. There is a tension between the local and the backpacker, and it is worth remembering that the same suspensions that the backpacker can experience can also be experienced by the local as the norms of the locality are tempered by the presence of the backpacker. The tension is enclaves such as Bondi Beach then seem to be between the local and the backpacker. In Whistler, however, the tension would include a third element, that of the tourist. Cohen (2005: 3), in a discussion about the scarcity of information on the 'hosts' side of the story' suggests that 'most importantly, [it is] whether they [the hosts'] contend themselves with serving an enclave of backpacker tourism or would prefer to host more conventional, upper-end tourists.' Whistler does both, in that it supports a backpacker community at the same time as it supports the upper-end tourist. In supporting both, can Whistler be seen as a backpacker enclave? I want to leave this question for now but I will return to it in Chapter Six.

2.5 Transnationalism

> Are backpackers in some contexts becoming a model for the modern mobile
> worker as well as the modern tourist? (Wilson and Richards, 2005: 12).

The main tenet of transnationalism can perhaps be said to be that of the multiplicity of involvements, ties and interactions which the people involved sustain in multiple societies, communities or nation-states (see Mitchell, 2000; Vertovec, 1999). The last decade has seen a profound movement away from seeing the world 'as a cultural mosaic, of separate pieces with hard, well-defined edges' (Hannerz, 1992: 218) towards a world which is concerned with 'the diverse mobilities of peoples, objects, images, information and wastes: and of the complex interdependencies between, and social consequences of, these diverse mobilities' (Urry, 2000: 185; see also Hall, 2005b).

What this means is that an increasingly diverse range of people are experiencing some form of transnationality and that at the same time, an increasing number of people are participating in transnational spaces (see Jackson et al, 2004). For young budget travellers, the time they spend away from home – whether studying, volunteering, developing a career or travelling – can then not only be seen as becoming a normal and almost taken for granted part of the life cycle, but becomes part of a wider process of mobility, of transnationalism (see Conradson and Latham, 2005c).

Transnationalism has often focused on either end of the global labour market and so has been seen to be about either the mobility of the global elite (see for instance Koser and Salt, 1997) or the diasporic movement of individuals and families from the 'developing 'world to the industrialised West (such as Filipino nurses who work in the UK). Recent work (such as Clarke, 2005; Conradson and Latham, 2005c) however, has begun to consider the 'middle'[55]. This work[56] on the 'middle' considers how the working and living practices of what are, in terms of this thesis, young budget travellers, demonstrates distinctive forms of transnational experience. Whilst using these examples, I also want to consider how transnationalism and processes of identity formation may connect (see Ghosh and Wang, 2003, see Figure 2.6).

Ghosh and Wang (2003: 278) suggest that the transnational process is essentially individualistic as one composes a sense of multiple or hybrid selves through 'an abstract awareness of one's self, diaspora and multiple belonging'. As such, place plays a pivotal role in constructing transnational identities as an individual's total attachment to a single place loosens, so dividing their attention and presence between two places or more (Hannerz, 2002; see also Jackson et al, 2004).

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[55] I do believe there is a need to consider this 'middle' of transnationalism. However, I also echo Ghosh and Wang's (2003: 280, see also Westwood and Phizacklea, 2000) concerns that the term transnational seems to more often concentrate on those who have the freedom, legally, culturally and economically to move across borders and between cultures thus eclipsing the stories of the financially challenged transnational migrants whose limited resources mean they are embarking on a journey of uncertainty.
[56] For instance, Clarke (2005) considers the working holiday maker in Australia whilst Conradson and Latham (2005b) consider New Zealand OEers in London.
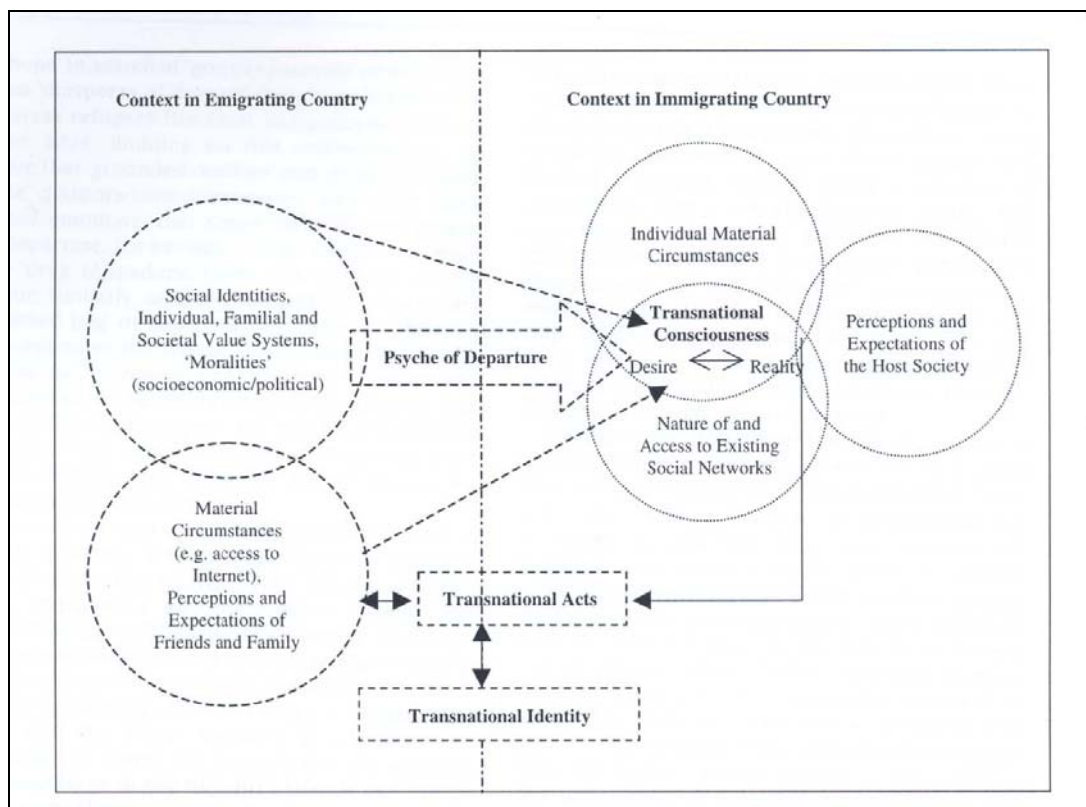
Figure 2.6 Transnationalism and Identity: A Conceptual Framework (Source: Ghosh and Wang, 2003: 279).

This style of mobility can be seen to be bound-up with a more general process of societal individualisation. This process emphasises the nurturing of the self as the self becomes increasingly reflexive, fluid and complex (see Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1994; Conradson and Latham, 2005c). Thus young budget travellers working and travelling experiences allow them to explore both the personal and professional possibilities that are bound up in the broader social networks associated with contemporary practices of mobility.

The freedom of mobility for this group of travellers gives rise to a circulatory movement, where citizens of one nation will go and work/live/travel abroad for a period of time before returning home (see Conradson and Latham. 2005c; Findlay, 1995). What is also worth noting, is that, for example in the case of the New Zealanders in London, social networks were moving from place to place with the young budget travellers (Conradson and Latham, 2005c). As such, it is not just individuals who develop through transnational opportunities but the relations within and between wider social networks also become more mobile, complex and fluid through transnational practices and experiences.

2.6 Conclusion

The chapter has put forward a number of theoretical debates with which to consider the empirical evidence of this research. It has done so through an examination of four main themes; identity, work, place and transnationalism. The everyday lives of young budget travellers are about more than simply travelling. The working practices and experiences they undertake, the way they see and use place and the ease with which they negotiate national, social, cultural and economic boundaries all have an impact on the ways in which these young people 'do' tourism.

This chapter provides the theoretical base. The empirical chapters that follow will assemble stories and narratives with which to illustrate, define, challenge and compliment the theoretical. By developing empirical accounts of identity formation through working and travelling practices, I argue that this thesis opens up a space for thinking about the longer term travel practices of these young budget travellers. As the blurring between work and leisure expands through time and across space, so I suggest that these young people's everyday lives will continue developing the working and travelling practices they cultivated through their initial trips away from home.

I will now consider the methodology involved in this research project before moving on to the empirical chapters. The concluding chapter then draws together the threads from the theoretical, the methodological and the empirical and conveys some final thoughts on the young budget traveller.

CHAPTER THREE:

WRITING A PERSONAL GEOGRAPHY OF MY FIELDWORK?

> Being both an individual perception and a socially constructed identity, "backpacker" is more a social construct than a definition. As such it is an obvious object for ethnographic inquiry (Sørensen, 2003: 852).

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter One I argued that this thesis has stemmed from my own experiences and the questions I found myself asking about the young people I saw coming to and through Whistler. In the previous chapter I discussed the theoretical literature around which this research has been based and I outlined the three main strands that have been present from the outset - identity, work and place. The aim of this chapter therefore is to pull these two things - the theoretical and those early questions - together in a coherent discussion of how I turned an idea for a research topic into the 'real thing'.

More particularly, this chapter will outline the methodological principles behind this research before going on to discuss the tools – methods – that were used in the pursuit of gaining the knowledge needed to find answers to those very first questions (see Gilbert, 1994). In the process of articulating the amalgamation of the theoretical and the methodological and in aiming to describe, analyse and critique the real and lived experience of the field work, I have seen my emphasis shift from what seemed at the start a straightforward discussion of the role of work in young people's travel experiences to a complex hybridity of ideas around the transnational spaces these young people occupy during their working and travelling time away from home. These ideas will be explored more fully in the following chapters but it is a point of methodological importance to note here that the process of research needs to be recognised as neither linear nor simplistic, even though the final, 'sanitised' version often portrays exactly that.

In thinking about how to approach this chapter, I wanted to be able to justify using a somewhat autobiographical account[57] of the qualitative and ethnographic methods I used. I believe that qualitative and ethnographic fieldwork cannot escape the messiness of everyday life (see Hyndman, 2001; Rose 1997; Vail, 2001) and therefore, no account of these types of fieldwork can fully escape that messiness when trying to translate it into something readable, tangible, coherent and cohesive. As such, I have chosen to write this chapter through combining a conversational autobiographical style[58] with contextual and abstract discussions surrounding the many issues involved in any qualitative social science research project.

This chapter details the various methodological considerations and method constructions involved in the research. The first section discusses the methodologies behind the research project. As I suggested earlier, the process of fieldwork is complex - perhaps a better word is unpredictable. Therefore, before going on to examine the methods involved in the fieldwork – both the planned methods and the reality of the fieldwork, I intend to discuss the issue of reflexivity in this type of research. I will then continue on to examine how the messiness of everyday life has influenced the research process throughout. As I go on to try and rationalise the methods planned and used, the analysis done and the results achieved, I will put forward a few caveats (see Vail, 2001) that I feel are particularly important when doing/reading/writing/ the research process.

3.2 Qualitative and Ethnographic Methodologies

3.21 The Starting Point

Qualitative and ethnographic methods began to be incorporated into humanistic geography throughout the 1970s as dissatisfaction grew with positivist geography's lack of concern with the complexities of people's everyday experiences (see Cook and Crang, 1995, Smith, S., 2000). Using these methods, geographers began to explore

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[57] In this chapter, I see autobiographical writing in geography as a particular type of research tool; however, autobiographical stories are also one way in which young travellers can narrate identity (see Elsrud, 2001). As such, it is not only a 'method' but has also been one of the ways in which my participants (and myself) have communicated during this research process.

[58] Reading Ian Cook's (1998) paper, 'You want to be careful you don't end up like Ian. He's all over the place' was a revelation for me. I have been told and have often felt that my academic writing was too conversational, too 'chatty', and perhaps not even 'academic' enough. Cook's (1998) article and Pamela Moss's (2001) edited collection made me realise that it was a valid form of expression and so I am particularly pursuing this approach in this chapter in order to highlight the individuality of fieldwork and how, behind the methodology, the theory, the analysis and the tidily written conclusions, there is a mass of other 'stuff' that leads us, as individuals, to those particular conclusions (see also Ghosh and Wang, 2003).

other ways in which to generate data in order to explore of the role of human agency within social and cultural geography, including incorporating the work of earlier Chicago School sociologists and their much more ethnographic approaches (see Gregory, 2000a; Hiebert, 2000). Qualitative and ethnographic methods, now often widely utilised within human geography, can be defined as being concerned with 'how the world is viewed, experienced and constructed' (Smith, S., 2000: 660) and 'interpreted, understood … produced' (Mason, 1996: 4). They are about understanding people's lived realities, their everyday interactions and actions, thus allowing us, as researchers to begin to understand social realities (Brewer, 2000; Mason, 1996).

Qualitative research methods are seen as much more fluid and exploratory than quantitative methods and the data generated from this type of research aims to produce insightful social explanations with which to provide greater understanding for the academic community. Thus, there is a constant relationship between theory and research with the dual aims that not only will theory be improved and advanced through the process of research but so too will our understanding of the social and cultural worlds around us (Herbert, 2000; May, 2001).

It is not my intention here to argue whether my methodology has been qualitative or ethnographic, whether in fact there is a difference or whether ethnographic methods are just another form of qualitative methods. As I conducted interviews and undertook participant observation as part of my research I will use the two terms interchangeably, although below, I will aim to offer an explanation of why I am using the two so interchangeably. I believe that both qualitative and ethnographic forms of research involve the researcher in many ways and I follow Susan Smith's (2001: 25) stance that

> Knowledge is situated and struggled over, so the broad ontological position of
> qualitative research comes with a particular epistemological mandate … This
> mandate is one that requires the researchers to recognize the extent to which
> they are immersed in, rather than detached from, the production of knowledge.

Thus, by choosing to use qualitative methods for my research, I have chosen a way of doing research that

encompasses more than tactics and techniques. Inherent to the method are one's philosophies, assumptions and values regarding the subject, and these articles of faith dictate the manner and means by which the subject is pursued (Estroff, 1981: 34).

In some ways, this should allow me to 'tell it like it is' or 'tell it from the inside' (Pearson, 1993: viii) yet this does nothing in the end but simplify why I chose to explore the complexities of the everyday lives of these young working tourists. Rather, the idea that 'we cannot completely divorce ourselves from who we are or from what we know' (Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 47) has enabled me to understand that both myself as researcher and my respondents have enacted the world in a certain way and so the methodology I have employed has, in some ways, actively constituted the data I have collected (see Hitchings, 2004; Law and Urry, 2002).

Thus, by using a qualitative and ethnographic methodology I have not only used methods which allowed me to 'constantly and continually reflect on the interpretations and shared meanings of people's everyday worlds and realities' (Dwyer and Limb, 2001: 6; see also Cook and Crang, 1995) but have used these methods in order to recognise that as a researcher, I am never a 'neutral channel of communication' (Pearson, 1993: viii)

3.22 What Methodology? What Methods? Why?

In many ways I am following Hammersley and Atkinson's (1995: 1) 'liberal' interpretation of ethnography

> In its most characteristic form it involves the ethnographer participating, overtly and covertly, in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions – in fact, collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research.

With this I also follow Susan Smith's (2000: 660) definition of qualitative methods,

> Qualitative methods are concerned with how the world is viewed, experienced and constructed by social actors. They provide access to motives, aspirations, and power relationships that account for how places, people and events are made and represented.

These two definitions are, in many ways, remarkably similar. Both are concerned with how the world is viewed by the people in it, yet the difference between the two comes down to language. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) talk about ethnography as getting involved, asking questions, listening; Susan Smith (2000) talks about how qualitative methods provide access to the same information but does not say how this access is achieved. It can be said that ethnography is a methodology that utilises qualitative methods (for instance, see Jackson, 2000) however, qualitative methods can also be said to utilise ethnographic techniques (see Smith, S., 2000). Thus by using qualitative interviews and the ethnographic technique of participating within my research, I find it difficult to 'decide' which methodology or approach I have used. If I have ensured that my research has been, as Mason (1996: 5-6) suggests (qualitative) research should be, ethically, systematically and rigorously conducted, and if I have aimed to ensure that it will produce social explanations to intellectual puzzles and that these social explanations will have a wider resonance than this single study, then I do not believe it necessary to make that decision about methodology. However, what I do see as necessary is to look at the background of these methodological approaches which will lead on to a short discussion of my own ontological position – or rather, how my assumptions, values and personal philosophies have led me to adopt these approaches.

3.23 A "Sort of" History of Qualitative Approaches and Ethnography

h) Qualitative Approaches

The use of qualitative methods in human geography can be seen as part of the humanistic and cultural turns within geography (Baxter and Eyles, 1997). As I have suggested above this was in part due to humanistic geography's dissatisfaction with 1960s positivist geography's lack of consideration of the complexities of everyday life and its repositioning of geography as a spatial science. Positivist geography was seen to dehumanise people. Humanist geographers criticised its belief in a separate, empirically objective world (outside of the individual observing it) and its narrow deterministic view of human beings (see Clarke, 2004; Johnston, 1997).

Humanistic geographers of the 1970s, informed by the likes of the neo-Kantianism and pragmatism[59] of the Chicago School of sociology and by the French school of

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[59] I understand neo-Kantianism to be based upon the Kantian tradition that geography was an integrated science concerned with studying the world and stressing the 'epistemic structuring of the world by the human actor' (see Gregory, 2000b: 410); as such, knowledge is shaped and constructed by experience and content. I see pragmatism to be characterised by the belief that 'no truth is ever final' and that 'the

human geography (see Gregory, 2000a), were not the only ones to be critical of positivist geography. Critical geography, in the forms of Marxist and realist geography (see Johnston, 1997) argued that by simply describing the superstructure, positivist geographers were diverting attention away from deeper causes and helping to maintain the present situation of exploitation (see Clarke, 2004).

Rather than in any way be successive, there was debate between these approaches in that each view critiqued the others (see Clarke, 2004; Delanty, 1997; Johnston, 1997). By the 1980s positivism had lost ground in this debate and the 1980s and early 1990s saw the debate move to the two sides of social theory, humanism, emphasising agency, on the one hand and Marxism-realism, emphasising structure, on the other. What both of these viewpoints brought with them was a different way of studying the world. Whereas positivism aimed for geography to become a spatial science by creating a (false) sense of objectivity by separating the observed and the observer (see Cloke et al, 1991:14) and so taking everyday people out of their studies, humanistic geography sought to give agency to the human beings present in their studies. Marxists tended to look at the more political-economic aspects of society and although criticised by humanism for neglecting the lived experiences and micro-worlds of family and neighbourhoods (see Clarke, 2004), it presented an alternative view to both positivism and humanistic geography by incorporating the political economic with theories of space and society-nature relations (see Smith, N., 2000).

With this 'peopling of human geography' (Cloke et al, 1991) in the 1980s and 1990s came about the greater use of qualitative methods. Methods such as in-depth, open-ended interviews, participant observation and the interpretation of different 'texts' including landscapes, archival material, maps, literature and visual images (see Smith, S., 2000) began to be adopted as they were seen to allow researchers to access how the world was viewed and constructed by their participants.

The cultural turn in human geography in the 1990s and perhaps more specifically, the augmentation of feminist geography[60], has perhaps added one further important aspect to the qualitative methodologies that were being readily explored and used; that of reflexivity. The cultural turn, in a very brief summary, highlighted the neglect of

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notion of scholarship takes place within a wider community' (see Barnes, 2000: 632). Originally a philosophical movement of the late nineteenth century, it has been partly revitalised by the wider growth of interest in post-structuralism and post-modernism, of which I will touch on shortly.

[60] Feminist geography dates back to the mid-1970s yet it seemed to take until the late 1980s/early 1990s to really take 'hold' in human geography. To me, three important publications signify when feminist geography finally (for want of a better phrase) hit the geographical mainstream; first was the publication of the Women and Geography Study Group's (1984) book, *Gender and Geography*. The second two were both a decade later and were Gillian Rose's (1993) book, *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* and the founding of the journal, *Gender, Place and Culture* in 1994.

cultural processes in the humanistic and Marxist approaches of the 1980s. It emphasised the shift from broadly class-based studies towards identity-based, post-colonial, culturally different ways of life (see Crang, 2000). Feminist geographers, at the same time, were developing a critical discourse that illustrated not only women's oppression within society but also how this was reproduced in various ways in geographical theory (see Pratt, 2000). Both of these approaches emphasised the role of the researcher within the research project. As human geography began to realise the importance of the everyday within the study of society, so the cultural turn and feminist geography emphasised the importance of realising that the researcher was not a neutral (objective) observer of this everyday life.

i)   Ethnography

As I have suggested, ethnography can be seen as part of a qualitative methodology and certainly the increased use of observation, and particularly participant observation, within human geography is bound up with the intellectual turns that have taken place within the discipline. However, ethnography has its own history.

Firstly, it is worth noting that the growth of positivism hides a previous period when many researchers – as is often done now – used qualitative and quantitative methods side by side. Mayhew (1861) and Booth (1902-03) both treated qualitative and quantitative methods as complimentary. The sociologists of the Chicago School, renowned for their use of ethnographic participant observation, also used statistical methods (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

Ethnography, as it emerged in the early twentieth century, was predominantly about conveying the inner life and workings of particular social groups, often primitive 'others' (see Jackson, 2000; Simpson, 2005). Such studies proposed that the researcher was somehow 'objective'; that even if the researcher was familiar with a group or setting, they should treat it as 'anthropologically strange' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 9) in an attempt to 'erase' those things they would take for granted as a culture member. So, the researcher would become an objective observer, able to record the practices of others without prejudice. These early naturalistic ethnographies have now largely been discredited (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Vidich and Lyman, 2003) and ethnographers, and particularly anthropologists, have had to face a crisis of representation in relation to how they have represented the people, places and cultures they have studied.

However, the history of and behind these ethnographies is equally important to remember. The early twentieth century also saw the beginning of the end of the British Empire. Therefore, there was a drive to understand how 'pre-industrial 'foreign' others were to be incorporated into a new 'British family of nations'' (Simpson, 2005: 68, see also Brewer, 2000). Malinowski's (1922) work on the Trobriand Islanders (see Hannerz, 2002) is seen as one of the earliest ethnographical anthropological studies and his work is often credited with initiating a new paradigm in research, that of long-term participant observation (Minnesota State University, 2004, see also O'Reilly, 2000). However, it was the publication of his own research diaries that eventually helped to damage confidence in his research (Malinowski, 2004).

Yet, ethnography has never been just about observing the primitive other. The Chicago School's rationale for much of their research stemmed from the idea that there are many different layers of cultural knowledge within a society and that

> this is particularly true of modern industrial societies with their complex divisions
> of labour, multi-farious life-styles, ethnic diversity, and deviant communities – and
> the subcultures and perspectives that maintain, and are generated by, these
> social divisions (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995: 9).

Criticisms of both Malinowski and the Chicago School have not led to the abandonment of ethnographic research methods by the social sciences. Instead, an evolution in ethnography seems to have occurred. Key to this, and linking back to my earlier discussion of qualitative approaches, has been the recognition of the socially constructed nature of knowledges (see Simpson, 2005: 68). The researcher is thus positioned culturally, socially, and politically and so are themselves part of the social relations that they are studying (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

As such qualitative and ethnographic approaches continue to value the everyday as a valid site for understanding social relations. Perhaps one thing that has changed from almost a century ago, is that

> …the points of view from which ethnographic [and qualitative] observations may
> be made are as great as the choices of lifestyles available to modern society
> (Vidich and Lyman, 2003: 95).

3.3 My Own Positionality?

In order to embark on a way to situate myself, I am going to quote another PhD, on a similar topic and from a similar standpoint (that is, from *my* reading of it…)

> To conclude, then, on a scale of late modern thought, I settle around Albrow (1996)[61] himself. I reject the radical claims of positivism, and I shy away from those of postmodernism, towards something between the two, what Albrow calls 'pragmatic universalism', an approach which is sceptical about ever discovering timeless truth, but which recognises the necessity to affirm truths on the best understanding available to us in our own time (Clarke, 2004: 91).

I keep also going back to a quote I used earlier; 'Inherent to the method are one's philosophies, assumptions and values regarding the subject' (Estroff, 1981: 34) and to something I said in an earlier footnote in that I see autobiographical writing as a research tool. Yet, for me, the importance of this research tool is that autobiographical stories are a way in which young travellers can narrate their identity (see Elsrud, 2001) and so, through the interviews I have conducted, autobiographical stories have been the main way in which my participants and I have communicated during this research process.

I then think about Mike Crang's (2003: 499) comment that says that the bodily presence of the researcher is now acknowledged, we are no longer doing the 'God-trick of the invisible, omnipresent narrator'; instead the researcher is the 'copresent interlocutor'. As much as I realise he is talking about how the actual 'body' is present in the research process – often through race or gender for instance – I do agree when he says that often, once the scene has been set, the researcher is still only a 'ghostly absence' in the finished paper, report or thesis (Crang, 2003: 499).

So, where does this leave me? Or rather, where do all these thoughts, theories, assumptions and values place me? I do not yet want to be particularly reflexive – that bit comes next. I do think it is pertinent to state a few things.

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[61] Clarke (2004) is talking about a quote from Albrow (1996: 5) which says, 'On a scale of late modern thought in which Michel Foucault is at point zero and Alasdair MacIntyre at point ten, I settle around point six. Finding a way between these two wild extremes, a ruthless scientific relativism and living as a quest for meaning in living, is the fate of anyone who seeks to grasp the contemporary world'.

- I study backpackers, yet have never been a backpacker myself[62].

- I see myself as a cultural and social geographer who happens to be doing research in tourism. I am not simply a tourism geographer – in this I totally agree with Urry (1990:82) in that we are all tourists much of the time and that tourism is intrinsically part of contemporary experience.

- I enjoy the idea of postmodern methods (after Dear, 1994) yet pull back from committing fully to the 'anything goes' attitude of much postmodernism as method (see Clarke, 2004: 90) and finally,

- Defining my 'national' identity is always a challenge; am I British or am I Canadian?[63] Can I be both? How can I even consider myself Canadian when I know more about British politics, history, and probably culture, than I do Canadian?

So why are these points important; why do I need to state them for the reader? For the first point, I have never been a backpacker. I moved to a ski resort in Canada to 'do' a ski season and then I moved back to the UK. For me, this became an important point during the research process. To borrow from another, similar, PhD (Simpson, 2005), respondents often employ a form of 'referential' reflexivity (Adkins, 2002) and as such there is

> a process of respondents 'imagining' the researcher, of deciding what it means to
> be a social scientist, or whatever other role the interviewer is in. It is then to this
> positioned person that the respondent speaks and chooses what representation,
> truths and narratives to recount (Simpson, 2005: 76).

As such, during my interviews, I often found it important to define myself to my respondents as a 'non-backpacker', yet there were certainly occasions when I did not correct assumptions about my past travelling experiences and how I would define myself because of them. I will discuss this more when I talk about interviewing but it leads onto my next point. I do think 'our projects are often unstable entities which are not only presented but actually exist, in multiple versions…' (Crang, 2003: 497). Not

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[62] For a much more detailed and autobiographical explanation of this comment, see Appendix 3. I have discussed the term 'backpacker' in more detail in Chapter 1. I have used it here to purposely evoke a type of traveller – and so want to show that I specifically have not been, and do not, define myself, as such.

[63] Here, in a way, is the first, real 'autobiographical moment'. I have, so far, talked and chatted my way through this chapter as much as I written it and I have yet to expose much personal detail about myself. Is that not what autobiography is about – writing about one's own life? I was born in Calgary, Alberta, Canada to British parents and moved back to the UK when I was 11. My parents immigrated to Canada in the late 1960s (my father was a trained teacher and at the time, Canada had a shortage of teachers.) Both my parents retained their British citizenship and therefore, growing up, I always had a British passport. When I was 26, I applied for and received my Canadian passport and so now hold both passports.

only are the finished products unstable, but the processes, the thinking, the writing, the doing of the research process, are unstable and changing – again, a sort of messiness pervading the research process. This messiness is not only the preserve of the researcher. As I have begun to suggest, how our respondents behave, the assumptions they make, the stories they tell – or perhaps don't tell; this too, adds to the messiness as we, the researcher try to make sense of it all and find a way to understand the information we gather. Putting it together in a way that makes it understandable and worthwhile to our audience without taking away the meaning of what others have said to us is the challenge. Again, going back to postmodernism and my third point (above), reading a text is not straightforward either. Different readers – and once more back to Crang's (2003) multiple versions – interpret the same text in different ways, so funders, colleagues, friends, family, peers and respondents (ibid, 2003: 497) will all read/see/know different versions of the same text according to their own fields of reference, their own past biographies and their present intentions (see also Clarke, 2004: 88).

In some ways, postmodern philosophies also apply to my last point. In a simple way, the transnational world we live in has 'allowed' me to have dual citizenship (I am saying this very tongue in cheek!). Yet, it was only as other people questioned me about my national identity that I began to find it problematic[64]. When I started my research, I never questioned the fact that I did (and do) hold two passports; that at that time, I had equally split my life between the two countries. My research, my theoretical reading, my social networks have given me the space(s) and the debates with which to question my nationality, yet have provided me with few answers. Through this process, the role transnational identities play in the lives of the young people I spoke to has become a much more important aspect of this research.

The reasoning behind stating the above points then is twofold. Firstly, it gives the reader some context in which to place this text – it gives them some personal reference points or perhaps some theoretical reference points, or maybe both, with which to relate and so to interpret the text in their own way[65]. Secondly, I see the research process as a somewhat individual journey.

Yet, the knowledge that is used to undertake any research is not produced in social and historical abstraction; as Simpson (2005: 73) says, 'one person's representations

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[64] See Appendix 4 for an extract from my research diary of one example of how this questioning of my identity manifested itself.
[65] See Section 1.5 in Chapter 1 for context of the field itself. See also Section 3.5 below.

are indicative of more commonly held knowledges'. She is talking about knowledges produced by and through gap year travel, however it applies as much to the researcher as the researched. My positionality, therefore, helps makes this research different from other research and yet it also allows for comparison and validity with other research. The fact that I do situate myself illustrates that I have and use commonly held (in this sense, academic) knowledges. As such, I find myself 'caught' in a (post-modernist) dichotomy of my own making; somewhere between the distinct individuality of the fieldwork experience (see Saunders, 2001; Veeck, 2001) and the shared experiences of many similar and commonly held knowledges.

3.4 Reflexivity or the Messiness of Research?

As I have already suggested, in using ethnographic and qualitative methods, a researcher has to recognise that knowledge production is not a disinterested process. Knowledge is produced from 'positions' and so is always partial (see Rose, 1997) and thus demands a level of reflexivity. Positions are both individual, such as educational experiences, and structural, such as class, race and gender and so reflexivity, in part, becomes the process of recognising and accepting these various positions (see Simpson, 2005). Ethnographers (like social scientists generally) must locate their data in the context of the social processes that brought them about, and recognise the limits of their perception of reality (Brewer, 2000: 4).

Reflexivity is ultimately about acknowledging that it is 'through the multiple partial views of multiple social actors that a particular representation of reality is arrived at' (Simpson, 2005: 75). With this, it is important to also recognise that the partiality of views and limits of knowledge production do not undermine the value of such knowledge (Lynch, 2000). The value of the knowledge we find is not about how close it comes to being a universal view, but rather, how rigorous we are in trying to construct our various knowledges (Brewer 2000: 44; see also Crang, 2005; Mason, 1996; Simpson, 2005).

There are two more points on reflexivity I want to make before the autobiographical takes over. Firstly, reflexivity has evolved, both in theory and in practice. As social scientists undertaking qualitative or ethnographic research, we are expected to make mention of how we came to this position; we are expected to explain our partial knowledges and we are expected to somehow use reflexivity within the whole research process. Yet as Tuan (2001:44) says,

Reflection may seem, at first blush, a commonplace sort of activity open to all. It does not require, for example, special training and equipment, as scientific experimentation does. *Yet it is rare.* (emphasis added).

Rose (1997: 306), when discussing feminist geographers says, 'at the same time as they defend reflexivity [as a strategy for situating knowledges], many feminist geographers acknowledge the difficulty of actually doing it'. Trying to be reflexive is not as easy as the literature suggests; in fact, it is a difficult task. How do you think about your research, how do you position yourself within that, how much do you have to take account of your gender, your class, your educated (and somewhat institutionalised) view of the world? Reflecting on our research illustrates the very messiness of it; as Rose (1997: 314; see also Parr, 1996) says

Doing research … is a messy business. Researchers are entangled in the research process in all sorts of ways, and the demand to situate knowledge is a demand to recognise this messiness.

Secondly, I think it is safe to say that, for many researchers, simply stating your positionality as a researcher (i.e. I am a white, middle-class woman) is not reflexive enough. However, I also worry that we, as academics and researchers, spend so much time trying to justify our positions, trying to sort out the messiness of our positionality, and trying to tell our audience how partial our knowledge is and how this can only be a good thing, that we end up almost 'navel-gazing' (see England, 1994), or being misunderstood; our reflexivity can be seen almost 'as "a confession to salacious indiscretions" … and perhaps even "narcissistic and egoistic"'(Okely, 1992 cited in England, 1994: 82). Chris Hamnett's (2003: 1-2) comments add to my concerns when he says of postmodern human geography,

its stress on textuality and texts, deconstruction, critique, 'reading' and interpretation, has led human geography into a theoretical playground where its practitioners stimulate or entertain themselves and a handful of readers, but have in the process become increasingly detached from contemporary social issues and concerns.

I am not immediately going to launch into a discussion about reflexivity and my fieldwork experience as such, nor am I going to specifically address the concerns I have raised above. What follows are two particular discussions; the first is about 'the field' and the second is about the role of the researcher (and the researched).

Both of these will begin to address the concerns I have raised here as well as, I hope, begin to illustrate the many ways in which I believe I have considered my research. I do not think it will be until the reader reaches the conclusion that they – and I – will fully understand the ways in which the notion of reflexivity has influenced this thesis, and how the messy, confusing, frustrating and illuminating process of fieldwork is both an impediment and an aid to this supposedly contemplative process.

3.5 The Field or Rather, (At) Home and Away

Zelinsky (2001: 3, see also Ford, 2001) suggests that modern technology has somewhat lessened the appeal of 'muck[ing] about in messy situations', like that of fieldwork. However, he goes on to say that geographers seem to have an above average craving for the whole field experience (!). Fieldwork is often seen as a type of 'rite of passage' for novice researchers (DeLyser and Starrs, 2001)[66] with Edwards and Ribbens (1998: 5) suggesting that the doctoral research period is a ''training ground' for 'real research' to be undertaken later,' and is a crucial time, 'as the individual is poised at the moment of entry into the public world of academia as an active participant, in transition between different social worlds'[67].

Fieldwork, more importantly, can involve leaving one physical setting to travel to (and in and out of) a different physical setting (Clifford, 1997: 58). The field therefore always remains '*somewhere else*' (Clifford, 1997: 85, italics in original). As well as being treated as somehow physically distinct, locating this 'field' has more recently become about sociological and theoretical concerns (see Laurie et al, 1999; Nast 1994).

It is the more sociological aspects of fieldwork I want to discuss here. To me, this research consisted of a specific physical 'field' or place – Whistler. In Section 1.5 in

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[66] In the same way that autobiography is both a method I am employing in this chapter and a method with which I communicated with my respondents, so too the idea of a 'rite of passage' is meaningful to me in terms of the research process and in terms of the young people I chose to study.

[67] I must add one more comment. Not only can field research perhaps be seen as a type of 'researcher training ground' but it is also worth remembering that as a researcher we are 'using' this same field for our own ends. As such, tourism and fieldwork can (again) be said to be similar in that both tend to involve the intent to discover somewhere (or someone) else. As Crick (1985: 81) says about anthropology,

> We may dislike the tourist who merely uses other cultures. But anthropology uses the other
> to create itself. If the tourist has limited interests, so do fieldworkers – they are after a PhD
> or intent upon publications

He does go on to suggest that 'Tourists are at play; fieldwork is work' (Crick, 1985: 81) and says 'Mintz (1977: 60) suggests that the tourist *pays* to experience whereas the anthropologist is *paid* to carry out responsible work (Crick, 1985: 80, italics in the original). Personally, I believe we could – perhaps somewhat cynically – replace the '*paid* to carry out responsible work' with '*paid* to experience' (see Tuan, 2001) so once again, returning to Urry's (1990: 82) contention that we are all tourists much of the time.

Chapter One I provided a historical overview of the growth of this resort town. This description, for me, is directly related to the importance I place on the field's physicality within the fieldwork process. Fine (2003, cited in Crang, 2005: 226-7) argues that a 'detailed account of the world being observed has to be presented, as opposed to the inclusion of a few instances of data to bolster one's analytical points, to build a case, rather than simply illuminate it'. As much as this quote is about how to represent our respondent's insights, to me it goes back to the points I raised earlier when talking about reflexivity. I want to create a picture of this place for the reader; I want the reader to 'experience' Whistler in some way. Words and pictures may not transport the reader to the 'field' yet they can provide the base on which to imagine the field rather than simply providing odd, disjointed details of that place.

However, I also realise that although the temporal and spatial fieldwork took place in this physical space, the field was, in fact, a much wider social terrain that covered the entire research process (see Laurie et al, 1999). I do not agree with the contention that

> as academics we create, indeed invent, fields through our academic stories and projects; there is no reified field separate from our construction of it (Staeheli and Lawson, 1994: 97).

I do believe that the field is an actively constructed space and that it is often about recognising a multitude of fields that reflect the differing relationships between researcher and researched. However, the physical place of the field still exists after we, the researcher, leaves.

3.51 The Field and the Researcher

Fieldwork is both a professional and a personal undertaking (see Hyndman, 2001). Ralph Saunders (2001: 88) suggests that fieldwork defines us, as geographers and as social scientists. Karen Till (2001: 46) says that 'a researcher cannot easily divide her research and personal selves into separate sites of home and field'.

Many social scientists undertake research in 'fields' they know. Many of us undertake research and go 'into the field' because that field is already very familiar to us. Something in that field has attracted our attention, has caught our imagination and made us want to explore it more detail.

> Flying in the face of all that good advice, some researchers, like me, find topics close to home, or close to our hearts – topics so compelling we can't leave them alone – and we try to find ways to use our "insider" status to help, not hinder, insights (DeLyser, 2001: 442).

