

Work, Leisure, and Flourishing:
An ethnographic study of voluntary sea
turtle conservation

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Summary

Volunteer tourism is a burgeoning industry, and is similarly expanding as a field of academic interest. However, much of the extant literature on this phenomenon is concerned with the motivations of volunteer tourists and their interactions with indigenous and local populations or, in the field of environmental conservationism, impacts upon local environments. There are few thick, qualitative studies of the environments created by the phenomenon within this literature, and even fewer which engage rigorously with sociological theory.

Drawing on ethnographic immersion in a small community of volunteer sea-turtle conservationists in Greece, this thesis explores the types of work volunteers perform within these environments, and frames these experiences in relation to broader sociological perspectives on work, employment, and leisure. The concept of flourishing is mobilised to understand the specific types of satisfaction which the participants exhibit and report during their time volunteering. This investigation combines fieldwork and qualitative interviews to develop an empirical understanding of the everyday life of volunteering and how the participants' experiences and accounts *contrast to* but are also *framed by* dominant discourses such as personal growth, employability, and instrumentalism found in advanced neo-liberal capitalism. The 'thickness' of the data, providing detailed insights into the lived experiences of volunteers through the immersive ethnographic method, allows for the social complexity of the volunteer experience to be studied. It proposes that whilst volunteer tourists employ discourses of employability and self-improvement when asked why they volunteer, the actual experiences of volunteering provide less tangible rewards, such as sensual interactions with the natural environment and human relationships reinforced by the proximity of the volunteers' living quarters and values.

This research both contributes to a growing literature on the phenomenon of volunteer tourism and adds empirical weight to an established debate concerning the relationship of Marxism to environmentalism. Using the concept of species-being in relation to the teleology of both Marxist and Aristotelian theory, it is argued that conservation work can allow individuals to flourish – in an environment in which work and leisure are more hybridised than oppositional – and for a protected species, the sea turtle, to achieve its *telos*.

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Introduction

‘Camping is the antidote to excessive civilisation’¹.

On various beaches throughout Greece, between the months of May and August, endangered Mediterranean loggerhead sea turtles nest. These nests in turn hatch between July and October. Tourism is burgeoning on these same beaches, posing various challenges to the turtles both on land and at sea – including noise, light, and physical pollution alongside the placement of umbrellas and sun loungers which can respectively pierce nests and obstruct or entrap nesting turtles. Foxes and stray dogs present a further threat to the turtles due to their appetite for turtle eggs and hatchlings. Fishing also poses problems, with turtles occasionally being caught in nets, injured by fishing hooks, drowned after being knocked unconscious by illegal dynamite fishing, and in a few cases being wounded or killed intentionally by fishermen who fear that the turtles endanger their livelihood.

Since 1983, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) called ARCHELON² has worked to protect the nests of these loggerhead sea turtles from anthropogenic and canine threats, as well as collecting data about nesting densities and success rates around the Peloponnese, Crete and Zakynthos. ARCHELON also monitor individual adult turtles identified by visible tags and microchips, recording the frequency of nesting within and between seasons, growth rates, and other observable data such as injuries and parasites. Furthermore, throughout the country the organisation engages in various public awareness programmes. These are aimed at educating permanent residents, tourists holidaying around nesting areas, school children, and scout groups about the ecological importance of the species and the threats currently facing the turtles. ARCHELON also run a rescue centre in Athens all year round to treat and, where possible, rehabilitate injured turtles.

¹ My father’s response to my telling him I’d spent 4 and a half months living in a tent in Greece.

² ARCHELON is capitalised throughout this thesis at the request of the organisation.

This thesis is about a fluid group of volunteer environmentalists who spend their time and money engaging in an experience in which work and leisure are inextricable, camping in a field behind a beach in Greece and working to protect the endangered Mediterranean loggerhead sea turtles. Within this site, various elements found in contemporary western capitalist societies are inverted, and, it is argued, human needs of autonomy, self-worth and enjoyment are fulfilled. This volunteer tourist community is explored as somewhere in which participants can find happiness and fulfilment, and where people can flourish, living, albeit temporarily, the 'good life'.

To understand the increasing popularity of such experiences, it is argued that we need to adopt a relational approach, by interpreting their significance in the light of wider shifts in contemporary society. A comparison is drawn here between the confines of this environment and the socio-economic circumstances which characterise the world beyond this site. Based on critical social theory, emergent discourses from volunteer interviews, and the author's total immersion in this site, it is argued that work is manifested here in fundamentally different ways to that found in what volunteers refer to as the 'real world'. Consequently, it is argued that a hybrid form of 'work-as-leisure' is created in which individuals are able to flourish, acting to benefit both themselves and the natural environment. The temporary nature of this experience, however, and the fact that it is subject to re-appropriations for more instrumental purposes, means that this experience is less distinct from the 'real world' than it might initially appear.

Exploring flourishing in a volunteer tourist community

This conservation project which provided the site in which this research was conducted is coordinated by ARCHELON and staffed by international volunteers, *helonades* – 'turtle people' or 'turtlers' – as some locals call them. During the summer months, volunteers are responsible for monitoring and protecting the nests which are laid within a 9km stretch of beach, staffing information kiosks and contributing to public awareness about the turtles. The campsite which accommodates the volunteers is located in an olive grove,

which sits between a fairly major coastal road and a now disused railway line. There is very little touristic activity on the beach closest to the camp, as holidaymakers tend to prefer the stretch of beach adjacent to the nearest village a few kilometres away, or close to one of the seasonal beach bars. This research entailed a four and half month period of participant observation, in which I worked for a full season (the nesting and hatching periods of the Mediterranean loggerhead sea turtles) at this site, collecting field notes and observations and conducting interviews with these volunteers. It is also informed by my experience both as volunteer and researcher during five seasons previous to this research encounter, and one since³.

Through my repeated immersion at this site I have witnessed year after year the emergence of a small, somewhat isolated, fluid community, in which volunteers seemingly flourish. Whilst participating, volunteers form and in many cases maintain strong interpersonal bonds with their companions, and they enjoy plenty of free time to read, walk, sunbathe or swim, alone or in company. In these characteristics the project may bear a strong resemblance to more traditional forms of travel and tourism. However, this thesis argues that the touristic elements of this instance of volunteer tourism are secondary to the communitarian and work-centred features found there. It is these features which point to its sociological significance as a hybrid practice - one that addresses, and seeks to resolve, key current tensions in the world of work, leisure, and consumption. Before this argument can be explored empirically, various theoretical traditions are discussed from literatures pertaining to these topics to understand the various ways in which this site compares to how we live in western capitalist societies.

The relationship between work and leisure provides the starting point for this thesis, and the following two chapters entail the development of increasingly focussed research questions pertaining to this topic. Initially, the following questions are posed, with an aim towards their subsequent refinement and development for the current project:

³ In total I have spent around 44 weeks volunteering for ARCHELON since 2004.

- What are the impacts of this volunteer tourist experience upon participants?
- How can we understand the popularity of volunteer tourism in relation to broader social contexts?
- What can this research tell us about the contemporary relationship between work and leisure?

Thesis outline

Chapter 1 begins by offering an overview of relevant critical social theory to explore some of the elements of contemporary society which structure contemporary understandings and experiences of work and of leisure. As the primary ways in which people engage with one another and society more broadly, employment (remunerated work) and contemporary forms of commodity consumption are prominent topics in critical sociology. This chapter explores a sample of recent and classical analyses of work and consumption which are primarily concerned with the extent to which ideologies of both full employment and unfettered commodity consumption in contemporary capitalism are responsible for undermining very real concerns for human well-being and happiness, as well as compromising the health of our planet. Marx's concepts of alienation and species-being are discussed in relation to the critique of work presented in this chapter. However, in light of the ecological implications of capitalism, Marx's productivism is also explored here, asking to what extent it is possible to employ a Marxist approach in this context.

Commentary on the politically and publicly accepted 'goods' of consumerism, growth and employment are innumerable within the sociological literature, and what follows is a critical discussion of these topics informed by Soper (2006; 2007; 2008), Gorz (2011 [1989]), Marcuse (1968), and Leiss (1978). These literatures are mobilised to argue that that when too much emphasis is placed on the integrative nature of both employment and consumption, we are in danger of forgetting other factors which integrate us as human beings and contribute to our sense of well-being or happiness, and our ability to flourish. Following theorists such as Sen (1999), Sayer (2011), Jackson (2009) and

Nussbaum (2001), and a distinctly Marxist logic, a version of flourishing based on the fulfilment of individual capabilities is presented here⁴.

Chapter 1 then proceeds to explore some methods through which people seek alternatives to some of the more problematic elements of contemporary life identified so far. These include proposals for work-time reduction or withdrawal from work (Gorz 1985; 2011 [1989]; 1999; Frayne 2011; Hayden 1999) and alternative forms of pleasure and pleasure-seeking (Frayne 2011; Soper 1990; 2007; 2008). I also discuss the idea of ‘needs’ here, arguing that in environments where one might disengage from what Leiss (1978) refers to as ‘high-intensity market settings’ and live in a simpler way, the confusion between what one needs and how one might satisfy these needs might be remedied. This is not just an academic concern, as I hope the ecological underpinnings of this thesis suggest: this is of practical importance in the interests of the ecosystem at large. Further elaboration on the concept of flourishing introduced above is offered at this point.

Proposals for restructuring work and rethinking our leisure practices offer some alternatives to the more ecologically and individually damaging elements of work and consumption discussed in Chapter 1, but empirical examples of these alternatives are few and far between within this body of literature, and where they can be found they are pursued by a small minority (Frayne 2011; 2015). It is clear that most people do not withdraw in the long term either from work or from large-scale consumerist practices. Rather than a wholesale

⁴ However, I must note at this early juncture that, despite the often critical nature of this literature, one cannot be wholly negative about the capitalist enterprise. Advances in technology, science and medicine which have resulted directly from this economic system are not to be ignored, and are responsible for increased longevity, improved health and quantifiably higher standards of living for millions of people. Beyond these achievements, more modest accomplishments have created an incredible world of leisure pursuits available to increasing numbers, from electronic gaming to deep-sea diving (and, of course, volunteer tourism). As I shortly propose, leisure and pleasure have long been philosophically regarded as much a part of the human *telos* as the ‘higher’ virtues of knowledge and honour. Nonetheless, the review of the critical theory presented in Chapter 1 argues that all of these advantages come at a price, and that they represent a problematic prominence of economically rational forms of ‘sense-making’ in these societies (Fevre 2000). To suggest that we should simply be satisfied that things are better than they were in the pre-capitalist era when life was ‘nasty, brutish and short’ (Hobbes 1994 [1651], p.89) is inadequate and ignoble when depression – both economic and human – is rife in the capitalist world, and ecological catastrophe appears imminent if alternative models for living are not seriously entertained.

rejection of work and/or contemporary forms of commodity consumption, individuals largely accept these 'ills' and seek instead to engage in more personally fulfilling activities in their leisure time. Temporary forms of escape from the constraints of the working week are sanctioned by and within these dominant structures, through the contractual allocation of holiday time. On holiday, the tourist is able to experience certain freedoms that are constrained in the labour market. Leisure and tourism, perhaps, are more fruitful avenues through which personal freedom and flourishing may be found.

In Chapter 2, then, the classical literature on tourism is introduced. Urry proposes that through recognising what is different about tourism, that which is enjoyed for its contrast to mundane everyday life, we are able to identify important aspects of this 'everyday' – using 'the fact of difference to interrogate the normal' (Urry and Larsen 2011, p.3). Given the contrast to work implicit in the idea of the holiday, this form of escape – which has become a common feature in capitalist societies and a major source of employment and gross domestic product (GDP) the world over – is explored in this chapter. Mass tourism, however, is not itself a particularly convincing alternative to the contemporary malaise, as both the apparent motivations for this form of tourism (to recuperate *from* and *for* work), and the industries which facilitate it may be argued to be inextricable from work itself. Furthermore, this thesis suggests that the idea of escape as antithesis to the world of work, in which work is left behind, does not capture the newer forms of increasingly popular hybrid practices such as volunteer tourism, in which the dividing line between leisure and work is blurred. As a result of this, the discussion progresses to explore empirical research on 'alternative tourism' (Wearing 2001), specifically looking at volunteer tourism as a branch of this.

Volunteer tourism is a relatively recent phenomenon which has been explored across a variety of disciplines, including geography, tourism, anthropology, sociology, organisation studies and psychology. These studies have variously labelled volunteers as altruistic (Rehberg 2005), instrumental (Simpson 2004), or hedonistic (Sin 2009). Whilst useful, there is a tendency for some of these studies to 'psychologise' the motivations of volunteers, divorcing them from

their social contexts and from sociological debates. Conversely, the focus of this thesis is to explore the specific milieu of a volunteer tourism encounter in relation to these forces and discourses. Other studies have explored the benefits of volunteering (Brown and Lehto 2005), and the impacts of the phenomena on 'host' populations (Theodossopoulos 2004), ecosystems, and conservation efforts (Brightsmith et al. 2008). Demographic factors have also been subject to academic research, with researchers attempting to understand 'who' volunteers in terms of age, sex, class, gender and ethnicity, and these are also briefly reviewed. However, there are few thick, qualitative studies of this environment in this literature, and this is a gap which this research hopes to address. In the final section the threads from the preceding pages are drawn together to generate questions about how volunteering may be understood as offering something which the other forms of tourism or leisure discussed cannot, and which contrasts significantly to the everyday lives of volunteers outside of this environment.

Chapter 3 outlines the research design for this project, explaining the methods by which the data presented in Chapters 4-6 were collected, including the practical, epistemological and ethical considerations of this process. The research employs qualitative methods, using participant observation in combination with semi-structured interviews conducted over a period of four and a half months. This research was conducted within a volunteer community which exists 'beyond' nation-based society, drawing its membership from a diverse geographical base in which we find a group united by common interests rather than kinship. Existing in a largely isolated but highly fluid community, these volunteers provide the empirical basis for this research.

The empirical analysis work begins in Chapter 4 by looking at how the volunteer tourists accounted for their decisions to participate in the project. Chapter 5 then explores what they did while they were there, and the forms of community and opportunities for flourishing which they found there are discussed in Chapter 6. Both work and consumption, inextricable from one another, are valued as the 'goods' of contemporary western societies. Within the community under study, however, forms of commodity consumption and work

are very different to those found in the 'real world'. Data are presented to illustrate how types of work are manifested in this environment which are both satisfying and 'make sense' to the participants. A consequence of this, I argue, is that alternative understandings of the 'good' are able to emerge in this environment. These contrast to the 'goods' celebrated in western capitalist societies which are discussed in Chapter 1, including unfettered economic growth which is founded upon and celebrates 'full' employment and excessive commodity consumption.

In Chapters 7 and 8, the empirical data presented in Chapters 4-6 are reconciled with the theoretical discussion in Chapters 1 and 2, as the refined research questions are addressed more explicitly. The forms of work performed on this site are re-examined using Marx's conceptualisations of 'alienated labour' (Marx 1993 [1939]) and species-being (Marx 1992 [1844]), and Gorz's ideas of autonomous activities and 'work-for-oneself' (Gorz 2011 [1989]). Volunteer tourism is presented both as a form of 'serious leisure' (Stebbins 1996) and a type of 'alternative hedonism' (Soper 2008), concepts which, respectively, help to elucidate the relationships between work, leisure and identity, and between altruism and instrumentalism which are manifested here. I suggest that the forms of flourishing experienced in this site are available because participants' engagement with environmental conservation in the form of volunteer tourism is, for many, a *part* of – rather than an escape or break from – their life plans: it is coherent with both their career trajectories and personal interests. However, the relationship between volunteering and career plans cannot be understood without considering the social class backgrounds of the volunteers, and the 'classed' discourses employed in their accounts.

Drawing on ideas of social class and responding to the association of the volunteer project with participants' career plans and trajectories, it is argued that volunteer tourism is recognised as a means of distinction by those with the forms of social capital in which such abstract goods as 'experience' and 'networking' are recognised and sought. Uniting the discussions of employability, employment and consumption throughout this thesis is the idea of economic rationality. This form of sense-making is manifested in volunteers'

traditionally instrumental accounts for their decisions to volunteer such as CV enhancement and networking, and is the type of sense-making which increasingly dominates 'Western' lives. However, it is also argued that the 'external' goods sought by volunteers, such as networks and 'skills', are of lesser importance to the volunteers' experiences than are the 'internal' goods that emerge in this environment.

Whilst volunteering, economic rationality appears to lose its monopoly, and volunteers interact with the other participants and with nature at large as ends in themselves. I argue that whilst on the project a new type of sense-making or rationality emerges – based not on money, but on environmental concern, communitarian behaviour and the sharing of values and concerns. However, this is a shift which may very well be short-lived, given that the participants quickly return to the 'real world'. Whilst the site provides a temporary and alternative 'bubble', its significance derives from its contrast to the usual contexts in which participants are immersed and which give it its distinctive appeal. Sociologically, analyzing the nature of the experience throws into relief the contours of the 'real world' that volunteers leave behind and to which they subsequently return.

This thesis is not, then, simply about volunteer tourism as a phenomenon. Indeed, the volunteer community discussed here might better be understood as providing the sample *for* rather than topic *of* study. This thesis ethnographically explores a potential site in which the new forms of sense-making required to overcome the 'demoralisation' of advanced, post-industrial capitalism might be found, and aims to establish an understanding of what volunteers find in this environment and, in turn, what this can tell us about what people *need* (and do *not* need) to flourish. I argue that this site is one in which participants may experience an alternative version of *ars vitae* – the art of living – necessary to achieve this. Importantly, I argue that attempts to understand the experiences and indeed the accounts mobilised by volunteers to explain their choice to volunteer are incomprehensible when considered in isolation from the broader social milieu from which volunteers originate and it is with this context that I begin.

1 Work, Consumption, and Human Flourishing

Stand in a busy street during working hours... empty your mind of your own ego, and let the personalities of the strangers about you take possession of you one after another... you will see anxiety, excessive concentration, dyspepsia, lack of interest in anything but the struggle, incapacity for play, unconsciousness of their fellow creatures (Russell, 1930 [1999], 12-13).

In contemporary western societies, it is work – remunerated employment – which dominates much of our time, and preoccupies our minds. It is with employment that this discussion begins, to lay the foundations for the remainder of this investigation. Is Russell correct? Are we so dissatisfied in our working lives, and, if so, what is it about employment which might cause the traits described above? What is it about contemporary forms of employment which might be considered to constrain us as individuals, and, in contrast, what do we *need* to flourish? The subsequent pages explore some sociological critiques of work, seeking answers to these questions and, later, alternatives to this predicament. However, attention is also given to the more positive elements of paid employment. A Marxist analysis of work is provided, at the outset, and the problematic elements of his work when considered from an environmentalist perspective are later highlighted.

1.1.1 Alienation and automation

Despite its prominence in contemporary lives, some theorists suggest that employment fails to offer significant opportunities for individual flourishing (Russell 1993 [1930]; Hayden 1999; Bowring 1999; Olin Wright 2009; Gorz 1985, 1999, 2011 [1989]). The early work of Marx provides a starting point for understanding how employment curtails individuals' abilities to flourish. Marx argues that the economic character of employment results in the alienation of the worker from their productive activity and from their essential or 'species being'. It is the ability of people to act *consciously* upon their surroundings and within their species beyond their subjective individuality that distinguishes

them from animals, according to Marx. It is in the working-up or objectification of the world around him

...that man really proves himself to be a *species-being*. Such production is his active species-life. Through it nature appears as *his* work and his reality. The object of labour is, therefore, the *objectification of the species-life of man*: for man reproduces himself not only intellectually, in his consciousness, but actively and actually, and he can therefore contemplate himself in a world that he has created (Marx 1992 [1844], p.329)⁵.

However, through the appropriation of labour individuals are alienated from this species being. Work ceases to be a means through which the world is objectified, but instead becomes a 'mere means to ... existence' (ibid, p.328). Labour cannot, in this alienated manifestation, allow individuals to either achieve or *experience* their being-of-a-species. They neither *are* nor *have* a species-being, as 'species-objectivity' is torn away through the 'tearing away the object of his production from man' (ibid). Capitalist production and the relations of property found in capitalism provide not a means to *be*, but a means to *have*, for Marx: 'all the physical and intellectual senses have been replaced by the simple estrangement of *all* these senses – the sense of *having*' (ibid, p.352)⁶.

⁵ Unless otherwise stated, all italics in quotations represent original emphases.

⁶ Importantly, Marx critiques Hegel's assumption that human essence is fundamentally cognitive, arguing that, for Hegel, 'the entire *history of alienation* and the entire *retraction* of this alienation is therefore nothing more than the *history of the production* of abstract, i.e. absolute, thought, of logical, speculative thought. *Estrangement*, which thus forms the real interest of this alienation and its supersession, is the opposition of *in itself* and *for itself*, of *consciousness* and *self consciousness*, of object and subject, i.e. the opposition within thought itself of abstract thought and sensuous reality or real sensuousness' (Marx 1992 [1844], p.384). Hegel's perspective, summarised above by Marx, disregards the importance of the sensual elements of human activity, particularly in terms of how 'man' interacts with the physical world. Marx argues that the prominence of abstracted thought found in Hegel's phenomenology is incompatible with his own understanding of 'species-being', which is realised not just internally – through 'knowing' – but also externally – through *being* – being both in the world and a part of the world. 'A non-objective being is a *non-being*', argues Marx, 'unreal, non-sensuous, merely thought' (ibid, p.390). Moreover, the experience of species-being is mediated through the socio-historical context in which it is manifested, and the precise ways in which individuals are able to labour upon the world are also dynamic rather than fixed: 'those attributes which coalesce into "species-being" are historical products which emerge from the ability of individuals to labour upon the world in order to meet their needs. As new needs are satisfied and new ones develop, consciousness changes and alters its form' (Roberts 2002, p.243). Interactions with the world – both in work and leisure – are sensuous as well as mental and physical, which highlights an important and often overlooked element of humanism in Marx's work, to which I return in due course.

Estrangement originates in both the objectification entailed by private property and the relations of production, for Marx. Labour enacted within capitalist systems is always appropriated, which necessarily estranges the worker, in part due to the need for workers to 'sell' their labour:

Labour is *external* to the worker i.e., it does not belong to his essential being: that he therefore does not confirm himself in his work, but denies himself, feels miserable and not happy, does not develop free mental and physical energy, but mortifies his flesh and ruins his mind (Marx 1992 [1844], p.326)

Selling one's labour means that the worker/producer becomes a worker/consumer: 'the social individual who produces nothing she or he consumes and consumes nothing he or she produces; for whom the essential object of work is to earn enough to buy commodities produced and defined by the social machine as a whole' (Gorz 2011 [1989], p.22). Labour is external to the worker, and that upon which they work has only exchange value rather than use-value. That which individuals might personally use must, in turn, be purchased.

As well as the need to 'sell' one's labour, increasing mechanisation, automation and other forms of technological advances further separate 'the producer from the product to the point where she or he no longer knows the purpose of what she or he is doing' (Gorz 2011 [1989], p.87). Marx and Engels argued that 'the work of the proletarians has lost all individual character, and consequently, all charm for the workman. He becomes an appendage of the machine, and it is only the most simple, most monotonous, and most easily acquired knack, that is required of him' (1985 [1948], p.87). Sennett (1999) provides an empirical example of this commonly accepted inverse relationship between autonomy at work and worker satisfaction, in a discussion of a Boston bakery. He argues that the workers were alienated from the products they were creating as the processes of bread making were increasingly mechanised and automated. The employees eventually acted as machine operatives rather than bakers, never even touching the dough or the finished loaves. Furthermore, the machines operated by the bakers were complicated beyond the workers' comprehension or technical expertise, exacerbating their alienation. The 'bakers', Sennett

states, 'are vividly aware of the fact that they are performing simple, mindless tasks, doing less than they know how to do', with machines they were unable to understand or repair (1999, p.70). As Marx suggested, 'the more intelligent the work, the duller the worker and the more he becomes a slave of nature' (1992 [1844], p.325). This slavery *to*, rather than mastery *of*, nature characterised by a lack of opportunities to exercise either autonomy or skill, it is argued, is detrimental to the workers, resulting in apathy and indifference, limited identification with the job and increased dissatisfaction.

Olin Wright argues in a contemporary Marxist critique of capitalism that 'in capitalist economies most people for most of their work lives face job opportunities which offer meagre opportunities at best for creativity and challenge, and this obstructs human flourishing' (2009, p.32). Work, it is argued,

has become increasingly subdivided into petty operations that fail to sustain the interest or engage the capacities of humans with current levels of education... the modern trend of work by its "mindlessness" and "bureaucratization" is "alienating" ever larger sections of the working population (1998 [1974], p.3).

Concerns about the alienating consequences of the bureaucratisation of work are discussed in Ritzer's *The MacDonaldization of Society* (2011). This bureaucratisation entails not only the mechanisation and automation of an increasing number of industries, but also 'the process by which the principles of the fast-food restaurant', including the spread of calculability, efficiency, predictability and control, 'are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world' (ibid, p1). Working for someone else, performing roles dictated by abstract economic imperatives, in increasingly mechanised and automated environments all contribute to the manner in which work is understood by theorists like Gorz (2011 [1989]), Sennett (1999), and Marx (Marx 1992 [1844]) as alienating.

Research suggests that alienation and bureaucratisation extends in western 'post-industrial' societies beyond the automated working-class manufacturing roles, and are increasingly found in the expansive and expanding service industries: such as call centres (Taylor and Bain 1999); customer services

(Hochschild 2003); and innumerable other 'bullshit jobs' (Graeber 2013). Gorz argues that an important consequence of increased automation, as well as creating the fragmented forms of production employed today, is that 'work no longer involves the identification of the individual with an activity 'which determines him in his particular being ... To work is just to do this or that, here or there ... it hardly matters' (Gorz 1985, p.33). As a consequence, 'work is now only a source of social identity and personal achievement for the rapidly dwindling minority of "professionals"', and Gorz argues that as a consequence work is detrimental to the well-being of most employees and especially those of lower socio-economic classes (ibid).

However, the critique of work discussed in the preceding pages is sociologically contentious. Even Braverman (despite subsequently criticising the many negative consequences for the majority of workers of the systematically deskilled and frequently degrading forms of work) recognises in his introduction to the seminal *Labour and Monopoly Capital* that, in certain domains, 'modern work' increasingly requires extensive training and education, as well as 'the greater exercise of intelligence and mental effort in general' (1998 [1974], p.3). Indeed, Stebbins argues that certain jobs are so very fulfilling and enjoyable that, if they were *not* remunerated, would themselves be regarded as leisure. He refers to these types of jobs as 'devotee occupations'. Jobs can offer both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Rose 2003), and it is primarily on the basis of the persistent experience of the former types of rewards that 'occupational devotees' might emerge (Stebbins 2004). Devotee occupations are ones in which certain rewards might be found: 'personal enrichment'; 'self-actualization'; 'self-expression' – often found in 'psychological flow'; pride; 'self-gratification'; 'social attraction' – which is more than the reward of liking one's colleagues, but 'refers to the pleasant character of the social relations engaged in as an essential part of the core activity'; 'group accomplishment'; and 'contribution to the maintenance and development of the group' (ibid, p76-78). However, even here, mismatches between aptitude, interests, and training of employees threaten the 'devotee' potential of these occupations:

It is a cruel irony of every human economic system that many people wind up in places within it that fail to match their tastes, talents and qualifications. This mismatch can be one of potential devotees working below their training and ability or working at this level but in a position that stifles fulfilment. And it happens, too, that people sometimes get mismatched in the opposite direction, by holding a job for which they are poorly qualified (ibid, p.121).

Moreover, these devotee occupations are comparatively rare – and work which may be highly fulfilling and satisfying may still be compromised, to greater or lesser extents, by bureaucratization, alienation, automation and the constant economic imperative associated with it – however much a job may satisfy certain intrinsic rewards, it is still a job, necessary for subsistence for all but the very small minority (Stebbins 2004, p.111).

Aside from these devotee occupations, empirical data suggest that work more generally serves existential ‘goods’ unrecognised by its critics, providing people with ‘a feeling of being tied into the larger society, of having something to do, of having a purpose in life’ (Morse and Weiss 1955, p.191). People need, it is argued, to have purpose in their life, and to contribute to the society of which they are part (Sayers 1998). Jahoda offered evidence that work performs various latent functions, providing time structures, a sense of collective purpose, social contacts, status and forms of activity, all of which actually contribute to the well-being of workers (1981). As aforementioned, satisfaction is related to autonomy at work, and employees who work in organisations in which they are able to exercise greater autonomy and experience higher levels of participation at an organisational level are more likely to have positive experiences of work (Gallie 2003; Lopes et al. 2014). A recent ethnographic study by Jenkins and Delbridge illustrates this, and found that,

[F]or the working-class women at VoiceTel, whose expectations of employment were grounded in their previous working experiences and histories which often failed to deliver a meaningful working life, the nature, content and management of work were highly significant in how they responded to the organization. The opportunity to undertake decent work and use their discretion and autonomy at work helped to sustain a positive sense of self (2014, p.884).

Their findings support the well-established conviction that autonomy in and identification with work are of great importance to increasing worker satisfaction and happiness, but also highlight the importance of relating satisfaction to *expectations*, and of identifying the various forms which 'job satisfaction' may take. A growing body of work examines the more positive experiences of workers. For example, a recent Work and Employment Relations Study found an overall increase in reported worker autonomy, influence, commitment, and job satisfaction (though it also noted a decline in workers' sense of job security, increase in zero hours contracts, and a decline in union membership in the private and manufacturing sectors) (van Wanrooy et al. 2011). This study measures both *extrinsic* (instrumental, material) aspects of employment such as promotion, pay or job security on the one hand, and, on the other, *intrinsic* (quality of work) aspects such as relations with managers, scope for initiative, and the nature of the work itself' (Rose 2003, p.506). The common conflation between extrinsic and intrinsic rewards elsewhere is responsible, in part, for the problematic nature of the concept of 'job satisfaction' within the literature (Brown et al. 2012). Norms and expectations concerning the extrinsic rewards encapsulated by the concept of job satisfaction may well mask the intrinsic characteristics of the work such as the degree of autonomy or creativity afforded to the employee. This can work both ways, so a relatively autonomous worker may regard themselves as *unsatisfied* with their job if they regard the job as not fitting their expectations, whilst those in a highly automated, repetitive and traditionally alienating role may report overall satisfaction, based on the job meeting their minimal expectations of the labour market (Rose 1988; Brown et al. 2012).

The importance of work is not only measureable in terms of the happiness of workers in particular environments, but also, apparently, in terms of the positive consequences of routine for employees. Sennett, for example, argues that although routine has the potential to demean, 'it can also protect; routine can decompose labour, but it can compose a life' (Sennett 1999, p.43). Bertrand Russell goes so far as to argue that employment is a necessary precondition for happiness, proposing that, without wage labour – something to fill the majority

of our waking hours with activities defined by someone else – we should become less capable of what he calls ‘zest’ in our leisure time. As both Sennett and Russell imply, it is the *excess* of routine which is problematic, dulling the mind and the senses of the labourer. Furthermore, Russell argues that the very ability ‘to fill leisure intelligently’ is one that few people possess (1993 [1930], p.160). This is not, however, a ‘natural’ state of humanity, but is a ‘condemnation of our civilization’ (Russell 1976, p.11). Characteristics such as the filling of time, and indeed other elements which are not directly resultant of the actual work performed – such the sense of well-being experienced as a consequence of holding a job, security and remuneration – are extrinsic, according to Stebbins (2004; Rose 2003, see also ; Rose 1988). They are a consequence of having a job rather than of the actual work performed.

So far, it has been recognised that paid employment serves certain social and individual functions, increasing overall productivity and providing purpose and meaning to individuals’ lives. However, it has also been argued that it simultaneously constrains and alienates many individuals. Can we identify forms of work which are *non*-alienating, in which individuals can flourish and find personal fulfilment? Is it *work* – in the sense of engaging in productive and useful activities with various intrinsic social and individual benefits – which is valued, or instead specifically employment – paid labour – with its associated extrinsic rewards of remuneration and social recognition? Shortly, alternatives to the ideal of full-employment – in which everyone who wants a job may be able to secure one (Beveridge 1945) – are discussed. Firstly, however, let us explore some forms of work which are less socially, politically or financially valued, but which might still, nonetheless, offer significant rewards.

1.2 Non-alienated work and ‘work-for-oneself’

Alienated and remunerated labour entails ‘not the satisfaction of a need but a mere *means* to satisfy needs outside itself’ (Marx 1992 [1844], p.326). As discussed above, forms of work which are alienating contribute neither to the direct survival of the worker because labour is abstracted – produced for another, and produced for remuneration rather than use – nor do they reinforce

the workers' species being. However, neither Gorz nor Marx denied either the integrative potential or the necessary character of work – though Bowring argues that Gorz particularly is often misread by theorists who assume that he did (1996). What Gorz proposed instead, Bowring argues, was a 'dual society'; 'divided between a sphere of heteronomy and a sphere of autonomy, with the former subordinated to the latter' (ibid, p.103). Gorz likens the sphere of heteronomy to Habermas's 'system', and defines it as 'the totality of specialised activities which individuals have to accomplish as functions co-ordinated from outside' (Gorz 2011 [1989], p.32). Within this sphere of activity, functions are achieved which are incomprehensible to the individuals who perform them. Heteronomy 'co-ordinates [individuals'] behaviour by referring beyond their subjective preferences, norms and motivations to the imperatives of the pre-established organisation' (Bowring 1996, p.103). Autonomy, on the other hand, refers to the sphere of activity within which individuals *self-regulate*, and which is socially rather than functionally integrated, and in which common goals are consensually sought rather than institutionally enforced or coerced. This dual society, however, remains inadequately realised because of the continued separation of the 'system' and the 'life-world' (Habermas 1989), with the latter subordinated to the needs of the former, and the subsequent regulative problems faced by 'the bureaucratic-industrial megamachine' (Gorz, 2011). Ultimately, drawing on a Weberian analysis, Gorz suggests that 'no rationality and no totalizing view or vision have been able to provide [this megamachine] with an overall meaning, cohesion and directing goal' (Gorz 2011 [1989], p.37; Weber 2003 [1905]).

However, even activities performed outside of paid work can take on an alienated character when treated as means, for Marx, because 'estranged labour'

tears from him his *species-life*, his true species-objectivity, and transforms his advantage over animals into the disadvantage that his inorganic body, nature, is taken from him ... estranged labour... makes man's species-life a means of his physical existence (Marx 1992 [1844], p.329).

For Marx, through work, 'man' might realise his essential self and his species-being. However, because labour is estranged or alienated in capitalism, this potential is often denied. 'Free' work, that which is non-alienated, on the other hand, can be liberating, allowing for 'self-realization, objectification of the subject, hence real freedom, whose action is, precisely, labour' (Marx 1993 [1939], p.611). Work, in this perspective, allows the worker to realise their species-being as simultaneously anchored in society and though being an individual in a world upon which they might make their mark – this being, Marx argues, precisely what distinguishes humankind from the animal kingdom. Gorz similarly argues that work is necessary not only for production of things, but also for the reproduction and realisation of the self, fulfilling 'the need the individual feels to appropriate the surrounding world, to impress his or her stamp upon it and, by the objective transformations he or she effects upon it, to acquire a sense of him- or herself as an autonomous subject possessing practical freedom' (Gorz 1994, p.55). He suggests that it is in the forms of autonomous activities and work-for-oneself that individuals might find greater fulfilment than they can in the alienated and alienating forms of work which characterise much of the contemporary labour market (Gorz 2011 [1989]; see also Bowring 1996).

Gorz describes 'work-for-oneself' as '*what we have to do to take possession of ourselves* and that arrangement of objects which, as both extension of ourselves and mirror of our bodily existence, forms our niche within the sensory world, our private sphere' (Gorz 2011 [1989], p.158, original emphasis). This private sphere, he argues, is not just our own homes, but the spaces we share with others, as long as we are able to contribute to the development of these spaces and in doing so to realise our own *species-being* (Marx 1993 [1939]). This follows a Marxist humanist logic: Gorz argues that the 'work-for-oneself' of care, cleanliness and nourishment lose their essentially human character when shaped around economic ends, becoming simply a means to survival and reproduction of the labour force. Autonomous activities, those 'which are themselves their own end' (Gorz 2011 [1989], p.166), such as arts and crafts for one's own use or for other non-commercial purposes, are on the other hand

avenues in which Gorz considers self-expression and individual flourishing as real possibilities. Again, however, these activities are suppressed and/or commodified by the economic imperatives of contemporary capitalism in which neither time nor, importantly, respect is afforded to activities without economic ends.

1.3 Marx and environmentalism

The Marxist perspective summarised above proposes that the alienated forms of labour found in capitalist employment restrict human flourishing. However, because through productive work humans can experience their 'species-being', work also contains the potential for human emancipation. Marxism is then optimistic about the progressive and civilising *potential* of production, but regards the barriers to the realisation of this potential as rooted in the relations of production – the social classes which emerge in and through capitalism. This section commences by discussing the productivism inherent in this argument in terms of an ecological critique of Marxism, before moving on to explore alternative readings of Marx which are more commensurable with environmental movement.

The productivism highlighted in Marx's confidence in the emancipatory potential of work has elicited criticisms from various 'green' scholars (Benton 1996; 1989; Soper 1996; Grundmann 1991; Clark 1999). Moreover, the historical materialism of Marx prioritises developing productive forces as the *primary* goal of and criteria for progress, which is also problematic here (Soper 1996). His teleology, in this reading, emphasises the benefits of anthropocentrism, instrumental approaches to nature, and technological advancement at any cost, as society develops towards a socialist utopia unfettered by natural, material or technological limits (ibid, p.83). We are inclined, argues Soper, to view this productivist tendency in Marxism 'as a heady piece of Enlightenment optimism very much at odds with ecological cautions about dwindling resources and the need for sustainable levels of consumption' (ibid, p.95). Moreover, as Benton notes, this 'red/green' rift has been exacerbated by the poor environmental track record of 'actually existing'

socialism (1989) – perhaps the most persuasive support for ecological critique of Marxism given Marx’s attribution of all of the problems of capitalism to the relations of production generated therein.

Marxism and ecology might therefore appear uneasy bedfellows – indeed, Clark argues that attempts to reconcile the two entails ‘the negation of key aspects of [Marx’s] philosophy of history, his theory of human nature, and his view of social transformation’ (1999, p.34), and Grundmann suggests that attempts to reconcile ecology within a Marxist framework often entail ‘wishful thinking’ (1991, p.203). However, Benton argues that, despite apparent tensions, ‘there is much in the corpus of Marxian historical materialism which is readily compatible with an ecological perspective’ (1989, p.63). Indeed, sociological thought more generally can be seen as not just relevant but fundamental to ecological analysis, because of the anthropogenic nature of the threat (Foster 1999, p.400). Marx and Engels were well aware of the anthropogenic nature of environmental depredation, and Engels particularly writes at some length about this in *Dialectics of Nature*, arguing that human impacts upon nature are a direct consequence of their ‘mastery’ of it:

Let us not ... flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human conquests over nature. For each such conquest takes its revenge on us. Each of them, it is true, has in its first place the consequences on which we counted, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel out the first (Engels 1940; cited in Parsons 1977, p.179-180).

Marx, too, expressed concerns about the impact of human production upon nature. This is most explicit in his discussion of soil degradation as a consequence of urbanisation and of the private ownership of land through which soil vitality is ‘exploited and squandered’ (Marx 1999 [1894], p.567). Greed here surpasses sustainable agriculture, and Marx makes a damning comparison to the manner in which the capitalist shortens ‘the extent of the labourer’s life, as a greedy farmer snatches increased produce from the soil by robbing it of its fertility’ (Marx 1990 [1867], p.264-264). Both Marx and Engels, then, argued that ‘the appropriation’ of natural resources, and the inequitable and, importantly, *unsustainable* nature of this appropriation were a

consequence of property relations (just as the barriers to human flourishing result from social class relations, of which property relations are part). Private property does not just have economic or social implications, argued Engels, but ‘wherever we turn, private property leads us into contradictions’, and entails the appropriation and monopolisation of the earth’s resources by the few – which he argues is ‘an immorality surpassed only by the immorality of self-alienation’ (2012 [1844], p.188)⁷.

Despite evidence of environmentalist predispositions in Marx and Engels’ works, the Marxist perspective on the limits which prohibit growth is that these are not ‘natural’ limits resulting from the finite stock of natural resources but direct consequences of the inherent contradictions of the capitalist system, which are economic and social in nature. Marx and Engels rejected Malthus’ argument that there were natural limits to production as conservative, contradicting the generally optimistic Marxist view of production as potentially emancipating (Benton 1989). Instead, they perceived these limits as self-imposed by the fundamental contradiction inherent in capitalism – the emergence of antagonistic social classes and the resultant fettering of the productive forces (Marx 1993 [1939]). Despite the productive power which capitalism unleashed, neither the goals of emancipating societies from poverty and suffering nor the full use and expression of human potential are realised within this system (Sayers 1998). The worker and the soil – primary sources of wealth – are robbed of the constituents required for their full potential to be realised, and their productivity is thus undermined (Marx 1990 [1867]).

1.3.1 Contradictions of capitalism

For Marx, capitalism creates its own barriers even as it overcomes ‘natural’ and ‘mental’ barriers (Marx 1993 [1939]). Productive forces are obstructed because

⁷ Elsewhere, Engels highlights the inextricability of ‘man’ from nature, arguing that ‘at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over foreign people, like someone standing outside nature – but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastering of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other beings of being able to know and correctly apply its laws’ (Engels, F., 1844, cited in Benton 1989, p.82).

the inequitable distribution of wealth results in *overproduction*, in the form of dormant, unrealised exchange value, whereby *production* fails to match *consumption*. Barriers to production stemming from traditional beliefs and minimal technology are, then, replaced with barriers resulting from the economic contradictions of the social relations of capitalism. Productive forces are, according to Marx, fettered by social relations, rather than by limits that are in any sense *natural*, and this fettering in turn restricts human freedom from, and control of, nature. The following passage from the *Grundrisse* notes that capitalism ostensibly served to overcome '*nature-idolatry*':

For the first time, nature becomes purely an object for humankind, purely a matter of utility; ceases to be recognized as a power for itself; and the theoretical discovery of its autonomous laws appears merely as a ruse so as to subjugate it under human needs, whether as an object of consumption or as a means of production (Marx 1993 [1939], p.410).

The issue of human 'control' of nature introduced in this passage is explored in more depth shortly, but of importance here is the point Marx is making about the inherently contradictory nature of capitalism. Capital revolutionises existing beliefs, traditions, relationships and needs, 'tearing down all the barriers which hem in the development of the forces of production, the expansion of needs, the all-sided development of production, and the exploitation and exchange of natural and mental forces' (ibid). However, Marx argues that this is in fact a ruse; capital cannot *actually* overcome these barriers, 'since every such barrier contradicts its character, its production moves in contradictions which are constantly overcome but just as constantly posited' (ibid).

O'Conner proposed that environmental degradation, which was present though under theorised in Marxism, indicates a second contradiction in capitalism, in which capital destroys its own means of reproduction (1996). This is prefigured in Marx's comments on the tendency for capitalism to over-exploit the earth, thus leading to what Foster calls a 'metabolic rift' in the ways in which, mediated through the labour process, individuals in capitalist societies interact with the earth (Marx 1990 [1867], Foster 1999). Foster suggests that, 'contrary to those who believe he wore an ecological blinder that prevented him from perceiving natural limits', Marx's application of the concept of metabolism to

the interactions between humans and nature allowed him to 'capture the material estrangement of human beings in capitalist society from the natural conditions of their existence' (Foster 1999, p.383)⁸. Marx prominently theorised the contradictory nature of capitalism, but thought that a 'rift' existed not between man and nature but between the forces and relations of production, in which we find barriers internal or latent within capitalism, rather than imposed from outside.

Marx's 'first contradiction of capitalism', then, refers to the 'contradictory social-relational structures of capitalist economies ... mediated through class struggles' (Benton 1989, p.74). O'Connor's 'second' contradiction of capitalism, suggests that the contradiction is instead between 'capitalist production relations and forces and the *conditions of production*', which includes elements which are not commodities though are treated in the same way – human labour, natural resources and the infrastructure of capital (1996, p.197). Whilst Marx and Engels were certainly highly prescient in commenting upon the environmental consequences of capitalism, they failed to recognise the root of these problems as existing parallel to or even divorced from the social class relations which originated within this system. O'Connor's second contradiction offers a kind of 'ecological Marxism', which is analogous to traditional Marxism in its recognition of the crisis ridden nature of capital – whereby its conditions are obstructive to its own reproduction – but departs from it in terms of the origins and consequences of this contradiction. The social movement required to overcome capitalism was, in Marx's view, a *class* movement, with social class originating *within* the system itself and the exploitation of the proletariat and underuse of productive forces to create a more equitable society being responsible for the barriers to productive growth. However the social and environmental barriers to production in the second contradiction originate

⁸ Urry also notes this rift, writing that 'the separation of nature from the society, a metabolic rift, was a form of alienation which, paradoxically, Marxist writing has subsequently tended to reproduce' (2011, p.50). One manifestation of man's (sic) mastery over nature which Marx didn't theorise, but is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, is tourism, entailing human 'movement over, under and across it' (ibid, p.51).

from *without*, and the agents for change are not united by social class, but instead comprise various new social movements (O'Connor 1996).

To return to Marx's use of 'metabolism', the forms of labour manifested in capitalism alienate individuals not only from their own nature and their *species-being* (as per alienation) but also from the rest of nature. Neither humankind nor nature is able, in this perspective, to achieve their potential in capitalist societies, because the dialectical relationship between capital and nature persists in erecting new barriers (Foster 2008). Foster suggests that, whilst useful, O'Connor's second contradiction is subject to the same green critique as Marx's initial contradiction – as both are driven by economic concerns (2002). Whether it is the relations of production – in the form of exploitation and class conflict – or it is, instead, the (natural) *conditions* of production that create barriers, these barriers are to sustainable and unfettered production, economic growth, and human emancipation from nature, rather than to natural flourishing.

1.3.2 Marx's Prometheanism

Marx's productivism and materialism are often accompanied, in green critiques, by the recognition of Marx as 'Promethean', based on various passages in which humans are represented by Marx as distinct from and antagonistic to nature, insofar as productive power is seen to facilitate the 'mastery' or 'domination' of nature. For Benton, the assumed transition from a period of nature dominating us to one of us dominating nature entailed in the historical shift from feudal to capitalist societies represents an ontological rejection of the possibility for 'symbiosis, peaceful co-existence, mutual indifference, or other imaginable metaphors for this relationship' (1989, p.75). The prominence of this antagonism is rooted in the assumed dualism between humans and nature prominent in the social sciences⁹. However, Foster argues that this reading of Marxism is erroneous, and he highlights passages within the *Grundrisse* which

⁹ Simmel, similarly, presented an antagonistic relationship between humans and nature, writing that 'man, unlike the animal, does not allow himself simply to be absorbed by the naturally given order of the world. Instead, he tears himself loose from it, places himself in opposition to it' (1968:28).

contradict the charge of 'Prometheanism' based on the idea of 'man' controlling nature. He write, 'such "human mastery" was of course not about the robbing of nature but the realization of a wealth of human needs and powers through human production, and not for a single generation, but for successive generations' (Foster 2008, p.98).

Benton takes an alternative view, and suggests that it is a consequence of the failure of Marxism to adequately explore *non-transformative* types of work, concentrating on 'productive' and 'transformative' labour instead, that this Promethean tendency arises. Whilst productive labour is transformative, and does entail mastery of or control over nature, *eco-regulatory* labour, under-theorised in the Marxist canon, is that which is not transformative *per se*, but requires that 'labour is applied primarily to optimizing the *conditions* for transformations, which are themselves organic processes, relatively impervious to intentional modification' (Benton 1989, p.67). This does not mean that eco-regulatory labour does not entail some degree of transformation, as Grundmann points out (1991), but that this transformation is facilitated through ensuring optimal conditions – as in agriculture for example – rather than transformations immediately affected by the worker – as in carpentry (Benton 1992). Eco-regulatory labour is concerned with allowing nature to itself achieve its *telos*, and as such is compatible with environmentalism. Nonetheless, Benton is critical of Marx's susceptibility to the 'spontaneous ideology' of progress predicated on controlling nature, which was common in the nineteenth-century. In an article in the New York Herald, for example, Marx celebrates the emancipation of Indian villagers from 'undignified, stagnatory, and vegetative life', in which, prior to British colonialism, industrialism and trade, traditions and practices in these societies 'subjugated man to external circumstances instead of elevating man the sovereign of circumstances' (Marx 1853). In passages like this, the primacy of humankind (or 'man', in the Marxist canon) is celebrated, as is the potential for productivity to emancipate humanity. Labour – the activity of work and the exercise of 'labour power', the capacity to work – is fundamental to this emancipation, though the commodification of labour is not.