In theory, we are supposed to be able to separate the field from the home, the professional from the personal yet in practice 'we often construct emotional, spatial, and temporal boundaries between personal and work lives, a *here* and *there*, a home and field' (Till, 2001: 46, italics in original). And yet again, this becomes more difficult when the field is spatially a long way away from home. Whistler was a continent away from where I lived yet it was more than a 'field', more than a place in which to study young working tourists. It was somewhere that I had lived, worked and played with a generation of young working tourists; it had also been my home.

In part because of this, the 'field' should perhaps be defined as the space in which 'the researcher and the researched come together, it is no one's 'home'' (Simpson, 2005: 91). I prefer however, Vail's (2001) caveats on researching from afar. Vail (2001: 717) discusses how ethnographic research, instead of being undertaken over one long period[68], can be successfully undertaken in somewhat 'unnatural' temporal chunks if one has 'prior, *intimate* knowledge of the immersion site' (italics in original). He continues on by saying,

> Effective research from afar is only possible when the fieldworker has deep roots in the social world she or he is studying. Without such roots, the novelty, performed ignorance, and problems with isolation and temporal constriction about which I have written here could all raise the justifiable concern of those who would read the research (Vail, 2001: 718).

I will go on to talk about performed ignorance in the next section, however, what the above discussion aims to illustrate is that undertaking research in a known 'field' challenges the researcher on many levels. A researcher has to confront the very personal nature of their fieldwork (Saunders, 2001:93); from times and spaces of isolation to times of uncertainty (see extracts from my research diary below) whilst being willing to acknowledge the influence of one place, for instance, the 'field' on another, for instance, 'home' (see Till, 2001).

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[68] It is often stated that ethnographic research should be conducted over an extended period of time (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995; Herbert, 2000; Jackson, 2000 and O'Reilly, 2000). Few texts state how long this extended period should be although many social scientists see a period of at least a year to eighteen months as the minimum standard (see Becker, 1996; O'Reilly, 2000).

The complexity of social and cultural life, the complexity of life in Whistler affected my fieldwork more than I thought it would.

I now totally understand why many researchers feel a year in the field is necessary. Before I left I felt I had an advantage as I knew Whistler well, knew how systems worked, had some contacts there, had planned pretty well for my fieldwork, had thought how I was going to do it, where, when etc. So, 5 to 6 months in the field would work. It did, as much because it had to as due to the factors outlined above. …

I had troubles settling in. Although I had realised it would be different from when I lived there previously, it was more different than I realised. I was lonely. I was often in my house all day; I was often alone. It was difficult to maintain an academic outlook when there was no one else around. Luckily my roommate was taking some evening classes and that helped. Trying to discuss my research with people was interesting. They were interested but often then turned it around to what they saw it as, teased me about managing to get back to Whistler, or quite obviously didn't understand or weren't interested. Paul accused me of playing down why I was in Whistler when I spoke to many people. He may have been right but there was also an element of not wanting to alienate people who did not in any way relate to what I was doing. As many travellers will know, people make very quick decisions about who they will and will not spend time with when travelling. My research seemed, to me, to make people wary of me. Was I using everything they said as research?

I also had troubles when I returned to the UK. Five months away, just beginning to settle in and suddenly I was moving again. The upheaval of coming back to the UK was equally as difficult, if not more so, as moving to Whistler in the first place. The first day of walking back into my department was wonderful. It felt good to be back in an academic environment where I could discuss my ideas with a receptive audience. Yet, it was also quite weird as the conversations were so different to those in Whistler. The day-to-day lives of Londoners compared to Whistlerites is so different. It really does take some getting used to. (Extract 1. from Research Diary May, 2003)

I don't think that any texts about research warn you enough about some of these things [such as 'settling in']. And I think they should. You need to make sure that you have a good support network for when you go into fieldwork and when you return. And you need to be sure of yourself. There is nothing worse than going into the field and not having the confidence to go out and do it until a month before you return home. I found going into X difficult. I wanted to get involved in

their seminar series but going into the department was, for me, quite intimidating and daunting (Extract 2. from Research Diary May, 2003).

I found and still do find the idea of going 'into the field' somewhat incongruous. This is partly due to a point I mentioned earlier in that the field is actively constructed and so there can be a multitude of fields; it is also partly due to, as Katz (1994: 72, see also Hyndman, 2001: 265) says

'I am always, everywhere, in "the field". … This task requires recognition that as an ethnographer and as a woman my subject position is constituted in spaces of betweenness, a place neither inside nor outside'.

It is also in part due to my own relationship with the field. As Whistler had been my home and as I was living there again and as such, was immersed in the place, I never understood how I could therefore be venturing into such a thing as 'a field'. The relationship between the field and somewhere else, i.e. 'home', also became more problematic due to my past relationship with the place. The seasonal nature of the resort meant that there were occasions when I bumped into people and they literally talked to me as though I had never left. One ex-colleague actually asked, had I left or had I just been hiding, another asked what I was up to now and when I told her about my PhD, she said she hadn't even realised I had left Whistler[69]. Another saw my return as a continuation of my former role and was disappointed when this was not the case:

Just writing notes from The Geog Review (91:1) and am taking notes on an article about insider researcher. Do you know one thing I don't think I put in my research diary was an incident that happened a day or two after arriving in Whistler. I went up to Payroll (when they were still upstairs in the Cabin) to say hi to everyone. Hannah was there and I was being introduced to people and Corinne came up and said something like, thank goodness you're back, you can sort them out downstairs (Extract 3. from Research Diary Sept 2003)

Yet, it was also my own relationship with the place, my own past experiences that made it difficult as I had to remember and remind myself I was there for a reason i.e. in order to conduct research:

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[69] At this point, I had been gone for over two years.

It's strange being back and its strange seeing people's reactions to that. In many ways no one is surprised to see me back – the comment being that people can't stay away or that they always come back.

In some ways it's making my research here even more difficult because I'm already "involved" at a level above first season yet because I've been away so long I've sort of gone back to that level. It was talking to Bill and both of us agreeing how we were used to asking people to do stuff for us because of our [supervisory] positions and how we can't do that anymore as we've come back in at a much (lower?) different level (Extract 4. from Research Diary Nov 2002).

And a final example was the ease in which I was able to gather much of my secondary data. On the occasion I relate below, I had returned to Whistler four months after completing my original fieldwork and over three years since I had first left.

Just thinking back to the three weeks I just spent in Canada/USA. And the fact that I did get some field work done. It always makes me smile at how easily I am accepted back at the Cabin. Enough people still know me that I can literally walk in and go about my business and no one stops me. I must have used almost two reams of paper to photocopy sooooo much stuff from old handbooks and newsletters and besides Jane asking me what I was doing, no one else was really worried about it. It is nice to know that I am still that accepted there but at the same time I do feel some niggling questions about why I am there, how I will justify all this and how I will actually use all the stuff I have now photocopied! Was it worth it? (Extract 5. from Research Diary Sept 2003).

There were moments when, to use Karen Till's (2001: 46) words 'I felt almost schizophrenic, torn between worlds, cultures, sets of social relations and selves'. The quote earlier from my research diary (Extract 1.) illustrates that the transition between one place and another can be fraught with difficulties and that this transition is not only about going *in* to the field; coming *out* again can be equally (if nor more) problematic and complicated.

Research spaces test the emotional, spatial and temporal boundaries between here and there, home and away. As researchers, our identities can become bound up with our research and so, the fields where this research is conducted. Going back to conduct research in somewhere that I had previously lived and worked and was, for me, still 'home' made me question myself in ways that I had not foreseen and could not have planned for.

When we move back and forth between shifting homes and fields, our research agendas, relationships, and even our own understandings of ourselves as researchers will change because we can never know who we will become during the research process (Till, 2001: 46).

Madge et al (1997: 109) ask, 'What about our relationship with the 'field'? Can we ever really leave it? Can we, or should we go back?'. These questions relate back to Katz's (1994) quote earlier about the spaces of 'betweenness' and how or where, as a researcher, one places oneself. Can a researcher ever fully be inside the field? Can they ever fully leave the field? In this respect, engaging with the messiness of myself – being reflexive perhaps – and my relation to my 'field' made me realise that my fieldwork did not finish with leaving Whistler, nor will it finish when this thesis is complete; as Ford (2001: 382) says, '[f]or me, fieldwork is never finished'.

3.6 The Researcher

Tuan (2001: 43) suggests that '*[e]xperience* is a key world in the humanist geographer's lexicon'. In describing what this experience is, he says (2001: 43),

Experience has both a passive and an active component. The passive component is suggested by the word *undergo*: One undergoes experience. An experienced person is one to whom much has happened, whether he or she wants it to or not. The active component is suggested by the root *per*, as in the word *peril*: To experience is to venture forth, to run a risk.

For some researchers, the disjuncture between the field and everyday life is the experience; it is 'this most exciting form of adventure tourism' (Saunders, 2001: 89). For others of us, we never really enter or return from the field. Rather, we are part of our own research (DeLyser, 2001: 441) and as such, have to negotiate the challenges posed by being an 'insider'. Fieldwork, then becomes less about the intersection between spaces of academia and everyday life (Simpson, 2005) and is much more 'a curious mixture of humiliations and intimidations mixed with moments of insight and even enjoyment' (Thrift, 2003 cited in Crang, 2005: 231) that we find by examining an arena already well known to us.

Yet, there remains a disjuncture in being an insider as, by also being a researcher, so I am always also an 'outsider'[70]. As Pearson (1993: viii) says, '[b]eing an ethnographer is to be in two places at the same time'. Perhaps, Thrift's 'quip' about being an observant participator (see Smith, S.,2001; Thrift, 2003) is the most accurate? And Melissa Gilbert (1994) argues that we are always outsiders when we are engaged in research; ethnography, after all, is about the researcher adopting different roles and levels of participation depending on the demands of the research context, is it not (Bennett, 2002a: 139)?

Overall, I believe I was an 'insider' during my fieldwork in Whistler. A comment made by Dydia DeLyser (2001: 442) seems particularly relevant,

> To me, the difference seems significant: Those who go "native" begin as outsiders, whereas those of us who study our own communities start as insiders and are "natives" before the research begins – a distinction not widely acknowledged in the literature.

Yet being an insider is not always straightforward, as I have already suggested. Narayan (1993: 676) points out that '[w]e all belong to several communities simultaneously' and so we can be both insiders and outsiders. I can be part of the Whistler community and belong within an academic community; the two are not mutually exclusive[71].

3.61 And the Researched

> *Neil*: It's nice having an intellectual conversation with someone for a change. You've got no idea how nice it is. Cause normally you just like see people and they're just, like, where are you from and then you get this conversation, because I judge people, when I judge people I can tell whether I like them or not and nobody ever seems to hold my interest. I think I'm a high maintenance person. I

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[70] See the earlier extract from my research diary where I talk there about how I was wary of talking to people about my research. Much of this caution came from what I perceived as the question of whether I was an 'insider' or an 'outsider'. In Whistler, this meant was I a 'local' (i.e. living and working in Whistler) or was I a 'tourist' (or worse, a one season employee).

[71] As an example of this, two of the replies I received from my requests for respondents both referenced the academic element of recruiting people at the same time as volunteering to talk about their experiences as travellers. Amanda, in an email, wrote, 'I have just read your request for subjects in the Messenger and would like to offer my services, ... My sister is doing a PhD and I know how difficult it is to find subjects, so I am more than willing to help'. Neil, in his email, wrote 'I saw your request in the Messenger and I would like to volunteer for an interview, I have just completed my dissertation and I know it can be difficult sometimes finding interviewees!!'. See Appendix Five for a copy of the article that was in 'The Messenger'.

like talking to people who have got something to say. … It's the first proper conversation I've had in ages.

Tara: It's really nice, it's exactly as you say, like you have a conversation about such a range of things

Neil: Yah, and your brain starts working again, it's so funny like, talking to you, I was, there's all this stuff kicking in, I can feel my brain, we were talking about interviews before and it's all kicking, oh I can remember reading that article, I can remember the methods of group interviews (laughing). I thought I'd forgotten everything I did in my degree but it all comes back to you, it's pretty cool. … You can't believe how happy you've made me today. So good to be able to get to think.

Interviews are often about a combination of luck, circumstances, timing and how well both you and your respondent interact on that particular day (see McDowell, 2001). My approach to the interviews with my respondents can be seen as very casual, very unstructured, and very 'friendly'. As a researcher, I approached the process as an academic and as an individual with a personal history of the place, its processes and its people (see Parr, 1998). I assumed everything told to me was valid, 'in the sense or being representative of how [they] viewed the world and [their] place in it at that time,' (McDowell, 2001:211):

> As Ellie said to me when we were talking about it at a later date, it was less the interviewee talking about themselves and more about them talking about their opinions. In some ways this worries me. How do I qualify people's opinions? Yet, this is exactly what I was looking for (Extract 6. from Research Diary May 2003)

My interview with Neil (see above) was one of my more, for want of a better word, 'interactive'. In transcribing it, I was surprised – and amused - to find how often he asked me questions. The interview was much more a discussion than an interview and one in which, I often had to demonstrate 'insider' knowledge (see DeLyser, 2001: 444). My aim had been to have conversations with my respondents, for it to be a somewhat interactive process and I believe that generally, I achieved this. Neil's comments, above, show that he thought of it as a conversation; he was 'talking to me', not just answering my questions. Robert's comment (below) suggests that he did not see our 'chat' as a formal interview although he appreciated the opportunity to talk about his experiences.

> I enjoyed the coffee and chat too - …, and it was good to be able to tell someone about it all and put some kind of order to the chaos!
>
> *Robert*, by email (Jan 2003)

One of the problems associated with the informality of this type of interviewing has to do with the difference between friendship and friendliness (see Kirsch, 2005). By striving for an interactive conversation with my respondents, did I in fact create an environment where my respondents could have felt misunderstood or felt that their stories or narratives were being betrayed in some way (Kirsch, 2005: 2163)?

a) Friends

Although I do not believe this is the case with any of my respondents, as an insider, much of the information I gathered was through friends. In using these friendships, the differences between friendships and friendliness, between insider and outsider, same and different became more complex. Browne (2003: 136) suggests that while employing pre-existing friends in geographical research is referenced relatively rarely, informal conversations suggest that this practice does occur.

Contacts, acquaintances, friends all played a part in my research. When I arrived in Whistler, I had a job lined up for me and by the end of the five months of fieldwork, I had worked in four different departments, having gotten all these jobs through my acquaintances and friendships[72]. In this respect, the ease of access to different groups of people and different situations was a unique and unexpected bonus for the fieldwork, but as DeLyser (2001) points out, familiarity can signal problems. By taking up these opportunities, the complexities and intricate nature of the various research relations were exposed, as it emphasised my role as both 'insider' and 'outsider' (see Browne, 2003). Negotiating the hours I worked, who I worked with, and to an extent, how I worked (i.e. autonomous decision-making in an environment where others always referred to their supervisors) proved a difficult path to travel and I often had to remind the very friends and acquaintances who had helped me by giving me employment that I was in Whistler for another purpose.

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[72] I arrived to find that my previous boss had lined up a job in Employee Services for me (even though I had asked to go through the recruitment fair). I was then asked, through contacts in Employee Experience if I wanted to deliver the Messenger newletter around the mountain; another friend said she knew I needed the odd day of work and so did I want to work one day a week in Group Tickets and another friend called me a number of times to help at various catering events.

It was often,

> Personally and professionally, … tricky to recast relationships with friends and
> coworkers, shifting from being one of the gang to being a researcher (DeLyser,
> 2001: 444).

Browne (2003: 140) says that the dialectic relationship between research and everyday life, between 'research relations and social relations thus blur the boundaries of the field'. I can see how this has happened in my own research. I would often record social conversations (and events) in my research diary, and these have since made it into my research, yet at the time I doubt I considered the social situation as a research opportunity:

> Was talking to Ellie this morning and we were laughing at how last night we were
> sort of disparaging tourists in Merlin's and then ended up talking to them all night
> and going to Casa for some food. In Merlin's, we were all trying to guess who the
> tourists were – or more likely, where they were from. It was as though being 'local'
> gave us a reason to put down the fact that they were drunk and acting out. Sasha
> said she didn't think they behaved like this at home, it was only when they were
> away. (exposing breasts, doing moonies, dancing with other girls…). It was quite
> amusing to watch. Ellie laughed at me at one point because my expression was
> of bemusement and amazement at the antics taking place on stage. Guitar Doug
> was playing and he always gets the crowd going. …

> Talking about the same thing later with Ellie, Andrew and Nicole. We were talking
> about how people behave and wondering, for instance, if the two girls kissing on
> stage regretted that today or the two girls pretending to masturbate each other.
> Nicole made the comment that this was an escape from the everyday, that these
> tourists didn't know each other and could go back to their normal lives with no one
> the wiser. That it almost allowed them to behave in this way. Andrew then
> commented that it was the same for many of the first season staff who come
> here. They don't know anyone for the first few months so behave in ways they
> would not necessarily do at home, or if surrounded by people who knew them –
> as though they were on holiday. Then we started talking about staff housing and
> how it is like a university dorm – only they have to go to work here, not to courses.
> The thing is that these sorts of conversations are fairly normal in Whistler.
> Everyone does do some dissecting of behaviours (Extract 7. from Research Diary
> March 2003[73]).

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[73] This particular example has also been used by a colleague of mine when teaching a qualitative methodology course. The boundary between the social situation and the use of it in/for research, has then been further blurred by it being used by a third party.

Using friendships for research purposes highlights the complexities of the power relations between the researcher and the researched (Browne, 2003). I was not consciously aware, nor at the time did I consider that the sort of social interactions I describe in the extract above could be potentially viewed as exploitative relationships. As I say above, these sort of conversations are normal in Whistler, therefore it has only been as I have reviewed the information I 'collected' that I have questioned if power relations played a part in why I had these conversations; for instance, did I start them purposely to write up later or did I perhaps extend conversations once in them in order to reap the benefits? And I ask myself another question, for the number of times I wrote about something that had happened in my social life, how many occasions did I not write anything down. How much 'information' did I miss by taking a social conversation or event for granted and 'forgetting' that I was there in order to undertake research? I wonder if, on occasion, because I knew the 'field', because I was interacting with friends on both personal and professional levels, I was so settled into the routines of the field that I missed 'precious opportunities' (see Veeck, 2001: 37).

One more perturbing question is whether I 'coerced' my friends into taking part in my research (see Browne 2003; Neal and Gordon, 2002). Browne (2003: 137) suggests that ties of friendship with the researcher can lead to a feeling of a sense of duty to the research. By using very informal interview techniques in order to create less hierarchical relationships with my respondents, and specifically my friends, had I '(re)created alternative position(ing)s of power' (Browne, 2003: 137)?

I go back to Dydia DeLyser's (2001: 444) comment, '[t]he result, …, was a series of interviews at times more like discussions; I found I had to rely on and demonstrate my knowledge too'. In fact, many of the interviews with friends turned into discussions where they were as likely to ask me about the theoretical background to the questions I asked of them (i.e. to demonstrate my knowledges). Often, these discussions would be over dinner (at my house) and so would turn into group discussions with whoever happened to be there. To me, power relations were then regularly turned on their head as the person with the strongest opinion (myself included) would dominate that strand of the conversation. Knowledges varied and if power relations played a part in the conversations, it tended to be about who had the greatest knowledge (local, theoretical, statistical, even hypothetical), not who oversaw the entire conversation.

Yet, as often as there were instances when I was asked by my respondents to display my knowledge, there were often instances when I had to perform ignorance (Vail

2001). The dynamics of the interviews often became more complicated as I wanted to be seen as a knowledgeable and competent interviewer (or rather conversationalist). Yet, when interviewees said something along the lines of 'you know what I mean', or 'you remember how we used to …', I had to persuade the interviewee to expand on something that they knew I already knew. Vail (2001: 713) talks about how his performed ignorance involved taking misinformed or rigid stances; in my discussion with friends, we often had some of the same knowledges (i.e. we had worked together/lived together/socialised together) and therefore my performed ignorance would involve asking them why we assumed we had that knowledge (for instance, about who came to Whistler) and how we both gained that knowledge. For some, the interviews were instead, a chance to reflect on their experiences. My asking questions allowed both of us to engage with our experiences in a new way – it brought the 'concept of the possibility of strangeness' (Simpson, 2005: 92) back into the discussion.

Before moving on to the next section, I want to make one final point. Utilising my friends, colleagues and acquaintances for the research process did occasionally complicate my relationships. Yet, the element of friendship also allowed for the interviews to be very informal and relaxed, engaging for both interviewer and participant, and often fun! This came through,

> Rachel: Ah, isn't that cute
> Tara: (laughing)
> Rachel: Hi, Tara, you're just about to sit down and transcribe this, hope you have
> a big coffee…(laughing)
> Tara: Thanks (laughing).

The comment from Rachel, above, was said directly into the microphone specifically because she knew that I would be listening to it at a later date. She empathised with the task at hand and yet was teasing me at the same time and this was indicative of many of my interview experiences.

3.7 The Planned Methods

In the preceding discussions, I have already mentioned what methods I used during my fieldwork; interviews and participant observation, but now want to briefly outline how I came to use these methods and what other methods I had planned using for this fieldwork.

3.71 Participant Observation

I had always planned to work part-time during fieldwork and so felt there would be plenty of opportunities to undertake participant observation. As I have said above, in my five months of fieldwork, I worked in four different departments and although the hours were often sporadic and infrequent, it allowed me access to a variety of different people and situations. My chief aim had been to situate myself in the life of those who I aimed to study by working (and hopefully playing) with them (Bennett, 2002a). Before I left to undertake the fieldwork, the contradictions inherent in the term participant observation led me to explore the literature in some detail in order to not only justify why I wanted to use this method but also to try and understand how I was supposed to conduct this type of research. I was aware that it was personally demanding and analytically difficult to undertake (May, 2001) and believed that although I positioned myself somewhere between participant as observer and observer as participant (see Figure 3.1 below), my role would probably change throughout the research process depending on who I was with and what I was doing (see Bennett, 2002a: O'Reilly, 2000).

3.72 Interviews

The other method I had decided to use was that of the semi- or loosely structured interview. I saw the loosely structured interview as a way of understanding how the individuals I was studying made sense of their world and how they acted within that world. I aimed to use a conversational form of interview that concentrated mainly on the interests, views and experiences of the researched rather than on myself (see Bennett 2002b: May, 2001). I believed that through this informality, my interviewees would be able to reflect upon their working and travelling experiences within the interview time frame. Although I believed that my respondents may have reflected on their experiences to some extent, I was unsure whether they would have recognized it as such before speaking to me. I therefore felt that a loosely structured interview would give them an opportunity to articulate this reflection process.

I also wanted to use longitudinal interviews. I wanted to talk to young people before they went travelling, whilst they were travelling and then finally, upon their return. I believed this would help me build trust and rapport with this group of young people so increasing the level and nature of the information I gathered. I also thought that it would allow my interviewees time to reflect on each interview and discuss this in the

next. In order to achieve this, I contacted BUNAC[74] in London and was given permission to attend their 'Work Canada' briefings. These are compulsorily sessions attended by young people who have successfully applied for a working holiday visa to Canada. I went to two sessions, one in Edinburgh in July 2002 and one in London in August 2002. At each session, I talked briefly, explaining what my research was about, where I was undertaking it, what I would want from them and then asked for volunteers. I handed out a small leaflet (see Appendix 6) and collected email addresses. Overall, this was a very successful process and I collected approximately 30 email addresses, of which between 12 and 17 were planning to either be in Whistler or Vancouver during the period I would be in Canada.

The Participant Observation Continuum

Complete Participant

The researcher is undertaking covert research and is fully engaged in the activities of the group/organization under study. The risk here is that the researcher will 'go native' and identify so closely with the people under study that they abandon reflexive analysis of the knowledge they are gathering.

↓

Participant as Observer

This involves and emphasis on participation and social interaction in order to develop relationships and trust with the people under study. This is overt research; the researcher has made their intentions and presence known to the group. Here again, there is a risk of 'going native', however, the intimacy between researcher and researched is often more restrained than with the complete participant in order to allow for observation as well as participation.

↓

Observer as Participant

This again is an overt role, although here the emphasis is on observation. This stops the researcher from 'going native' but the limited participation role can restrict the researcher's understanding of the group's activities.

↓

Complete Observer

This completely removes the researcher from any type of interactive role but can introduce the possibility of ethnocentrism where the researcher imposes an alien framework of understanding on the situations observed.

(Gold (1958) cited in May, 2001: 155)[75]

Figure 3.1 The Participant Observation Continuum

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[74] BUNAC (British Universities North American Club) was founded 50 years ago and is a non-profit organization that issues working holiday visas for young people (aged 18-35), to countries such over 30 countries including Canada, the USA, Australia, and New Zealand.
[75] It is worth noting that Walsh (1998:222) attributed this classification system to Junker in 1960.

Finally, I had planned to do a few life history interviews. I aimed to interview people who had worked and travelled abroad at some point in the last five or so years and so had perhaps had the chance to reflect upon their experiences. I aimed to recruit these people through snowballing of existing contacts and friends (see Browne, 2005).

3.73 Secondary Sources

Whilst doing my fieldwork, I also intended to collect documentary evidence about Whistler and the young people who travelled there. I was hoping to collect copies of the weekly newsletter produced by Whistler/Blackcomb, as well as copies of handbooks given out to staff. I also intended to look at marketing and advertising strategies, various statistical reports and any information I could find in the local library and museum.

3.8 The Actual Methods

Translating the planned methods into fieldwork often involves

> being open to new ideas and new avenues right in the middle of things. It helps
> to have a Plan B and even versions C through Z in a back pocket in trying to
> make sense of complex and ever-changing observations (Ford, 2001: 381).

Undertaking fieldwork rarely follows the elaborate plans laid out in research proposals. Qualitative research requires highly active engagement from its practitioners (Mason, 2002) and no matter how well the planning has been done; there will almost always be occasions when something goes amiss. Doing research is a learning experience and the discussions below aim to illustrate how well the planned approaches translated into in the field.

3.81 Participating and Observing

> The participant observation stopped working almost immediately, I think it did
> work a bit at ES [Employee Services] but then when they more or less laid me off
> and I was working bits and pieces, it was simply hard to get the exposure to allow
> me to participate, let alone observe. And the term does have inherent difficulties.
> There is a semantic confusion in the term. It is also difficult to be detached when I
> have previously been so involved. And it is difficult not to put some of those past
> contacts, colleagues, situations, conversations and understandings into play now.

It is difficult to ignore the history I have here. But if I had simply been starting out, would I have known where to look for everything and would I have got the cooperation? (Extract 8. from Research Diary March, 2003)

As I have already argued, it is often difficult to separate 'home' and 'field', professional from personal when conducting fieldwork (see Till, 2001). Participant observation is an attempt by the researcher to 'interpret … cultures from a participant's perspective' (Jackson, 2000: 573) yet the inherent contradictions in being a participant and being an observer, of being an 'insider' and an 'outsider' often make interpretation problematical. O'Reilly (2000) talks about how her in-depth participant observation in the Costa del Sol led to her discarding the casual clothes of her university setting for gold-coloured sandals in order to fit in with the British community abroad. This change was as much about being a part of the community in which she lived and worked as it was about her various roles as a participant observer in that same community.

Participant observation sees researchers as a methodological tool who should not resist the changing relationship between themselves and the community they are immersed in, but rather should be 'aware of it, understand and accommodate it and utilize it in the direction of the research problem' (Evans, 1988: 204). Linked to this is the suggestion that participant observation is like being in two places at the same time (Pearson, 1993: viii). Many of the discussions of this method suggest that it is difficult to find a balance between the field and elsewhere (i.e. home). In immersing oneself in a field in order to conduct fieldwork, so we seem to overlook that even here, one needs some 'down-time'; time when you are not being a researcher and are simply a person living in that place. The disjuncture between the field and everyday life, between who we are in the field and who we are at home (if there is a difference between the two) and between our social scientific practices and the very personal nature of fieldwork are often discomforting, especially when the field becomes home for a lengthy period of time (see Saunders, 2001: 89).

In many ways, I believe that total separation of the personal and professional when 'in the field' is unattainable (though often obviously desirable). Upon reflection and in part due to the amount of 'data' I found I had collected upon my return to the UK, I believe that the participant observation I did was successful (see the extract from my research diary above for my initial reactions to undertaking participant observation). I did find it difficult, in part because of my 'insider' status and the reservations I had about recording the conversations I had with friends, even when these same people knew it

to be very likely that I would do just that; the example below illustrates how this came through in my research diary:

> … talking to Eva this morning, we were talking about uh, for me, it's covert/overt, for her it's just issues of whether I take her name and stuff ... I basically said in a roundabout way that I listen to conversations I have with people and I take note of bits and pieces of them but I don't sort of say … 'in my report, Lauren says this', and she just laughed at that. So, then later on, she asked, we had a conversation and afterwards she thought, oh, Tara DID record all that (Extract 9. from Research Diary Jan 2003).

Another difficulty came about because it was hard not to 'settle into routines …, just as we do at home, and [therefore] miss precious opportunities' (Veeck, 2001: 37). Yet that very routine was also a way to tap into the 'data'; it was about being an everyday participant in the community as well as being a researcher as observer. My research diary reflects this duality, both through the negative assumptions I made about the participant observation 'not working' (see above) and also through a realisation that, to quote Clifford (1997: 21), 'one is always a participant-observer some *where*':

> Interesting how little you sometimes notice and other times so much. The joking comment in New Orleans was couldn't you tell Tara was in the middle of doing participant observation because she noticed the small details, who was where, where they'd moved to… (the band at the Old Opera House…).

> I've begun to take notice of things again. I think I got so caught up in worrying about other things – such as New Orleans, that I forgot to take notice of the very things I was supposed to be noticing (Extract 10. from Research Diary March, 2003).

The duality and contradictory nature of the participant observation does mean that it was often 'a source of tension and discomfort' (Edwards and Ribbens, 1998: 2). I did have friends ask me explicitly not to include a conversation in my notes and on other occasions I know that I did not feel it appropriate to include conversations. At other times, I felt it was necessary to reassure colleagues and friends that not everything they said was going to be included into my research. At the same time, this tension was often a source of insight (Edwards and Ribbens, 1998).

My research diary is rich with the personal observations and commentary, reflexive comments (see below for a few examples from my research diary), anecdotes,

worries, fears, failings and successes. All of which are, of course, 'data' collected through participant observation and as such, a veritable pool of information ripe for the interpreting.

It's also that half way through the season I realized that although I enjoyed the skiing, that wasn't why I had been here (okay, and not simply for the research either). It was for the people, the job, the friends I had around me. Yes, I like to ski, but as I have said a number of times to different people – why does it take so much effort to have fun? I am not the enthusiastic skier and so I suppose in some ways I don't 'fit in' with some groups – but then there are many people like that here too. (March 2003)

The number of people who found time to talk to me over the five months or so I was around the mountain was also complementary. I was flattered. It made me re-evaluate the job I had done when I was there, the people I worked with and made me re-evaluate my previous role in Whistler and W/B. So I suppose even I can look back and ponder what I have been doing, how it has affected not only me but others as well. (Sept, 2003)

Also thinking about the week spent in London during the RGS/IBG. Paul and I were walking through Covent Garden and he was looking around and watching the world go by whereas I wanted to keep going. He made a comment about how I did not want to be identified as a tourist, either in London or in Whistler. Quite astute and also true (although I may not want to admit it). This seems somewhat ironic to me as this is in some ways exactly what I am studying and I epitomize it??? Hmmm…. (Sept 2003)

3.82 Conversations or Interviews?

Interviews yield rich insights into people's 'biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings' (May, 2001: 120), they allow the participants to speak about their own experiences of the world (Smith, 2001: 29) and are an excellent way to gain information from participants when what you want to know may not be clearly formulated in your interviewee's minds (Mason, 1996). In using an informal interview method, and as I stated earlier, I aimed to get my respondents to begin to think reflexively about their experiences. Interviews allow the researcher to capture an elapsed period of time as they can collect information about a length of time that they cannot fully be a part of. So, in the case of the interviews I undertook, I could not have followed all of my respondents in their work and travelling experiences; what I could

do, over the course of an hour or so, was to collect their thoughts, opinions and views, on these experiences.

> *Tara:* What are you going to take away with you from Whistler?
> *Emma*: … I don't know, like it's hard to know you've taken away from something until you get back …, you know, when I look back on my travelling experiences and what I got out of them, you tend to notice a bit more when you're back into your old lifestyle …, and then you appreciate. … like when I did some travelling before it was, I was in the thick of it, oh my god and it was a bit crazy there for a while and then you get back and you go yah, I did damn good to get through all that. You know, so, yah, I'll think I'll learn later what I take away from it.

This aim of getting them to think reflexively did not always work as I hoped, as Emma's comments (above) illustrates. Emma's comment on how this reflexive process will take place at a later date was quite a typical response from my interviewees. In many cases, there was an amount of self-reflection that took place in the interviews, in part because I was asking them to look back over the experiences they had already had and evaluate and explain them to me. In doing this, I often felt that I also gave them the insight to realise that this self-reflexivity was a worthwhile process to do in the future. Because of this, I believe that many of my respondents took something away from the interview experience; in this respect, we both learned something. I learned about their working and travelling experiences and they learned that thinking about their experiences could provide deep and telling insights about their lives.

By the end of the fieldwork, I had conducted interviews with thirty-three people (see Appendix 7 for details). I recruited these people in a number of ways,

a) through the two BUNAC 'Work Canada' meetings I attended in July and August 2002 (see Appendix 6 for a copy of the leaflet I handed out at these meetings),

b) through an article I put in Whistler Blackcomb's weekly Newsletter, 'The Messenger' (see Appendix 5 for a copy of this article)

c) through snowball sampling of friends

d) through official contacts I had with Whistler Blackcomb.

To each interview I took an interview schedule that I used as a general guide in order to ensure that I covered specific topics in the interview (see Appendix 8a). Three of

the interviews I undertook, I would class as 'corporate interviews'. For these I used a different set of questions (see Appendix 8b) and I interviewed one BUNAC participant who was not based in Whistler and again, used different questions (see Appendix 8c).

I would often not refer to my interview schedule for the first half of the interview and on a number of occasions I have transcribed myself saying, 'let me just have a quick look at my cheat sheet'. I did this for two reasons, one was that it ensured I double checked that I had covered all the areas I wanted to and secondly, it gave my interviewee a moment to think about what we had been talking about and this often led to them going back to a point or starting another thread in the conversation.

I believe the interviews I conducted have provided me with a great deal of information. However, as I suggest above, things did go amiss. For instance, at the BUNAC meetings I attended in July and August of 2002, I had collected over a dozen names and email addresses of young people who thought they would be in the Whistler/Vancouver area at the same time I was conducting my fieldwork. I had aimed to do longitudinal interviews on most of these young people but in the end, I only managed to interview two of them, although I also emailed questions and received responses from one other. Of these two, I have interviewed Robert twice – when he was in Canada and upon his return, and Lisa once although I also received answers to questions I emailed to her upon her return to the UK. I was disappointed to be unable to do more of this type of interview but it provided me with one of my first 'real-life' research learning experiences as I realised how difficult the recruitment process of respondents could be.

3.83 Other 'Data'

b) <u>Handbooks and 'The Messenger'</u>

I did manage to collect and photocopy various sections of old employee handbooks dating back to 1972. I also photocopied sections of the newsletter, 'The Messenger' which has been running since 1997 as well as photocopying some sections of Blackcomb's old newsletter, 'The Blabcomb' from as far back as 1988 and from Whistler's old newsletter, 'The Whistler Expression' from 1990 on. I also continually searched local and international newspapers for articles on young budget travellers and still continue to do this. I was allowed access to all of this information through my contacts at Whistler Blackcomb although, as an extract from my research diary above

suggests, I did have a few worries about the ease of this access and the lack of concern about what I was collecting and why.

b) The Research Diary

My research diary has provided me with another source of information. I used the research diary as a tool to write down observations, conversations and more personally, to record my own responses to the research process (see Dwyer and Limb, 2001). Many of the extracts from my research diary shown above and below portray how I felt about the research process. From feelings of disappointment that the participant observation was not working to feelings of relief that things were beginning to come together (see below), the research diary provided me with a way to record the range of emotions that occurred during the research process.

> Put an ad in the Messenger yesterday and had two emails and two phone calls from it, which is a good start. I've now got two interviews lined up for tomorrow, I'm interviewing Naomi on Saturday and I've left messages for four or five other people. Phew, maybe it's coming together (Extract 11. from Research Diary, Jan 2003).

In retrospect and through re-reading it, the research diary has proved that I was very aware of how I was affecting the research process and how that same process also affected me. In this respect, the research diary was an on-going self-reflexive record of the fieldwork experience.

c) Email

The most unexpected source of information came from emails. I used emails to contact interviewees, to thank them for their time and to keep in touch with friends and colleagues. Looking back through the correspondence was surprising as I had not realised how much information can be imparted in a few hurriedly typed lines. In the following empirical chapters, the discussions will include information gathered through email.

Planning for my research, it did not occur to me that I could access any information 'remotely'. Going back to earlier discussions, the idea that the 'field' could be this wide or that it could consist of a technological network never registered. Even in my discussions of the field and the researcher earlier, I do not think to mention the role

that email and the internet have played in gathering information. Yet I have asked questions of a number of people through email when I have been unable to meet them for an interview (for instance both Lisa and William), or, as with Section 4. 6 in Chapter Four, when I would like a response to a question that has arisen that I did not ask in the original interview (for instance, with Sasha).

In realising that my emails were such a rich source of information, so I go back to Ford's (2001: 381) comment that fieldwork involves constantly being open to new ideas and new avenues.

3.9 Re-telling It 'Like It Is'?

> Stories, narratives, accounts, do not remain unchanged, but are edited, rewritten and interpreted away from the social relationships in which they occurred. Within this process of 'working up' data into a sociological research account, the interpretation depends more and more on my own inner dialogue, on finding my own way of telling my story of others (Birch, 1998: 182).

The stories I heard, the interviews I transcribed, the conversations I noted in my research diary all now have one thing in common – they have been reduced to a text that, through the writing process, should produce an ordered, theoretical argument. In transcribing many of my interviews and part transcribing others, so I have transformed the spoken word with all its emotion and expression into a textual representation, or rather, I have turned it into my textual representation.