Related to these debates, it is noted by various scholars that anthropogenic harm already inflicted upon the environment must be rectified, and often this requires technological processes aimed at harnessing rather than necessarily dominating nature, such as the use of renewable energies such as solar, wind and wave power. As Soper argues, 'we cannot leave nature to itself', and correcting the depredations of capitalism may well necessitate 'a highly rational, technically sophisticated intervention in ("mastering" of?) natural forces' (1996, p.92). In this regard, then, 'the "Promethean" project of "mastering" or "domesticating" nature is not necessarily incompatible with a concern for the environment' (Gorz 1980, p.21), and O'Neill, in a similar spirit, argues that 'to reduce greenhouse gases is to try to control nature, but it is not to dominate it' (1993, p.154). The conflation of domination and control is common in ecological critiques of Marxism, but O'Neill, Soper, and Gorz argue that the scientific necessity of *controlling* nature is both appropriate and imperative for the environmental movement.

This brief review of the tensions between Marxist theory and environmentalism suggests that, although inarguably productivist and occasionally somewhat Promethean, a careful reading of Marx highlights some useful ways in which Marxism can contribute to an environmentally inclined sociology. Moreover, it offers some important insights into understanding human nature and the relationship between humans and the 'rest' of nature. This relationship is recognised as exploitative and unsustainable, impacting negatively upon human and natural flourishing. If work manifested as alienated labour cannot offer us means to flourish, cannot allow us to be at one with ourselves or the world around us, what exists outside of this in which we might seek to fulfil and even to 'find' ourselves? Indeed, what does it even mean to be able to 'flourish'? This discussion moves now to consumption – inextricable from production and employment – and explores some academic perspectives on consumption, framed in relation to the concept of flourishing.

1.4 Employment and consumption

Commodity consumption is a prominent leisure activity in contemporary societies. However, is it one in which we might find more promising avenues for individual autonomy, self-identification and flourishing than we might where employment is concerned? Employment patterns are strongly related to consumption patterns, with increased employment leading to increased wealth and decreased leisure time – both of which lead to greater levels of commodity consumption and increased commodification of various roles such as domestic chores, childcare and health care (Fevre 2000; Hochschild 2012; Gorz 2011 [1989]). As with employment, sociological perspectives on consumption vary, and the following discussion focuses on the individual consequences of contemporary forms of commodity consumption, framed as an alternative manner in which individuals might be able to ‘flourish’.

Flourishing can be understood as the realisation of individual capabilities (Sen 1999; Sayer 2011; Jackson 2009; Nussbaum 2001). Prescriptions for identifying these ‘capabilities’ are varied, and Jackson argues that access to them depends upon ‘educational and democratic entitlements’, ‘trust, security and a sense of community’, ‘relationships, meaningful employment and the ability to participate in the life of society’ (Jackson 2009). Jackson suggests that ‘people suffer mentally and physically when these things are absent’, but that these ‘goods’ are rarely directly sought in societies oriented towards economic growth (ibid, p.47). The preceding pages have suggested that work often constrains flourishing, but can human flourishing instead be achieved through leisure, specifically, through consumption as a popular and prominent form of leisure? The following section commences with an examination of two prominent understandings of consumption – loosely classified as ‘cultural theory’ and ‘critical theory’ – to understand how these theories frame consumption as variously autonomous and emancipatory or ‘repressive and constraining’.

1.4.1 Theorising consumption

Within cultural theory, commodity consumption is frequently presented as a phenomenon through which identity can be explored, presented and, to an extent, *created* through an engagement with the symbolic meanings of commodities, an arena in which the autonomy we are denied in employment might be exercised (Smart 1992; Featherstone 2007; Abercrombie 1994; Fiske 1989; Willis 1990; Featherstone 1987). Consumers are able not only to drive the market, but to use it as something which allows for the individual expression of self, unshackled by biological or ascribed characteristics like kin, class, education, or geographical location (Bauman 2005). This results in an 'aestheticization of everyday life', whereby

the preoccupation with customising a lifestyle and a stylistic self-consciousness are not just to be found among the young and the affluent; consumer culture publicity suggests that we all have room for self-improvement and self-expression whatever our age or class origin (Featherstone 1987, p.57).

Whilst ascribed characteristics contributed to the more 'fixed' identities of earlier modernity, consumerism provides new avenues through which identity becomes more malleable or fluid (Bauman 2005). In this perspective, 'how and what we consume has grown in prominence relative to the workplace as the terrain on which identities are formed and social issues debated' (Butcher 2008, p.316, see also; Bauman 1992). The self can thereby be constructed through a sort of 'calculated hedonism' (Featherstone 1991), based on the idea that consumer choices have an impact upon personal identity, and provide a reflexive form of 'controlled de-control' (Binkley 2007, p.56).

An alternative and more critical approach to consumption can be found in the work of the Frankfurt School – particularly that of Herbert Marcuse. Marcuse's classic analysis of consumption draws on both Marx and Freud to understand the complex interplay between consumption and needs, arguing that the quest for liberation and autonomy is a part of human nature. However, for Marcuse, the basic or 'true' need for autonomy is increasingly denied in a society trapped by capitalism and, instead, needs which are imposed by the economic system

are pursued. These needs are false because they find their basis in 'false promises', worming their way into the psyche through advertising and persuading consumers that their satisfaction will bring the ultimate reward of genuine fulfilment:

No matter how much needs may have become the individual's own, reproduced and fortified by the conditions of his existence; no matter how much he identifies himself with them and finds himself in their satisfaction, they continue to be what they were from the beginning – products of a society whose dominant interest demands repression (Marcuse 1968, p.22).

Whilst cultural theorists suggest that capitalism no longer tells consumers what they want by offering only a limited range of goods, instead consumers are seen to choreograph the show, for Marcuse and fellow critical theorists, as our so-called needs are ultimately always dictated by the repressive structures of capitalism. False needs are, for Marcuse, borne out of a system bent on subjugation, and their satisfaction can only gratify the system itself, while further repressing its subjects.

A similar idea emerges in Bauman's conceptualisation of desires and wishes. Bauman is often cited by cultural theorists and just as often aligned with them, however he is actually highly critical of what Lodziak refers to as the 'ideology of consumerism' (2000). He cites Ferguson and, like Marcuse, also draws on Freud in arguing that, in contemporary societies, the 'pleasure principle' has become a necessary element of consumer culture, encouraged and perpetuated by the production of desire in consumer marketing (Ferguson 1996; Bauman 2002; 2007). In this perspective, desire is no longer regulated, and 'the abominably constrictive "needs" have had their day as the principal motive of consumption' (Bauman 2002, p.185). However, even 'desires' are insufficient to maintain contemporary consumer practices: 'a more powerful, and above all more versatile stimulant is needed ... "Wish" is the much needed replacement: it completes the liberation of the pleasure principle, purging the last residues of any "reality principle" impediment' (ibid). In both Bauman and Marcuse's work, then, our wants, needs, desires or wishes are external to us, dictated by the system which they serve and from whence they came.

Leiss (1978) also approaches needs in relation to the broader socio-economic context. His critical perspective, like Marcuse's, proposes that 'experienced needs do not reflect "natural" or ahistorical needs but instead reflect the particular structure of the relations of production in which they are experienced' (Wallridge 2011, p.55, see also; Leiss 1978; Marcuse 1968). Leiss argues that in 'high-intensity market settings' individuals are constantly forced to reinterpret their needs due to the ever shifting availability of various goods and services. In an environment such as this, he argues, individuals' 'categories of needing', and thus their judgements of the manner in which commodities may or may not answer these needs are destabilised (Leiss 1978, p.88). Dependence on commodity consumption as a means to satisfy individual needs results in the neglect of other potential means to self-fulfilment, 'such as participation in creative and satisfying work environments' (ibid, p.28). Our understanding of our own needs, well-being and satisfaction are, in this perspective, confused by the interplay between commodity consumption as the 'playground' for selfhood and the economic system at large.

Consumerism, from the 'cultural studies' perspective, is referred to critically as an ideology by Lodziak, because he argues that in post-Fordist capitalism the consumer is represented by theorists within this perspective as 'liberated' – no longer regarded as a passive dupe manipulated by advertising, but, instead, an active and 'sovereign consumer' (2000, p.113). Lodziak departs significantly from those who represent consumption as being integral for locating identity and as integrative for individuals, and is critical of the 'ideology of consumerism' perspective, in which consumption is 'firmly established as the focus, and the playground for individual freedom' (Bauman 1992, p.51). Lodziak suggests that the view that consumption is of paramount symbolic importance in contemporary cultures and is central to individuals' self identities is drastically overstated in cultural theory and identity as a concept is, as a result, trivialised. Understandings of the self as that which is cultivated *purely* from consumer choice are regarded by Lodziak and others as inherently unstable, undermining more 'authentic' avenues of self-expression and self-

development (Bauman 2007; Giddens 1994; Lodziak 2000; Marcuse 1968; Leiss 1978).

Kate Soper similarly disputes the idea that consumption is paramount for identity construction. She considers postmodern analyses of the topic of consumption as being characterised by 'a too exclusively semiotic – and often rather celebratory – preoccupation with fashion, self-styling and identity-affirming forms of consumption' (Soper 2009, p.11). The use of consumption in the primarily symbolic manner proposed by cultural theorists is instead only really applicable to the young - for whom self-identity may be expressed and explored temporarily through consumerist choices - and to 'sad bastards' (Lodziak 2000, p.121). By suggesting that we construct our 'selves' through commodity consumption, and that consumerism is the key avenue through which autonomous choice may be exercised, Lodziak argues that it is implied that those who cannot or choose not to consume inevitably 'fail' at the project of identity.

Drawing on Gorz and Bowring's respective analyses of life satisfaction studies (Gorz 1999; Bowring 1999), Lodziak argues that consumption serves a far less integrative role than Bauman suggests, and that consumption should instead be seen as reflecting practical choices which respond to the various demands of contemporary living (Lodziak 2000). The studies cited show that once basic needs have been fulfilled, *non-commodifiable* goods are sought, such as the 'satisfactions derived from harmonious family relationships, love, friendships, solidarity with others, mutuality, security, autonomy and so on' (ibid, p.117). Importantly, the inextricability of employment and consumption is highlighted by these studies, which indicate that individuals would accept a reduction in income if it meant an increase in activities which would facilitate the realisation of the satisfactions listed above, rather than, as the 'ideology of consumerism' theorists would have it, providing satisfaction through the accumulation of unending commodities (Lodziak 2000; Bowring 1999; Gorz 1999).

1.4.2 Consequences of consumption

Contemporary forms of commodity consumption are regarded in the above debates as inextricable from various social and individual issues and contexts. In practice, individual attempts to accumulate wealth are for many thwarted by the expenses of surviving in capitalist societies, with an endless supply of consumer goods waiting on the side-lines for one to spend any money the housing, utilities and food markets have left in one's pocket at the end of the month. As Fevre suggests, we continue 'in a race that has no finishing line... running harder to simply stand still' (Fevre 2000, p.205). Even if material desires can be met, buying a new consumer good is but a short term fix, and the constant quest for newness in contemporary society through consumer goods creates ever shifting goalposts, in which one can only 'score' through unrelenting consumption (Bauman 2007). Moreover, a further important critique of the 'celebratory' understandings of consumerism found in cultural theory is that large-scale commodity consumerism is ecologically destructive (Soper 2008; 1990; Lodziak 2000; Gorz 2011 [1989]; 1999). Current consumption patterns generate and perpetuate unsustainable and significant waste in their production, packaging, transportation, retail and (often rapid) disposal, and can entail the exploitation of workers around the globe. Lodziak writes that 'the future health of the planet – and thus its capacity to sustain a growing global population – is significantly dependent on reducing consumption in the affluent societies' (Lodziak 2000, p.111). Recognition of the ecologically and socially inequitable nature of contemporary forms of commodity consumption also impact on individuals' enjoyment of them, argues Kate Soper, resulting in what she refers to as 'troubled pleasures' (1990).

1.4.3 Decentring consumption

According to Soper consumption is being decentred by some individuals through what she calls 'alternative hedonism', which she suggests offers greater potential for human flourishing than do mainstream forms of consumption-orientated hedonism (Soper 1990; 2007; 2008). She argues that 'the affluent,

“consumerist”, Euro-American mode of consumption ... has become the model of the “good life” for so many other societies today’, and within this model, the political, individual and institutional discourses of growth-based and economically measured progress have developed (Soper 2008, p.571). This model, as has already been argued, is socially and environmentally exploitative and inequitable, and Soper argues that alternatives should be sought. However, many ‘green’ alternatives are couched in the rhetoric of asceticism (as noted by Soper 2007; 2008; 2009; Hayden 1999; Frayne 2015), and as a result these remain unpopular with profit oriented businesses, mainstream politics bent on economic growth and a British public accustomed to discourses of individualism and personal choice (Jackson 2009). How does Soper’s alternative hedonism overcome this unappealingly ascetic character?

Whilst in some cases movements towards alternative forms of hedonism may involve ostensibly regressive forms of living, Soper sees the movement towards alternative hedonism as instead an alternative form of progress based on the *desire for* new pleasures rather than *fear of* ecological catastrophe (Soper 2009, p.3). It is in this hedonistic aspect that we might find a more palatable alternative to either the rampant consumerism of developed capitalism or the abstemious undertones of other ‘green’ solutions. Rather than promoting either a return to a kind of primitive asceticism and the denial of personal pleasure in the interest of saving our planet, Soper promotes ‘alternative hedonism’ as instead offering *greater* potential for personal enjoyment than contemporary consumerist practices are able, and doing so in a more ecologically sound manner:

Through [alternative hedonism] I refer to motives for changing consumption practices that derive from the more negative aspects for consumers themselves of their high-speed, work-dominated, materialistic lifestyle, and are fed by a sense that important pleasures and sources of gratification are being lost or un-realized as a consequence of it (2007, p.211).

This does not mean simply switching to more ethical brands, but entails actually reducing one’s overall consumption and seeking pleasures in non-commodified leisure activities. This choice simultaneously satisfies altruistic and egoistic

interests: the social and environmental degradation inherent in consumerism is a prominent concern for Soper's alternative hedonists, and withdrawing from these practices illustrates an altruistic concern for the other as well as an egoistic concern to seek individual and personal pleasures. Constitutive of Soper's alternative hedonism, then, is the avoidance of harm: harm to the planet, to others and to oneself. Her work on this topic entails a critique of the ideologies of endless growth associated with consumerist lifestyles, arguing that even if unending cycles of commodity consumption were environmentally sustainable, they would not ultimately make people happy (2009, p.3).

So far, a range of variously theoretical, empirical, historical and contemporary literature concerned with two key components of capitalist societies has been examined. Work and consumption are each regarded within these literatures as potentially emancipatory but with repressive tendencies in their current manifestations. This review has thus far provided some perspectives on the context from which Western volunteer tourists originate, and has laid the foundations for developing a comparison between sites in which employment and consumption dominate and those in which they are subordinated to other needs and practices. What sites are there in which reconfigured consumerist and work based behaviours might impact upon individuals, allowing them to feel fulfilled and happy? Before we seek these sites, though, we must first explore the types of sense-making which lead to the valuation of the types of economic and material 'goods' discussed in the preceding pages. It will then be possible to elaborate upon the brief definition of flourishing provided at the outset of this section, and to seek sites in which flourishing and fulfilment might be found.

1.5 Sense-making, economic rationality, and 'demoralization'

Contemporary forms both of employment and consumption can be regarded as serving an ideological role, suggesting that *you can be* whatever you want to be if you work hard and make the 'right' choices. In consumption these ideologies

are manifested in the assumption that the selection of commodities can shape or represent one's 'chosen' self (Smart 1992; Featherstone 2007; Abercrombie 1994; Fiske 1989; Willis 1990; Featherstone 1987). In terms of employment opportunities this justifies and perpetuates structural class inequalities, and is manifested in educational discourses which highlight the increasingly self-directed project of 'employability'. This highly individualised 'project' calls for the development of various skills, beyond those garnered through traditional channels of formal education (Moreau and Leathwood 2006; Boden and Nedeva 2010; Tomlinson 2010; Brown et al. 2003; Snee 2014), alongside a more instrumental or strategic approach to education, personal growth and self-management (Ehrenreich 1990).

In the realm of the 'professional middle classes', Ehrenreich suggests that there is recognition of a necessity to substitute real ambitions for those which yield higher economic returns. She refers to this trade-off as 'premature pragmatism', whereby college students were 'putting aside, at far too early an age, their idealism and intellectual curiosity in favour of economic security' (ibid, p.210). In this scenario, through a more agential and strategic approach than implied by Gorz, Sennett, Ritzer and Braverman's disparate analyses of work discussed earlier, individuals' selves are subordinated to economic ends. In turn, these discourses of individualisation, which find their basis in the Enlightenment philosophy but exist in a very specific way in contemporary society, lead to the belief that 'how one lives becomes the *biographical solution to systemic contradictions*' (Beck 1992, p.137, original emphasis). However, as Bauman notes, this is a fallacy, and a number of structural barriers to the equitable access to resources mean that, 'more often than not, control over life is the way in which the story of life is told, rather than the way in which life is lived' (2002, p.69). Whether 'premature pragmatism' and the associated perception of one's life as a 'project' can provide real or only imagined control over individuals' lives is less important here, however, than the point that in both perspectives, individualism is both a characteristic and a consequence of how we make sense of the world around us.

1.5.1 Common sense, sentiment, and 'ersatz morality'

As the previous pages have discussed, the centrality of both commodity consumption and employment are questioned in critical branches of the social sciences, and the 'freedom' upon which they are premised also seems problematic. If contemporary forms of employment and consumption cannot satisfy or fulfil us, why do we persist with them? Fevre suggests that these trends are a consequence of a dominant form of sense-making based upon economic rationality. He characterises the contemporary compulsion to work and to consume in reference to the historical development of capitalism:

As Max Weber saw, capitalism brought with it a 'spirit' which functioned like a morality to compel people to behave in a particular way. At one time this simply meant people were productive: they felt compelled to accumulate and compelled to labour. But now we are compelled to work and buy, and *work at what we buy*, in a kind of frenzy which seems to be intended to put meaning into our lives but leaves us little time for thought of anything else. When we are possessed by these 'spirits of the hive' we distil our humanity into getting and spending money (Fevre 2000, p.201, original emphasis).

This 'spirit' of capitalism provides us with certain guidelines for how we might live, creating what Fevre refers to as an 'ersatz' morality. He argues that, 'not only does economic rationality increasingly dominate our business dealings, but also our business dealings increasingly dominate our lives' (Fevre 2000, p.202). Fevre suggests that the economically rational form of common sense which results from this is manifested in and perpetuated by the compulsion to consume and contemporary versions of the 'work ethic'.

Sense-making, for Fevre, entails four different types of reason based on the respective dualisms between human and non-human, and between belief and knowledge: these are science (non-human knowledge); religion (non-human belief); sentiment (human belief); and common sense (human knowledge). These varieties of sense-making are combined in various ways in different situations. For Fevre, common sense is a type of sense-making which is

increasingly dominant and is based, fundamentally, upon what can be *known*¹⁰. Sentiment, on the other hand, relies on belief, which Fevre argues is immeasurable, invisible, non-falsifiable, and increasingly denigrated. How can we measure felicity? How can we measure love? Even if we *can*, can we then trust these 'feelings'? We *can*, however, measure income. We can 'know' that our family are provided for, that we are protected by our savings and our pensions. These are calculable, *knowable* considerations. We can 'know' that the outcome of one choice will result in greater economic gains whilst the other choice offers only the *potential* for unquantifiable increases in happiness. This is partly why, Fevre suggests, we do not pack in our jobs to spend our afternoons engaging in love-making sessions with our spouses and/or lovers, or take to the hills or the beach rather than to our desks on a sunny day. This is not so trivial as it sounds: whilst it's unrealistic to suggest that if we only trusted our feelings we would spend sunny afternoons frolicking rather than working – and Fevre, of course, makes no such assertion – it is the 'leakage' of common sense rationality into areas of our lives which should be determined by sentiment and belief which, he suggests, leads to contemporary demoralization. The over-reliance on common sense is often the result of what he calls 'category errors'; situations in which we apply the wrong type or combination of types of reason to given circumstances.

Fevre suggests that our inability to know what to do is because morality can only find a substantive base in beliefs and sentiments. The dominance of economic rationality, which he regards as 'one of the most important reinventions of common sense', has resulted in the 'degradation of sentiment' (ibid, p.200). In this scenario, economic rationality provides an 'ersatz' morality, which provides guides to action based on common sense assertions, those which can be reached through logic, calculations and comparisons – the knowable – rather than being based in *belief*, in what we *feel*. Fevre argues that 'neither cognition nor science can ever create a real morality of their own

¹⁰ This idea of increasing rationalization within society is nothing new, with Weber being a forerunner in his recognition of the arrival of calculated rationality and Bauman illustrating its consequences most dramatically in *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Weber, 2003, Bauman, 1991).

because they do not depend in any way on belief and have no need or proper use for the sacred quality that goes directly to morality' (Fevre 2000, p.227). This 'sacrosanct quality' is sentiment. Fevre suggests that 'confusion and dilemmas plague us where we were once absolutely sure and had no doubts. This is demoralization: we don't know how to live our lives the right way and we have lost touch with the source of felicity as well as morality' (Fevre 2000, p.223).

Szerszynski is similarly concerned about the state of contemporary morality, and suggests that 'the modern problematic' is characterised by 'a lonely humanity faced with the task of pure self-assertion in a meaningless world that no longer tells them/us what to do' (1996, p.118). In this perspective we reach 'moral' understandings through reasoned debate, passing only normative judgements rather than moral ones. The reduction of 'morals' to rhetoric, which can be engaged or ignored at will, is an idea rejected by both MacIntyre (1985) and Sayer (2011). As Sayer notes, morality or ethics reduced to this discursive form suggests that we are simply 'disembodied rational actors, merely needing to recognise the force of the better argument in order to change' (ibid, p.152). On the other hand, if individuals select their 'guides to action' based only on what can be known, measured and sensed, as Fevre's demoralization thesis proposes, this leaves us in an equally morally bleak predicament (2000).

1.6 Happiness, eudaimonia and the 'good life'

The literature in the preceding pages suggests that a rejection of the types of economic rationality – these quantifiable goals of income and material accumulation discussed above – is needed for individuals to hope to achieve happiness. Alternative hedonism was discussed as an 'altered conception of what it is to flourish and to enjoy a 'high' standard of living' (Soper and Thomas 2006). Central to Soper's idea of alternative hedonism is the premise that it is necessary to reconsider what is meant by the 'good life'¹¹, and to question what

¹¹ This is both a self-interested and an altruistic venture, intended to simultaneously improve one's own experience of life and to reduce one's negative impacts upon other.

it is that we actually want and need from life. In popular British rhetoric, 'the good life' has connotations of well-meaning but slightly clueless attempts to raise chickens and grow vegetables in the city, resulting from the 1970s sitcom *The Good Life*, starring Richard Briers and Felicity Kendall. However, in philosophy, the phrase has other connotations, and is associated with the idea of *ars vitae*, or 'the art of living', concerned with the Aristotelian version of the virtues in which one seeks balance between reason and pleasure (de Geus 2009). Of course, as Sayer notes, in everyday life "conceptions of the good" ... are generally less coherent and explicit than philosophers assume' (Sayer 2005, p.8), and the idea of 'needs' is highly contentious, sociologically. Let us attempt to clarify our understanding of 'needs' and 'the good life' now.

Earlier in this chapter, the idea of needs was introduced, drawing on Marcuse and Leiss. It is important to note here that alternative versions of the good life implicit in attempts to 're-vision' society always and inevitably entail some consideration of needs:

Whether one considers the libertarian vision of Illich, the 'green' socialism of Bahro, the asceticism of Gandhi or the communism of Marx and Engels, somewhere there will be a reference to a society that meets human needs better than that of the present day (Doyal and Gough 1984, p.8).

However, this does not necessitate either a universalistic approach to needs or the assumption that needs are 'true' or 'false', as found in Marcuse's work. Universalistic understandings of needs employ the oppositional categories of wants and needs in arguing that certain needs are universal and should, as such, be treated as providing a criterion for well-being (as proposed by Doyal and Gough 1984). These perspectives dominate development rhetoric, providing baseline criteria for global standards of health, sustenance and freedom from persecution. Whilst these requirements are indisputably fundamental to human flourishing, this perspective ignores human needs of enjoyment and happiness.

In restricting human goals to those of physical health and autonomy, Doyal and Gough may be committed to a somewhat puritanical and limited conception of our fundamental motivations: a conception in which the quest for pleasures other than those which directly enhance

health and autonomy would seem to be ‘unneeded’, even irrational, despite the very extensive option for them within the human community (Soper 1993, p.119)¹².

The pursuit of *eudaimonia* – a term which encapsulates this desire to go beyond survival needs and pursue happiness, self-development and personal satisfaction, to ‘thrive on all the possibilities of existence’ – is necessary to achieve individual fulfilment (Pearce 2005, p.162). The enjoyment inherent in alternative hedonism is celebrated by an individualist ethic, in which enjoyment is both a right (Soper 1993), and according to Bourdieu, a *duty* (Bourdieu 1984, p.367). Rather than the restriction of pleasures, or the contrasting scenario of consumption as a prerequisite for enjoyment, alternative hedonism requires seeking new pleasures which Soper suggests are largely denied by the system at large through pursuing non-commodified forms of pleasure.

In Soper’s work, then, we find a version of needs which is simultaneously less restrictive and universal than Doyal and Gough’s but also less pessimistic and jeremeadic than Marcuse’s critique. Flourishing and enjoyment are laudable goals, and ones which are possible through the realisation of our own capabilities. Sen and Nussbaum similarly recognise the importance of needs to individual fulfilment, arguing that it is in our ‘capability’ to achieve that our needs are realised and we are able to flourish (Sen 1999; Nussbaum 2001). This approach is founded on the idea that ‘it is not only what people *have* that is important for their well-being but what they can *do* or *be*’ (Sayer 2011, p.234, original emphasis)¹³. This consideration, Sayer suggests, ‘forces us to inspect our ethical values’, moving beyond our academic detachment and philosophical cul-de-sacs in assessing *how* the realisation of individual capabilities in given circumstances can allow for individual flourishing (ibid, p.239). These needs, however, expand relative to the standards of the society inhabited. For Sen, the

¹² Indeed Gorz’s more critical stance on the expansion of the sphere of autonomy with a subsequent compression of human needs is similarly puritanical, requiring ‘an increase in leisure without the expansion of consumer needs and capacities for enjoyment which economic development brings’ (Sayers 1998, p.74),

¹³ Sayer goes on to say that ‘this fits with our use of the term ‘flourishing’, with its connotation of activity, rather than ‘happiness’, which merely connotes a state of mind’ (ibid). This is a point to which I return shortly.

avoidance of shame is a prerequisite for flourishing (1998), however, we can only avoid shame, ostensibly, by 'keeping up with the Joneses': 'the baseline for social functioning is always the current level of commodities' (Jackson 2009, p.147; Bauman 2007).

A related perspective can be identified in Olin Wright's distinction between 'restrictive' and 'expansive' conceptualisations of flourishing. The former perspective adheres to an idea, like that found in Doyal and Gough's work, that, to flourish, individuals must realise certain human needs necessary for them to *function*. In contrast, an expansive theory of flourishing is concerned with the exercise of individual talents and the realisation of individual potentials.

The development of intellectual, physical and social capacities requires much more than simple material necessities. It requires access to educational settings within which learning takes place and talents are cultivated, not just in childhood, but throughout life. It requires access to work settings where skills can be developed and exercised and activity is to a substantial extent self-directed. It requires communities which provide opportunities for active participation in civic affairs and cultural activities (Olin Wright 2009, p.10).

Human flourishing, then, can be understood as the realisation of capabilities, rather than being predicated simply on the satisfaction of basic human needs (Olin Wright 2009; Sayer 2011; Soper 1993; Nussbaum 2001; Sen 1999). However, as Soper argues, this realisation requires first the rejection of the socially, environmentally and individually damaging consequences of narrowly defined economic 'goods' perpetuated by economic forms of rationality. She argues that alternative forms of enjoyment are being sought in activities which allow for greater idleness and sensuality.

Eudaimonia entails the achievement of happiness through the pursuit of meaningful goals, sought as ends in themselves rather than as means to other ends, and can loosely be translated as 'flourishing'.

A 'happy person' is a person free from want and excess; a person who has 'found the golden rule', who 'strikes it just right', who has everything he needs and no more, or rather everything that is worth having and nothing in excess that would make it a burden. The Greeks called such happiness Eudaimonia ... a supposition that a happy life (at least in the

negative sense of the absence of unhappiness) is a well-balanced life, a life that steers clear of the Scylla of impoverishment and the Charybdis of intemperance, a life of harmony and a life confined to the care of goods worthy of desire and effort (Bauman 2002, p.123-124).

For Sayer, 'happiness is largely a by-product of flourishing (eudaimonia) rather than something which can be achieved independently of it' (2011, p.262) – in other words, to achieve happiness one must first realise this 'balance', pursuing worthwhile and coherent 'goods'. Happiness pursued through isolated or fragmented life events, such as the purchasing of a certain commodity, cannot be sustained without this broader and more holistic experience of eudaimonia: 'the state of being well and doing well in being well' (MacIntyre 1985, p.148). As Sayers explains, 'one's own pleasure is not a sufficient end or purpose in life. People...want and need something more than this. They want and need activity which achieves something in the public realm and which contributes usefully to society' (Sayers 1998, p.76). This echoes the Marxist perspective on work, as fundamental to species-being. Eudaimonia, like species-being, is, at root, premised on the realisation of human capacities: variously sensual, physical, mental and emotional.

From an Aristotelian perspective leisure is of central importance for 'personal growth and social attainment of the "good life"' (Arnold 1985, p.12)¹⁴. In leisure pursuits one is engaged in a practice; be it chess, football or train-spotting. In any practice can be found 'internal' goods, which may be contrary to those 'goods' celebrated by society at large (MacIntyre 1985). Practices, for MacIntyre are understood as:

Any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realised in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity (ibid, p.187).

¹⁴ It must be remembered, as Arnold points out, that the Athenian regard for the importance of leisure as representing both personal growth and personal freedom was predicated on slavery – 'which was rationalized as essential to citizen freedom' to allow the wealthy slave owners' autonomy to achieve the virtues afforded by leisure (Arnold, 1985:12).

Internal goods refer to virtues that enrich a practice, and which are only accessible through engagement in this practice; 'the virtues are those goods by reference to which, whether we like it or not, we define our relationships to those other people with whom we share the kind of purposes and standards which inform practices' (ibid, p191). In contrast, external goods are those which could be achieved through other practices. For example, whilst playing violin perfectly may result in great prestige and wealth, these goods could have been attained through many other perfected practices. The internal goods such as an appreciation and accomplishment of, for example, the precisely mastered fingering needed to create a vibrato on this instrument, however, could not be attained through becoming a world class saxophonist, although similar goods of fame, wealth or status might be achieved.

Drawing on MacIntyre's distinction between internal and external goods, Keat argues that practices pursued for external goods alone may themselves be compromised, suggesting that when this happens 'participants may then experience serious "strains of commitment" to the practice, its internal goods no longer providing sufficient motivation for them' (Keat 1991, p.220). Internal goods, furthermore, are those which can themselves enrich not just the actor, but the practice itself. These goods are ones which cannot be attained through cheating. As MacIntyre explains, 'to be willing to cheat ... bars us from achieving the standards of excellence or the goods internal to the practice' and that cheating and willingness to do so 'renders the practice pointless except as a device for achieving external goods' (MacIntyre 1985, p.191). When practices become avenues through which external rather than internal goods are sought, in other words when valued instrumentally, the practice itself is diminished in value. As Keat explains, the 'integrity of the practice' is compromised (Keat 1991).

It might well be argued, based upon the first half of this chapter, that internal goods are lacking in contemporary society, in which we find political and commercial rhetoric lauding Western ideologies of economic growth, employment, and unfettered consumption as the 'goods' of contemporary societies. These goods are 'external': goods which are in limited supply insofar

as ‘the more someone has of them, the less there is for other people’ (MacIntyre 1985, p.190)¹⁵, and are prioritised in a world in which we lack a substantive morality or the corresponding virtues. Our conception of the ‘good life’ and the virtues is further compromised, according to MacIntyre, by the fragmentation of our individual biographies as well as that of the ‘language of morality’ (ibid, p.2). Furthermore the ‘virtues’ of the various practices in which we engage may often be at odds with one another – for example one’s involvement in a religious institution may well entail and celebrate goods such as charity and altruism which contradict with the competitive and self-interested virtues pursued in the same individual’s career.

The version of ‘the good life’ in which we seek what MacIntyre refers to as ‘external goods’, which are measured through economic forms of reason, can be regarded as based more on the hedonistic philosophies of Democritus, Leucippus, Locke and Hobbes (de Geus 2009), than the moral philosophy of Aristotle (1826 [circa 350BCE]). In these approaches ‘the art of living and human happiness are achieved by satisfying what are, in principle, unlimited desires and leading a comfortable or even luxurious and affluent lifestyle’, rather than the Aristotelian virtues derived from balance (de Geus 2009, p.115). This view of the ‘good life’ is what is in need of fundamental political, institutional and individual reform, according to the theorists discussed throughout the preceding pages (Soper 2009; 2007; Leiss 1978; de Geus 2009; Hayden 1999). Through alternative hedonism, for example, a more Aristotelian version of the good life is sought, in which leisure is revered in its own right rather than simply regarded as that which we do to recover from or indeed *for* economic forms of work. As MacIntyre asserts, echoing Aristotle’s claim that ‘the object of work is leisure’: ‘leisure time is the time when we do things for their own sake, since business affairs are for the sake of leisure’ (2003, p.53).

Can we find alternatives in which non-economic forms of reason dominate, where common sense is replaced with sense-making based on sentiment and on

¹⁵ Consider, for example, the distribution of wealth and resources, both within and across different societies.

belief rather than quantifiable and knowable ‘goods’? And, if we can, might we subsequently identify examples of individuals seeking not just hedonistic gratification – but *eudaimonia*? In the ensuing pages, alternatives to the various trappings of work and consumption – which seem to be emblematic of the encroachment of economic rationality into increasing areas of our lives (Fevre 2000) – are explored.

1.7 Seeking alternatives: A need to escape

Having reviewed various sources of dissatisfaction and demoralisation found in contemporary societies, as well as the concepts of happiness and *eudaimonia*, the remainder of this chapter explores how and where individuals might flourish. Examples are provided of individuals applying non-economic forms of reason to their choices and pursuing non-economic, non-commodified ‘goods’. This discussion illustrates a small selection of the alternatives that exist in contemporary societies rather than providing a comprehensive review of all potential ‘escape attempts’ (Cohen and Taylor 1976). Throughout this section, attention is given to some alternatives identified in the academic literature, and further research questions are developed and refined. We begin with a proposal entailing systemic overhaul – which Cohen and Taylor suggest is required so that the ills of contemporary capitalism might be remedied – and then move on to explore alternatives sought *within* the existing system through solutions based on individual action. These alternatives, variously empirical or hypothetical, engage with perceptions of ‘the good life’ different to those commonly accepted in political and popular discourses of prosperity founded on economic growth.

1.7.1 Decentring work: Work-time reduction

Alternatives to neo-liberal versions of growth are all but invisible in contemporary British politics. Concurrently, the centrality of work is rarely questioned at a political level; ‘the assumptions at the heart of the work ethic, not only about the virtues of hard work and long hours but also about their

inevitability, are too rarely examined, let alone contested (Weeks 2011, p.35)¹⁶. Gorz argues that it is part of the (il)logic of capitalism that it appears as both inevitable and self-justifying, which is why ideas such as the systematic redistribution of work are so rarely entertained. Subsequent to this (il)logic, the belief persists that the answers are to be found *within* the system which itself created the crisis, collective problems are seen as reconcilable only through '*individual* consumption of marketable goods and services' (Gorz 1985, p.16, original emphasis), and individualised 'projects' of self-enhancement and employability. The ethic of work has, Gerrard argues, seeped into a corresponding 'learning ethic', in which 'learning and education are sites of self-work, connected to the processes of value accrual and exchange' (Gerrard 2014, p.864). This is in part a consequence of an ongoing shift towards a conceptualisation of education as 'necessary, mandatory, and never-ending' (Illich and Verne 1976, p.9), and the related view of time as something to be 'spent' rather than 'passed' (Thompson 1967, p.61). Time should be constructively and productively spent, and the manner in which this impacts upon contemporary experiences of leisure is addressed in the subsequent chapter.

In the academic realm, however, the manner in which work might be reconfigured is a rich topic for discussion. Gorz, for example, proposes that a reduction in work-time is a necessary precondition for an increase in personal production and a reduction of commodity consumption. He suggests:

'progressively reducing worktime and the size of the tools of production': promoting 'technology which is "open", not restricted and centralized'; encouraging 'use of free time for creativity not consumption', for the contraction, not expansion, of market relations (Gorz 2011 [1989], p.28, original punctuation).

¹⁶ Incumbent British Prime Minister David Cameron, for example, is famed for the kind of rhetoric displayed in the following quote, which underpins many of his 'pro-work' policies: 'We are building a country for those who work hard and want to get on. And we are saying to each and every hardworking person in our country: we are on your side. This is a government for hardworking people: and that's the way it will stay' (Channel 4 News [online] 2013).

In his perspective, 'the causes of the crisis are so deeply embedded in the structure of the productive system that their elimination depends on restructuring the system, not managing it' (Gorz 1985, p.6). The demotion of work from the main activity and focus of life is necessary here not only to counter the consumptive ideology – calling for a substantive shift in the logic of capitalism to a system that *responds to* rather than *creates* needs and desires – but also for the well-being of a population for whom work is increasingly seen as something set apart from one's 'self' or 'identity'. As Bauman argues, this is characteristic of an economic system in which the 'private' and the 'public' are systemically segregated, with the result that 'the minds and deeds of individuals' are diverted 'from the collectively set conditions that determine the agenda and the chances of their individual choices and efforts' (2002, p.69). However, to change this requires not simply legislation to 'cap' working hours, but also the development of 'an alternative vision of progress', in which 'the affluent in the North need to redefine what it is we want' (Hayden 1999, p.50). This, Hayden argues, is necessary both to allow for human flourishing and 'for reasons of ecological sustainability and global equity' (ibid). For this 'vision of progress' to be acknowledged, let alone acted upon, substantive shifts in sense-making practices away from the quantifiable and largely economic goals to those of human felicity and ecological equity are required (Fevre 2000; Szerszynski 1996; Lodziak 2000; Gorz 2011 [1989]).

Although the legislative reduction of working hours in most Western countries is as yet unrealised, empirical evidence suggests that some individuals are taking it upon themselves to rethink their relationship to work. David Frayne's work explores the subjectivities of a diverse group of people who 'are united by a common attempt to decentralise work from everyday life' (2011, p.1; and 2015). He argues that, on the whole, 'working less and consuming less formed a complementary package in the practice of a less acquisitive and therefore subjectively more gratifying way of life' (2011:135). As well as reflecting on the pragmatic and ethical implications of consuming less, Frayne suggests that his respondents were cognisant of the insatiability of material desires. Through withdrawing from cycles of wants, consumption and waste, the participants in

his study were able to focus their attentions elsewhere. Frayne's empirical work on 'idlers' and 'downshifters', then, offers some evidence of individuals seeking to withdraw from the socially and environmentally destructive aspects of consumption implicated in Soper's idea of 'troubled pleasures' (Frayne 2011, and forthcoming: 2015; Soper 1990). Fundamentally, he argues that 'the participants' low consumption lifestyles were not achieved through an ascetic renunciation of appetites, but via a strong "will to happiness", in which the good-life was redefined in terms of time-dependent activities rather than in terms of material acquisition' (2011, p.143). Frayne's research suggests that some individuals are noticing the impacts of their actions and seeking alternatives within this system, and explores the behaviours of those who withdraw to some extent from employment and consumption, questioning the 'goods' of mainstream society.

The preceding pages have introduced some empirical and theoretical solutions to the various environmental, social and individual impacts of contemporary capitalist societies centred on consumption and employment (Soper 1990; 2007; 2008; Frayne 2011; 2015). In Hayden's and Gorz's proposals and in Frayne's empirical work we find a prioritisation of *free time*, and in Soper's the prioritisation of non-consumption based forms of leisure. These ideas contrast with capitalist and neoliberal ideologies founded on material and economic growth, in which both national and individual economic prosperity are the fundamental 'goods' to be sought. They instead follow in the traditions Marx and Aristotle, as in both of these perspectives it is only in the leisured dimension of life – 'beyond the sphere of actual material production' and commodified labour (Marx 1971 [1884], p.820) – that we are able to pursue 'higher' virtues and meaningful ends: productive and celebrated in and for themselves, rather than for what these ends can in turn accrue.

1.8 Conclusion

Some very odd and apparently dissimilar areas of life come under our heading of free areas: from collecting bus tickets to undergoing psychoanalysis, from taking a package holiday to going on an acid trip, from playing roulette to joining a commune. They all share similar

escape meanings: they are routes out... They might best be classified not in terms of their own features – which might be wholly mundane and uninteresting – but in terms of the area of paramount reality which the individual is trying to edge away from and put on the line. (Cohen and Taylor 1976, p.114)

In common with Habermas (1989) and Gorz (2011 [1989]), Cohen and Taylor suggest that in contemporary society our life-worlds are fractured: our personal, creative and professional selves are segregated by the various structures of capitalist societies discussed in the previous pages. A consequence of this is the apparent need for ‘escape attempts’, in which we might seek our ‘authentic’ and individualised selves (Cohen and Taylor 1976). Cohen and Taylor’s *Escape Attempts* argues that fundamental and systemic shifts are required for individual fulfilment. Without these shifts, the authors argue, we are doomed to seek methods of escapes *within* the system, methods which are invariably unable to solve the core troubles of contemporary lifestyles.

Drawing on literature, media and personal observations, Cohen and Taylor chart the variously sacred or profane, legal or illegal, and ephemeral or permanent means by which people attempt to escape. Escapes, they argue, are found in ‘free areas’ in which we slip out of our ‘normal’ reality, engaging in voluntarily chosen activities such as hobbies, sex, holidays, therapy and the consumption of mind-altering substances. However, from sleeping with your secretary to committing mass murder, a picture of escapes doomed to failure is presented in Cohen and Taylor’s work, in which they argue that ‘only a dramatic change in existing structures...can resolve the fragmentation of contemporary man, dissipate his sense of alienation, make him once again into a whole being in tune with his friends, his work, and his world’ (Cohen and Taylor 1976, p.143). This chapter has sought to understand the sources and extent of this assumed fragmentation and alienation, and to illustrate what elements of these societies sociology has identified which act to constrain us. What, in Cohen and Taylor’s perspective, are we attempting to escape *from*? The main preoccupations which appear to necessitate these attempts have already been discussed: employment – something which most of us do or seek to do for the best part of our adult lives (appositely often referred to as our *working* lives) –

and contemporary forms of commodity consumption. These characteristics result in variously severe and variously manifested degrees of oppression, boredom and dissatisfaction, endemic to the capitalist system. As Benton argues, resistance to these elements indicates the extent to which they compromise human flourishing:

Waves of rapid industrialization and transformations in the urban or rural environment have generally been accompanied by forms of cultural resistance which reaffirm human needs for a proper moral, aesthetic and spiritual dimension in their relation to nature. Such forms of resistance are so widespread, and reoccur in such disparate settings, that they can, I think, be reasonably regarded as symptomatic of a certain truth about the structure of a general human need (1992, p.70)¹⁷.

For Benton, then, contemporary resistance to capitalism – such as is found in alternative hedonism and downshifting – suggests that there are certain moral and aesthetic human needs which are not sufficiently met in advanced capitalist societies.

In the second half of this chapter, alternatives based upon reconfiguring contemporary relationships to work and consumption were explored, asking how ‘the good life’ can be re-framed to provide escape routes from the more problematic elements of the capitalist system through decentralising employment (Gorz 1999; 2011 [1989]; Soper 2007; Hayden 1999) and adapting consumption behaviours (Soper and Thomas 2006; Frayne 2011; 2015). These solutions, however, seem to offer only hypothetical or minority escapes. For most, the availability of these options is obscured by the dominant and moralised rhetoric surrounding work in capitalist societies (Weber 2003 [1905]; Weeks 2011; Gorz 1999; 2011 [1989]; Fevre 2000). So what about those who don’t reconfigure their relationship to employment and/or consumption? How do individuals cope *within* the structures of a society bent on consumption and the pursuit of full employment?

¹⁷ The bases of this more ‘romantic’, sensual, and fundamentally less antagonistic human-nature relationship is foreshadowed in the more humanist Marxism found in the Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts, though somewhat contradicts the more Promethean and modernist Marx found in, for example, the *Grundrisse*.

2 Leisure, Tourism, and Individual Escapes

The previous chapter explored ways in which individual flourishing appears to be constrained by consumption oriented forms of leisure and alienated forms of employment. This chapter explores tourism as an explicit form of escape from the rigours of work, in which experiences rather than commodities are purchased. Cohen and Taylor's *Escape Attempts*, introduced in Chapter 1, suggests that we are forced to seek escape routes from the malaise of capitalist societies. Support for this assertion is provided in this chapter by those who suggest that tourism and work exist as oppositional categories (McCabe 2002; Cohen and Taylor 1976; Leiss 1978; Dann 2002). Travel, it is argued, is motivated by both alienating forces at home and a desire for ego-enhancement: 'the fantasy world of travel seeks to overcome the humdrum, the normlessness and meaninglessness of life, with more satisfying experiences' (Dann 1977, p.188).

The ensuing discussion suggests that leisure is increasingly *replacing* work as an avenue through which identity might be expressed and developed (MacCannell 1999 [1976]): as Vecchio suggests based on an empirical revisit to Morse and Weiss's study, 'a leisure ethic may be replacing the traditional work ethic' (Vecchio 1980). Tourism is explored as a site in which autonomy and freedom can be at least temporarily exercised – representing an escape from paid employment and the types of commodity consumption found in daily, mundane existence. As well as reviewing the contemporary and historical relationship between tourism and work, the ethical implications of tourism are examined. Is tourism a phenomenon in which we might find avenues for human flourishing, happiness and well-being? Volunteer tourism in turn is discussed as an increasingly popular alternative to more mainstream forms of tourism, in which work and leisure are hybridised rather than dichotomous. Trends within volunteer tourism pertaining to age, gender and class are discussed and the topic of motivations is explored. However, the uncritical use of the concept of motivations, whilst prevalent in the tourism and volunteer tourism literatures, seems somewhat problematic when posited next to the kind of theory explored

in the preceding chapter, in which individual action, behaviour and forms of sense-making are regarded as originating from society rather than from *within* individuals. In light of this, the research concerned with volunteer motivations reviewed in the latter half of this chapter is accompanied by some discussion of the usefulness of this concept for this research. Throughout the chapter, the research questions developed thus far for this project are refined.

2.1 Travel and tourism

Tourism was, until quite recently, a topic viewed by many sociologists 'with suspicion or disdain' (Cohen 1984, p.388), indeed Urry writes that 'on the face of it there could not be a more trivial subject' (Urry 1990, p.2). However, tourism accounts for 9% of global GDP, 8% of all jobs (UNWTO 2012b), and is 'the largest industry in the world' (Urry 2002b, p.5). Data show that 'over the past six decades, tourism has experienced continued expansion and diversification ... international tourist arrivals have shown virtually uninterrupted growth – from 277 million in 1980 to 528 million in 1995, 983 million in 2011' (UNWTO 2012a, p.2), and exceeding 1 billion in 2012 (UNWTO 2012b). McCabe states that 'tourism is now so pervasive in postmodern society that tourism can no longer be perceived as a 'departure' from the routines and practices of everyday life, but instead has become an established part of everyday life, culture and consumption' (2002, p.63).

There are, of course, persistent economic barriers to access to tourism: 'despite the democratisation of travel, significant class differences still exist...not only in the propensity to travel but also in the distance and type of destination, the organisation of the trip, the motivations and travelling style, and the deeper cultural motifs informing tourism' (Cohen 1984, p.377, see also; Urry and Larsen 2011). Furthermore, tourism has significant ecological consequences, with travel accounting for a 3rd of all CO2 emissions (Urry 2002b). Despite these problems, tourism as a form of escape seems more common than the alternative lifestyle options explored in the previous chapter. These escapes are not those engaged in by a select minority preoccupied with social equity, environmental sustainability or partial or wholesale withdrawal from work found in Frayne's

empirical study of 'downshifters' (2015) or Soper's 'alternative hedonists' (2007; 2008). Neither do these escapes entail the systemic shifts required for Hayden (1999) or Gorz's (1999) dreams for the reduction of working hours to be realised. This chapter begins by exploring the relationship between work and tourism, as well as asking what kinds of satisfaction leisure might provide to individuals.

2.1.1 Leisure and tourism in opposition to work

In contemporary Western capitalism, following our formative childhood years when we discover the freedom of play, and then the opposite of freedom in structured education, 'it is particularly in the world of modern work that the freedom of most of us will be subjected to its most severe restrictions' (Bregha 1985). It is in our 'free time' that we experience leisure, which Stebbins defines as:

Un-coerced activity ... which people want to do and, in either a satisfying or a fulfilling way (or both), use their abilities and resources to succeed at this. "Free time" is time away from unpleasant obligation, with pleasant obligation being treated here as essentially leisure since *homo otiosus*, leisure man, feels no significant coercion to enact the activity in question (2007, p.4).

Leisure offers us opportunities to temporarily escape, to experience the personal autonomy and freedom prohibited in our working lives. However, it is valued within society only to the extent to which it is a *complement* to work, rather than its substitute (Sayers 1998). Escape routes exist here which are in fact sanctioned by and available within the structures of employment. Urry argues that tourism 'is one manifestation of how work and leisure are organised as separate and regulated spheres of social practice in 'modern' societies' (1990, p.2). Wearing, similarly, suggests that 'tourism, like leisure, was seen in a dialectical relationship with the "workaday world"' (2002, p.237). Indeed, for Urry, it is the distinction between tourism and the everyday which creates 'the distinctive tourist gaze': 'tourism therefore results from a basic binary distinction between the ordinary/everyday and the *extraordinary*', and it is this

contrast to 'normality' which induces pleasurable experiences (Urry 1990, p.12).

Whether a week lying in the sun on a beach, camping in the New Forest, or just being at home with one's family, one's friends or oneself, the 'holiday' is structured into contemporary working lives, providing a 'limited breaking with established routines and practices of everyday life and allowing one's senses to engage with a set of stimuli that contrast with the everyday and the mundane' (Urry and Larsen 2011, p.3). This is necessary, argue theorists like MacCannell (1999 [1976]), McCabe (2002) and Urry (1990; Urry and Larsen 2011), to create a highly rationalised form of leisure 'which has been designed expressly to cope with time constraints and the dictates of quantitative efficiency' (Leiss 1978, p.21). The package tours which preceded the numerous and diverse types of tourism we see today served as a means of increasing consistency and productivity for industrialists for the rest of the working year (Urry and Larsen 2011; Urry 1990). Cohen and Taylor similarly view tourism as entailing 'culturally sanctioned' escape routes from the various ills of the structures of work inherent to the capitalist system (1976). Tourism is thus understood in opposition to work, as it is work, as previously discussed, which dominates the everyday for most. Jamal and Hill, however, suggest that these 'rational, recreational opportunities in commercialised and commodified natural and cultural spaces ensure[d] that "self-discipline" and control continue[d] to be exercised in leisure/touristic space as in the workplace' (2002, p.93). In this respect, the formalisation and standardisation of leisure in package holidays ensured that social order was maintained, even in 'free time'.

However, this perspective inadequately theorises the complexity of the relationship between capitalism and leisure. Drawing on the Marxist tradition, Sayers notes the highly 'civilising' project of the growth of production, arguing that it is only as a consequence of contemporary forms of work that the contemporary experience of leisure might exist – 'not only because it permits an expansion of leisure time, but also because it creates the needs and capacities required to make this time truly a "realm of freedom"' (Sayers 1998, p.74). 'Free time' is *freer* – more plentiful and containing greater scope for creativity,

because of capitalist production. It is only through the development of the productive forces, moreover, that the 'degree of wealth' becomes less dependent upon the extent of human work or of labour power and more so on the 'power of the agencies set in motion during labour time' (Marx 1993 [1939], cited in Sayers (1998), p.73). Leisure is not the opposite of work, and leisured forms of work (such as recreational fishing, hunting or knitting) are activities which can only *become* leisured insofar as their products might also be realised through work – we can hunt, and fish and knit for *fun* only because we can buy meat and trout and scarves elsewhere: the activities are pursued not out of *necessity for the product* but out of necessity to exercise our skills and disposition *through leisured labour*. Leisure is not, for Sayers and for Marx, 'simply a time of passivity and idleness, but a sphere of activity and creativity' (Sayers 1998, p.73). Through developments in the productive forces and the reduction in average working hours, people are both more able and more inclined to make productive use of their time outside paid work, as a consequence of the 'growth of needs and capacities, institutions and facilities' (ibid, p.74).

Russell suggests that it is only through being 'restricted' within the world of work that we can appreciate the freedom we find without. In this perspective, the tedium which characterises most forms of employment serve to perpetuate 'zest' outside of work: 'provided a man does not have to work so hard as to impair his vigour, he is likely to find far more zest in his free time than an idle man could possibly find' (Russell 1993 [1930], p.161). Similarly, Wang discusses the various temporal and economic constraints which structure brief spells of freedom, which she considers in relation to a broader quest for felicity:

In order to live a happy life, happiness itself must be re-structured and re-cycled as a distinct contrast to the elements of unhappiness, such as the pressure of work in daily life... The elements of happiness should not be evenly distributed according to each day of the year. Rather, they are dispersed in a fluctuating, uplifting and cyclical way within a year ... The institution of a holiday is therefore an institution of an accessible and cyclical utopia that makes daily constraints tolerable (Wang 2002, p.288).

Work then stands in contrast to the pleasure we find outside of it, and the institutionalised 'holidays' from work make the other 46 weeks or so of work performed within the year palatable. However, is Wang correct in proposing that we need leisure to make *work* palatable, or is it the very tedium of work which gives us such 'zest' for play, as Russell's suggests? Happiness, Wang argues, is *inevitably* ephemeral, and the idea of 'achieving' a state of happiness is therefore impossible. She continues:

Life is a project of progress, that is to say, life could be, and should be, constantly improved, better and happier. Happiness, once realised, soon turns into its opposite – Boredom. Thus people pursue ever newer forms of happiness. Happiness is transitional, fleeting and dynamic. It lies in expectation and in wishful thinking (ibid).

This somewhat contradicts the version of happiness presented in the previous chapter, in which happiness results from the more sustained and substantial experience of *eudaimonia*, however the contrast may be more semantic than philosophical. The forms of 'happiness' discussed in chapter one are inextricable from 'flourishing' – with happiness being seen as a by-product of this. What Wang seems to refer to here is better understood as the more ephemeral experience of *pleasure* attained through brief escapes and commodity consumption, rather than sustained *happiness* found only through a 'good life' lived well.

In Wang's perspective, like Russell's, a symbiotic relationship seems to exist between work and leisure, and between happiness (or pleasure) and boredom, in which our approach to one influences how we experience the other, and their definitions are co-dependent – leisure and work are structured and contextualised in relation to one another (Sayers 1998). Whether agreeing with the Aristotelian version of happiness resulting only from experiencing *eudaimonia* – found in a balanced or 'good' life in which worthwhile goods are pursued and excess denied – or the Kantian position that rather than happiness itself, being *worthy* of happiness as the goal is preferred, few would argue with the suggestion that happiness is *better* than unhappiness (Bauman 2008; Russell 1993 [1930]). As discussed in Chapter 1, Marx (1971 [1884]), Aristotle (1826 [circa 350BCE]) and Gorz (2011 [1989]) all highlight the importance of

leisured free time and the exercise of autonomy for the realisation of selfhood, personal flourishing and individual virtues.

MacCannell argues that, increasingly, individuals affirm their social values through their leisure time – in which creativity and intimacy may be found – rather than seeking this affirmation at work, as the world of work is increasingly alienating, calculating and void of meaningful human relations (MacCannell 1999 [1976]). Tourism and leisure – both necessarily freely chosen activities – are related to individuals' values and interests in a way in which coerced or remunerated activities may well not be, and this can in turn lead to specific forms of satisfaction in tourism and leisure contexts. Stebbins similarly regards leisure as the primary means through which individuals find self-fulfilment, arguing that 'it is by way of leisure activities and their core tasks that participants realise a unique combination of, what are for them, strongly held cultural values: success, achievement, freedom of action, individual personality, and activity' (Stebbins 2007, p.73). In the tourism context this relates to issues around 'quality of life' alongside 'deep satisfaction and enjoyment of experiences, as well as learning, personal growth and skill development' (Pearce 2005, p.162), which may be prohibited in certain work environments. Indeed, MacCannell argues that leisure, of which tourism is an important element, 'is replacing work from the centre of modern social arrangements', and *lifestyle*, in which both work and leisure are combined, 'is replacing "occupation" as the basis for social relationship formation, social status and social action' (1999 [1976], p.5-6). Again, however, Sayers critiques this suggestion, arguing that work maintains its centrality not in an ideological or negative sense, but due to its liberating and fulfilling potential (Sayers 1998). Bearing these various understandings of the relationship between tourism and work in mind, the following section explores the kinds of values which are implicated in tourism choices and asks what this can tell us about the potential for tourism to provide environments in which individuals might flourish and be fulfilled.

2.2 Ethical tourism, (ersatz) moralities, consumption and identity

In the previous chapter we explored the idea that identity is often theoretically related to consumption in the sense that the commodities which we consume are thought to contribute to our construction and representation of self (Smart 1992; Featherstone 2007; Abercrombie 1994; Fiske 1989; Willis 1990; Featherstone 1987). Wearing argues that ‘the pursuit of a desired identity is often channelled into consumerism through the promulgation in modern complex societies of an ideal person whose main “freely chosen” activity is consumption’ (Wearing 2002, p.247). Tourism is subject to the same sort of ethical considerations as any other form of consumption, with consumers increasingly interrogating the social and environmental ethics of their choices (Butcher 2002; Moufakkir and Burns 2012; Soper 2007; 2008; 2009). However, like ethical consumption more broadly, the importance of ethical concerns in tourism appears to be limited to a minority, with weather, cost of accommodation and service quality ranking above ethical concerns in determining choices of vacation destination (Moufakkir and Burns 2012). Indeed, Moufakkir and Burns argue that many tourists are in fact completely unaware of the moral implications of their tourist behaviours, and the debate within tourism and leisure studies concerning this are, fundamentally, ‘much ado about nothing’ if those discussed are in fact untouched by the debate (ibid, p.12).

Another perspective, offered by Butcher (2002), argues that the ‘moralisation’ of tourism entails the imposition of morals into our ‘free’ time – those sacrosanct periods in which we are unshackled by employment and free to enjoy ourselves as we see fit. He suggests that this is an error in reason, and inherently undermines the ‘freedom’ implied by ‘free-time’. This argument seems to imply, however, that we can simply turn our morals off in our leisure pursuits – literally taking a holiday from our ethics. If this is an accurate assessment, then it is damning support for the arguments of MacIntyre (1985), Fevre (2000), and Szerszynski (1996) discussed in the previous chapter, who

fear that contemporary morality is moribund. It suggests that we really do no longer substantively know what to do, constructing 'ersatz moralities' which we can disregard at will rather than employing substantive and binding 'guides to action'.

Debates also exist within the literature about ethical tourism as to whether new *types* of tourism can rectify the problems caused by mass tourism or whether, instead, the cessation of tourism as we know it is necessary to mitigate the social and environmental consequences of global travel (Moufakkir and Burns 2012). Nonetheless, the tourism industry reflects an apparent concern for individually ethical behaviour through the proliferation of different types of tourism available (Wearing 2001; 2002; Salazar 2004; Butcher 2002). This discussion elicits an interesting research question here; are certain kinds of tourism regarded as more ethical than other forms of tourism, and if so what kinds of discourses or types of reasoning do individuals employ to explain this distinction? Returning to the discussion in Chapter 1, does the 'moralisation of tourism' reflect substantive forms of morality based on sentiment or the economically rational 'common sense' 'ersatz' morality which Fevre (2000) argues dominates today? In other words, are 'ethical tourists' decisions informed by sentiment, or are they instead an alternative manifestation of common sense and/or economic rationality? This chapter now turns to explore an alternative form of tourism, and how this relates to the issue of social class.

2.2.1 Alternative tourism and social class

If we set aside this debate about morality, real or ersatz, for the moment, and turn our attention instead to the diversification of tourism, we can establish a clearer understanding of the emergence and popularity of new/niche/alternative forms of tourism in the context of established academic literature on tourism. Alternative tourism encompasses a diverse array of tourist opportunities, and Salazar suggests that alternative tourists fall within an age range of 20-29, are generally well educated, and of a higher social class (2004, p.90). In terms of socio-economic class and tourism more broadly, the celebration of the natural and unmediated amongst these largely middle-class

'alternative tourists' is in common with trends recognised by Bourdieu (1984), Urry and Larsen (2011) and Karlsdóttir (2013), amongst numerous others. A 'romantic tourist gaze' is at work here, in which middle-class individuals seek experiences away from the masses, where nature or 'exotic others' can be enjoyed in relative isolation. Urry and Larsen suggest that there is a preference amongst the service class for this romantic kind of gaze, in which the 'real' or 'natural' is sought and tourists are attracted to visiting and protecting rural areas (2011). Elsewhere, Macnaghten and Urry refer to an 'apparently enhanced 'culture of nature' in many societies', in which 'the social/cultural has intervened so as to 'save' nature' (2001, p.1).

Individuals increasingly seek opportunities through alternative forms of tourism to experience nature, and 'the romantic gaze continues to be an influential motivation for nature-based tourism, involving an ongoing quest for new objects of the solitary gaze, the deserted beach, the empty hilltop, the uninhabited forest, the uncontaminated mountain stream' (Karlsdóttir 2013, p.140, see also; Urry and Larsen 2011; Urry 2002a). This is an especially prominent trend in the middle classes, who seek 'social practices that are involved in being in, or passing through, nature, the countryside, the outdoors, landscape or wilderness' (Macnaghten and Urry 2001, p.1). This 'romantic gaze', characterised by solitary experiences and feelings of awe, contrasts with the more spectatorial or collective 'gazes' found in mass tourism, focussed on shared encounters of familiar sites, or brief encounters entailing the collection of gazes and/or photographs of various demarcated 'signs' (Urry 2002a). An understanding of the self which is informed by 'expressivism' emerges here – which 'refer[s] to the notion that individuals can reconnect themselves with nature through the recovery of an authentic state of being, one that has been lost due to the artificiality of social existence' (Szerszynski 1996, p.120).

Alternative tourism is often represented in the literature and in popular discourses as somehow 'better' than mass tourism, either in terms of the experience, which might be more 'authentic' or 'romantic', or in terms of the social, economic or ecological consequences of these more niche types of tourism (as suggested by Ooi and Laing 2010). The proliferation of alternative

types of tourism such as various manifestations of adventure tourism, eco-tourism and volunteer tourism illustrates the concerns of contemporary tourists who wish to mitigate their own environmental impact, but also to find types of tourism which 'suit' them, reflecting tourists' own values and concerns in a way that package tours may not. In part, this could be seen as a result of the differentiation which Urry argues is sought by contemporary Western subjects, who increasingly refuse to be seen or treated 'as part of an undifferentiated mass' (Urry 1990, p.79). Salazar also suggests that alternative tourists are 'people interested in the experiential and educative aspects of travelling ("collecting" new experiences, broadening their horizons)'¹⁸ (2004, p.90). Furthermore, alternative tourism can provide various opportunities for personal development (Wearing 2001; Callanan and Thomas 2005).

The emergence of various types of alternative tourism can be understood in the context of burgeoning global ideologies of neo-liberalism, in which consumer choice determines the market. This echoes assertions in the mainstream tourism literature discussed above that suggest that tourism is a means of self-expression, which 'mass' tourism is increasingly unable to satisfy (Urry and Larsen 2011; MacCannell 1999 [1976]). Wearing notes the importance of alternative types of tourism in providing a form of distinction for participants, suggesting that engagement with the niche markets of alternative tourism is a means of 'maintaining an appropriate level of social status among their peers' (Wearing 2001, p.6). In this perspective, 'alternative' tourism is desirable as an alternative to 'mass' tourism as it allows for the identity of participants to be acknowledged – they are doing 'something different' because they *themselves* are different. In terms of the classed distinction between 'alternative' and mass tourism, alternative tourism offers a contrast to the types of tourism discussed in the ethnography *Deviance and Risk on Holiday* (Briggs 2013) in which the drunken exploits of young and usually working-class British tourists are

¹⁸ This recognition of experience as an end in itself is nothing new, of course, as MacCannell also highlighted the experiential elements of travel, suggesting that 'cultural experiences are valued in themselves and are the ultimate deposit of values' (1999, p.28); one's travel choices are reflective of and reinforce these values.

explored (see also Prieto-Arranz and Casey 2014). These are the ‘masses’, the drunken, loutish ‘others’. As Bourdieu explains:

One only has to bear in mind that goods are converted into distinctive signs, which may be signs of distinction but also of vulgarity, as soon as they are perceived relationally, to see that the representation which individuals and groups inevitably project through their practices and properties is an integral part of social reality (1984, p.483).

These ‘conversions’, for Bourdieu, inform social actors’ perceptions of social reality, and he highlights the relational quality of these distinctions – what one does is always measured in terms of what others (both those similar and those *dissimilar* to oneself) may do. Moreover, these distinctions are not neutral or accidental, but are mobilised to assert dominance and superiority. One key distinction discussed in the tourism literature, is that of ‘authentic’ and ‘inauthentic’ experiences. Drunken holidays spent lounging in the sun are contrasted with more seemingly ‘authentic’ experiences of the ‘other’ - people, cultures places or species – available through alternative forms of tourism. It is to the topic of tourism and authenticity which we now turn, before moving on to explore alternative forms of tourism in more detail.

2.2.2 Tourism and authenticity

For MacCannell, one of the most prominent issues in tourism is authenticity, reflecting a concern about the ‘reality’ of the contemporary world (1999 [1976], see also; Rojek 1993). Various discussions of authenticity exist in this literature, the most convincing of which echo MacCannell in highlighting the apparent *inauthenticity* of the ‘real world’ dominated by economic relationships between individuals, using the concept of *anomie* (Dann 1977; 2002; Rojek 1993; MacCannell 1999 [1976]). Furthermore, travel is regarded in this perspective as providing a means to transcend the ‘presentation of self’ exercised in everyday life, and to find the ‘real’ other. MacCannell asserted that tourism then entails a quest for authenticity, specifically referring to the authenticity of *experience* in which the guest wishes to transcend the constructed ‘front stage’ and access the more ‘real’ and authentic ‘back-stage’ lives of the hosts (1999 [1976]; Goffman 1959). Tourists, then, seek intimate – “real” or “authentic” – experiences with

their hosts in a quest in which, MacCannell argues, they are destined as tourists to fail, only ever encountering the 'front-stage' or increasingly constructed 'back stages' similar to those of Brechtian plays, rather than the desired, intimate and fundamentally *authentic* back-stage.

This debate is well rehearsed and has been foreshadowed in the preceding pages. As such, it requires little further elaboration here. However, there are various critiques with MacCannell's concern with the quest for authenticity entailed in tourism which are pertinent to this discussion. Jamal and Hill, for example, argue that the idea that tourists *necessarily* seek the 'authentic' experiences of MacCannell's (1999 [1976]) work is erroneous (2002). Drawing on research by Redfoot (1984), they suggest that 'a substantial portion of travel is related to being with family and friends, having fun and seeking togetherness – [tourists] are not restlessly searching for the authentic' (2002, p.92). Seaton similarly argues that 'interactions with holiday *companions* and *fellow holiday makers* take up much more time than that spent in looking at either sites or people from the host culture' (2002, p.163, original emphasis), critiquing both Urry's work on the *Tourist Gaze* as well as MacCannell's preoccupation with authenticity (MacCannell 1999 [1976]; Urry 1990). Urry and Larsen, finally, suggest that the authenticity sought by tourists is best understood in terms of the contrasts drawn between the holiday and the everyday, rather than between the assumed authenticity of tourist encounters and inauthenticity of everyday life (2011). Authentic 'difference' does not, however, mean that what we experience at home is necessarily inauthentic, alienating or dull (Franklin 2001). For them, it is particularly the 'gaze' that orders this difference, demarcating that which is to be relevant, important and, of course, out of the ordinary. In turn this gaze is itself ordered by multitudinous tour operators, signs and methods of spatial organisation (Urry and Larsen 2011).

In relation to choices of tourist destinations and their apparent motivations there are further critiques concerning the assumed quest for authenticity of tourists. Cohen, in a review of the state of the sociology of tourism written in 1984 suggests that tourist behaviours can better be understood in the context of the broader 'life-plans' and/or 'psychological needs' of the tourist, and he

suggests that 'intrinsic motives such as self-actualisation seem to be particularly important' (1984, p.377)¹⁹. A more recent contribution, which again contrasts with MacCannell's view on authenticity, argues that 'what tourists seek are their own authentic selves or inter-subjective authenticity, and the issue of whether toured objects are authentic are irrelevant, or less relevant' (Wang 2000, p.71). In these perspectives tourist identities are more prominent than a quest for authentic experiences, and tourism is instead regarded as a space in which individual identities may be explored and negotiated. Do tourists seek authentic experiences of the 'other' (other cultures, other environments) or are they more concerned instead with seeking their own inner authenticity and authentic encounters with others 'like' themselves, such as the people with whom they are travelling or the other holidaymakers they meet?

2.3 Moving beyond 'mass' tourism

Base on the preceding discussion, leisure seems to be a fruitful avenue in which to seek sites in which individuals may flourish. However, I suggest that theories of mainstream tourism alone do not provide a sufficient framework here, because 'casual tourism, though hardly humiliating or despicable, is nonetheless too fleeting, mundane and commonplace for most tourists to find much of an identity in it' (Stebbins 2007, p.79). Where might we seek a form of tourism which is less 'fleeting, mundane and commonplace', in which individual identities might be allowed to flourish? Alternative forms of tourism offer a potential site, but what particular *type* of alternative tourism? The variety of alternative tourism to which the remainder of this thesis is concerned is volunteer tourism. I have twice conducted research with environmental volunteer tourists working in Greece for an organisation called ARCHELON (O'Mahoney 2009; 2010), and have also volunteered there on four separate occasions. In this site a form of tourism can be identified which seems to fulfil the criteria described above, as well as offering great potential to address the other questions raised in the preceding pages. Before elaborating on this

¹⁹ Whilst offering an interesting perspective, it's worth remembering the brief critique of motivations introduced on pages 51 and 52 which will be further elaborated shortly.

particular site, the phenomenon of volunteer tourism as a form of alternative tourism is explored.

Volunteering, for Wilson, is 'any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another group or person or cause' (Wilson 2000, p.215). Tourism, on the other hand, is described by John Urry as 'a leisure activity which presupposes its opposite, namely regulated and organised work' (Urry 2002a, see also Urry, 1992) and a phenomenon which involves travel of varying distances. The term 'volunteer tourism' might be regarded as somewhat oxymoronic – implying both work (volunteering) and the escape from work (tourism) (Butcher and Smith 2010, p.28). Wearing's definition of 'volunteer tourism' appears to be the most frequently cited, and refers to those who 'volunteer in an organised way to undertake holidays that may involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments, or research into aspects of society or environment' (2001, p.1). Whilst it entails work, this is performed without coercion or remuneration and as such is a form of leisure activity (Stebbins 1996; Stebbins and Graham 2004). For most volunteers it entails foreign travel engaged in during their free time, and as such is aligned with tourism. It sits, then, at an intersection between work and leisure – entailing characteristics of each apparently contrasting category.

Volunteer tourism is an example of alternative tourism: an ostensibly ethical form of tourism in which tourists can give something back rather than simply 'taking' from local cultures and ecosystems (Butcher 2006; Smith and Butcher 2010; Wearing 2001; 2002)²⁰. This type of tourism 'rebukes mass tourism and the consumptive mindset it engenders and instead offers alternative, more discriminating, socially and environmentally sustaining tourism experiences' (Lyons and Wearing 2008, p.3; see also Benson and Wearing 2012). Volunteer tourism is understood as an avenue through which one 'seeks to discover the type of life experience that best suits their needs' and, through doing so, to 'launch themselves into a journey of personal discovery' (Wearing 2001, p.9).

²⁰ However, critics argue that too often these types of tourism exist more as marketing techniques formulated to increase sales than as substantively different and quantifiably less damaging forms of travel (Liu, 2003, Butcher, 2002).

Do the experiences found in this type of leisure allow volunteers to flourish in ways that neither coerced or remunerated work nor purely hedonistic pursuits can? Previous research by this author has suggested that volunteering is a highly enjoyable and rewarding experience. The key findings of these projects are introduced here, before moving on to explore published academic research into volunteer tourism.

2.4 Studying volunteer sea-turtle conservationists

The first research project conducted by this author was an ethnographic study of the volunteer community, informed by participant observation and verbally administered surveys (O'Mahoney 2009). The volunteers in the community were exclusively white, largely middle-class, in possession of higher educational qualifications (university degrees or higher – 38 out of the 39 participants), predominantly aged between 18 and 30 (average age 25²¹), and included more females than males (24 females and 15 males). This study elicited a discussion of volunteer motivations, which were found to be complex and multifaceted, echoing the findings of Clary et al (1996), Bruyere and Rappe (2007), Wearing (2001), Campbell and Smith (2005; 2006), and Broad and Jenkins (2008), amongst others which I discuss shortly. These motivations were described by the volunteers as variously – and often concurrently – instrumental, altruistic and egoistic, though this element of the research was more descriptive than analytical or critical²². Prior engagement with volunteerism was also explored, finding that over half (20 out of 35) of the volunteers had some prior experience of volunteering, though this was largely intermittent and non-committal. This is a tendency which Hustinx and Lammertyn suggest is characteristic of contemporary volunteering, which is 'more dependent on personal interests and needs than on service ethic' or 'a sense of obligation', contrasting to the 'lifelong and demanding commitment' of traditional volunteering (2003, p.168).

²¹ This average is somewhat inflated by two 'outliers' aged 61 and 59; excluding these participants the average age was 23.

²² Since this study was conducted, however, my interest in motivations has moved beyond identification and description, as the concept itself, as aforementioned, now appears problematic – entailing a more 'psychologistic' than sociological approach.

The development of a strong community within the volunteer project – with its emergent structures, hierarchies and inter-personal relationships – was a dominant theme in this research.

Engaging with theoretical conceptualisations of cosmopolitanism, reflexivity and morality, the second research project at this site sought to explore the self-perceptions of ARCHELON volunteers, using a combination of narrative and thematic analyses to explore data generated in semi-structured interviews with ten participants. My theoretical and empirical concern in this research was to establish the importance of pro-environmental behaviours and of environmental concern generally for these participants, using Beck's ideas on cosmopolitanism and reflexivity (1992; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Beck et al. 2003) and Fevre's work on de-moralization (2000) as theoretical tools to understand their responses. Primarily, however, this study provided an opportunity for methodological experimentation at the same site.

Drawing variously on theories of tourism, reflexivity, cosmopolitanism, communities and morality, these prior research encounters left several questions unanswered, largely because of the brevity of the pieces and their exploratory nature. In the volunteer community I have been confronted time and again with an environment in which the usually opposing categories of work and leisure are blurred, a site in which strong bonds are established based on shared values and interests rather than economic relationships, and fundamentally one in which participants are *happy*, flourishing in their daily activities. Importantly, this site differs from the predominantly urban and technologically developed environments from which most of these participants hark, in terms of their interactions with work, with consumption, and with other people within this site. The wider volunteer tourism literature is discussed in the remainder of this chapter to refine the topics to be further explored within this research. Beforehand, however, a brief word on the topic of community, foreshadowed but under-elaborated in my previous research, is necessary.

2.4.1 The emergence of ‘community’ in volunteer tourism

The idea of community has been implied though not elaborated upon a few times in this and the preceding chapter. As Durkheim argued, the changing nature of societies including increased geographical mobility and accompanying urbanisation means that relationships are increasingly predicated on economic relations. Solidarity results from mutual obligations in the economic arena, rather than from bonds of kinship, religious affiliation or locality (Durkheim 1997 [1893]). A more pessimistic view suggests that these changes, in which individualisation increases, lead to an actual demise in solidarity (Melucci 1996; Offe 1996) rather than a change in its nature (Beck 1992; Durkheim 1997 [1893]). These changes have significant impacts upon ‘civil society’, which are beyond the remit of this review (see Putnam 2001; and Wuthnow 2002). The demise of communities can also be understood in relation to the ways in which contemporary lives are fragmented, a discussion foreshadowed in Chapter 1. Those with whom we associate within employment usually differ to and may never meet those with whom we associate socially and domestically. The suggestion that communities in advanced capitalism have been eroded is fairly uncontroversial and has been empirically corroborated (Dorling et al. 2008; Easton 2008). However, it has also been argued that it is through ‘communities’ and participation in societies that humans are able to flourish (Olin Wright 2009; MacIntyre 1985; Gorz 2011 [1989]; Bowring 1997). Herein, of course, lies the relevance for this research.

Olin Wright suggests that ‘one can...talk about the *degree* of community in a particular social setting, since reciprocity, solidarity, mutual concern and caring can vary in intensity and durability’ (2009, p.53). Similarly, Crow suggests that ‘certain contexts are more favourable than others to the development of solidarity’ (2002, p.3). The communities created in volunteer tourist experiences are short-lived and fluid. However, although participants in volunteer communities come and go, previous research into the sea-turtle conservation volunteers working for ARCHELON has suggested that these communities are what might be understood as ‘strong’ communities in which

there is a strong degree of social solidarity amongst members (O'Mahoney 2009). Whilst briefly discussed, the precise characteristics of this community were not sufficiently explored in my prior research. What is it about this sort of environment which creates this kind of 'strong' community?

Before the topics identified so far can be mobilised into a research design, empirical studies and theoretical discussions of volunteer tourism are reviewed to further the clarification and development of these questions in the light of extant research in this area. I present a brief overview of studies which explore volunteer demographics, seeking to better understand who volunteers – in terms of age, sex and social background. This empirical section proceeds with a discussion of the ways in which motivations for and benefits of volunteering have been presented in the empirical literature. At this point, my rejection of the concept of motivations as an analytic framework within which to conduct the current research is clarified. An introduction of the concept 'serious leisure' concludes this review, and the research questions developed in these chapters are summarised.

2.5 Measuring trends in volunteer tourism

Volunteer tourism is a huge industry: the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS/TRAM 2008) suggested that globally, 1.6 million people engage in volunteer tourism per year. Volunteer tourism has changed vastly since its inception in the form of the Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) and US Peace Corps in the 1950s (Tomazos and Butler 2008). However, it is very difficult to quantify its size or growth accurately (Conran 2011; Gray and Campbell 2007; Smith and Butcher 2010) because of the large number of independent, small and informal organisations facilitating this new form of tourism. Attempts to quantify trends in volunteer tourism indicate that it is a large and growing industry (Benson and Wearing 2012; Smith and Butcher 2010; Conran 2011; Callanan and Thomas 2005). Data suggest that the most significant growth in the volunteer industry began in the 1990s – which corresponds with a steep increase of gap year and 'backpacker' travel in this decade (Richards and Wilson 2004). Callanan and Thomas suggest that while

tourism in the 1990s could be characterised as 'the cultural and adventure tourism rush', that of the late 1990s and early 2000s entailed a 'volunteer tourism rush' (2005, p.183).

Callanan and Thomas argue that 'volunteer tourism is becoming increasingly ambiguous in definition and context' (2005, p.195). Trends vary between sectors and types of volunteering, be it domestic or international, regular or episodic (Andereck et al. 2012; Alexander 2012; Wilson and Musick 2000), and trends within volunteering for 'human' concerns (such as health, education or third world development) differ from those found within the environmental and conservation sectors (Callanan and Thomas 2005). All of these types of project are ostensibly intended to achieve some form of social or environmental 'good', identified and facilitated by the coordinating organisation and executed to a greater or lesser degree by volunteers. Quantitative research has been conducted to ascertain the demographic make-up of volunteer tourists based on surveys of national populations and empirical research conducted with specific groups of volunteer tourists, and the following data come from various empirical studies into these sectors.

Benson and Seibert surveyed 94 German volunteers who had engaged in various types of volunteer tourism in the previous 5 years, and found that at the time they had volunteered 75% were aged between 18 and 21, and only 2% were 30 or over (2009). Similar trends in age distribution were found by other authors looking at volunteer tourism (Broad and Jenkins 2008; McGehee 2002; Campbell and Smith 2005). Women seem more likely to volunteer than men, for example Benson and Seibert (2009) found that 85% of their 94 respondents were female (see also Grimm and Needham 2012; Andereck et al. 2012; McGehee 2002; Broad and Jenkins 2008; Brown and Morrison 2003) and this is particularly evident within sea turtle conservation (Campbell and Smith 2005; Bradford 2003). Volunteer tourists tend to originate from industrialised countries (Benson and Wearing 2012) and in conservation volunteering tend to be of 'Western descent' (Powell 1997). Volunteer tourists tend to be from

educated and economically privileged backgrounds²³ (Grimm and Needham 2012; Campbell and Smith 2005; McGehee 2002; Benson and Seibert 2009) an issue which perpetuates social class inequalities within society (Heath 2007).

2.6 Accounts for and benefits of volunteering

Now we know what the literature has to say about *who* volunteers in terms of demographic details, we can explore what existing studies might be able to tell us about why people say that they participate in these forms of tourism and how participants might be affected by volunteering. However, there are certain shortcomings in seeking to understand volunteer tourism using motivations as an analytic framework, which are rarely considered in any rigorous or consistent manner within this field. Firstly, as this section will demonstrate, volunteers' accounts of their motivations and the benefits they accrue from these experiences can be very hard to extricate from one another, because in most of the research discussed volunteers were asked about their motivations *after* their period of volunteerism, and as a consequence reported motivations are likely to have been influenced by their experiences. Moreover, and more importantly, motivations are framed in this literature as something which is internal to the volunteers, and as such pays little heed to the social forces which shape these accounts of motivations.

Swidler argues that apparent motivations are better understood as 'strategies of action' which are drawn from what she refers to as a 'tool-kit' or 'repertoire', rather than offering actual insights into the values of interlocutors (1986). In perspectives like this, rather than seeing motivations as inspiring action, justifications are thought to be mobilised to *account* for actions, and we can regard 'cultural meanings as rationalizing, making sense of, or (at most) allowing action rather than motivating it' (Vaisey 2009, p.1680). However, this wholly discursive perspective fails to account for *practical* consciousness, which Vaisey argues also influences individual action. He proposes that sociology instead needs to recognise both the conscious and unconscious (or practical)

²³ However, studies explicitly concerned with the social class backgrounds of volunteers are surprisingly limited.

ways in which life is negotiated and action is both justified (Swidler 1986) *and* motivated by unconscious dispositions (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu 1990) and the need for 'ontological security' (Giddens 1984).

In the context of this study, in which the volunteer project and participants are framed in relation to broader social and economic characteristics of the contemporary milieu, framing motivations for volunteer tourism as something which comes from *within* the volunteers – uninformed by social forces or contexts – is both contentious and unsatisfactory. Nonetheless, as aforementioned, the prominence of this concept in the literature requires that studies which do just this are reviewed here, though with an awareness that these accounts of motivations should be understood as inextricable from the socio-economic contexts from which they originate – they reflect dominant discourses *and* practical or unconscious components rather, I argue, than simply providing 'real' insight into the volunteers' psychological states. The literature reviewed in the following sections present volunteer tourists' accounts of motivations as variously instrumental, hedonistic, and altruistic. These concepts are each subjected to some theoretical discussion, so as to locate them as sociological rather than psychological categories. I then move on to look at the co-occurrence of these different types of motivations within volunteer tourists' accounts, before finally discussing the empirical literature about the impacts of volunteering upon participants.

2.6.1 Instrumental accounts of volunteering

Volunteer tourism, as an activity undertaken in one's leisure time, is often promoted as a means of enhancing one's employment prospects through gaining relevant experience or simply by virtue of having done some form of voluntary work which can be listed on one's CV (Halpenny and Caissie 2003; Broad and Jenkins 2008). The decision to volunteer is presented in this discourse as an economically rational one in line with the classic utilitarian perspective of rational choice theory (Simpson 2004; Coghlan 2007). Economic rationality, then, spills out of the economic realm of work as employment and into the (relatively new) realm of work-as-leisure. Brown *et al.* suggest that 'as

more and more contestants enter the labour market with graduate qualifications the value of credentials as a screening device declines. Therefore, personal qualities are emphasized' (2003, p.115). Thus, as well as the benefits of specific work experience, there is a growing recognition of the importance of 'the personality package' (Brown et al. 2003). Personal qualities in this context can include 'soft skills' such as 'communication skills, organisational skills and team working skills' (Heath 2007, p.94), as well as forms of personal development manifested in characteristics such as increased confidence, maturity and independence (Brown et al. 2003; Simpson 2005). More concrete benefits are also sought, such as learning about a particular species, improving networks, and accumulating skills in a specific field such as marine conservation (Broad and Jenkins 2008).

The typical focus in tourism research on motivations as an analytic category is reflected in the work of Broad and Jenkins, who argued that, of 45 volunteers working for a gibbon rehabilitation programme in Phuket, Thailand, 'about half of the volunteers indicated that they hoped to gain experience relevant to their studies and future career plans' (Broad and Jenkins 2008, p.80). Volunteering, then seems to be expected to provide benefits of a particular kind to participants. This raises concerns that class discrepancies in participation in volunteer tourism are not a consequence of the inequitable distribution of wanting to 'do good' for others (as noted by Wilson and Musick 2000), but of being *able* to do so. It is therefore important to emphasise the issue of social class here. This topic is broad and complex, and is well rehearsed enough to require only a superficial review here, though in light of the above discussion of instrumentalism is one which cannot be ignored. This class discrepancy in participation is perhaps, in part, a consequence of the different types of tourism enjoyed by those of different social classes, discussed above (Bourdieu 1984; Salazar 2004; Urry and Larsen 2011). These discrepancies are reproduced and naturalised in the apparently instrumental motivations of volunteer tourists, though these accounts of motivations cannot themselves be expected to reveal a great deal about the complexities of social class. Wilson and Musick suggest that it can be assumed 'that the desire to do good is more or less evenly distributed,

but the resources to fulfil that desire are not' (2000, p.244). However, further discussion of the relationship between class and volunteer tourism is required to both assess the accuracy of this statement and to explore the barriers which may create a class bias in recruitment.

Social class and instrumentalism

It has long been recognised that there are various mechanisms through which social class is reproduced across generations, regardless of aptitude (Ball 2003), and Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and cultural capital are illuminating here (Bourdieu 1984). Habitus comprises 'the tastes and distastes, sympathies and aversions, fantasies and phobias which, more than declared opinions, forge the unconscious unity of class' (Bourdieu 1984, p.77). It provides 'a way of understanding individuals as a complex amalgam of their past and present' (Tett 2000, p.185), and structures both the practices in which individuals engage and the perceptions of these practices. The habitus of the middle and upper classes apparently predispose their members with the knowledge of how best to 'play the game', through monopolising cultural capital to the detriment of upward social mobility from the lower socio-economic classes (Ehrenreich 1990; Bourdieu 1984). Cultural capital, Bennett *et al.* explain, 'works rather like property; those with it can gain at the expense of those who don't' (2009, p.11). Bourdieu argues that cultural capital provides an important, albeit unconsciously mobilised, weapon in the struggle between the classes, demarcating and perpetuating their differences in various fields (1984). As a consequence, and despite an historical increase in social mobility (Goldthorpe 1985), 'people's life-chances and who they become are strongly influenced by the accident of their natal class and the inequalities which follow from this' (Sayer 2005, p.1; see also Tomlinson 2010; Brown et al. 2003; Bernstein 1960; Skeggs 2004). Based on these ideas, experiences like volunteering, in which benefits such as the accrual of 'soft skills' and what I refer to here as 'CV enhancement' which are somewhat abstract are likely to be less appealing to working-class individuals (Bradley and Bathmaker 2013; Bourdieu 1984). Pearlin and Kohn attribute this to a middle class proclivity in American families

towards valuing 'self-direction' and a working-class valuation of 'conformity to external proscription' (Pearlin and Kohn 1966).

On a structural level, then, middle-class students may be more likely to recognise these benefits than working-class students and may be equipped with the cultural capital which allows them to 'play the game' more effectively (Bradley and Bathmaker 2013; Bourdieu 1984). Featherstone (1987) refers to this as a kind of 'calculating hedonism' emanating from the middle classes, in which the fragmented, discontinuous, and seemingly irrational narratives of members of this class comprise 'individual blocks [which] may be calculated and rational' (Urry and Larsen 2011, p.106). For Featherstone, these 'blocks' form part of a larger project of self-presentation through consumerism, but in terms of *experiential* consumption a similar argument might be made as middle class youths accumulate a diverse range of experiences to create their 'professional' self, encapsulated in the individual *curriculum vitae* (CV).

On a more pragmatic level, there are temporal and economic restraints which restrict working-class participation in these experiences, as working-class students are far more likely to need to seek paid employment during university holidays than their wealthier counterparts who are equipped with the economic capital to remain unemployed whilst studying (Bradley and Bathmaker 2013). Volunteer tourist experiences are often expensive and are generally paid for by the volunteers themselves, which means that these forms of travel, as with tourism more generally, are unevenly distributed. Various attempts to rectify this exist, however, such as Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and International Citizen Service (ICS) initiatives intended to broaden participation by offering economic help to potential volunteers (VSO 2013; ICS 2014). Nonetheless, the time commitment and structural obstacles to these opportunities often limit the participation of less economically privileged individuals.

Are these mechanisms at work in the phenomenon of volunteer tourism? Further research is required to identify the social class backgrounds of volunteer tourists and the manner in which they conceptualise their own acquisition of experience and skill through activities like volunteering. The idea

that leisure pursuits can provide a means of enhancing employability furthermore also offers some interesting support for the suggestion that economic forms of rationality are encroaching on increasing areas of our lives (Fevre 2000; Ritzer 2011; Bauman 2000; Bauman 1991), and this topic also warrants further empirical study²⁴.

Volunteer tourism and the ‘gap year’

Volunteer tourism is a common feature of the phenomenon known as the ‘gap year’, which can be defined as ‘a period of time between 3 and 24 months taken out of education or a work career’ (ATLAS/TRAM 2008). This is a type of travel which has increased rapidly since 1990 and has not declined significantly despite the near-global financial crisis which began in 2008 (Lyons et al. 2012, p.365). However formally or informally organised, gap year programmes frequently entail volunteer experiences ‘which seek to combine the hedonism of tourism with the altruism of development work’ (Simpson 2004, p.681). Furthermore, there are also many opportunities for paid gap year employment and as such gap years are frequently marketed as a favourable venture with tangible benefits in terms of employability and self-development, under the broad rubric of ‘experience’. In this sense, volunteer tourism and the gap year are both phenomena in which work and leisure are related rather than opposed.

The processes through which these experiences might benefit individuals, however, are poorly elucidated. Simpson writes that within the gap year industry ‘the concept of experience has been simplified and transformed from a pedagogical process to a method ... [E]xperience alone ... is promoted as an educational process in its own right’ (Simpson 2005, p.464). Sin argues that

²⁴ However, to return to the critique of the concept of motivations introduced earlier, it is important to remember that simply looking at people’s declared motivations cannot reveal much about the inner workings of class due to the ways in which class becomes naturalised in these discourses of individual motivations. Exploring volunteers’ accounts of their motivations framed in the context of a broader discussion of the various elements of post-industrial society which seem to influence them – such as social class, individualism, economic rationality, work and consumption centred lifestyles – can be more fruitful.

‘many volunteer tourists are typically more interested in fulfilling objectives relating to the self’ (2009:497), such as seeking to find out what they’re capable of and broadening their geographical and personal horizons. This shift seems to represent a form of professionalisation and commoditisation of gap years in general and volunteer tourism in particular. In the case of the former, it transforms the image of the ‘gapper’ from one of a Kerouac-esque drop-out to one of a ‘global citizen’ (Butcher and Smith 2010, p.30), and in the case of the latter it shifts the image of the volunteer tourist from the altruist to the instrumental self-optimiser. Is volunteer tourism something which is viewed by participants as inherently self-interested, or something which is framed as motivated by concern for others (species, ecosystems, or social groups)?

Notwithstanding that the prominence of these apparently instrumental ‘motivations’ is itself indicative of dominant societal discourses of personal growth, employability, and economically informed rationality, it’s also important to note that the prevalence of instrumental motivations described in the literature may not be the only way in which the relationship between work and leisure peculiar to this phenomenon is manifested. Ingram suggests that as a consequence of contemporary lifestyles, in which work pressures are high and discourses of individualisation, self-fulfilment, and achievement are prominent, ‘the boundary between professional and personal spaces has become vague as globalisation and deregulation have transformed the way that people work’ (Ingram 2011, p.214, see also Beck and Beck Gernsheim 2002). She argues that a consequence of these changes, in which work is increasingly and largely without resistance seeping into our ‘free’ or ‘leisure’ time, has been the development of a belief that *all* time should be spent productively. This echoes concerns raised earlier about the centralisation of employment to contemporary lives. In this scenario, work and leisure are increasingly indistinguishable, ‘and in the form of volunteering and tourism, the combination of work and leisure is not a contradiction, but a rational match’ (2011, p.215)²⁵.

²⁵ Various authors in both tourism studies and sociology more broadly have argued that the blurring of categories such as discussed in this passage is emblematic of late, reflexive or liquid modernity or of *post* modernity (Giddens, 1991, Beck and Beck Gernsheim, 2002; MacCannell, 2002; Ingram, 2011).

The rise of gap year travel and increased opportunities to work whilst travelling, both in paid roles and in volunteer tourism environments, is therefore pertinent to understanding the contemporary blurring of distinctions between work and leisure, the contemporary role of tourism, and indeed the roles of work, tourism and leisure in shaping contemporary discourses. Do volunteer tourists relate their leisure pursuits explicitly or implicitly to their employment aspirations? Is engaging in this type of volunteering perceived by volunteers as contributing to a project in which one's 'self' is central? How is the proposed blurring of work and leisure manifested in volunteer tourists' own accounts volunteering? The manners in which volunteer tourists talk about their motivations, the work of volunteering, and their future employment warrants further empirical examination to address these questions.

Self-development: a means or an end?

Volunteer tourist motivations reflect societal discourses pertaining to self-improvement, broadening horizons and experiencing self-development/discovery and independence (Wearing 2001). Based on interviews with 228 Swiss volunteers, Rehberg suggests that a 'quest for oneself' was a prominent category in volunteers' accounts of their motivations – and these accounts included references to the desire to gain experience, personal development, clarification or advancement of professional goals, as well as 'discovering or transcending personal limits' (2005, p.116-119). This apparent quest for personal discovery is of particular relevance to volunteer tourism in part due to the generally extended nature of volunteer experiences, allowing greater time as well as more intense immersion in a new way of life than might be found in a package-tour lasting only a few weeks (Wearing 2001). Furthermore, Wearing suggests that greater levels of independence are perceived of engagement with volunteer tourist experiences than of package-tours by participants, allowing for the exploration, revision or confirmation of volunteers' perceived identities (ibid, p.10). Whilst the processes through which personal benefits like this accrue are rarely elaborated upon, a vague sense that it is 'good' for a person to see the world and experience other cultures is present in these discourses

(Simpson 2005). Research into how volunteer tourists frame their understanding of what is meant by experience in the context of volunteering could shed further empirical light on this topic: do participants feel that volunteer tourism substantively contributes to their personal development? And if so, is this regarded as a good in itself, or a means to increasing employability?