Transcription in not a neutral, value free process, '[w]hat passes from tape to paper is the result of decisions about what ought to go on paper' (Arksey and Knight, 1999: 141). In turning the spoken word into nothing more than a script (see Cook and Crang, 1995) so I have made the decision of how that spoken word is written down. Grammar, intonations, pauses, laughter, how do we write those into the transcription? How do we write hand gestures, facial expressions and other body language into our interpretations? And finally, how do we write the rapport we develop with our respondents into our transcriptions? Through transcribing, the researcher can re-live the telling, yet even then, how much non-verbal communication is missed or left out of the final text (see Birch, 1998)?

I have transcribed my interviews verbatim as much as possible. I have included as much of the repetition, the pauses, the laughter, the terrible use of the English

language, the awful grammar as possible. Yet, when I have come to insert comments from my research diary or from interviews into this text, I find I want to 'tidy' them up. In order to find a compromise between including what might be interpreted as a nonsensical quote and including a refined, well-phrased and grammatically correct comment, I have found myself editing the comments (see Figure 3.2 below).

Tara: What are you going to take away with you from Whistler?

Emma: from this trip? Skiing, boarding, talking about all the tangibles (laugh) the extra bruises….

Emma: Memory, um, a little bit more of an understanding about myself, um,

Tara: Good (all laugh)

Emma: I don't know, like it's hard to know you've taken away from something until you get back **and you just go, yah,** you know, when I look back on my travelling experiences and what I got out of them, you tend to notice a bit more when you're back into your old lifestyle um, and then you appreciate. **Like I remember,** like when I did some travelling before it was, I was in the thick of it, oh my god and it was a bit crazy there for a while and then you get back and you go yah, I did damn good to get through all that. You know, so, yah, I'll think I'll learn later what I take away from it.

Tara: Yah, I think, it's one of those where you can sort of say, yah well I did this and this and this but it's not until you get home and as you say go back to what you did before and in some aspects you go oh wow, I didn't realise that now I can do this and this and I've react differently to these situations

Emma: Yah, yah.

Tara: What are you going to take away with you from Whistler?

Emma: … I don't know, like it's hard to know you've taken away from something until you get back …, you know, when I look back on my travelling experiences and what I got out of them, you tend to notice a bit more when you're back into your old lifestyle …, and then you appreciate. … like when I did some travelling before it was, I was in the thick of it, oh my god and it was a bit crazy there for a while and then you get back and you go yah, I did damn good to get through all that. You know, so, yah, I'll think I'll learn later what I take away from it.

Figure 3.2 Transcribing an interview – the full and 'sanitised' versions.

The quote on the right is one I have used in Section 3.82 above, the quote on the left is the same quote exactly as I transcribed it[76]; I have simply added back in the bits I 'left out'. Much of this 'editing' is for aesthetics – to make the text flow better for the reader, to make the finalised version cohesive and understandable. Yet, by not putting in those other details, I have chosen how Emma's comments are represented and in this instance, I have also chosen to hide my comments.

Any interpretation of the stories told to me by my respondents is an attempt on my part to depict their perspectives and actions in a way that orders these stories into a plausible account (see Strauss and Corbin, 1998: 20). Behind qualitative research,

> there is an idea that what the research is for is to provide an interpretation of the subjects' interpretation of theirs and others' representations of what the world is like. What we are doing here is accessing the world as people think it is and has been. We are accessing a representation (a vision, an image, an experience) of a text (the world of lived experience) through a text (the interview transcript) that is itself open to interpretation (Smith, S., 2001: 29).

Yet the analysis of the information available from the interviews was not done in isolation. The participant observation, the research diary, the secondary sources, such as the handbooks, together provided a complex mess of information that was grouped through themes, through similarities and through differences. These different 'data sources' form a dialogic relationship that has providing me with a wide array of information. This information I have then selected and organised to tell another story, that of the research story (Birch, 1997: 180).

Baxter and Eyles (1997: 508) say that it is 'reasonable to expect some discussion of why particular voices are heard and others silenced through the selection of quotes'. Although I have tried not to 'silence' any of the people who took the time to tell me their stories, I realise that I have given preference to some voices over others and that I have highlighted some stories when they help to illustrate a point. In particular, I have tended to use British (and Canadian) voices over Australian and New Zealand voices. This decision is in part 'contextual'. I am writing this thesis from an Occidental position and through an institution based in the Anglo-centric Northern hemisphere. As such, I have tended to emphasize voices that come from the same position. I have tried to make no one voice (mine included) dominate and believe that in emphasising

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[76] And we have to realise that my transcription of the interview is itself only a representation of the spoken interaction that is recorded on the tape.

certain voices I have not 'silenced' or disregarded others. In the end, the claims I make, the arguments I raise, and the voices I have chosen to use are based on my interpretation of the interpretation of others and presented to the reader to interpret (Clarke, 2004: 109).

3.10 The Messiness of Research

Throughout this chapter I have kept coming back to the messiness of research (see Hyndman, 2001; Parr, 1996; Rose 1997; Vail, 2001). This very messiness is one of the reasons many of us enjoy fieldwork (Vail, 2001: 718) as it challenges us, both personally and professionally. I have said that fieldwork is a very individual process yet we are rarely alone in the field (see DeLyser and Starrs, 2001).

And it is these two points that then become my caveats for fieldwork. Fieldwork is messy, so is everyday life. If, as researchers, we follow Ford's (2001) idea of having plans A to Z in our back pockets then, although we will still not be prepared for everything that will befall us in the field, so we can at least enjoy the challenge of overcoming the next hurdle. And secondly, the research process is a very personal experience, yet it is not an individual experience. However, in order to avoid feeling as though you are the only researcher to undergo this experience, we must look beyond the texts on how to 'do' methods to those texts that talk about how methods have been 'done' (for instance, by reading the special edition of The Geographical Review, Volume 91, Issues 1 and 2).

My fieldwork, the knowledges that I gained, the stories that I collected, will not allow me to speak from a position of truth about why these young people go travelling and what they learn from their experiences. What it will do is allow me to present a positioned and partial insight into these questions. I am not looking to explain why these young people do what they do, instead I aim to begin to understand why. Through the interpretation and representation of the stories I have been told, I hope to sustain discussion, to understand something (see Geertz, 1973) and be able to provide an account for others to read, allowing them to interpret my interpretations.

In many ways, I have not questioned the methods I used. Could I have done things differently? Probably, but figuring out how I could have been more overt, or if I should have included all my respondents in the transcribing process, or whether I accessed secondary information too easily will not now make a difference to my findings. I

believe I conducted my research in an ethical and systematic way. In continually questioning the information I collected and in questioning my own positionality, I believe that I have also been rigorous in my research processes. The next few chapters will use the empirical information I have collected to examine the theoretical issues raised in the last chapter. I have tried to include 'evidence' of some of the points I have raised in this chapter about the role of the researcher and the relationships between interviewer and respondent. In the next three chapters, 'me' as the researcher is therefore not totally excluded and I try and point out where interviews turned into conversations, where I worried about how I could influence answers and how my comments were, on occasion as equally valid and informative as that of the respondent. The next three chapters are not about theory as such. The threads between the theoretical and the empirical weave their way through the empirical chapters and lead to the conclusion where I believe that the arguments and discussions raised will resonate more widely than as either a simple case study of a ski resort or as an exploratory study into the working and travelling practices of young budget travellers.

CHAPTER FOUR: EXPLORING THE SELF

> A self does not amount to much, but no self is an island; each exists in a fabric of relations that is now more complex and mobile than ever before (Lyotard, 1984 cited in Urry, 2000: 185).

4.1 Introduction

Chapter One outlined what a young budget traveller, working tourist or backpacker could be defined as. It looked at the history of tourism, youth tourism and of Whistler and led on to the theoretical debates summarized in Chapter Two. Chapter Three outlined how I have reached this point and looked at the methods used in collecting the information – or rather the stories – that follow. This chapter, and the two that follow, aim to pull out some of the threads from these stories and portray them in such a way as to illustrate how the empirical can engage with the theoretical and inform our knowledge of this particular type of budget travel.

So what is it about working and playing in Whistler (or perhaps anywhere that is away from home) that makes such a difference to these young people? How does it affect them? Does it really allow them to change or define their identity? As the above quote from Lyotard (1984) suggests, this is by no means a new phenomenon. If Lyotard (1984) was talking about it over two decades ago, why do we still find it difficult to understand how the experiences that young people have affect the ways in which they define themselves; affect the ways in which they understand and move forward with their professional and personal futures.

In recent years, as an emerging literature has begun to emphasis the increasing importance of identity and the perpetuation of self-narratives in backpacker travel (see Richard and Wilson, 2004b: 48), so too, has the emphasis shifted to include more marketing based perspectives looking at the supply of services and 'image' management to (and for) young budget travellers. At the most recent Atlas Special Interest Group meeting of the Backpacker Research Group[77], how this type of tourism related to sustainable development was one of the main issues. The importance of these areas of research and the recognition that backpacker research has to continue to challenge preconceptions of hedonistic, narcissistic younger people travelling on a budget remains imperative. However, these studies do not negate the need to

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[77] As stated in Footnote 1, this was held in Bangkok in September 2005.

continue to try to understand more fully the personal perceptions of young people's travel experiences. This chapter will aim to add to the emerging literature on the importance of identity and self-narratives through the interviews and discussions I undertook during the course of my fieldwork.

4.2 Who Goes Travelling?

The question of who goes travelling is complicated by the question of what a backpacker is (see Section 1.4 in Chapter One). Recent large-scale surveys have found that over three quarters of young budget travellers are under the age of 34 and tend to originate from the UK, North America and Australasia (see Lonely Planet, 2005; Richards and Wilson, 2003; TNT and Student Uni Travel 2003). These studies, by reporting the demographics of their respondents, can give us a good idea of who these young people usually are, their level of education, where they come from and sometimes, where they are going (see Lonely Planet, 2005, see also Appendix 9). In academic literature, we can find motivational theories that explain who might go travelling (see for instance Cooper, 2005); literature that considers alienation or crisis as a reason for travelling (see for instance, Cohen, 1979; MacCannell, 1973; Maoz, 2005) and literature that suggests young people travel in order to escape the monotony of everyday life (see Loker-Murphy and Pearce, 1995; Wyn and Willis, 2001).

The young people I spoke to were often quite astute about who travelled and why. When I asked Veronica what she thought the reasons were behind travelling, she firstly went through what the major surveys suggest are some the main motivators for travel (see ; Lonely Planet, 2005: 36, 2006: 11; Richards and Wilson, 2003: 18); new experiences and meeting new people. However, it is telling that once the expected answers were out the way, her reply changed to what I would suggest is now a more 'realistic' reason for travelling.

> *Tara*: What do you think the typical person who goes travelling is looking for?
> *Veronica*: I don't know, I think probably new experiences, meeting new people, something different, I mean if you're being cynical, I think a lot of people now go travelling because it gives them something to talk about in a job interview when they come back to real life.

Wyn and Willis (2001) suggest that uncertain career futures have encouraged more young people to travel; if we put this with the idea that travel has become a type of informal qualification (see Desforges, 1997b; Munt, 1994), then the cynicism that Veronica displays becomes part of a wider picture that suggests, as David Jones (2003:2) says, that young budget travellers today are '[s]avvy, …and motivated to equip themselves for a life in a global society'.

Add to this a comment by Ellie,

> *Ellie*: In Britain, there's the gap year, and people are more likely to take a year off to go travelling and I think it's much more accepted, whether or not it's actually going to count for anything. It's something interesting, it's something to talk about in the interview, something to catch that person's interest …

This comment illustrates a number of points; firstly that Veronica's views are not unique. I spoke to Veronica in the UK in October 2003 and her comments came about upon her return from travelling; I spoke to Ellie in Whistler in March 2003, about six months before I spoke to Veronica. Secondly, it illustrates a knowledge of different types of youth travel. Ellie is Canadian and still she has been able to recognise (through her time in Whistler) a specific phenomenon of young budget travellers from a specific area i.e. gap year travellers from the UK.

Perhaps, more telling is the conversation I had with Ellie and Andrew. When I asked them who went travelling, they were able to define different groups of people, from the adventure seekers, to the – in Andrew's words – 'crisis people' to those on some sort of world tour.

> *Ellie*: … seasonal people who are doing the world tour, this is one of the stops, you know, I don't know where else they go, London … whatever, they end up in Whistler at some point and they have no intention on staying … you know there's always something else to see and somewhere else to go, so there's that group … and then I think there's the people who, … like they're at a certain point in their life, like they've had it with work, with a relationship, like there's been some sort of major event in their life and, you know, it's caused them to re-evaluate things and up and move to a place like this.
> *Andrew*: I don't know if there is a particular type of person, I don't know. I think there's a lot more. Like there's the person who comes here just to ski, right? They came here because it's the best skiing or in the summertime they came here because it's awesome mountain biking, and that's their one and only motivation to

be here ... Like you said … there's the crisis people … I don't know, there's lots of different people, there are some people who come up here but on just a seasonal basis, you know, there's Japanese people who are here for one reason [the snowboarding] … but Aussie's and Brits, like you said world tour, travelling and having fun, and there's Canadian's skiing and having fun and there's the younger crowd, people just outta high school or maybe college that are looking to get away for a season and then leave …

Ellie and Andrew's views on who comes to Whistler and the realisation that there is perhaps not one particular type of person are based solely on their own experiences. Yet their understanding of these different groups of young budget travellers can be seen to relate back to the academic literature. For instance, Desforges (1997a: 99) discusses how the decision to go travelling often relates to moments in one's life where self-identity is open to question; Wyn and Willis (2001) talk about career uncertainty leading to travel and Maoz (2005) in her recent work on Israeli backpackers, discusses how finishing national service often leads to young Israeli's going travelling. These studies link into Ellie and Andrew's personal experiences that there is are specific groups of travellers who have reached a certain point or crisis point in their lives, at which point they, as Ellie says, 'up and move'.

Ellie and Andrew's comments also raise a number of questions about who travels to Whistler and I believe suggest that perhaps we have neglected or ignored the less 'beneficial' motivations or reasons behind this type of travelling[78]. The idea that some people come to Whistler just to ski or mountain bike; that they have only that one motivation does not seem to have penetrated the literature. Lonely Planet's (2005) study asks its respondents to rate a number of motivational factors[79]; as does Richards and Wilson's (2003) study. In setting questions such as this, have we assumed that young people have multiple reasons to undertake these sorts of working and travelling experiences? Are we forgetting those early typologies of tourism? Does Cohen's (1972) drifter still exist; are experimental tourists (Cohen, 1979) now using adventure sports for instance, as opposed to spiritual enlightenment, as a way of overcoming alienation from their home society?

Also, Andrew defines groups by nationality, Japanese, Aussies and Brits, Canadians. His experiences show that different nationalities may well travel in different ways (see

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[78] Erik Cohen (2005: 1) suggests that backpacker studies have been 'to a large extent affected by the personal background of the researcher'. He suggests that often the researcher's own backpacking experience has led them to being predisposed to studying areas they were most familiar with; such as motivations, travelling style, interactions with others and the meaning of the trip for identity formation.
[79] The Lonely Planet's 2006 Survey were given a list of options and asked to select all that applied.

Appendix 1; see also Maoz, 2005) and he has seen these differences in one particular location; Whistler. I think here is one way in which empirical evidence can inform the theoretical. The comments of one person do not allow for any reorganisation of theoretical generalisations of traveller types, but what Andrew's comments do allow me to do is recognise that the academic debates about what - or rather who - a backpacker is, need to be informed in part by the 'backpacker's' recognition of the many differences in traveller type.

4.3 Defining the Self

> They say travel broadens the mind, but you must have the mind' (G.K. Chesterton
> cited in Evaristo, 2005)

I set out to discover how the young people who came to Whistler used their work and travelling experiences to construct a sense of self. In many ways, through the stories I heard, the conversations I was a part of and the interviews I undertook, this is exactly what I did find; yet within these stories were many different strands, some of which fall under this section, some of which will be explored in the next chapter on work and some of which I have not used here[80].

4.31 The Inexperience of Travelling?

Grace first travelled to Whistler after finishing high school. After heading home to New Zealand for a period of time, she travelled and worked in the UK and Europe before returning to Whistler.

> *Grace*: Totally different experience as well [to the first time she was in Whistler]…
> *Tara*: Yah why?
> *Grace*: Um, I was really naïve when I first came here. So, I mean it's the
> difference between looking at it through just out of high school eyes to now where
> I'm think I'm taking more opportunities this time, … just had more, okay, I can do
> this, I want to give that a go, as opposed to the first time I was like, ah, I'm too
> scared to do anything.

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[80] For instance, William, in an email response to some questions I posed talked about how one of the reasons he went travelling was because 'you get a lot more attention from girls in other countries than you do here [in the UK], especially in the US. The scene in Love Actually is an exaggeration but I can say from experience it is not entirely unrealistic'. He mentions that the confidence he has gained through travelling has not yet made him a lady-killer (his word!) but that he can now interact happily and easily in any social environment. As his is the only comment I have on how travelling can enhance personal relations in this way, I find it difficult to fit into a wider discussion in this instance!

Grace's comments suggest that travel experience made a difference to her self-definition. She goes on to say,

> *Grace*: I let a lot of opportunities go by, even in the UK, and I've always regretted it, yeh. I went down to France to get a job on charter boats down there, and just didn't put any effort into it … I had a ball, got bored after four weeks and then went back to London for the year. I think I'd gone home to New Zealand and I was kind of looking back on those two years and I was like, that was something I really regret not doing, so went back the next year and was like right, I'm going to stay here until I get a job and it was great. I've done it now, I mean I wouldn't do it again (laugh) …

Grace realised that she let opportunities pass her by. That she was then able to go back and experience some of those things is illustrative of how her increased travelling knowledge and confidence changed her ability to take advantage not only when opportunities presented themselves but also to be able to make opportunities for herself.

> *Helen*: I was very confident when I came out here having done that year abroad.
> *Tara*: I think that's good though, cause a lot of people who come out here, I think they get here and I think become really daunted by what's in front of them.
> *Helen*: Yah, I didn't see that, I guess I didn't even look for it.

Helen's comments suggest too, that her confidence stemmed from her previous travelling experiences and so moving to Whistler proved 'easy'. Helen's answer to my comment that many people may feel daunted by the experience is also revealing in itself. By denying any apprehension, she is defining herself in certain ways; not only as confident but perhaps also as 'go-getting' and adventurous. In defining herself in this way, it is possible that she is also defining herself in relation to other young travellers in Whistler, in that she had the experience and confidence that they lacked.

This is very different to Lisa's experience. When I asked her about where she was living and who she had met she was much more reserved about her experiences and admitted that it was difficult for her to just get up and go out with new people.

> *Lisa*: I mean, I've got to know a couple of people across the [hall] and um, and further down so
> *Tara*: Oh that's good … Yeh, have you been out socialising with them at all?

> *Lisa*: No I haven't. I mean I've got to go because you know, because you've got
> to do it anyway. Um, they did, they keep asking, come out with us … but I've got
> to kind of, they ask me like the minute they're going and I need to prepare a bit
> beforehand, you know
> *Tara*: (laugh) Got to psych yourself up for it?
> *Lisa*: Yeh, yeh … So I said next time you know, give me a bit of warning (laugh).
> And um, you know I'll go, I will go, … at the moment, cause … I'd like to get to
> know them first so that I know that we can keep a conversation going. And then,
> there's no uncomfortable kind of moments
> *Tara*: Silences, yeh, you're sitting there like, oh my gosh.
> *Lisa*: Yeh, but I think I'm quite comfortable with that now so…

Lisa's experiences are very different to both Grace's and Helen's. For Lisa this was her first extended trip away from home whereas both Grace and Helen had been travelling before. Lisa's anxiety about having enough things to talk about with other people is perhaps illustrative of her travel inexperience. In fact, in an email after her return to the UK, she says that her experiences in Whistler have made her 'a lot more self confident and happier. It has also made me more outgoing (not in the sense of going out on Saturday nights)' and she said that she ended up making some close friends with whom she has remained in touch.

Another of my respondents, Rachel, said, 'I think Canada as a whole has a reputation for being a very safe, friendly country'. For some young people, this may be another incentive to travel to Whistler. If we say, for instance, that for young people, 'the life of one's own is an experimental life' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002 cited in Conradson and Latham, 2005c: 290), then perhaps, as a first travelling experience, travelling to, in this instance, Whistler, does not demand that things get too experimental. Neil says for instance,

> *Neil*: It's funny isn't it how you come half way across the world to get away from
> home and everything that's ordinary and you end up spending your time with
> people that are from home, strange. It's almost as if you're scared to like, do your
> own thing really.

Travelling and working away from home, though seen as a rite of passage for many young people, often pushes the boundaries of and about themselves and disrupts what they see as their normal everyday lives (see Elsrud, 2001; Heald, 2003). Lisa's comments above are illustrative of this. Perhaps then, Canada can be seen as the 'easy option', as for Australians, New Zealanders, the British, the Irish, the language is

the same and the culture is similar. Myers and Inkson (2003:9) for instance, suggest that there is a 'natural tendency for travellers not to change too many parameters of their lives all at once'. When I asked Byron about this he said,

> *Byron*: I suspect that [Whistler not being culturally diverse] has something to do with it, I mean, .. the kind of travel pattern that I see most is that they go from here and then to Africa. Right? Or they might jump off and go to South America. But usually they're coming here and then they travel to Europe. So it is almost an easier stop to come, get work, speak the language and then, you know, hopefully keep some money in the bank to keep on travelling a little bit. … and we often hear the complaint, you know, I'm here and still surrounded by Australians but I think that is an appeal for them right. Like, it's almost a rite of passage, perhaps now in Australia.

4.32 Time to Decide?

In using travel to define themselves through their working and travelling experiences, young people are often looking to 'find themselves' (see Lonely Planet, 2005; Richards and Wilson, 2003). For a few of my respondents, this was not a spiritual search (as for instance, Maoz 2005 suggests it can be with Israeli youth travelling to India) nor did it come out as a main reason for their travel. It was often a comment in the middle of another conversation. For instance, in my interview with Neil, we were discussing why people came to Whistler and in the middle of this conversation he said,

> *Neil*: Yah, that's the thing about getting away from home as well, you start to clarify your aims, you start thinking, right, that's what I want to do. Cause like when you're at home there's just a lot of shit going on, there's too many distractions, you never get round to things you want to do… it's like you get to thinking right, what do I want to do and start thinking about jobs and stuff and you get time to do it as well that's another thing, you've got time to do application forms. ... I've started developing my ten-year plan…

Neil's move to Whistler had come about because other people at the hostel in Vancouver were coming to the resort. He was working nights and was on a four day on/three day off rota. This shift work, he said, allowed him time to think about his future and he had even begun to fill in graduate training application forms and send them back to the UK. He saw his time away from home as an opportunity to think

about his future as much as to gain the experiences of working and travelling abroad. Later in the interview he also said,

> *Neil*: this is the time where your life seems to go quicker, cause like all the important things are like bang, bang, bang in a row, maybe that's part of it, the urgency to do something so maybe that's why you take a year out to find out what you're going to do.

This links back to the idea that the young people who travel today are more aware of the career and leisure opportunities available to them (see Wyn and Willis, 2001). They see taking a year out as an opportunity to take the time to decide their next career move.

This was the case for Lisa who had started university the year before and left after a few months as she felt it was not the right thing for her to be doing at that time. Lisa was hoping that the time she was taking travelling to Canada would help her decide her next step.

> *Lisa*: (laugh) don't tell anyone, so, but that's not my plan, I'm not going to go there[81], because … at the moment I can't get my head into going to university and I don't know. The opportunity for me to come here was also so I can really decide what path I wanna go, where, what I want to study or what I wanna do, where I wanna go, I really haven't got a clue …there's so many [options], I've just really got to take this time now and oh please, I 'm hoping it would just come, hit me and say that's what I want to do and then I can go and do it.
>
> *Tara*: Well, I think, I always think that there's no point in rushing
>
> *Lisa*: No, no, no. I was thinking that actually cause then you're just like working for most of your life
>
> *Tara*: Yah, exactly, why rush it, and they say now that in any one lifespan you tend to change your career, like totally change your career 5 or 6 times
>
> *Lisa*: No way
>
> *Tara*: So, you know, it's not only get one job for life so, why make up the decision what your first careers gonna be straight away, why not take some time and figure out what you wanna do and how you wanna do it and just enjoy travelling and all that sort of stuff
>
> *Lisa*: Yah, exactly

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[81] At the time, in order to get a Canadian working holiday visa through the BUNAC programme, you had to be registered on a full-time degree course in the UK. Lisa had done this but, at the time of the interview, had no intention of taking the place up in the fall of 2003.

Tara: Cause if you don't take the opportunity now, it's one of those ones when do you get the opportunity?
Lisa: Exactly, be too late then won't it?

Our conversation about her choices illustrates the reciprocal nature of my interviews. We spoke at length about her options, including exploring going to university in British Columbia, going home to earn more money at any menial job in order to do more travelling or taking up some sort of sports course at university in order to start a career. This conversation enabled her to talk through some of her ideas about her future with, I suppose, a 'neutral' sounding board. However, it was very much a dialogue as I had explored going to university in British Columbia so could suggest some places for her to start looking for information and as I had looked at various working holiday visas through my research, I could also talk about how she could take advantage of those too. In the end, Lisa's time away from home led her back to university in the UK.

4.33 'And I look back now'

One of the interview experiences I remember most is with David. I remember it less for the interview itself and more for the email he sent out to a group mailing list almost immediately after out interview. In my research diary (14 March 2003) I note,

> And then David sent that email last night after our interview. I smiled. Our chatting obviously got him thinking even more than the hour and a half we spoke. And I am sure that given the chance, he could have chatted for another hour and a half.

David's email talks reflexively about his travelling experiences and he says,

> I have been on the road for the last five years and with each "pick-up and move" I learn anew about myself … I think the hardest part about travelling is saying goodbye to those you know you may never see again and the idea of leaving a piece of your soul in the place you once were through stories or conversations of shared experiences. … It seems to be that while travelling you are always under construction in the three most important places: mind body and soul. …Where I've been in life makes up much of who I am now – the rest of the equation comes from whom I have met along the way during my travels [email received from David, 14 March 2003]

David's comments illustrate how he sees stories, conversations, places and people as parts of his self. He sees himself, through travelling, as always under 'construction'. His level of reflexivity was generally not mirrored in the other people I spoke to (see also Section 3.82 in Chapter Three), as Emma pointed out to me,

> *Emma*: … I don't know, like it's hard to know [what] you've taken away from something until you get back …, you know, when I look back on my travelling experiences and what I got out of them, you tend to notice a bit more when you're back into your old lifestyle …, and then you appreciate. … like when I did some travelling before it was, I was in the thick of it, oh my god and it was a bit crazy there for a while and then you get back and you go yah, I did damn good to get through all that. You know, so, yah, I'll think I'll learn later what I take away from it.

However, that did not stop me asking what they had learnt about themselves and this often allowed them a space in which to be reflexive. For instance, William, in an email sent to me in October 2003 said,

> I can tell you that arriving here with no job, no house and not a lot of cash is proving to be a testing experience. Still, it's character building stuff! [email received from William October 2003]

In a later email from him, he began to reflect even more about his experiences and said,

> My year in California is the greatest thing that has ever happened to me. By comparison the 6 months in Canada were weak, but that is probably because I had to work instead of being a student who could party all the time. I think I should have tried to work in a relevant job in Canada rather than be a bartender, but I didn't have the right perspective at the time [email received from William June 2004]

At this point, William was back in the UK and starting a PhD course in Scotland. His reflection on his experience is important for two main reasons. Firstly, it illustrates how these young people do reflect upon their time away from home, whether they are working, studying or travelling; as Robert said to me, it allows them to put some kind of order to the chaos of the experiences. It also illustrates how they differentiate between these various experiences and that they have, and gain a clear understanding of how their thinking at the time can affect their actions. So William

realised why he did not enjoy his time in Canada, where as Grace, in her comments above, reflected on her naivety on her first trip away from home and decided to go back and take advantage of opportunities she had by-passed on her initial trip.

4.34 The Not-So-Good Experience

Secondly, William's comment points to the idea that even though he may not have enjoyed his experiences, he learnt something about himself from it. Rarely do we hear of young people who have not enjoyed their time away from home, and if we do, then what we tend to hear remains about the positive and the beneficial (see Noy, 2004: 90). For instance, at the end of Polly Curtis's (2004) article in The Guardian there are two examples of young 'gappers'; one who had a fantastic time, one who didn't. Jess Colmer, the one who said 'You're supposed to have a fantastic time. I didn't' also says,

> "I'm glad I did it. I regret almost everything about the way I behaved and the way I coped with it.
>   "But I learned that I had more strength than I thought I did. I also had a lot more growing up to do than I thought. When I came back, I realised how much of a child I was." (The Guardian, 27 July 2004: 8).

I interviewed one person whose experience turned sour. Naomi, an Australian, was a bubbly young girl who, by the time she went home – at least two months earlier than planned – had been working seven day weeks in three different jobs in order to financially (and emotionally) support her injured, depressed and uninsured boyfriend[82]. When I interviewed her in January 2003, she remained upbeat about her experiences and at the time was still aiming to stay in Canada until the end of the season. Although she left Canada less than a month later, I know that she felt she had learnt many positive things about her self from her experiences and she hoped to be able to return to Canada at some point in the future in order to 'try' again[83].

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[82] His travel insurance had run out a few days before he was injured and the cost of health care led to him removing his own stitches and neglecting medical advice and attention.
[83] I have not included any comments from Naomi in future chapters. This has more to do with what she said, the ways in which she said it and the dynamics of the interview than the relevance of her comments to this thesis. I do not feel it appropriate to do more than use Naomi's interview to highlight that unhappy experiences are not uncommon and that the construction of self through less-than-successful backpacking and travelling remains unexplored.

4.35 'I have learned x, y, z about myself'

In asking these young people what they have learnt about themselves or what they will take away from their travels, so they often began to talk about personal changes (see Noy, 2004). For some, it allowed them to explore areas of their identities they had been unable to previously. Lisa, for instance, said

> *Lisa*: … since being here I've found my creative side again. I always pass Lotus [an art supply shop] and I just can't help just go in there and like buy something, you know, and to fill in cause I'm quite musical, …and so I went, I've always wanted to the play the harmonica because you can just put in your pocket and go anywhere and just take it out and play. So I went and bought a harmonica and I'm trying to learn to play that to (laugh).

Yet Lisa's exploration of self did not stop there. Upon her return to the UK, her experiences led her to do and plan a number of things. In reply to email questions I sent to her, she says,

> But after a summer of mountain biking there [in Whistler] I have taken a real interest in the sport and this year [2004] I will be entering a number of different events across the uk. I shall be doing this on my own, getting to events on the train, camping out on my own etc. Something that I would never have attempted before. After pretty much living out of a backpack for 15 months, I've learnt that we really don't need much around us. People tend to hoard loads of 'stuff' over the years. Since I have returned home I have given most of my belongings that I left behind to Red cross shops and have remained living with as little as possible. [email received from Lisa, May, 2004: text as written in the email]

Lisa's changes in personality, from rediscovering her creative side soon after arriving in Whistler to giving away 'stuff' upon her return to the UK is indicative of how her cultural capital has changed over time. In being able to explore her musical side she could be said to be 'romanticising' her travelling experiences (see for instance, Noy, 2004). In Whistler, she found the space in which to re-explore an aspect of self that she had either been unable to or unwilling to in her home environment. She disclosed that she was quite sporty (she was very into field hockey) and for me, learning the harmonica was an indication that she was discovering ways in which to expand her sense of 'self'. Upon her return, her telling of the giving away of belongings, the loss of 'stuff', seems to indicate that she wanted to be perceived as a specific sort of person. Through her travel experiences, she had found the value of possessions and had

acted upon this. This action, the telling of this action and resultant impression we have of her as a person are all part of the narrative she is using to define this new self.

For others, they spoke of what they had learned in broader terms. Emma, for instance, said,

> *Emma*: It does help you to appreciate different backgrounds, different life experiences. I mean you learn all the time about yourself but I mean, when you do travel and especially when you do travel by yourself, you're forced to, I guess, push a lot of insecurities behind because you've got to make a life for yourself, you've got to make new friends, you've got to find a job. Basically you're throwing yourself off a mountain and you know you've got to struggle to find a spot for yourself…its just a matter of pushing yourself to do it.

And Ellie says,

> *Ellie*: … like going abroad for a year for the first time was a huge eye-opener ... Out there, you're pretty much on your own and I think it's a humbling experience. You know, you think you realise that the world's a lot bigger place than you thought it was and … I came from, not a small town I guess, but not a big city and I think sometimes that it made me get out my small pond sort of mentality and probably made me realise that there are a lot more options in the world … I remember when I came back from Spain, I remember that I was much more confident, I still didn't have a clue what I wanted to do or anything like that but I just I wasn't so uncertain about things. … I had to go out and look for a job, … I did exactly the same thing in another country so that was fine, I could do that. … I've got to get a bus across town, well I had to that and figure out the train schedule and everything in Spanish so …

The 'soft skills' implied by these comments illustrate how these young people can use stories to narrate a sense of self. Emma's metaphor of throwing oneself off a mountain relates not only to the place they were in at the time (Whistler) but also to the risk-taking that is inherent in leaving home to go somewhere else. Young people in narrating the changes they see in themselves through their travelling and working experiences are creating a real or imagined 'risk' mythology about those experiences (see Elsrud, 2001). So for Grace, it was the risk of going back to France and getting a job on a charter boat; for Ellie, it was that on her return from Spain, the hardships she had undergone in another country in order to secure a job or simply travel about, made the same tasks 'at home' much easier and less uncertain. This risk-taking and

hardship - whether it is in the form of skiing for the first time or leaving home to travel abroad and having to find a job, somewhere to live and make new friends - is now a necessary part of the travel experience. It allows the young budget traveller to define themselves as someone who has survived these experiences and can say they are a different person for it (see Sørensen, 2003; Trinh, 1994).

4.4 Being a Backpacker?

How these young people define themselves relates back to my discussions in Chapter One about what a backpacker is. It related to Richards and Wilson's (2003) report which suggests that over two thirds of young budget travellers call themselves travellers rather than backpackers. Most of the young people I spoke to in Whistler were reluctant to define themselves as either a backpacker or a traveller and I believe this was in part to do with the length of time they were planning to stay in Whistler. My interview with Rachel confirmed this,

> *Tara*: What I was going to ask you, do you consider the people who come here as a type of tourist? Or do you think they just come here, as a worker?
> *Rachel*: I think if you ask them, they wouldn't want to be referred to as a tourist (laugh). I think once they're here and they've slept somewhere for more than three nights they're a local and they want to be considered a local. But you know, everybody's, everybody's a bit of a tourist, right? Everyone still going to want to see the same things as a tourist does and you know, go to the city and go to the island and be a tourist there. But yah, I think the attitude is when they're here they want to be considered part of the community, a local, they don't want to be considered a tourist.
> *Tara*: No
> *Rachel*: And I don't think they feel like they're one either. Even though, they might be
> *Tara*: (laugh) Yah
> *Rachel*: They would never, they would never agree to that.

This relates back to points I raised in Chapter Two where I suggest that the traveller wants to position themselves in opposition to an 'other' (see Cheong and Miller, 2000; Trinh, 1994). In the case of the young people in Whistler, they want to position themselves as a local rather than a tourist. Byron suggests that this is also the case when he says,

> *Byron*: What other community have you ever gone to where the first person says hi, my name's Byron, how long have you lived here? You know what I mean, that's the second question in any conversation is how long you've lived in town, like you have to qualify to be part of that group. But I think they do, I think they consider themselves part of the local group, just a special part. Yah, I think they have to have a certain sense of inclusion.

His comments suggest the need to qualify in order to be part of the group. In order to become part of the group you have to prove you are eligible; in the case of Whistler, this involves declaring how long you have been living there. This then allows the young people to class themselves as locals rather than tourists.

There were others who did not consider themselves backpackers. As I note in my research diary, Eva considers her time away from home as a holiday,

> Also she [Eva] was talking about how she doesn't want the stress of a "career" job while she's away so she looked for a job that meant she could do a good job but switch off when finished work and to some extent at work. What really stuck was that this was a holiday?!

For me, this indicated a more touristic outlook. I bumped in to Eva in London about a year after I interviewed her in Whistler and our brief conversation discussed the job she was doing and the city breaks and holidays she had been on. Her outlook was quite different to William's, for instance who, when asked if he considered himself a backpacker said, 'Absolutely'.

Some of the young people I spoke to had considered what type of traveller they wanted to be. Robert, for instance, said,

> *Robert*: They both said go to, you'll like Canada so, … the other option I had was going to South America but I kind of, at the time I thought I don't want to be a tourist and go and travel and see things, I want to just live somewhere else for a while and see what I want to … irrespective of everything back at home.

He does not define himself as a backpacker or traveller but he does define himself in opposition to something, a tourist. His assertion that this is not what he wants to be then suggests that alternatives – such as a traveller or backpacker – may be applicable. What was interesting about Robert was that in our two interviews we did not directly discuss how he defined his travelling experiences. In our first interview, he

said the comment above; in our second he talked of a couple of (good) experiences where other people had called him a traveller but he did not elaborate on this and in hindsight, I should have probed him more on this point.

4.5 Social Interaction

Social interactions between young budget travellers are seen as one of the defining features of this type of experience (see for instance, Murphy, 2001; Noy, 2004; Sørensen, 2003) and modern technology is rapidly changing the ways in which these young people use communications to their advantage (see for instance, Ireland, 2005). Social interaction can directly relate to the stories that young people tell about themselves to others; the interviews I undertook are in themselves indicative of this. Social interactions can affirm the norms of the group, so as Byron pointed out earlier, by declaring how long you have lived in Whistler, so you can define yourself as a local rather than a tourist. Yet social interactions can also help these young people become part of the group as they exchange information about hostels, places to visits, where to go for jobs and they can help they remain part of the group. These are the two examples I want to illustrate here.

In Chapter Three (Section 3.83c) I discuss how email communication became an unexpected information source for me. It is, however, an important communication source for young budget travellers as it allows them to keep in easy (and almost daily) contact with home, it allows them to gain information and insights through other travellers, it allows them to share their experiences through websites such as MyTripJournal.com and it allows them to remain part of a travelling community even after they have returned home.

Through BUNAC, I aimed to recruit a number of my interview respondents (see Appendix 7). However, I did not expect that I would be used as a 'resource'. Both Robert and William emailed me after the BUNAC talks and asked questions about getting jobs, contacts, living arrangements and any other advice I could offer.