2.6.2 Hedonism and volunteering

Research into volunteer tourism at times ignores the more traditional 'touristic' appeals of volunteering, focussing instead upon what are perceived as instrumental or the altruistic motivations. It should not, however, be forgotten that volunteer tourism, in common with more mainstream forms of tourism, is very often marketed as exciting and enjoyable, and this marketing influences the choices made by volunteers. Discourses of recovery for work and novelty seeking are prominent in contemporary western society in which, as I have argued previously, work and leisure are commonly presented as oppositional, and 'newness' is constantly sought (Bauman 2007). Sin suggests, based on 33 in-depth interviews with 11 Singaporean volunteers working in South Africa, that the 'volunteer tourists interviewed believed that travelling allowed them to see something new and exotic, to do something fun and exciting, or simply to escape mundane tasks at home' (2009, p.488). As such their decision to engage in volunteer tourism was 'not too different from conventional choices that tourists make in deciding holiday destinations to visit' (ibid; similar findings were observed by Broad and Jenkins, 2008). Volunteer tourism often provides opportunities to visit new places and meet new people. In the case of community based volunteer tourism it affords participants with opportunities for ostensibly 'authentic' and intimate encounters with host cultures (Conran 2011), and in conservation volunteering, providing more intimate, sustained, or interactive encounters with the natural environments and creatures than traditional or 'mass' tourism might allow (Campbell and Smith 2006).

Tourists and volunteer tourists alike seek something different from their everyday lives: experiences in which the everyday is 'inverted' (Urry and Larsen

2011; Gottlieb 1982; MacCannell 1999 [1976]). The elements which tourists seek can be understood in relation to the theory of value exchange known as 'the scarcity hypothesis' (Inglehart 1981). In this hypothesis, 'one places the greatest subjective value on those things that are in relatively short supply' (ibid, p.881). Gottlieb argues that one manner in which this is manifested in tourism is that middle-class tourists seek opportunities to be 'a peasant for a day', whilst those from lower-middle or working-class backgrounds seek to be 'king/queen for a day' (1982). Those seeking to be 'kings' or 'queens' are of less interest here, but given the prior discussion of anti-consumerism and the seeking of possible alternatives to 'mainstream' capitalist lifestyles in Chapter 1, this idea of tourists and particularly volunteer tourists seeking to be 'a peasant for a day' is intriguing. My own research has shown how volunteer tourism experiences often entail a temporarily lower standard of living for volunteers, and given the class disparity already noted as a characteristic of volunteer tourism this presents an interesting question here. In these environments where consumption is dramatically reduced and material possessions and economic interactions are minimised – in which the volunteers are removed, in other words, from high-intensity market settings (Leiss 1978) – do the needs, wants, wishes or desires of volunteers shift?

2.6.3 Volunteering and altruism

A final key motivation which is prominently discussed in the volunteer tourism literature is altruism. Indeed, Haski-Leventhal argues that 'the connection [between volunteering and altruism] is so strong that one cannot speak of one without the other (2009, p.272). Altruism can be defined as 'behaviour intended to benefit another, even when this risks possible sacrifice to the welfare of the actor' (Monroe 1996, p.6), and is often cited as a motivating factor for volunteer tourism (Brown and Lehto 2005; Wearing 2001) which is, in turn, frequently set up as an oppositional category to self interest (Benson and Seibert 2009; Grimm and Needham 2012; Tomazos and Butler 2008). However, whilst subject to the same criticisms as any other apparent 'motivation' presented in this literature, beyond these more general critiques of the use of motivations at all,

altruism itself is a highly debated concept. Various attempts to expel or problematize the concept exist, based primarily on the idea that humans are always out to get something, in an argument which proposes that altruism is always, at root, egoistic. Hobbes, for example, regarded altruism as fundamentally self-interested, arguing that ‘of the voluntary acts of every man, the object is some *good to himself*’ (Hobbes 1994 [1651], p.82, original emphasis). Critiques of altruism such as Hobbes’ are premised on a belief in *homo economicus* – ‘a rational being who acts foremost to fulfil his or her own needs or interests’ (Haski-Leventhal 2009, p.292).

These interests are not always tangible. Giving time to others offers personal rewards including human and social forms of capital, and at the very least results in a ‘warm glow’ (Andreoni 1995; Smith 1981). Smith argues that ‘there is literally no evidence to justify a belief in some “absolute” form of human altruism, in which the motivation for an action is utterly without some form of selfishness’ (1981, p.23). This is because, he states, at a minimum level, rewards of ego enhancement and ‘feeling good’ about what you’ve done are inevitable consequences of altruistic acts:

Human beings have selves as the central organizing principle/pattern of their psyches, and all human beings strive in one degree or another at every waking moment to maintain, and if possible enhance, both the structure of the self and positive net sentiments regarding the self. (1981, p.24)

However, Knox argues that the fact ‘that another’s happiness cannot be obtained without the contingent effect of one’s satisfaction does not undermine or even threaten the true altruism of an act’ (1999, p.477). Doing good, even if it does benefit the actor as well as the recipient(s), can still be understood as fundamentally altruistic, and failing to recognise the altruism of volunteers denies that people are oriented towards needs which exist beyond their own.

The discussion above illustrates the problematic nature of attempts to extricate altruism from self-interest. Indeed, from a utilitarian view, the very distinction between altruism and self-interest makes little sense, as the ‘pursuit of one’s own happiness and that of the greater number would either coincide or fail to

conflict' (Lukes 2006, p.88). An alternative perspective views altruism as relative rather than 'pure' or 'absolute', and as Soper suggests, this can be contingent upon the satisfaction of self-interest (see Chapter 1 of this thesis, and Soper 2009). The premise that any action must be considered based on what is given *and* what is received, as these two sides are inextricable from one another, has been employed to aid understandings of volunteers' accounts of their motivations (Campbell and Smith 2005). This approach entails the recognition of 'a relationship between selflessness and self-fulfilment' in which volunteers can be understood as simultaneously giving *and* receiving (Cloke et al. 2007, p.1094). Wilson and Musick, for example, argue that 'research studies show that most people do in fact hold the belief that helping others is a good way to gain fulfilment for yourself' (2000, p.141). Wearing suggests that a prominent motivation for doing environmental volunteering was what he refers to somewhat contradictorily as 'an altruistic attempt to explore the 'self'' (2001, p.3) in which 'the self is enlarged or expanded, challenged, renewed or reinforced'. A more useful concept for this research would be that adopted by Schwartz of 'self-transcendence', which entails ideas of benevolence, universalism, understanding and concern for other (1994). This terminology allows for the recognition that certain acts and beliefs *transcend* the self, going beyond oneself but still contributing to it, and furthermore avoiding the connotations of self-sacrifice implied by altruism. Are self-transcendent discourses prominent in the accounts of motivations provided by participants, and how do these accounts interact with more instrumental accounts of motivations?

Consequentialist or deontological ethics?

Given the previous discussion of the encroachment of economic forms of rationality into our sense-making (Fevre, 2000), and the dominance of social exchange theory which rationalises altruism in terms of consequences, it is important here to explore the philosophical precedence of the concept of altruism as an inherently *moral* form of behaviour. Caton argues that philosophical approaches to morality are a necessary academic response to the

contradictory forces of positivism and postmodernism, with the former guilty of denigrating discussions of values and morals as 'outside the bounds of legitimate social enquiry' and the latter 'pronouncing it irrelevant in the epistemological vacuum created by the realisation that there are no secure foundations for truth' (2012, p.1916). She argues for an engagement with moral philosophy in tourism studies as a necessary remedy to this predicament, maintaining that it is senseless to ignore moral philosophy in this context:

Because, in a world with nothing – not religion, not the scientific method, not even human reason – to firmly and absolutely hitch our conceptualisations to, it would seem that our moral capacity, in terms of our ability to reflect on the meaning of our lives and to engage in deliberation with others, is *the most important tool we have to work with* in trying to make choices about how to successfully function with one another in the shared space of our planet (ibid, original emphasis).

Similarly, Sayer argues for a recognition in the social sciences that individuals have values and interests which are deeply important to them, and as such act on the basis of more than just 'preferences'. He suggests that it is too easy for social scientists to forget this in applying variously normative, economic and rational theories to explain human behaviour (2005, 2011).

A *non-consequentialist*, deontological approach to ethics offers a sophisticated understanding of morality and of those acts performed to help others rather than serve one's own interests, and avoids the solipsistic cul-de-sac in which economic rationality, positivism, postmodernism or social exchange theory each leave us. Over-emphasising the consequences of an action such as volunteering obscures deontological motivations for self-transcendent acts, such as doing something because it is *right* (Knox 1999). Furthermore, deriving value from an action does not necessarily deprive it of any moral quality (ibid), and empirical accounts of motivations which refer to consequences are inevitably influenced by dominant discourses – including those of employability, growth and personal development (Ehrenreich 1990; Gerrard 2014; Illich and Verne 1976). The non-consequentialist perspective looks at the good act performed in isolation from the consequences of the action. The deed is done as an end in itself, not as a

means of acquiring something further²⁶. As previously suggested, only through engaging in acts which serve as ends rather than means might *eudaimonia* be realised (MacIntyre 1985; Aristotle 1826 [circa 350BCE]). In the context of this research then, it will be interesting to explore the extent to which consequentialist discourses are mobilised in volunteers' accounts, as well as those which are instead deontological, valuing volunteering in and for itself rather than in terms of what it can achieve for the volunteers.

2.6.4 Subjectivity and multiplicity in accounts of motivations

Whilst some would argue that there has been a movement from altruism to instrumentalism or self-interest in characterising volunteer tourist accounts of motives in line with changes in the labour market, the increasingly neo-liberalisation of capitalism and the accompanying onus on the individual to seek self-promotion and employability (Heath 2007; Eckstein 2001), there has been a backlash against this idea of a subjective shift (Cloke et al. 2007; Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003). The response has called for the recognition of the multifaceted nature of volunteers' motivations (Clary, 1996; Bruyere and Rappe, 2007; Wearing, 2001; Campbell and Smith, 2005; Broad and Jenkins, 2008 amongst others). Following a review of 44 peer reviewed papers, books and chapters published between 1993 and 2008, Coghlan and Fennell state that, 'in most cases, the studies have identified both altruistic and egoistic motivations within the same sample' (2009, p.389). Most volunteers cited combinations of self and other-oriented influences, accounting for their motivations in ways which refer to helping others and to benefiting themselves (Campbell and Smith 2005; Rehberg 2005; Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003; Sin 2009). This is in line with tourism research which has found that reasons given for tourist choices are usually multifaceted, relating to practical, economic, ethical and personal/biographical factors (Swarbrooke and Horner 2007).

²⁶ Monroe uses this kind of approach in her discussion of Germans who hid Jews in World War 2 – Germans protecting the Jews did so *to protect the Jews*, the motivation was an end in itself (1996).

Again, this supports Soper's suggestion that hedonism can entail the concurrent satisfaction of both altruistic and egoistic considerations, as individuals seek to increase their own personal enjoyment and pleasures through avoiding inflicting harm on others, or indeed, in volunteer tourism through actively seeking to assist others.

2.7 Volunteer tourism and 'life-politics'

Volunteer tourism, like tourism more generally, entails the potential for individual development, especially as regards personal and political concerns and attitudes as these experiences can challenge, undermine or reinforce volunteers' existing perceptions of both the self and the 'other' (Zahra 2011; Wearing 2001). Moreover, the decision to volunteer, where to volunteer and what projects in which to participate are often informed by volunteers' existing values and concerns (Sin 2009; Smith and Butcher 2010). Sin links volunteering to self-expression through politicised lifestyle and leisure choices, suggesting that 'the choice of where to travel to, how to travel, and what activities to engage in while travelling are all parts of the narrative about one's identity' (2009, p.491). These lifestyles, increasingly, are informed by a greater reflexivity about the implications of individual actions, particularly consumption, upon other implicated parties – including producers, distributors and the environments upon which these processes impact (Soper 2007; 2008; Beck 1992; Klein 2000; Binkley 2009). Through participation in volunteer projects 'volunteer tourists seek to affect change as a part of a self-conscious shaping of their own identity' (Smith and Butcher 2010, p.234).

Giddens' concept of 'life politics' – which Bauman suggests refers to 'identity construction, negotiation and assertion' – can be useful here to explore the relationship between volunteering and identity (Giddens 1991; 1994; Bauman 2007, p.121). Smith and Butcher argue that identity is related to volunteering in the form of 'life politics', arguing that

The focus of the gap year and volunteer tourism companies seems to resonate with significant numbers of people seeking to act upon their world, outside of traditional political channels, in the realm of the ethical

consumption of holidays. For these people, the erstwhile assumed boundaries between the political and personal life no longer apply. Rather, they can be seen as engaging in life politics, through which the two are closely related (2010, p.228).

In this perspective, volunteer tourism is related to understandings both of one's self and one's relationship to the 'other' (other people, other places, and other living beings), acting beyond the traditional constraints of class, religion or family (Giddens, 1991). Hustinx and Lammertyn offer a similar analysis though using an alternative conceptual framework. They characterise contemporary volunteer tourism as a form of 'reflexive volunteering' (2003). Reflexive types of volunteering are a consequence and characteristic of globalisation, entailing both 'social closeness and geographical distance that crystallizes in a situation of local disintegration amid global integration' (2003, p.178, following on from Beck, 1992). In these situations, belonging is not *ascribed* based on place, gender, class or race, but is *selected* as a consequence of shared interests. McGehee and Santos similarly suggest that in today's geographically mobile society, 'volunteer tourism is an activity that could provide a connection for people with similar interests', as these connections might not necessarily be provided at the local level (2005, p.764; see also Comerford and Fambrough 2002). This reflects a more individualised kind of politics, based no longer on 'left' and 'right', but on 'right' and 'wrong' (Mouffe 2005). The portrayal of volunteer tourism as 'doing the right thing' (and also mass tourism as perhaps 'wrong') is indicative of this, argue Butcher and Smith (2010, p.31)²⁷. Volunteering as a form of ethical consumption is a means of forming communities (real or imagined) based on values and 'political' interests which are shared by the participants.

Whilst shifts towards ethical forms of tourism framed in this manner might be regarded as reflecting a cosmopolitan, responsible and engaged form of citizenship, they could also be construed as reflecting the demise of collective and/or institutional responsibility, whereby individuals pursue solutions within

²⁷ Whether this shift is representative of a general decline in the importance of politics or instead an expansion of politics into an unprecedented range of personal behaviours and preferences is, however, unclear - and is well beyond the remit of this review (see Furedi, 2005).

their own biographical choices rather than seeking collective solutions to collective problems (Smith and Butcher 2010; Gorz 2011 [1989]). Rather than being 'naturally inscribed in collective patterns of behaviour', for reflexive volunteers 'the individual world of experience becomes the principal frame of reference ... it is a self-induced and self-monitored event within a self-constructed biographical frame' (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003, p.172). This point implicates a well-rehearsed debate over individualisation – a process rooted in the Enlightenment which shows no sign of abating. Further empirical research is necessary to understand the way in which individuals understand their own responsibility *and* ability to effect change. Having explored in some depth how volunteer tourists account for their decisions to volunteer let us now look at the apparent impacts of volunteering upon participants.

2.8 What are the impacts of volunteer tourism upon participants?

The impacts of volunteering are less frequently explored than are the motivations, perhaps because if providers know what volunteers *want*, they can better understand what to *offer* – in terms of tailoring both experiences and marketing (Bruyere and Rappe 2007; Grimm and Needham 2012). However, understanding the impacts of volunteering can serve a similar marketing purpose; 'if volunteering can be shown to be good for you', physically, mentally and socially, 'perhaps more people will do it' (Wilson and Musick 2000, p.168). For Brown and Lehto, volunteer tourism entails 'blending good hard work with some fun activities wrapped around it, and knowing that there will be some pretty neat people doing the same thing' (2005, p.489). Similarly, Coghlan and Fennell suggest that experience, personal development, fun and other egoistic benefits are the most prominent impacts of volunteering. Importantly, they suggest that 'volunteer tourism offers benefits of a kind which cannot always be purchased', including increased self-awareness, gaining knowledge and skills, development of professional and personal social networks, and empowerment (Coghlan and Fennell 2009, p.393). These factors resemble the instrumental goods discussed previously: however, it was also suggested earlier that

volunteering may offer less tangible goods, such as the potential for human happiness and flourishing. I turn now to a few discrete empirical studies of the benefits of volunteering to explore this further.

O'Brien *et al* combined qualitative and quantitative methods to explore both the benefits accrued by volunteers from their participation and their motivations for participating (O'Brien et al. 2010). The authors argued that the benefits of volunteering can be physical and/or social, as well as resulting in increased mental well-being for volunteers. Brown and Lehto also sought to explore the motivations and benefits of volunteering, and used data from qualitative interviews (2005). They argue that 'on the premise that motivations derive from a real or perceived need, it is justifiable to analyse tourist choices of destinations and activities as a consequence of need deficiency' (ibid, p.481). Assuming that these 'needs' can be understood in a distinctly sociological way – originating in society rather than from the individual psyche – this seems like a fair assertion. The authors therefore link the benefits of volunteering to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, arguing that volunteering can lead to the achievement of the highest of these needs: self-actualisation and autonomy, which in turn align with the needs advocated by the theorists discussed in Chapter 1. They also suggest that volunteering can have long-term consequences on participants' perceptions of their own privileged circumstances, how they relate to their own families, and the importance of the relationships formed during the volunteer interactions themselves (2005). These interactions, McGehee and Santos argue, 'may not be particularly lengthy, [but] often the intensity makes up for the duration' (2004, p.764).

Whilst the benefits discussed by O'Brien *et al.* (2010) and by Brown and Lehto (2005) are more immediate and concrete, looking at the emotional states of current volunteers soon after volunteering, Zahra explored whether the benefits of volunteering can be regarded as long-lasting or even transformative for participants. She used longitudinal²⁸ ethnographic case studies of ten

²⁸ Zahra's interviews were conducted with volunteers between seven and eighteen years after their voluntary experiences. However she knew many of the volunteers and worked and travelled alongside them during their participation, hence the classification of this research as longitudinal.

volunteers to explore the 'long-lasting impact' of these experiences (2011, p.90). Based on interviews with volunteers who engaged in volunteer tourism between 1989 and 2000, her findings suggest that;

The primary motivations of the volunteers were to experience a culture, go overseas, go on a holiday in which everything was organised, and do something worthwhile. When they were confronted with suffering, poverty, cultures embedded with deep values devoid of materialism and consumerism, combined with the cheerfulness of the host communities amid the lack of basic needs, each volunteer underwent a cathartic ... and life-changing ... experience. (ibid, p.90-91).

She found that volunteers experienced changes in their attitudes towards materialism and consumerism, becoming more cognisant of Western materialism, marketing and consumerism and in turn seeking alternative values. A relational approach like the one adopted in this thesis might have been useful here, so as to understand the contexts from which Zahra's volunteers originated to illustrate more fully the contrasts between these and the 'host' environments. Former volunteers interviewed for her research also suggested that they became more concerned about both their families and communities as a result of volunteering, as well as becoming more involved in issues of social justice. Finally, their experiences impacted upon subsequent touristic choices, resulting in the rejection of 'mass' tourism practices and participants seeking greater local engagement when travelling abroad.

Zahra's research suggests that volunteering abroad has long-term transformative potential for volunteers, and echoes Wearing's assertion that these experiences can cause 'value change and changed consciousness in the individual that will subsequently influence their lifestyle' (2001, p.x). The perceptions of volunteer tourists are considered to be potentially more likely to be transformed in volunteer tourist encounters than in 'mass' tourist encounters due to the higher level of cultural or environmental interaction experienced by participants. This is thought to have implications for levels of social, environmental and, potentially, political engagement or concern extending beyond the volunteer encounter (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003; McGehee and Santos 2005; Brown and Lehto 2005; Zahra 2011). It has been

argued that volunteering can have a transformative impact upon volunteers, leading to a reassessment of priorities (Simpson 2005) and even difficulty in re-assimilating into 'mainstream' society afterwards (Leigh 2006). However, Lyons *et al.* draw attention to the relationship between these experiences and the socio-economic contexts from which volunteers originate, arguing that volunteering inevitably takes place within the context of 'neo-liberal forms of self-regulatory citizenship'. Thus, whilst perhaps an act of ostensible resistance to the 'market-mindedness of neo-liberalism', volunteers 'are bound to run headlong into its hegemonic processes' (Lyons *et al* 2012, p.369). Further efforts to explore the impacts of volunteering upon participants are necessary to understand the neo-liberal discourses and mechanisms at work within volunteer tourism in relation to the socio-economic environments encountered by these volunteers at home.

Whilst these studies offer some fascinating insights into the impacts of volunteering upon participants in the short and long-term, for the most part they tell us little about how these experiences relate to volunteers' experiences of life outside of the project. Given the literature with which this thesis commenced, it seems particularly pertinent to understand the types of *work* which volunteers perform on these projects, and how these relate to volunteers' accounts of other types of work performed *outside* the volunteer encounter. The alienating nature of remunerated employment was discussed in the previous chapter, in contrast to what Gorz (2011 [1989]) characterises as 'work-for-oneself' and 'autonomous activities' and Marx's (1993 [1939]) concept of 'free working'. What kinds of work are performed by volunteers, and how are they framed in volunteers' accounts in relationship to the forms of remunerated work we find outside? Do these forms of work provide volunteers with ways of positively impacting upon their own environment in a 'non-alienated' manner (Marx 1993 [1939]; Gorz 2011 [1989])? Returning to a theme that has influenced so much of this review, if volunteers' values and attitudes change within these projects, can this tell us anything about the sense-making practices of volunteer tourists (Fevre 2000; MacIntyre 1985)? To address these

questions, it is necessary to examine more closely the relationship between work and leisure unique to the phenomenon of volunteering.

2.9 Volunteering: work, leisure, or ‘serious leisure’?

In some respects, volunteering can be understood as a form of leisure, as defined earlier by Stebbins (2007). Volunteering is, for Stebbins, ‘serious leisure’ which he defines as an ongoing engagement with a particular leisured activity. This is in contrast to ‘project-based leisure’, in which we find ‘a unique sense of time allocation: time use is more or less intense but limited to a known and definite period on the calendar’ (2007:70). Stebbins argues that serious leisure can be distinguished from casual leisure or project-based leisure because of the following six characteristics:

The occasional need to persevere; the potential to find a career within the activity; these careers employ the use of significant personal effort using the participants’ acquired skills, knowledge, training or experience; serious leisure entails various benefits; self-actualization, self-enrichment, self-expression, regeneration or renewal of the self, feelings of accomplishment, enhancement of self-image, social interaction and belongingness; a unique ethos grows up amongst those who participate in the activity; participants in serious leisure tend to identify strongly with the activity (Stebbins, 2007, 12-13).

Because of these characteristics, Stebbins and Graham suggest that ‘volunteering as leisure gives participants a sense of purpose, provokes serious contemplation, encourages concern for others, provides the opportunity to further an interest, and to have fun and enjoyment’ (2004, p.241). Based on this, volunteering seems like a fruitful avenue to find a site in which individuals might flourish, because ‘the substantial forms of volunteering can generate a sense of deep personal fulfilment’ (ibid). However, volunteering – when conceptualised as serious leisure – usually refers to long-term, local and/or persistent forms of volunteering. What about volunteer *tourism* though, which is contained within a predetermined temporal frame? Is this still ‘substantial’ enough to generate this ‘deep personal fulfilment’? The argument was presented earlier that happiness can be a temporary experience rather than a stable state (Wang 2002; Russell 1993 [1930]), and that it was contingent upon

individual realisation of given capacities and needs (Sayer 2005). Volunteer tourism – a phenomenon in which creates we find ephemeral or temporary communities in which worthwhile ‘goods’ are sought – could in this respect be a perfect environment for exploring the happiness and fulfilment of individuals, who are pursuing something which is of some value to them and to the wider social or environmental milieu. However, if the volunteers are found to be happy and fulfilled in these spaces, is that in part *because* their participation is temporally limited, even if the impacts of their volunteering may not be?

2.10 Conclusion

The previous chapter – which discussed employment, consumption, needs and ‘sense-making’ – generated some interesting research questions, but was largely divorced from empirical evidence and failed to provide adequate solutions to questions about where individuals might find spaces in which to flourish. This chapter began by examining the contemporary character of a specific form of leisure – tourism – and how this relates to work. Tourism, it was argued, provides a sanctioned and institutionalised escape, in which individuals seek to briefly experience forms of happiness and well-being denied to them in work and only available in an ersatz form through commodity consumption. Volunteer tourism was then discussed as an example of one of the recent ‘new’ forms of tourism which have flourished since the 1990s. Sociological literature pertaining to demographic trends within volunteer tourism and volunteers’ accounts of motivations for and benefits of volunteering were then reviewed, drawing attention to the relationship between volunteer tourism and work, as well as social class inequalities within this phenomenon.

Volunteer tourism seems an appropriate place to seek opportunities for individual flourishing, but an over-reliance on social-exchange theory and psychological attempts to understand motivations accompanied with a lack of rigorous theoretical engagement with the broader socio-economic context of this phenomenon in this literature leave significant empirical and theoretical gaps which must be addressed. Furthermore, an over-reliance on surveys and interviews characterises this literature, which presents certain limitations

which I discuss further in the following chapter. The types of questions I am left with at this stage require a theoretically and methodologically sophisticated approach to overcome these problems. The next chapter begins by listing the research questions developed so far, and describes the research design through which answers to these questions are sought.

3 Researching Volunteer Tourists

A range of theoretical and empirical literature has thus far been employed to generate research questions, providing an understanding of the academic context in which this research falls and illustrating the broader socio-cultural context from which the phenomenon of volunteer tourism has emerged. The questions developed in the previous two chapters are intended to address the theoretical and empirical gaps identified in these literatures, and are summarised below. Research conducted at a sea turtle conservation project in Greece run by ARCHELON provides data which is analysed to seek answers to these questions.

The qualitative research design laid out in this chapter details the methods in which these data were collected. Qualitative research includes ‘an array of interpretative techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world’ (Van Maanen 1979, p.9). Environmental volunteer tourism has been identified as the social world which provides the site for empirical study, as an environment in which paid work and commodity consumption are decentralised and in which the traditionally opposed categories of work and leisure are blurred. The remainder of this thesis seeks to address the gaps in the empirical and theoretical literature discussed so far by addressing the following exploratory research questions. The primary questions (1, 2 and 3) were noted in the introduction, and their subsidiary questions were developed in Chapters 1 and 2.

3.1 Research questions²⁹

1. What are the impacts of this volunteer tourist experience upon participants?
 - a. How is community manifested in this site?

²⁹ These are referred to in subsequent sections as ‘RQ1’, ‘RQ1b’ and so on.

- b. Is this an environment in which certain needs are better fulfilled than they are in contemporary western societies, and if so, how or why are these needs better fulfilled?
 - i. What non-commodifiable goods, if any, are sought or celebrated in this environment?
 - ii. What are the 'virtues' of volunteering, and how can these be understood in relation to the virtues found elsewhere?
 - iii. What can this site tell us about what individuals need to flourish?
 - c. To what extent does this site provide an alternative space in which non-economic forms of reason gain strength, impacting upon how these volunteer tourists make sense of the world?
 - d. In what ways does volunteer tourism offer more than hedonistic gratification, facilitating *eudaimonia*?
 - i. Can a short period of volunteering be regarded as substantial enough to generate the deep personal fulfilment required for *eudaimonia*?
 2. How can we understand the popularity of volunteer tourism in relation to broader social contexts?
 - a. Who engages in volunteer tourism, in terms of age, sex, nationality and socio-economic background?
 - b. What accounts do individuals mobilise when asked why they volunteered?
 - i. Do tourists appear to seek authentic experiences through volunteer tourism, and if so what *types* of authenticity do they claim to seek?
 - ii. Do volunteer tourists see this experience as an opportunity for CV enhancement and self-development, or for self-transcendence?
 - c. To what extent are social-class inequalities reproduced in this environment?
 3. What can this research tell us about the contemporary relationship between work and leisure?

- a. How do volunteers' accounts of work confirm or contradict the critique of work presented in Chapter 1?
- b. What specific forms of work are performed by these participants whilst volunteering?
 - i. What forms of non-alienated work can be identified here, in which individuals can flourish and find personal fulfilment, and how might this impact upon the volunteer's attitudes to other forms of work?

3.1.1 Previous research methods at this site

These research questions listed above developed both as a consequence of my own prior research at this site, and from the review of empirical and theoretical literature discussed in the preceding pages. Two previous research encounters at the same site by this author employed various methods (O'Mahoney 2009; 2010), and served as pilot exercises for the current research. The first of these used participant observation, adopting the 'funnel approach' to research (Agar 1980), whereby one 'begins a project at the wider end of the funnel, building rapport, doing participant observation and informal interviews and covering a wide range of ground in an unsystematic manner' (Barrett 2009, p.209). In this instance, the majority of my data came from informal conversations conducted within this participatory role, alongside more general observations which were also informed by my earlier experiences as a volunteer at the project. Volunteers were also interviewed to collect quantifiable demographic data about the respondents; including age, sex, social class and educational background.

The second research opportunity allowed me to explore the use of alternative methods of data collection and analysis, using semi-structured interviews and a combination of narrative methods and thematic coding to guide my analysis. This project used semi-structured interviews to explore the environmental values and concerns of the volunteers. The data from these interviews was analysed in two ways, with the intention of testing the use of two analytical methods upon the same qualitative data set. Narrative methods facilitated a

holistic analysis of selected narrative excerpts, whilst thematic analysis allowed for the emergence of analytic themes and categories from within my data. This research entailed interviewing ten participants: three returning volunteers, and seven who had not previously volunteered for ARCHELON. Six of my participants were female and four were male.

My prior research has informed the development of the questions listed above and suggested that this site offers an ideal opportunity to explore further the relationship between work, leisure, and flourishing. Through volunteering at this project, individuals not only seek to avoid environmental harm and to improve the natural environment in some way in their leisure time but do so whilst pursuing an activity which interests and seems to fulfil them in various ways. My own earlier research and my own voluntary participation at this site has shown me how enjoyable this project is, and through the methods outlined in this chapter I will explore what it is about the project which leads to the particular kinds of happiness and fulfilment volunteers seem to find there. This chapter now discusses the methods through which the questions summarised above are mobilised to explore this ephemeral group of environmental volunteer tourists.

3.2 Research design

Because of the complexity of the research questions, in-depth and exploratory qualitative methods which allow for the recognition of the interconnectedness between the phenomenon under study and the wider context were required. I conducted a four and a half month period of participant observation spanning one complete nesting and hatching 'season' combined with in-depth semi-structured interviews, to understand the 'meanings' of volunteer tourism both for participants and in relation to the broader social context. Two interviews were conducted with most of the respondents, one shortly after they arrived and another a day or two before their departure from the project. These interviews provided a means of collecting data pertaining to volunteers' views towards and experiences of life outside of the camp environment, as well as demographic data. Participant observation, in turn, provided an insight into the

life within the environment of the volunteer project, as I was able to observe and participate in the various types of formal and informal work performed there. Field notes were written throughout the research encounter and interviews were digitally recorded and fully transcribed, providing a wealth of textual qualitative data through which to address the questions listed above. Using 'before' and 'after' interviews in combination with participant observation allowed for a more complete understanding of volunteers' views in the context of the project than either simply participant observation or single interviews may have done.

In terms of addressing specific research questions, combining methods was particularly appropriate for my interest in whether – and if so how and why – volunteering provides participants opportunities to be happy and to flourish (pertaining to RQ1b and subsidiary questions), and what this can tell us about the relationship between work and leisure in contemporary society (RQ3 and subsidiaries). Pearce notes that it can be very difficult to measure satisfaction and enjoyment in tourism because 'satisfaction is simply a post-experience attitude, and attitudes are not fixed or tangible parameters' (Pearce 2005, p.163). As well as the relative and temporally bound nature of satisfaction, asking people how satisfied they are with choices which they have freely made might present a further problem:

Tourism products and experiences reflect people's values and represent aspects of (and opportunities to enhance) their identity; it is therefore counterproductive and reflects poorly on personal credibility to be very dissatisfied with a situation that one has willingly entered and often paid handsomely to experience (ibid, p.166).

The use of participant observation in combination with interviews can help to overcome this issue, as satisfaction and enjoyment can be observed and experienced as well as reported through interviews. Being able to participate in and observe the activities entailed in volunteering facilitated a much clearer understanding on my part of how these elements contribute to volunteers' subjective experiences of their participation reported in their interviews.

This research seeks to understand whether (and if so why) volunteer tourism provides opportunities for volunteers to flourish, and how this experience is related to contemporary capitalist societies. Understanding this will in turn, it is hoped, lead to a better comprehension of the contemporary relationship between work and leisure (RQ3). It is of course important to consider the ways in which my chosen methods may or may not be able to adequately address these issues. My research questions entail a concern with the subjective experiences of volunteers which are inextricably related to structures in society which exist beyond these individuals, including class, labour markets and neo-liberal forms of capitalism (RQ2). This interplay between broader structures and individual subjectivities and agency requires both a consideration of how participants find or create meanings in the world(s) which they inhabit, and how structures within this/these world(s) in turn shape their experiences. This relies in turn on both reporting how participants account for themselves, but also maintaining awareness that these accounts are themselves social practices on the part of respondents and are inextricable from dominant societal discourses (Gill 1993; Potter and Wetherell 1987).

3.2.1 Participant Observation

Although four and a half months is a comparatively short period of immersion in anthropological terms, ARCHELON's conservation projects exist only during these summer months, during which the sea turtles are nesting and their nests hatching. Data collection was therefore unavoidably limited to this period. Participating in and observing the whole cycle of the project from start to finish allowed for a fuller appreciation of the nuances of the shifting dynamic of the community (see RQ1a) as well as the various flows and fluctuations of work and leisure within the project, particularly important for addressing RQ3, RQ3b and RQ3bi. The benefits of ethnographic immersion have been recognised in prior research into volunteer tourism:

The researcher needs to understand behaviour as the volunteers understand it, learn about their world, learn their interpretation of self in the interaction and share their definitions. In order to accomplish this, the researcher must understand the world from the volunteer's

perspective. The researcher, therefore, must be both a volunteer in the world and an observer of the volunteers in that world (Wearing, 2001, p.117-118).

The use of participant observation for this research was also in part in recognition that ‘*all* social research is a form of participant observation because we cannot study the social world without being part of it’ (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994, p.249). The world of environmental volunteers was one which I was very much a part of and had been for many years previously, though never for a complete ‘season’. Furthermore, as someone who shares characteristics with the demographic group whom, it was suggested in Chapter 2, are most likely to volunteer – young, educated, of Western descent, and female – I am also a ‘member’ of a similar social context which these participants might be expected to inhabit *outside* of the volunteer project. This ‘insider’ status is discussed in more detail shortly.

Participant observation requires that ‘the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study...observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people, over some length of time’ (Becker and Geer 1957, p.28). This methodology is of particular importance for addressing the research questions concerned with the types of work engaged in by volunteers (RQ3b), as well as for understanding the manner in which the community that evolved on this site was manifested (RQ1a). The kind of non-verbal data available only through participating in the day-to-day lives of volunteers provided a deep and embodied understanding of the hands-on experience of volunteering. For example, the joy of finding the eggs of a turtle on a morning survey is something which I would be unable to fully appreciate without both experiencing it first-hand and observing the immediate responses of others to doing so. Similarly, the particular type of community and the social relationships within this environment would be incomprehensible through interview data alone. The more infrequent occurrences and the seemingly mundane imponderabilia of everyday life which make up the rich world found within this volunteer tourist experience similarly require researcher immersion for them to be identified.

Combining personal experience and participatory observation with the volunteers' accounts is necessary to address RQs 1b and 1d (and their subsidiary questions). This combination allows an understanding of the importance of the interplay between community, work, and the sense-making practices within the project to the overall experience of volunteer tourism to emerge (RQ1c). Finally, the use of participant observation also increases the validity of this study, in which volunteers' attitudes to and engagements with work are of particular interest. Simply asking volunteers about experiences of work on the project without being able to both observe and experience them *at work* may have facilitated far less and less 'rich' or reliable data. These data were of the utmost importance in the analysis and theoretical contributions to be discussed shortly, as well as directly influencing the collection of interview data.

Participant observation is somewhat oxymoronic, requiring simultaneous observation of this 'social world' which implies some level of objective distancing, and participation, which necessitates engagement (Tedlock 2000, p.465). In reality, most ethnographic research falls somewhere along a continuum, at one end of which can be placed pure observation, and at the other complete participatory immersion. It is invariably augmented with data from unstructured or semi-structured interviews and directed conversations are steered by the researcher to their own interest areas. In this research, both formal and informal interviews occurred. Interviews which I refer to here as 'formal' were pre-arranged with participants, conducted with the use of an interview schedule (discussed shortly), and were recorded and subsequently transcribed. Informal interviews refer to the innumerable 'directed conversations' (Lofland 1971) which occurred throughout my fieldwork in day to day interactions with volunteers, and these contributed immensely to my field-notes and the ultimate shape of this thesis. Observations and either directed or 'naturally occurring' conversations also helped to shape the subsequent interviews with volunteers, and to refine my research interests as the fieldwork progressed, allowing for a degree of flexibility denied through

more rigidly defined research designs. The use of qualitative interviews is discussed in more detail now.

3.2.2 Using ‘arrival’ and ‘departure’ interviews

Multiple interviews were employed for this research in part to overcome a methodological issue identified in the previous chapter. Stebbins suggests that the use of ethnographic study is important when examining volunteers, because

Examined at close range like this, we can easily discover and thoroughly explore the complex of costs and rewards unique to each volunteer activity, the careers available there and the social worlds within which the participants strive to reach their altruistic and self-interested goals. (Stebbins 1996, p.222).

However, in several of the studies discussed in Chapter 2, the benefits and the motivations were poorly extricated from one another, with varying degrees of leakage between the two (Wearing, 2001; Campbell and Smith, 2005; Broad and Jenkins, 2008 amongst others). Often the reason for this ambiguity is that volunteers were asked about their motives *after* volunteering, and it is unclear the extent to which their reported motivations are in fact accounts of what participants enjoyed about volunteering. This research sought to overcome this problem by conducting ‘arrival’ and ‘departure’ interviews, thereby attempting to extricate volunteers’ accounts of their motivations for (RQ2b) from the benefits of volunteering (RQ1).

A further problem with researching volunteer motivations, argues Smith, is that research based purely on what he refers to as “the vocabulary of motives” – measured using responses to the question ‘why did you volunteer?’ – are ‘sophomoric and pedestrian’ (1981, p.25). He suggests that this kind of data ‘tells us little or nothing about the underlying motivations for people’s volunteerism. At most it tells us about the socio-culturally accepted “reasons” people tend to give’ (1981, p.25). Using qualitative semi-structured interviews, however, I found that a variety of data pertaining to volunteers’ interests, values and backgrounds were elicited by starting interviews by asking why the volunteer had decided to participate. Volunteers rarely answered this question

with simple or self-contained responses, instead locating their answers in broader narratives throughout the interview process, frequently returning to elaborate upon prior responses throughout. This allowed for apparent 'motivations' to be understood in a more contextual manner, highlighting their inextricability from the socio-economic milieus from which these volunteers originated. Finally, as Charmaz notes, 'when interviewers rely on one-shot interviewing, they miss opportunities to correct earlier errors and omissions and to construct a denser, more complex analysis' (Charmaz 2003, p.318). Both researcher and participants are able, through the use of multiple interviews, to build upon and clarify earlier points of discussion and, in this instance, to temporally and theoretically distinguish between accounts of motivations *for* and accounts of benefits or impacts *of* volunteering.

Interviewing 'in the field'

Interviews usually took place in what was referred to as 'the container', which was a shipping unit situated in a corner of the field in which we camped. This unit has large windows, which allowed a breeze to pass through and as such could usually be used quite comfortably for parts of the day, although tended, in the afternoons, to be too hot for use. In August, however, a local electrician connected the container to the electricity mains, after which we were afforded the luxury of a few fans. Earlier in the season, the container was only used regularly by me, although later the camp and PA leaders began using it more frequently to work on their various administrative tasks. On a few occasions, interviews were conducted on the beach, out of earshot of other volunteers, and in two cases were conducted during 'boxing shifts'³⁰, in which periods of up to an hour of rest intersperse the activity of the shift.

The interviews conducted for this research were semi-structured. They varied from interview to interview, informed by earlier interview responses, prior knowledge of the interviewee either from already knowing them from previous seasons, and by ethnographic observations and conversations outside of the

³⁰ The practical work of these shifts is discussed in Chapter 5.

interview. A loose schedule was created prior to beginning the research, which I briefly describe below. Interviews deviated greatly from these topics, though this schedule ensured that, at a minimum, responses to each of these questions were collected from each respondent.

Schedule for arrival interviews

Arrival interviews commenced with my asking why the participant had chosen to do this project, with an aim to address RQ2b and its subsidiary questions. Whilst I have certain reservations about the insights available through simply asking volunteers why they volunteered (as noted in this chapter and Chapter 2), this question was an excellent ice breaker, as in my prior research it had proved to be the question which people were most at ease answering, and that which they most expected me to ask. Furthermore, this is a question frequently asked of newly arrived volunteers, along with, 'where are you from?', 'what do you do?' and 'how old are you?'. These questions provide the initial 'small-talk' with which relationships on camp often begin. Volunteers are thus somewhat rehearsed in answering this question, both because of having already been asked by other volunteers or by their friends or family at home, and because – as I discovered when conducting interviews in previous years at the same site – they are questions which volunteers *expect* from me. Indeed one past respondent expressed some discomfort at *not* being asked why he was volunteering. Questions eliciting accounts of volunteers' motivations also generated rich narrative data from respondents concerning the relationship between their decision to volunteer and the broader context of this decision, such as upbringing, personal values, or career trajectory.

Having asked about participants' reasons for doing the project I had in many cases accessed some data about their backgrounds, such as references to the relevance or otherwise of the project to their studies, careers or ambitions. This information led into further questioning along these lines to gather the remaining quantitative data about social class and educational backgrounds of the volunteers. Certain trends in the class, age and gender profiles of volunteer tourists have already been recognised in volunteer tourism, as discussed in

Chapter 2. Similar quantifiable demographic data collected in these interviews was used to see if these trends were also evident in this sample, and provided an understanding of the social class backgrounds of these volunteers (RQ2a). This latter characteristic is important in relation to my research question concerning the manner in which volunteering reflects and potentially contributes to class inequalities which exist in the labour market. (RQ2c). In cases where the respondent was still in full time education (53 of the 67 respondents), social class was measured using the proxy of parental occupation and education level (Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) 2009). This data was coded using the National Statistics socio-economic classification system (NS-SEC) detailed in Appendix 1 (NS-SEC 2014). I also asked participants whether they had volunteered previously for ARCHELON or any other organisations.

I concluded the interviews by asking what participants thought of as important and what their priorities were. This question was intentionally ambiguous, as it was designed to explore the types of sense-making which volunteers applied to their worlds. In many cases due to linguistic or contextual discrepancies this question would need to be repeatedly reformulated and worked through between myself and the interviewee 'to arrive together at meanings that both can understand' (Mishler 1991, p.65). To close the interviews on a lighter note, and to allow some circularity to the process, I concluded by asked the participants what they expected from their time on the project, both in terms of the work they'd be doing and what they hoped to get out of it. A similar format was used when interviewing both new and returning volunteers, though in the case of returning volunteers I also asked if they remembered why they had first come and then why they had returned on this occasion. In the case of the more 'habitual' volunteers, who had volunteered either here or elsewhere³¹ three or more times, I also asked how they facilitated their frequent returns, in terms of both their career and their personal lives.

³¹ Either working for this organisation but at other sites (1 volunteer), or repeatedly using tourism to engage in variety of voluntary experiences (4 volunteers).

Schedule for departure interview

I loosely worked around the following questions during these interviews, modified accordingly based on ethnographic observations and prior responses:

1. Have you enjoyed yourself and how did your experiences compare with your expectations?
2. Do you think you have benefited in any ways from doing this project, and if so how?
3. Have you learnt anything about yourself doing this project?
4. What have you enjoyed about doing this project?
5. Will you do this project again?
6. Have you had any further thoughts about the question I asked last time about what you think of as important to you?

The first topic was used to explore my research questions concerning the extent to which volunteers were able to flourish on the project (RQ1d). This relates to the assumption that the most enjoyable elements of tourist experiences are those which contrast to the everyday (Urry and Larsen 2011). This also has some broader implications for the earlier discussion of alternative hedonism, concerning what volunteers find to be enjoyable, and whether seeking these pleasures entail an ethical dimension as implied in Soper's alternative hedonism discussed in Chapter 1.

The second and third interview questions were aimed at my concern to extricate the reported motivations for volunteering from the reported benefits of doing so. The fourth question was in part directed at further exploring the value of 'difference' in generating enjoyable tourist experiences, touched upon in response to the first question and discussed in Chapter 2. The final question was designed to elaborate upon volunteers' responses to the corresponding question in the initial interviews, as this was a question which several volunteers found it difficult to articulate answers to. The departure interviews tended to be somewhat longer than the arrival interviews, and there were, on occasion, tears from participants who were very upset at their impending

departure. Whilst these tears frequently seemed to serve a cathartic purpose, I had not expected them and often found the situation either upsetting or uncomfortable, depending on my own relationship with the interviewee.

Conducting second interviews with most participants allowed me to review and conduct preliminary analysis of initial interviews to inform the schedule for this later interview. These interviews can be regarded as 'active' in this sense:

Whereas the standardised interview would try to limit informational "spillage" from one interview to another, active interviewing takes advantage of the growing stockpile of background knowledge that the interviewer collects in prior interviews to pose concrete questions and explore facets of respondents' circumstances that would not otherwise be probed (Holstein and Gubrium 1995, p.46).

This 'stockpile' was in this instance built through participant observation as well as prior interviews, as ethnographic data collected in the interim between the first and second interviews allowed for further development of the design of second interviews. This meant that some of the questions asked of later respondents were not asked of earlier ones, and the formulation of questions changed, impacting upon the direct comparability of certain data. For example, in the early departure interviews I found that some of these volunteers talked about having experienced certain forms of personal development such as learning about themselves whilst doing the project, and so I decided to ask in future departure interviews whether volunteers felt that they had learnt anything about themselves whilst they had been there. However, through framing the question in this way it is quite possible that other forms of personal development which do *not* translate as 'learning about oneself' might have been neglected by these respondents.

3.3 Being 'at home' or 'going native'?

Angrosino and Perez (2000) suggest that participant observation usually occurs in a natural setting, so normally the anthropologist or sociologist will enter a given society as an outsider, and embed themselves within the milieu so as to begin to understand the structures and practices at work in the group. In this

time, they are expected to develop certain competences which will allow them both to 'live' that which they report (to become a participant) and to understand that which they see (to become an effective observer). The practice of long-term participation within ethnographic research is generally necessary to ensure linguistic and cultural understanding between the researcher and the researched. However, it is also hoped that the extended presence of a researcher will eventually allow their presence to become naturalised, and group members might begin to behave as they would were the researcher absent.

In this instance, however, I was far more 'at home' in the setting under investigation than were most of the participants, as most were volunteering for an ARCHELON project for the first time. My language competence, in some cases in terms of the language of the project (English) and in most the vocabulary of turtles and ARCHELON's work, was greater than that of the new volunteers with whom camp was largely populated. Furthermore, my practical understanding of both the idiosyncrasies of camp life and the requirements of the conservation and PA shifts exceeded those of most of the participants. Volunteers in this site come and go, with a maximum of around 35 on site at the peak of the season, and only two or three at the beginning. This experience is relatively fleeting, to a point, for all respondents, but within this temporary experience my presence as researcher was a persistent feature. The ensuing discussion addresses my 'insider' status in this research, and discusses the impacts of my 'competences' as a seasoned sea-turtle conservationist.

Most volunteers take a day or two to adapt to their new surroundings, working out the idiosyncrasies of the shower and toilet, how food is shared, why putting their tent on the south side of a tree was perhaps not the smartest move, and other such matters. This is an experience analogous perhaps to that undergone by most anthropologists engaging in fieldwork at a new site. However, due both to being the first person there and having done the project multiple times before, my 'arrival' story does not match either that of most anthropologists entering the field or of a volunteer arriving anew. In a sense, the 'traditional' roles of anthropologist and informant were reversed, as it was necessary for me

to tell new volunteers how things worked, rather than the ethnographic encounter in which the researcher is the stranger who must be introduced to the society in question and must themselves learn how to behave, who to talk to, and what to do there. As Robben notes, 'competence will help to bridge some gaps [between the researcher and the researched culture], while a genuine affinity with and affection for a culture will open other doors' (2006, p.61). I was in a most fortunate position from the outset, simultaneously possessing competency of, affinity with, and affection for, this community of volunteer tourists.

Of course, there are potential pitfalls associated with this status; which Desmond describes in relation to his 'insider' research into wildfire-fighting:

When the field is familiar, when the "informants" are friends, one is more likely to leave unexplored commonsense ways of viewing the world. Although a new language need not be mastered, one's mother tongue must be spoken anew, with hesitancy and doubt; although one's surroundings are comfortable and recognizable, they must become uncomfortable, disconcerting and curious; and although one's informants are intimates, familiar and friendly, one must look on them with searching eyes (2008, p.286).

Conducting interviews with participants with whom I lived and worked presented some interesting challenges. I knew eight of the participants before conducting this research. Seven were volunteers with whom I had volunteered in previous years – one of whom had been on the project every year since I had – and the last was my twin. The interviews with these participants fall under what Garton and Copland call 'acquaintance interviews', which they define as 'semi-structured interviews in an ethnographic research culture in which the researcher is an insider and in which the interviewer and interviewee have a prior relationship' (2010, p.535). Even with the volunteers with whom I had no prior relationship, by the time of the departure interview I had become quite close to many of them. This is perhaps unusual for interview scenarios, in which 'those with whom the researcher interacts are not normally intimate friends' (May 1997, p.61).

Throughout the research process I maintained a field diary which helped to overcome my over-familiarity with both the personnel and the imponderabilia of the milieu in which I dwelled, helping to “exoticise the domestic,” to resist relaxing in the comfort of familiarity’ (Desmond 2008, p.286). When it came to writing these field notes, I used a variety of methods. Often I would scribble notes to myself, and these acted as cues for extended mental notes which I could later write down more fully, as recommended by Lofland and Lofland who note the speedy rate of decay for mental notes (1999, p.4). My field notes ranged from purely descriptive, to highly subjective and/or analytically abstract, to, at times, self-flagellating or self-pitying. Writing these notes proved incredibly useful as a means of organising my thoughts and maintaining some analytical distance from my respondents. As Desmond found, my positionality as an ‘insider’ gave me ‘unparalleled access’ to the everyday lives of the volunteers, not only being able to witness and record their experiences, but being able to fully appreciate and understand life on the project in an embodied manner which would have been otherwise beyond me, accessing ‘that deep knowledge that comes only from full-fledged membership’ (2008, p.294).

3.4 Sampling and access

Access to this site was granted with the kind permission of ARCHELON, the Sea Turtle Protection Society of Greece. Given my prior engagement as a volunteer, the lines of communication were already open, and in my earlier applications to conduct research for my Masters’ dissertations I had specified that I hoped to subsequently engage in longer and more comprehensive research for this thesis. In this research encounter, the sample comprised all volunteers present throughout the four and a half month ‘season’; 73 participants in total. The volunteers within my sample participated at the project for between two weeks and four and a half months, with the majority staying from four to six weeks.

Of these 73 participants, 67 volunteers were interviewed, in most cases twice (47 of the 67 respondents); once towards the beginning of their period of volunteerism and once shortly before they left. In some cases, due to unexpected early departures or other unforeseen circumstances, I was unable

to conduct this second interview (n.6). In a few other cases it was the early interview which was impossible and in these instances I instead conducted just one interview towards the middle or end of the participants' stay (n.6). All of the Greek volunteers except one, as well as two very experienced returning volunteers, were present for only two weeks, and because of this I only interviewed these participants only once (n.8). 14 of the 73 participants were 'returning volunteers', and 14 returned to the project the following year, only 5 of whom had been classed as 'returning volunteers' the previous season. 2 participants who had been in the first 'cohort' at the beginning of the season in which this research was conducted actually returned *later* the same season. Data beyond this subsequent season is not available, but based on earlier trends witnessed it seems less common, though not unheard of, for volunteers to return in subsequent years if they do not return to the project in the season directly following their initial participation.

In total, 114 interviews were conducted. The tables below provide a descriptive account of my sample, in terms of the distribution of age, gender, nationalities, socio-economic status and education level. The volunteers were mostly under the age of 30, with the mean age being 23. The mode and median, however, are both 21, which is more reliable than the mean average due to the few outliers in their 40s who skewed this data. Volunteers largely come from Europe, with only 11% coming from Australasia, and 8% from North America. Of the remaining 81%, 56% came from Continental Europe and 25% from the UK. The UK was the single largest origin for participants, with almost all of these coming from England (there was one Scottish participant, none from Ireland or Northern Ireland, and one from Wales). All but 2 volunteers (3%) were in possession of, currently studying, or enrolled to study either undergraduate or Masters' level educational qualifications, and both of these had instead gained professional qualifications (clerical in one case and mechanical in the other). The sample in general can be described as young and well educated, with more females than males by a ratio of 3:1. Nearly half of the volunteers came with a friend or partner. In terms of socio-economic class, 14 of the 67 volunteers could be classified using their own occupations and the National Statistics Socio-

economic Classification system (NS-SEC 2014). The other 53 volunteers were current students, and are classified using the highest occupational classification of their parents as proxy measure.

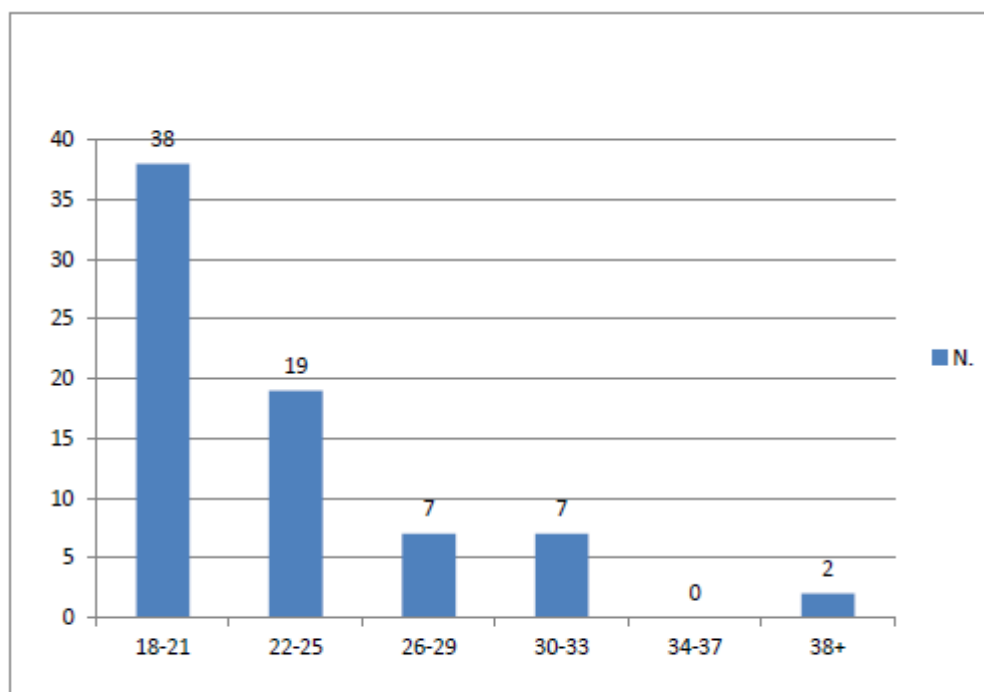


Figure 1: Age range of respondents

Age	No.	%
18	7	10
19	10	14
20	8	11
21	13	18
22	3	4
23	7	10
24	4	5
25	5	7
26	2	3
27	2	3
28	3	4
30	2	3
31	3	4
33	2	3
41	1	1
44	1	1
Total	73	100

Table 1: Age distribution of respondents

Country of Origin	No.	%
Australia	4	5
Austria	4	5
Belgium	2	3
France	4	5
Germany	10	14
Greece	8	11
Hungary	1	1
Italy	1	1
New Zealand	3	4
Philippines	1	1
Poland	1	1
Portugal	1	1
Spain	5	7
Sweden	1	1
Switzerland	3	4
UK	18	25
USA	6	8
Total	73	100

Table 2: Country of origin of respondents

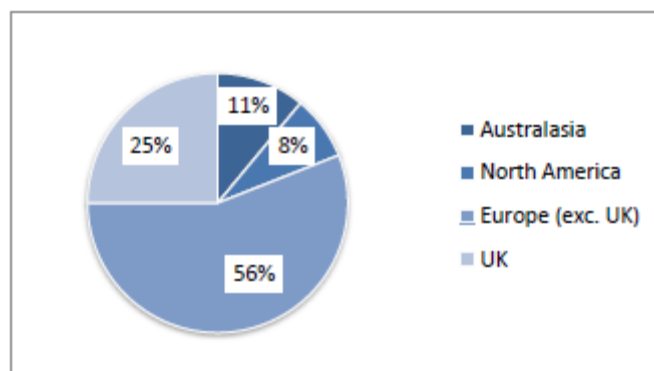


Figure 2: Geographical distribution of respondents

Volunteer status	No.	%
Volunteered with a partner	12	16
Volunteered with a friend	23	32
Volunteered alone	38	52
<i>Total</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 3: Number of respondents volunteering alone or with a friend/partner

Sex	No.	%
Male	18	25
Female	55	75
<i>Total</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 4: Sex distribution of respondents

Qualification level	No.	%
Apprenticeship/training	2	3
Undergraduate degree	52	78
Masters degree	13	19
Unknown	6	9
<i>Total</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 5: Qualification level of respondents (includes enrolled students commencing after the summer)

NS-SEC classifications	Based on respondents' occupation	Using parents' occupation as proxy measure	total No.	Total %
Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations	6	36	42	58
Intermediate occupations	4	13	17	23
Routine and manual occupations	4	4	8	11
Unknown	n/a	n/a	6	8
<i>Total</i>			<i>73</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 6: NS-SEC classification of respondents

3.5 Ethics

As with all data collection in which people are involved, as a researcher I have certain ethical responsibilities which reflect both professional and personal ethical codes recognising that 'our primary obligation is always to the people we study, not to our project or to a larger discipline' (Denzin 1989, p.83). Procedures intended to protect respondents and researchers are important for ensuring the safety of both parties, as well as maintaining professional disciplinary standards. Before undertaking research it was necessary for me to apply for ethical approval from both the University ethics committee and from ARCHELON. This was generously granted in both cases. Three basic ethical considerations to ensure the protection of respondents must be addressed here: informed consent; respondents' right to privacy; and respondents' right to protection from harm (Fontana and Frey 2000, p.662).

In terms of ensuring that the consent of participants was fully informed, several opportunities to explain my research occurred with each respondent. Shortly after the arrival of a new volunteer the leader would give a welcoming presentation to introduce them to camp and explain their roles and responsibilities. I would usually attend these presentations, in which I briefly explained my research and how I hoped the volunteers might be involved in the process. My explanation in this instance was invariably brief, remembering how overwhelming one's first few days on the project can be. Furthermore I was frequently communicating with those for whom English was a second or third language and found it generally better in such instances to keep my initial introduction brief. I made it clear in these encounters that a detailed information sheet (Appendix 2) was displayed in a communal area – attached to the fridge – and that when it came to interviewing, again, more information would be provided to them (see Appendix 3). Finally, because of my prior voluntary experience, I was often tasked with training new volunteers, and as such would usually conduct shifts with them very early on, during which they frequently asked questions about myself and my research which I answered willingly.

Conducting 'arrival interviews' allowed my role as a researcher to be firmly established early on, providing respondents with an early opportunity to air any concerns they had and to ask any questions they wanted of me. Before arranging these interviews I provided potential interviewees with a headed letter (Appendix 3), detailing who I am, what I was doing, and what their role as participant would entail. Subject to their agreement, I arranged a time in the next few days to conduct the interview, and asked them to sign a consent form (Appendix 4). I took every practical precaution to protect the data resulting from interviews, which were digitally recorded in a space in which we were unlikely to be disturbed. After conducting interviews I transferred the audio recordings onto my password protected laptop.

The likelihood of physical or psychological harm in this research was fairly slim, although in several cases tears were shed, as aforementioned, in the departure interviews. These tears were not a direct consequence of the interview itself, as tears from departing volunteers are commonplace. Before embarking on my research I recognised the personal nature of the questions I was asking, as well as the potential that my interest might be viewed as judgemental. Although I maintained awareness of this possibility, in no cases did respondents demonstrate either distress or defensiveness in response to my questions. I have used pseudonyms to protect the identities of my respondents, and have avoided discussions in which identifying features might be revealed. Despite my primary ethical commitment being to the protection of my participants, I also recognise my responsibility to the discipline as a whole, and as such conducted myself in a professional manner throughout my data collection, as well as maintaining a reflexive concern for the ethical imperative to represent and analyse my data as truthfully and transparently as possible. It is with the topic of analysis and representation of these data that this chapter concludes.

3.6 Data analysis and presentation

All of my interviews were digitally recorded and fully transcribed. Analysis of my data was largely thematic, based upon the research questions described at the start of this chapter. The most obvious codes were those which related directly to my

research questions, so for example references made by volunteers to their careers were thematically grouped into numerous smaller codes including 'future plans', 'relevant study/work experience', 'instrumental motives', 'desire to enjoy job', 'accounts of work', 'temporary/casual employment', 'networking', 'don't need to enjoy job', 'unhappy with job', 'desire for security', 'education', 'long term plans', 'rut', 'repetitive work', 'unfulfilling jobs', 'career change', 'using degrees', 'job allows free time', 'overqualified/credentialism', and 'societal expectations'³². After I had transcribed and formally coded all of the interviews using Atlas.ti CAQDAS software, I returned to the first interviews I had analysed and re-coded them, this time employing those codes which had only emerged in later analysis. I then progressed for a second time through all of the transcripts, to ensure rigour and consistency in this process.

Once I was satisfied with my coding, I began exploring relationships between the codes to understand how this data might be employed to answer my research questions. A more deductive form of analysis comes into play here, as theoretical links informed by my own intellectual interests began to emerge. This was a process which took place over some time, and underwent numerable iterations; 'no sudden switch from the empirical to the sociological is possible, only slow growing of the latter into the former' (Konopásek 2008, para. 40). Various 'maps' were created physically using printed lists of codes and highlighters to colour code these, and electronically by grouping these codes into themes using excel spreadsheets and by also by exploring links and relationships using Atlas-ti. The 'code hierarchy' function of the software was also employed to identify which codes were most prominent based on the number of extracts contained within them. The 'comments' function was also used, in part to identify which codes were of the most theoretical importance. As Konopasek explains, comments are the researcher's method of inscribing 'him or herself into the studied material so that it becomes more and more under control... as time goes, the others' accounts are extended by our own textual interventions and additions' (ibid). It is upon these codes, comments, and

³² There are, of course, significant overlaps within these codes, such as 'instrumental motives', 'relevant study/work experience' and 'networking', however keeping these codes separate helped to preserve the nuances of the coded extracts.

themes and the iteration between this analytical work and the extant literature reviewed in the previous two chapters that the remainder of this thesis is shaped.

Within qualitative research, it has become increasingly recognised that interview data is co-constructed through a negotiated process between the researcher and the researched (Fontana and Frey 2000; Garton and Copland 2010; Holstein and Gubrium 1995). I recognise the importance of my own role in the creation of the data discussed herein, and that the data generated is a result of the interaction of the interview itself, in which neither the interviewer nor interviewee can be seen as 'epistemologically passive' (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). This is true both in data generation/collection and in the subsequent representation of findings and analyses. The design and outcomes of this research reflect my intellectual past, my epistemological position and the research strategies selected. I adhere to a critical realist approach to sociological research, recognising that individuals are active creators of meanings but that they create these meanings in an environment – society at large – which 'exists independently of our conceptions of it' (Davies 2008, p.19; see also Bhaskar 1997). This approach recognises the agency of human subjects and their iterative association to society at large – shaped by them but simultaneously shaping them in a 'reflexive feedback relationship', and offers, as Davies notes, a richer alternative to either the 'crisis of authority' in the more extreme constructivist positions or the largely un-reflexive empiricism of positivism (2008, p.19).

This research was conducted with participants from seventeen different countries coming from three continents, speaking twelve different first languages. As a result, there were disparities in the fluency of various participants' grasp of the English language, although a reasonable level of fluency in English is a prerequisite for participation. There were various issues which resulted from this, most of which I have discussed already. Important to note here, though, is the use of particular phrases which I have adopted in the subsequent chapters. These phrases are in some senses colloquial and obtain a specific meaning within the confines of the project. I use these 'emic' concepts in the following empirical chapters because they are more grounded and elegant than the more elaborated phrases I could use to explain the same ideas. These participant-generated phrases or concepts are the

‘real world’ and ‘sense full’. The ‘real world’ is a phrase used by several participants in interviews and many more in day to day talk, to refer to the world that exists outside of the project. ‘Sense full’ is a phrase which two of my German speaking participants used in very similar contexts to which several others used ‘sinnvoll’. I could have substituted the use of sense-full or sinnvol in my discussion for ‘meaningful’ or ‘sensible’ instead, but ‘meaning’ and ‘sense’ are not entirely the same, and the multi-lingual composition of the sample means that certain choices of translation must be made in the interests of coherence. The idea of something being ‘full’ of ‘sense’ – in the context in which the words ‘sinnvol’ and ‘sense full’ are used – is more powerful, I suggest, than the idea of simply ‘*making*’ sense.

Given the large size of the participant base, it is perhaps inevitable that some voices are more prominent in what follows than others, indeed, the voices of some participants are only ever encompassed in these chapters in the words ‘volunteers’ or ‘participants’. Throughout the chapters, pains have been taken to provide a balanced view of the themes which emerged throughout the coding of my data. However, some volunteers offered more articulate or fully elaborated responses than did others, due to factors including but probably not limited to the volunteers’ relationship with myself, their degree of comfort in the interview encounter, and the extent to which English was fluently spoken. Although not all of my participants feature heavily in the following chapters, a summary of the demographic composition of the group was offered earlier in this chapter and an appendix providing some further details about interviewees can be found at the end of this thesis (Appendix 5). Following all interview extracts, the pseudonym, age, and nationality of the respondent is provided in brackets. In cases where only one or two volunteers come from a given country, nationality is altered in these descriptions (though presented accurately in the tables of demographics earlier in this chapter) to protect anonymity. When data is excluded from extracts it is indicated using (...), when my own clarifications are offered they are shown in square brackets, and when there are pauses in participants’ responses these are indicated by a series of full stops. The number of full stops loosely corresponds to the length of the pause, but these are not accurately measured because the analytical methods adopted here do not require that strict transcription conventions are followed.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the practical, ethical and epistemological issues pertaining to the research design of this thesis, and has provided a summary of the demographic characteristics of these volunteer tourists (see RQ2a). The remaining research questions developed earlier and listed at the start of this chapter are answered using the data presented in the empirical chapters which follow, and the theoretical discussion found in Chapter 7. In the next three chapters, then, I present the main findings of these data. The relational characteristics of this site to the broader social economic context are intertwined throughout these chapters, as volunteers' accounts are frequently informed by direct or implicit comparisons to the 'real world'. A great deal of boundary work occurs throughout these data, as volunteers variously work to distinguish themselves from other types of tourists, the project from other types of holidays, and various elements of the project from the 'real world'. Exploring these contrasts illuminates the different ways in which life within the confines of the volunteer project alternately contrasts to and replicates the hierarchies and structures which exist outside of this environment, and those found in other types of tourism.

Chapter 4 begins by exploring *why* the participants volunteered, and discusses the diversity of their accounts of their motivations (see RQ2b and subsidiary questions). Accounts of paid work are also discussed in this chapter, as these were frequently referred to in relation to volunteers' accounts of their motivations (see RQ3a). Chapter 5 engages with data acquired through both interviews and repeated participant observation to paint a 'thicker' ethnographic account of what volunteering for this project entails, presenting empirical data pertaining to the forms of work performed here (see RQ3b) as well as the types of values which emerged alongside this work (see RQ1b and subsidiary questions). Chapter 6 explores the forms of community which emerged in this site, and the impacts of this experience upon volunteers (see RQ1 and subsidiary questions), and is again informed by both participant observation and interview data. The findings discussed in this section, pertaining to the enjoyment which volunteers get from being a *part* of something, doing something *worthwhile*, and which *makes sense* to them are set up

in contrast to their experiences of the 'real world', suggesting that the specific forms of happiness, fulfilment and flourishing found here are less available elsewhere. Fundamentally, the data represented within this final empirical chapter illustrates how volunteers' sense-making practices are subject to changes within this environment (see RQ1c), and this topic is explored more explicitly in the final discussion chapter. Answers to the remaining research questions are foreshadowed throughout these three chapters, but are addressed explicitly in Chapters 7 and 8 through returning to the literatures discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

4 Accounting for Volunteer Tourism

In this chapter, the questions posed in Chapter 2 asking how volunteers justify and account for their decisions to participate in this project are addressed through exploring accounts elicited in their arrival interviews (see RQ2b and subsidiary questions). Their responses are mobilised here as well as in Chapters 7 and 8 to contribute to an empirical understanding of the ways in which certain societal discourses such as those pertaining to employability, environmentalism and instrumentalism are manifested in this environment. This chapter also helps to explore the complex relationship between self-transcendent and self-interested or instrumental accounts of motivations for volunteer tourism, to highlight the problems inherent in positing these types of accounts as separate or even opposed. The distinction between self-transcendence and instrumentalism was argued to be somewhat contentious in Chapter 2, and the data presented in this chapter support this suggestion. Volunteers' accounts of motivations in the context of their career aspirations and attitudes towards work are also discussed. These data are fundamental for answering the research questions about the relationship between contemporary forms of work – in the sense of remunerated employment – and leisure (see RQ3 and subsidiaries). This is facilitated in part by examining how volunteers account for their own employment histories or ambitions. As well as examining this relationship, the data discussed in this chapter also lay the foundations for a later reappraisal of Gorz's assertions about the 'meaninglessness' of contemporary employment discussed in Chapter 1 (Gorz 2011 [1989]). This apparent meaninglessness is contrasted to the fulfilling nature of 'autonomous activities' in Gorz's work or 'serious leisure' in that of Stebbins and Graham, both of which are concepts that are empirically manifested within this site (Gorz 2011 [1989]; Stebbins and Graham 2004).

The accounts which volunteers used to explain their voluntary engagements were variously pragmatic, hedonistic, self-transcendent, and instrumental, and were almost invariably influenced by factors relating to education, upbringing and personal interests. Many of the volunteers interviewed highlighted the various natural and cultural attractions of the country (indeed three had chosen Greece

specifically due to a personal or ancestral connection to the country) or the continent – a romantic and mystical Europe. Several also referred to the budgetary appeal of doing a relatively inexpensive project (costing 300 Euros to participate for a minimum of 28 days)³³. Volunteers rarely attempted to present themselves as either entirely self-interested or purely self-sacrificing: indeed one volunteer, Dianna, explained:

I don't wanna um try to feel very like Mother Theresa'. (Dianna, 19, Belgian)

In Harriet's account we see exemplified a co-occurrence of discourses mobilised to account for volunteers' participation in the project, such as was common throughout these data. This co-occurrence of multiple motivations in volunteers' accounts is further illustrated in Appendix 6.

Because this is my gap year um, I was looking online for volunteer experiences because I wanted to do something that was worthwhile but also it wasn't too far and also it wasn't going to cost, like, the earth 'Cause like a lot of things you end up paying like two thousand, three thousand pounds and you're not actually doing anything that's helping anyone (...) and this seemed like a good cause and really worthy and reading the reviews of people who've done it before it seemed like a genuine thing and um I've never been to Greece so it's a new culture, a new language. (Harriet, 19, British).

Harriet's response includes self-directed elements such as the wish to travel and accrue cultural experiences, pragmatic considerations such as the comparatively low cost, recommendations from past volunteers and geographical proximity of the project, alongside more self-transcendent factors such as doing something which was 'worthwhile' and for a good cause. This quote is illustrative both of how volunteers account for their own motivations, as well as a broader methodological issue of how respondents actively present themselves in interview encounters, drawing on dominant discourses to account for their choices and interests, and actively negotiating their 'selves' through the narratives they create. For the sake of clarity, different types of motivational accounts are discussed separately in this chapter, despite their co-occurrence in almost all volunteers' accounts.

³³ To provide a comparison, the Sea Turtle Conservancy organisation in Costa Rica provide volunteer opportunities with prices ranging from US \$1554 for one week to US \$3604 for 3 weeks, excluding flights (Sea Turtle Conservancy [online] 2014).

The chapter begins with self-transcendence, which is manifested in accounts in which volunteers state that they want to do something ‘good or worthwhile’ (cited by a third of volunteers) to ‘mitigate anthropogenic challenges to nature’ (15% of volunteers) and to do ‘something for the environment’ (13% of volunteers). Following this, I move on to explore the more instrumental or self-interested accounts of volunteers, such as gaining career-relevant experience (cited by a little over half of the volunteers). Given the prominence of these instrumental discourses, participants’ attitudes to future or past employment are also explored, as ideas about what paid work should be, had been or might be were of relevance to several volunteers’ decisions to volunteer. This chapter concludes by exploring a somewhat less clearly articulated response, whereby a third of volunteers said that they wanted ‘to do something different’. The discussions of the accounts which follow are mostly derived from participants’ responses to the question ‘why are you doing this project?’, but are also drawn from the broader narratives within the interviews, as participants’ responses to this question were often augmented with narrative digressions at later stages in the interview. These accounts are interwoven throughout this descriptive section and those which follow.

4.1.1 Self-Transcendence: being a ‘good’ person

A third of the volunteers drew upon discourses of wanting to do something ‘good’, ‘useful’, ‘helpful’ or ‘worthwhile’ to account for their decision to volunteer. These discourses are well documented in the literature concerned with volunteer tourist motivations. However, as previously discussed, these types of accounts are frequently characterised in this literature as altruistic, and as such are necessarily contrasted to instrumental or self-interested motivations. Self-transcendence provides a more useful concept here, because it refers to accounts which express a concern with *transcending* or going beyond considerations of and for the self, without *necessarily* entailing self-sacrifice or conflicting with self-interest. Volunteers frequently offered self-transcendent accounts of motivations:

[I wanted to] go somewhere where I can actually do some good. (Rob, 21, British)

I was looking for something ... I can mix the holidays and um something... um something good or something helpful. (Josie, 21, German).

Self-transcendent discourses like these do not by necessity preclude self-interest, as the following extract from Sophia illustrates:

Because I love marine animals, first, and I wanted to do something useful. (Sophia, 21, French)

Sophia, then, is simultaneously satisfying a self-interested 'love' for marine animals, alongside a self-transcendent wish to do something useful. In some cases respondents themselves drew upon the distinction between self-interest and self-transcendence. This section moves on to discuss self-transcendent accounts which are represented by volunteers as contrasting to or distinct from self-interest. I then introduce some examples of how self-transcendence can be seen as complementary to self-interest, providing a sense of well-being to volunteers.

It was common within my data for self-transcendent responses to be presented in a manner in which these discourses were rhetorically distanced or isolated from more self-interested concerns. Very often this took the form of volunteers wishing to 'give something back' and was framed by discourses of guilt over or responsibility for anthropogenic threats to the natural environment:

That's why I want to work with animals and especially with marine species (...) to give something back. I'm not really sure if I can give a lot back but I try... to... yeah.. I try to give something back.... that's why I want to work with animals, to rescue a little bit what's left in the world really 'cause, we won't be able to... everything will be destroyed! (Lauren, 24, Austrian)

I think especially with conservation of animals I feel like the damage we're doing to ourselves that's our fault, we're doing it, whereas the damage which we're doing to our seas this is to other animals who can't do anything about and it's just, yeah, sort of righting the balance really. Um er..... yeah just being part of something I think that is making a difference and sort of ...not necessarily making a difference straight away, but that's gonna make a difference for future generations (Carly, 22, British).

Lauren says she wants to 'give something back' and volunteering is thus something which is directed away from the volunteer herself. For Carly, doing something for others is also emphasised. In both of these extracts, along with several others to which I turn shortly, the responsibility for the negative impacts humans have had

upon the planet and its inhabitants rests upon the individual as a member of humankind. For Lara, self-transcendent discourses are posited in direct opposition to self-interest. The following extract is taken from a discussion about how volunteering allows one to learn certain things about oneself. I asked Lara if she had expected to learn things about herself before she had volunteered:

I came here because of the animals, uh, I didn't come here because of me [...] it wasn't my, my most important goal here to know myself (Lara, 19, Spanish).

For Lara, the intent is again directed outwards, as she explicitly did not do the project *for herself* – seeking personal development or self-understanding – but *for* the animals. In this account, then, self-interested discourses of personal growth or development are rejected as factors which might inspire action, though, as she notes, these factors might form a secondary ‘goal’. Lara recognised that she had learnt things about herself, and that she had benefited as a person from her experience, but that these benefits had been just that: benefits, rather than expectations or motivational factors. Whilst this is an unusual example of self-transcendent accounts being explicitly and *necessarily* isolated from self-interest, a discursive concern for the ‘other’ evident in this account was very common within my data.

Despite the self-transcendent discourses discussed above in which participants’ desires to help others are separate from or even anathema to concerns about oneself, self-development can also be sought *as a form of* self-transcendence, and this can be framed as explicitly ‘altruistic’ rather than the more loosely defined analyst category of ‘self-transcendence’. This might sound contradictory (like Wearing’s ‘altruistic attempt to explore the self’ (2001, p.3)), however, in some cases, explicitly seeking to become altruistic or being altruistic is regarded as something which can be achieved and should be sought as a personal characteristic rather than an inherent quality. This section, in contrast to the version of self-transcendence as oppositional to egoism as presented by Lara, sees ‘altruistic self-development’ as both a reason for and consequence of volunteering. In the following accounts, which emerged in discussions with the respondents about what was important to them, being a ‘good’ or ‘altruistic’ person is part of the ends, rather than or as well as providing a discursive reason for volunteering:

Like, morals and stuff like that is quite important (...) like having a good outlook on life, like I dunno, just trying to be like a good person, to make a difference (Hayley, 18, British)

I know I would like to be the.... um... the more altruist? Altruist? (...) it's yeah the opposite of egoist... yeah (...) I would like to be the more altruist as possible (Pierre, 19, French)

So for Hayley and Pierre, the desire to *be* 'good' or altruistic rather than to *exercise* altruism is demonstrated, and entails an aspiration to do 'good' things for beings other than oneself – which is of course self-transcendent – but in doing so to improve oneself – which is self-interested.

For other volunteers, self-transcendent accounts were more reflexively identified as inextricable from self-interested ones, again supporting Smith's assertion that altruism is always both relative and contingent on considerations of the self – an inevitable consequence of human reflexivity rather than evidence of self-interest in the negative sense (1981):

I mean you feel better with yourself sometimes - it's good for, of course it's good for the environmental things and then for the other people too (Olivia, 19, Spanish)

Obviously you feel well when you do good things, but uh, yeah the meaning of doing good things because you want to help the others or just because you want to feel good... yeah.... I think..... I think in fact there are both (...) I think a lot of people will do only because they know if they do that after they will feel good and not because maybe they want to help the others but I don't... I don't think... also that everyone will be like that... (Estella, 20, Spanish)

Self-development *can* then be understood as a self-transcendent and a self-interested endeavour, as Wearing suggests (2001), through which one simultaneously benefits others to improve the self and improves oneself for the benefit of others. Learning to be a 'good' person or contributing to one's own 'goodness' can be understood, in this context, as a virtue which is sought and developed within the volunteer project. In the following example, volunteering makes the volunteer 'feel' better explicitly because it is not remunerated:

It feels like you're doing something worthwhile and it's helping something that really needs help.....and like, doing it like not for money makes it feel... like better (...) like.... yeah....it's sort of the type of thing that you wouldn't

want to be paid for (...) like.. I think if I did something like this like you wouldn't really want to be paid because it.. you feel like you're doing something good and helping out... (...) and then if you get paid for it it's a bit like mmmm (Hayley, 18, British).

The lack of payment for volunteering actually contributes to the 'good' of volunteering which would be undermined by the introduction of economic remuneration. The types of work performed here reflect the personal interests and concerns of the volunteers, and are performed as ends rather than as means to tangible or economic rewards. This is a point to which I return in my subsequent discussion of autonomous activities as an example of non-economic and non-alienating work in which individuals seem to find satisfaction and meaning. I return to this topic in Chapter 7 with a more holistic approach to the research questions based upon the arguments which are developed in this and subsequent pages and in relation to the literature discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Here, though, it has been illustrated that various forms of self-transcendent discourses are manifest in my data. Having explored the complex and varied manifestations of these types of accounts of volunteers' reasons for participating, I now explore the interrelated emergence of environmental discourses in these data.

4.1.2 Environmentalism: Righting human wrongs

Given the large number of volunteers studying the natural or environmental sciences (around half), as well as the purpose of the volunteer project itself, it is perhaps unsurprising that pro-environmental discourses were a prominent feature in participants' accounts of motivations. Although not all volunteers were necessarily employed, seeking employment, or educated in disciplines relating to the natural environment, many of the volunteers appeared passionate about the challenges facing the natural environment today. As the previous section suggested, this was often manifested in a concern about anthropogenic harm to the environment resulting in a sense of individual or collective responsibility:

We humans make such bad things to the environmental that someone needs to come... to do something good and... Yes it's... and I think that if I, If I can I think everybody should do it (George, 18, Spanish)

For most volunteers, environmental responsibility is located within humankind, rather than with individuals, though solutions are often presented as requiring individual actions – ‘I’ should do this because ‘I’ can. So in George’s account, above, he suggests that if he *can*, everybody *should*, and he expresses an individualised account of the responsibility to volunteer. However, in other cases the idea expressed was that if *we can*, then *we should*:

Because we’re like the most intelligent species we should help everything anyway (...) because we’re capable to. (Corrine, 20, British)

I just think that the human race is pretty up its own arse [self-obsessed], and it doesn’t seem to care about the fact that it’s destroying everything. And any little thing that anybody who’s got the common-sense to realise that we’re not actually the be-all-and-end-all can do to try and counteract that, it’s time well spent ... I’d rather be doing this than anything else right now. I don’t know....it just makes sense. (Jess, 26, British)

For Jess, volunteering ‘makes sense’ because it offers a means of righting the wrongs for which the human race are responsible. In both of these examples, the differences between humans and animals are seen to necessitate a caring approach to the environment. Human ‘intelligence’ and ‘common-sense’, in these extracts, mark us as distinctive from the rest of nature, echoing a Marxist conception of ‘species-being’, in which we are able and indeed predisposed to shape our environments based on needs other than our own, and to standards which are variously aesthetic, pragmatic, or instrumental (Marx 1992 [1844]).

However, as discussed in Chapter 1, much of human productivity *is* to the detriment rather than the protection or restoration of the natural environment. Indeed, one participant, Lauren, goes so far as to say that she wouldn’t want to work with humans *because* of human impacts upon the planet:

My father and my mother are nurse, are both nurses, my best friends are both nurses, they’re all working with humans (...) and I don’t want to work with humans cos... they’re... mankind is destroying the planet.... [laughter]. I don’t want to work with humans... I want to give back something to the earth, to the animals (Lauren, 24, Austrian).

In some accounts, however, such as this one from Chris, volunteerism and his recent enrolment in an environmental science degree with the aim of seeking employment

in this sector are in part responses to his own past employment and impact upon the planet, rather than the responsibility of humanity as a whole:

I've done enough of the negative stuff and negative work in life; I've worked in construction, I've worked in the oil industry (...) and they're all considered negative impacts (Chris, 41, British).

In the above accounts, then, there is an interesting disparity between responsibility for environmental harm being attributed to humanity or to individuals, and alongside this whether individual actions or solutions are seen as being something which everyone should do or that 'I' should do. In each of these instances, what 'is' (anthropogenic environmental degradation) necessary suggests what 'ought' to be done (individuals taking action to mitigate these problems). As well as existing concerns about the threat humankind poses to the natural environment, negative views about this topic are often reaffirmed through participation in this project. I have observed many volunteers over the course of my participation becoming quite vociferous in their condemnation of various practices which impact upon the turtle population, including littering, dynamite fishing, light and music pollution on the beaches and illegal building activity on or near the beach. I return to this discussion shortly, looking specifically at the sharing and reinforcement of values and concerns within the volunteer community as a key manner in which communitarian feeling is formed and reinforced within the group.

Although the project was described by many as being worthwhile, and participants, on the whole, cited high levels of general environmental concern, few volunteers could provide clear accounts of why sea turtle conservation was important. Many respondents referred to the aim of the project and practices engaged in whilst working and living in the camp as 'making sense' on a common-sense level. If a species is endangered, especially, so many argued, as a result of human action, it made sense to protect it. Again, what 'is' (a threat to the turtle population) logically determined what 'ought' to happen (the protection of the species). In these cases, individuals consider themselves responsible for rectifying the harmful actions of others. In the following extract, echoing the extracts of Carly, Jess and Lauren earlier in this chapter, Sophia explains her decision to protect sea turtles in terms of a

general sense of responsibility to right some of the wrongs which human beings have inflicted upon the environment:

Me: So why do you think we should be the ones to try and save them?

Sophia: um, if we don't do it maybe nobody will. (...) I don't want to stay and wait that other people do it, so if you are part of it and for your conscience at least you can say ok I tried to do something. (...) And maybe it will be not enough, but at least I have tried and it will be like, I don't know, for your children. (...) you've tried to do something (...) a lot of species are disappearing, and if it's just one species in one place in the world it may be a little bit better (Sophia, 21, French)

Inherent in many of the accounts above is the idea of one's labour leaving a legacy – whether for the participants' own (imagined) progeny or for future populations in general. This represents a form of non-alienated work, which has a substantive impact upon the environment and connects the worker to their 'species being'. It was not only those studying, working or hoping to work in the natural science disciplines who conceptualised conservationism as something which was important and for which they felt an individual responsibility. However, despite the self-transcendent and environmentalist discourses present in many of the volunteers' accounts, for many natural, marine and environmental science students the decision to volunteer was also explicitly linked to perceived employability. I illustrate these more 'instrumental' approaches to volunteering here.

4.1.3 Instrumentalism and CV enhancement

Around half of the volunteers interviewed were studying the natural sciences (n.33), including biology, marine science and environmental science. For these volunteers, the project was appealing to them as they hoped that it would give them invaluable experience for their desired careers, providing a form of social capital introduced in Chapter 2. Claudia, for example, explains how it is commonly recognised that experience and networking are essential for those seeking careers in conservation;

Claudia: Because what I want to do later after my studies is marine mammal science, so for that you have to volunteer a lot to get, uh, experience, to meet people, to know people. Vitamin B, something like that.

Me: The what sorry?

Claudia: Vitamin B, you have the same? Vitamin B?

Me: No

Claudia: Vitamin. B. No? Well if you know people from your um ... well..... uh speciality? (...) if you know the people you get better jobs, because they take people they know. (Claudia, 23, German)

Vitamin B is, then, a German phrase referring to the need to 'network' to find a career³⁴. The view that volunteer experiences can increase employability in more or less direct ways than this is very common. A little over half of all participants explicitly cited experience relevant to their career trajectories – including references to volunteering as a means of enhancing their CVs, and/or 'networking' – in their accounts of why they were volunteering. Even the respondents who were not volunteering to gain either scientific or field-based experience of any direct relevance to their careers saw volunteering as something which would improve their CVs in a more general sense.

It's not like this is the kind of experience I need for dancing [...] but in other ways it's useful [...] any kind of work like this is ... good on a CV, you know? (Elle, 20, British).

4.2 Volunteering in relation to the labour market

For a significant proportion of volunteers, discourses around CV enhancement and/or accumulating experience relevant to their career aspirations were mobilised to account for their volunteering. In conversations with 'career' turtle conservationists over the years it has become evident that this idea of 'Vitamin B' to which Claudia referred earlier certainly applies within the global turtle conservation network. In several cases volunteers' associations and experiences within ARCHELON projects have led to other placements, including paid positions working with other turtle projects in South America, as well as paid roles such as field leadership for ARCHELON's various projects: as such it is a reasonable expectation that volunteering might lead to other turtle based employment opportunities. However, the direct relationship between volunteer tourism and work is not the

³⁴ In Claudia's interview this 'nepotism' seem to be less of a critique of a systemic problem and more of a recognition that this is just how things are in her desired career path.

only point to consider here. Consideration of the types of attitudes to work exhibited by volunteers can shed further light on the complex issue of instrumentalism in this context. In turn, this helps to address my research questions pertaining to the assumed alienation found in paid employment (RQ3a). The engagement with broader interviewee narratives in the remainder of this section contributes to a rich ethnographic exploration of this instance of volunteer tourism, as well as adding complexity to the somewhat one-dimensional characterisation of motivational accounts offered in this initial discussion.

4.2.1 Work to live or live to work?

Although around half of the volunteers expressed an interest in finding jobs in what I refer to as ‘the environmental sector’ – which serves as a convenient shorthand to encompass jobs in marine or terrestrial conservation and/or research – volunteers varied greatly in their views towards paid employment. I didn’t ask volunteers explicitly about their career plans. Nevertheless most of the respondents mentioned their ambitions in relation to either their reasons for volunteering or their passions and interests more broadly. It seemed that, of these participants, it was the younger volunteers – those still in full-time education and/or below the age of 21 – who tended to be more optimistic about their career plans, hoping that their chosen educational paths would result in careers which were fulfilling and enjoyable and would serve some ‘greater good’: benefiting the environment, animals or humans. In the following pages, I look first at those volunteers who regard work as something which should be meaningful and intrinsically worthwhile, often because it is expected to benefit others (such as a specific species or broader ecosystems). I then turn to the smaller number of cases, comprising mostly the slightly older volunteers in the sample, for whom work is presented as a necessary means to acquire the funds needed to pursue their passions *outside of* paid employment. This section concludes by examining the overarching inevitability which surrounds the discourses of work within the interviews.

4.2.2 Live to work (in an enjoyable, rewarding job)

For some volunteers, the very idea of working in a job which did not satisfy them was quite objectionable. Indeed, one volunteer, Jodi, explained her amazement at having only recently realised that there were people for whom work was seen purely as a means to live and was, by some, neither expected nor desired to be particularly enjoyable. This kind of attitude reflects a habitus in which work is regarded as a potential means of self-expression and personal development, something which not only *can* but in fact *should* be enjoyable, interesting and/or developmental for employees. Such attitudes to work are characteristic of the professional middle-classes (Ehrenreich 1990) introduced in Chapters 1 and 2, whilst to those outside of this class it might perhaps be more surprising that work *could* be enjoyable, let alone that many expect that it *should* be. Jodi states here that she felt very sorry for people who didn't enjoy their jobs:

I just always loved animals and I just wanted to do something with animals and I just always wanted, always said I don't care what I do for a job, I just want to enjoy it (...) cos I feel really sad for people who don't like their job and someone said to me you spend something like 80% or 90% of your life working and I thought, well, if I'm not going to enjoy what I'm doing there's just no point. (Jodi, 21, New Zealander)

So for Jodi, it is less the *type* of job which she is concerned about, but instead the result of doing the job, in that it has the ability to make her happy.

It was very common for volunteers to be quite unclear as to what precise jobs they wanted. In some cases the types of jobs which volunteers hoped to acquire were articulated in self-transcendent terms, such as in this extract from my interview with Harriet:

I just like to make... to make things better (...)so... that's why I'm like so interested in geography and natural disasters and ... relief work and.... I don't... I don't even know what I'm interested in it all merges into like conservation, everything (...) that's why I don't know what career I want (Harriet, 19, British).

So for Harriet, a desire to 'make things better' had initiated her interest in conservation, but had provided no real prescriptions as to what career path she

wished to pursue. For others, the desire to do something meaningful or worthwhile was positioned in direct opposition to office work, but still the precise type of work which they desired was not clarified:

I'm not saying it's bad, but like office jobs, it's not like, I know it's important but I feel like I wanna make like an actual difference, like something that's noticeable (...) like help people or animals or the environment, or, like, something where I feel good about myself for doing (Hayley, 18, British)

Angie's account of her time as an apprentice in an office provides a similar version of 'office work' as something which doesn't make sense:

After school I did an apprenticeship ... working in an industrial company. Mainly office work, and I did a combination to learn foreign languages; English and French ... but I would not do it again. Languages are great but the office work was just ... disgusting ... It didn't make any sense to me and I was so happy just finishing ... I'm totally happy with the studies ... I will never start a job again that doesn't make sense to me ... it's just to earn money, to be home early ... go to bed soon, or I dunno to have your holidays every year for 6 weeks. I would never do it again. (Angie, 23, German)

However, several of the older volunteers who had completed their time in secondary education or at university and subsequently entered the labour market, such as Clare, Jenny, Pete, Phoebe and Victoria, looked upon employment in a more instrumental manner, viewing it as something that could facilitate the next adventure. Clare, who had been working in the same area for some years and thoroughly disliked her job, finding it both senseless and alienating, was in a less fortunate position than Jenny, Lucy and Victoria who, though still seeing work as a means to an end (travelling or volunteering), were lucky enough to enjoy their jobs:

So I'm not interested in..... um, like, I don't know, say working in a career that I'm not happy in (...) And I will do what makes me happy, which has been why I guess why I impulsively have done, like quit jobs so that I can come out to Greece for five months (Lucy, 31, New Zealander).

I turn to these respondents who exemplify the 'work to live' approach to employment now.

4.2.3 Work to live (or to travel)

Clare had trained in a clerical role after completing education rather than going to university. She described her administrative job as 'senseless' in this classically alienated account of the type of work in which she had previously been employed:

It's senseless somehow, it's like you're working for a big company trying to make money for them ... but you don't really see what you're doing you have no results ... Nobody thanks you in the end... They always see the bad things they don't see the good things, you know? (Clare, 25, Swiss)

However, because it allowed her to engage in projects such as this which *did* make sense she said she was willing to accept this, knowing that her work, however personally unfulfilling, was suitable for temporary and sporadic engagement interspersed with spells of volunteering. Both Clare and Pete presented negative views on their past employment, having felt alienated and under-appreciated in their previous jobs. Pete explained elsewhere that he was 'treated like crap' in his previous job as a mechanic a lot of the time, and Clare felt that her employers at her clerical job only ever noticed the mistakes made, never commenting upon successes and achievements amongst the staff. Both Clare and Pete, neither of whom had studied beyond high school but had instead done apprenticeships in their respective fields, implied that they would like to have a job they enjoyed, but didn't mind doing less satisfying work if it would allow them finances to travel in between these jobs:

I don't mind working my butt off for those extra couple of months in a horrible city to travel to other places (Pete, 24, New Zealander).

For volunteers like Clare and Pete, volunteering is an enjoyable break from unfulfilling and unpleasant paid work rather than a means to improved employment options, offering networking opportunities or relevant experience. Work is the means to these ends, providing the money to facilitate travel.

Clare's outlook on work did not seem to be entirely due to dissatisfaction with work, as she stated explicitly that even if she did train for a job she really enjoyed she would still not want to work all year round, but instead would continue to intersperse periods of work with periods of travel:

Actually I really don't care what kind of work I'm going to find, just something... (...). I think it depends of what sort of person you are. Because I know people that are really, like for them it's really important to do a job which is good for them, and for me personally (...) I work so that I can have a life living out of it. It would be nice to have a job that I like but still I would not like to work 100%. I prefer to have time than to have money (Clare, 25, Swiss).

This quote is exemplary of the 'work to live' perspective, in contrast to outlooks which posit meaningful and satisfying work as central to happiness, well-being and personal success such as those of Jodi and Lucy presented earlier. In this account, then, work is not presented as something which will ever be of central importance to Clare's life. Paid work is seen as necessary for facilitating more pleasurable and personally fulfilling activities, allowing for 'a life living' outside of paid employment rather than something which might be itself of intrinsic value. Through investing *less* of themselves into their work and placing a higher emphasis on the importance of leisure as a means for fulfilment, these volunteers are thereby liberated from the ideological commitment to work inherent in the accounts of the younger, and more idealistic, volunteers.

One of the younger volunteers on the project had previously spent some time working in a factory which makes weapons and weapons systems, which she spoke about here:

Hilda: When I have told some people that I worked at this company just as a summer job I was just kind of bringing things on the computer and everyone has said oh no, that's so bad, did you really work there? It's, 'oh no, weapons!' and 'you know that they sell these things to children soldiers?' and I was like no [...] I think some other student maybe my age had been sitting there instead if I haven't been in this work [...]