> Hi Tara,
>   I was at that BUNAC talk you did a few weeks back (I was, I believe, the only person there with their lip pierced if that helps!), where you mentioned you were doing research on ski resorts and travellers, and that you yourself had been in Whistler several times. I'm going off to Vancouver on the 9th, and am probably

going to try and have a go doing a season in Whistler - it seems silly not to give it a go at least. So just a few questions; I remember you saying that my not being able to ski (yet) wouldn't be a problem. But I just wondered what your general impressions were about both Whistler, and any tips or advice for a young would-be traveller hoping to get some work out there? Obviously I know your going to be busy, but any advice is gratefully received. Thanks,

Rob [email received 29 September, 2002]

Robert's email was followed by William's who asked,

I have an interview for Intrawest in november, but I have been hearing horror stories about the cost of living in whistler. Is it possible to get by on what they pay you? They give accommodation but I hear food and leisure are unbelievably pricey.

Also I wondered if you had any connections that could help get me a job. All the good intrawest jobs like bars and restaurants seem to be gone already to long-termers and locals. What did you do to get by there? I don't mind working in a shop, or doing admin but I could really do with a job that tips.

Whistler is two months away, so i am trying to get a job in the city right now. Do you have any ideas?

William [email received 8 October 2002]

Ireland (2005) suggests that this sort of peer-to-peer network of friends is drawn upon for many reasons. These range from organising social events to acting as an informal travel advisory service. As such, this informal service can provide information in a far more 'trusted' way than travel literature and web-sites. First hand knowledge and experience is seen as more reliable, more dependable as it comes from someone they see as having similar interests to themselves and they see it as being context specific. This is the role that I was given – and took on – for Robert and William. In many ways, it shows their awareness of this type of informal network. They were the only two who 'took advantage' of my previous knowledge of Whistler in order to use it for their own benefit[84].

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[84] This is not the only occasion this has happened. In my research diary I record an incident that happened in January 2004,

'Did a 5 minute talk to 2nd years today and talked briefly about my methods in Whistler. Only question I got asked was what sort of jobs there were there as one of the lads was hoping to do a season after he finished his degree. Typical! Not about my research but how to get a job!'

Keeping in touch upon return from travelling is another way in which these young people can remain part of a backpacker community. David's group emails illustrate this most effectively,

Its funny. I met this girl on a ferry once while heading from Nanaimo to Vancouver and right away we hit it off – that was like almost 4 years ago, and just today that same girl sent me photos of her and hers trip to Ireland … How cool is that? I received another email today from a guy I met only once when I was visiting Whistler from Lake Louise that, once again, we hit it off right away … [email received 22 Oct 2003]

I have been unable to make it to a cpu to check my emails but now I can and so here I am,...How is everyone? Ken where are you now? Ben how is San Juan treating your crazy ass? Lotsa riding on yer hard tail and moto I hope? Jess? Any changes since we last talked? So for those of you in the know I got accepted into school in Halifax and will be making my way back there to finally be able to hang with Sammy, the first time we will be together - again for more than a half hour - in 14 years...Damn 14 years is a long time to not be around your best friend ya know? For those of you not in the know I applied to school in Halifax and now since you read my last sentence then you are now officially in the know, ya know? I gotta jet y'all but first let me give shout outs to Kennedy and Bunter, I miss you guys and Whistler just ain't the same without the crew...Val? I miss you something awful and send my thoughts to you on a daily basis, Godspeed my eternal friend...Katy I love ya and tell the boys I say hi and will make a trip over before I leave...Leanne? Sometimes...life is sweet...To the aussies on my list it was an honor to spend a season with ya and hopefully we can meet up once again and reminisce about valleys of snow and smoky nightclubs of lore...Talk to everyone real soon again and make sure to keep your stick on the ice, unless you wanna be called for highsticking...Later. [email received 2 June 2003]

Group emails to people met on the journey seem to be one of the main ways to keep in contact, one of Lisa's group emails reads,

Well hello there everybody,

I hope you are all well and looking forward to Christmas (you better pray that you were good all year!).

I went up snowboarding for the first time this season and it was awesome. To all of you that were here last season there is much more snow this year (not to make any of you jealous at all!!!), and it was possible to ski out on opening day too. I

was really nervous at first because I wasn't sure if I would be able to ride well or not. But it's just like riding a bike, once you learn you never forget. …

And then I woke up this morning only to realise that I have 4 days left and then I'm flying home. GOD DAMN IT, LIFE IS SO CRUEL.

But you've just got to look for the silver lining on every cloud and mine is to play hockey again. My god, I can't wait to hit those balls and run around the pitch like a headless chicken again. And I've also decided to go back to university, and for the first time since I quit uni I am actually looking forward to it....... yeah, I know it sounds strange!

Anyway, whatever you are all doing I hope that you are having some fun.

See you all when I see you
From Me. [Lisa] [email received from Lisa December 2003]

What these three examples show is firstly how easy it is to remain part of a group through modern communication. David personalised his email in order to keep in touch with over a dozen people. Both David and Lisa use the group email to deliver information about themselves and their futures; in this case, that both of them are returning to university. Yet these emails also reaffirm their part of the group of travellers. In this case, by talking about skiing/boarding, they confirm their role as one of a group that existed in Whistler. These emails also illustrate how questionable some of those group links can be. My inclusion in these emails, although providing me with much information, is directly related only to the interviews I conducted with David and with Lisa. This causes me to question the relationships I formed with these people through those conversations; did I mislead them into thinking that through the interview we had formed some sort of friendship? I believe, however, this has much more to do with the networks these young people form through their travels. By keeping in touch with a wide array of people - good friends, casual acquaintances, co-workers, researchers - so their network remains very broad. This may allow them to travel further and wider at a later date. Veronica, for instance, after over two years in the UK, visited friends she had made in Whistler in Sydney, Australia. Keeping these networks as broad as possible and as wide as possible, allows these young budget travellers, even upon their return home, to remain part of a community. It allows them, through emails, web sites, and even mobile phones, to continue to identify themselves as this type of person.

4.6 Transnational Identities?

In wishing to remain connected to a group or community of friends or young budget travellers made whilst working and travelling away from home, so these young people often show a desire to maintain multiple identities (see for instance, Malbon, 1997, Vertovec, 1999). These multiple identities combine the narratives they have developed about themselves whilst away from home with those they may have to re-adjust to or make upon their return home. So, in going home they may pick off where they left off by going back to study or returning to a career but by remaining in contact with other travellers, they retain that part of their identity as well. These multiple identities are often born out of an awareness of multilocality (Ghosh and Wang, 2003: 277) and through the spatial and temporal frames in which they are built, they are or become transnational (see Smith, M., 2001). These young people practise life materially, discursively and strategically through the networks they develop on and throughout their work experiences and their travels. These networks involve family, friends, short-lived acquaintances and work colleagues and they have crossed nations, becoming transnational. These young people can be seen as Ong's (1999) 'flexible citizens'.

In order then, to try and illustrate some of the ways these young people are, or have become transnational, I am going to use answers from a question I posed to three specific people. In late October 2003 I sent an email to three people; Sasha, Diane and Susan. The question I posed was about how they perceived their national identity. The reasons for asking these particular three people were threefold. Firstly, they were well known to me and I felt that I could pose this sort of question and they would not only respond but would think about the question and answer frankly and most importantly, honestly. Secondly, all three had worked and travelled away from home and so I classed them as young budget travellers. Thirdly, I knew that all three of these people had citizen rights in more than one country at the time they were travelling. When I posed these questions, their situations had all changed somewhat from their original 'backpacker' days. For instance, Diane, an Australian with Irish parents (and so she has an Irish passport) married a Canadian in 2001 and is a permanent resident in Canada. Susan had grown up with both Australian and Canadian citizenship and Sasha had joint citizenship rights with Australia and the USA and, after five years in Whistler, also became a permanent Canadian resident. I believe their answers are still valid for the very reason I asked the question in the first place, their working and travelling experiences had taken them to this point in their

lives. They had all lived, worked, played in more than one country and through friends, relatives, work colleagues and casual acquaintances had developed world-wide connections.

> To Diane and Susan
> How do you deal with question about your nationality? Do you still think of yourselves as Australian or Canadian or both? What do you say when people ask you about it? I've been asked about it quite a lot lately and it has got me thinking….

> To Sasha
> How do you deal with questions about your nationality? Do you think of yourself as Australian, American or Canadian or a mixture of them all? What do you say when people ask you about it? I've been asked about it quite a lot lately and it's got me thinking...

What I want to explore is their reactions and answers to my question. Susan's response, below, shows how frustrating it can be trying to successfully balance a less than singular national identity. She also illustrates that place is important in these discourses, a point I will come back to in Chapter Six. Whistler, she says, is particularly bad as it is an international resort populated by people from various parts of the globe (mainly Australasian and European) who are not only likely to be more aware of the multiple national identities people can have but are also therefore more likely to question people about their identity. Her answer also illustrates the temporality of this frustration. October is the beginning of the recruiting season in Whistler, so there are (literally) thousands of new people in the village. Questions then, of where you are from, how long you have been here and even, how long you intend to stay are prevalent and are asked of everyone with an accent, whether they are longer term residents, such as Susan, or young people who have, as Susan says, 'just stepped off the boat'.

> Anyways as for your question … People always give me crap for being Australian. And some of them even ask how can I stay here. I then explain that my mom is from Vancouver and all my relatives are here. I also say I have been coming over here since I was born and have lived here for the last 6 years. I am getting really tired of it. It really pisses me off. Only Whistler is bad. Especially this time of year when everyone assumes you just stepped off the boat. Sometimes I just speak like a Canadian so I don't get questioned and people can understand me. But in Vancouver, it works for me. Everyone thinks it is sooo cool in Vancouver and you

can use it as a benefit. How well – I get a parking ticket and talk to the person saying I wasn't from around there and if they could void it for me and they did then they told me to enjoy my vacation in Canada. I didn't tell them I was on holiday but they assumed it. [email received from Susan, November, 2003]

Yet she also illustrates how her transnational identity can be used to her benefit. By getting out of a parking ticket by not disabusing the attendant of the notion she was *only* Australian and here on holiday, she illustrates how she can use her various national identities to help manipulate aspects of her everyday life.

Diane's response, below, is in some ways more considered. Whereas Susan's immediate response was to express her frustration at some of the questions she encounters, Diane seems to see the frankness of the questions as a way of being able to explain and express her multiple national identities. When talking about travelling, Diane seems to be suggesting that she purposely explains the intricacies of her multiple national identities. I think this is an important point and is another important identity defining characteristic. Her identity is bound up not only with her Australian upbringing and accent, but with the fact that she also holds an Irish passport and is now a Canadian permanent resident. Thus, telling people about her transnational identity becomes an important part of her storied self. What Diane's response also illustrates is again, how important place is in defining and rooting (routing?) the self. As she says, she would like to consider herself Canadian and she has fulfilled criteria set by the Canadian government to become a permanent resident, yet her upbringing and accent make her uncomfortable with suggesting she is Canadian. Her Australian background is therefore still the largest self-defining aspect. However, she is suggesting that this tension between being either Australian or Canadian is temporal. She suggests that it may be resolved to some extent when she gains citizenship rights as then she will be able to claim both nationalities as part of her identity.

Good to hear from you Tara and interesting question.

I find most people tend to ask where I'm from, so that's easy, obviously I say from Australia. Sometimes I add that I now live in Canada as a permanent resident though. Quite often people outright ask if I am a visa etc, which would promote me to say I'm a Canadian permanent resident.

However, if people are talking about travel and passports etc. then I usually say I am a dual Australian and Irish citizen, as well as a permanent resident of Canada. Confusing huh! …

I think I would like to consider myself Canadian but feel like a bit of a fraud because I was born and grew up in Australia and have the Aussie accent. So maybe when I get my citizenship in a few years, I might say to people I'm dual Australian/Canadian. Mmmm, ask me again in 3 years and see if that is what I say! [email received from Diane, November, 2003]

Sasha's response, below, in some ways suggests a more simplistic view of her multiple citizenship, in the way in which she does and would answer questions. However, I think this belies the complexity that her final comments imply. One point to note before I discuss those final comments is the spatial aspect of her answer to the question 'where is home?'. Her answer illustrates how ideas of home and away are complicated by transnational identities. One has to ask, how often is she in Melbourne? Why is it still considered home when her permanent residence (as in abode) is in Whistler?[85] This links back to Conradson and Latham's (2005c) work on friendships and networks; Sasha's family is in Melbourne, and as such does this factor alone mean it remains home?

It is Sasha's final comments that I want to concentrate on for a moment. The first point is that she sees herself as a mixture of two nationalities, however her next sentence suggests that she does not believe that these reflect her identity; they simply allow her to travel the world. Nevertheless, her final comment reaffirms the role that place plays in her definition of self. Perhaps however, it is not the nation as such that she is using as a definition of self; rather it is, as Diane suggested, elements associated with the nation, and here I would suggest it is specifically culture that Sasha is using to describe who she sees herself as

Regarding your question, I have different answers for different questions.

If someone asks, "Where are you from?", I answer, "Australia".

If someone asks, "What nationality do you consider yourself?", I answer, "Australian".

If someone asks, "Where is home?", I answer, "Whistler and Melbourne".

If someone were to ask, "Do you think of yourself as Australian, American or Canadian or a mixture of them all?" (which I've never been asked), I would

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[85] This is also illustrated by others; Wilson (2006) says of her OE experience, 'As it happened, it was twenty years before I finally returned to New Zealand to live. Throughout those twenty years I always planned to return home one day. I described myself as "a New Zealander who lived in London" and 'home' was always New Zealand.'

answer, "Mostly Australian, with a bit of Canadian mixed in". I don't consider my citizenships as a reflection of my constitution. Just pieces of paper that enable me to roam the world. I do, however, consider Australia as who I am – Canada is who I've become.

Make any sense? [email received from Sasha, November, 2003]

Having transnational identities, for these particular young people, is thus a complicated relationship bound together by issues of home, identity, and nation. The question I asked and the answers I received do not consider the responsibilities associated with issues of citizenship and national identity (which was not what I was looking for when I asked these questions). I was concerned with their transnational identities and what these responses do provide is the beginnings of a discussion which demonstrates that transnationalism, is not only about the widening of perceptions across national boundaries but that at the same time this widening causes tension. Issues such as a sense of belonging, where 'home' is, how to define oneself in relation to transnational opportunities, and how to negotiate the increasing complexity of belonging to more than one nation-state have all been introduced in these responses. The fact that these three all had existing connections to more than one country differentiates them from many of the young people that I talked to. Nonetheless, many of these issues are applicable to young working tourists as a whole in that the idea of a transnational identity is a factor in (re)constructing an ideal sense of self once back 'at home'.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored how the working and travelling experiences of young budget travellers help them to tell stories about their identities, and how these stories allow them to define themselves in specific ways through their experiences. As I have suggested, the media are often critical of the learning experiences of young budget travellers (see for instance, Barrow, 2007; Kay, 2004; Prigg, 2003). However, what I hope this chapter has done is to illustrate the many ways in which these young people gain knowledge from their experiences. For some, the realisation they have learned something is not necessarily immediate, yet this does not detract from the experiences. Even for those whose experience has been less than expected, they take something away. Yes, convention says that whatever it is that they learn, that they take away, should be positive and I want to believe that this is the case. It is important to note that I have not found many negative experiences and maybe this is an area that needs more research (although I wonder at how one would go about

finding people a) who had a negative experiences and b) getting them to admit they learned little or nothing about themselves from it).

The next two chapters continue to use empirical data and expand on some of the ideas I have raised here. Chapter Five will look more closely at the role of work in the lives of the young budget traveller. It introduces some wider theoretical debates and considers issues of emotional labour, mobility and temporary migration in relation to the work these young people undertake in Whistler. Chapter Six looks at how a sense of place and community can influence the young budget traveller and links in with the comments I have raised about transnational identities and the idea that for some, their identity becomes bound up with more than place.

CHAPTER 5: WORK

> Most travellers want to participate along the way, not simply observe. (Elsrud, 1998: 311).

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two, I look at ideas about work through the emphasis that has been placed on the blurrings and disjunctions between consumption and production (see Crang and Malbon, 1996; Du Gay, 1996). Although this chapter will go on to consider work through this lens, I think it is important to expand on these discussions in a number of ways. In engaging with young budget traveller's working experiences, so I will be returning to literatures on motivation (see also Chapter Two Section 2.13) Combined with this, I will look at Whistler as a site of seasonal and temporary employment and expand on the ideas I raise in Chapter Two about work being an empowering and fulfilling activity (c.f. Du Gay, 1996) through a discussion of emotional labour (after Hochschild, 1983).

In proceeding in this way, I suggest that much of the current literature on young budget travellers has, to a great extent, ignored the ways in which their travels intersect with tourism industries through a wider arena than simply producing or consuming the services provided (for exceptions, see Bianchi, 2000; Clarke, 2005). The contentions of this chapter will be threefold. Firstly that for the young budget travellers who engage in periods of (paid[86]) tourism or service work whilst travelling away from home, this work is an intrinsic part of the touristic experience (Bianchi, 2000). Secondly, that although international business often recruits this particular group of tourists as workers, they need to pay more attention to the motivations behind this type of travel; and thirdly, that if young budget travellers are, as Gogia (2006: 364) suggests, 'new symbols of über-mobility' and are therefore 'indicative of emergent patterns of post-industrial mobility in which the boundaries between work and leisure are blurred' (Bianchi, 2000: 114), then we need to consider the possible

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[86] It is interesting to note that as more research appears on young budget travellers, so the focus frequently seems to centre on the 'volunteer gap year' (see for instance, Jones, 2004b, forthcoming; Simpson 2003, 2005) rather than on any paid work these young people may undertake in their year out. I think that although this, in part, stems from a concern about the impact these young people have on the cultures, communities and people they encounter along the way, these researchers often fail to engage with wider literatures, such as mobility and migration, and to me, seem to remain within disciplinary boundaries rather than engaging in cross-disciplinary/interdisciplinary discussions.

(short and long term) effects of their role in the 'middle' of transnationalism (see Conradson and Latham 2005c; Clarke, 2005).

In furthering the discussions of some of the theoretical ideas I raise in earlier chapters, I hope to illustrate not only how working while travelling is an important part of the young budget traveller's overall experience but that the three clear strands I use to order this thesis (identity, work and place) are not isolated from each other. This chapter should therefore also illustrate the myriad connections and networks between many of the concepts I discuss, including identity, work, play, consumption, production, mobility, place and space.

This chapter will work through these themes beginning by looking at seasonality before moving onto motivation and then emotional labour. Within these discussions, I will talk in more detail about company – or corporate – culture and think more closely about Intrawest's assertion that 'we work to play'. I go on to use an example of another 'resort' town - Queenstown in New Zealand – to consider some of the issues faced by both employers and employees in such resorts before concluding by returning to the contentions I mention above.

5.2 Seasonality

As I suggest in Chapter One, tourism is often heralded as the world's largest service industry (Cloke, 2000: 840; Ringer, 1998:1), though it is perhaps more accurate to describe it as an amalgam of service industries (Otto and Brent, 1996:165). According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC, 2005), total global employment in travel and tourism comprises over 76 million jobs – or approximately 2.8% of total global employment.

Hinch and Hickey (1998:1 cited in Boon, 2003: 115) argue that 'seasonality is one of the most prominent feature of tourism'. As such, the spatial and temporal nature of tourism means that there is often an uneven and unpredictable demand from tourists and therefore an uneven need for tourism labour (Shaw and Williams, 2004: 71). It has also been suggested that as the characteristics of tourism have changed over time – from an elite to a highly popularised activity – so too have the work patterns associated with tourism (and hospitality) industries (Huang and Häggkvist, 2004)

As Huang and Häggkvist (2004: 4) suggest, mass tourism, as well as economic, political and social factors such as globalisation, technological change, and shorter 'product' life cycles have led to employers within tourism industries utilising a flexible labour force (see also de Jong and Schalk, 2005). These factors can be seen to have caused a casualization of work in tourism industries (Wood, 1992) as the nature of work in the tourism and hospitality industries have become more focused on seasonal, part-time, temporary and short-term work (see Baum 1995).

Whistler, as a popular ski resort, is inherently seasonal. Although this has changed rapidly as summer activities such as mountain biking and golf grow in popularity[87], Whistler remains a predominantly winter resort (see Chapter One, Section 1.5 for a brief history of the growth of Whistler as a resort). Figures from a 1997 article on seasonal recruitment (Woodall, 1997[88]) suggests that Whistler Mountain's 1997 summer employment dropped to approximately 200 employees whilst in the middle of the winter season, they employed over 1,100 workers and up to 400 volunteers; Blackcomb Mountain, during the winter, employed over 1400 workers, of which up to 700 were seasonal. This article compares these figures to Disneyland in California and Sea World in San Diego. Disney, for instance employ an extra 1,000 to 3,000 'cast members' for their three peak periods – spring break, summer and autumn through to Christmas; Sea World employment peaks at approximately 3,5000 in the busy summer months, compared to only 1,800 employees at other times of the year. As another article (Business Niagra, 2005) suggests,

> Seasonal workers are like honey for tourism, winery and agriculture businesses that curl up in the winter but roar to life when the snow melts.

5.3 Flexibility in Employment?

Tourism service work is most often associated with long hours, high pressure in peak times, low salary, and repetitive, emotionally and physically demanding tasks (see Urry, 1990; Crang, 1997; Huang and Häggkvist, 2004, Sharpe, 2005). Tourism employers, who often have a reputation for high staff turnover, seek ways in which to recruit, and retain, the 'right' employees even though they often resign themselves to

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[87] In part, of course, due to promotion by Intrawest and other local businesses.
[88] As I outline in Chapter One, 1997 is the year that Whistler and Blackcomb merge. As such these figures give an idea of the seasonal nature of employment for each mountain at the time of the merger. By 2000, summer employment had risen to approximately 1,000 workers (of which approximately 200 workers were seasonal) with over 4,000 employees, including volunteers, during the winter season.

the fact that temporary employment is a necessary management strategy (Boon, 2003). Some theorists (Wood, 1992, Baum, 1995) suggest that this type of temporary employment is particularly attractive to young people, because of its flexible nature, or; as HR Canada (2006) put it,

> The seasonality of the tourism industry provides ideal employment for students
> and people wanting short-term employment. The drive is there for them to work
> as many hours as they can to earn the money they need to pursue their dreams.

Shaw and Williams (2004:72) suggest that Atkinson's (1984) distinction between numerical and functional flexibility 'has become the classic conceptualisation of flexibility'[89]. Atkinson's (1984, cited in Shaw and Williams, 2004: 72 and Urry, 1990: 70) numerical flexibility implies changes in employment in response to demand fluctuations whilst functional flexibility suggests the movement of workers between tasks in response to changing demands at different points in an establishment. This then promotes the notion of core and peripheral workers – those in the core have greater security in their jobs whilst the peripheral workers are employed on various short-term, temporary, seasonal and/or casual contracts (Shaw and Williams, 2005: 72).

Yet, as Urry (1990: 70-71) states, this 'classic' conceptualisation of (manufacturing) work has characterised the tourism industry since at least the 1960s. He (1990: 70-72) suggests that tourism industries have not only used numerical and functional flexibility but that they have also utilised pay flexibility. Most service related industries have to provide the customer with a product/service when the customer demands it. This then places a temporal and spatial demand on the labour force employed. It is at this point that employers utilise numerical flexibility and increase their temporary, casual, seasonal and part-time employees. Yet, and specifically in the case of much tourism related industry, the variety of customer demands can lead to functional flexibility as employees – whether core or peripheral – undertake a variety of roles in order to meet employer and customer satisfaction levels (see Urry, 1990). The difference between core and periphery can thus become blurred. Not only can core staff be functionally inflexible due to the nature of their jobs (Urry, 1990: 73 suggests receptionists or waiting staff for instance) but peripheral staff, by the very nature of their temporary contracts can gain functional flexibility in order to be employable (and

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[89] Atkinson (1984) identifies four forms of flexibility. Numerical flexibility and functional flexibility as examined here, as well as distancing and pay flexibility (see Urry, 1990: 70). Distancing displaces employment through strategies such as subcontracting and pay flexibility rewards individuals who, for example, become multi-skilled and functionally flexible (Urry, 1990: 70).

mobile). As much, therefore, as job security may be the main point of differentiation between core and periphery, it cannot be supposed that this one factor is enough to allow us to assume that temporary employment is 'second-rate' or that, in being 'only' temporary, these workers are 'deprived' (see de Jong and Schalk, Huang and Häggkvist, 2004; McGovern et al 2004). I will return to this point shortly.

Shaw and Williams (1994, cited in 2004: 72)) have extended Atkinson's (1984) conceptualisation of flexibility by classifying the variety of employment conditions in tourism – so, temporary, seasonal, part-time, home-worker for instance – in terms of four axes. These are regularity of working hours, functional-numerical flexibility, employment security and availability of material and fringe benefits. They (2004: 72-73) also suggest a broader perspective as put forward by Rimmer and Zappala (1988) that identifies five main types of employment flexibility (numerical, functional, working-time, wage and procedural flexibility) and relates these more directly to local labour markets. This broader perspective, whilst allowing for more complex associations between each type of flexibility still implies that employee flexibility remains a 'top-down' approach i.e. that they are strategic managerial practices, and thus does not take into account the many motivational aspects that may encourage certain groups of employees – such as young budget travellers - to seek out some form of temporary employment. Or, perhaps, as Wood (1997: 181 cited in Shaw and Williams, 2004: 73) argues, 'the suspicion is that managerial practices towards deskilling… are less a matter of unified intent than uncoordinated stumblings toward some hazy ideal of efficiency and administrative improvement'.

5.4 Motivations

As I suggest in Chapter Two, Section 2.13 the motivations behind young budget travellers are many and varied. Whilst Maslow's (1970, cited in Cooper, 2005) fairly rigid hierarchy of needs provides a model through which individuals move, so both Dann's (1981) and McIntoch et al's(1995) elements of motivation suggest a more interactive approach whereby the various elements can act in conjunction with one another.

Before I continue thinking through some other theoretical approaches to motivation, I want to briefly go back to the two survey's that have asked young budget travellers about motivational factors, Lonely Planet (2005, 2006) and Richards and Wilson (2003). Both studies ask young budget travellers to rank a number of motivational

factors. In Richards and Wilson (2003: 17) report, the young people they surveyed ranked exploration, excitement and increasing knowledge as the main motivational factors for travel; exploring other cultures, with 83% was ranked first overall by the 2,300 respondents, excitement was second with 74% and increasing knowledge ranked third with 69%. In both years of the Lonely Planet (2005, 2006) survey, exploring other cultures ranked first, followed by relaxing or escaping life, exploring non-tourist areas, interacting with locals and finding oneself/personal growth. Both surveys illustrate that young budget travellers have multiple motivations to travel. While neither survey asked explicitly if working/volunteering whilst travelling were motivators in any way[90], the Lonely Planet (2005) survey did find that 33% of their respondents[91] said travelling had a major impact on their overall lifestyle with 20% saying that it directly affected their career choices. The Lonely Planet (2006) also found that, for 30% of their respondents, their main purpose of travel was for a career break (as Lonely Planet point out, this should perhaps read taking a short break from work), over 20% said their main purpose was take a gap year or working holiday and 10% said volunteering was their main purpose of travel. One final survey adds weight to the Lonely Planet Surveys. The Chartered Institute of Personal Development's (CIPD) recent survey suggested that, in 2005, 39% of the UK graduates they surveyed took a year out between school and university in order to get paid work; this compared to 50% in 2000. Two other interesting figures were that the number of young people who took a year out before university to gain work experience (3% in 2000 rising to 5% in 2005) and those who took time out to undertake volunteer work (1% on 2000 rising to 5% in 2005) (CIPD, 2006:10).

This suggests that the motivations that lead young people to work in Whistler are somewhat complex and what the last paragraph does not mention are the motivational strategies employed by tourism and service industries in order to attract and retain temporary, seasonal, casual and part-time workers. The next sections will explore these two aspects of motivation. Firstly, I want to look at some of the reasons why these young people chose to work in Whistler. I will then go on to consider some of the motivational strategies that businesses can employ.

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[90] This is due, at least in part, to both the aims behind conducting these surveys and the methodologies used.
[91] In 2005, the Lonely Planet survey had approximately 20,000 respondents, in 2006 this number jumped to over 33,000.

5.41 I wanted to work in Whistler because …

Research into the motivations behind the decision to accept a temporary job has suggested that there are often two distinct categories. These are voluntary and involuntary (see for instance, Ball, 1988; de Jong and Schalk, 2005; Ellingson et al, 1998; Tan and Tan, 2002). Voluntary factors include giving the employee a sense of freedom, flexible hours, and the potential to work for limited periods of time, whereas involuntary factors can include job loss, difficulty finding a permanent position and a tight labour market. I would say that all the young people I spoke to fit into the first category.

However, within this group, Ball (1998) further divides the voluntary factors into traditional and professional. Traditional voluntary workers tend to be unemployed prior to their temporary (seasonal) job but probably have other engagements planned during the year (i.e. students); professional voluntary workers choose to work in seasonal jobs and move from one job (place?) to the next (see Ball, 1988; de Jong and Schalk, 2005). Tan and Tan (2002; see also de Jong and Schalk, 2005: 10) break down the reasons for undertaking temporary work into the six distinctive categories of: family related reasons, economic related reasons, self-improvement, personal preference, a means to getting a permanent job and could not find a permanent job.

Both Ball (1998) and Tan and Tan's (2002) approaches hold factors that I think do influence the motivations of the young people I spoke to. Ball's (1998) approach appeals as it not only explains those young people who take a year out knowing they have something to go back to (whether they have deferred a university or work placement, or perhaps are on sabbatical from work), but also those young people who, as I suggest in Chapter Four and below, may be taking some time out to decide their future and so are content to undertake temporary, casual and seasonal work. It also explains people like Todd and Dean who worked as ski instructors in Whistler for half the year and for the other half work, as in Todd's case, as a river guide and in Dean's case, as a mountain bike guide[92].

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[92] In the UK, the media have occasionally drawn attention to the small number of young people who do not return to take up their university place and instead, decide to perhaps take up this temporary worker lifestyle. As the director of one volunteer organisation said, 'We actively encourage our gap year volunteers to take up their university places, because we don't want to produce a generation of drifters,'(Summers, 20002). It is interesting to compare this view with the views of people like Dean and Todd who see their employment flexibility in terms of a lifestyle choice.

Young people are often motivated to choose service work within the tourism industry because of the flexibility and convenience of this type of work. Despite the low wages, young budget travellers are attracted to the opportunities that this type of employment can provide; as one of Adler and Adler's (1999: 283) respondents said of working in a Hawaiian hotel, ''I'm living the life now, full-time, that all the people who slave year 'round only get to live on their two-week vacation a year'' (ibid: 383). For Adler and Adler's respondents, as for mine, it can be suggested that part of the motivation for taking a job in tourist resort – whether it be Hawaii or Whistler – is that seasonal jobs can be perceived to have higher prestige than other similar jobs in an intermittent labour market (see Ball, 1988; Tan and Tan, 2002). So, for instance,

> *Tara*: I mean, when you talk to people, what stories do you tell?
> *Andrew*: Oh yah, the big powder days,
> *Tara*: You don't tell them about the mundane, you don't tell them about the day you were sitting at work and it was pretty damn boring
> *Andrew*: You tell them, so it's a workday and I'm going skiing, that's what you tell them.

My conversation with Andrew suggests that one of the motivations behind working in Whistler is has little to do with skills they might learn or money they might earn; rather it is about the prestige of saying, as Lisa did, 'Yah, I worked there'. I had a similar conversation with Ellie

> *Ellie*: When people talk about their travelling experiences at other places before they came here you always hear about places, you only hear about this beach and they hiked this hill or this city that they went to, you never hear about where else they've worked, and you know they have cause they've mentioned it. It's always glossed over and … I've always wondered how we fit in, as part of that, you know Whistler Blackcomb. I mean, are we glossed over as well, does it become, does the work become completely unimportant after they leave? Or is it the one thing that they actually talk about?
> *Tara*: If you talk to people who have been before what's the first thing you talk about? …Say you meet someone in the city who used to work up here or …
> *Ellie*: Oh yeh, where do you work? Where did you work when you were here?
> *Tara*: And then? Are you a snowboarder, what was your favourite run, oh, do you remember that season when… None of it's forgotten, it just seems that it's, prioritised, you know,
> *Ellie*: Yah, which then shows the priorities of why they're here …

This links back to the stories that young people tell about themselves, and so perhaps, to Tan and Tan's (2002) factor of self-improvement. As I suggest to Ellie, it is not so much that work is an unimportant aspect of their experiences, rather young people prioritise their experiences and arrange them in a way that will endear them to their current audience. Young people are rarely 'motivated' to take a job as a busser[93] in the Glacier Creek restaurant on Blackcomb – unless, of course, they can describe (to other young budget travellers, friends and family) how the only access to this restaurant is to ski in and out.

Other non-monetary elements motivated young people to work for Whistler Blackcomb, Lisa, in an email to me, said,

> You get a free season pass, a free meal everyday you work, discounts on food and equipment, you get a uniform!

Neil says,

> Oh it's a good company to work for. Housing's cheap which is good, and the ski pass… Pays not great, for living in Whistler but because they make accommodation cheap that's good. Plus discounts on Merlin's [bar/restaurant], I'm lucky as I get a food voucher for every day that I work

And Elaine says,

> I mean, getting work, you know, you go to these interviews and obviously I think all the interviewers know that the main thing is you want to get to your season pass94, but you've got to show that you want that job …

Crang (1997) points out that there is still a danger of romanticising tourism employment. For these young people, telling stories about the non-monetary advantages of this sort of work often ignores the fact that much of this work is repetitive, poorly paid and can be emotionally and physically demanding. Yet, as I suggest earlier in the thesis (see Section 2.13; Jones, 2003:2), young people are 'savvy' about the work choices they make. For instance, both Lisa and Neil, whilst being motivated by the benefits listed above also say,

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[93] A busser is someone who goes around clearing and cleaning the tables in the restaurant.
[94] Full-time employees of Whistler Blackcomb (those who work 30 hours or more a week) are entitled to a free winter season ski pass.

> The wages weren't great, neither was staff housing, however it was a roof over your head and a bed to sleep in (Lisa).

> They [Whistler Blackcomb] know how to get you work. That's the secret, they know how to get to work and they know how to keep you sweet, …That's how they can get away without paying much ... Yah, they're not stupid. A few people don't realise it, like when you get something for free they're like wow! It's free, and it's like, no it's not free (Neil)

Lisa's comment comes across as an acceptance that with the perks comes low pay and accommodation that leaves something to be desired. Neil is much more critical; he realises that the non-monetary incentives came at a cost and that they were being used to motivate young people to *want* to work for Whistler Blackcomb.

De Jong and Schalk (2005: 9) suggest that short-term employees (such as seasonal staff) may be willing to work in inequitable employment relations (for example, for low pay) if they expect to obtain different employment conditions in the near future (see also Reynolds et al, 2004). A large proportion of the young budget travellers who travel to, and work in, Whistler are taking a break between school and university or between university and beginning a career and so are often over-qualified[95], as Byron says,

> Doesn't really matter what kind of education or background they have because the majority of the time we are not going to be able to match that experience with a position given that most of our jobs are front line entry level jobs,

As Esping-Andersen (1999: 182) says, a 'temporary deprivation is unimportant if it does not affect our life chances'. Thus, young budget travellers may evaluate their desire to work in Whistler in relation with their expectations for the future (see de Jong and Schalk, 2005; Feldman and Turnley, 2004). This again links back to Ball's (1988) notion of both traditional and professional voluntary factors of motivation.

As I discuss in Chapter Four (Section 4.32), some young people are motivated to take time away in order to think about their future. In my conversation with Neil, he talked about how his time away from home had allowed him time (and space) to begin thinking about his future. Being in Whistler had given him the motivation to begin developing his ten-year plan. He was applying for graduate training schemes back in

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[95] As I say in Chapter Six, Section 6.4, Lonely Planet (2005: 15, 2006: 6) have found that over 70% of their respondents were educated to degree level or higher.

the UK and he was looking to use his work experiences at Whistler Blackcomb to help facilitate his future working life.

> *Neil*: I'm hoping I can use it [his job] as an example of my independence and you know, planning and sort of thing, human instances
> *Tara*: Organisational skills, team work,
> *Neil*: All those cheesy words I don't like to use. I was hoping that I could use that for that [his job applications]. …I think as well they should provide, you know that, they do that, what is it called, that training thing don't they where you can go to those module things.
> *Tara*: Yeh, yeh
> *Neil*: I think they should promote that more, for people like me. Cause I wouldn't mind doing those. So I was actually thinking about doing a couple of those, when I finish doing my job applications, it's actually a bit practice isn't it?
> *Tara*: And it's good to put on your CV anyway.
> *Neil*: Yah, exactly

Other employees were motivated by the lifestyle that Whistler Blackcomb promotes (and which I will discuss in more detail below). For instance, in the 2002/2003 Employee Handbook, there were comments from employees at the top of every other page. Each comment includes the person's name and how long they have been in Whistler. Some of the comments include[96]

> I came for the mountain lifestyle. It adds to the growth of our bodies, minds and souls. (4 years)

> It's the best place to find a balance between work and play. Whether you are carving powder in the Symphony Bowl or riding the epic trails that litter the valley, this is the best place to call home. (1 year)

> I came because of the parent company, plain and simple, Intrawest carries a reputation associated with youth, cutting edge and striving to be the best. Intrawest challenges you to be your best, think your best and realize your true potential. (3 years)

> The Ski industry was what I knew I wanted to do and what better place to be than here with the leaders of the industry. It was the best decision I've ever made. (5 years)

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[96] I have excluded all names and page numbers for the sake of anonymity; of course, their details are available to every employee who received a copy of the 2002-2003 Handbook (approximately 4000 are produced every winter season).