Me: Did you feel bad about it when they said this?

Hilda: No [...] the first time I was like mmm OK and then when I heard it again I was like no don't say that [...] now I feel bad, but oh, yeah... I don't know... there's not so much I can do about it and at least I'm finished [laughs] with the work now, so yeah (Hilda, 18, Belgian).

In this case the work was not boring, dissatisfying, or poorly rewarded in terms of recognition, but was actually anathema to the participant's values. She uses what I have elsewhere referred to as 'moral balancing' to justify working in this job

(O'Mahoney 2010), rationalising her engagement with the work by referring to the inevitability of the work being done by *someone*.

4.2.4 Work as an inevitable feature of adult life

Although attitudes towards the types of employment sought and the levels of satisfaction, fulfilment or enjoyment volunteers hoped to gain through employment varied greatly, paid work, for all volunteers but one, was regarded as something which would inevitably dominate their adult lives. The one exception, Jess, was at the time of writing living in a community project at which one day of work per week served as 'rent' for the space for her caravan. She spoke at some length both in her interview and in conversations outside of this encounter about the actions she'd already taken at home to disengage from the mainstream capitalist system: taking great pleasure in growing her own vegetables, salads and herbs; foraging for wild food; occasionally 'skipping'³⁵; and brewing her own alcohol from elderflowers, apples or root ginger. She explained, in this extract taken from an extended discussion about her lifestyle, that as far as possible she'd also like to be able to withdraw in her daily life from economic exchanges and responsibilities:

Basically I'm trying to use... to get to be in a situation where I can live with as little money as possible and the money that I do earn I can earn doing something that I really love (Jess, 26, British).

The example Jess gives is face-painting, something which she enjoyed doing on a sporadic remunerated basis at festivals or parties, and something which she did on camp for pleasure on several occasions, but something she did not wish to see fully commodified in the sense of providing her with a full-time occupation. Although far from self-sufficient, she was and remains an avid learner of techniques that might allow her to realise her dream of working only by doing things she 'loved' such as face-painting, gardening and story-telling, and only to the extent which was necessary to maintain rather than improve her lifestyle.

³⁵ 'Skipping' refers to the practice of taking from skips behind supermarkets items which have either exceeded their sell-by dates or are damaged.

Aside from Jess, then, engaging in regular employment is seen as necessary and inevitable amongst the volunteers who comprise this sample. Even Clare, who you will remember preferred to balance periods of work with periods of travel, with the former providing the resources for the latter, did not express any intention of withdrawing from employment to the extent that Jess was attempting to. Of the 14 volunteers who had completed full-time education and were currently 'in' the labour market, half explicitly disliked the jobs they had held most recently, two were ambivalent, and only five spoke in largely (though not exclusively) positive terms about their jobs. However, of these five respondents, three were somewhat itinerant – often taking extended leave for travel or seeking only temporary jobs so that they could facilitate this – and despite enjoying their jobs on the whole, they saw them primarily as the means to allow for this lifestyle. Eric, Bob, Victoria, Jenny, Lucy and Phoebe had all persisted with periods of temporary employment at various points in their lives, working for spells of several months in short-term positions or leaving jobs to volunteer and/or to travel for extended periods of time. Stan and Chris, who are both in their 40s, had both decided educationally and professionally to distance themselves from their successful and well established careers in IT and construction, respectively, in the pursuit of environmental science based qualifications and, on obtaining these, to fulfil a desire to engage professionally with conservation. Both had left well-paid and secure jobs to pursue these ambitions to work in a sector which is notoriously competitive and poorly paid.

Regardless of whether employment is viewed as a necessary evil, engaged in sporadically to facilitate bouts of travel, or a future adventure which is potentially fulfilling and rewarding, it is almost ubiquitously regarded as an inevitable feature of one's future. The hegemonic ideology of work is thus evident within this stratum of my data, as an aspect of contemporary life which is largely viewed neither as potentially resistible in the long term nor actively or persistently resisted by many³⁶. Before I move on to discuss what volunteers did during their participation and the

³⁶ In my literature review I discussed various reasons for this, including the work by Fevre (2000), Gorz (2011), Hayden (1999), Frayne (2011, 2015) and Weeks (2011). I return to discuss the importance of this literature to my findings shortly. However, further work must first be done to elaborate upon the types of attitudes to work expressed by my participants, looking at alternative versions of work (in the sense of voluntary – freely chosen and non-remunerated – labour) in the subsequent chapters to paint a richer picture of the attitudes to work generated within my data.

impacts of their participation in this project – which contributes further to the preceding exploration of the theme of employment through an exposition of the types of work engaged in whilst volunteering – I discuss the commonly occurring but often ambiguous motivation of ‘doing something different’.

4.3 Doing something different.

For several participants, volunteering for this project was just one more adventure in a larger experience of travelling and often – despite their obvious concern for conservation – volunteering for the project was couched in touristic rather than environmentalist rhetoric, albeit as, again, ‘something different’ from conventional tourism. The phrase ‘do something different’ encapsulates some of the discourses introduced above, such as ‘doing something different’ from one’s normal job or ‘doing something different’ to accrue work experience or expand ‘networks’, and was very common within my interview data. As Urry and Larsen suggest, ‘tourists look at ‘difference’ differently’ (2011, p.3), and the volunteers’ accounts included implicit and explicit references to volunteering as something different from other types of holiday, something different from a participant’s career trajectory, or something different as a means of distinction on their CV. ‘Something different’ was also often offered as a self-sufficient and non-elaborated explanation for participation. I briefly discuss these various manifestations in turn below.

4.3.1 A different form of travel

Over a third of volunteers said that overseas travel was a factor in their decision to volunteer. However, volunteering was largely presented by volunteers as something ‘different’ from mass tourism. The discourses employed here served to distinguish the activity from other fields of tourism and the participants themselves from other categories of people, and provide examples of the ways in which volunteers draw moral boundaries between themselves and ‘others’ (Sayer 2011; Wetherell et al. 1987). Thus it is important to illustrate how different accounts of motivations for volunteering discursively present volunteer tourism as distinct from other types of tourism. Discussions ranged from a desire to avoid package holidays or hotels, to avoiding behaviours associated with the types of tourism that the participants in

question wished to distance themselves from. Participants also expressed a desire to cause minimal harm through their touristic endeavours, again as distinct from other forms of tourism deemed exploitative of the natural environment.

As regards the manner in which participants expressed a desire to avoid 'normal' holidays, Jana explains her decision to volunteer through positing it as an opportunity for adventure:

We just didn't um want to go in a hotel. Just, we wanted, uh, adventure. (Jana, 18, Swiss)

So in this instance the 'hotel' style of tourism is seen as unadventurous. For Lena and Emmalina, as well as several other volunteers, camping is something which is associated with childhood and is presented as a preferable form of holiday accommodation:

...when I was a child we went camping like every summer - so to Italy and to Croatia and stuff, so I'm uh used to this. I don't like hotels so much (Lena, 30, Austrian).

And then we moved actually to my Grandma's so then I was in the middle of nowhere in the mountains so um, yeah we are always playing outside in the woods so always kind of connected to nature, also like all the free-time activities we did with my parents - it was never like, I don't know whether you go on city tourism or anything? It was just like camping and in wildlife and, yeah, going camping and so on. (Emmalina, 25, Austrian)

For Lena and Emmalina, then, camping is not something different from their own experiences, as it is something they have enjoyed with their families whilst growing up, but is something different from what 'other people' might do on holiday – such as staying in hotels or engaging in 'city tourism'. For these volunteers these are tastes developed from a young age, and are presented in terms of the distinctions between the participants' tastes and those of 'others' (Bourdieu 1984). Hayley, similarly, relates the types of travel and tourism she enjoys now to those which she experienced growing up, though in this case she speaks negatively about her previous tourist experiences with her family as opposed to the type engaged in here:

I mean we used to go on holiday quite a lot but not really do anything. We'd just like sit around the beach, so I wanted to come and like go abroad and actually experience something a little bit (Hayley, 18, British).

This idea of not wanting to 'sit around the beach' is reiterated by Dave, who elsewhere explains that he would 'go mad' if he had nothing to do in his six week summer break, and he also combined this with the idea of being useful:

...I feel like I'm doing something worthwhile with my time, rather than sitting round a pool and doing nothing (Dave, 22, British).

Doing something different can then refer to types of travel which differ from what the volunteers themselves have previously engaged in, or from the ways that other people spend their leisure time, and reflect both the tastes and the related habitus of the volunteers. Moreover, these accounts support various literatures discussed earlier which refer to the desire of contemporary individuals to 'spend' rather than 'pass' their time, doing useful and productive activities in their 'free' time, and, often, developing themselves personally or professionally through doing so (Thompson 1967; Ingram 2011; Simpson 2005, 2005; Gerrard 2014; Illich and Verne 1976; Ehrenreich 1990, Wearing 2001).

4.3.2 Doing something useful as opposed to getting drunk

In the examples given above, the ideas of experiencing something different from package holidays and of being useful or doing something deemed worthwhile are expressed in opposition to the sorts of behaviour participants would wish to avoid, or in terms of the distinctions between different types of 'tastes' (Bourdieu 1984). Corrine and Jenny here express a desire to distance themselves from 'drunken' tourism:

...and they're just the typical British person, do you know what I mean? [...] like the people who go to Zante or whatever [...] and just get pissed all the time? (Corrine, 20, British).

When you go from hostel to hostel and you're meeting so many people from your own country so you think it would be you think ah well they're from Australia too so we should get along and you do for like 5 or 10 minutes then you think about it and you're like they're actually here to get pissed and go to like the best pub and like that's not at all what I want to do, and you just feel even more isolated I guess (Jenny, 25, Australian).

Jenny compares this to her first experience of volunteering which, as she elsewhere explains, entirely transformed her own attitude to travel:

I ended up having the best month of my whole life [...] met the best people that I've ever met in all my travels in three years, just because it was people that were like-minded, cared about the same things, weren't just overseas for different reasons, like drinking (Jenny, 25, Australian)³⁷.

Interestingly, alcohol is associated by another volunteer, Claudia, with the type of people who do not care about the environment, and are self-centred. For Claudia, drinking too heavily – or at least too often – is here associated with a lack of care for the world outside of one's own and a preoccupation with themselves:

...I don't like that humans think that they are the best and the only ummmm.. creatures in earth... that they have the right to do everything and they just destroy the whole earth, and it's just so sad, so I think, well, many people do something against that, that's what's so great [...] but I don't like people that really don't care – they just care about their lives and just going out and drinking and yeah... I don't know, I don't like that (Claudia, 23, German).

This is not to say that Claudia associated everyone who drank with an uncaring or selfish outlook, and she had no complaints about the alcohol consumption on camp. Drinking alcohol was common on camp, verging on excessive during certain periods such as before nesting began and again towards the end of the season when the work began to decline. However, despite the frequency of camp 'parties' to say farewell to a departing volunteer or perhaps to mark 'meat days'³⁸ when a barbecue would be lit and a party would invariably commence, Claudia usually preferred to remain sober.

4.3.3 Doing something different as a form of recuperation

Despite the general evidence of participants discursively distinguishing volunteering from other types of travel, during which excessive alcohol is consumed, deck chairs

³⁷ For Jenny, working with people who have similar values and concerns to her was also prominent in her account of why she volunteered, and I return to the importance of sharing values or interests later in relation to volunteers' sense of 'belonging'.

³⁸ 'Meat days' varied in frequency throughout the season, depending on the keenness of volunteers to eat meat and the willingness of volunteer 'chefs' to sweat over the BBQ cooking it. When these did occur, an additional collection was required from the meat-eating volunteers to subsidise the weekly 'kitty' and a special trip to the butcher ensued. Generally, though, the camp is a vegetarian one, due to the expense of buying and practicalities of storing meat. Though some volunteers are vegetarian, this seems to be increasingly uncommon as the years pass. When I first volunteered in 2004 meat eaters were usually a minority, now, however, the opposite is true.

are populated with bronzing bodies and work is strictly off the agenda, volunteers all engaged to varying degrees with these activities. My field-notes are littered with references to trips to the local tavernas and swimming pool, and the hours spent by volunteers frolicking in the sea (often accompanied by the raft made by a group of volunteers in mid-June) or sunbathing on the beach by camp. This was often justified through a discourse of the recuperation of the self. Several volunteers refer to their time in this way, saying how nice it is to temporarily live in a laid-back environment and to 'get away from it all'. Some even reflected upon the health benefits of this, such as Josh here who suggested that it is restorative to live in a 'different way':

Yeah but I mean there are like thousands of reasons also like being here like in different way of living, it's like mental recharging of batteries or something [...] I really needed that. (Josh, 20, Belgian)

For Jenny, it is suggested that living this way is good for oneself, but also for the planet at large:

I don't know, I just feel like, um to live a little bit more simply doing the earth a little bit of a service and to yourself as well (Jenny, 25, Australian)

As with my previous discussion concerning employment, the ideas about well-being implicated in these extracts and in my observations of the almost ubiquitous felicity of volunteers during their participation are topics to which I return later.

4.3.4 'Something different' as an end in itself

Despite the prominence of the phrase 'something different' (mentioned in about a third of all arrival interviews) it is clear that what is 'different' varies between volunteers. For some volunteers like Stan and Chris who were seeking new careers in conservation, volunteering is a means to an end, referring explicitly to a departure from something within their 'normal' lives, such as where their career trajectory appears to be leading them or work they have done previously. For others something different refers to a wish to avoid mainstream tourism practices like staying in hotels and lying on the beach or by the pool. One final dominant conceptualisation of 'different' is typical of touristic types of accounts of

motivations: 'something different' is a self-justifying explanation; enjoyment can be found simply in doing something which differs from what is normally done (Urry 2002b; Urry and Larsen 2011). Extracts like this one from Elle were common:

So um, so I just did it, and... It's always exciting to do something completely different and new really. (Elle, 20, British)

Volunteers often did not clarify what they regard volunteering as different *from* or what is substantively different *about* it, using the discursive idea of 'novelty' as justification for their participation. As discussed in Chapter 2, this desire for novelty is characteristic of the 'post' or 'liquid' stage of modernity (Bauman 2000). For these volunteers something different is encapsulated by the stated desire to have new experiences, and this desire is an end in itself. Bob, an American arts graduate in his early 30s, for example, falls into this category:

Because I was looking for new experiences beyond a traditional office job and um..... When I had a traditional office job and I wanted to do something else I didn't know quite what it was. People would ask me what else I wanted to do and I always said I wanted to be on a beach, taking measurements of turtle tracks, and hanging out with graduate students and so when I found out about the project I was like well, I have to do it because I've been kind of glibly joking about doing exactly this. (Bob, 33, American)

Bob is, however, somewhat atypical, as this 'something else' has become habitual and he has returned repeatedly to protect the Greek sea turtles. His initial desire to leave his 'traditional' job and life in the United States and travel indefinitely found a catalyst in his discovery of ARCHELON's projects. Harriet also mentioned in her first interview that she had referred in jest to sea turtle conservation before having heard of the project:

Well it's strange cos like a year ago when somebody said to me 'ohhh what are you going to do in your gap year' I was like 'I dunno I'll go and save sea turtles or something'. (Harriet, 19, British)

In these two examples, especially the latter, the participants' earlier light-hearted reference to a desire to conserve turtles suggests that turtle conservation is perhaps the pinnacle of 'something different', and is about as far from normal life as you could hope to get in a few short weeks. Zoe similarly, demonstrates an attachment to turtles which she cannot rationalise clearly:

Ever since I was like 10 I've always wanted to go somewhere and work with turtles. I'm not really sure why turtles ... but yeah and so like coming here's actually been something that I've wanted to do for a long time but not actually known why. (Zoe, 19, British)

Campbell and Smith suggest that the sea turtle conservationists with whom they conducted research in Costa Rica viewed turtles as engendering particular environmental values, real or mythical (Campbell and Smith 2006). This is reflected in volunteers' rhetoric surrounding the creatures in a similar way that the whale, the orang-utan or the giant panda have come to stand as symbolic for conservation generally³⁹, as 'flagship species', so perhaps these seemingly offhand references to turtles are unsurprising, though nonetheless telling. Conversely, few volunteers show more than a mythologised affinity with turtles: whilst casting them in a symbolically prominent place in relation to conservation as a whole, for the most part denying that a specific concern for turtles was their reason for volunteering. Some even made a point of noting that they had no particular affinity with turtles, or even that they were overly fond of the species before engaging in the project. As Bob flippantly remarked when I asked him how he felt about sea turtles: 'there are no turtle figurines in the house'.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the various accounts mobilised by volunteers to account for their participation in the project have been discussed. As predicted by the existing academic literature, these accounts comprise multi-faceted, interrelated, and co-occurring discourses, entailing egoistic drives such as hedonism and instrumentalism, as well as more self-transcendent concerns and various pragmatic considerations. The relationship between work and leisure has been introduced in this chapter and re-emerges repeatedly throughout the subsequent pages. Finally, the various manifestations of the desire to 'do something different' were discussed, and it is necessary now to elaborate further on what was substantively different

³⁹ These symbolic assignments, however, are often somewhat spurious, for example, Kalland (1993) argues that the whale as an environmental symbol is actually better understood as an amalgamation of characteristics of various species of whale into the mythical "super-whale" which is intelligent, endangered, displays family values, etc.

about life within the project to that experienced in the 'real world'. To do this, the following two chapters discuss what volunteers actually do on the project: how they live, how they work, and the types of values and forms of community which develop therein.

The next chapter opens with a descriptive account of the project, informed by field-notes and repeated observations over several years as researcher and volunteer to present a clearer picture of the everyday life of ARCHELON volunteers. Interview data and field notes are subsequently mobilised to discuss certain practices in more detail, including specific aspects of both the formal and informal work that volunteers perform whilst participating. The contrasts between this instance of volunteer tourism and the types of work experienced in the 'real world' are further explored in this chapter. These contrasts begin to answer the research questions about the ways in which volunteer tourists are able to find experiences which allow them to flourish and challenge dominant discourses and forms of sense-making (RQs 1c and 3b), many of which were manifested in the accounts of why participants had volunteered, as discussed in this chapter. Data are mobilised which suggest that the types of work experienced here are of a fundamentally non-alienated character. Furthermore, the types of interactions, not only within the group of volunteers but also between volunteers and the environment around them, are also of a non-alienated character. These interactions are largely unmediated by economic factors or by commodity consumption. These observations contribute to the development of my argument which has been developing thus far – foreshadowed in the previous empirical chapter and my earlier theoretical chapters – about the relationship between the volunteer tourist environment and the broader socio-economic characteristics of advanced capitalism.

5 The Everyday Life of ARCHELON Volunteers

Having described in Chapter 4 the motivations for volunteers' participation, the current chapter explores what they did while they were volunteering, beginning with an ethnographic account of the community under discussion. The volunteers at the project where I conducted my research live in very basic conditions. There is a simple kitchen structure and a shed-like toilet stall which remain in place throughout the winter months. The additional shaded areas around camp and on the beach, as well as the make-shift shower cubicle, are constructed anew when the project begins each May as their flimsy nature means that they would not survive the rougher winter weather. Volunteers provide their own tents, in which they sleep for the duration of their stay, and they are required to participate for a minimum of 4 weeks⁴⁰. The average length of volunteers' participation during the summer in which this research was conducted was around five and a half weeks.

Hierarchy and the distribution of work

The conservation work and camp responsibilities are coordinated throughout the season by a monitoring leader and a public-awareness (PA) leader. These individuals are paid a minimal fee by the organisation, and are themselves past volunteers with several seasons' worth of experience behind each of them. As well as coordinating the conservation work, these leaders work together to 'run' the campsite, ensuring that the camp life also runs smoothly. Informal camp meetings are called by these leaders once every ten days or so (this is not rigidly structured). These are loosely 'chaired' by the monitoring leader, but are quite informal affairs at which any volunteer is welcome to speak freely. At these meetings the group will discuss any current or ongoing problems, changing routines due to the transition from 'nesting season' to 'hatching season'. At times when the group of volunteers is particularly messy, a gentle group 'telling off' will be necessary and the importance of keeping communal areas clear of clutter is regularly emphasized at these

⁴⁰ Greek volunteers are an exception to this rule, and they are able to participate for a minimum of 2 weeks to encourage greater participation amongst this group.

meetings. Camp meetings allow issues to be addressed directly and swiftly, in a fairly democratic manner.

The rota through which tasks are allocated amongst the volunteers is created every 5 to 7 days, at the beginning of the season by the monitoring leader alone, and later through the combined efforts of both leaders. This rota is written on a white board, and serves as a focal point for volunteers' attention, with volunteers ritually huddling around the freshly written whiteboard to see who they will be working with in the subsequent few days, what beaches they would be surveying, how many kiosk shifts they have, and whether they have a day off scheduled in that period. Volunteers also scour this document for errors, such as finding their name on two different beaches on the same morning, or being allocated a 'night survey' followed directly by a 'morning survey'. Changes to the rota are permitted, though only after discussion with the monitoring or PA leader to ensure that these do not impact upon the allocation of tasks or experienced volunteers elsewhere.

Morning surveys: Nesting season

Because of the extreme heat of the Greek summer and the nesting habits of the turtles themselves, most of the practical work of conservation conducted by the volunteers takes place either throughout the night (night surveys) or as early in the day as daylight permits (morning surveys). Thus sleep deprivation is a frequent complaint, as it is often too hot to sleep easily during the day. A typical volunteers' day begins between 5:30 and 6am, shortly before sunrise, when they stumble blearily towards the toilet. They await their turn a short distance away to allow the current occupant the privacy which is otherwise compromised by the 8 inch gap between the ground and the bottom of the toilet shed, before shuffling in to answer their own calls of nature. They pause at the sink afterwards to perform brief ablutions, before moving towards the kitchen and beginning whatever routine they have adopted there: perhaps making a fortifying frappe, or a cup of tea, maybe eating a bowl of cereal, or, if shopping has been done recently, a banana. Other volunteers may be greeted cheerfully, or simply grunted at by the less morning-friendly members – you quickly learn who these are. The bag of equipment for morning survey may have been packed the night before, but if it was not, whoever's

name is first on the rota for each beach sector is responsible for packing the bag for their team, ensuring that sufficient bamboo and grids are collected by the rest of the team, and that the bucket, necessary if any nests are to be relocated, is not forgotten. Once the team is gathered – on occasion requiring the beach ‘leader’⁴¹ to awaken a missing member, whose alarm clock has awakened everyone around but not, unfortunately, its owner – the group will make their way to the beach.

Morning survey can last for as little as an hour, or as long as six, and as such it is necessary to carry sufficient sun protection and water to allow for this. During the nesting season, from May to early August, the shift involves walking the length of each sector, approximately 2.5km, recording and protecting any nests laid the previous night, and recording and obliterating any evidence of non-nesting emergences. Simple though this may sound, the ability to correctly identify nests and having done so to be able to successfully locate a clutch of eggs buried up to 60cm deep under a camouflage (the pile of sand thrown by the nesting turtle over her clutch), which can be several meters long, can be extremely challenging. Incorrectly identifying a ‘body pit’ or a ‘swim’ (both non-nesting attempts in which a turtle has dug in the sand but has not laid eggs) can lead to a great deal of wasted time and energy digging holes in which no eggs are found. However, incorrectly identifying an actual nest can lead to subsequent predation if it is left unprotected. Morning surveys therefore necessitate cooperation, consideration and discussion, and the importance of looking hard at the patterns in the sand, correctly identifying the ‘up’ and ‘down’ tracks, and knowing the difference between a camouflage, a body pit, a swim and an abandoned egg chamber before flopping to the ground and beginning to dig is emphasised very strongly to all volunteers. These shifts are necessarily exercises in teaching and learning for all, though occasionally experienced volunteers forget their capacity for the latter, and indeed, their responsibility to engage in the former, as the sun rises, the heat intensifies, and the urge to get back to camp for food, sleep, or cold water increases.

⁴¹ This refers to the volunteer whose name is top of the list. This individual is not a leader in the sense of necessarily being the most experienced or the volunteer ‘in charge’ of the shift, but it is he or she who must ensure that all equipment (and team members) are collected and, hopefully, returned intact some hours later.

If a clutch of eggs is found, measurements can then be taken and recorded. These include the depth from the beach level to the top egg, the distance to the sea, the distance to the nearest beach marker (located every 50m along the back of the beach), and the GPS (global positioning system) location of the nest. Volunteers then protect the nest from predation. A grid of approximately 1m² is placed with its centre directly above the reburied eggs, and sticks of bamboo 50-60cm long are hammered in around its edges, securing the grid in place to stop predation from dogs and foxes from above, and causing an obstruction below the sand to impede predation from the front, back, or sides of the nest. A sign, explaining in Greek, English and German that this is a nest of the endangered loggerhead sea turtle and is protected by national and international law, is affixed to the central-rear piece of bamboo, which is also marked in permanent pen with the nesting date and nest code, as are two stones buried behind the nest. This is so that future morning survey teams can correctly identify the nest. Finally, all of the equipment is returned to the bag, the tracks leading to and from the nest are scrubbed out so they do not confuse the members of later morning or night surveys, and the volunteers can move on to the next emergence.

If there were high waves the previous night, the team may also have inundations to deal with. An inundation is when waves go past existing protected nests, often depositing sand upon the top, which must be removed until the grid is once more visible. The sand immediately below the grid must then be gently aerated using a scrunching action with the fingers in the top layer of compacted sand to allow oxygen to reach the clutch. The team may also encounter a predated nest on morning surveys, bamboo scattered around, a gaping hole revealing the remaining eggs within, and broken shells littering the area. If this happens, and a dog or fox has penetrated the nest, the broken eggs must be counted and then buried some distance away from the remaining clutch, the damage must be recorded, whatever eggs remain untouched within the nest must be reburied, and additional sticks and stones used to protect the nest from future predations. Morning survey also often involves replacing the occasional missing beach marker, which are placed at 50 metre intervals along the back of the beach and used for the purpose of triangulating the position of nests. It can also entail checking data which has either been forgotten

or recorded incorrectly on previous mornings, often communicated to the team by way of an apologetic note in the morning survey book from the preceding mornings' team. The volunteers will return to camp between one and six hours after departing, hungry, often tired, but usually in good spirits. The work is hard – largely because of the intense heat which is felt as soon as the sun rises above the mountains to the east – but satisfying, and for many, interesting.

The rest of the day

Following the morning survey, and having completed the paperwork generated by it, the volunteer's day is largely their own. For many, the first port of call will be the kitchen, whereupon breakfast may at last be consumed. For some, breakfast making is a shared and joyful activity, often planned to excruciating detail whilst on the preceding morning survey, and the meal will comprise delicious, usually fried, concoctions garnished with fresh herbs from the garden. For others, cereal and Greek yoghurt, or a few slices of fresh bread slathered with 'Mr Choc' chocolate spread will suffice, or on occasion someone will have decided to make pancakes. After this, volunteers may sit at the kitchen table reading, chatting, and playing games, or they may head either to the beach, the pool bar, or back to sleep if it's not already too hot. A few volunteers will be required to staff the information kiosk in the nearby village. These shifts last about 3 hours, which are spent trying to inform tourists and locals about the turtles and to collect donations in exchange for turtle themed merchandise. The kiosk is open around 11 hours a day, and is staffed by four teams of two volunteers during this period. The kiosk shifts are intended to raise crucial funds for the organisation and increase awareness of the turtles amongst tourists and locals alike. However, they require that the volunteers sit in a small and overheated wooden box for around 3 hours, in most cases able to communicate only a very limited amount of useful information to tourists or local residents due to language barriers. Whilst recognised as an important shift and enjoyed by some, many volunteers referred to this as 'boring' or 'pointless' due either to a lack of visitors/customers, or to the frequent inability of the volunteers to communicate with those who do visit.

Around 4pm, the mid-afternoon cleaning duty will be performed. Cleaning is performed twice daily: once in the morning by a volunteer who was not performing morning survey that day, so that any mess from the previous night is cleared up before the morning survey teams returned, and once in the afternoon so that any mess made during the day would be removed before the volunteer 'chefs' begin cooking dinner. Although everyone is theoretically responsible for cleaning up after themselves, in practice some mess is always left. Both shifts involve the same pre-defined tasks: emptying the kitchen bin, compost bin and toilet bin; wiping the sides in the kitchen; washing any leftover dishes; cleaning the stove-tops; and tidying the communal area. Further elements which some volunteers choose to add to this list or to perform at their will include dealing with any old leftovers in the fridge, tidying the cupboards or cleaning or organising the freezer.

The shaded area adjoining the kitchen fluctuates in population between the post-morning-survey breakfast rush and the late afternoon when people begin reassembling, in some cases opening a beer, playing chess or backgammon, reading, smoking, engaging in a craft project, or just talking with the others present. Dinner is served around 8pm, and this is the time of day when the largest proportion of the volunteers will be gathered together, as usually everyone – except the two volunteers staffing the kiosk, and those presenting a slide show at a local tavern or hotel if such an event is scheduled that day - will be present. The meal is prepared by



Figure 3: Volleyball at Sunset

two or three volunteers, and cooking is not an allocated shift but instead one which any willing or inspired person may volunteer for, usually employing the help of a friend or two in the process⁴². After dinner and the

⁴² In previous years, cooking has appeared on the rota, distributed by the monitoring or camp leader as fairly as possible and comprising teams not of their own choosing. However, the system in place during the season this research was conducted improved both the goodwill of the cooks and the overall quality of food

subsequent clear-up – a communal effort in which everyone washes their own dishes – a number of volunteers will ritually decamp to the beach to play volleyball in the short period between dinner and dusk (Figure. 3), the only time of day in which it's realistic to attempt the sport, often armed with beer and coming back wet and laughing from a sunset swim in the sea an hour or so later. For most, the rest of the evening will be spent socialising, playing games, and listening to music.

Night survey

For a select few, one more shift awaits them. Ideally, three night survey teams are dispatched every night, covering the 4km of the total length of the beach which has the highest nesting density for the hours between 11pm and 4 or 5am, and each team will contain at most 3 people. One or two of these will be 'taggers' – either already trained, *trainers*, or *trainees* – and the other one or two are 'scribes'. In many ways night survey is highly taxing, but it is also a shift shrouded in mystique amongst the uninitiated, and full of potential for trained or trainee taggers⁴³. For the tagger who leads the team this is where they will come into their element, being able to use the skills entrusted to them, and to impart them if the team also contains a trainee. Before leaving camp to begin the shift, the tagger informs the scribe(s) of their duties (and the trainee of theirs, if one is included). These duties include recording data in the night survey book while the tagger (and potentially their trainee) deals with the turtle as well as helping to keep track of the other specialist and, in some cases, expensive equipment. The scribe and trainees are also taught how to restrain a turtle, as this is occasionally required.

cooked. Autonomy is afforded to the volunteers who are able to choose to cook, rather than being told to do so, which contrasts with most of the other forms of work performed by the volunteers and with the requirements of the labour market in the 'real world'. Rather than overcooked pasta and vegetable based sauce, red in colour and indistinguishable from that served the previous day which can become the norm otherwise, a greater range of creative culinary delights are produced under this voluntary system.

⁴³ The 'tagger' is the leader of the night survey team, and will either be a returning volunteer or one who has been on the project long enough to have been trained, as well as having shown interest and/or potential. The name 'tagger' refers to the fact that they will be the one to tag the turtle with both visible and internal identification, so that longitudinal data can be collected in subsequent years regarding a specific turtles nesting habits/success/growth rates.

During night surveys, the team walk along the shoreline from one end of the section to the other, and there they wait for around 15 minutes before commencing the return journey. This 'break' is to allow the turtles to get far enough up the beach that the volunteers will not disturb them emerging from the sea. If a track is found on one of the walks, the scribe(s) will wait at the bottom of the track, whilst the tagger(s) will ascend the beach to ascertain the turtle's current status. If she is digging, the team will note the time and move on, as it usually takes at least 20 minutes for an egg chamber to be completed, and a further 20 minutes for her eggs to be laid. They would therefore return in a short time, having surveyed a further stretch of beach in the interim deemed appropriate. If she is already laying her eggs, the scribe(s) will join the tagger(s), and preparations are made to tag the turtle, using metal and plastic tags and micro chips. During this period, there is usually time for the volunteers to observe closely the nesting process.

For the new volunteer, this shift presents the rare opportunity to see a mother turtle laying her eggs, an experience which few walk away from unmoved. The innumerable excited exchanges I have observed over the years between first-time viewers and their friends the next day bear testament to this. Repeated observations from leading many night surveys have also highlighted the sense of privilege and excitement which night surveys can afford volunteers. These volunteers are able to witness the eggs descending from the turtle's cloaca into the waiting egg chamber, to smell the unique scent of the turtle and to hear her breathing, curling her rear flippers gently as each egg passes out of her⁴⁴. Volunteers may end up walking the beach until 5am, and if they're unlucky they may not even see any turtles. However, even on the occasional turtle-free nights volunteers can find night surveys to be rewarding in other ways. During the relative inactivity of the shift strong bonds can be formed between the members of the team, who have little to do to pass the time between turtles except talk, afforded privacy and intimacy by the darkness and by the beauty of the beach by night. Furthermore, volunteers repeatedly marvel at the beauty of the night sky which they have plenty of time to enjoy between walks and

⁴⁴ In part, this privilege seems to result from the 'romantic' nature of night surveys, in which the specific type of gaze enjoyed by the volunteers is characterised by a degree of 'solitude, privacy and a personal, semi-spiritual relationship with the object of the gaze' (Urry and Larsen 2011, p.225). I return to this discussion in Chapter 7.

whilst waiting for turtles to finish digging their egg chambers. On night surveys, one may see numerous shooting stars, and though at times exhausting, volunteers often enjoy the simple pleasures of walking together on the beach at night, unhindered by the challenges of heat and dehydration encountered on morning surveys.

Hatching season

During the hatching season, the work is quite different. Night surveys cease on all beaches, and are replaced on certain sectors, adjacent to which can be found hotels and beach bars, with 'boxing' shifts. Boxing involves the positioning of wooden boxes over each nest which is hatching or due to hatch within the stretch of beach within which light pollution is most severe. In these areas, hatchlings are very likely to emerge from their nests and head for the back of the beach, rather than to the sea, as hotel or street lights cause them to become disorientated. Boxing is a long shift, lasting from about 10pm until 6am. The boxes are first placed by the kiosk staff at 9pm, towards the end of their shift. Once an hour between box placement and sunrise a team of two volunteers will check every 'boxed' nest for hatchlings, gathering any which are found and recording which nest they came from, and then releasing them in a dark area to make their way to the sea. Morning survey is different as well, and is occupied by looking for and recording evidence of hatching (which should take place at night, though it is not uncommon to find hatchlings making their way to the sea in the early morning), as well as predations which are more common during the latter end of the gestation period when the nests tend to smell more strongly and emerging hatchlings attract dogs, foxes and birds.

Excavations are also conducted during morning surveys within the hatching season, as well as during additional shifts in the early evening. These are cited as the worst task for some volunteers, involving the excavation of nests which have either finished hatching, or those which have exceeded the realistic gestation period by a significant margin. Excavated nests contain various combinations of hatched eggs, "pipped"⁴⁵ hatchlings, either dead or alive, live hatchlings that haven't made it out of

⁴⁵ Pipped refers to a hatchling which has only partly emerged from its shell. Often live examples of these will be a little weak, or malformed.

the egg chamber, dead hatchlings, and unhatched eggs. All unhatched eggs need to be opened to see whether there is an embryo inside, and, if so, what stage of development it has reached. In some cases bacterial infections can also be identified at this stage, ascertained by a pink, red or green hue to the yolk. The job, unsurprisingly, is at times unpleasant, and the smell is unforgettable. However, many volunteers revel in the weird and wonderful discoveries found in excavations, such as albino hatchlings, twins, conjoined eggs and hatchlings, and, on occasion, pockets of healthy and lively hatchlings trapped due to compressed sand, dead siblings, or other obstructions.

Finally, morning surveys during this period can include the shading of nests to avoid the disorientation of hatchlings. Often, this is pre-emptive, and performed before the nest hatches as an alternative to boxing. This is used in places where the disorientation is more sporadic – such as in sites where there are only few nests affected by light pollution, and these are far away from the main ‘boxing’ area – as it would be impractical to ‘box’ these nests. However, in cases where a nest is not located by the morning survey team when laid and instead only discovered upon hatching⁴⁶, or when a light source is not anticipated to be problematic, this occurs after the nest has already hatched. Unfortunately, in these cases some hatchlings will have already been lost to disorientation: either eaten by birds, dogs or foxes due to spending more time on the beach than necessary walking parallel to rather than towards the sea; lost in the shrubbery behind the beach; or simply dried up in the sun, exhausted from walking up to 500m in the wrong direction. Shading is created using bamboo beach mats, cut in half lengthways and then supported by attached sticks of bamboo which are then pushed into the sand behind the nest and to either side, creating a sort of runway pointing the emerging hatchlings in the direction of the sea and shading them from offending light sources. Shading is usually combined with trenches which are dug from the front of the nest to a point a few metres from the sea, again to encourage hatchlings to go the right way – seawards. This can be time-consuming and physically taxing, but highly satisfying when on subsequent

⁴⁶ Known as an FBH or ‘found by hatching’.

mornings these trenches are found to be filled with tiny turtle tracks leading straight to the sea.

Additional tasks also throughout the season. One prominent additional task is maintaining stocks of bamboo, either by collecting long pieces which have been washed up on the beaches, or by cutting living bamboo from local thickets. These longer lengths are then cut at the campsite into shorter lengths to be hammered in around new nests. Shading for nests at risk of light pollution must also be made, and boxes must be maintained. Some volunteers choose to help the monitoring leader to write the database, which involves entering the data collected on morning survey into a spreadsheet which is later compiled with the data from other projects and seasons by the organisation. Bi-weekly, a shopping trip into the local town to buy food supplies for the camp must be made. Camp maintenance is performed throughout the season by anyone who is free and willing, and includes fixing furniture (or making new furniture if the number of volunteers becomes too large), creating shading for volunteers to sleep under in the heat of the day (both on the beach and within the camp environs), and working on the garden. Finally, slide-shows are scheduled in the busier tourist periods, in which a presentation is given (usually in Greek and then once again in German) and donations collected at various hotels or tavernas in the area. Of these additional shifts, only shopping, slide shows and collecting bamboo are included on the rota, as these activities involve the use of a car and as such must be scheduled to include a designated driver. Furthermore, these are shifts which must be performed at specific intervals or pre-allocated times. The other roles are performed instead by willing and able volunteers who find themselves with free-time which they wish to dispose of productively.

5.1 How does life on camp differ from the 'real world'?

The lifestyle of ARCHELON volunteers represents a significant break from how most people in Western capitalist societies normally live. Whilst many volunteers on these projects are students, and perhaps somewhat used to sharing facilities and eating simple food, the hours spent working outside, in the 24 hour company of largely the same people, is less commonly found in these lifestyles. The description above has begun to sketch out a rough idea of how diurnal and nocturnal life

emerges for the members of a community which, albeit ephemeral and highly fluid, is for this period completely immersive and *real*, and something of significant meaning to those who engage with it. This ‘something’ is elucidated in subsequent pages, and the outline of the life of the ARCHELON volunteer is ‘thickened’ by extracts from interviews as well as further ethnographic detail.

The remainder of this chapter explores various practices which exist on this site and which are framed in volunteers’ accounts as qualitatively different from those engaged in outside of this milieu. These practices include living and working in close proximity to the other volunteers in a relatively self-contained environment; the types of work enacted on camp; and the way in which the camp itself acts as a semi-isolated ‘bubble’ distinct from the ‘real world’. Also discussed is the manner in which volunteers on camp behave differently from how they might in the ‘real world’, by being outside for most of their days, lowering their standards of personal cleanliness and interacting in different ways with the material environment and other volunteers around them.

5.1.1 Living and working together

Volunteers live and work together, in close proximity and in simple conditions, for the duration of their stay. The total working hours for volunteers tend to be shorter than would be experienced in full employment, with volunteers rarely working for more than 6 hours per day and usually averaging around 26 hours per week⁴⁷. However, it is generally recognised that the work can be physically taxing, and the hours of work are antisocial by ‘normal’ standards. These factors rarely seem to conflict with volunteers’ enjoyment though. Indeed for many volunteers the nature of the work and the timing of shifts are actually factors which increase their enjoyment of the project as a whole. There is plenty of free time which volunteers can spend lying on the beach or swimming in the Mediterranean Sea, and in some

⁴⁷ This is based on a very approximate average, assuming each volunteer does around 4 morning surveys (averaging approximately 3.5 hours each), 3 kiosk shifts (2 hours per shift) and one night survey (6 hours) per week. This would vary throughout the season, and ‘voluntary’ shifts such as cooking, or additional jobs like cutting or collecting bamboo, making shades, or helping with the database are not included. This omission follows a similar logic which dictates that the invisible domestic labour necessarily engaged for the smooth running of capitalist societies is neither counted nor remunerated, in part because of its unquantifiable nature.

cases volunteers would use this time to work beyond their scheduled shifts for the betterment of either camp or the conservation effort.

Many volunteers refer explicitly to the hard work – in terms of both scheduled shifts and of additional contributions to either conservation or the camp – as one of the most positive elements of the project. The forms of work performed here are framed as less alienating than those which volunteers experienced in the ‘real world’ discussed in Chapter 4. This seems to result not only because of the individual gains of both skills and satisfaction which come from this hard work, but also because it is something which binds them to the rest of the group, as well as contributing directly to the cause for which they are volunteering. I return to this shortly as regards actual conservation work, but want to look first at the forms of work required for the community to function.

Cooperation, cohesion and transience

Sometimes, as is shown in this extract from an interview with Lara, in response to my asking how she had felt about the social side of the project, this work entails practical assistance of new members:

If you live like this you can spend more time with the people - everybody helps each other. When someone new comes maybe you'll help this person to put their tent [up] or you'll show [them] how everything goes ... it's a way to know new people and to live all the people together. (Lara, 19, Spanish)

This is important because it highlights the transient roles which participants occupy in the community, as new or seasoned volunteer, as well as the sense of there *being* a community of which one may be a part. New volunteer status is felt very strongly upon arrival, when the community can appear highly cohesive, an almost impenetrable group, and this is something I have both experienced first-hand as a ‘new’ volunteer and have observed repeatedly as a seasoned volunteer and as a researcher. However, within as little as one or two days, someone else will be ‘new’, and the volunteer who arrived only a few days earlier will have learnt the ropes and will play their part in teaching them in various informal ways to someone else, remembering their own recent arrival and the help they were offered. Furthermore, as time passes for the neophyte, opportunities to develop friendships and to find

their own place within the broader community emerge, and only very rarely does a 'new' volunteer remain on the margins of the community for long.

As well as witnessing the transition of new volunteers becoming integrated, it is also interesting to see how volunteers develop various skills necessary to live in close proximity to others, and with limited facilities. Goffman's front and back-stage concepts are illuminating for understanding the closely proximate lives of these volunteers. As aforementioned, all volunteers live in tents for the duration of their stay. These tents afford very little privacy to their occupants, and there are few opportunities to be alone. For Goffman, the 'back-stage' is not only the site in which one is not 'performing', but it is also, as in the theatre, that in which one *prepares* to perform. In many cases, volunteers are barely even able to get changed in their tents, due to being unable to stand up, and as such are forced to adopt techniques used in public changing rooms, such as shimmying in and out of undergarments or swimwear concealed by a towel (or sarong), and doing so in the middle of camp. Similarly, activities like shaving or putting on makeup, whilst not engaged in frequently by many, are also conducted outside. Privacy is thus compromised, and volunteers are often required to do the 'back-stage work' of preparing to present themselves in the public arena of the campsite, but this is dealt with by the volunteers' performance of 'civil inattention' (Goffman 1966). This requires a more subtle form of cooperation than that exercised when, for example, a new volunteer is struggling to put up their tent, and entails a temporary reconfiguration of norms about privacy, dignity and personal space⁴⁸.

When I ask her how she feels about volunteers having to live and work together in such close proximity, Lara explains how having to share facilities can have a positive impact on volunteers, as they learn to be patient – a word which came to her a short time after the interview:

You learn how to uh, how to, how to live with maybe 30 more people, so that means you maybe you have to wait for a shower, or maybe for the bathroom,

⁴⁸ In part, the success with which this seemingly trivial element of sharing space is accomplished is testament to the 'fit' which, this thesis goes on to argue, develops between individuals living in such close proximity.

or maybe you have to wait for the kitchen ... that's very positive because you learn how to ... I don't know the fucking word in English! (Lara, 19, Spanish)

George here highlights the development of patience and tolerance which living together nurtures, as he recognises that reacting too strongly to minor irritations would be detrimental to the smooth running of camp. Below is a discussion we had after I asked him if he felt that doing the project had taught him anything about himself:

George: I'm really different here than back home (...) because like back home when I'm with my family I don't have this much passion, it's like... um... I don't... not so concerned about cleaning things and everything because, I don't know, because I know that someone else will do it. And here it's, I know that I need to do it and.. like instead of ... someone says something that I don't like, instead of like giving a bad answer... like I could say back home, like, because I... I don't know more... like my family it's a little bit different (...) and so I know that I am going to be here with them for 2 months so I'm going to have to live with them so.. better, I don't know, we have a little bit more patience than this.

Hannah: do you think that you're more tolerant or just that you sort of bite your tongue?

George: um..... I think I'm more.. tolerant.... um..... yeah..... yeah, more tolerant, yeah, than back home... sometimes (...) there's things that I maybe want to say and didn't (...) yeah it's good because to know how to live in a community and yeah not feel angry with each other, otherwise it wouldn't work (George, 19, Spanish).

This kind of adaptability to the environment was something which several volunteers mentioned, and that which I have observed repeatedly. However, despite outward tolerance, some tensions within camp were experienced, especially concerning cleaning up after other people:

People kind of wander about ... as if their parents were still here, and they do things at the last minute, and though that's fine... it's not really (laughs) [...] cos everyone else ends up, you know, just tidying things up and not saying anything [...] I'm not cleaning up after 30 people (Chris, 41, British)

I will discuss in greater depth the impacts of volunteering upon participants in terms of developing specific personal and practical skills in the next chapter, but first I continue this discussion of some of the volunteers' accounts of living on the project itself, the work entailed, and their subsequent interactions with other participants,

turtles and the natural environment more generally, beginning with the interrelated themes 'living simply' and 'being dirty'.

5.1.2 Living simply and being dirty

Volunteering for ARCHELON's projects entails certain practices which differ from how volunteers live in the 'real world'. The first of these which I discussed above involved the sharing of space and facilities with others, and the modification of behaviour to allow for these differences. Furthermore, the lifestyle of volunteers is a very simple one, in the sense of the material environment within which volunteers lived. Lara was one participant who was particularly vocal about the enjoyment of living in such a minimal way, and her responses in her departure interview repeatedly came back to this. The extract below came in response to my asking whether she had enjoyed the lifestyle she had experienced on camp:

Lara: I wanted to live in basic conditions; first of all because um... here we can see that we don't need to live how we live usually, uh, you can live with much less than we are used to (...) you know that the conditions aren't going to be luxurious, and, and also I think that if you um love nature, animals and all the things, most people that love that don't mind living in this conditions, because it's one of the good things of coming here for me because, yeah, it's one of the things that I've enjoyed.

Hannah: Mmmm. What, living rough?

Lara: Yeah. (...) You feel more natural (...) If you have never experienced that and you don't know how much your life can change and at the same time be as good as with better conditions. (Lara, 19, Spanish).

Lara suggests that living more simply impacts upon one's perception of their needs. Furthermore, her description of 'feeling more natural' implies both a more authentic and consequently less alienated relationship to the environment and to oneself. Lara was not alone in noting the simplicity of the volunteer lifestyle. Jodi approached this from another angle, describing the equalising effect that living minimally can have between volunteers, and she commented on how this contrasted to life outside of the project:

It's a good out from kind of, well reality really (...). It's not materialist and it doesn't matter, yeah, what you look like or how much make-up you have on (laughs), everyone's just the same (Jodi, 21, New Zealander).