Comments from young people I spoke to also re-affirmed that lifestyle – which assumes an element of work is involved – was one reason they decided to come to Whistler. For instance, Eva said she was looking for a job where she could switch off when not working so she could enjoy the lifestyle that went with being in Whistler. Sonia said,

> *Sonia*: For me, it's a whole lifestyle thing, you know? I love my job, I love meeting all these new people and I love that I get to do something I love [snowboarding] whenever I want. … It's not, if I was back east and working in the bank, I'd go home and do nothing. …Here, you know, I go meet someone for a beer after work, or maybe, you know, head up the hill with some of the girls from work…

Elaine said,

> *Elaine*: …my friends told me to come here. They were here, let's see, um, back in 2000 I think, and they said how they just had such a great time, you know, they'd worked with this great bunch of people and hung out in some cool bars and stuff. …I just wanted to get away from my job in [Australia], I hated it, hated everything about what I was doing and just, like, wanted to come here and enjoy everything, you know…

And Grace said,

> *Grace*: I've more come here for the lifestyle, the ski village lifestyle.
> *Tara*: What do you see that lifestyle as, sort of laid back
> *Grace*: Yah, not having too many responsibilities, um, looking after myself, yah, really kind of um, I think this is another thing I am going to take away from travelling in general, like my views on this have completely changed, it's like about a work life balance …

These comments illustrate that the motivations for coming to Whistler cannot be seen as being about one particular factor; for instance, work. Nor can they always be seen to be about working towards something 'better'. Maslow's (1970; see also Chapter Two, Section 2.13) theory of motivation therefore, does not apply to many of the young people I spoke to. They do not go through each of his stages until they reach personal self-fulfilment.   In many ways, the motivation to work as part of their travels fitted in much better with Dann's (1981) and McIntosh's (1995) factors of motivation (see Cooper, 2005) which allows these young people to 'mix and match' – or rather,

combine various elements which work in conjunction with each other and so cause a blurring of Maslow's (1970) five steps. This also allows the factors suggested by Ball (1998) and Tan and Tan (2002) to be incorporated. So, for instance, Lisa chose to travel in order to experience something different from her home environment (after Dann, 1981; see Cooper, 2005: 55-56). She was a traditional voluntary temporary worker (after Ball, 1998) who chose to work in Whistler for economic, self-improvement and personal preference reasons (after Tan and Tan, 2002). In other words, Lisa chose to work in Whistler as she had decided university was not yet for her and wanted to experience something different. She couldn't afford to 'just' travel so chose to work in Whistler as she had friends living in nearby Pemberton.

5.42 Motivating Employees

Another set of motivations exists alongside those of young budget travellers. These motivation studies, which have often consisted of theories to questions such as why and how employees act in a certain way (see Ambrose and Kulik, 1999), have developed over the last few decades. Through the1970s, researchers considered the motives and needs of workers in content theories whilst by the 1990s the development of motive and need theories had fallen in job design theory and achievement theory (see Huang and Häggkvist , 2004: 6).

As Huang and Häggkvist (2004) suggest, it is commonly promoted within management literature that '"…good managers motivate with the power of the vision, the passion of their delivery, and the compelling logic of their reasoning."' (Nicholson, 2003 cited in Huang and Häggkvist, 2004: 3). Making employees perform the best way they can is a critical issue for tourism businesses and one reason why motivation has been regarded as a pivotal concern in recent organizational research (see Ambrose and Kulik, 1999; Huang and Häggkvist, 2004). Baum (1997) believes that human resource management is more than an operational concern and considers it a strategic dimension that aims to achieve a wider enhancement of service quality. Within tourism and hospitality, the delivery of quality products and services reflects an increased focus on intangible experiences. This emphasises the "human factor" element of service delivery (see Baum, 1997). Employee motivation, co-operation and teamwork are therefore critical to delivering a quality service in order to achieve higher customer satisfaction and differentiation from competition. So, for Whistler Blackcomb,

Over recent years our Staff have been recognised for adding a service differentiation to our Guest's experience and it our intention to widen the gap between our performance and that of our competition. (Employee Handbook, 2002-2003: 2)

Before I look in greater detail at some of the motivational strategies Whistler Blackcomb employ, I want to consider Herzberg's (1966, cited in Amabile, 1993) motivation-hygiene theory. According to Herzberg (1966), motivators that refer to achievement, recognition and responsibility are cited as causes of job satisfaction. Hygiene factors are considered as the factors around work, such as supervision, interpersonal relations, physical working conditions and salary. Hygiene factors are rarely seen as creators of job satisfaction and often affect levels of dissatisfaction (see also Huang and Häggkvist, 2004: 6). These two factors have also been called intrinsic (motivators) and extrinsic (hygiene) factors (see Amabile, 1993; Reynolds et al, 2004). Here, intrinsic factors are related to the work itself and have to do with employee competence and the autonomy of the work and extrinsic factors relate to factors outside of work that can drive an employee, such as promised rewards (a free ski pass for instance) and expected evaluations.

Huang and Häggkvist's (2004) study of an amusement park illustrates how this motivational theory is applicable to a tourism business. They used motivational theories to try and discover the answers to two questions: 1) what motivational factors motivated seasonal front-line employees to carry out their work and; 2) how do the motivational factors influence the behaviour of seasonal front-line workers. Their analysis outlines a number of intrinsic and extrinsic factors.

The intrinsic motivational factors consisted of personal reasons, personal work ethics and characteristics of people (Huang and Häggkvist, 2004: 53-54). Personal reasons included earning money as the basic reason to work. Personal work ethics included those employees who were good at motivating themselves and so needed little external (i.e. company) motivation and those who did 'the minimum of the best' (ibid: 54). These employees would arrive on time, be well prepared and do most things asked of them but would do no more than they were required to. The people characteristics included people's nature i.e. did they relate well to children, were they always 'happy'. Huang and Häggkvist's (2004) suggested that management should take note of these characteristics and place people accordingly. This would then maximise both employee and customer satisfaction and according to Cowling and

Newman (1995, cited in Huang and Häggkvist, 2004:1) research shows that a strong positive relationship exists between employee satisfaction and customer satisfaction.

The extrinsic motivational factors that Huang and Häggkvist (2004: 55-59) found related to customers, teamwork, and leadership. Customer appreciation motivated the amusement park employees and often gave them huge personal satisfaction. However, having to deal or confront problem customers could affect employee motivation in negative ways and employees often felt they needed support from management. Teamwork involved feelings of camaraderie and mutual trust between co-workers and involved social gatherings outside of work hours. Huang and Häggkvist (2004: 55-56) found that,

> Almost every attraction worker and team leader admitted that co-workers were what they enjoyed best. … Thus, respondents in general were clearly motivated by the social factor of being part of a group.

The final extrinsic factor was leadership. The employees like leaders who trusted them and acted fairly. The team leaders emphasised the need to gain the respect of their employees and discussed the amount of responsibility they gave to their employees. Personal feedback, appraisals and rewards from management were other factors that motivated employees to work hard and provide

Whistler Blackcomb use similar intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors, as identified by Huang and Häggkvist (2004) in order to recruit and retain the 4000 plus seasonal employees needed every winter. For instance, Whistler Blackcomb look for the 'right' type of person to work for them – so personal work ethics and people characteristics become important. Here, I think it is also important to refer back to Baum (1997) and his contention that human resource management plays a strategic role in quality service delivery. Whistler Blackcomb's human resources department, Employee Experience[97], say,

> Whistler Blackcomb is more than just a workplace, it's a lifestyle. … we continuously re-energize our product and our people. Employees are our strength; we look for talented, innovative and hard working individuals who are looking   for   a   memorable   and   unique   experience.

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[97] Employee Experience is the name of the division as well as the HR department. The division consists of a number of departments including, Recruiting, Employee Experience, Employee Development and Residence (what was Staff Housing).

(http://www.whistlerblackcomb.com/employment/index.htm, last accessed 10 November 2006).

Through their use of language and their promotion of a lifestyle, they are trying to attract a specific sort of person, the sort of person that is already highly self-motivated and wants to engage with the Whistler Blackcomb lifestyle. As Rachel says,

> we are looking for somebody with the right attitude. It's pretty simple. That's really it. Doesn't really matter what kind of education or background they have because the majority of the time we are not going to be able to match that experience with a position given that most of our jobs are front line entry level jobs and so attitude is the big thing, right? We're looking for somebody who really wants to create an experience for our guests and who enjoys doing so. You know, somebody who genuinely cares.

She goes on to say

> *Rachel*: … well, through company fit interviews[98] … the company fit interview questions that we ask are all behavioural based, questions around our core values and, it's our job in our interview to try and, and pull out actual experiences that people have had with these core values. So, we would have thought, you know, see a time when they have actually demonstrated, you know, team play. And so, so you know by asking those questions and seeing if people can actually demonstrate that that's important to them, that along with, you know, after you interview, a lot of people for a lot of years, you know. You know, if people come in and they're upbeat and they're smiling and they're professional, and they're …You know, if somebody really wants to be here and if they're going to be friendly to the guest…

Through identifying some of the core values[99] in the interview process, Employee Experience are looking for employees with a combination of the intrinsic motivational factors of personal work ethics and people characteristics with the extrinsic factor of teamwork. Byron emphasises this when he says,

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[98] Lashley (2002: 256) says that the most professional service organisations adopt recruitment practices 'that involve appointing the "right sort of person", and in some cases can involve role plays and psychometric tests'. Whistler Blackcomb adopted an on-line psychometric pre-interview application form/questionnaire in 1999.

[99] The Employee Handbook (2002-2003: 3-5) lists the seven core values as Team Play; Positive Employee Experience; Guest Loyalty; Striving to be the Best; Responsibility to our Community and Environment; Uncompromising Safety; and Honesty and Integrity.

there's a balance between work and play for most of the front line folks where you know the same people they're working with are probably the group they're living close to in Residence and probably the group they're riding and skiing with on their days off.

For the young people who wanted to work in Whistler this meant that getting a job was not an easy process, as the comments below suggest,

Getting a job at Whistler was the hardest thing I have ever had to do. Apparently only 30% of interviewees got employed by intrawest. [email received from William, November 2002]

Tara: What was it like going through the recruiting fair?
Lisa: It was a lot harder than what I thought it would.

Neil: I think it was a good way of doing it actually [the hiring process] …, yah, I thought it was really good cause I think it weeded out all the people that couldn't care less

Veronica: … its things like the interview process for Whistler Blackcomb. I think if you can survive that, I mean, I tell you, no interview on earth could phase me now (laugh).

Yet these comments also suggest that for those who were successful in getting a job, the intrinsic motivators of personal reasons (i.e. the satisfaction of knowing you were one of the few who had got a job) and personal work ethics become important. This then links into my next discussion about emotional labour, as having recruited these employees, maximising commitment to the job remains key to not only retaining employees but to ensuring quality customer service (see Aryee and Heng, 1990; Krueger and Rouse, 1998).

5.5 Emotional Labour

As tourism service jobs have grown in number over the last few decades, so emotional labour has become a more prevalent component of work (see Leidner, 1999) with Hochschild's (1983) seminal text drawing attention to the extent to which emotions are socially embedded and constructed (see Sharpe, 2005). Lashley (2002: 255) suggests that 'the study of emotions in the workplace is interesting and

informative because emotions create the context in which management policies and approaches are shaped or distorted'. Emotional labour is then the commodification of feeling, whereby workers are called upon to act, "not as their personal self, but as a representative of an organization" (Montemurro, 2001: 292 cited in Sharpe, 2005: 31).

Hochschild (1983: 7) defined emotional labour as 'the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display'. Companies rely on the 'emotional displays of front-line employees to match the expectations of their customers' (Lashley, 2002: 255). Most service industries see a strong service culture as a key feature of their interaction with customers and their employees have to exercise "emotional" management in their interactions with customers, managers and other staff (Lashley, 2002: 256). In order to ensure that their employees act in ways that they find acceptable, service industries often attempt to exert control over how the work is done in a variety of ways (Leidner, 1999). Some of these ways include taking care in how they select employees (see comments from Rachel above) and through initial orientations and ongoing training (see below) (Leidner, 1999: 86). Thus, employees are often subject to 'feeling rules', which Sharpe (2005: 30) suggests can be formalized in training manuals or company slogans (see also Hochschild, 1983) – such as Intrawest's phrase 'we work to play'[100]. Front line employees often therefore, have to cope with their own emotions being managed whilst at the same time they try and manage the emotions (responses) of others (Leidner, 1999: 82). Although, Lashley (2002: 256) suggests that if an employee feels happy and helpful, they are not providing emotional labour because they do not have to display emotions they do not feel (emotional harmony), this seems too simplistic, as the employees still have to manage the emotive responses of those around them.

Both Ashforth and Humphrey (1995) and Lashley (2002) content that emotional management is integral and inseparable to organisational life. Lashley (2002: 256) goes on to say that managing emotions is 'the stuff of everyday life' as

> in many domestic and work contexts we have to limit the display of our emotions to those that are deemed appropriate to the situation. In varying ways we use lips and eyes, body language, facial expressions, and the tone of voice to create the display we want or think is right for the situation (Lashley, 2002: 256)

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[100] This slogan is also the address of their employment opportunities website, see www.wework2play.com.

Bolton and Boyd (2003: 293) reiterate this as they suggest that this separation of public and private emotions is one of two central weaknesses to Hochschild's (1993) account of organizational emotionality. They suggest that she operates on the underlying assumption that there is no room for the 'private' in organizational life (Bolton and Boyd, 2003: 293). They suggest her other weakness is that she 'mistakenly equates a physical labour process with an emotional labour process' (Bolton and Boyd, 2003: 293). Thus, the idea that the smile on an employees face is an indirect extension of a company smile and so is a tangible product that the employee 'sells'.

Hochschild (1983) suggests that emotional labour will cause an alienation from real self due to feelings of identity confusion. However, in Sharpe's (2005: 45) study on river guides, she found that,

> what the guides did not convey was any sense of anxiety around their inability to locate their real self. Instead, they seemed to feel little need to resolve the incongruity and appeared quite comfortable maintaining a blurry distinction between what they identified as their work role and their true self.

Sharpe (2005: 46-47) instead suggests that these guides have a different understanding of self than has traditionally been assumed. Hochschild took the assumption that individuals have a core self, yet in recent years other research, such as Holstein and Gubrium (2000), has recognised that the self often involves processes of self-fragmentation and multiplication (see also Ghosh and Wang, 2003). Thus, instead of having one 'true' self, contemporary subjects have many different selves, 'with each version of self equally as true as any other' (Sharpe, 2005: 47; see also Malbon, 1997).

In the rest of this section, I want to explore how Whistler Blackcomb utilise motivation factors and emotional labour in order to ensure the service differentiation that will widen the gap between their 'product' and that of their competitor's; as Bolton and Boyd (2003: 289) suggest, 'the management and manipulation of employees' feeling is securely tied to the idea of competitive advantage'. Tourism service jobs are about service interactions and as I outline in Chapter Two, Section 2.3, there has been a blurring of production and consumption (see Crang and Malbon, 1996; Du Gay, 1996) as it becomes 'impossible to draw clear distinctions between the worker, the work process, and the product or outcome' (Leidner, 1999: 83). The interaction between producer (tourism service worker) and consumer (tourist) is thus part of the service

being delivered and in many cases, is the product generating company profits (Leidner, 1999: 83).

5.51 Company Culture

Bolton and Boyd (2003: 289) suggest that over the past two decades we have witnessed a 'scaling up of institutional privilege over the ownership of emotion' (see also Fineman, 2000). They (20003: 289-290) suggest that

> Employers are openly engaging with hearts and minds (Warhurst and Thompson, 1998) and, some would say, souls (Willmott, 1993) as the management and manipulation of employees' feeling is securely tied to the idea of competitive advantage.'

As I have suggested above, Whistler Blackcomb aims to promote a distinct company culture[101] - or rather, a lifestyle. Harnessing and using motivation, and engaging employees' emotions are therefore two ways in which they do this. During a seasonal employees time with Whistler Blackcomb there are several points at which the company culture is promoted, and employees are motivated and their emotions engaged.

      a) First Season Orientation[102]

For Whistler Blackcomb first season orientation is the time (usually between a half day and full day) when new employees are told about the 'big' picture. They learn about some of the history of Whistler, they learn about Intrawest and they learn what is expected of them in terms of guest service and their own conduct. Leidner (1999: 86) suggests that '[a]n important component of orientation programs … in many workplaces is indoctrination with company culture', he goes on to say.

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[101] I am using the term 'company culture' rather than 'corporate culture'. As Intrawest has grown and consolidated it reputation in 'playgrounds' – the word Intrawest uses to describe its (mountain, beach and golf) resorts – I could perhaps talk of a wider corporate culture. However, I believe that the corporate culture informs the company culture and so, although many aspects of company culture will be similar between Intrawest's resorts, so too, each resort will be slightly different. As such, and as Whistler Blackcomb is the 'flagship' playground, I will talk of company culture.

[102] Whistler Blackcomb also run yearly returning staff orientations, which are for year round staff or those who work return yearly to work for the winter season. These sessions often talk more about improvements in on-mountain services and profit potential than the first season orientations do. This is a different way in which Whistler Blackcomb try and (re)motivate staff and (re)engage them with the company culture and lifestyle they are promoting.

To win the trust and emotional identification of newly hired employees, organizations may teach organizational history, often emphasizing the unique talents of the founder; commend recruits on their good fortune in joining the "team"; tell exemplary stories; highlight the distinguishing characteristics of the organization; and stress its commitment to honoured values, often including customer service (Leidner, 1999:86).

Reynolds et al (1994: 236) suggest that orientation often goes 'well beyond being an introduction to the physical plant', encompassing a more 'holistic' approach which entails department, organisation and peer orientation. They suggest that, by providing orientation, companies often appears to increase employee retention (Reynolds et al, 2004: 233).

For the young people employed by Whistler Blackcomb, the first season orientation can be an stimulating experience, as Andrew says,

> *Andrew*: I think that at the start they get in with it [company culture], because …when I came in it was pretty swoosh, you come in and you know, it's a big presentation and a big psyche up session and they get you going and a room full of people and, first season orientation, …it was very well produced and so you know, when you first come on board, you're really excited to be here and all the things that they're going to do for you and give you a free pass…

Elaine said

> *Elaine*: That first day when we were at, um… what's called,..
> *Tara*: What, the um, like your training days or first season orientation…?
> *Elaine*: Yeh, that' it, first season orientation. I was, like, you know, quite cynical I suppose. There was this woman sort being all lively and happy, just so over the top somehow but you know, by the end of the afternoon, …I was, I totally understood, like all these people had come and talked to us and they were all so enthusiastic, … I was psyched to start work and get up the hill and all that sort of stuff.

Whistler Blackcomb, through their orientation, have motivated their employees and as Elaine's comment suggests, engaged their emotions. This is almost in opposition to Elaine's earlier comment where she suggested that even the interviewers knew young people only wanted to work for Whistler Blackcomb because of the (free) ski pass. I think this is an important point to note. Whistler Blackcomb pay every employee who attends a first season orientation. This is time away from the front line; it is time away

from making a positive impression and/or money for the company. Thus, both Bolton and Boyd's (2003) and Leidner's (1999) comments above are relevant. Elaine's comments illustrates how a company strategy is employed to turn young people who have come here 'just' to ski, into motivated, enthusiastic employees who are looking forward to, as Andrew says, what the company is going to do form them.

b) Training Courses

Training courses, in many of the same ways as the orientation, are an opportunity to indoctrinate staff with company culture, engage their emotions, and enthuse their 'spirit'. Although training courses at Whistler Blackcomb were available to everyone, in reality first season employees did generally not attend them. Neil, above, suggests a desire to attend some of these courses but he was the only first season employee that I spoke to who mentioned them. The comments I use below are important, I think, for a different reason. The employees, who do attend these courses, use the information they learn when they return to their respective departments. This information is then passed on to the front-line staff, most of whom are my young budget travellers. Thus, ideas of lifestyle and company culture are being passed on, not just through the company but also through other employees.

Ellie: So you remember, oh, I can't remember what course it was, do you remember the story X used to tell about Nordstrom's?

Tara: Um, no, I don't think I ever heard it.

Ellie: Okay, well, it was always when we were talking about like, customer service, and you know, going above and beyond…

Tara: Yah, …

Ellie: So, this old woman takes her car into Nordstrom's and says, I don't like these new tires you've put on, they too hard or something like that, I want my old one back…

Tara: Okay…

Ellie: So the guy sort of says, of course madam, and so, you know, they get this woman a coffee or something or send her round the shop to spend more money or whatever, and a little while later, they say, there you go madam, sorry about that, your old tires are back on your car.

Tara: So, good customer service, what, no quibbling about it or …

Ellie: No! You see, Nordstrom's don't even sell tires! (laughs)

Tara: (laughs) Oh my god, really? So they…

As Ellie went on to say, telling this story 'worked every time' as it got employees to think about what customer service was, and the extent to which customer service can be taken. It was, Ellie suggested, used as an example to illustrate what the person attending the course didn't do, and then got them thinking (through the rest of the course) about what they could do to go 'above and beyond' for the customers.

When I spoke with Alexandra, I mentioned this particular story as were talking about how Whistler Blackcomb tried to get the customer service message across to new employees,

> *Tara*: …and we were talking about X and her Nordstrom story…
>
> *Alexandra*: (laughs) I love that story! I have no idea whether it's true or not though, … but you know X always adds to it don't you? About her dress? … She says, you know, that she's not sure if it's actually true but, that her own experience was, um, well, she goes in to Nordstrom's and finds this dress she loves but they don't have her size, …, anyway, she asks if they have her size and the assistant says no but let me see if I can find one for you. So the assistant make a phone call and you know, X can hear that they've found one and so she's expecting to have to go across town or something and the assistant puts her hand over the receiver and says, this other shop, who are like, Nordstrom's biggest competitor, has got one, and if I can take your details here, I can have it sent directly to your home. Well, X sort of says, well I'm only in town for tonight and the assistant says no problem and so she gets her dress delivered to her hotel and she pays Nordstrom's price, which she finds was cheaper than the other store. So, you know, that adds to the story cause it's like first hand experience.

These comments illustrate two things. Not only are they a way of teaching employees about ideas of exceptional customer service but by talking about them in contexts such as my interviews, so these ideas are being perpetuated as they get told, and re-told to other employees, to family and friends. These stories reinforce Whistler Blackcomb's customer service philosophies (and so their core value of striving to be the best) even though another company is used as the example.

c) Rewarding Employees

Leidner (1999) suggests that companies also employ strategies (Leidner (1999:86) calls them 'periodic rituals) to recharge the energy and identification (with the company) of employees. Whistler Blackcomb did this in a number of ways – and again, these were always double-edged strategies as they not only acted to

(re)motivate the employee but also often were used to further engage the employees emotional ties to the company.

So for instance, in my conversation with Neil, he said

> *Neil*: What else do they do that's good? They've got well, we have anyway, we've got a good recognition thing, you nominate every week, good employee recognition, my name comes up a lot.

Whistler Blackcomb used a combination of departmental and company wide schemes. Neil's department, for instance, had a weekly programme of recognising employees. This kept motivation high throughout the season and, for Neil, this made him want to work harder.

> *Neil*: I think, it's, if I get so many of these weekly nominations over the season, then they'll, I think, give me some vouchers for one of the stores. I've seen this really cool jacket but … yah, can't afford it, but if I had some vouchers as well… Anyway, it makes me want to work harder you know?

In my conversation with Emma, she said,

> *Emma*: in terms um, perks and benefits, as being a staff member, they're great and they organise these fabulous parties and um, you wouldn't ask for anything more…

Thus, young budget travellers are being motivated through parties and informal recognition. For some, this recognition is also an incentive to work harder, and so, 'toe the company line'.

d) 'We work to play'?

As I have tried to suggest, by encouraging a lifestyle so Whistler Blackcomb's company culture promotes a certain level of emotional attachment. As Byron says,

> Yes … there is a Whistler Blackcomb culture which … you know, revels in the fact that we're made of a bunch of different groups … in the sense that it's laid back, it's friendly, it's personable, it's not pretentious, that atmosphere I think, does cause a blurring of the lines [between work and play], and even the way people are scheduled, four on, three off, there's a balance between work and play for most of

the front line folks where you know the same people they're working with are probably the group they're living close to in Residence and probably the group they're riding and skiing with on their days off. But, yah I think it really does blur. *We also preach that right, fun in workplace*? (my emphasis)

This causes a blurring between work and play, between the professional and the personal. Huang and Häggkvist (2004: 55-56) found that teamwork was one of the major extrinsic factors for their respondents. Teamwork can also lead to emotional attachment, if not to the job itself then to the people who work there, as an employee, you do not want to let your fellow employees down. As Emma says,

Emma: But then I also feel guilty because I like the people that I work with as well so you don't want to leave things…

Tara: You don't want to leave them in a mess?

Emma: Yah, totally. … We all, we all supported each other, like, I don't think I would have got through the last three months, …, without the people in the office, you know, like, some of those people might be the same people who infuriate me but you know, that they are same people, you know, who support you right to the end and you know, we've all had our rough days, …, and I think that's, we're a sort of family, and you know, families fight, families don't get along, whatever, but whatever, families look after each other as well and I think that's one of the nice things that we've had, yah…

Figure 5.1 Whistler Blackcomb Employees (Source: www.whistlerblakcomb.com, last accessed 10 November 2006).

Guilt, frustration, anger, all come across here but Emma also talks about the idea of family in a way that suggests the importance of these personal emotional ties within the workplace.

In promoting a lifestyle so Whistler Blackcomb, are trying to suggest that these young people are not really working at all (see Grugulis at al, 2000, Urry, 1990). Guerrier and Adib (2003: 1400) wonder whether, because front-line staff work with people who engage in the business of having fun, this fun 'rubs off' and so the jobs they do become fun too.

5.52 Involving Company Culture in Employee's Personal Lives?

Guerrier and Adib (2003: 1400) suggest that

> Customer service staff … are part of the themeing. They are required to deliver not just 'emotional' labour but also what Nickson et al. (2001) term 'aesthetic' labour. They must look appropriate (in term of, not just dress but age and physical attractiveness) so that they blend into the branding and present the 'correct' company image.

Whistler Blackcomb's Employee Handbook outlines a grooming policy that says,

> Part of creating memories for our Guests involves projecting a positive image of our mountains. We rely on your good judgement and commitment to maintain a professional, well-groomed appearance while at work. Hair must be kept neat and tidy at all times. Long hair on females must be tied back in areas where it is a health or safety issue. For men, your hair must be mid-ear length on the sides, above the collar at the back and well-trimmed. Radical hair styles or colours do not meet our standards. Moustaches, beards and sideburns are to be clean and neatly trimmed; however, they must be grown prior to the start of employment (a beard or moustache may be grown during your annual vacation) otherwise you must be clean shaven each and every day.

> Jewellery should be work in moderation and must not interfere with job function or safety. Men may wear one earring – either a small stud or a small ring and women may wear one earring of the same size in each ear. Other facial jewellery or exposed body piercing must be removed while on the job. Tongue rings or studs are not to be worn. Visible tattoos are also not in keeping with the first impression we wish to put forward. Personal hygiene is a vital part of good grooming. This includes daily bathing and the use of a deodorant if required. Overbearing aftershave or perfume should be avoided (Employee Handbook, 2002-2003: 24).

Leidner (1999: 83-84) suggests that employers may feel that in exchange for wages, they are 'legitimately entitled to intervene in workers' looks, words, feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and demeanour, not only in the motions of their bodies and the uses of their time'. So, not only does Whistler Blackcomb expect employees to conform to certain rules about their emotional behaviour within interactions with customers, so these rules extend to appearance and behaviour outside of work. Rachel says,

> we expect people to still be a representative of Whistler/Blackcomb on their days off so it's not like you can take your uniform off and then just go out there and, and do insane crazy things.

There is often resistance to these rules. In my conversation with Sonia, we talked about some of the ways in which these manifested themselves,

> *Sonia:* I get so annoyed with the snowboarders, you know? I mean, my lot are pretty good, I've ignored the odd tongue ring but you know, I also had to take X aside and say that their hair wasn't appropriate to work on the front counter, they were all right about it but, you know it's not the easiest thing is it.
> *Tara*: Yah, what about the snowboarders?
> *Sonia*: Oh yah, well, you know, there's a couple who've got dreadlocks and they just… looks so dirty, but cause they can put a hat over them and cause their supervisor thinks it's cool, then they don't worry about the policy right? …And then the rental guys next door, they had this phase that they all dyed their hair weird colours, I mean what sort of impression does that give, I mean, I suppose it sort of fun but you know…

Sonia's role in the company means that she has to enforce the grooming policy. Yet from her comments above, she is emotionally involved enough with the company to agree with this policy and to get annoyed with those who do not conform.

Yet the young people I spoke to were also aware of these manipulations, Robert said of Whistler Blackcomb,

> *Robert*: Yah, but at the time … I wasn't willing to make the sacrifices. It's just like on the way it says on the website, its like grooming and appearance, hair must be this length, you know, women may wear one pair of earrings, men may wear one earring and like no facial piercings, blah, blah, blah, and whereas they say the same thing up on my mountain [Cyrus in Vancouver], it's not enforced because that's not the way it works. Over there I bet it's really how it works.

5.53 Emotionally Worn Out

> *Emma*: I'm exhausted, like, totally, my empathy, it just stinks, [it's been] draining
> for me, I've got limited tolerance, …, like I just, I'm over it, …I've had enough, had
> a gutful.

Hochschild (1983) suggests that the demands of emotional labour will estrange them from their own feelings as their work encroaches upon previously private parts of themselves (see Leidner, 1999:90). What this means is that emotional labour can lead not only to an alienation of self, but that it can also led to emotional exhaustion or, employees 'burning out'. Emma says her emotions are drained, she expands on this by saying,

> *Emma*: I mean for me, I've become a lot more aware of how stress will affect me
> in the work place and how it affects your relationships between other people, how
> it affects motivation, all that kind of stuff. … I mean there's so many things, like I
> mean that you can take from it and um, in many ways … it's been incredibly
> difficult, you know, it has been, you know it has been challenging both, like on a
> professional level but also on a personal level,

For Emma then, her experience of working for Whistler Blackcomb has not only engaged her emotions, it has now drained them. She has found it incredibly difficult on both a personal and professional level. Helen makes a similar comment when she says,

> *Helen*: And I'm not really that motivated to anything round here either, cause I
> mean, it's so Intrawest controlled… They're really dynamic and stuff but they're
> so suffocating in so many ways. I mean you see it all over the place, it gets really
> disheartening when you see the world's most dynamic people you'll ever meet
> fizzling out and dropping off like flies and you just, you wonder how much longer
> you can do it.

Helen associates the dynamism of the company with the emotional fizzling out of members of staff and this is enough to de-motivate her and disengage her emotions.

Bolton and Boyd (2003) suggest that Hochschild (1983) overemphasizes the divide between public and private performances of the emotional self. In this, is also the idea that employees can resist the commodification of their emotions (Guerrier and Adib, 2003). Although they suggest that this resistance can be through the employee

enjoying the emotional engagement with the customer, I think we can also see this resistance in Neil's comment,

> *Neil*: Yah, I think in terms of seasonal staff, you've got, a realistic perspective of how it should it be because they think, like oh you've got to get involved in our company and blah, blah, blah and get all in the groove and all that sort of rubbish, all that sort of shit they talk, so they bang on about that all the time. I think that's just completely unrealistic. Nobody buys into it, everyone just sees it as a job with a pass,

For me, this suggests that the employee's emotional labour is as much aimed at the company as it is the customer. As such, the employee is deceiving Whistler Blackcomb into thinking that they are motivated and emotionally attached when in fact, they are resisting this through subverting their emotional labour. Grace's comment helps to refine this when she says,

> *Grace*: I mean like the last group that was in, they'd been through university, they were trained at something else, I mean however you want to look at it, so you know, they're not really going to try, they just pretend to be, you know, putting in 100%, …

Yet although Grace recognises this deception, it is obvious that her emotions are still entangled with Whistler Blackcomb as she says,

> *Grace*: Yah, … I really feel for Intrawest because they have this concentrated group of newbies all working for the same company, okay, they're not doing the same job but …, how many disgruntled employees can they have?

As such, employee's emotions are engaged in a number of ways – these can be related back to some of the intrinsic and extrinsic factors mentioned above (see Reynolds et al, 2004) as well as to Hochschild's (1983) concept of emotional labour. I now want to briefly look at another resort and illustrate a few similarities between it and Whistler before concluding the chapter.

5.6 Queenstown and Whistler?

I want to look briefly at a study that considers another place, in this instance, Queenstown on the South Island in New Zealand (see Boon, 2003). In looking at this

study, I am not trying to say that we can directly compare either employer or employee experiences at the two places, but what I want to try and do is find a few common threads to help illustrate a few of the points I have raised in this chapter. Let me first explain why I think this is a useful study to use. Boon's (2003) main research question asks why hotels in Queenstown see employee transience as a problem. As such, she is discussing the seasonal nature of a resort; she is discussing a transient workforce and she discusses the ways in which labour flexibility is manipulated and managed. From reading through her thesis, I think that a few common threads emerge. Firstly, that the experiences of young budget travellers in Whistler are not unique. Secondly, the threads I pull from the two studies illustrate that although the experiences are situated in specific places, there remains global similarities. And thirdly, I think it helps to illustrate that, although both examples can perhaps be seen as case studies, by looking at how they relate to each other, they can (and do) have wider applicability and relevance and so can inform our wider understanding of young seasonal employees.

I want to start with Urry's (1990: 2-3) contention that

> Tourism is a leisure activity that presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organised work. It is one manifestation of how work and leisure are organised as separate and regulated spheres of social practice in 'modern' societies … This has come to be organised within particular places and to occur for regularised periods of time.

Both Queenstown and Whistler are therefore places where the social practice of tourism dominates many dimensions of the community (see Boon, 2003: 97).

The two places have different histories (see Chapter One for a brief history of Whistler). Queenstown started life as a pastoral area but gold was discovered in the area in 1861 and a gold mining village quickly developed. Although originally temporary (canvas), this village soon became more permanent although the residents seemed to have 'a particular sensitivity to the potential of tourism' (Boon, 2003: 98) and the landscape of Queenstown soon began to resemble a 'European alpine village' (Boon, 2003: 99).

Whilst both Queenstown and Whistler can now be seen as bi-modal resorts (in that they have peaks in the both the summer and winter seasons), both resorts developed as a result of the ski industry. Whistler was developed specifically as a ski report in

the 1960s whilst Queenstown's ski field, Coronet Peak, developed in the 1950s and changed the area's whole outlook on tourism as before this, the tourism season seemed to last for only a few weeks of the year (Boon, 2003: 101).

Both resorts have seen huge growth in the number of visitors. Whistler Blackcomb regularly boasts of two million plus skier visits every winter; in 2000, Queenstown reached over one million visitor arrivals a year (Boon, 2003: 102). However, this has lead to concerns (in both resorts) that the increasing numbers of tourists are affecting the touristic experience. I will not go on to discuss this in much more detail, but, in other words, the resorts could be sent o be reaching their 'carrying capacities' – although I agree with Boon (2003) when she cites Hall and Page (1999:134 cited in Boon, 2003: 105) as saying

> carrying capacity is one of the most complex and confusing concepts which faces the geographer in seeking to understand recreation sites and their ability to support a certain level of usage.

One of Boon's (2003: 105-106) respondents says of Queenstown,

> It will never be Bali. We don't have the resources. There is only one Shotover Jet. You can only put X amount of people through that to have a nice experience… If it was filled with thousands of people and you couldn't get on, it probably doesn't leave the right perception.

And in Whistler, I wrote in my research diary,

> this woman got on the treadmill next to me – she'd obviously had problems with the booking of the equipment and her and her husband were talking about it and saying how they wouldn't come back [to Whistler] … He said he lined up at the gym, lined up in lift lines, had to fight your way to line up in lift lines. It was like going into battle (extract from Research Diary March 2003)

Andrew further illustrates this quote, which I also use as part of my discussion on community in Chapter Six, when he says,

> Yah, I mean, it's definitely a corporate town and I think they've, .. done a lot of good, but it's getting so busy. Every winter, you know, there just seems to be more people, even with the new lifts, there's always lines [queues], …you never feel like you've got space, even on the mountain.

This means however, that as tourism increases, so too, does the number of young people who come to these places to, as Boon (2003: 115) 'to 'work' and 'party''.

5.61 Employee Similarities?

For employees, a number of similarities occur between the two resorts.

As I have suggested earlier, tourism service workers are often low-paid, yet, resorts such as Queenstown and Whistler are expensive to live in. So, in Queenstown Alex says,

> It's expensive… especially if you are a seasonal worker and you are waiting for
> the season to kick in.. you have minimal hours – just enough to pay the rent and
> no more – and you end up living on rice for a month, Not the nicest of feelings …
> and I speak from bitter experience (Boon, 2003: 116).

In Whistler, Neil says,

> And also at the beginning the season where they did the food bags, just before
> Christmas time where they the three dollar meals, there's one tonight actually, so
> I'm going to that, they're a good idea.

The food bags and three dollar meals were provided by Whistler Blackcomb to help employees who had yet to start work who were, as Alex was, waiting for the season to kick in. William hears about the problems in Whistler before he even arrives, he said in an email,

> I have an interview for Intrawest in november, but I have been hearing horror
> stories about the cost of living in whistler. Is it possible to get by on what they pay
> you? They give accommodation but I hear food and leisure are unbelievably
> pricey [email received from William, October 2002].

And then later in the season, William says,

> I got a job as a bartender there [in Whistler], but it's not full-time, which is a real
> pain because that means I don't qualify for staff housing [email received from
> William November 2002]

Whistler Blackcomb employees are only applicable for housing if they work full-time – over 30 hours a week. This cut-off point also defines what discounts they have and whether they are eligible for a free ski pass.

These comments show that despite the desire to work in a ski resort and perhaps the 'prestige' that goes along with this type of temporary and seasonal work, it is not always easy. In Section 5.3 I use a quote that says that young people often choose temporary and seasonal tourism employment as it gives them the flexibility to 'pursue their dreams' (HR Canada, 2006) yet these comments from employees suggest that working as a seasonal employee is not providing them with the monetary rewards or flexibility they might have expected. As Rachel in Whistler says,

> it's really important that, and you hear it in the messages from [the Vice President's] at first season orientations, it's important that people come to Whistler and often will end up having to work two jobs to make ends meet and it's really, really important that people don't lose sight of what they came here for …And that was to ski or ride the mountains or maybe it was just to play in the snow or whatever it was You know it's really important that people don't forget that because it's very easy to get caught up in that and … it's easy to get you know stuck you know, working long hours at certain times of the year or what have you. But I think for that front line employee, you know. Working two jobs, *where's the time to actually enjoy the product*? (my emphasis)

5.62 Employer Similarities?

Whistler is dominated by Whistler Blackcomb, they are the town's largest employer and are the providers of many of the touristic experiences. Queenstown consists of numerous employers and although one may dominate a particular activity, there is not this same 'corporate town' feeling. In some case, the difference between the two resorts then comes down to employer perceptions about their employees. For instance, unlike some of the Queenstown hotel sector, Whistler Blackcomb is much more concerned with finding employees who are the right 'fit'. One of Boon's respondents says,

> A lot of them you know that they are here for three months for the ski season or something like that. So you are really just interested in if they can do the jobs for three months. (Boon, 2003: 127)

Whereas in Whistler, as Rachel says,

> we are looking for somebody with the right attitude. It's pretty simple. That's really it. Doesn't really matter what kind of education or background they have because the majority of the time we are not going to be able to match that experience with a position given that most of our jobs are front line entry level jobs and so attitude is the big thing, right?

However, at another hotel in Queenstown, Duncan, an HR manager says,

> I know that all these people are going to come through my courses and they will probably only be with us three months, six months, maximum a year … but it's just something that you have to do. You have to continually train your staff so that they can meet your expectations and also develop themselves as well. … (Boon, 2003: 133).

This relates much more closely to the HR (Employee Experience) perspective in Whistler. Byron, for instance says,

> youth today … are looking for total life experience so when they come to a ski resort they're not really taking a year off to learn how to ski, they want something that will still fill their resume or prove positive in terms of life experience …in terms of actually career development, … let's make no mistake, like a one season lift operator isn't going to add a huge amount to their resume other than the operational specific stuff but they should at least have some guest service philosophies patterned into their head that will be very valuable wherever they go…

This suggests that, company strategies for recruiting, retaining and motivating staff are similar in both Queenstown and Whistler. What this does illustrate is that global networks exist and these have introduced corporate strategies, cultures and lifestyles to all corners of the (developed?) world.

5.7 Conclusions

Before I move on, I want to briefly return to the three contentions I raised in the introduction to this chapter. Firstly I implied that work was an intrinsic part of young budget traveller's overall experience. Bianchi (2000: 107) suggests that as they are

neither 'strictly tourists nor workers, they constitute a … segment of tourist-workers who engage in periods of work within tourism destinations as an integral part of the touristic experience'.

Secondly, that international business needs to take more notice of these young people's motivations. I think this is an important point. Although companies such as Intrawest realise that the young people come for more than the work experiences and so employ strategies to engage these seasonal employees with the company, I think it is necessary for both industry and academic researchers to look more closely at the complex relationality between young budget travellers, the places they inhabit, visit, pass through and the working practices that are involved within in this temporal and spatial experience (Sheller and Urry, 2006). Thirdly, I think we need to look in more detail at both the shorter and longer-term effects of their working experiences. I come back to this in Chapter Seven.

The next chapter will look in more detail at aspects of space. It will consider issue around the micro-geographies of Whistler through considering the 'social scene' and ideas of community and it will think about whether Whistler can be recognised as a backpacker enclave. The final chapter will bring together many of the points raised in these empirical chapters and link them back to ideas raised in Chapter Two. It will conclude by considering so future areas of research and suggest that perhaps we need to re-invent the 'Gap Year'.

CHAPTER SIX: DEFINING A SENSE OF PLACE

> Most often among young people, who cannot stand so much continuity, so much repetitiveness, so much transparency, there may just be a crushing sense of boredom. Home is a bit of a prison. So impatiently they dream of "the world", a larger city perhaps, and in the end some of them will take off for it (Hannerz, 2002: 220).

6.1 Introduction

Chapters Four and Five have been concerned with how young budget travellers narrate a sense of self through their travelling and work experiences. Through these discussions, spaces and places have been very evident yet somehow seem to have remained in and as the background. Yet these very discussions demonstrate that these stories, these narratives are not only created in and through place (see Duncan and Duncan 2001) but I suggest that place can be 'made' through those very conversations (Smith, 2001: 34). Not only this, but this thesis is based around a place, Whistler. Whistler has been described in some detail in Chapter One; its importance is mentioned again in Chapter Three; and Chapter Five talks about the young budget travellers who come to work in a specific place; again Whistler.

Figure 6.1 Whistler Village
(Source: www.mywhistler.com)

No matter whether I see this research as a case study based in Whistler or an exploratory study of the working experiences of young budget travellers, the very nature of the research is based upon geography. The research was conducted in a specific place at a specific time and the writing up has been conducted over more time and in other places. I go back to Chapter Three and the discussion I put forward there about home and away, the multitude of fields and the idea that even after we have left, the physical field remains. Combine with this is the notion that place and space are fundamental constructs in tourism (see McCabe and Stokoe, 2004: 601-602) as

the spatial characteristics of a destination, such as Whistler, and the contrasting features of domestic spaces allow us to begin to understand the meanings tourist attach to place.

This chapter will explore how the young people I spoke to saw place. As I have already intimated, places and spaces have been evident throughout the last few chapters. This chapter will aim to pull these threads together; it will bring place back into the foreground. Through framing a history of Whistler in Chapter One, I have ensured that Whistler is firmly situated as a place and within this thesis and in following pages, I continue this in another way by including photographs of Whistler (from a variety of on-line sources including the press office at www.mywhistler.com and Whistler Blackcomb Employee Handbooks[103]). What I hope will come through in the following discussions is a more subtle impression of Whistler and of place. What impact does place have on these young people? What did they think of Whistler? How did they use the spaces of Whistler through their works and through their social lives? Can it be seen as a backpacker enclave? Do their comments show us how place has affected them, through their memories, through the stories they tell, through the things they don't say. This chapter aims to explore place through the stories and impressions of the young people I spoke to.

Figure 6.2 View over Whistler (Source: http://imagesource.art.com/images/-/Peter-Walton/Garibaldi-Provincial-Park-View-Over-Whistler-BC-Photographic-Print-C11997583.jpeg)

6.2 Why Canada? Why Whistler?

Motivations for young budget travellers include the desire to experience other cultures and local people (see Richards and Wilson, 2003). However, for most of the young people I spoke to, Canada was not an 'exotic other', it was a 'similar other'. As I

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[103] Although I have only mentioned it briefly in Chapter Five, the Employee Handbooks portray a specific sense of place through the pictures they use. Whistler is portrayed as 'fun' through pictures of employees (see Figures 5.1 to 5.3, the stunning environment is emphasized through the use of landscape shots and a sense of adventure is portrayed through various action shots (see Figures 6.2 to 6.14).

suggest in Chapter Four, leaving home and working and travelling abroad disrupts and pushes at the boundaries of these young people's everyday lives; by coming to Canada, they are still doing this, but perhaps they are not pushing those boundaries too far just yet (see Myers and Inkson, 2003).

When I asked Helen about why she came to Canada, she said,

> *Helen*: …when I was little, Canada was a very far away wilderness, (laugh) ... and it was the most romantic sounding fabulous place on the whole planet. Never had any interest whatsoever in going to Australia, New Zealand kind of tweaked my interest a little bit, might get there one day but Canada, ah! It had to be (laugh). I kind of forgot about for ages and then got through university and I knuckled down in my second year, third year, fourth year, just really full on and just concentrated on getting a good grade but then I was like okay what do I next, what do I now, what do I next, okay don't want to stick around in the UK…

For Helen then, Canada was an exotic other but this exoticism was about wilderness. Squire (1998: 80) suggests that the Canadian Rockies, for example, have been marketed exactly as this, as type of wilderness, and that this reflects cultural influences that originate in European Romanticism. As Helen says, it appealed as the most romantic sounding place. So coming to Canada became about exploring that wilderness – even if that wilderness no longer really exists.

Robert came to Canada because he did not want to be a tourist. As I suggest in Chapter Four, coming to Canada rather than travelling around South America therefore defines him as a certain type of young budget traveller. He wanted to live somewhere rather than just gaze upon it (Urry, 1990/2002) through touristic eyes. He said,

> *Robert*: They both said go to, you'll like Canada so, … the other option I had was going to South America but I kind of, at the time I thought I don't want to be a tourist and go and travel and see things, I want to just live somewhere else for a while and see what I want to … irrespective of everything back at home. Canada is a cheap place to come as well …

For others, they had been to Whistler before and wanted to come back. Veronica epitomises this in two ways, firstly because, she says

Veronica: I went to Whistler specifically because I'd been there before and I liked it and I wanted to do a ski season.

And secondly,

Tara: You know what, when I went back last year, I mean, it must be a bit the same for you cause you keep going back on bloody holiday, but it was one of those ones where the people you see that you know say, well … once you've been here, you can't stay away.

Veronica: No, it's one of the places, it gets under skin

Tara: Yah, you just get addicted to it in a way.

Veronica's first comment illustrates why some people go to Whistler. For some, it is not about avoiding something more exotic or taking the 'easy' travelling option; for some it is a choice about the place they want to travel to. Veronica wanted to do a ski season and so she was, as Richards (1996: 33) suggests, furthering her passion for skiing by 'gaining employment in ski resorts, allowing [her] to combine work and pleasure…'.

Figure 6.3 View from the top of Whistler (Source: http://community.iexplore.com/planning/journalEntryOverview.asp

The conversation with Veronica shows that Whistler, as a place, can then becomes somewhere that is not easy to leave behind. Veronica says that Whistler is 'addictive' and 'a hard lifestyle to leave'. Yet, she did not want to go back and repeat her 'season' because,

Veronica: I had such a good time, I don't think I could repeat it and I think…, if I was to go back and do another season, I'd constantly be comparing it to the last one and I just don't think I would get as much out of it or I would enjoy it as much ... But then I love going back there on holiday … because you see a few faces [you know] and, you have some fun and there's no pressure basically.

This idea was confirmed in my research diary[104], when I wrote,

> I had troubles settling in. Although I had realised it would be different from when I lived there previously, it was more different than I realised. (Extract from Research Diary, May 2003)

Rachel's experience was similar, although for Rachel, Whistler started out as a place to visit regularly from the lower mainland. Yet as she says,

> *Rachel*: I was just one of those weekend warriors that would come up all the time and ski and it was just something about the place. Every time I would arrive into Whistler, for me there was a real sense of arrival that was just really, I don't know, it was just peaceful and I felt at home, I loved it and every time I would leave on Sunday I would be so depressed so I always just wanted to make a career up here and got the opportunity when the two mountains merged …

For Rachel then, Whistler was about more than a ski resort and it was about more than 'doing' a ski season. It became 'home', it was place in which she felt peaceful. It also became a place she aspired to be,

> *Rachel*: So I was just one of those super fortunate ones who got the call and was ready in my life to make the move up here, yah. And why Whistler Blackcomb was really because I chose tourism/hospitality years ago because I wanted a position that offered variety; that offered some challenges but was fun… So I really wanted something that was really cool, something I could be proud of and say oh, this is where I work and people would go oh, wow, that's cool, So I was in the hotel industry for nine years and loved it when I was trying to figure out what else I was going to do, I thought wow, working for a ski resort would be very …
> So, this is where I ended up.
> *Tara*: And you've enjoyed it?
> *Rachel*: (laugh) Livin' the dream as Mike would say

Whistler, as a place, felt like home, yet that place also provided a career, a challenge and fun (back to the idea of working and playing hard?). For Rachel then, her lifestyle is intimately bound together with place, her identity is not just that she is someone who works in tourism and hospitality, it is about living a lifestyle in a specific space, in this case, a ski resort.

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[104] I have also used this quote in Chapter Three, Section 3.51 when I am talking about the field and the researcher.

My interview with Byron was focussed very much on working for Whistler Blackcomb, but when I asked him why he though young people chose to come to Whistler, he said.

Byron: I think it's just international recognition, marketing and uh, and the second part of it, the vast majority of folks that have worked here for a season have gone home spread good word of mouth about what the natural environment is. You know, that we have things like employee housing which other ski resorts don't, that we're a nice easy border into North America, friendly, not that closely divorced from themselves and it's probably a lot of fun right? Like the focus on fun in this community, it's easy to live in sort of serviced ski in/ski out residence, you can move round, it's easily accessible, it's all contained, you know if you go out at night, you're going to bump into your friends, in one of the bars that are spread throughout the village.

Figure 6.4 Top of Whistler (Source: www.whistlerblackcomb.com)

My conversation with Rachel confirmed this,

Tara: Why, why do you think they choose Whistler?
Rachel: I think they chose Whistler because of our reputation. For a small town we have an enormous reputation worldwide and in all honestly, I do believe that. I mean other than the obvious … you know these two enormous mountains with all this vertical and terrain, I mean that for sure attracts people but I think you know, it's on the west coast which is very attractive to people that travel … I really think it's, you know, everybody that travels for some reason wants to come to Canada … I think Canada as a whole has a reputation for being a very safe, friendly country so I think that a lot of that is you know … but I think it's really, its the type of people we attract. We … attract those young people looking for that adventure ands we can offer it. I mean, my god, we've got so many different activities that

you can do here … from beginner to extreme and so I think that, that's what does
it, you know. Word of mouth is a powerful thing so, that's why I would say people
come here.

Both Byron and Rachel seem to think that word of mouth plays an important part in
attracting young budget travellers to Whistler. This follows Richards and Wilson
(2003) study that suggests that friends and family are one of the main sources of
information when planning a trip (see also Chadee and Cutler, 1996; Murphy, 2001;
Ireland, 2005). Gabby's experience illustrates this as she came to Whistler because,

  Tara: Yah so, why did you decide to come to Whistler? Because you've got
  friends in Vancouver?
  Gabby: Yah, you know I wanted yah just go and visit, come here and visit my
  friends and then basically, they said oh you've got to work in Whistler (laugh)

And Elaine says,

  Tara: So why did you choose Whistler?
  Elaine: I'd heard a lot about it, just back home, Whistler, Whistler Blackcomb,
  great place to go, it's in Canada … I just thought I wanted to go there and then on
  a whim, I arrived.

Lisa on the other hand, had not really heard of Whistler before,

  Lisa: Yah, I hadn't, I honestly hadn't heard of it before.
  Tara: Yah
  Lisa: Whistler, but that's I guess because I'm not I was never big into skiing or
  snowboarding and so um, but I'm sure there's people that are would have know
  about Whistler. But it's dead funny because after knowing about it and looking on
  the internet like there's a been a couple of holiday programmes on TV at home
  and Whistler would come up and it's like all of a sudden you know, you know like
  it's there… So, and being like one of the biggest and best resorts in North
  America it's like kind of a big thing to say you know if I go back home sort of, you
  know, I worked there.
  Tara: Yah, yah
  Lisa: I spent a season there
  Tara: Have you done, have you just sort of looked on the web and found
  information or guide books and stuff or…
  Lisa: Yah,

So for Lisa, Whistler went from being a place she had heard very little about to somewhere that kept 'popping' up. In using various resources to find out about Whistler, her comments confirm the findings of Richards and Wilson's (2003) study that shows that the internet and guidebooks were some of the more popular resources for young travellers to utilise. One of the comments I find interesting is that at the time we talked, she had not yet started work and had only been living in Whistler for a few weeks yet she had already absorbed the idea that this was the biggest and best resort in North America[105]. Not only that, but she also realised that this could be advantageous in the future; she could say, I was there.

6.3 'I didn't want to leave'

As Veronica says above, Whistler becomes 'addictive' and I found that of the young people I spoke to after they had left Whistler, most talked about returning to Canada or Whistler.

Neil's experiences are a good example of this. When I spoke to him in Whistler and asked him why he came to Whistler he said,

> *Tara*: So why did you come to Whistler if you didn't really want to…
> *Neil*: Uh, cause everybody else was coming, because like we all came, we had a
> group like, and then it was like, where you're going, and everybody was going.
> Everybody was coming from the skiing, came here to get a job, so I thought, oh,
> well I'll go and get a job. We looked at staying in Vancouver but it's just too big,
> cause I'm not used to living in a big city…

As much as Neil was the only person I spoke to who was honest enough to admit he had just followed his friends (he also admitted that he had not realised Whistler was a ski resort until he arrived), I do believe there is a group of young budget travellers who end up in places, like Whistler, for exactly this reason. These young people are the ones who do not quite know where they want to go or what they want to do. They know they want to gain the experiences they are supposed to through travelling and working but have not yet quite figured out how to do this. Neil, at the time I originally

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[105] I think it is also interesting to note that most of the young people I interviewed made reference to Intrawest at some point during our conversations. This varied from when I lived and worked in Whistler between 1997-2000. It seems that by 2002-2003, Intrawest had, in many ways, successfully marketed (or perhaps 'branded') Whistler as an Intrawest resort rather than a town where Intrawest had business interests (see Rojek, 1998).

spoke to him did not particularly like Whistler, in fact he saw Whistler as more of a stop gap location where he could save to go travelling.

> *Neil*: That's why I'm staying here cause I want to save to go travelling, I've got a bigger picture so I'm not too bothered about skiing and stuff cause I just wanted to work and just killing time in between, doing job application forms. You get a bit tired of Whistler don't you? Well, I do anyway cause there's not much to do…

However, upon his return I got an email from Neil that said,

> Hey Tara,
>
> Don't know if u remember me but u interviewed me in the Cinnamon bear in whistler for ur phd, just cleaning up my address book and found ur e-mail thought i'd drop u a line just to see how that transcribing was going!! back in uk now myself, in the end didn't want to leave i want to go back and live there so badly, anyway, take care and good luck, neil. [email as received from Neil, August 2003]

Figure 6.5 Skiing down The Peak (Source www.canyoncourt.com)

Lisa is another good example. I first spoke to her in mid November 2002 and she had only been in Canada for about six weeks at that time and yet she had already decided she wanted to stay!

> *Lisa*: And then, if I can, can extend my work visa um, I would like maybe to come back fro the winter season again here
> *Tara*: Yup, you haven't even seen it, how it is and you still want to come back (laugh)
> *Lisa*: I know!

For Lisa, this aspiration did not change. In October 2003 I received an email from Lisa that said,

Hi Tara

Yes, you guessed it, I'm still here in Canada.

My work visa has now run out so now I am doing the travelling/touristy thing. I am travelling with the Moose network (a hop on hop off bus that takes you every where, which is really good) … When I get [back] into Vancouver I am heading out to Toronto for a couple of weeks then back to Whistler before heading back home sometime in December.

The trip has been really exciting meeting new people and seeing new sights, especially yesterday driving through the Columbia Icefield. I still love Canada and don't want to leave ever [email received from Lisa, October 2003].

By January 2004 she was backing the UK but,

Yes, I'm back in dismal old England and I am fed up with it already. I would do anything to be back in Whistler right now [email received from Lisa, January 2004].

In fact, in reply to some questions I sent her not long after that, she says,

My absolute main focus is to get back to Whistler as soon as I can and live there, get Canadian citizenship, to do that I have to go to uni first so that I have enough points to emigrate … I know that someday I will be returning to Whistler … As much as I want to be there every minute of every day, how much happier living in Whistler made me, I know that I have to go to uni in September and knowing that that is going to help me get Canadian citizenship helps get me through yet another day [email received from Lisa, May 2004].

For Lisa then, Whistler is her goal. It is the place that she wants to go back to. Unlike Veronica, she is not just going back on holiday; she is looking to move there permanently. In this respect, it is interesting to note two things. Firstly, that it is this particular place she wants to go (back) to. Neil's comments earlier suggest he also wants to go back to Whistler but his comments are also more vague – is it Whistler he wants to go back to or Canada? Secondly, Lisa realises that in order to achieve her aim, she has to work through a process; for her it is to complete university so that she

has the necessary qualifications to pass stringent immigration requirements. For Lisa therefore, she is aware of an alternative possible life in Whistler (Hannerz, 2002) and is endeavouring to achieve that alternative.

Figure 6.6 Fire and Ice Welcome Night
(Source www2.flickr.com/photos/good_day/129235199/)

6.4 Whistler as a 'Disneyland'?

I became one of those "weekend warriors". I felt at peace and had a sense of well-being when I arrived in Whistler. Life in Whistler is like living in a grown-up Disneyland, full of energy, people, beauty and play! (Employee Handbook 2002-2003: 59)

Whistler is an adult's playground; in many ways that is what it was built for. Chapter One describes Whistler in some detail. One of the footnotes comments on the fact that the very man who helped design Whistler village so that it incorporated 'a sense of place through view corridors, secondary seating, and the feeling of "discovering" the mountains as you walked up the curving Village Stroll' (Barnett, 2000a: 17) later commented that 'everything seemed a little too in place … '(Vogler, 2000:122).

Whistler is not Disneyland but, as Vogler (2000: 157) says,

> Disneyfication is rampant around the world as the entertainment corporation sucks in culture from all corners of the globe and spits it back out as homogenized product palatable for mass consumption. While Disney hasn't bought Whistler yet, the resort has learned much from its approach to entertainment over the last decade.

What surprised me was the comment (above) in the Employee Handbook (and yes, the comment came from one of my respondents, Rachel). When talking to people such as Byron, they very carefully avoided any comparisons with a Disney-like culture. Whistler Blackcomb have been accused of turning Whistler into 'a modern-day company town' (Vogler, 2000: 158) and have, as a result, adjusted their focus over the last decade to include the local community[106]. The municipal government have also been accused of corporatising Whistler.

> The municipal government have been entertaining the idea of taking on corporate sponsors to help bolster the town coffers when development dollars dry up. Apparently nothing more than a few placed corporate logos: "And would you like fries with that development permit?" (Vogler, 2000: 158-59).

The young people I spoke to also recognised that Whistler can be seen as a Disney-like resort, Gabby said,

> *Gabby*: ... my friends, they've spent a season here and skiing as well and they pretty much told me its like a Disneyland and it is yah. I mean, the first time I came here, it was really quiet and there's hardly anybody around and but I was like, you know, the shops here because they're all mountain and outdoor shops, those are the things I love and I thought this is great, this was like paradise you know!

For Gabby, Whistler being like Disneyland is therefore not a bad thing. She, like Rachel, sees it as a paradise, a place of fun. Another comment from the Employee Handbook supports this,

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[106] One of Whistler Blackcomb's core values is 'Responsibility to our Community & Environment' and the Employee Handbook (2002-2003: 5) states, 'we have an added responsibility to be a good neighbour, supportive of the needs of our friends in Whistler, Pemberton and Squamish.' It goes on to say, 'We strive to promote a healthy, well integrated Community through support of strategies that encourage the workforce to be resident in the Whistler Valley'. Whistler village, in conjunction with Intrawest, other local businesses and the community now have a longer-term strategic plan (for which they have won internationally recognised awards, see www.naturalstep.com) that promotes a more inclusive role for local peoples and communities - such as the Lil'wat people in Mount Currie.

I realised I was about to finish school and begin life in the real world. I'd heard Whistler was the perfect bubble to play in for a couple of years. I'm still here five years later! (Employee Handbook, 2002-2003: 24)

Whistler is seen as a bubble, as isolated from the outside world. As somehow, a separate place from other places. For these people, Whistler is also a fun place, an exciting place and somewhere they want to live. Yet, for some, this Disneyfication is not necessarily a good thing. In my conversation with Ellie and Andrew, they said,

Ellie: Like last summer we went to Mission Hill winery in the Okanagon, the thing was it was, it's just like Intrawest, everything is polished, everything is…
Andrew: Disneyland
Ellie: Yah everything is Disneyland, everything is presented exactly the way you want to see it and it seems to me that Whistler is getting more that way which is not necessarily a bad thing but it almost takes the spontaneity out of it

Figure 6.7 The Village Stroll with a view over Whistler Mountain
(Source: www.mywhistler.com)

Andrew went on to suggest that Whistler has become more of a corporation town, saying

> *Andrew*: … it seems like, before there was more a sense of personalisation, I think there is still a sense of community I think the difference would be that, yah, now it's more like a corporation town right? You have, you know, to follow the rules …

Both Ellie and Andrew were trying to see the positive, Ellie added to Andrew's comment by saying

> *Ellie*: The thing is there are so many things that have changed for the better, I mean the amount of money Intrawest has, has developed Whistler I think the town is definitely better off but it doesn't have the same, that same sort of friendly, kind of, I don't know…

Yet somehow, through their comments, the feeling comes through that they are not totally convinced that this de-personalisation has actually benefited the town. In another case, Alexandra defended Whistler,

> *Tara*: it's a bit of a bubble really, it's like Disneyland in some ways isn't it?
> *Alexandra*: No, no, I don't think so. It's certainly not a bubble, it's not, like, it's separate from the rest of the world or anything is it? … But yah, maybe it can be seen as a bit Disney-ish in the winter. I suppose I could understand people saying that, especially if they're only here for a season or are tourists or something,

As a longer term resident, Alexandra did not think Whistler was in any way a touristic 'bubble' (see Judd, 1999) although she was willing to admit that people might find the village a bit like Disneyland (that they might find this space a bit contrived?).

Many of the young people I spoke to raised similar points. When I first spoke to Lisa, she already had the idea that Whistler was like Disney.

> *Lisa*: And yah, it is like an unreal place, very Disney World, and more people I've spoken to, they say the same thing…

Neil, who didn't particularly like Whistler when he first arrived says,

> *Neil*: Whistler's different though isn't cause its just, it's not a place, it's a placeless place. That's why everybody comes here probably, part from the skiing as well.

One point of interest with Neil's comment is that he identities Whistler as placeless. Does he mean that Whistler has been commercialised to the extent that, like many town centres/high streets, shopping malls and public spaces, it looks the same as everywhere else? Or that Whistler, as a village, is perhaps a contrived space, actively planned and built to portray a specific sense of place (See Barnett, 2000a)? Yet, immediately I go back to the original comments about what Whistler should look like, and the feeling of 'discovering' the mountains when walking through the village. There is little doubt that Whistler has many of the same retail stores as most other shopping areas, but I do not think this is how Neil meant his comment. I think Neil's comment has more to do with what I have touched on in the other two empirical chapters and what I will go on to discuss next. This is the idea that for the young people who come to Whistler, it is as much about being a place to have fun, gain some great work experiences, friends and stories as it is about being a place in itself. A young budget traveller going to Thailand has to go the Khao San Road in Bangkok or to the Full Moon Parties on Koh Phangan in Malaysia (see Cohen, 2004; Welk, 2004; see also Barr, 1999), or they have to go to Bondi Beach in Australia or live in London (see Conradson and Latham, 2005c; Wilson, 2005). Is it that Whistler has not yet established itself (for the backpacking community at least) as one of the 'must-sees' or 'must-dos' on the backpacker trail? Or is it that the activities done in these places are as important as the place itself? So, for instance, young budget travellers may go to Khao San Road for the banana pancakes, they are going to Koh Phangan for the full moon parties, they go to Bondi to have a 'barbie on the beach' and to London to go to The Church (an infamous bar/club that is generally frequented by antipodeans). Do they then come to Whistler to be in a type of Disneyland, or is it just to say they've 'done' Spanky's Ladder?

Yet I think Neil's comment suggests something further. Young people come to Whistler in part because it is placeless. For me, Neil's comment is based around his experiences, as I quoted in Chapter Four, he says

> *Neil*: It's funny isn't it how you come half way across the world to get away from, to get away from home and ... you end up spending your time with people that are from home, strange...

And later,

> *Tara*: You were talking like, you travel all the way across the world to get away from home and …

Neil: Yah, that's the thing like, they have like Aussies Days and shit and stuff like
that yah, and they make the effort in that people huddle together, you go out with
your work friends and you get your fellow Brits, Australians, and then you all like
do things together.

For Neil, Whistler is placeless because, in some ways, it has become the same as
home. He says at one point in our conversation 'Like I don't feel as though I'm in
Canada anymore,' and I think this is indicative of the group of friends he moved up to
Whistler with and his experiences with the other young budget travellers he has met.
He still situates his experiences, his reflection of where he is, in a particular space,
even if he is unhappy (at the time) about being in this space.

Figure 6.8 Employee Residence on Blackcomb
(Source http://www.whistlerblackcomb.com)

Place remains important for these young people as they tell stories about their
experience by situating these stories in a specific place. Place is bound up in their
stories and their identities (see Crang, 1998) and in defining Whistler as a particular
type of place, a 'Disneyland', so they are defining and positioning themselves in
relation to this.

6.5 A 'Community' in Whistler?

In Chapter Two I introduce the idea of backpacker enclaves as an evolving
phenomenon within the backpacker literature (see for instance, Cohen, 2005, 2004;
Hottola, 2005; Howard, 2005; Richards and Wilson 2004b; Wilson and Richards,
2005). It seems to me that this is an example of where a concept from academic
literature is slowly pervading everyday culture. So, for instance, in the conversations I
had with many of my respondents, we talked of ideas of community; more recently
when I have discussed young budget travellers with acquaintances, friends and
colleagues, the concept of backpacker enclaves has not only been accepted but is
regularly understood, recognised and discussed. In this section, I will discuss Whistler

in terms of the phrase community rather than enclave, although I hope to illustrate that the descriptions of community given to me by the people I spoke to, allow for a more complex conceptualisation of the idea of backpacker enclaves.

As I discuss in Chapter Four, the young people who come to Whistler often use the distinction of 'local' in order to define themselves in opposition to the tourists who visit the town. In this, they are defining themselves as a particular community and so, as such, 'to be an 'x' means 'not being a 'y'' (Sollors, 1989 cited in Welk, 2004: 79).

> The thing is that these sorts of conversations are fairly normal in Whistler. Everyone does do some dissecting of behaviours and there are phrases for it – such as 'dual mountain ass', cougar, etc. In some ways there is a different language here. So, 'it's puking' for instance, or 'pow', or 20cm rule, or the various acronyms and shortened names for places, such as MY place, Mac Pan, G1. Sometimes you have to be 'in the know' to understand these phrases. Is this another way of making people feel like a local, or accepted or at home? (Extract from Research Diary, March 2003)

In my research diary, I found a number of examples where I talk about how knowledge of the place was used as a way to distinguish oneself from others. So, for instance, in the example above, I talk about how the young people who live and work in Whistler tend to manipulate language in order to be more 'local' and so 'accepted'. Another example (below) indicates how knowledge facilitates movement. For me, knowing when places, such as the gym, were likely to be busy, or knowing that when I was skiing, certain lifts or ski areas would be less busy, facilitated an ease of movement around Whistler that people – tourists – with less local knowledge could not access or utilise.

> I was at the gym yesterday afternoon – it was busy as it was raining outside and this woman got on the treadmill next to me – she'd obviously had problems with the booking of the equipment and her and her husband were talking about it and saying how they wouldn't come back [to Whistler] … However, he did say one thing that made me think. He said he lined up at the gym, lined up in lift lines, had to fight your way to line up in lift lines.   It was like going into battle. It made me think what it must be like for some tourists. As a quasi-local, I know the routines of places like the gym so I don't lose my turn ... I know when to go to the lift line, or when not to, or which lift is liable to be less busy. Knowledge of the place means I use it in a different way to the tourist who does not have that insider

knowledge and so can get frustrated with the delays and systems in place (Extract from Research Diary, March 2003).

For many of the young people I spoke to, they saw at least two quite distinct 'communities' in Whistler. So for instance in my conversation with Emma, I asked her two questions,

Tara: Do you think all the people in [staff] housing, do you think they sort of form their own community while they're here?
Emma: Yah, I think so… housing helps to try and do that as well…
Tara: Do you think there's an actual sort of community in Whistler itself, the sort of longer-term residents?
Emma: I think they're trying to do that, I don't know … I really haven't had that much opportunity to get out and see what the community's like but I hear people talking about it and saying how difficult sort of thing, to get a community together just because everyone's in and out all the time.

For Gabby,

Gabby: I think there's definite groups in Whistler, like non-mountain locals, then there's the mountain locals and they're all like the managers and stuff so they've been here for longer than two or three years and so they've got their own groups as well and then you've got the workers bees, like the imports (laugh), they're all at the bottom levels doing the craps jobs, non-year round jobs and then you've the kids that are like, like when I first arrived, we stayed with a friend of ours for about six weeks in a place in White Gold, I don't think one person worked for the mountain … and it was completely different.

Both comments show that there are not only distinctions between local's and non-locals – or those who are living, working (and playing) in Whistler and those who come to Whistler on holiday to ski/board, mountain-bike/golf etc – but there are also distinctions within what could be classed as the local community. Whistler's population is said to consist of approximately 10,000 permanent residents; during the winter season, this figure almost doubles. Helen's comments about community also confirm this,

Tara: Did you think there was one in Whistler? A local community?
Helen: I was very unaware, Like there's a huge bar scene community now, oh my god, if you're into the bar scene, you're set, but it's … so meat market, on the

prowl, trampy… No, the community thing, you have to, really get involved, you have to dedicate to it, I mean I haven't found the time yet …

Figure 6.9 The Roundhouse at the top of Whistler
(Source: www.whistlerblackcomb.com)

Helen's comments suggest not only that there are a number of communities within Whistler but that gaining access to some of them is not either easy or straightforward. What is also interesting about Helen is her assertion that she hasn't yet found the community yet. However, earlier in our conversation she says,

Helen: Oh yah, big into the mountain biking. Like last year? I only made it to a couple of the Twoonie Races[107], by the end of the season, I was, like, trying to, going pretty regularly but you know… This year, I've been to every one, and me and X organised that one the other week for charity? And yah, so I'm feeling, like, really involved with it this year. They've asked me to help a bit more next year but you know, I don't know where I'm gonna be or anything…

This suggests to me that she is involved in the community more than she realises. It may also be that as she does not want to be associated with the 'bar scene' so she denies involvement in the local community in order to define herself as not with them – so she becomes an 'Other' (see Trinh, 1994).

In my conversation with Neil about community, he asked me if I thought there was a local community,

Neil: I don't know, what do you think? Do you think there is [a community in Whistler]?
Tara: I think there's definitely a local's community
Neil: Yah there is definitely, cause they've got all like, the library and stuff and

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[107] The Twoonie Races are weekly mountain bike rides that run from about late April to late October. Everyone who enters pays $2 (a twoonie) and after the race, everyone converges at Merlin's bar for drinks and food.

Tara: Yah, and you just sort of run into it occasionally, it's sort of like, like MY place is one of the places where you see it more than anywhere cause it's sort of centred the community in a way

Neil: You always notice in the Peak as well, all the events that go on, yah, they've got a strong local sort of

Tara: I think the people who are here for a season do have a community, I think there is, I don't think it's so much a community as more a gathering of like minds.

Neil: Yah, that's what it, it's not a community in a proper sense of community.

Tara: No, it's just, its also everyone knows they're only here for a short period of time

Neil: Yah, it's really funny, make friends as soon as proper friends, even people that you meet that are British, like you know you're not likely to see them again…. It's like University really, same thing.

As with my whole interview with Neil, this was very much an interactive conversation and so he solicited my views on what I thought of community as much as he expressed his own. The comments we both raise however, illustrate not only that, for Whistler Blackcomb employees, there seems to be these two separate communities i.e., the 'community' of young budget travellers, of seasonal workers and the local community, but also that these communities have spaces in which they are articulated or perhaps even performed. I suggest that MY Place, an arts and community centre opened in 2000, is one place where the local community can be found, Neil also suggests the library as a place where this community is evident and that the local community is visible through events advertised and narrated in the local (free) newspaper. What these suggestions also illustrate is that perhaps Whistler has multiple communities or enclaves. If locals utilise MY Place, what spaces do the seasonal locals inhabit? And what about spaces such as the library where these two groups intersect?

For Rachel, she sees a community not only in Whistler but in Pemberton where she has recently moved to. Pemberton is north of Whistler and has grown considerably in the last decade as Whistler residents have been priced out of the local property market and so have looked to move to other areas[108]. As Rachel intimates, there is a

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[108] A comment in my research diary (below) suggests that perhaps the community in Whistler is fragmenting because the housing market is pricing local workers out of Whistler,

> Yet saying that, Tony showed that he was very perceptive when we were talking about the community and he was saying that maybe it is decreasing as locals are priced out of the market and so the community is fragmenting – up to Pemberton, down to Squamish (Extract from Research Diary, January 2003).

strong sense of community in Pemberton because it does not have the large tourist population to contend with.

> *Tara*: Do you think there is a community in Whistler?
>
> *Rachel*: Oh yah. I believe so. You know, I just moved to Pemberton four months ago so, there's definitely a community feeling out there. Maybe it's a little stronger out there because it's not the resort. But, but I still believe there is a community in Whistler, I mean, there's probably 9, 10 thousand local residents and you known, you walk down through the village and you can't go down there without seeing somebody you known and saying hello and to me that's community.
>
> *Tara*: Yah
>
> *Rachel*: Right? To me that's, that's what it's all about. It's seeing people you know and them saying hello and people are friendly and you always know where you're sort of safe or that you know someone will help you if they need to … It's so different up here so to me there's a real strong sense of community and because I sit on, you know, on a board that, that supports services in the community, I see a lot more of what the community is about.
>
> *Tara*: Yah, yah
>
> *Rachel*: You know? Where as, I think if you come here for six months and live in staff housing and work on the mountain, you're not going to see it as much but if you live here you'll start to see what it's all about.
>
> *Tara*: You think that the young people who come here, sort of form their own transient community?
>
> *Rachel*: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.
>
> *Tara*: Yah?
>
> *Rachel*: I mean, staff housing just becomes a big dorm. Like at University. Right?
>
> *Tara*: Yah
>
> *Rachel*: And, and you know, that's their family, that's their family away from home. So no question, no question, I think that, uh, they have their own community up there.

Rachel's comments help to suggest that there is separation between the seasonal workers and the longer-term residents. It suggests that the spaces these groups inhabit do differ; people who come for six months live in staff housing, longer term residents move to Pemberton.

Figure 6.10 Concert at the base of Whistler Mountain

(Source: http://www.livedownloads.com/images/shows/050408_09.jpg)

However, I believe Rachel's comments also add value to Helen's in relation to Rachel's role in the local community through her work on various committees. It suggests that Helen's comment about having to work to become part of the community is probably valid. What is also interesting to note about both Rachel and Neil's comments is the reference to the young budget traveller's community being similar to university experiences. These qualitative comments are reaffirmed by the Lonely Planet (2005: 14; 2006: 6) surveys that found that over 70% of their respondents were educated to degree level or higher. Andrew's comments add to this in a slightly different way as he suggests that

> *Andrew*: Staff housing is like a university dormitory for kids who never went to university, it's a totally different world, that why I'm not there (laugh). No, I mean I came here from a career life whatever, so I couldn't go back to that, but I think that, they make their own friends cause they … Someone said something to me my first year and he said that its really hard to put time and effort and energy into making friends and spending time with someone you know is going to be gone in six months, so you spend all this time and energy on this friendship and then you never hear from them again.
>
> *Ellie*: you know the mountain makes an effort to you know to do stuff for the employees, to get them out but it's always the same groups so you're not mixing the groups and some of the groups don't want to mix, like you said, why bother when they're leaving at the end of the season.