Whilst this is, as Jodi says, 'out from reality', and living in a tent on a roughly ploughed field is not always very comfortable, volunteers very quickly adapt to these conditions. George here explains that he felt perfectly happy living in this simple environment, without a bed and with minimal possessions, as part of an extended discussion of how he had enjoyed his time on the project:

You don't have much but you live really happy... it seems like you have everything. You don't need the bed because you're really happy. (George, 19, Spanish)

Again, the idea of 'needs' is highlighted here. This is not to say that volunteers do not miss their 'creature comforts', indeed in departure interviews some volunteers said they had missed sleeping in a bed, for example, or having access to a washing machine. However, the impression overwhelmingly given in interviews and through participant observation is that volunteers are generally satisfied to live, at least temporarily, in these conditions.

Over my years of participation many a conversation has revolved around the number of days it had been since a proper shower had been experienced, with several volunteers preferring to bathe in the sea, or on occasion to be 'hosed down' at one of the taps around camp rather than queue for the shower cubicle, and the year in which this research was conducted was no exception. Clean clothing, for many volunteers, was an optional extra, as the societal expectations of cleanliness and, to a point, modesty, are all but abandoned on the project. Volunteers were frequently scantily clad, with many spending most of their time on the project wearing swimwear and sarongs, or faded and often dirty vest tops, shorts or fisherman's pants. Official volunteer T-shirts were generally worn only on PA shifts or, in the case of more conscientious volunteers, for morning surveys. This is another aspect of the project to which volunteers must adapt:

You know it's like, whatever! We're all dirty ... you learn like this.. kind of to chill about those things and ... like not worry too much about like your appearances (Suzi, 23, American)

Suzi's extract was part of her response to my asking whether the project had matched her expectations, and she highlighted 'dirtiness' to draw a contrast between how she lived at home to how she lived on the project. The difference between this dirtiness and how the participants live in the 'real world' is echoed here by Fiona, in response to my asking whether she had enjoyed living in this kind of environment, and elsewhere in other interviews:

I think it's um a big difference to your normal life and I like that - just don't care about what you wear or if you are, yeah, it doesn't matter when you're dusty (Fiona, 21, German)

The ways in which volunteers adapt to these alternative ways of being in the world are highlighted throughout this chapter in relation to the themes 'living with less', 'being creative', and in relation to the various forms of work performed by volunteers.

Living with less and being creative

As mentioned above, free time is common for the volunteers whilst on the project, and the ways in which volunteers deal with this surfeit of unstructured time varies greatly. The following pages explore how some of the volunteers occupied this time



Figure 4: Depth gauges made from bamboo

productively. Working on the project often requires volunteers to be quite resourceful, for both practical and aesthetic ways, in filling this surfeit of free time. One commonly observed pastime was making things: items included furniture; monitoring equipment such as depth gauges which are used to measure how deep the clutch is buried beneath the sand (Figure 4); and various decorative items. These were generally made using the rudimentary tools available on camp and various materials found

washed up on the beach.

Not every volunteer becomes an artisan whilst on the project, but for many, making things is an enjoyable element of the volunteer project, and the extracts that follow show the range of views volunteers aired about this aspect of volunteering. Louise and Harriet highlight the enjoyment of having to be creative, with Louise's extract being in response to my asking what had been the best thing for her about doing the project, and Harriet's being a response to the question, 'how did you enjoy the camp side of things?':

I really like camp life, I like that sort of life-style, living in that, like, communal thing and because, I was thinking as well because we don't like have loads of posh resources and it's all posh and stuff, because you have to work to do things (...) I think it's more creative and resourceful, and I think that's more fun. (Louise, 24, British)

I love how people are forced to be creative, cos you have to use the things around you, in some ways it's like where I was [volunteering] in Kenya, they just, 'cause they don't have access to everything (...) I like making things, I like watching other people making things and thinking oh that's really clever (...) like when Louise was making, er, the instrument the other day. (Harriet, 19, British)

For Harriet as well, then, there is also pleasure to be had in observing creativity in others. Jodi in turn expresses her surprise at how resourceful one is forced to be in such an underfunded environment, and highlights the benefits of gaining skills such as the practical and inventive skills demonstrated by volunteers working on the project. The extract below is part of a discussion about whether the project had matched up to her expectations:

I didn't really click on it that it would be, um, pretty much an underfunded, like, there's no money. So I guess that I hadn't really thought about that. So when you come and see, like, the kitchen is just made, like, I knew that the camp was made by people but I don't know, for some reason it hadn't really crossed my mind, like, how kind of *resourceful* everyone would be ... It's really cool, I have never been in that situation when I have to be that resourceful and I think it's a really good skill to have. (Jodi, 21, New Zealander).

5.1.3 Contributing to one's own environment

In other cases volunteers found themselves developing more general practical skills such as basic plumbing and building as the camp needed ongoing maintenance and augmentation as the population swelled mid-season, requiring, for example, the construction of a second shower unit. The furniture was in some cases decades old, and several items had been built from scavenged materials such as discarded pallets. As such this furniture frequently needed repairs and reinforcement. The plumbing, too, was a site for frequent experimentation and discussion. Various methods were explored to irrigate the vegetable patch, and as a separate matter, to deal with the waste water from the kitchen sink. Eventually, these two issues were simultaneously addressed through the purchase of a tank to collect the grey water from the kitchen from which we were able to run a pipe to reuse the water on the flourishing vegetable patch. The exercise of these practical skills, and how these are necessitated by the project in which one must *work* to create one's own environment, impacts upon the relationship that volunteers have *to* this environment, again implicating Marx's idea of non-alienated work which I discuss more theoretically in Chapter 7. Importantly, these elements of the work which were required of ARCHELON volunteers were not allocated on the rota, nor were they generally requested of any specific volunteer. On one occasion towards the beginning of the season, a 'To-Do List' was made, listing various tasks which were required to improve the campsite in certain ways, and on a few occasions these were mentioned at camp meetings, but, for the most part, these tasks were simply noticed, discussed, and dealt with by whoever felt competent or motivated to perform them.

When I asked Claudia what she had enjoyed about doing the project, she said that she enjoyed being able to make things, in part because it is a new experience, but also because it teaches her what she's capable of:

Living on the campsite was really nice and challenging; it was like an adventure to build the shower and stuff, and also with the people was really great (...) Yeah, and also, like, you see that you can do something, like, with your hands. Because normally at home you never build something, it's like, it's not like here, you have your house and everything. (...) Yeah so it's cool to see that you can do it (Claudia, 23, German).

The sentiments of these quotes are echoed throughout my data, especially in interviews with volunteers such as Harriet and Claudia who arrived very early in the project, when there was a lot of practical work to be done towards setting up the camp, and also in interviews with volunteers towards the very end of the project, due to the shorter hours of conservation work towards the end of the season. Enjoyment found in handicraft and manual construction, especially when performed communally, was something noted repeatedly in my field notes. One example of this comes from a day towards the end of the season when we had a great deal of rain:

...and then came the rain, serious, heavy rain with amazing accompanying thunder and lightning. Went and shaded a nest on B then did a speedy beach clean dressed in bin bags with Jess and Clare. The clean had been scheduled and cancelled on several occasions and was necessary to collect the vast amount of plastic debris that had accumulated on B sector, I think from the neighbouring watermelon fields. Because of the storm we decided that rather than cancelling it, it was in fact all the more necessary because of the risk that waves might sweep the rubbish out to sea [posing an even greater threat to the turtles who might mistake the plastic for jellyfish]. We swam in the sea after, the lightning was amazing and the clouds were spectacular. Got back, hosed down, showered, ate, and was then informed that the plastic with which the kitchen roof was covered has disintegrated. Cheap plastic which I don't think can withstand the Greek sunshine for a whole season. Lots of patching up to be done in the dark; clambering, climbing, and taping bin-bags over the holes. We still have leaks, but at least the electrics and parts of the seating area are covered. Will assess the carnage later I guess. Good day all round though. Carl said that today was the best day so far, even though I dumped a pile of water off the roof all over him and Jess said that the litter pick was the best ever too. Rain is great for morale. It is the only suffering which we all incur simultaneously whilst here, and those who do not run away and hide in their tents are inevitably bound by their shared experience. (field notes, 7th September)

I have written elsewhere about the positive effects of difficult conditions such as rain upon the camaraderie of participants (O'Mahoney 2010) and this was something I observed repeatedly once again this season. In this instance, for Carl, the time spent patching the roof was highly enjoyable, partly because it was made all the more interesting by the adverse weather conditions but also because of both the physicality of and clear necessity for the work, in which a clear objective can be identified, the task can be carried through to the end by those involved, and it has visible and important consequences. On another occasion, a group of volunteers was caught in a massive downpour during a scheduled bamboo cutting session. Rather

than abandoning the shift to wait for more clement conditions, they completed the task and returned in the highest of spirits, drenched through but laughing and joking about their shared experience. Other periods throughout the season showed similar instances of volunteers enjoying manual work during which their time was spent constructively and with obvious purpose, such as when the shower cubicles were built, the raft constructed, the shading over the kitchen table erected, and the volleyball court cleared of bamboo, debris and one or two resident scorpions.

5.1.4 'Planning' as a form of entertainment

Where leisure time at home might be spent surfing the web or watching television, other activities were instead sought by volunteers on this project. The creativity which volunteers exercised in filling their time was not always manifested physically. In spare time between shifts a pastime which I have observed year after year is the creative planning of events, which was a version of 'doing nothing' which cumulatively occupied many hours. Whilst planning does not always result in subsequent action, the planning itself is an enjoyable and sociable way to pass the time. One example of this is the Beach Olympics – legendary in the frequency with which they are planned but, to my knowledge, something which never passed the planning stage. The year in which I conducted research was, however, an exception, though by the time the Olympics actually happened in August all but two of the volunteers who had begun planning the event in June had long since departed. Two other creative 'plans', discussed in some depth in this season, but which were not followed through, entailed the use of 'beach crap'. The first was the idea of conducting a 'beach clean' and then using the collected rubbish to make a giant turtle sculpture, as a means of aesthetically representing both the threat and the extent of marine pollution upon sea turtles to tourists and the local population. The second was the idea of an 'anything but' party, which would involve volunteers dressing up in anything but 'real' clothes, making costumes from the debris collected on morning surveys, which, early in the season and before the arrival of many turtles, were often used to conduct beach clean-ups. The use of 'beach crap'⁴⁹ in

⁴⁹ 'Beach crap' refers to the things volunteers find washed up on the shores; usually man-made, often what would generally be conceived of as 'rubbish', but nonetheless items which volunteers adopt for creative, practical and/or aesthetic purposes around camp.

making decorations for camp and other planned or real uses represents an aesthetic manifestation of the ethic of living with less and disengaging from consumption practices. This environmental ethic of reuse and recycling corresponded to the concerns which many volunteers expressed in their interviews and in discussions outside of these about the amount of waste in the world, and is the topic of this next section.

5.1.5 Using ‘beach crap’

As the previous section discussed, volunteers found that they could be very resourceful and creative, and an element of this was the discovery that they could do a great deal with found and foraged materials. It was extremely common for volunteers to make use of ‘beach crap’ – of which there are plentiful supplies dropped on the beach by the pre-season storms – in various ways. Throughout this season recycled and improvised creations included: a basic anemometer (made from an old bike wheel); a Monopoly game (featuring local areas and characters); various items of furniture on camp; decorative items such as wind chimes; and assorted ‘toys’ made by combining broken dolls found on the beach in a style reminiscent of



Figure 5: Driftwood decoration

those found in the film ‘Toy Story’. A few volunteers even fashioned functional musical instruments from indigenous bamboo-like reeds, including pan-pipes and a basic flute, providing entertainment both in the making and later –

though perhaps less so – in the playing. Some items which were made were intended to communicate a message. For example, one volunteer shaped two bits of driftwood into a pair of dolphin heads, and used a pyrography iron purchased at the local Lidl store to engrave upon it the words, ‘the ocean is not a waste bin’ on it (Figure 5).

Another volunteer, disgruntled by certain volunteers' refusal to wash their dishes promptly after eating, spent several hours carving the words 'wash your fucking dishes you lazy bastards, thank you!' in decorative script embellished with images of flowers and dragonflies, again on some driftwood.

Despite the serious intent of both messages, and the potentially offensive language of the latter, both items were aesthetically pleasing and combined intentions to both decorate and communicate through the medium of art. As discussed above it was common for volunteers to speak of the enjoyment to be found in making these things. As well as the references made by volunteers in interviews to enjoying the creativity and resourcefulness of volunteering which I described above, it was also something which I observed repeatedly throughout my participation in this season and others, and the construction of these practical and aesthetic items allowed their makers to pass some of their free time productively. This was for several volunteers one of the harder aspects of the project as they struggled with the surfeit of free time available to them whilst on the project, a point which will be discussed further in the remainder of this chapter. Beforehand though, I wish to discuss another element of the 'simple life' experienced on camp, and that is the lack of what I refer to here using the shorthand 'technology' – by which I mean largely electrical or electronic equipment and the connections to the rest of the world, with which we are accustomed.

5.1.6 A lack of technology

In this section I argue that one consequence of the simplification of technological material conditions experienced by volunteers is that volunteers find that they interacted in a different manner with the people around them for the period of their participation. There were neither televisions nor internet access on camp, so a great deal more time was spent here engaging on a directly human level than perhaps some of the 'Facebook' generation are accustomed to. The degree to which volunteers are disconnected in terms of media from the 'real world' has subsided somewhat over the years that I have been volunteering. In the first three years when I volunteered for the project there was no electricity available at the campsite, volunteers did not bring laptops with them, and mobile phones, portable music

devices and accompanying speakers were infrequently encountered here. Furthermore, during the first few years I volunteered the nearest internet cafe was around 10km away. In more recent times, however, WIFI access has become available in the streets of the local village, only 2km away, and an internet cafe has also been established there. Despite the introduction of electricity to camp and the increased ownership of laptops and MP3 players, as well as expensive multimedia telephones with internet connectivity, the lack of WIFI on the campsite means that volunteers still tend to be largely detached from the outside world. Mobiles are carried now by most volunteers, though few use them frequently due to prohibitive 'roaming' costs.

For Suzi, immediate human company was something which was prioritised during her time on the project. The following extract was in response to my asking whether volunteering had changed how she felt about anything:

Suzi: I don't know. I appreciate things a lot more I guess.

Hannah: like?

Suzi: um... washing machines (laughter) [...] um.. yeah I don't know like, I guess, like, people's company, but like you, yeah, the simp... the simplicity of things... is really nice. 'Cause that's the thing, once you get down to the basics you don't you know necessarily have all the distractions of technology (...) yeah sometimes, you know, we'll walk to [the internet cafe] and stuff and do that but that's, like, a short time. (Suzi, 23, American).

It seemed here as well as in numerous informal conversations and interviews with other volunteers that the lack of technology, particularly the internet, impacted upon the types of human interactions which occurred between individuals on camp. The few volunteers who had also spent time at the rescue centre made similar remarks outside of their interviews, saying that, in the rescue centre, volunteers would spend a lot of time interacting with their various electronic devices: making use of the available WIFI to connect with the world outside, rather than interacting with one another. A potentially exaggerated caricature emerged during one of these discussions in which each of the rescue centre volunteers would sit apart from the others, staring intently at their screen. There were occasions when laptops would be used in this season, for example, following a trip to a local waterfall one volunteer

proceeded to upload their photos onto the screen and flick through them with a few of the other volunteers who had been with them. However, whilst this 'slide-show' was taking place one of the volunteers who was not interested in looking at the photos was overheard saying mockingly, 'ooohhh look at this thing that *just* happened. What's the point? Why not hang out with the people who are here?' – a statement with which several other volunteers agreed. In this respect, direct and human contact is awarded greater significance by the volunteers than more abstract and detached forms of interaction experienced through emails, text messages and Facebook.

The extracts which follow echo the sentiment found in Suzi's interview, as regards the simplified lifestyle found on the project, and come from various points of both interviews with Josh. He explains the simplicity in terms of the satisfaction of needs in this extract from his reflections on his time volunteering for another ARCHELON project which had no electricity:

It puts you back on the ground like, in the real world like, you don't need electricity, you don't need all the fancy things. (Josh, 20, Belgian).

He later talks about the impacts of the limited facilities on camp in a positive light as something which facilitates more sharing. In the previous extract, he uses the phrase the 'real world' to describe his life outside of the project, and in the one which follows he again draws contrasts between the time spent on the project and how we live outside, as well as how other 'tourists' spend their time.

You don't need like all the material stuff and everything ... and yeah that you can function in that way (...) You see, in a group, the less you have the more you will share. You know? For instance let's say you have 4, 5 fridges, then everybody will have his own private bottle of water and nobody would, like, share water, nobody would, like, share food and everything, and, yeah, if you have less you will share more (...) When you see with the difference in the hotel, a really luxurious hotel, that live together with a lot of people as well but you have so many luxurious things so many stuff, that everybody's, like, living in his own cocoon, his own balloon and, here it's like that's ... different (Josh, 20, Belgian).

Volunteers, then, live with much less than they have access to at home, both in terms of the material possessions around them and the degree of information to which they are subjected, and they recognise the impacts of this difference upon how they

interact with the other volunteers. This is frequently celebrated by volunteers, as one former volunteer said to me in private correspondence (quoted with permission) sometime after leaving the project:

I liked being a stinky, un-contactable nomad for a month, personally (Becka, 19, British).

5.1.7 Working with and gazing upon nature

Finally, within this theme, many of the volunteers celebrated the 'back to nature' lifestyle enjoyed whilst volunteering, as something which was very different from their 'normal' lives. In some cases as mentioned earlier in this chapter, this is specifically related to turtles, with many volunteers highlighting the privilege of watching a turtle laying her eggs, or seeing hatchlings heading out to sea:

Seeing the hatchlings going to the sea for the first time was just so special (...) and, yeah, just finding your first nest and seeing your first eggs and everything about it. It's just such a privilege to be able to, like, take part in this. (Carly, 22, British).

There are some moments where I, like, particularly with the turtles on night survey, when you're sat behind them when they're laying ... I'd just go, like, wow! (Jodi, 21, New Zealander)

In these extracts the volunteers highlight how particular moments during their time volunteering stood out as special. In other cases volunteers celebrate the persistent and ritualised pleasure of getting up early and walking along the relatively unspoilt beaches:

It's quite nice to be doing something at 7 o'clock in the morning rather than doing what I'd normally be doing and waking up as late as I possibly can (...) Um, but yeah, going up and down the beach when there's no-one there (...) it's quite nice to see like the tracks from the turtles and thinking there was a little mummy turtle just there before. (Becka, 19, British)

Morning surveys are often accompanied - after the practicalities of getting out on the beach are completed - with volunteers recognising how pleasurable it is to be out there, 'in the nature', with the sea to the west, the sun rising over the mountains in the east, and the sky and landscape gradually changing colour as they walk and

work. It is recognised by the volunteers as a beautiful time of day, with no one around but a few fishermen, who are usually very friendly.

Also mentioned by some was the pleasure of being able to observe the changing lunar cycles – a pleasure maximised by the lack of a roof over one's head and the favourable weather conditions of the country. Marta and Naomi here refer to the increased opportunities to observe nature facilitated by being outdoors so much, being able to notice the times of sunrise and sunset, and to gaze upon the stars.

It was, you know, a different kind of living than in the hotels or in, er, dormitories ... I find out that a lot of people sleeping at the beach during the night and I joined them, and it was really good to sleep under the sky ... and er gazing at the stars, I really enjoyed that part (Marta, 25, Austrian).

I maybe enjoyed it to be, um, not in a house, you know? Just to be really out – fresh air and in the sun all day, I really enjoyed that, and also to see how the, um, to see how the world has changed. Like, the sunset is earlier and the sun rising is later and... the moon and things like that it is really nice to see it, and how it has changed (Naomi, 23, German).

The morning and night surveys conducted on this ARCHELON project were particularly celebrated as instances in which nature, unpolluted by 'other' tourists, might be gazed upon, in which volunteers enjoy watching turtles nesting and hatching, stars shining and shooting, and the sun and moon rising and setting. As well as the more passive gaze, volunteers were also able to actively engage in 'saving' or 'protecting' nature through the direct turtle conservation work and the sporadic performance of 'beach cleans'.

5.2 Volunteers' attitudes to work

I discussed previously how some volunteers spent their free time engaging in creative projects, of both aesthetic and practical value. In some cases these practices reflected a desire to keep busy, in others, a way of being 'productive' within their free time. Of course, it could be argued that volunteering as a whole is a manifestation of these desires and the discussion in the previous chapter which argues that being useful and doing something worthwhile provide justifications and motivations for volunteering are testament to this. For those who talk about volunteering in relation to enjoying productive work, free time is seen as an

opportunity to 'give something back', engaging in useful, non-remunerated, and uncoerced activities. These varying attitudes to work are often articulated in oppositional terms: relaxing as opposed to working, or being someone who *enjoys* work as opposed to someone who enjoys lazing around a pool or beach, as previously discussed. In Chapter 4 I also discussed volunteers' attitudes to work in the sense of paid employment. In what follows the differing conceptualisations and manifestations of the work ethic found within the community are explored, referring to the volunteers' personal work ethic as regards their engagement with the project rather than their attitudes to paid employment.

5.2.1 Work vs. Leisure: 'It's hard work doing nothing'.

Throughout both arrival and departure interviews, as well as the participatory data collection, it was very clear that the volunteers' attitudes to and degrees of engagement with work were highly varied within the sample of volunteers. To some, work was something around which leisure must be planned. For others, it was the other way round, and even outside of timetabled shifts, these volunteers wished to spend their constructively. Some volunteers found it more difficult than others to adapt to the environment, struggling to keep busy in their spare time. Pete, for example, was not a fan of reading books, a common pastime amongst many of the volunteers, and preferred to be physically active as much as possible. Below is his response when I asked him what he expected in terms of workload from the project:

um.. more than what I have got (...) I get bored during the day, I'm not a person who can sit around and do nothing as you might have noticed, I don't know whether you have or not but... (...) yeah, it's hard work doing nothing (Pete, 24, New Zealander).

He struggled with boredom in the first few weeks of his six week stay, though later discovered how much there was that could be done in between conservation shifts by way of camp maintenance and improvements. Finding entertainment, noted above in the description of volunteers' creative use of 'beach crap', was something else in which volunteers had to show resourcefulness. Throughout the season, especially for the more experienced or observant volunteers, there was always something useful that could be done: repairs to camp, making shades for nests prone

to light pollution, cutting bamboo, gardening, the list could go on. However, the ability to identify or usefully participate in these non-alienated forms of work varied greatly, as these extracts illustrate:

So I feel bad that we're not doing anything, but at the same time nobody's, like, pushing us to be like 'ok you guys we really need to do this' you know? (...) so it's not that, like, it's not that I'm getting bored at all, I just kind of feel bad that, I feel like...I dunno, people are looking at it, like, oh they're not doing anything, they're being lazy (Helen, 23, American).

I had an interesting chat with Helen today about camp life, how people are feeling about stuff, not having much to do, no structure etc, but then I sat there for another hour transcribing and when I went down to the kitchen *everyone* was working away, doing all the jobs we'd put up as an intended ongoing 'to-do list': cutting bamboo, burying plumbing pipes, fixing benches, cleaning the kitchen. (Field notes: 22nd May)

So, in Helen's arrival interview, which occurred before any turtles had emerged onto the beaches so before the conservation shifts had begun, she had been talking about how she had expected to be doing more work, and sometimes felt as if perhaps the new volunteers seemed lazy. She explained that it wasn't that they didn't *want* to work, but simply didn't know what would be useful.

In contrast to Pete's struggle with boredom, and Helen's fear of being seen as 'lazy', Linda, who had spent a lot of time both travelling and volunteering in her repeatedly extended gap year⁵⁰, was much more able to enjoy 'doing nothing'. The following extract came in response to me asking whether she was getting bored because there wasn't much work to do in the first few days of her participation, which also began before the turtles had begun emerging:

I've really learnt, actually over the five years travelling because in travelling you, it's not like a holiday all the time. There's a lot of time where you're constantly on the move, it's hard work it's stressful, but there are times where you've got nothing to do and you're in (...) this really beautiful place or wherever, and you've just got to learn to do nothing (...). Learn to enjoy doing nothing and to appreciate it as well, appreciate what you can see around you and what's going on around you, so yeah it doesn't really bother me when we've got days of doing nothing (Linda, 23, British).

⁵⁰ Linda had been travelling on and off for around five years having deferred her initial decision to go to university. She enrolled in the September following this research, much to the surprise of her family and friends.

She suggests that this relates to her age, having been out of school for several years and having learnt how to 'chill out':

If I was 18, 19 and I'd just come out of college and was used to doing something every day and having a purpose going to col.. to school and college – cos that's what you do every day at that age, and your weekends are like gold dust or whatever (...) but now I've, yeah, I've started to appreciate the times where you just get to completely chill out. Just take in what's around you and think about where you are (Linda, 23, British).

In her interview she represented the ability to 'do nothing' as in itself a transferable skill which she had learnt through her prior volunteering and her experiences of backpacking, and Linda's account provided an interesting contrast to other volunteers' ideas of transferable skills such as the practical and technical skills of camp life and monitoring work.

Although the work performed by volunteers is not what would normally be seen as alienating as the preceding pages have illustrated, it can nonetheless still be hard or tedious, to varying degrees. Doing nothing in between these tasks is something which Linda presents as a form of leisure practice which is defined in contrast to the work performed whilst volunteering, the 'work' necessary to travel – simply to get safely and promptly from 'A' to 'B', and the manner in which daily lives are structured in the 'real world' where 'busyness' may be more common. The following extract was prompted not by a question, as such, but by my yawning in an interview as a result of a night survey the preceding evening:

It's funny cos yeah the whole.... at first you're here, you're like 'wow I feel so lazy with things at times', and then I'm like, 'it's just so hot!' (...) You know, it's just like, you're out in the heat and you're doing so much and then it's like, it's OK to be lazy. That's the other thing, Claudia and I had talked about this as well, cos at home the mentality is like work work work, you work like nine to five or whatever, you know? You do your shift and then relax when you get home and you're just beat from, you know, working all day and ...whatever, and this has been, it's different cos it's made you slow down and all that (...) enjoy things a little bit more. (Suzi, 23, American)

Leisure in this context can then entail the *active* enjoyment of doing nothing. This may sound paradoxical, but can be understood in a contrastive relationship to the 'work, work, work' mentality found in the 'real world', in which enjoyment in tourism stems *from* these very differences to the everyday as discussed in Chapter 2.

Whilst at home what we perceive as 'leisure' might be spent more actively, pursuing hobbies like sports, crafts or music, here leisure can simply be doing nothing. Rather than 'relaxing when you get home' because 'you're just beat', relaxing is structured into the daily lives of volunteers not as a means of recovery, but as a means of *enjoyment*. The daily volleyball ritual mentioned earlier is accompanied by the ritual of watching the sunset, for those disinclined to team sports. In this activity the daily rotation of the planet on its axis is marked by the gaze of the volunteers, facing the sea as they might at home orient themselves towards the television set, talking amongst themselves with their eyes firmly fixed on the sun setting over the water. However, as Linda and Pete's interviews differently illustrate, this kind of stillness and relaxation is not something that comes naturally to all volunteers.

At some points of the season there are significant lulls in the amount of scheduled work available as the turtles have either not yet begun to emerge in earnest, or because their emergences have tailed off. At these times and throughout the season there was a clear difference between those volunteers for whom, for example, morning survey was a chore which must be completed before sunbathing can begin, and those for whom it was, every day, an exciting adventure full of potential to be embraced and enjoyed. Of course, this simplified representation is reductionist and polarising. In reality a continuum existed, with even the most committed and engaged volunteers at times wishing away the hours spent fruitlessly digging holes on the beach, but the manner in which work was discussed and executed was certainly interesting, as was the manner in which volunteers spent their leisure time⁵¹. Most volunteers fell towards the former end of this continuum, working hard and usually with enthusiasm despite the heat and sleep deprivation. This extract from my field diary provides an example of this;

Morning survey with Anna and Louise, 5 nests, 3 relocations, but speedy on the whole, and enjoyable. Got back, bummed around, then at around 12.30 Lynsey got back from her sector looking thoroughly miserable, having left Josh and Lara drowning in a sea of nests. Bless her. She's been struggling a lot with the heat and the work, it's not that she's not willing, but keeps coming out in heat rash and isn't really used to being so active, I don't think. I cycled down to see how Lara and Josh were doing and they were actually really

⁵¹ I return to this opposition later in my discussion of serious leisure.

happy. They had really enjoyed their morning, they were buzzing about the PA [public awareness] they'd delivered to various tourists, and all the nests they'd found and protected, and were not in the least disgruntled that the third member of their team had left. They were also really touched that a German tourist had walked up to one of the local shops and got them some cold fruit juice to help them out. (Field notes, 16th July)

As this extract illustrates, the enjoyment of work was far from ubiquitous, though even Lynsey came to enjoy morning surveys eventually, once her body had adapted to the conditions. For Josh and Lara, amongst many other volunteers who found great enjoyment in morning surveys, however taxing, work on the project was a source of great satisfaction and pleasure. In part this seemed to be due to rather than in spite of the physical nature of the work. As Bob said of morning survey, somewhat facetiously:

In my case it gives you tiny almost indistinguishable digging muscles (Bob, 33, American)

As Stan notes, this physicality – both found in this project and expected in his intended career change into conservationism at home – stands in contrast to life in the 'real world':

I've been using my mind very much for the past decade so, I thought I'm trying more to use my body I mean you know follow my body whether it's rational or not follow my body (Stan, 44, Greek).

Others referred in unrecorded conversations to the development of calf muscles from walking on the sand, the ongoing opportunities to improve their suntans, and the physical and spiritual benefits of walking up and down the beach, breathing fresh air and being 'in' nature.

5.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, the various attitudes to work found in my ethnographic and interview data have been mobilised to illustrate both the non-alienated nature of the work of the volunteer project and the manner in which work and leisure are hybridised in this environment. A lack of commodity consumption and the related aesthetic expression of environmental concerns were demonstrated through a discussion of volunteers' craft projects, and a more coherent understanding of the

everyday lives of ARCHELON volunteers was provided. Before moving on to discuss the theoretical implications of these findings, the final empirical chapter explores the impacts of volunteering upon volunteers. The idea of community acts as an organising theme throughout this chapter, as it is largely through incorporation into this community that even seemingly individualised benefits such as self-development and self-actualisation are facilitated and nurtured.

6 Developing Community and the Self in Volunteer Tourism

This final empirical chapter illustrates how the existence of a ‘community’ emerged on the project as something which volunteers were able to feel a part of. This discussion focuses on certain elements which occur every year within the project and that contribute to a strong sense of belonging, including the sharing of values and ideas as well as physical space and resources. Other elements such as working together and helping one another which create and reinforce the community have been foreshadowed in previous sections of this thesis. Following this, the more individualised impacts of volunteering are discussed, in the sense of volunteers’ perceptions of their own personal development within the project. Data are discussed to illustrate how a further element in this process of belonging occurs through the development of personal knowledge which is learnt and in turn taught by all volunteers throughout their participation. This chapter concludes by exploring the extent to which volunteering has any kind of transformative effect upon participants, impacting on the manner in which volunteers relate to money and how they think about tourism more broadly.

6.1 Being part of something: sharing more than space

Primarily, the academic literature on volunteer tourism reviewed earlier in this thesis focus more on the motivations of volunteers than the benefits. Of course, very often these overlap, but there are some important distinctions between responses in the arrival interviews, in which I asked ‘why did you come here?’ and in the departure interviews, in which I asked ‘what has been the best part of volunteering for you?’, indicating that accounts of motivations for volunteer tourism do not always neatly align with the benefits of volunteering. For example, a third of volunteers said they hoped to meet new people in response to their initial interviews, but in their second interviews, whilst saying that they, of course, *had* met lots of new people, emphasis was more often placed on membership within the community found in the project, alongside the enjoyment of being part of a shared endeavour. Being a part of something is, within my data, a complicated theme, which

is both facilitated through and manifested in various ways within the project, which are discussed below.

In some cases 'being part of something' refers to being a part of a wider endeavour of sea turtle conservation, or even more broadly, environmental conservation, as demonstrated in an earlier extract from my an interview with Carly, who said, based on prior voluntary experience, that she liked 'being part of something I think that is making a difference'. It is also a consequence of sharing space and resources and as such being part of a physical community of volunteers who eat, work and play together. Beyond this, as many volunteers observed, being part of something is also a state of mind through which one comes to realise that one's values are shared by others within the group. Many volunteers highlight the enjoyment they found in being part of a community, using the words 'team' and 'family' when asked what they had enjoyed about doing the project:

I think I'd, er, its most important part, it's the part of the volunteering and the living all together here, it's er, very important I think, that it's, we are like a team. (Christos, 20, Greek)

The whole like communal thing actually worked out really well, I feel like we've turned into a big family. (Suzi, 23, American)

And yes the evenings when we all sit together and ... yes it's just the feeling of belonging together and it's very nice. (Kirsty, 18, German)

Rather than meeting new people in the sense of meeting individuals, volunteers such as Suzi, Kirsty and Christos emphasize becoming part of a group more prominently here than the individual friendships they made. Indeed, even though almost all volunteers speak about the people they'd met and the group dynamic of which they had enjoyed being a part, only one or two volunteers mentioned specific relationships which had developed on the project, with the vast majority instead focusing on the volunteer community as a whole. Rare occasions which did elicit references to certain individuals included the few romantic relationships which developed in this summer, and in two cases references to particularly close friendships which had emerged.

Living together was not the only thing that brings volunteers together. The fact that volunteers tend to share values and opinions on the project further coheres the community. In the first extract this is mentioned in relation to turtle conservation, with Chris explaining what he enjoys about the social side of the project. In the second extract, Beth discusses the impact of meeting people with similar values upon her views on environmentalism more generally. Finally in Jenny's extract this refers to ideals in a more general sense, and the kinds of attitudes she has encountered on volunteer projects in contrast to people she has met in other travel contexts:

There's a shared sort of commitment, there's a shared reason for being here ... which is good, everybody is interested ... and from diverse backgrounds or diverse futures ... but then they all have an interest in what they're doing, and um they want to know about conservation, they want to save the world, the planet, they want to do something useful for the environment. Whether this is the only time they'll ever do it ... but while they're here they're committed to doing it. (Chris, 41, British)

So many different people with different interests, they have all one thing that combines them, and that's turtles, working with the turtles try to protect them. (Beth, 18, German)

I think it doesn't matter where you come from as long as you have the same kind of ideals, that's the people that you're going to click with more. (Jenny, 25, Australian)

In each of these accounts, a form of solidarity founded on shared interests or values emerges. Bob is a habitual volunteer, and in his response to my asking what benefits he thought came from volunteering he notes the creation of specific leisure activities observed over his years of engagement with the organisation, such as beach Olympics as well as the more day to day aspects of communal living, as ways in which the members of the community are brought closer together:

I mean on the human scale it's very nice because you meet people that you care about, and you share meals and you drink cheap Lidl alcohol and invent beach Olympics, and that's very, you know, that's sort of important as a human being. (Bob, 33, American)

Interactions and sharing of experiences like this are, in Bob's account, fundamentally important for people, implying an Aristotelian version of the virtues in which conviviality and fraternity are important, as well as the development of goods such

as shared values, which are internal to this practice (MacIntyre 1985). Both my ongoing observations and interviews suggest that the types of sharing and the sense of belonging this fosters are a significant aspect of the overall enjoyment volunteers get out of their participation.

Jenny considered the sense of 'belonging' experienced during her time as a volunteer to be both an incentive for and a consequence of volunteering, explaining how, like Carly, she had found this familial atmosphere whilst volunteering for another project and had sought it again here. Her quest for this kind of closeness is partly explained in relation to her itinerant lifestyle. She speaks elsewhere about her sister, whom she had not seen for two years despite being 'very close', and it seems from this extract that the opportunity to meet new people with whom familial closeness can be attained serves to fill this perceived lack:

And that's another part of the community aspect that I love ... I became like a family with the people there in just one month ... because, I guess because you're thrown into a place where, you know, you're with like-minded people. And that's especially one of the things I was hoping to find here, just you become part of a family, and when you're travelling on the opposite side of the world that's something really nice to find. (Jenny, 25, Australian)

Living and working together, combined with sharing values and concerns, seems to result in a strong sense of belonging or solidarity amongst volunteers. The community binds people to those around them through uniting people from various countries and backgrounds with a shared purpose – conserving the sea turtles. Whether or not this was prevalent in accounts of motivations for volunteering – and in many cases it wasn't – while on the project the emergence of this solidarity becomes important to the degree of enjoyment and satisfaction volunteers experience and report. Celebrations like those which marked the discovery of the first nest of the season, the first nest to hatch, a particularly successful night survey or slide show, or when a new landmark in nest numbers is reached are shared by all volunteers, and demonstrative of the communitarian and convivial environment which develops within the project.

Explicit references to 'belonging' were not, however, exclusively positive. The topic of 'belonging' was occasionally referred to in terms of a perceived absence. Two

volunteers, for example, suggested that they did not feel that they 'fitted in', saying that they perceived themselves as in some way 'different' from the other volunteers.

...because ... uh I find myself very atypical of people, and um difficult to re, well difficult to relate with people so I wanted to immerse myself in an environment also where I'll be forced to relate and well get along with people (Stan, 44, Greek)

In the example above, Stan explains how he doesn't feel that he is like the other volunteers because he sees himself as being atypical of people *in general*. For Chris, however, he sees his working-class background as creating some distance between himself and the other volunteers, following a discussion of the types of stories which other volunteers had told of their time at university. The following extract was instigated by my asking if there was anything else he wanted to talk about, and he said he wanted to talk more about the social-economic background of the volunteers, as something which we had touched upon in his arrival interview.

I couldn't have done it 18, 19, 20 years ago. I just didn't have the time and that, and er, it's interesting I've held back on some of my youthful stories because I hear (laughing voice)... what people are doing in this world (...) it's all about uni and studying and stuff and work and what I'd class as er *safe* teenage years I would suppose (...) nice, great, they'll be the future and that's all good (...) but mine was just mental (...) and um it's a totally different social class to what I grew up with (...) and that's very different. And I like that conversation, cos I know what that conversation is about and they, my friends wouldn't do that (...) they wouldn't enjoy the conversation. They would enjoy the turtles, but they would just think these are just rich toffs and they don't know what life is like. (Chris, 41, British)

There are significant class discourses at work here, and this extract highlights the social class discrepancies which exist in the world of volunteer tourism. As Chris observes and my quantitative data testify, most of the volunteer tourists come from middle-class backgrounds (only 11% are classed as manual or routine occupations⁵²) and all but two of the participants are in possession or pursuit of university degrees. I return to this point in more depth in the next chapter. Chris was a particularly interesting example in terms of the class debate, when I asked him

⁵² This figure is based on either their own employment status or that of their parents, in the case of students (as discussed in Chapter 3).

about his parents' socio-economic status, a form of boundary work emerged in which he seemed somewhat defensive of the status which his parents now hold:

My parents were *definitely* working class when they were younger and they became middle class, but they're not your bog standard, there's a slight bohemian attitude to them (...) and my dad, he's in the pub, he's a pub guy, so he's not your classic change your car every year and mow your lawn. More haphazard, and they um go off on holiday a lot, and generally sort of drink and eat well. Yeah they haven't properly retired or anything they just, you know, (...) bum about (Chris, 41, British).

Both Chris and Stan were males in their 40s, and both were in the process of re-training to pursue employment in conservation having previously been engaged in non-conservation based careers. It is possible that both their sex and age contributed to their slight feelings of isolation on the project, as females outnumber males by around three to one, and the average age of volunteers was 23. However, despite both their differences in background as well as the disparity in age and sex from the 'average' ARCHELON volunteer, and whilst not necessarily feeling as much a 'part' of community as others perhaps did, both of these participants were active and willing members of the project, and said that they had enjoyed the group dynamic even without necessarily feeling wholly integrated into it.

6.1.1 Belonging and the length or intensity of participation

Before embarking on fieldwork, I assumed that 'belonging' would be an explicit and prominent theme resulting from my interviews, particularly in response to the question, 'what did you enjoy most about doing this project?'. This assumption was a consequence of my repeated immersion in the project. However, it was not something which all or even a majority of volunteers identified explicitly. Although many participants – like Suzi and Christos above – mentioned that they felt like part of a team or a family, very few were as explicit as Kirsty and Jenny in prioritising 'belonging' as a primary factor for their enjoyment of the project. Nonetheless, my observation in this season and others, as well as participation in the various online 'communities' of past and present ARCHELON volunteers suggest that belonging is a key element in the experience of volunteer tourism. The sense of 'belonging' seemed to be achieved to the highest level by those who participated with the most

commitment and enthusiasm in both the required work of formal conservation and the additional practices of camp maintenance and improvement found on the project. Time also seemed to be an inevitable factor which contributed to levels of 'belonging', with the volunteers who stayed the longest understandably becoming more fully integrated into the group.

Generally speaking, volunteers who participated for longer were far more active as 'teachers', formally educating other volunteers about the work of conservation, and informally educating newer volunteers in the social and domestic life of the camp. Jenny was an example of a volunteer who stayed for an above average period (56 days) and who, whilst on the project, worked with complete commitment, passion and enthusiasm – spending many hours helping to update the monitoring database, always first in line when an extra job needed doing, and simultaneously managing to maintain a very strong social presence on the campsite. Other volunteers like Jess and Lucy also serves as exemplars, not anomalies, to illustrate the difference that length and intensity of stay can have upon the degree to which someone might experience 'belonging'. This sense of belonging to a community also, I argue, contributes to volunteers' identities. This is a consequence of the types of self-development which volunteering facilitates for participants, which I discuss below before moving on to explore how belonging might be related to practices of both teaching and learning.

6.2 Self-development

In Chapter 4, self-development was introduced in the seemingly paradoxical context of self-transcendence or altruism, whereby participants sought to 'become' better people – 'improving' themselves for the good of others. Some volunteers suggested that one of their reasons for doing the project in the first place was in part an attempt at developing particular personal attributes - saying that they felt they weren't very proficient in the social milieu and hoped that doing this project would help them overcome this. The extract from Stan's interview discussed above is an example of this. In a few other cases, such as those of Claudia and Sophia who I discuss shortly, participants said that they had a tendency towards shyness and had found that the project had helped them to develop their self-confidence. In this

section, I discuss volunteers' accounts of self-development in which this is framed as a positive consequence of having volunteered, including their development of various practical and personal qualities.

Learning about turtles and gaining the confidence and knowledge to teach others were specific benefits cited by some participants. For other volunteers the social benefits of the project – such as being part of something, learning to adapt to one's environment, or making new friends – were both cited as motivating factors and beneficial elements of the project. For others still, personal development within the project was referred to more in the sense of learning new skills such as transferable conservation skills, including the use of GPS equipment, taking and recording measurements, and experiencing interactions with the animals, rather than social or pedagogic skills. These volunteers saw their participation in the project as an opportunity to develop new practical skills, as well as acquiring a greater understanding both of how conservation works and the intricacies of the endangered loggerhead sea turtles as a species. Volunteers were also challenged, as discussed in Chapter 5, by the need to use their practical skills for the benefit of the environment on camp, with the subsequent development of various practical skills.

6.2.1 Personal development: 'settling in' and overcoming shyness

In an environment such as that found on camp, it can be difficult initially to engage with other volunteers, especially during the peak of the season when there can be around 35 volunteers, all seemingly well settled in their friendships – relationships which may initially appear completely impenetrable. Carly here explains how you have to be quite adaptable to live in an environment like that, again in response to being asked what she'd learnt about herself:

Living like this and with the constant change of people like, you have to adapt and yeah be more adaptable and that's always a good thing. (Carly, 22, British)

Repeated observations as well as having personally experienced the challenge of becoming integrated into the community during previous periods of participation

have demonstrated the processes through which volunteers achieve this integration. One element which seems to aid new volunteers in this is the division of labour on the project. Small teams ranging from two to five volunteers make up a morning survey, pairs staff the kiosk, and only two or three volunteers comprise a night survey team. As mentioned earlier, these teams are allocated by the monitoring leader rather than being chosen by the volunteers. Consequently, even those less comfortable in large groups can form friendships and become included in the larger group quite rapidly, through working with some intensity with small and varied groups of volunteers on a daily basis.

Prominent in departure interviews were accounts of how volunteers felt they had learnt about themselves through doing the project. It was frequently noted both within interviews and in day-to-day conversations how rewarding it was to learn for yourself what you were capable of, both practically and socially. This extract from Sophia was in response to my asking if she felt that she had learnt anything about herself through doing the project:

It helps to feel more self-confident in my... but um.... I never live in this, kind of like..., for such a long, in a tent and with the shower like this and the toilet (...) and it's yeah it's nice to see that you are able to adapt um, yeah I was happy to see that it's not too hard. (Sophia, 21, French)

Self-confidence was for some volunteers cited as a factor which had prompted them to volunteer, rather than as a benefit of volunteering, as this extract from Claudia's first interview illustrates after I asked her what she expected from doing the project:

When you travel alone it's quite challenging (...) Yeah um you're open, because you're alone so you need to talk to people you need to meet people and, well, when I was younger I was a really shy person and then I had a period where I wasn't shy, and for now I feel like, mm, I'm a bit shy again so [giggles] I need to work that out. (Claudia, 23, German)

Over the period of her participation, I was able to observe Claudia, who was one of the earliest volunteers to arrive, become a highly competent and confident worker and teacher.

6.2.2 Learning to teach and teaching to learn.

A key consequence of engaging with small teams for the performance of the volunteer duties – and one which appears to factor into the personal flourishing of volunteers – is learning about the practical work of conservation and being able to impart these skills to new volunteers. The extracts that follow demonstrate how learning is consolidated for participants through their teaching others and this is something which I have witnessed time and again as volunteers move swiftly from the role of neophyte to teacher in their conservation duties. Especially, it seemed, those who self-identified as shy found it empowering to learn enough about the work to have the confidence to teach others, in the case of Sophia, or to inform tourists, in the case of Claudia. Sophia's response below was given to the question 'do you feel that you have learnt anything about yourself?', and Claudia's in response to my asking whether she had learnt much about turtles, as she had said this was one of her aims on the project:

I don't really know if it's something about me but sometimes I have really, like, a lack of self confidence, and it was, like, the last morning survey I made was with, er, the two new German [volunteers] and with Pierre, and it was only his third morning survey, um, it's been a long time since I was there, but at the beginning I was not really sure that I could learn them everything (..) and finally it was at the end it was cool because I think I didn't forget anything (Sophia, 21, French).

I didn't know anything about turtles and then when, um, we did, er, we went, like, to the beach to check the three things there and then two German [tourists] came and asked many questions and I could answer everything. And I was, like, talking really enthusiastic like I talk about dolphins with someone else. So then it was nice to see 'OK I know stuff now' (...) and also it's really nice to see when you (...) can read the tracks, and you know what she's doing and stuff. It's really cool. I couldn't, like, in the beginning I was like 'you can't learn that in that short time', but it's possible. (Claudia, 23, German).

In both of these examples, full understanding of how to protect nests was represented as something which had at first seemed inconceivable to these volunteers, but was something that they both came to grips with by the time they left the project.

Volunteers' accounts of their own realisation that they had learnt enough to teach others, or to inform locals or tourists they encountered during shifts, were used to explain the way they gained confidence and a degree of authority. Kirsty was a German participant who took her unofficial role as a morning survey 'leader' very seriously⁵³. Below is Kirsty's response to the question 'what's been the best thing for you?':

Seeing a turtle! (laughter) and.... yes um... getting knowledge about all the stuff on morning survey and yeah... feeling a little bit important, like when you are leader and you can pack the bag and everything and you can explain to new people something and you know about, yeah, the tracks and what the turtles do. (Kirsty, 18, German)

As well as evidencing the importance of the visual pleasures of the project in her enjoyment of 'seeing a turtle', Kirsty here also illustrates the inherent pleasure of being afforded responsibility and a degree of leadership. Although this extract shows the recognition by volunteers of 'feeling a little bit important', on the whole volunteers recognise the non-hierarchical nature of working on a project like this. Nicole, for example, noted this when I asked her what she had learnt about herself doing the project:

I can work together with other people [...] um.. yeah and .. and for example when we saw a nest like discussing what it is and not just one [person is] the boss. (Nicole, 22, Austrian)

In this extract, Nicole notes the necessity for discussing tracks and patterns in the sand which suggest whether the turtle nested or not. The beach 'leader', whilst probably somewhat more experienced than the other members, must always teach as they go, pointing out certain characteristics which may indicate the presence or absence of a clutch. However, this 'leader' also needs to listen to the other members of the team, who may spot a pattern of flicked sand, for example, that the nominal

⁵³ This role is not, you might remember from Chapter 5, one which enforces any kind of hierarchy as such, but when a large number of volunteers can be found on camp, with very varied levels of expertise as far as the practical work of conservation goes, it is one which necessarily emerges to ensure that the volunteers with more training and knowledge are distributed across the beach sectors. These volunteers will either be those who have been on camp for a few weeks, or are returning volunteers, and as such will have gained sufficient experience to 'lead' a morning survey. When the rota is constructed, the monitoring leader makes sure that each beach has one nominal 'leader' so that no completely inexperienced teams are dispatched. It is a role that almost all volunteers will be capable of fulfilling after they have acquired a certain amount of knowledge.

leader may have missed. Observations of numerous morning surveys and the accompanying transitions from 'new' to 'experienced' volunteer were fascinating. Furthermore, the role which this learning process played in the integration of volunteers into the group and, in individual cases upon the development of self-confidence, was most noticeable in these conservation shifts.