Again, there is the comparison is to university life, although it is interesting that Andrew seems to think staff housing is the dorm for those young people who have not been to university. Perhaps more important to note is the comment about the time and

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energy spent on friendships and that different groups do not mix. Andrew and Ellie's comments suggest that one of the reasons for the separation between the young budget travellers and the longer-term residents is the seasonal nature of the resort. As such, they see the formation of a number of temporary communities (enclaves?) by the young budget travellers.

Sasha felt that the community was split into various levels. There was the seasonal worker who lived in staff housing, then there were the workers who had been in Whistler for somewhere between one and three years, those who had been here for three to five years and the final group consisted of those who had lived in Whistler for five plus years. She suggested that a person transitioned through these various 'levels' rather than simply entered a wider community. As such, if the community in Whistler consists of a number of smaller communities or enclaves, then there are also individuals who intersect with different groups or people, perhaps linking these groups or perhaps feeling isolated from any particular group[109]. This can then relate again back to Helen's comments about having to dedicate time to becoming part of the Whistler community. Byron's comments also suggest that there are 'phases' to the local community when he says,

> *Tara*: Do you think the young people who come here form their own type of community.
>
> *Byron*: Absolutely, I think we all went through that phase when we first moved here, right, where you first you find out who your friends are, and you know you do that bouncing around, the world is your oyster kind of thing, then you kind of settle in, probably with a group a people you know, you share similar values or similar quests whether it's to go be the best snowboarder on the hill or you know, or party every night or whatever … I mean if you go through the residences now, the RA programmes[110] are about helping them form that sense of community so they have a, you know, a tight framework of friends
>
> *Tara*: Yah
>
> *Byron*: But you do see it, I think that, the resort lives on the energy that first season group brings in so we kind of support them forming their own community but it does, doesn't seem to be an isolated or segregated community.
>
> *Tara*: No?
>
> *Byron*: It seems to be fairly involved with the rest of the community. People tend to reach out to it, even though we speak of them as completely different.

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[109] Perhaps this then becomes about identification with the various groups within the wider community (see Malbon, 1997)?

[110] The RA (Residential Advisor) programmes consist of a longer-term member of staff who lives in the staff residence with first season staff and organises events, acts as a councillor, mediator and regulator (of Whistler Blackcomb rules) when necessary.

It is interesting to note that this more 'company' view of community suggests that although the two groups – the first season employees and the rest of community – may talk about each other completely differently, they are not seen as separate. I believe that corporate strategies, in part, encourage this view of a fully integrated community which has been brought together by company culture and a shared lifestyle rather than observing a community of multiple groupings who co-exist but infrequently overlap.

Figure 6.11 Whistler Village (Source: www.mywhistler.ca)

6.6 The 'Social' Scene(s)

> Sonia: Oh my god, and do you remember the time we went into Buffalo Bills? God, why did we do that, it was so full of cougars[111]!
>
> Tara: Yah, it was, wasn't it? But the Canucks were in there that night weren't they?
>
> Sonia: (laughs) Yah, but that still doesn't make it any better. I HATE getting hit on because some guy thinks I'm, like, a tourist who's just out for a good time…

This conversation with Sonia is indicative of conversations that the people who live and work in Whistler frequently have. Living in Whistler and living in specific communities in Whistler also entails socialising in certain ways in Whistler. So, going

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[111] Cougars are women who are (for want of a better phrase) 'mutton dressed as lamb'.

into Buffalo Bills is seen as a mistake as it is 'classified' as a tourist bar/club. Whereas, as the next quote (which has also been used in Chapter Three) suggests, mixing with the locals in Merlin's is much more accepted,

> Was talking to Ellie this morning and we were laughing at how last night we were sort of disparaging tourists in Merlin's and then ended up talking to them all night and going to Casa for some food. In Merlin's, we were all trying to guess who the tourists were – or more likely, where they were from. It was as though being 'local' gave us a reason to put down the fact that they were drunk and acting out.

Neil helps to explain why it is acceptable to go to Merlin's but not Buffalo Bills when he talks about the discounts that members of staff receive in the Whistler Blackcomb-owned bar. As I have suggested in Chapter Five, many of the young people who live and work in Whistler are on low-wages and therefore will take advantage of discounts offered. This advantage also allows them to differentiate themselves within a certain space. So, in Merlin's, they may be mixing with tourists but they are 'locals' exactly because they can get discounts.

Yet, it is not just the space of bars and clubs that can have different social meanings. The earlier comment from my research diary concerning how I use the gym or what runs I ski, also illustrates ways in which young budget travellers utilise space in order to both make it their own and differentiate themselves from touristic others. A conversation I had over dinner with Sasha, Andrew and Ellie and record in my Research Diary helps to expand on this point,

> We were laughing because I was telling them how I always tell people to go up the Crystal Chair as it is often empty and then how I always kick myself because that' s exactly why I like Crystal, there are no tourists! Doh! Sasha said the same though but she says she's been known to mis-direct tourists just to keep them out of Spanky's! (Extract from Research Diary, March, 2003).

In differentiating themselves from the many tourists in Whistler, young budget travellers use space strategically. They take advantage of discounts in certain bars and restaurants and, in doing so, position themselves differently within that space. They may also use these spaces at different times in order to distinguish themselves as 'locals' or at the very least, 'not-tourists'. There are however, differences between groups, so

Neil: I'd never been here before. So when we arranged to meet here, I thought I better, you know, check it out. So… I came down last night and had a beer and then, you know, there was hockey on, which I don't understand but I ended up staying and yah, I really like this place, I didn't even know it existed. It's like a really nice bar for a hotel isn't it?

I arranged my interviews in a number of (quite specific) places, one of which was a bar called the Cinnamon Bear[112]. When reading through my interviews once back in the UK, Neil's comment prompted me to think in more detail about this,

I never really thought about it I suppose. Well, that's not quite true, I thought about where I could meet people that was in a public place but that was fairly quiet. And I can remember sitting in the Cinnamon Bear doing an interview and watching this girl walk by the bar a couple of time. You know, I knew she was Nina cause it was obvious she was checking out where she was going. I never thought about the fact that these people wouldn't know where the Cinnamon Bear was, I suppose it's just normal to me… (Extract from Research Diary, Sept 2003).

This perhaps illustrates some of the points I tried to make in Chapter Three. My existing knowledge of Whistler meant that I (occasionally) used space in different ways to the young people I was talking to. This was reiterated in a number of ways. So not only did I use the gym in specific ways or ski in specific places, so I also went to specific places for social reasons,

Veronica: And do you remember we always used to go to Tommy's on a Monday night? All 80s wasn't it? God, they were fun nights. … Yah, and where was it on Thursday's? Um, it was, um, Garf's, yah. And then Crabshack on a Sunday, cause that band, what were they called, that local band, always played. And um, where else?
Tara: Well. Merlin's I suppose, but that was whenever wasn't it?
Veronica: Yah, Merlin's. And then hot chocolate at the Chateau, yum.
Tara: Yah, but that was just for a treat wasn't it. … pretended we were posh or something, yah, but you used to work there.

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[112] The two places I used most were the Cinnamon Bear where I conducted 12 of my interviews and a restaurant called Sushi Village where I conducted 5 of my interviews over lunchtimes. The Cinnamon Bear was located in the Delta Hotel and in the summers, was used by Whistler Blackcomb as an after work venue. I used the Cinnamon Bear because generally it was quiet, you could get seats and it was somewhere I felt comfortable by myself so I could arrive early and stay after interviews to write up notes. I used Sushi Village for two reasons, as an incentive, I would pay for the food and also because restaurants in Whistler are generally quite expensive and Sushi Village was reasonably priced and so popular with locals.

For many of the young people in Whistler, bars, restaurants, clubs were temporally situated. The space becomes negotiated. In Merlin's, tourists and locals use the space at the same time and so negotiation becomes about defining yourself as a local by utilising employee discounts[113]. At other places, the negotiation was about when the space was frequented. So, going to the Crabshack on a Sunday was about knowing that a local band regularly played there, going to the Chateau was a 'treat' because it was a 'posh' hotel and somewhere that employees did not generally 'hang out' at.

Figure 6.12 Whistler Village from Blackcomb (Source: www.mywhislter.ca)

Yet there was a fluidity among many of these places. This extract (below) from my research diary helps to illustrate this.

Went to Payday Friday at Merlins on Friday – there was a huge line-up (at 9:30pm) but luckily we (Sasha, Sonia and I) got let in by Kelly (manager) – wonderful woman. …Saw Elaine from ES in there – she was heading home after a big night out the night before. Then went to Moe Joes where Bill got us a free pitcher. Saw Gabby (ES) and Libby in there. Talked to Gabby for a bit as her friend got off with a guy she doesn't like.   …Went and saw Snow White on Saturday night. Met up with Sasha and Kyle in Pasta Lupino and then went along. It's a local production put on by The Whistler Players but it was very good. Lots of local references and all the actors were locals. Caught up with X ands saw X and EE Jane there too.

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[113] The Employee Handbook (2002/2003) states that employees are not allowed to wear their uniforms after work hours in any bar or restaurant. This is difficult to police, in part due to the number of employees who (may) go out immediately after finishing work. However, what it often did, is allow these young people to visibly illustrate that they were not tourists. Merlin's staff often self-policed this issue by making any employee who came to the bar still wearing their nametag buy a round of drinks.

Here it is how I interact with others in particular spaces. So, using connections to pass the queue of people waiting get into Merlin's, illustrating Sasha and Sonia's (rather than mine) connections to place through people, getting free drinks at another bar, again because of the knowledge of people in that place. Then going to a local production with local references – the point here being that I knew they were local references. What you do not get a sense of from the quote is the differences within these spaces. Sasha and Sonia are longer-term residents of Whistler and so have the connections to the place to be able to queue jump. Bill, through his (second) job promoting Moe Joe's, is able to get 'free' drinks. Yet in both of these spaces, I also encountered a number of other people – and these 'others' were 'first season' people whose behaviour varied from mine – so Elaine was going home (early) as she had a big night the night before, Gabby and Libby talked to me because their friend was 'getting off with' some guy. In my research diary, I am talking about my knowledge of local connections to place – through Sasha and Bill and knowing local references for instance - in direct opposition to Elaine and Gabby and their experience of 'big nights out' or about 'getting off with some guy'. By so doing, I am defining myself as different to them, and this is reiterated in a conversation I had with Ellie,

Ellie: I blame you, my head hurt this morning.

Tara: Sorry, we had fun though didn't we?

Ellie: Yah… how did we ever used to do this? I'm, I never used to feel like this after a night out… (groan)

Tara: (laugh) … I always used to say I could cash up better on a hangover… And here I thought I could keep up with them [the girls I worked with in ES]…

Ellie: Yah, not any more… do you know, I don't want to. Getting drunk every night has no appeal, I don't want to go to work hung-over like all the lifties, I've done that, you know? I'm past that…

Tara: Oh my goodness, yes.

Both Ellie and Rachel (see Section 6.4 above) have chosen to live longer-term in Whistler and in doing so, use the spaces in Whistler in specific ways. For Rachel, it involves being social to everyone she meets in Whistler but living out of the resort in Pemberton. For Ellie, it is about not wanting to go out 'every night … like the lifties' (who are generally first season employees). This leads me back to the idea that Whistler is a place with a number of communities and so back to the question of whether Whistler is a backpacker enclave.

6.7 Whistler as a Backpacker Enclave?

I have tried to suggest that Whistler is perhaps a backpacker enclave through using the term community. The sheer numbers of young budget travellers that can be found in Whistler at any point in the year suggest that it can be defined as a backpacker enclave. However, if an enclave has to develop through a process of interaction between locals and backpackers (see Wilson and Richards, 2005) and if it is generally seen as a place that caters solely for the backpacking scene/community, then perhaps it is more questionable. The resort of Whistler is continually developing. This development and the tensions that result from it have as much to do with the interactions between the different elements of the local community and the high-end tourism market which Whistler caters for, as between long(er) term locals and the seasonal influx of working tourists.

If I go back to my discussion of backpacker enclaves in Chapter Two, then Whistler does not 'fit' into the description of an enclave. Whistler is not dominated by (specifically) backpacker related activities nor does it have a dedicated backpacker infrastructure (see Wilson and Richards, 2005). Both of these factors do exist in Whistler but they do not exist specifically because of the presence of young budget travellers. Rather many of the services in Whistler tailor to both tourists and backpackers.

The young budget travellers utilise the spaces and resources built for the high-end tourists on a daily basis (for instance bars, restaurants and retail outlets); tourists also utilise the resources built for the locals (for instance, the hardware stores, mechanic workshops and antique shops in Function Junction). The permeability of the spaces in Whistler perhaps then, does not suggest the same level of differentiation between 'here' and 'there' as in, for example, Khao San Road in Bangkok (see Wilson and Richards 2005: 6).

What does exist is a complex relationship between multiple communities. So it is not a simple differentiation between tourist and non-tourist spaces; rather it is a negotiation between the permeable spaces of Whistler and between different groups of people – tourist, long-term locals and seasonal employees – over time

For example, it could be suggested that the seasonal employee, our young budget traveller, lives in a specific place, staff housing or employee residence (see Figure 6.7). By living here, they are undergoing a 'spatial suspension' whereby they have

been separated from both the local community and from the high-end tourist. If this is the case, then the role of the Whistler Blackcomb has to be considered. In choosing to build staff residences in certain spaces within Whistler, are they manipulating the ways in which the local community and the high-end tourist interact with the young budget traveller? So, for instance, by building staff housing in a particular sub-district, are Whistler Blackcomb trying to make their employees less visible to the tourists, to the locals, to both? And if so, why are they doing this and why do they see a need to do this?

Yet, I think Whistler is much more than 'just' a backpacker enclave. Wilson and Richards (2005) suggest that backpacker enclaves are distinctive because of their diversity.   In this case, the diversity seems to be that multiple enclaves co-exist, intersecting at certain points with each other – such as the library or MY place. These communities or enclaves are not just local versus seasonal worker but, as Sasha suggests above, consist of different groups of young budget travellers, defined perhaps not only by the time they have spent or intend to spend Whistler, but also by the spaces (and places) that they inhabit within the village of Whistler and perhaps even by the jobs they do and the companies they work for.   As Grace says,

> I think there's definite groups in Whistler. Like, non-mountain locals, then there's the mountain locals and they're all like the managers and stuff so they've been here for longer than two or three years and so they've got their own groups as well and then you've got the workers bees, like the imports (laugh), they're all at the bottom levels doing the craps jobs, non-year round jobs

Figure 6.13 Sitting out at The Roundhouse, Whistler (Source: www.whislterblackcomb.com)

Thus, seeing Whistler as a touristic bubble (see Judd, 1999) or a backpacker enclave (Hottola, 2005; Howard, 2005; Wilson and Richards, 2005) limits our conception of this space. Whistler, as a place, is managed, marketed and branded as a world-class tourist destination, as a fun place to work, as a sustainable and forward thinking community (see www.whistlerblackcomb.com and www.naturalstep.ca for example). The lived experiences of tourists, seasonal staff and locals complicate this image as they co-exist and intersect over time and in space. The relationships between the various groups in Whistler mean that the geographical imagination of Whistler is vast. For some (both tourists and young budget travellers) it is a Disneyland, and one that they may have imagined before arriving. For longer-term residents, it is a place in which they live and which they may no longer see as a resort (see the extract from my research diary below). For others, there are temporal and behavioural suspensions allowing them to behave differently than they would do at home. Also, Whistler can never be an enclave if that means that the 'real' and 'cultural' work is left outside of it (see Wilson and Richards, 2005) as these are often the main reasons young people choose to come here in the first place.

6.8 Conclusions

> I'm having trouble finding Whistler. I don't mean on a map. It's easy to locate on a two-dimensional page in the atlas. And in terms of space, our resort is easier than ever to find with its burgeoning three-dimensional structures. Even in time, Whistler can be easily pinpointed as a world class resort confidently launching itself into the third millennium. What eludes me is another dimension altogether. I'm talking about the character of the place (Vogler, 2000: 13).

Whistler is, in many ways, a place of contradictions. It is a world-renowned ski resort that attracts over 1 million winter holidaymakers every year. At the same time, it is also a place that attracts and employs thousands of young budget travellers every year. I recently had a conversation in which the other person was amazed to discover this 'other' side of Whistler. They recognised Whistler as a holiday destination but had no idea that it was also somewhat of a 'backpacker enclave'. Whistler's history is that of a resort town. There was little or no community here before the mountain was developed. This, I believe, causes 'problems' for the people who come to live, work and play here.

I was talking to Ellie this morning, talking about my interviews yesterday and how well they'd gone and David's comment that he didn't think this was a resort. I'm still thinking about that one. Anyway, Ellie made the comment that the longer you are here (in Whistler), the less of a resort it becomes. There are functional businesses here that a local utilizes, rather than the ones aimed specifically at the tourists. David was comparing it to Lake Louise where there is a resort hotel and not much else. I suppose I see Whistler as a resort town. It grew up as a resort but has since developed many of the attributes of a town because of the local population, not so much due to it (Extract from Research Diary, March 2003).

There is a dichotomy between Whistler-as-resort and Whistler-as-a-local-town; one has grown up because of the other; and within this there are further tensions between different groups of locals, be they long(er) term locals or seasonal employees. I believe that Whistler consists of mobile, fluid and complex communities – in many ways it is both touristic bubble and backpacker enclave. It is a place that provides young budget travellers with meaning for their experiences. It is the backdrop to many a story and many a picture shown. And it is deeply embedded in global networks of space and place, through the people who live there, the tourists who visit, the international publicity and through the many young people who work for a few months.
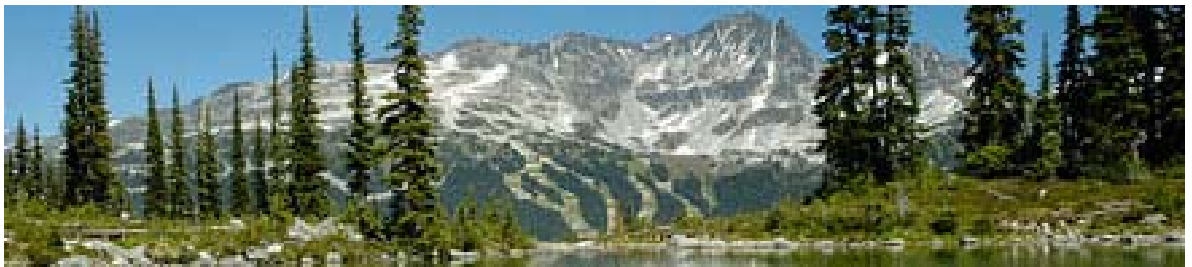
Figure 6.14 Blackcomb in the Summer (Source: www.mywhistler.ca)

For the young people who come to Whistler, they take away memories of Whistler as a place. These memories are about the adventure, fun, experience. Lisa, when asked about her memories of Whistler said,

I have too many fantastic memories to name one as being my favourite. I loved learning to snowboard, Whistler-Blackcomb really are amazing mountains. I love mountain biking during the summer, entering the Twoonie Races every Thursday. I have seen some of the most memorable scenery in my life, especially Joffre Lakes, one of my favourite hikes. Seeing my first bear and every one after that [email received from Lisa, May 2004].

Whistler Blackcomb has succeeded in its mission of providing the best mountain experience … again and again. Perhaps instead of worrying about how the tourist will perceive Whistler, or what memories and experiences the young budget traveller will take away with them, Whistler needs go back to Eldon Beck's (the village planner, see Barnett, 2000a) ideal of providing Whistler with a sense of place, otherwise, as Vogler (2000: 15-16) says,

> It could be that we're beginning to believe the images we send out to the world in the form of brochures and advertisements: "We're world class, we're famous, we're beautiful, we're powder snow and sunshine, we're Super Natural … we're hollow, we're plastic, we're fake." After all, the latter becomes reality if we begin to take the former for more than the mere advertising copy it is.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSIONS?

> The experience which is perceived to be utmost, personal, and individual is
> actually constructed amidst a tightly cohesive collective practice and is infused
> with sociocultural themes and tensions (Noy, 2004: 82).

In this conclusion, I want to try and bring together the threads that have been woven
together from the theoretical debates in Chapter Two and the empirical data in
Chapters Four, Five and Six. Through the next few pages I will continue to argue that
the working tourist is a distinctive form of backpacker travel and one that has received
little attention, especially when considering that the study of backpacking is

> becoming increasingly important because of the symbolic role the backpacker has
> assumed in more general debates about tourism and youth culture (Richards and
> Wilson, 2004c: 253).

I will go on to discuss how the travelling and working experiences of these young
budget travellers can affect their future travel careers, before arguing that we need to
consider the young budget traveller's complete experience rather than just the bit
where they worked, or volunteered or travelled. The chapter will conclude by looking
forward and examining how the research undertaken for this thesis could inform future
studies.

7.1 Reworking the Backpacker?

So how does the working tourist of Whistler fit into the categories of backpacker
outlined in Chapter One? Can the young budget travellers I spoke to be related to
Cohen's (1972, 1973, 1979) typologies outlined in Chapter Two? What about the
semantic confusion in the term 'working tourist' (see Abram and Waldren, 1997)?

The young working tourist in Whistler is distinctive. As comments from Byron and
Rachel in Chapter Five suggests, the young people who work for Whistler Blackcomb
and the other companies in Whistler are often over qualified for the front-line entry
level positions they are employed to do. If we arbitrarily apply the Lonely Planet's
(2005, 2006) findings, then over 70% of the young people who come to Whistler every
winter season looking for a job will have a university degree or higher. Yet they still

come to Whistler every October in their thousands. This seems to me to go back to both Pape's (1965) idea of working-to-travel and Cohen's (1974) idea of travelling-to-work.

What is perhaps more interesting is that the young budget traveller in Whistler seems to straddle Uriely's (2001) working tourist definition (as outlined in Figure 1. 4). The working tourist in Whistler is both grasping work as a recreational activity that is part of the holiday experience (for instance, by working as a lift operator and so skiing to work everyday) as well as working in order to finance a prolonged trip. The work they undertake is usually unskilled but may not be unpleasant and it is usually paid (although at minimum wage level). The other 'dilemma' is whether the work can be seen as prestigious or not. For instance, many of the young people who come to Whistler want to work as a lift operator or perhaps a ski instructor as these jobs are seen to be 'cool' or have all the perks. Yet, in reality, lift operators often start work before 5 a.m., they stand outside in the cold/windy/wet weather for up to 10 hours and as part of their job have to regularly shovel snow, move heavy gates and "risk life and limb"[114] loading small children on to lift chairs. As for ski instructors, they often have to cope with groups of unruly students (whether they are children or adults). If they teach children then they may well have to deal with incontinence problems, behavioural problems and parents!

And what of Cohen's (1973) drifter typology? If backpacking is still seen as a travel subculture then perhaps it can also still be seen as non-institutionalised. However, as countries such as Australia realise the potential spending power of these long-term budget travellers, so backpacking becomes a niche market to be tapped. Therefore, instead of trying to update Cohen's (1972) classification of tourists, I have instead somewhat updated his expanded typology of full and part-time drifters (Cohen, 1973, see Figure 7.1 below).

However, rather than radically or substantially revising any of the existing typologies that I have already looked at, I want to look to Cochrane's diagram (Figure 7.2) below and Conradson and Latham's (2005a) four-fold typology for international migrants.

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[114] This is somewhat tongue in cheek. In order to help small children on to the chair lifts, the lift operator has to juggle lifting the child pushing them firmly back in the seat and avoiding the moving arm of the chair as it sweeps past and up the hill. Having helped out on a few occasions – and been knocked back into snow drifts on even more occasions, I can safely say that it takes a certain knack!

The *"Proper" Backpacker* Linked to the original drifter Still tries to avoid all connections to the tourism industry and attempts to get as far away from familiarity as possible (although will join in some 'iconic' backpacker events such as Full Moon Parties in SE Asia) No fixed itinerary. Will have a credit card hidden away for 'emergencies'. Think they are living with local people and immersing themselves in local culture when in reality living in a backpacker enclave.	Full-Time Backpackers
The "*Adventure Seeker*" Attempts to travel as cheaply as possible in order save money for the next 'adrenaline high' (most likely to be found staying on friends sofas). Goes from season to season looking for the next 'big thrill' e.g. extreme skiing every winter to surfing/climbing/ down-hill mountain biking every summer	
The "*Mass-Drifter*" Usually a student on a year out or travelling during the holidays. Spends a limited time travelling the world, meeting people and "having experiences". Tends to stick to the backpackers enclaves for cheap lodgings and eating places.	Part-Time Backpackers
The "*Fellow-Traveller*" Inwardly orientated, the young professional who associates with the backpacker behaviour of this sub-culture. He/she will frequent the backpacker enclaves for short periods of time (i.e. long weekends) before returning to his/her everyday working life.	

Figure 7.1 A Revised Typology of Drifters? (after Cohen, 1973)

Cochrane's pictorial representation (see Figure 7.2) of the variations in gap-year travel highlights a number of points. Firstly, it illustrates that as well as what we, in the UK, perceive as 'Gap-Year' travel i.e. taking a year out between school and university or between university and the start of a career (see Jones, 2004b, see also Figure 1.3), there are many other types of gap year travel that can be undertaken. Secondly it illustrates that taking a gap year is not the preserve of the young. Cochrane says that the age of '28' is the Golden Age (and so the Golden Gapper). The Lonely Planet's (2005:12) recent survey showed that 41% of their respondents were in the 25-34 age group, 37% were aged between 18-24 and perhaps more interestingly, a fifth of their respondents (21%) were aged over 35. This spread of ages helps to further explain Cochran's diagram. The career gappers are those taking some sort of sabbatical or career break and will tend to be in the 25-34 group; and again it is interesting to note that 43% of the Lonely Planet respondents classed themselves as professional

(Lonely Planet, 2005: 15). The serial gappers could be student's taking advantage of holiday periods, young professionals taking advantage of annual leave or people on the OE who spend short periods of time travelling between contracts or jobs. Flashpackers (see also Cochrane, 2005; Pursall, 2005) are those backpackers who spend a little more money whilst travelling and again are probably the young professionals on a career break of some sort. The Golden Gappers are the late twenties to mid-late thirties travellers and the senior gappers are probably the most recently recognised group of 'gappers' as they often consist of people who have retired and take advantage of the backpacker enclaves/circuit in order to travel the world.
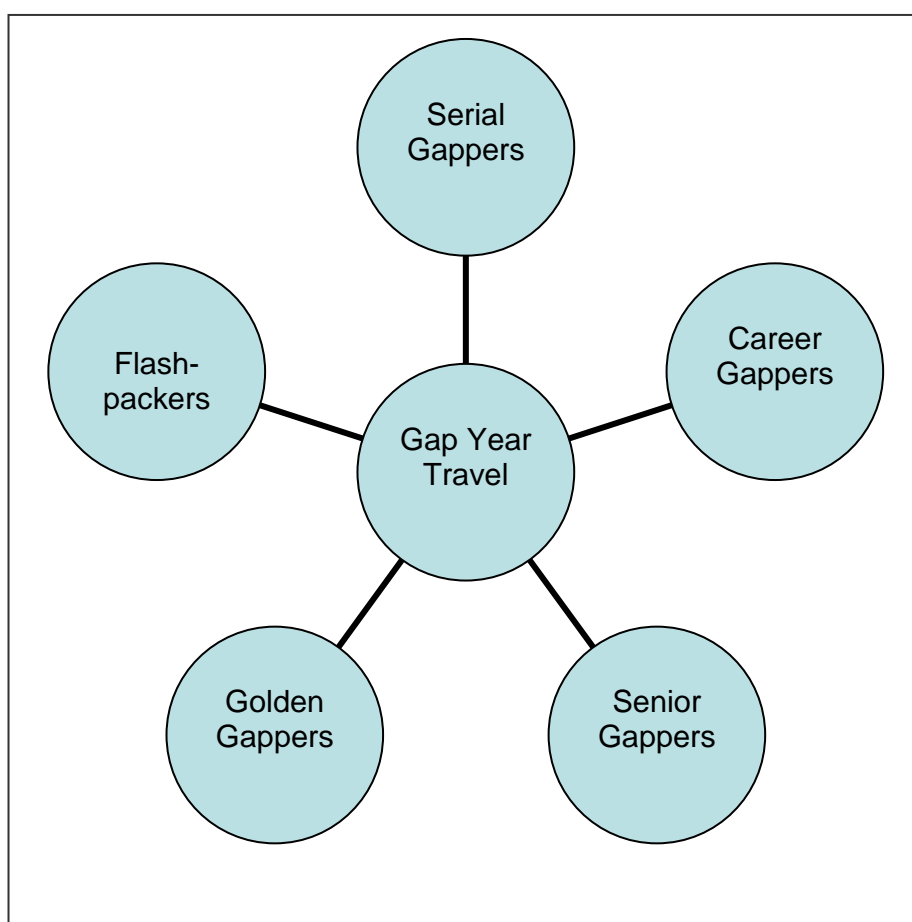
Figure 7.2 Types of Gap Year Travel (after Cochrane, 2005)[115].

Cochrane's diagram is useful in that it allows for a much broader range of people to be involved in backpacker travel. What it fails to do is to distinguish between the types of activities that these various groups undertake. It does not consider whether gap year travel involves any form of either unpaid or paid work. It does not distinguish between those young budget travellers, who, as suggested above, may work-to-travel

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[115] This diagram appeared in Cochrane's presentation at the Atlas SIG Meeting in Bangkok in September, 2005 but does not appear in her paper (Cochrane, 2005) from that same conference.

or travel-to-work. Nor does it consider the types of travel involved. For example, as I suggest in Chapter One, New Zealand OEers not only follow backpacker circuits when travelling but, as with those based in London (see Wilson, 2005), they also take advantage of short city breaks, package holidays (both summer and winter holidays) as well as organising their own short and long trips away from their temporary working environment. It does however suggest that different types of travel can be undertaken at different points along the life cycle and I will explore this in more detail in the next section.

Conradson and Latham (2005a: 162) have put forward 'a provisional typology of middling international migrants to global cities' (see Figure 7.3 below). Why is this relevant to this work on working tourists? In part, because Conradson and Latham's migrants are New Zealanders who, in some of their other work (see 2004b), they have classed as OEers. Young New Zealanders on their Overseas Experience place equal emphasis on both 'seeing the world' and working (Wilson et al, 2004b) and therefore have some similarities to the working tourists I have studies in Whistler. Having an established base in the UK, and especially in London, is preferred as it not only allows easy access to Europe but is also a prosperous city with a wide range of well-remunerated, high status jobs (see Conradson and Latham, 2005a). Herein lies the difference between the working tourists that I have studied and the New Zealand OEers. As I suggest above, working tourists are often overqualified for the front line, service jobs that they undertake for a limited time in Whistler whereas the young New Zealanders in London have the opportunity to utilise any professional skills and training they may have in a dynamic and buoyant job market. The young budget travellers I spoke to in Whistler would generally fit into the EM category (see Figure 7.3 below) as although Whistler may not be a global city, it does provide the working tourist with the opportunities for experimentation and creative individualisation.

This typology has been created to focus on tertiary educated migrants who move to London for a period of work and travel. It is therefore concentrating much more on the work experiences of these migrants rather than on their travel experiences. In this respect, it offers the opposite insights to Cochrane's diagram (above) and the open-endedness of each category negates the need to qualify the demographics. As much as I find these four categories appealing when considering long term traveller movements to and through global cities, such as London, New York, Sydney, I want to go on to consider, as I intimated at above, how these two models can perhaps help to illustrate a more transitional and fluid typology of young budget travel.

Global City Escalator Movers (GCEMs)

GCEMs are typically highly skilled individuals who move in order to access the career progression opportunities afforded by a global city. Some are moving within established corporate networks, where a certain amount of international mobility is an expected and necessary part of the process of advancing up the career ladder (Beaverstock and Broadwell, 2000; Beaverstock, 2005). Other individuals may not be transferring within a multinational firm structure, but are nevertheless attracted by the exemplary professional opportunities that a global city offers someone in their position.

Speculative Career Movers (SCMs)

SCMs are people seeking to progress their career in a direction not previously explored. There is an element of experimentation and openness to their relocation, in that it may involve a temporary move down the career ladder before the possibilities of a new destination's labour markets can be realised. For SCMs, the pull factors of a city like London are likely to be multi-faceted and may include its positions in global economic networks (allowing the migrant to become part of a global organisational elite), but also its various world city functions (opening opportunities for work in elite institutions, creative industries and universities).

Career Tending Experiential Movers (CTEMs)

CTEMs are people who wish to experience a different social and cultural milieu whilst continuing to work in a particular profession, but who are not seeking to develop their careers in any strong sense. What is interesting about the destination city for these migrants revolves much more around its social and cultural vibrancy - … - that its place within the global economic hierarchy. Nonetheless, the host city's labour markets must provide the CTEMs with sufficient opportunities to enable them to maintain their existing lifestyles and skill sets, so they are not materially disadvantaged upon return to a country of origin.

Experiential Movers (EMs)

EMs are people moving to a place for the experience of living within a different culture and/or different social milieu. Their migration is explicitly understood to be temporary, and to involve a direct break from career considerations. The opportunity for experimentation, travel and creative individualisation is generally more important than the type work they engage in.

Figure 7.3 Four-Fold Typology of International Migrants to Global Cities (Source: Conradson and Latham, 2005a: 162-163).

7.2 Working their Way Through a Travel Career?

'The hope is that backpackers of today will return with their families as the tourist of tomorrow' Anon, 2003, www.canadatourism.com

What I think both Cochrane (2005) and Conradson and Latham (2005a) do is provide the opportunity to turn their typologies into something closer to a travel career ladder (see Pearce and Lee, 2005) for young budget travellers. The travel career ladder is based upon Maslow's (1970) hierarchical theory of motivation and although travellers were not considered to have just one level of motivation, it was suggested that one level would most likely be dominant at any given time (see Pearce and Lee, 2005: 227). One of the core ideas is that people's motivations change with time and travel experiences and so

people may be said to have a travel career, that is, a pattern of travel motives that change according to their life span and /or accumulated travel experiences (Pearce and Lee, 2005: 227).

I want to suggest two things from the idea of a travel career ladder. Firstly, that in the case of many long term young budget travellers, each trip has its own particular travel and work plan or pattern. Secondly, that over time, these young budget travellers develop a travel career ladder that, simply put, progresses through various stages, i.e. from backpacker to flashpacker to career-break backpacker to elite traveller.

So, for instance, a New Zealander, trained as a barrister travels to Whistler on a one year working visa. In the winter season she works as a ticket seller for Whistler Blackcomb. Instead of moving to Vancouver or another part of Canada, she decides to stay for part of the summer and works at the local golf course as the 'bar-cart girl'.

She then heads to London where she finds a flat in Chalk Farm (with her sister) and works as a barrister. She works in London for two years before returning to New Zealand. During this time, she returns to Canada on holiday at least twice (to visit her younger sister who is now doing a season there), goes on numerous city break weekends (to Dublin, Amsterdam, Paris) and takes at least one package holiday to Spain.
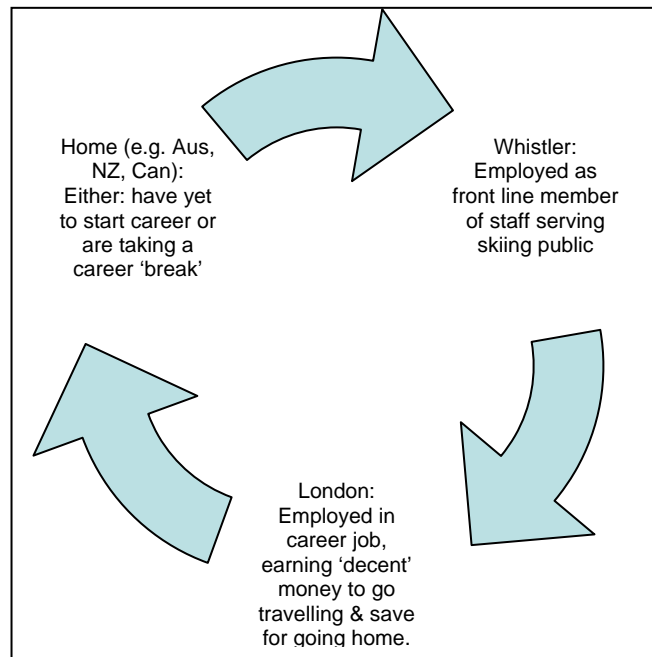
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Figure 7.4 The Multiple Stages of a Single Trip

During the course of this single trip she has gone, in terms of Conradson and Latham's (2005a) typology, from being an EM in Whistler to being a CTEM or perhaps even a SCM in London. And to move the single trip travel career ladder that one step further, upon her return home she finds a job with a law firm who employ her to move back to UK and work in their London office and so she becomes a GCEM. Of course, this example works well because Conradson and Latham's (2005a) typology is based on New Zealand migrants.

However, I think the advantage of Conradson and Latham's typology is that it takes into account the current transnational flexibility inherent in many young budget travellers itineraries. Let me take another example, Sasha, who we heard from in Chapter Four, is an Australian who holds an American passport and now has Canadian residency. Sasha originally intended to 'do' a season in Whistler. She was an IT professional in Australia, had recently come out of a long term relationship and after Whistler, planned on going on the UK for a year before returning to Australia. However, she was one of the few young budget travellers in Whistler who was able to use their professional skills in her seasonal position. She was promoted and Whistler Blackcomb applied and received a year's extension to her working visa. After the second year, Sash had found a 'niche'. She wanted to stay in Whistler and advance her career but could not get another extension through the company. Instead she utilised her US passport and through NAFTA (North American Free trade

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Agreements) was able to once again extend her working visa. Two years later she decided to continue her education and headed back to Australia for six months for an extended holiday and to register for an MBA programme. By this time she had applied and received her Canadian residency and so headed back to Whistler to work at senior management level for another local company and complete her MBA through distance learning. Sasha may not be working in a global city but she has moved up through Conradson and Latham's (2005a) typology; she arrived in Whistler with the expectation of being an EM, was lucky enough to become a CTEM and is now a GCEM.

7.3 Is there a need for all these typologies?

Examples aside, one of the most important findings of this thesis is that the work experiences in Whistler of young budget travellers must be taken in context with their whole working and travelling experience. Working on a bar-cart when trained as a barrister may not prove vital to the C.V. but the career job that is taken up in London may be. It may also be that this career job allows room for more travel and perhaps even provides the flexibility to do more than one Whistler-type work experience. It is therefore important that backpacker research starts considering the whole experience rather than providing these brief insights into parts of these young budget travellers working and travelling lives.

Therefore, although Carr (2006) argues that backpacker research is undermined in part because there is no clear definition of what a backpacker is, I think we need to think carefully about how, and if, the typologies I have suggested in this thesis (from Cohen (1972 to Uriely (2001) to Conradson and Latham (2005a)) are useful when we try and think about who backpackers are. O'Reilly (2006: 999) suggests although the backpacker is an easily recognised stereotype, it can be difficult to distinguish between this and other types of tourism. In the media, Blackburn et al (2005: 33) identified over 1300 references to the 'Gap Year' in UK broadsheet papers in the four years between August 1998 and August 2002, over 1300 and more recently, in the UK, Kenco coffee adverts have featured a 'Gap Year' student[116]. Backpacking has changed; it has become an accepted part of many Western (and some non-Western) cultures and a niche market in the tourism industry. Alongside this growth and

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[116] I think there are a number of 'problems' with these adverts, not least because of the stereotype of the gap year that it portrays. However, what it does illustrate is the extent to which the Gap Year has pervaded the UK consciousness.

acceptance, backpacking and youth travel are also broadening. Australia and New Zealand are both seeing the 'Gap Year' take hold. Research such as Muzaini's (2006) illustrates the changing and growing inclusiveness of young budget travel whilst Conradson and Latham's (2005a), and Clarke's (2005) research both demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of this research.

I believe that there is a need to identify who we are talking about in our research. However, I worry that in agreeing to Carr's (2006) assertion that we need to define who backpackers are, so we will end up in a navel-gazing debate (see England, 1994) as researchers quibble over the details of who, what, where, when and how. Nor do I want to suggest that we totally reject all the typologies that have gone before. I believe that Cohen's (1972, 1973, 1979) work still has great relevance to the study of young budget travel today. Uriely's (2001: 7) suggestion that further research needs to be done in order to assist in solidifying his typology is still valid. However, I think that in just considering the typologies that surround backpacker travel, we limit ourselves to particular views of youth travel.

I suggest instead, that we need to take a wider approach to the study of young budget travel. Cohen (2004: 58) suggests that the 'researchers' background has doubtlessly coloured their orientation to their research and the interpretation of their findings'. If we look at any recent work on backpackers this, to me, becomes so apparent. Much research on young budget travellers seems to be based on case studies (my own work included). If we, as I started to try and do in Chapter Five, began putting these case studies together, would we get a fuller picture of a young budget traveller's trip?

A recent study day on backpackers consisted mainly of discussions about ethical volunteering – a very worthwhile and necessary avenue of research. Yet, on that same day, it emerged that in actual fact, only approximately 6% of UK gap years involve volunteering. I suggested to a colleague at another recent conference that the young people I talked about – i.e those who work and travel – were similar, if not the same, people that they were talking about – i.e. adventurous youth. They denied any similarity. Yet the young people I spoke to in Whistler in 2002-2003 and the many people I have spoken to since do not limit their time away from home to their 'volunteering' time, or their 'work' time or their 'beach' time. For them, it is the whole experience that has given the stories and narratives that allow them to construct a sense of self.

7.4 Transnationalism, Temporary Mobility and the Gap Year?

Even if my work only engages with the time young budget traveller spend working whilst away from home, perhaps I can still say that I begin to unsettle traditional definitions of temporary migration. This group of working budget travellers illustrate the ways in which labour migration and other forms of mobility are becoming increasing blurred. As a group, young budget travellers can be termed the 'middle' of transnationalism (Conradson and Latham 2005a and b; Clarke, 2005), in part because they do not easily fit into the often highly polarised view of migration (with the highly skilled and flexible on the one hand and the low or unskilled one the other)

Conradson and Latham (2005a: 168) say of those undertaking gap years,

> While at times tertiary educated, such individuals are not skilled or professional in the conventional sense of the global city migrant from a developed world country. Their migration often has more to do with the cultural and travel opportunities afforded by the arrangements such the Working Holiday programme,

Bianchi (2000: 107) describes them as,

> Neither strictly tourists nor workers, they constitute an emergent segment of tourist-workers who engage in periods of work within tourism destinations as an integral part of the touristic experience.

And he goes on to say

> A continuing factor of relevance in this respect [that there has been little attention to transnational tourism migration] is the persistent tendency to conceptualise tourism destination areas as bounded entities, a practice inherited from the tradition of ethnographic field research (Clifford, 1997; Selwyn, 1996:4), rather than a series of fluid social formations through which geographically mobile, capital, tourists, migrants and workers move and articulate with local and regional formations. It is within these spaces of flows that a growing network of cosmopolitan migrant tourist-workers, endowed with varying degrees of skill and expertise, is dispersed amongst the various touristic zones of Europe (and further afield), in search of varying combinations of work, pleasure and alternative lifestyles (Binachi, 2000: 118)

What I am suggesting, with the help of these quotes, is that young budget travellers who work as they travel are challenging notions of migration, as well as well as notions of tourism spaces. In particular, as Vertovec (2002: 2) says

> 'migration' may now not be the most accurate term. Instead, 'movement' or 'mobility' may be more apt terms. This is because migration has connotations of permanency or long-term stay, whereas the movement of many highly skilled persons tends, today, to be intermittent and short-term (cf. Koser and Salt, 1997).

He continues by saying,

> the networks of students should be seen as an integral part of transnational migration systems, not least because the networks they forge often lay the tracks of future skilled labour circulation (Vertovec, 2002: 13)

Thus, I am suggesting that we need to move away from looking at backpackers only from a motivational point of view. Cohen (2004: 58) suspects that the focus of most studies has been almost exclusively on backpackers and not on the local community in which they are situated. I think that a broader and wider picture of the 'Gap Year' is beginning to emerge and in some ways, it does situate the young budget traveller in the 'middle' of transnationalism. They do, as I suggest in Chapter Two, have multiple identities which are born out of an awareness multilocality (Ghosh and Wang, 2003); they can be seen as Ong's (1999) 'flexible citizens'.

Yet we must remember that, '[f]or those in the middle, cross-border travel (in every sense: corporeal, imaginative, virtual) is largely as matter of choice (though always social and cultured, never simply voluntary)' (Clarke, 2005: 320). Considering young budget traveller's mobility is not unproblematic. If we do consider young budget travellers as the 'middle' of transnationalism, are we peripheralising the polarities that have dominated migration studies? We must also not forget, as Cresswell (2001) suggests, that the corporeal mobilities of different groups of migrants are embedded in specific geographies, networks, and economic conditions and that these produce how people move and are received differently across the globe (see also Gogia, 2006).

As such, I think we need to see the Gap Year as a wider working and travelling concept. As Blackburn et al (2005: 37) state, '[i]t was more common than expected for students to take part in a combination of different activities during the [gap] year'. I wonder why they found this surprising and yet it seems that researchers into young

budget travellers rarely recognise that the young people involved often take part in a number of activities in the time they are away from home. A Gap Year can then consist of a number of activities that can include working in the 'home' country in order to save money to fund travel (or university), formal and informal volunteer work (both at home and overseas), working overseas, travelling, holidaying, 'taking a break', having adventures, and I am sure the list can go on.

For me, young budget travellers disrupt ideas of temporary migration. They have mobility and flexibility yet lack the level of skill seen in highly skilled migration. They choose to work in low-paid industries, whether this is in tourist resorts such as Whistler or fruit picking on farms in Australia. It is much more to me about temporary mobility. Hence, maybe we need to 'reinvent' the term 'Gap Year so that it is an inclusive term that encompasses the many different aspects of mobility, work and play that can occur during time away from formal education or work.

7.5 Some Final (Personal) Remarks

At the last few conferences I have been to, I have tried to present papers that have begun to challenge aspects of what I suppose is an 'academic backpacker culture'. I have tried to challenge typologies, suggested that we need to see backpacking in terms of temporary mobility and questioned how as researchers, we often only look at specific parts of the backpackers journey. What these three strands have in common is that with each, I am trying to engage with a wide range of literature. When we look at backpackers, we are immediately looking at an interdisciplinary group of young people. The literature crosses geography, sociology, psychology, migration studies, tourism studies, and mobility at least. Yet work on backpackers and the Gap Year seems to be contained within pockets of disciplines. I am unsure whether there is resistance to seeing the connections between activities undertaken by various groups of young budget travellers or whether perhaps I am reading too much into the networks and connections I see.

I also get frustrated with the discussions about what a backpacker is or is not, not least because the working tourist is often 'forgotten'. More importantly, I get frustrated because I believe that work on young budget travellers can and should inform a wider audience – whether it is to ensure that young people are able to choose ethical volunteer projects (see Simpson, 2003) or whether it helps tourist industries better understand the young people they recruit.

However, this remains a subject that I am fascinated by and believe needs more consideration. Hall's (2005: 134) suggests that,

> By placing mobility at the heart of our understanding of tourism, the geography of tourism may also be able to make a greater contribution to human geography, given the contemporary significance of concepts of circulation.

I think that we need to put mobility at the centre of our understanding of young budget travellers, as I believe that their experiences are inherently mobile, and by understanding this, so we can begin to understand how their narratives of self are informed by wider, global networks.

7.6 Conclusions

In conclusion, I think the young budget travellers I have spoken to are important to study for a number of reasons. Firstly, they are the tourists of the future and over the course of their life span their previous working and travelling experiences will determine future spending patterns and tourism preferences. Secondly, the mobility experienced by many of these young people is altering the way in which they define themselves; it becomes an awareness of multilocality (Ghosh and Wang, 2003), it is the opportunity to belong to more than one place at the same time, so allowing them the freedom to work and live and belong in a multiple locations over the course of their lives. Thirdly, the young budget travellers of today may, through their children, provide the work force for tourism resorts and industries of tomorrow; Whistler, in the past few years, has begun to see second generation backpackers come and work for a season, as their parents did before them.

These three points are for me, three areas where research needs to be done. If I go right back to the beginning of this thesis, the original aim of the Grand Tour was to 'prepare young gentlemen for diplomatic careers' (Hibbert, 1987). Although the reasons for Gap Years have changed, I think it is imperative that we realise that the experiences young budget travellers have today will prepare these young people for their futures. Travelling, and the working and volunteering experiences they have along the way, will affect their future career choices, their future living arrangements, their future political, cultural and economic views and affiliations. Considering why these young people travel is important, but I think more importantly, we need to start considering the effects that these young people's experiences will have on future global networks.

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APPENDIX ONE: 'TRAVELLER'S WE'VE ALL MET'

Source: www.bootsnall.com/oddsnends/stereotypes.shtml (last accessed 20 Sept, 2005)

BootsnAll.com

The Ultimate Resource for the Independent Traveller

Travel Articles | Members Forum | Cheap Tickets | RTW Tickets | Insiders | Youth Hostels | Eurail | Search

Travellers We've All Met-Part I

Typical
Traveller Part 2

Typical
Traveller Part 3

**Back to
Odds'n'Ends**

This section was devised while kicking back with a few other travellers. Present at this "meeting" were an Aussie, an American, an Englishwoman, a Japanese fellow and an Argentinian woman. We found that the harshest comments came from those talking about their own countries, i.e. the American ripping on his own.

The Yank (USA)

You can usually hear this traveller before you see them. They are often talking about themselves or comparing where they are to "home", VERY LOUDLY. Often seen wearing Nike shoes, a baseball cap and name brand clothes. You will also hear quotes from "Seinfeld", "The Simpsons" and about which character from "Friends" they'd like to be/shag.

The Yank will often try to take control of the group that he/she is in, and if they don't get their way, can be heard complaining about how nothing is quite as big/quick/good as at home. Eats at McDonalds no matter what country he or she is in.

The Pom (Prisoner of Mother England)

Usually found in a pub, the male Pom is often working on last night's hangover. If he is not watching football (soccer), he's talking about it. When not in a pub, a Pom can easily be spotted by the pasty white or lobster red colour of their skin which is exposed at the slightest hint of sunshine. At this time you will also see the obligatory tattoo of the Union Jack, bulldog, or English Rose.

Popular spots for the Pom include Ibiza and Mallorca for the beach and club-life or a 6 month tour of India and Thailand sampling the local hemp products.

The German

Smartly dressed, well kept and wearing small glasses, the German traveller is usually quiet and reserved. They often speak more than two languages and their English is excellent.

At resorts, they are the first ones out to put their towels by the pool to ensure a good spot. This really infuriates the Pom since he does not usually get to bed until 7am and the towels are already out there. The German male by the pool will always wear Speedos, commonly referred to as "shark shockers" or "meat safes".

Travellers We've All Met-Part II

The Aussie

Without fail, this traveller has been or is on the way to spending two years in the UK. Walking down the street in the Earl's Court or Shephard's Bush areas of London, you'll rarely hear an English accent. They live in 2 bedroom flats with 15 other Aussies, Kiwi's and South Africans and if you go to a pub in London, chances are extremely high that you will be served by someone from the Land Down Under.

Having said this, however, you will meet an Aussie almost anywhere in the world; whether it be on a beach in Thailand or piled into a combi in Eastern Europe. Aussies are very proud of their nation's sporting prowess, notably in games introduced by the English (Rugby, Cricket). If you wish to antagonise an Aussie, mention two words...Yahoo Serious.

The Japanese

Tending to hang around in groups, Japanese travellers follow each other around like sheep. They will usually have some piece of hi-tech gadgetry on them. Although fairly quiet and very polite, they are known for being messy cooks and tend not to clean up after themselves in communal hostel kitchens. The female Japanese traveller is characterised by her Spice Girl shoes, brand name clothes and a fair amount of make-up. Their faces are lost in the guide book and they giggle a lot.

The Israeli

Straight out of military service, the Israeli traveller is trim and taut with a short back and sides. They tend to hang out in groups speaking Hebrew and yet are very sensitive to being from Israel. They are hyperactive travellers, preferring vodka to beer and get most of their travel wardrobe from their Army days. They will spend a long time away from their homeland and are experienced and crafty hagglers.

send us your comments

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Kiwi's and Canadians

These travellers get lumped together simply because they will usually have a flag sewn onto their packs so they will not be confused with the stereotypes generated by their neighbours, the Aussie and the Yank. Canadians also differentiate themselves by saying "please" and "thank you" and getting very annoyed when asked what part of the States they are from. Canadians can usually be counted on to hold their booze and are always willing to try the local brew.

The Independent Gigolo

He is travelling the world collecting "flags". He's shagged more than 20 women from different countries and is very keen to tell you all about it. "I thought all Polish woman ate potatoes and had mustaches, but they walk a lot and have really hard butts" was an actual quote from one such IG. They will travel alone and for long periods and think they are very cool for doing so.

The Spiritual Guru

On a mission to find a higher being. Usually has some exotic herbs on their person. Often spend a lot of time in India, playing guitar and carrying their hammock. If you meet a spiritual guru on the way back from their travels, they will let you know that they have all the answers.

The Contiki Traveller

This traveller has been drunk in many different countries, hanging out with the same group for several weeks at a time, incestuously swapping partners. The only time they will interact with the local people is when they buy something. Their pictures tend to be of a large group of people standing in front of a tourist attraction or a bar. They promise to keep in touch with each other and some even organise reunions.

The Loud Mouth Know-It-All

Have been to 31 countries in 12 days. They know all the best sites to see and rely heavily on their guide book to take them there. They are eager to tell you how they "did" France by spending a day in Paris and will have pictures of the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, the Louvre, Notre Dame and the Catacombes to prove it.

APPENDIX TWO: MEDIA IMAGES

REPORT SHOWS HOW STUDENTS FAIL TO LEARN ABOUT DIFFERENT CULTURES

Official: gap year travel is just one long holiday

By Mark Prigg

IT IS THE classic student claim — if you take a year off, you'll travel and learn about different and exciting cultures.

However, a new report suggests most gap-year travellers simply mix with their own kind and often fail to learn anything at all about the culture they are supposedly immersed in.

Gap years have become massively popular in recent years, with around 200,000 British teenagers heading off around the world annually.

The rise is due in part to the "Prince William effect", as thousands follow the royal lead and head for South America, according to the report's author, Kate Simpson of Newcastle University.

She interviewed hundreds of gap-year students for the study. "Most people treat these just as

'They mix with their own kind and shy from

Daily Mail, Saturday,

Topless models, nightclubs and a visit to a brewery … so much for Prince Harry's 'mind improving' gap year!

Smooching: Model Lauren Pope

Above:
Prigg, Mark (2003), 'Official: gap year travel is just one long holiday', *The Evening Standard*, 5 September, 15.

Left:
Kay, Richard (2004), 'Topless models, nightclubs and a visit to a brewery … so much for Prince Harry's 'mind improving' gap year!', *The Daily Mail*, 7 February, 18-19.

Right:
Curtis, Polly (2004), 'Use your gap year wisely', *The Guardian*, 27 July, 8.

Use your gap year wisely, students told

Below:
Manzoor, Sarfraz (2004), 'Work in a gap year? Give me a break', *The Guardian G2*, 11 August, 5.

Appendix Three: Getting to Whistler… and back again: An autobiographical account of how I came to this point.

At the beginning of 1997 I was working as a Personal Assistant for a small international company in central London. I provided secretarial and administration support for the Sales and Marketing Director and 15 sales staff. I had been working for the company in various roles for just over 3 years and, for want of a better phrase, was 'burnt out'. The problem was that I had no idea how to 'get out'.

May 1997 saw my first trip back to Canada since my parents had split up in 1982 and my mother, sister and I had moved back to the UK from Northern Alberta. This trip gave me the motivation to begin moving forward. I decided to take up a part time job in order to save money and by the summer of 1997 was working 7 days and at least 2 nights a week! Besides my full time office job, I was working 2 or 3 nights a week at a local restaurant and in the canteen on the weekends at 'The Secret Nuclear Bunker'.

By September 1997 and at the age of 26, I had moved to Canada. My father lived on Salt Spring Island, one of the Gulf Islands situated between Vancouver and Vancouver Island and I was able to use his house as my base. I had originally though of going to Banff or Jasper to look for a job – I had decided I wanted to do a ski season – however, Whistler was closer (by a few hundred miles). I clearly remember my first interview. I turned up in a black trouser suit, blouse and two inch heels and sat across from my interviewer who was dressed in jeans and a t-shirt. I had been extremely confident about my chances of employment; after all I was a graduate with just about seven years of work experience, how could I not be employable? It was only when I arrived and saw so many other people in exactly the same position that I realised how difficult this process was going to be. In fact, what gave me more of a shock was that the people I saw being interviewed in jeans and casual attire were being treated exactly the same as I was – and I'd done the whole 'London business attire' thing.

I had to return to Whistler for two more interviews – the round trip cost me at least CDN$150 each time as I had to pay for ferries to the Gulf Islands, petrol for the truck I was driving and accommodation in Whistler. The third interview ended up being a 15 minute 'chat' with my future supervisor and I remember leaving Whistler in a daze.

I was lucky; I got a job and a place to live and I had saved enough money to not worry too much about when the first paycheque was coming in. I moved to Whistler on October 21st 1997 and started my job almost immediately. I had a job share – in the mornings I sold Lift Tickets and in the afternoons I worked in Employee Services giving out staff uniforms. Neither job was particularly challenging, as long as my till balanced in the morning and as long as I recorded what uniform I gave to whom, not much could go wrong. I had 2 ½ days off a week, I learned to ski (badly) and had a great social life.

However, by March 1998 I was bored and wanted a position that would allow me to use my brain! I applied for, and was offered a job with the Employee Experience (EE), or Human Resources department. In this role I had to deal with recruiting questions, employee relations questions, deal with telephone enquiries and generally man a busy front desk. In August 1998, I was promoted to Supervisor and stayed in that position until I left in July 2000.

As Supervisor, I did many different things. Besides overseeing the front desk, I edited the Employee Handbook (2 years running), I ran the staff social club, Club Shred, I often edited The Messenger, I worked on budgets, did research into salary levels and regularly dealt with staff disciplinary matters.   On top of all of my own responsibilities, I was part of the division that planned how it was going to recruit staff, how to train them, how they entertain them and how to retain them. I worked with people everyday who saw what a hard time some of these seasonal workers had, but I was also in the department that planned every party (of which we averaged one every six to eight weeks) and witnessed how much fun being in Whistler could be. I saw how often staff left, how much time and trouble it was to continually recruit new staff and more importantly, I talked daily to the young people who came to work and play in Whistler.

Since leaving Lampeter in 1993, I had always wanted to return to academia but never quite achieved it. I have to thank a young lady named Nicole Hayes (1999) for instigating my return to academia. Nicole was doing her Master's in Anthropology at McMaster's University in Ontario and had written to Whistler/Blackcomb about the possibility of doing her research with us. She gained permission and over the summer of 1999, she worked in EE delivering The Messenger around the two mountains and interviewed various people, including myself. This experience made me realise how much I wanted to go back to university and so I applied and was accepted by UCL for the Department of Geography's MSc in Modernity, Space and

Place. My original application included plans to do my Master's research on Whistler. In actual fact, my Master's dissertation ended up being about crime fiction, specifically that written by women with female protagonists.

I decided to keep going and applied for a PhD. My proposal outlined a project that looked at young budget travellers and my intention of doing fieldwork in Whistler. I was lucky enough to receive funding from the ESRC and armed with a literature review and an idea of methodology, I headed back to Whistler in October 2002 to conduct my five months of field research. Almost two years further on and I have come to some sort of conclusion; I have read the literature, done the fieldwork, analysed the data and produced a piece of work. However, my fascination with young budget traveller – and with Whistler – is far from over.

APPENDIX FOUR: IDENTITY CRISIS?

Just looking at some stuff on migration/identity (Ghosh and Wang, 2003) and thinking about the AAG in Philadelphia. We (Anna and I) were standing in line to get breakfast at the café across the road from the hotel and Leo and Thea were behind us and there was some samples of cake to try and I made a comment about how great it was and Kath sarcastically asked how long I'd been in the country (all of two days) and how had I managed to get that accent already. There were a few times I almost felt the need to say I was Canadian or half Canadian or something. I resisted every time and I am still unsure as to whether this was the right thing to do. Quite contradictory really. I remember thinking at the time that it was very unusual for me to want to tell people I was at least part Canadian.

Thinking about exploring further aspects of transnationalism. Could I do a similar thing by getting people I know who are dual citizens or who have taken up residency in another country to explain some of their feelings, etc about their experiences? What would I get out of it? Could I include my own experiences?

Figure 8: Extract from Research Diary, April 2004

SERVICE SNAPSHOT

Week of Jan 6th-Jan 12th	This Week	Last Week	YTD	Last Year End Avg
Mountain Operations	7.9	7.8	6.8	8.0
Food & Beverage	7.9	8.1	8.0	7.6
Rentals	6.5	7.7	7.2	7.8
Staff Friendliness	8.4	8.3	8.3	8.1
Overall Experience	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.3

GUESTS ☑ COMMENTS

◆"A good morning or nod from the Liftees in the morning helps us Customers relax and enjoy! To all, thanks!"

◆"Wonderful, every step of the way. Most courteous and friendly ski resort!"

◆"All Staff appeared genuinely happy to be here. Interaction with each other was great and Guests were happy too. Thankyou"

◆"Could this place be another planet's heaven?"

And of course, this week's gem:

◆"Too many people in my way. Perhaps you could send out Patrol to clear a path for me".

Our Quality Assurance Department conducts on-hill surveys every day in order to gage Guest satisfaction in all areas of the Whistler Blackcomb product. Weekly reports let us know how we are doing. Our Guests assign a value to every Employee they meet, in one way or another. Take a moment each day, to think about your contribution to the Guest experience. Even if you may not be serving the Guest directly, whether you are making snow or a hamburger, each Staff participation greatly influences the Guests' perception of the Whistler Blackcomb experience.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

My name is Tara Duncan and I am studying for my PhD in Human Geography. I worked for Whistler Blackcomb back in 1997 where I was later promoted to Employee Experience Supervisor. I am back in Whistler researching how travel and work experiences influence perceptions of self-identity in people who have taken a year (or more) out from college, university or their work.

My thesis title is "Working Tourists: Identity Formation in Leisure Space". I am researching where young people have traveled, how they are enjoying their time away and how they feel these experiences will help them in the future.

I am interviewing residents of Whistler about their time here and am looking for volunteers to help me in my research. As a result of this research, tourism employers and policy makers might better understand the expectations and needs of working travelers. Tourism is a huge industry, but I found that there was very little information about younger people who traveled and worked their way around the world and so was inspired to research this for my PhD. I decided to come back to Whistler as I knew that it was a resort that attracted the young, dynamic people typical to world travel.

If you have an hour to spare and would be willing to share some of your traveling tales, please contact me at email: tara.duncan@yahoo.com or at 604-905-4439.

I also wanted a good excuse to get in one last ski season!

STAFF SALE

SHOWCASE

CAN-SKI

FRIDAY, JANUARY 17th

5-9PM

FREE Burton Junkyard Snowskate with the purchase of any 2003 Burton Snowboard.

FREE Fresh Tracks tickets to the first 20 purchases over $100.

Don't miss out on some awesome deals.

Please see stores for more details on product listings for sale items.

Don't forget your Staff Pass!

APPENDIX SIX: THE LEAFLET HANDED OUT AT BUNAC MEETINGS

Can you help me?

? Are you thinking of working in a ski resort while you are in Canada?

? Would you be willing to take part in a study looking at young people who take a year out?

If you are interested in taking part in this research, please contact me at t.duncan@ucl.ac.uk, **or** on 07718 745080 **or** return the section on the back of this leaflet to:

Tara Duncan,
Department of Geography,
University College London,
26 Bedford Way, London,
WC1H 0AP.

Name ....
Email ....
When are you planning to be away?
....
Where are you planning to go?
....

Thank you for your help

Tara Duncan
Department of Geography
University College London
26 Bedford Way, London,
WC1H 0AP.

Tara Duncan

PhD Researcher
UCL

'Working Tourists: Identity Formation in a Leisure Space'

Contact:

t.duncan@ucl.ac.uk

Mobile: 07718 745080

What is my research about?

I am trying to find out if and how travel and work experiences influence perceptions of self-identity in people who have taken a year out.

Over the next year, I am aiming to speak to between 50 and 100 people about their travelling and work experiences.

I will be asking them where they have travelled and worked, where they plan to go next and how they feel their experiences have affected them.

Where am I doing this?

I will be based in Whistler, British Columbia, Canada from late October 2002 through to March 2003.

Why do you need me?

One of the things I am hoping to do is to talk to a small number of people before they go travelling, whilst they are away and then when they return to the UK.

I am hoping you will be willing to be one of these people.

What's in it for me?

You will be part of a study that aims to ensure that tourism employers and policy makers are informed about young travellers needs and expectations whilst they are away.

If you are interested, you will be given a copy of the research.

If you would like to find out more about this research, if you want to know more about what will be involved in the interviews, or if you know of someone else who would be willing to talk to me, please contact me (details overleaf).

Thank you!

APPENDIX SEVEN: MY INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

Name	Date of I/V	Where I/V held	Nationality
Lisa	Nov 21, 2002	Cinnamon Bear	British
Rachel	Dec 5, 2002	EE Cabin	Canadian
Byron	Dec 9, 2002	Admin Building	Canadian
Robert	Jan 17, 2003	Vancouver	British
Naomi	Jan 18, 2003	Sushi Village	Australian
Amanda	Jan 21, 2003	Dusty's	Australian
Colin	Jan 21, 2003	Dusty's	Australian
Tony	Jan 22, 2003	Dusty's	Australian
Neil	Jan 22, 2003	Cinnamon Bear	British
Emma	Jan 24, 2003	Cinnamon Bear	Australian
Grace	Jan 24, 2003	Cinnamon Bear	New Zealander
Nina	Jan 24, 2003	Cinnamon Bear	Australian
Alison	Jan 24, 2003	Cinnamon Bear	Australian
Helen	March 13, 2003	18 Below	British
David	March 13, 2003	Moguls	Canadian
Melanie	March 13, 2003	EE Cabin	Canadian
Laura	March 13, 2003	EE Cabin	Canadian
Michelle	March 14, 2003	Sushi Village	Canadian
Eric	March 15, 2003	Cinnamon Bear	
Cathy	March 15, 2003	Sushi Village	Canadian
Alexandra	March 17, 2003	The Creek	Canadian
Ellie	March 17, 2003	Cedar Grove Lane	Canadian
Andrew	March 17, 2003	Cedar Grove Lane	Canadian
Michael	March 17, 2003	EE Cabin	Canadian
Eva	March 19, 2003	Sushi Village	Australian
Sonia	March 20, 2003	Cinnamon Bear	Canadian
Peter	March 20, 2003	Cinnamon Bear	Canadian
Gabby	March 26, 2003	Cinnamon Bear	Australian
Sasha	March 28, 2003	Cedar Grove Lane	Australian
Julie	March 29, 2003	Wild Wood	Canadian
Elaine	March 29, 2003	Cinnamon Bear	Australian
Susan	March 29, 2003	Sushi Village	Australian
Veronica	Oct 29, 2003	Her flat	British
Robert	Jan 28, 2004	Café Nero, Covent Garden	British
William	Emails etc	BUNAC	British
Yvonne	Conversations etc		Canadian
Diane	Email		Australian
Susan	Email		Australian
Paul	Conversations		British
Hannah	In research diary		Canadian
Corinne	In research diary		Canadian
Anna	In research diary		Swedish
Leo	In research diary		British
Thea	In research diary		British
Jane	In research diary		Canadian
Bill	In research diary		Canadian
Nicole	In research diary		British
Dean	In research diary		Australian

APPENDIX EIGHT: INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

a) General Interview Schedule

General Information/Background

1. When did you arrive? Are you travelling with someone else?
2. Why did you decide to go travelling?
3. What influenced your decision to come to Canada? And Whistler in particular?
4. How long do you intend to stay? Could this change? Are your plans flexible?
5. (How have you financed your trip?)
6. How much of your trip have you already planned? Have you booked airline tickets, accommodation?
7. What do you find different about Whistler/Canada?
8. (Do you miss anything particularly from home?)
9. What do your family and friends in the UK think of you being here?
10. How did you find out about Whistler? What sources of information did you use?
11. What had you heard about it before you arrived?
12. How does what you read/heard/seen about Whistler before you got here compare with the real thing? Did you expect anything different?

Work

1. Where are you working this winter? Are you enjoying it? Why did you choose that job? Did you apply for anything else? Have you done this type of job before?
2. Were you looking for something specific?
3. How long did it take you to find a job?
4. How did you feel when you were waiting to hear about your job?
5. Were there lots of you in the same boat?
6. When did you start training for work?
7. What did you think of the hiring process? Do you think it could be improved?
8. What did you think of the interviews? What do you think they were looking for?
9. Is this your only job? Will you be looking for or taking on another job?
10. Do you think the company try and make work fun? Do you think they try and blur the boundary between work and play? Do they succeed?
11. Do you feel you're taking on a role when you go to work?

Whistler

1. What do you think of it so far? Are you enjoying it?
2. Have you explored the area much?   Have you had a chance to? Do you plan to?
3. Do you ski or snowboard? How much experience have you got? Did this affect your decision to come to Whistler?
4. (What do you think of the social life in Whistler? Have you been out a lot?)
5. What do you think of the community in Whistler? Do you think there is a community? Did you expect to get more involved with the local community?
6. Do you consider the young people working and living in Whistler to be a community?
7. How do you think Whistler affects people who live here?
8. What is the most difficult thing about moving to Whistler? What was the most difficult thing for you?

Friends

1. What sort of people have you met?
2. Have you got a specific group of friends? Or numerous groups?
3. Who are you living with? How did this come about? What are they like?
4. Do you identify with other people who have come here?

After Whistler/Self

1. What are your plans after Whistler?
2. Have you done any other travelling?
3. Do you think you'll be able to use any of your experiences when you get home? And if so, how?
4. What do you want to take away with you from these experiences?
5. What are you planning to do when you get home? (have you got a job lined up? Back to university? Going to look for a job?)
6. Do you think your experiences here will influence/affect your future? How?
7. Have you learnt any new work skills that you feel you can take away and use elsewhere?
8. Have your social skills changed? Improved? How?

Tourists

1. Have you encountered many other types of tourist? What do you think of them?
2. Do you see yourself as some type of tourist? Do you see yourself as different to other tourists? Why?
3. Do you think there is a particular type of person who comes to Whistler? Or who travels? And what do you think that is?
4. What do you think of the tourists who come here? Where do they seem to be from?

Self

1. Have you discovered anything about yourself because of your experiences so far?
2. Have you heard any 'horror' stories about people who have come here? Or any really good stories?
3. Does the work hard/play harder aspect of living here appeal to you?
4. What's the best thing about your trip so far? And the worst?

Overall

1. What are the things you have enjoyed about Canada?
2. What are you going to take away with you from Canada/Whistler?
3. What would you do differently if you could do it again?
4. Are you experiences here going to affect you when you go home?
5. Will you look for the same type of job as before you came away?

b) Interview Schedule (Rachel)

How long have you been in Whistler?
Why did you decide to come to Whistler?
Why did you choose W/B?

Do you hear lots of rumours around this time of year re: job and housing availability?
Where are most young people from? Has this changed since you've been here?
What about male/female ratio's?
What is the company looking for when hiring employees?
Why?
How do you go about finding this out?
Can you give me a brief run through of the hiring process?
What sort of training do they get?

What do you think is the most difficult part of moving to Whistler for the young people who move here?
What do you think motivates people to travel in the first place?
What do you think attracts young people to Whistler? To Canada? Why do they come here?
Do you think that an element of 'risk' attracts some people?
Do you think the young people here identify with each other? With the place? The work culture?
Do you think that there is sometimes an element of performance in the work (and play) that some people do?
How do you think Whistler, as a place, affects these young people?
Do you think there is a particular type of person that is attracted to Whistler?
Do you see the young people who come to work here as a type of tourist? How do they differ (besides working…) from other tourists who come to Whistler?
What do you think young people take away from Whistler?
Do you think Whistler is the start of many people's travels or the end, somewhere in the middle?
How large a role does the environment (and concern for it) play in attracting people to Whistler?
Do you think Whistler becomes somewhat ingrained into people? Do people who come here integrate Whistler into their lives over the longer term?
Is Whistler as cyclical as it seems (people etc?)

Do you think Whistler/Blackcomb provides young people with good work practices?/company culture?

What is the company philosophy concerning work/life balance?

Do you think there is a blurring between work and play? Why? How?

Do you think the type of young person who comes to Whistler has changes since you have been here? How and why?

Have you got any stats from hiring fairs that you would let me use in my research?

What about stats from EOS's – can I use any of those? And use ones from other resorts?

Do you think most young people who come here enjoy themselves? Do you think this is measurable in any way (EOS)?

Do you think Whistler has a community? Who does it mainly consist of? How does it survive around the yearly influx of new people?

Do you think the young people who come here form a sort of transnational community while they are here? If yes, can you give me examples of this?

How do you think young people perceive Whistler? Do you think their perception changes during their time here?

Have you ever done any travelling/backpacking?

If so, how did it affect you? What did you take away from it?

Do you think Whistler is unique in term of the whole backpacker phenomenon?

Want to put an 'ad' in the Messenger looking for volunteers – is this okay?

Do you hear stories about how people have used their experiences here when they travel/go home?

c) Interview Schedule (Robert)

General/Background

1. Are you taking a year out?
2. What are you going to do when you get home?
3. When are you planning on going home?
4. What are your plans after the winter season?

Canada

5. Why did you decide to come to Canada?
6. When did you get to Canada?
7. Where did you go to first?
8. Why?
9. What did you think?
10. How did you find out about Whistler/Cypress? How did your perceptions compare to the real thing? Were they different? How?

Work Places

11. What was it about Whistler that made you decide not to stay there?
12. Have you heard about anyone else doing the same?

Cypress (don't know much about it…)

13. Why did you decide on Cypress?
14. How did you get a job there? Was it easy? Were you looking for something specific?
15. What are you doing?
16. Have you enjoyed some of it? What parts?
17. Is there a sort of work culture at Cypress? Do they do anything for staff? Do the staff socialize together?

Living

18. How did you find somewhere to live? Who are you living with?
19. You're not having a great time there? Why?
20. Have you met people you will stay in contact with?
21. Have you made many friends whilst you've been here?
22. What do your friends/family think about you moving jobs?

Next?

23. Where are you planning to go next?

24. When I phoned yesterday, you were in the library –doing what? Were you on the internet looking at Red/Panarama?

Self

25. What are you going to take away with you from Vancouver?

26. How have your experiences affected you so far?

27. Have you learnt anything about yourself so far?

28. What do you want to take away with you from Canada?

29. Do you think your travels have changed who you are?

30. Have you learned any new skills – both work and social?

31. Do you think there is a particular type of person who does this type of travelling and working? What do you think they are like?

32. What do you think most people want to get out of it?

33. How would you classify yourself? Are you a backpacker? A tourist?

34. What did you expect to get out of your travels? Are you getting this?

35. What have you enjoyed so far?

APPENDIX NINE: FAVOURITE COUNTRIES AND FAVOURITE NEXT DESTINATIONS (FROM LONELY PLANET, 2005)

Rank	Favourite Country
1	Australia
2	Italy
3	Thailand
4	New Zealand
5	France
6	Spain
7	United States
8	United Kingdom
9	India
10	Canada
11	Chile
12	Greece
13	Mexico
14	Brazil
15	Vietnam
16	Nepal
17	Japan
18	Indonesia
19	Turkey
20	Ireland

Rank	Next Destination
1	Australia
2	Chile
3	Brazil
4	New Zealand
5	India
6	Peru
7	Thailand
8	Italy
9	Japan
10	Vietnam
11	Argentina
12	Cuba
13	Egypt
14	United States
15	South Africa
16	Canada
17	Mexico
18	Nepal
19	Spain
20	France

(Source: Lonely Planet, 2005: 22, 24)