6.2.3 Understandings of 'self'

Practices such as teaching, learning and camp maintenance along with the development and sharing of values including community and conservation within the project impacted upon several volunteers' perceptions of their selves. The following extracts comprise some examples of how volunteers reflexively discussed their selves and identities in relation to living on the project. Josh here explains that volunteering offers a way in which you can improve yourself, gaining skills which are useful both for future work and for living in general. In the following account, he describes himself as being 'always under construction', when asked what he had learnt about himself through doing the project:

You're always like, under construction, and trying to change yourself in better way ... every time we live together with so many people you're getting better in it. You know more things how to like function in a group and everything if you're like under a lot of stress, shortage of sleep ... getting close together and everything, and, yeah there are skills that you'll use in any condition: working, living. (Josh, 20, Belgian).

In contrast, in these extracts from interviews with Naomi, Harriet and Jenny, when I asked volunteers if they felt that they had learnt anything about themselves the volunteers said that doing the project had allowed them to *be* themselves:

I learned that I really can be myself. (Naomi, 23, German)

I think everyone should have to do something like this just for... educational social purposes, just I think it... makes you a lot more comfortable. Like the whole time I've been here I've felt a lot more comfortable with who I am as well, I've just been, I've felt like I'm able to be myself the whole time and I think that's the most important thing. And then that's made me realise like at home sometimes, like, I'll be myself for most of the time, and I don't like *not* being myself, but it's made me realise that if you can't be yourself it's not worth trying to be friends with that person or trying to fit in somewhere where you're not going to. I just ... like, literally the whole time I'm here I've

not felt like ohh I have to do this to fit in with this or I have to be a certain way or say a certain thing. It's just really nice... so relaxed (Harriet, 19, British).

I never feel more myself than when I'm here meeting people who are like minded in a place where all we need is one another and a common goal, and you know, feeling like you're working towards something that is worthwhile and, you know, yeah I never feel more happy or more like myself. (Jenny, 25, Australian).

Stan, on the other hand, adopts an alternative perspective on identity, represented as something which must be maintained in this extract from his account of how he felt about leaving the project:

I realise there's still a lot to be done and actually I'm excited, I'm excited about um, yeah that part of my personal development ... so yeah I think I've been tense, um, feeling cooped up and feeling how do I say it in Eng... try to be, trying to blend with the group while keeping my own identity. (Stan, 44, Greek)

It is interesting to note here the discursive contrast between Josh's account of himself as being 'under construction', with those of Harriet, Naomi and Jenny, in which a more fixed comprehension of the self emerges, and Stan's account of his 'self' as something which needs maintaining. In each case, the volunteer's relationship to the group is an important factor in this self-perception. Volunteers discursively construct the environs of camp as a site in which the self may be explored and developed, through intensified interactions with other volunteers or through authentic experiences of the 'self'.

6.3 Volunteering as transformative

In the preceding empirical chapters of this thesis, data illustrated how volunteering can offer an alternative to normality. In this section, I explore how, for some volunteers, volunteering provides *more* than just a break from normality. On the whole, these volunteers tended to hold similar views as regards, for example, environmentalism, conservation and types of tourism. However, the experience of volunteering for the volunteers discussed in this section changed their perspectives on tourism and leisure. For example, Jenny's account suggests that volunteering had changed her whole attitude to travelling. She says elsewhere that through

volunteering she had come to spurn the drunken tourism so often encountered in many hostels. She suggests that to follow the 'mass' tourist activities and mentality can impact negatively upon one's ability to properly experience the host country:

...because I had such a, such a great time [volunteering before] and it just opened my mind to a whole different way of thinking. It's become a priority now; it's become my favourite way of travelling (Jenny, 25, Australian).

However, the manner in which the experience of volunteering impacts upon participants is not always presented in a wholly positive light, as Bob noted when I asked him how he felt volunteering had impacted upon him:

It prevents a person from moving on in life, because if you have sort of a temporary residence half the year and then the other half of the year you're living in a tent then you don't establish things like, you know, a home? [...] and I don't know it's a hindrance in that way if you do it too much, cos a lot of people, um, the returning volunteers are all sort of a high risk for being itinerant and um....kind of frustrated in their lives, because they keep rearranging things in order to come back, so they don't move on... (Bob, 33, American)

These concerns are ones which several 'habitual' volunteers have expressed to me over the years, and the strong 'pull' exerted by the project is something with which I can certainly identify⁵⁴.

In Jess's account below we also encounter the suggestion that volunteering had changed her perspective, although in this case, in a more positive light, impacting directly upon her career plans:

I was a member of ARCHELON 6 years ago which is partly why I'm studying what I'm studying now, cos I realised it's the kind of work that I'd like to be doing on a permanent and one day even paid basis (Jess, 26, British).

For others, such as Stan, the decision to volunteer was to allow him to explore his own potential to transform his career trajectory and entire lifestyle, as he explained that he had decided to leave his urban lifestyle and career in IT to pursue a career in conservation in a very provincial area, but had been hesitant to actually take the

⁵⁴ Furthermore, it is something which I continue to observe in the online 'community' of past and present ARCHELON volunteers. In May of every year, the various ARCHELON Facebook pages invariably spring into life, with past volunteers expressing their sadness if they cannot return, and excitement if they can.

leap. I asked him in his departure interview how he felt about these plans which he had mentioned in his arrival interview, and whether his apprehension was still present, to which he responded:

...part of that was resolved here because I can live, I can live in this environment (Stan, 44, Greek).

In these few cases, volunteers' engagement with the project fundamentally changed their outlook on their leisure time, career paths and lifestyles generally.

However, despite this, it was not infrequent for volunteers, when asked whether they would consider returning to the project, to offer either non-committal responses or to say that they would not return to the same site⁵⁵. Often, this was justified by the desire to do 'something different' once again, as discussed in some depth in the first of these empirical chapters. Jenny, for example, suggested that doing the same thing twice would be 'a disservice to her travels', and several other volunteers said that they would probably volunteer again, but elsewhere. So whilst volunteering is regarded as 'something different', and for many this is actually cited as motivating factor, once a project has been experienced it ceases, by definition, to fulfil the criterion of 'doing something different' and as such necessarily ceases to be an option for volunteers who claim to be motivated by this desire. For Eric, Victoria and Jenny, volunteering had become their preferred type of travel, though none had repeated a volunteer project, instead seeking different voluntary experiences whenever they travelled. Josh, Carly and Jess were all volunteering for ARCHELON as returning volunteers, though had previously participated in different projects. Two others subsequently volunteered again for ARCHELON the season following that in which I conducted this research, but went to different projects. However, for other volunteers, repeating the same project in the same place presented no such taboo: Lucy, Bob, Liz, Dave and Alex were all back for another season having volunteered at the same project between three and six times previously, and Clare, Laura and Lena were returning for their second season at the same site. Furthermore, nine of the 'new' volunteers in the season in which I collected this data returned to the same

⁵⁵ 11% of those asked said they would volunteer at another one of ARCHELON's projects, 55% were equivocal, and 34% said that they would return to the same project.

site in the following season, and two returned later that summer (both having been in the first 'cohort' of volunteers).

6.3.1 Withdrawing from monetary relations

As well as influencing volunteers' attitudes to travel, participating on the project also had an effect on some volunteers' attitudes towards money. This was true in terms of the lack of actual interactions with currency, as volunteers could easily go for several days without opening their purses. Money might be handled in the kiosks, or used to buy the occasional beer, gyros or ice-cream in the local village, but on the whole physical currency was not something which featured prominently in a volunteer's day. However, this was also manifested in a lack of commodities and internet connectivity on camp, as previously discussed in relation to volunteers' interactions with their surroundings and the other members of the volunteer community. Suzi here explains, when asked what her time on the project had made her appreciate more, how the simplicity of the lifestyle, the limited resources on camp and the lack of material provisions impact upon how volunteers relate to one another:

Once you get back down to the basics ... you know.. um you appreciate what you *do* have back home... and... but at the same time too when you get down to the basics you do have that communal living (...) you have, like, card games you ... you know, do all these things together because you don't have the other distractions of everything else around you so... um..... I don't know it's made.. yeah it's made me appreciate that more I guess. (Suzi, 23, American)

For some volunteers, withdrawal from the consumerist and materially focussed lifestyle facilitated – or even necessitated – by engagement with the project was particularly liberating. For Olivia the lack of monetary incentive was cited as a factor which had influenced her decision to volunteer, and the following extract was provided in response was to my asking whether she thought volunteering was something which more people should engage in:

It's a good way of thinking ... I think that it's really important to the people to try to do as much as they can without looking for recompense... So you don't gain anything material ... I think now it's important to try to do this because there are people who think in the other way - I mean they don't do anything if

they don't get anything material ... I think it's a bad way of thinking." (Olivia, 19, Spanish)

Suzi also discussed in her departure interview the differences between working for money and working for non-economic reasons, and the following extract was in response to my asking what she had enjoyed about doing the project:

I enjoy, like, even though yeah you wake up at the ass-crack of dawn and that kinda sucks but um... I like the fact like I'm enjoying what I'm doing you know? It's not like "grab that horn" and at that job that I don't like too much (...) um and yeah, like, 'ugh I gotta get up', like, the only motivation's like money (...) and like, here, it's like, like, you know, it's just, like, having fun and, you know, doing it for the turtles, and the cause and everything, and I really like that. (Suzi, 23, American)

Despite these accounts – which highlight the ways in which non-remunerated work entails implicit satisfaction and how living simply also has its own rewards – this does not result, for most volunteers, in a wholesale rejection of a desire to acquire paid work in the future. Indeed, many cited enhanced employability as something which had informed their decision to volunteer in the first place, though, as aforementioned, this and other apparent 'motivations' may simply be the reproduction of dominant discourses and expectations, rather than necessarily insights into the psychological needs or desires. As discussed earlier, most of the volunteers saw paid employment as an inevitable and dominant aspect of their futures, and despite enjoying their temporary disengagement with paid work and material consumption they did not imply that this would impact on the rest of their lives, or that they would desire it to do so. For most volunteers, the benefits of temporarily withdrawing from economic exchange were not factors which inspired their participation but were consequences of volunteering, if noted at all. For Jodi and Lara this came from having fewer material items, and for others discussed previously it resulted from the creativity required to live in an environment where you didn't necessarily buy things required but instead created them using available materials and makeshift tools.

Jenny, too, discussed her feelings towards money, expressing a sense of guilt when seeing it used frivolously, whether by herself or by others. She is a volunteer who habitually engages in temporary work so as to facilitate a peripatetic lifestyle:

Jenny – [when I go home] I tend to fall back into the traps of my friends and family as well, you know you go out for a nice dinner and end up spending, you know, 30 to 50 dollars, and like, in a way I can't just be, you know, people look at me and think like Well look at me as if I'm being pov... (...)

Hannah - like you're what?

Jenny - Pov. we say 'pov', it's short for poverty stricken I guess, and so (laughs) sorry that's a horrible slang term, I can't think of anything, any other way to explain it. People think that you're being, like, a tight-arse, um, by not wanting to spend this kind of money, cos they think it's for selfish reasons. And, like, and in a way it is because I'm saving up to go away again, but um, I just can't, I can't justify spending that kind of money when you see other places that need it so badly. I mean I haven't even *been* to any poverty stricken countries so I can't even say that it's that, but I do think of that. Even just seeing, like, people in conservation projects and people who run them and find them to begin with. They just put so much of their time and their money into it that it just makes me feel a little bit bitter towards people who don't realise, yeah, are happy to just go out and spend money, like, all on their selves. And I know it's really bad because it makes me sound very bitter and twisted but, you know, in order for me to live socially and not be a complete hermit I kind of have to fall back into that trap when I go back home. And I find myself going out on a night out and spending you know 50 dollars like everybody else, and I think, you know, the way that I justify it is 'well you know it's the only way that I'm going to see friends properly'. But then, yeah, I'm, on the other hand, why do I have to do that when I know that I could put it somewhere else that really needs it? (Jenny, 25, Australian)

For Jenny, then, living in a group in which it was unnecessary to spend money to be able to engage socially was a relief. The kind of guilt which Jenny's account constructs in the extract above and the ways she justifies her actions are another example of something I have described elsewhere as 'moral balancing' (O'Mahoney 2010).

6.3.2 Rejecting typical life-courses

Another theme that was also evident in some interviews was a rejection of the normative Western life-course. This idea refers to the rejection of those 'goods' traditionally pursued, such as economic security in the form of a 'good' job, home ownership, and having children. Chris, who is unmarried and childless⁵⁶, refers to

⁵⁶ As, indeed, were all of the volunteers interviewed.

this in a most explicit manner in his discussion of why he had chosen to leave his established career:

You come across opportunities and then years ago I would be doing the classic thing of living a modern life and having the 4 bedroom house and the 3 cars on the drive and all that, but you get kind of bored with all that. I thought, 'I'm going to just take every opportunity'. Why not? (Chris, 41, British)

For Chris, as well as Jess and Stan, who I have discussed elsewhere, a conscious decision has been made to avoid this traditional lifestyle, though in Chris and Stan's accounts a desire to be employed is still implied, but in the environmental sector rather than those areas in which they initially trained. In both Chris and Stan's cases significant life-changes were being pursued, entailing a significant decrease in their respective incomes. However, the wholesale rejection of these 'traditional' life-courses was rare. In more cases, full-time employment, children or home-ownership were regarded as desirable and/or inevitable features of participants' futures which would result eventually in the curtailment of the types of pleasures offered by travelling and, specifically, volunteering. For these volunteers, the idea of settling down is something which *will* happen in the future, and this inevitability about the future is used to justify extended travel experiences in the present:

...Yeah 'cos otherwise you get sort of tied down and then it just gets impossible so yeah I was like I gotta do it now, 'cos I've always loved travelling (Carly, 22, British).

You get that house, you get that job, and then you're stuck (Jenny, 25, Australian).

Travelling and volunteering are, for these respondents, something which must be 'fitted in' before entering the normative 'grown-up' life-stage, in which jobs, mortgages and families act to constrain these experiences⁵⁷.

⁵⁷ Indeed, a similar discourse emerged in an earlier extract from Bob, though interestingly his extract frames the issue from the other direction – with volunteering constraining 'growing up' or 'moving on'. He suggested that habitual volunteering delayed desirable goals such as securing a permanent home or job, and thereby constrained one's ability to 'move on' in life. However, in both discourses, the moral obligations and pressures of everyday life are implicated. In Jenny and Carly's accounts these are presented as something to be delayed, or at least a benchmark after which pleasures like extended volunteering might be necessarily cease, whereas in Bob's account, habitual volunteering itself prevents these goals from being realised.

For some volunteers, such as Lara whom I discussed earlier and Stan who wanted to 'test' himself, a desire to live more simply had encouraged them to engage in volunteering in the first place. For others, however, discovering the joys of living in a less consumer-driven manner was a result of having volunteered. In some cases, this led to a revision of attitudes towards consumerism and resource use, which is illustrated in this allegory provided by Christos to illustrate how people come to be aware of their environmental impacts:

You're living in a house and you want to get warm and you're cutting woods from the forest, and then one day you realise that there is no forest ... and you think, 'if it does this thing, is it worth it?' (...) Maybe we have to have reached our goal to have wealth, but we have lost some other things. I think that's why we see that there's so much trouble: not only with the environmental, [but also] societies. I mean there are poor people, there are countries that they are starving. I think it's natural that more and more people [are] thinking that it's something wrong ... [living like this] can help you to realise how life was and how it has been. (Christos, 20, Greek)

Volunteering, for Christos, leads to the reassessment of his own needs, but as Jenny shows in this next extract, it can also lead to the comparison of one's own needs and desires with those of others. This was part of Jenny's response when I asked her how she felt about the communal side of the project:

When you travel around and meet people from all different walks of life like, some people have their principles in the wrong places and I almost... like, people forget about their lives because they - it sounds funny but people just go along with what they think needs to be done, they think they need to get the good career, get money so they can get a house and things like that, and that's fine and they're happy but I also think they're a little bit numb as well they, it's a following rather than figuring out what really needs to, what you really need to do. (Jenny, 25, Australian)

Elsewhere she refers to these 'types' of people as 'cookie cutter people' – referring to their homogenous nature: a mass from whom she wishes to be distanced.

Volunteering in this regard serves as a temporary 'escape' from societal norms, as suggested in the previous chapter. As with all the themes discussed in this thesis, the wholesale, partial, or temporary rejection of the 'normal' Western life course, in which one studies, gets a job, gets married, has children, etc, is far from ubiquitous. Elle, for example, was most adamant that having a family was of great importance to

her, and as I discussed previously many volunteers talked about their future careers as something which was both inevitable and anticipated with some optimism. However, as both this section and that which preceded it have indicated there is a degree of dissatisfaction with certain features of contemporary society from which volunteering for ARCHELON allows a temporary reprieve. For some, volunteering on this project is a consequence of this dissatisfaction, for others the dissatisfaction with certain elements of life in the 'real world' only became evident through doing the project.

6.4 'Hands-on' conservation and seeing the 'fruits of your labour'

Something which many volunteers were particularly passionate about in their departure interview was the enjoyment of being able to do what they referred to as 'hands-on' conservation work, and to witness first-hand the 'fruits of their labour'. These two interrelated factors further contribute to the manner in which volunteering provides an escape or reprieve from the more detrimental elements of the 'real world'. This relates to several topics discussed previously, including ideas of doing something worthwhile, a desire to work hard, and discourses about employment which emerged from some of the interviews. Perceptions of employment discussed so far have been varied: work is viewed by volunteers as either something inherently or at least potentially worthwhile and important, or in contrast as largely meaningless and engaged in purely for its extrinsic benefits. In either case, though, it was almost always regarded as something which was inevitable. This section illustrates what some of the volunteers had to say about the work they had engaged in whilst on the volunteer project. In contrast to some of the discourses surrounding paid employment which I discussed in Chapter 4 and some of the literature found in the first half of Chapter 1, a version of work is presented here as something which can be rewarding for the worker, who is able to both recognise and observe the benefits of the work in which they are engaged whilst on the project.

When asked what the best thing about the project was, many of the volunteers mentioned both the 'hands-on' nature of the conservation aspect of the project, and also how rewarding their experiences of actively 'doing' conservation had been:

It's like if you don't turn up for morning survey then, like, if you don't protect a nest then it might get predated and, like, they'll die (...) so (laughter) it's like you have a bit more responsibility and actually feel you have to do it which is good, so I do feel like I've actually done some conservation now. (Zoe, 19, British)

Zoe refers here to a prior 'conservation' project for which she had volunteered, in which the conservation work was very minimal and the project has seemed more focussed upon providing a fun experience for the volunteers. For the 'helonades' at this project, in contrast, conservation and data collection was prioritised above providing a fun experience for the volunteers. In this site, the work was particularly rewarding because the participants literally got to see the 'fruits of their labour' – protecting a nest one day and then around 50 days later seeing hatchlings or hatchling tracks emerging from the same nest:

It was just so amazing and the fact that I got so much out of it, and there's that satisfaction of seeing that you've protected the nest and just being here long enough to see that nest, that you were there to find, hatch (Jenny, 25, Australian).

You see your success (...) you see the hatchlings getting into the sea (Sue, 21, German).

In one rare instance, a team of volunteers on night survey were able to help a turtle with a missing hind flipper to dig her egg chamber, after she had repeatedly failed to do so alone, and they subsequently watched her lay her eggs⁵⁸. From my own experience and observations of other volunteers I can think of few more rewarding experiences than knowing that a shading expedition, in which a nest known or expected to be impacted adversely by light pollution is shaded using makeshift bamboo shades, usually with an accompanying trench to direct hatchlings to the sea,

⁵⁸ Three 'flipped' turtles are less rare than one might think – usually due to injuries from predators, fishing equipment, and speed boats – but they very rarely nest successfully. When these turtles attempt to lay it is common to find multiple non-nesting attempts marked by the distinctive tracks from an injured specimen within a sector, and these may be found on several consecutive morning surveys until, it is assumed, she gives up and loses the eggs in the sea.

has been successful. This is evidenced by hatching tracks leading from the nest directly to the sea, rather than towards the back of the beach and/or the nearest beach bar. The following extract resulted from Chris being asked what had been the highlight of volunteering:

Chris: The fact that um... the volunteers are needed here (...) yeah and um the feeling of being involved in something worthwhile (...) you really get that, because you're, you're physically doing it and you're given autonomy to do things as well, if you show any sort of umph, or initiative, or skills, or (...) or some courage. So that's all good

Hannah: And how.. how do you feel that you personally have got on?

Chris: I've really enjoyed it, I've loved training, I've loved learning about turtles and how to deal with them at night and watching their behaviours was a privilege (...) and passing that stuff that I've learnt onto others.. I always enjoy that (Chris, 41, British).

The contrasts to the accounts of alienated employment discussed earlier are particularly evident in this account, in which Chris notes not only that the volunteers here are performing an important role, but that beyond this are granted autonomy and rewarded for displays of initiative.

6.4.1 Volunteer work and sense-making

Volunteering and the work conducted whilst volunteering are presented as something which is sense-full or which makes sense to participants, and this is because, as discussed above, of the *intrinsic* rewards of the work performed here (Rose 2008). However it is also presented as a consequence of volunteers' expectations based on the purpose of the project itself, as these two responses to the question 'why did you do this project?' illustrate:

I did it because I really wanted to do something that is sense-full... I wanted to go abroad as well, and to meet, like, people who have kind of the same ideas, stuff like that. (Clare, 25, Swiss)

[I wanted] to have fun and to do something sense-full, not just lying around all day long, but do something which is good and makes sense and also have fun. And I think it's interesting to get to know new people, and I think people who do stuff like this are nice ... and that's a good thing, to know people like that. (Fiona, 21, German.)

As well as referring to volunteering as being 'sense-full', both Clare and Fiona talk about the types of people who volunteer – in the first instance as the types of people who share certain ideas, and in the second as a type of person who is 'nice'. These ideas of the volunteer work being 'sense-full' again contrast with Pete and Clare's negative experiences of paid employment discussed in Chapter 4, as well as Angie's brief experience as an apprentice in an office, which she described as not making sense to her.

In my earlier discussion of employment, it was clear that volunteers within this project had varied attitudes to and expectations of employment. However, their attitudes towards the types of work conducted on the project were much more consistent, and they perceived this work as variously useful, helpful, worthwhile or 'sense-full'. Discourses about it being 'right' to protect the turtles and to conserve the natural environment more generally were common, though not ubiquitous, demonstrating a combination of instrumental or consequentialist (means to an end) and deontological (end in itself) forms of sense-making. In comparison to the young volunteer who justifies working in a munitions factory between studying with the argument that if she wasn't doing it then someone else would be, the volunteers justify their engagement with discourses like 'if I don't, who will?' and 'I can, so I *should*'. The work performed by volunteers is not here perceived as morally right because of what it *is* – the enactment of work for work's sake – but for what it *does* – protecting and monitoring an endangered species.

6.5 Conclusion

This final empirical chapter has shown what volunteers' accounts of their time participating in this instance of volunteer tourism suggest that they get out of this experience. On the project volunteers seem to flourish both socially and individually. These social and individual forms of flourishing are shown to be inextricable, with individual development contributing to volunteers' integration into the social milieu, and the social structures of the project simultaneously facilitating this individualised development. These points were illustrated by accounts from volunteers about how they had overcome shyness and engaged in both teaching and learning which had in turn developed their confidence, and also learnt various practical skills. Although

some of the aspects of volunteerism discussed in this chapter, such as ‘communal living’ and various manifestations of discourses of ‘personal development’, were mentioned as reasons for volunteering, these themes were far more prominent in departure interviews than in their earlier interviews in which participants were asked about their reasons for volunteering.

As a consequence of a sense of belonging, the personal development of volunteers, and the types of interactions necessitated by the formal conservation work and everyday structure of the community found in the volunteer project, certain versions of the ‘self’ were referred to in my interview data. Volunteers’ accounts included reflections upon their selves, what types of people they were and how they felt able, for the most part, to behave more authentically, feeling able to ‘be’ themselves whilst participating. Having shown how volunteers’ accounts entailed reflections upon their selves, the chapter then discussed the extent to which the project was transformative for volunteers in relation to how it entailed a shift in reported attitudes to money, travel, and typical Western life-courses. Finally, volunteers’ accounts of the types of work they had engaged in on the project were presented, in contrast to the types of discourses surrounding *paid* work which emerged in Chapter 4. It is possible now to re-examine these themes in the context of the theoretical literature with which this thesis began, and to address more explicitly the research questions developed in Chapters 1 and 2, and summarised at the outset of Chapter 3.

7 Understanding Work and Leisure in Volunteer Tourism

The preceding pages have used empirical data to illustrate what the everyday life of volunteer tourists working to conserve sea turtles in Greece is like, and how these volunteers talked about topics such as work, leisure, money and the environment. The remainder of this thesis is concerned with mobilising these data to provide appropriately theoretical and empirical answers to the primary research questions which were provided in the introduction and whose subsidiary questions were developed throughout Chapters 1 and 2. This discussion begins with my data about work – both the work of employment and the work of volunteering – in relation to the body of critical literature on work discussed in the first half of Chapter 1. It then moves on to discuss the theoretical implications of the ways in which discourses concerning consumption emerged in my data, as well as the relative absence of commodities within the project and the types of ‘needs’ satisfied there.

Subsequently, the established literature on volunteer tourism and tourism discussed in Chapter 2 is revisited in the light of volunteers’ accounts of this instance of volunteer tourism and other forms of tourism. It is argued that the primary distinction is to be found in the relationship between this form of tourism and the world of work – both in terms of paid employment and ‘work’ in the sense of toil enacted for purposes other than remuneration. This experience does not oppose work in the same manner as more conventional forms of tourism, but is incorporated into the career narratives of many of these volunteers. Social class forms an important element of this discussion, and is discussed in relation to the types of classed discourses which emerge within the comparisons drawn by volunteers’ accounts, and the reproduction of class inequalities which result from volunteer tourism more generally. The topic of sense-making is finally elaborated upon, drawing together the various empirical emergences of the idea of ‘sense-making’ found in the previous three chapters and the questions concerning the types of rationality which shape contemporary moralities, foreshadowed in Chapters 1 and 2.

7.1 Volunteering: Work and employment

An argument was presented in Chapter 1 that experiences of employment encountered in contemporary capitalist societies can be alienating in nature, may fail to provide opportunities for individual flourishing and can seem unnecessary in the sense of being largely unproductive – work for the sake of work (Gorz 1999; 2011 [1989]; Graeber 2013; Sennett 1999; Marx 1993 [1939]; 1992 [1844]). Moreover, productive work and the relationships and interactions perpetuated by this form of work are detrimental to the *rest* of nature – ‘man’s inorganic body’ – and to *human* nature. Paid employment is nonetheless regarded as a moral ‘good’ in contemporary societies (Weeks 2011; Weber 2003 [1905]; Fevre 2000). It was subsequently asked whether work is as detrimental to employees as some theorists suggest, and whether there are empirical sites in which we can find types of work which are *non*-alienating and in which individuals can act in symbiosis with rather than antagonism to the natural world. Volunteer tourism, as an environment in which work is enacted as a freely chosen form of leisure, was introduced in Chapter 2 as a contrastive environment in which individuals might flourish in their work, and in which alternative relationships between work and leisure are manifested. Furthermore, as the last three chapters have illustrated, in the realm of conservation alternative relationships between humans and nature emerge which differ from those established in more traditionally productivist forms of work.

The data discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 depict a site in which meaningful and non-coerced work is performed, work which connected participants both to the surrounding environment and to other volunteers whilst also allowing for their own personal development. The manner in which volunteers talked about the work of the conservation project here requires closer theoretical scrutiny, as these data have implications for how we understand the relationship between volunteer tourism and paid work. Gorz’s ideas about ‘work-for-oneself’ and ‘autonomous activities’ are used here to differentiate between these types of ‘work’ and those found in the forms of employment which dominate in the ‘real world’ (Gorz 2011 [1989]). Further, Benton’s re-working of Marxism is also employed to explore the forms of ‘eco-regulatory labour’ performed by these volunteer tourists in their interactions

with the turtles and the broader natural environment. With the aim of understanding the ways in which work and leisure are hybridised in volunteer tourism, this discussion begins by examining volunteers' accounts of their experiences of paid work in comparison to voluntary work. Data are used to then reassess and modify the literature which comprised the first half of Chapter 1.

7.1.1 Conservation work: 'I don't know....it just makes sense'

In this section the similarities and differences between voluntary and paid work are discussed in the context of the critiques of work presented in Chapter 1 and in response to RQ3 and its subsidiary questions. These questions were centred on the contemporary relationship between work and leisure, and I argue here that these seemingly oppositional categories are hybridised in this environment. Given the limited number of respondents at this site who had completed their educational careers and entered the labour market, empirical reflections on the topic of employment necessary for answering RQ3a are limited here. However, what was clear was that the largely negative experiences of the small number of volunteers who had experienced full-time employment conflicted somewhat with the optimistic expectations of those yet to do so. It appears, therefore, that there is a discord between the expectations and reported experiences of the labour market. Furthermore, as illustrated from page 137 in Chapter 4, the assumed *inevitability* of employment highlighted in the works of Weeks (2011) and Weber (2003 [1905]) in Chapter 1 was apparent: by only one volunteer, Jess, was the idea that full-time employment was an inevitable or desirable goal called into question. Moreover, the emergence in my data of a view of work as something which will inevitably occupy the volunteers' futures and, in the case of 'office work', something which is presented as potentially or actually dull, 'sense-less' and alienating (see p.135-6), the assumed dualism between work and leisure with which this thesis began is reinforced.

However, this perspective was not ubiquitous amongst the helonades, with several of the student volunteers expressing optimism over entering the labour market, and one or two of the older ones saying that they already enjoyed their jobs. Whilst Stebbins presents the caricature that '[non-devotee work] is fundamentally

uninteresting, if not unpleasant, obligation (the paycheck is nice, of course) and [leisure] is happy refuge from it' (Stebbins 2004, p.119), opposing discourses are also evident, and it seems that many of the volunteers are well aware of the potential or actual (experienced) intrinsic and extrinsic benefits of work. As Stebbins notes, the dichotomisation of work and leisure to which he refers in the aforementioned caricature has obscured an alternative conceptualisation of work and leisure 'as two highly fulfilling classes of activity that, except for the matter of remuneration, are much the same' (Stebbins 2004, p.120). Sayers also recognises this, and criticises Gorz's view of work as necessarily 'un-free', an imposition. He argues that 'the necessity of work does not entail such conclusions ... The feeling that one's work is useful and necessary is one of the major aspects of the fulfilment that work can bring' (Sayers 1998, p.61). In the case explored here, of course, the work is non-remunerated, and as such, being un-coerced and freely chosen, more a form of leisure than a form of work. Primary attention has been paid here to the importance of the intrinsic rewards for work – stemming from the work enacted rather than the contractual or extrinsic rewards of it – for facilitating the specific forms of flourishing which, I have argued, emerge here, due to my ethnographic observations and the wealth of interview data generated. Indeed, two volunteers celebrate the non-remunerated character of the work, with Hayley stating that she wouldn't *want* to be paid (p.127) and Olivia suggesting that everyone should, at some point in their lives, engage in forms of work which receive no material rewards (p.196-7). Nonetheless, it seems quite possible that these findings might be less a consequence of the *voluntary nature* of the experience, and instead available through other forms of work which are eco-regulatory rather than transformative, and which foster less instrumental interactions with the environment. I return to this point shortly, drawing on observations and volunteers' experiences of one specific element of the project: working in the kiosk.

In Chapter 4, section 4.2.2, data are presented in which volunteers describe 'office work' as sense-less. The volunteers whose accounts of work I discussed here felt variously underappreciated by their employers, unable to recognise the value in what they were doing, and consequently detached from their labour – which was treated purely as a means to an end. This offers some support to the theories of

alienation stemming from Marx's classical work (1993 [1939]; Marx 1992 [1844]), as well as more contemporary critiques found in the work of Gorz (2011 [1989]), Weeks (2011), Frayne (2011; 2015 forthcoming), and Russell (1993 [1930]). However, the volunteers' accounts of office work are contrasted with either employment or voluntary work in the sectors of conservation or environmental research, which are presented as types of work which 'make sense' to the volunteers, and in which volunteers seem able to work in a nurturing rather than an antagonistic or exploitative relationship with nature.

Whilst some participants engaged in volunteering for instrumental reasons (such as seeking personal development or CV enhancement, see p.130), the conservation activities performed on a day-to-day basis were not perceived as means to further ends. Even when volunteers cited self-interest in their discussions of their decisions to volunteer, they recognised that the turtles needed protection so as to conserve the species. This is not necessarily because said turtles serve any economic or practical service to humanity (though some volunteers spoke of their role in the ecosystem of which humankind is also a part), but because they are inherently worth saving⁵⁹. Protecting the turtles is framed as an ultimate endeavour – an ends rather than a means – even though individual accounts of motivations to volunteer are often framed as means to further ends. It is important to note, however, that these accounts of motivations, whilst framed as 'ends' oriented, are subject to the same kinds of societal influences as more apparently 'instrumental motivations', as both are a product of the volunteers' socialisation. Equally, they are just as likely to be justifications used to rationalise behaviours as these. Finally, the strength of their environmental concern is as much indicative of the dominance of certain discourses as are their more traditionally instrumental accounts of their motivations. The wish to 'give something back' and to rectify anthropogenic harm to nature – whether directly or indirectly, through future employment or through this experience of volunteer tourism – is historically, socially and discursively contextual.

⁵⁹ This represents a somewhat of romantic approach to nature. Evident in these accounts are both versions of a *moral* naturalism which takes 'a certain view of how nature works as morally prescriptive' (which Benton finds unacceptable) accompanied also by 'causal, or explanatory, naturalism' which, Benton explains, identifies 'basic facts about nature and our relation to it that we must recognize and to which we must adapt, irrespective of our moral or aesthetic valuation of them' (1992, p.69).

Furthermore, the work performed by the volunteers was recognised as purposeful and comprehensible. The alienated forms of work resulting from mechanisation and the subsequent distancing of workers from their products found in industrial and manufacturing occupations and the bureaucratic structures found in many service-related jobs in advanced and post-industrial capitalism are absent here. In no instances did volunteers ask why they were performing any allocated task on the project, aside from wanting to know the precise mechanism by which it was beneficial to the species. For example trainee ‘taggers’ might ask ‘why do we insert the plastic tag before the metal tag’. However a volunteer would never ask why they were protecting the nests from predation, or why the nests needed shading or boxing, because, as several of them remarked, the work made complete sense to them, for the most part they knew what they needed to do, how to do it, and *why* they were doing it. The forms of work executed by the volunteers are ‘sense-full’ – as several of the German-speaking volunteers describe them. Finally, the work makes sense to the volunteers because it corresponded with their own values, providing them with an opportunity to act upon a concern which is important to them (environmentalism, marine conservation or biodiversity loss) and to protect a species which also has inherent value as much as for what it is (an ancient and endangered species) as for what it does (contributing to the wider ecosystem), as shown in Chapter 4. This non-instrumental approach to the overall purpose of volunteer work, often framed in deontological terms in relation to the overall purpose of the project even if not in terms of individual accounts of motivations, provides empirical support for MacIntyre’s contention that goods pursued for their own ends have greater potential to substantively satisfy individuals (MacIntyre 1985). Furthermore, this non-instrumental approach to *nature*, especially when explored in terms of the flourishing experienced by volunteers, offers empirical support for a Marxist-humanist perspective on human nature, to which I shortly turn.

7.1.2 Parallels to the labour market

Although the roles performed in this site differ in numerous ways from the sorts of work performed within paid employment, certain corollaries to the labour market

nonetheless exist. For example, the times of work are structured by factors outside of the participants' choosing. Sunrise determines when morning surveys begin, and the number and types of turtle emergences the previous night largely determine how long the shift will last. However, these factors are a consequence of natural cycles, and, as such, more similar to the pre-industrial and largely agricultural forms of work characterised by spells of inactivity punctuated with intense periods of work, as opposed to the economic ends which structure and determine the more regular working hours found in the contemporary labour market (Thompson 1967). However, more similar to the demands of the labour market, in this respect, are the kiosk shifts. The information kiosk must be open between certain hours, and pre-determined donations are asked in exchange for each souvenir. This was often a frustrating shift for non-Greek speakers who felt powerless to 'inform' the local population and domestic tourists, who provided the main footfall, alongside the other dominant visiting group – German tourists. Furthermore, the requisite skills required for this role, such as enthusiasm, friendliness and confidence, could be attained in, and are required by, any other customer or public facing role.

The kiosk shifts, more than any other, were described by volunteers as 'boring' (as discussed in Chapter 5, p. 151), containing neither the potential for the unknown which accompanied the conservation shifts, nor the ability to display or hone the learned skills of conservation such as egg finding or turtle tagging. The lack of enjoyment found in this task offers support to the literature cited in Chapter 1 which identifies the underuse of individuals' potential as a constraint upon the realisation of flourishing within certain forms of paid work (Sennett 1999; Russell 1993 [1930]; Gorz 2011 [1989]; Marx 1992 [1844]). As Russell suggests of work and life more generally (1993 [1930]) and as Urry and Larsen observe in relation to tourism (2011), it is in the opportunities for novelty that enjoyment might be found, and this is not a feature of this particular shift. Indeed, the lack of either perceived novelty or usefulness here seemed to directly contribute to the volunteers' lack of 'zest' for this shift. Whilst the work of the kiosk is still, of course voluntary, the actual tasks performed here rarely call for the use of the specific skills learnt in the project, indeed, even the knowledge acquired by volunteers through their participation is rarely evidenced in this shift due to the infrequency of fluent English speaking

visitors to the kiosk. The occasional positive references made to kiosk shifts in my data, field-notes, and observations tended to originate either from Greek participants who could communicate with the local residents and domestic tourists, or from German volunteers who were able to communicate with the German tourists⁶⁰. In a few cases, positive experiences resulted when the pair of volunteers allocated this duty got on particularly well (when the enjoyment stemmed from the sociability rather than the work itself). However, enjoyment purely from the social interactions between the kiosk staff is not a consequence of the actual work enacted (though interactions stemming from work relations are nonetheless regarded as *intrinsic* rewards by Rose 1988; 2003; Brown et al. 2012). Sayers notes, 'where work is felt to be useless or unnecessary it becomes demoralizing and even hateful' (1998, p.62). Whilst 'hateful' might well be an overstatement in this case, the relationship between the lack of 'sense' volunteers could make of this shift in comparison to the more conservation oriented work offers support to this statement. Again, this raises questions about the extent to which it is the *voluntary* nature of the work performed on the project which leads to the specific types of flourishing discussed so far or if, instead, it is the *nature* of the work performed on the project that is paramount.

Although volunteer tourism as a whole is a 'leisured' activity, it entails certain obligations. These are enforced in various ways within the project, including the weekly rota written by the monitoring and PA leaders and the rules and guidelines for work set out by the organisation. Beyond this formal allocation by leaders, the ethic of work fostered within the volunteer community, discussed in Chapter 5 (from p.175), also reinforces this 'will to work': work enacted within the volunteer project is central to the daily lives of volunteers and is considered of a moral importance not dissimilar in influence to that which is present in capitalist societies. In a further echoing of life in the 'real world', a strong degree of routine characterises the everyday lives of these volunteers. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, routine is not in and of itself a negative experience, so long as the *degree*

⁶⁰ And were, as such, able to enjoy intrinsic elements of the work itself, such as being able to demonstrate and mobilise their knowledge in their interactions with the tourists and, indeed, potentially raise some extra funds for the organisation.

of routine experienced is not excessive (Russell 1993 [1930]). For the most part, the volunteer work is varied enough and entails sufficient skill and thought on the part of the participants that work itself can provide the 'zest' of which Russell writes (1993 [1930]), though these characteristics are not found in all shifts – as the previous discussion of the kiosk shifts illustrates. Indeed, even the direct conservation work can be variously tedious, unpleasant, repetitive, or difficult. However, on the whole a surfeit of leisure time between obligations helped to ensure that the 'zest' of volunteers was not compromised, and the work itself was, for the most part, neither persistently strenuous nor time-consuming enough to drain the volunteers' enthusiasm or energy. Furthermore, as I have argued, the '*sensefulness*' of the work meant that, even when it was tedious, unpleasant, repetitive, or difficult, a degree of pride in both the work and the *purpose* of the work served to make the overall experience an enjoyable and rewarding one.

7.2 Contrasts to the labour market: Conservation as non-alienated work

On the project, self-expression, self-development, and autonomy are valued, and these are facilitated in and perpetuated by the formal (conservation and public awareness) and informal (camp building and maintenance) work which volunteers perform there. Findings suggest that the work performed in this environment contrasts dramatically with Marx's traditional concept of labour as something external to the worker, in which 'he (*sic*) does not confirm himself in his work, but denies himself, feels miserable not happy, does not develop free mental and physical energy, but mortifies his flesh and ruins his mind' (Marx 1992 [1844], p.326). The meaningful nature of the work conducted by these individuals and the expression and development of the passions, interests and skills of the often like-minded and committed volunteer community led to a strong sense of self-identity and communality amongst the participants. Volunteers as such *do* affirm themselves, enacting work which they have elected to perform in their leisure time and which corresponds to their personal values and interests. These values and interests are in turn reaffirmed, both in their work and in the social milieu of the project. They perform work which becomes 'attractive', which provides a means of 'self-

realisation', and which is certainly more than 'mere fun, mere amusement' (Marx 1993 [1939], p.611). Marx's view on work expressed in this passage contradicts those of Gorz and Russell – viewing work not as oppositional to leisure, but leisure – in the sense of freedom from *coerced* wage-slavery – as the site in which *free* work can be realised. However, the forms of free-work, such as are found in the volunteer site, are socially and economically determined, as of course are the capacities, needs, facilities and institutions upon which they depend.

Marx critiques the view put forth by Adam Smith that labour is a curse, as a wholly negative characterisation of work. Instead, Marx argues that 'the individual, "in his normal state of health, strength, activity, skill, facility", also needs a normal portion of work, and of the suspension of tranquillity' (ibid) – the individual's 'labour power' must be exercised, though not, necessarily, commodified. This is manifested in this site; as many volunteers explain, they would not enjoy simply 'lying by a pool' or 'sitting on a beach' for a month. Work and the obstacles overcome through work are themselves, for Marx and seemingly also for these volunteers, in a sense liberating. Work in this site allows for the volunteers' 'self-realization'. This, argues Marx, is 'real freedom, whose action is, precisely, labour' (ibid), work is not sacrifice but is emancipation, and is not negative, but is the *negation of a negative*. He writes:

The negation of tranquillity, as mere negation, ascetic sacrifice, creates nothing.... There has to be something besides sacrifice. The sacrifice of tranquillity can also be called the sacrifice of laziness, unfreedom, unhappiness, i.e. negation of a negative state. A. Smith considers labour psychologically, as to the fun or displeasure it holds for the individual. But it is something else, too ... It is a *positive, creative activity* (ibid, p. 613).

As Marx suggests, work is important for human flourishing in ways idle leisure cannot be. 'Real freedom', summarizes Sayers, in critique of Gorz, 'is not the mere antithesis of necessity. It is not attained through a restriction of needs or a limitation of the realm of necessity' (Sayers 1998, p.67). Through performing work which is productive (like the various forms of building and maintenance performed around the camp) volunteers are able to objectify their surroundings but also to see themselves as an object in this world. Moreover, they are able to develop their capacities through this work. Through discussing the more *eco-regulatory* aspect of the volunteers' work this point is further explored.

The volunteers discussed within these pages engage in a form of eco-regulatory work directed towards allowing the *turtles* to achieve their *tele* (Rollin 1998; 2015; Benton 1989). This entails the optimisation of certain conditions for the turtles, including but not limited to: shading nests from light pollution; negotiating with local as well as (in the case of the organisation at large) national and international organisations, regulators and businesses in attempts to prevent further development of the beaches; protecting the nests from predators; informing locals and tourists verbally in the kiosks and slide shows and textually through multi-lingual nest signs; helping injured turtles to dig; aerating the sand over clutches when it becomes impacted by inundations; and relocating nests laid too close to the ocean. A non-antagonistic relationship to nature is manifested in this environment, and, importantly, a non-productivist form of work is enacted. Through this, I argue, the alienation of humankind from 'man's inorganic body' (the rest of nature) is temporarily overcome, and a more nurturing relationship is fostered in which nature is, to an extent, managed and controlled, but never dominated for instrumental purposes in the 'Promethean' sense.

The forms of work enacted in this environment are characterised by increased freedom on the part of the volunteers – who have chosen the work rather than being coerced through economic necessity – and, moreover, the work they perform is 'humanised', and performed manually rather than mechanically. Furthermore, the 'content, motive and understanding' of the work can be clearly reconciled 'with its final objectives' (Bowring 1996, p.108). It is in this reconcilability, in part, that the alienating nature of 'external labour' found in Marx's writing is largely overcome. Volunteers ultimately choose to participate in the project and whilst there perform work which has a quantifiable and observable impact upon that which it is intended to protect. This impact is quantifiable in the sense that longitudinal data attests to the success of nest-protection measures as the number of predations declines, and observable in the sense noted in Chapter 6 (p.202), volunteers are able to watch nests which they protected hatch. The above elements of the work are 'sense-full', they have a tangible impact, are physically demanding and offer opportunities for individuals to flourish which are denied by the accounts of 'sense-less' and tedious

office work recounted in Chapter 4 by those volunteers who had performed these types of jobs (p.135-6).

7.2.1 Non-alienated work and species-being

Marx's concept of alienation suggests that work in capitalist societies alienates individuals from their 'species being'. It tears away from individuals that which connects them to their species-being, their ability to create and modify their own environment *on their own terms*. Instead, they are forced to work for an abstraction – money. Moreover, it separates 'man' from 'man's inorganic body' – nature. However, work is fundamental to human flourishing, because 'one's own pleasure is not a sufficient end or purpose in life. People ... want and need activity which achieves something in the public realm and which contributes usefully to society (Sayers 1998, p.76). However, it is only in communism, according to Marx, that 'the *genuine* resolution of the conflict between man and nature, and between man and man... between existence and being, between objectification and self-affirmation, between freedom and necessity, between individual and species' might be realised (Marx 1992 [1844], p.348)⁶¹. Of course, Marx saw communism as achieving these ends through overcoming the contradictory nature of capitalism, in which the relations of production constrain the productive forces. However, human fulfilment is realised by the volunteers in this study not through the technological advances or unfettered 'production' which Marx saw as resulting from socialism, but is realised in a more sensual way, and in a concurrently more nurturing relationship with the natural environment.

Whilst participating in the conservation side of this project, volunteers were able to relate to nature in a non-objectifying manner – nurturing rather than mastering it, sensually experiencing it (and optimising various conditions for the turtles) rather than transforming it. The conservation work performed, rather than making nature their *object* (as they do, for example in the more productive work such as building shelters on the beach or creating aesthetic items from waste materials), reconciles

⁶¹ Nonetheless, it's important to remember that the 'back to basics' lifestyle found in the camp environs contrasts starkly with Marx's progressive vision of communism.

them with nature and, as such, with the more sensual, nurturing and naturalist elements of their species-being. This is more in line with the more humanist and romantic Marx found in parts of the *Manuscripts* and in the *Grundrisse* than the materialist or modernist Marx found in *Capital*, in which socialism is ‘the embodiment of a qualitatively new, aesthetically and spiritually more fulfilling relation to nature’ (Benton 1992, p.68). To compare the structure of the volunteer camp to communism might be a bit of a leap, and is not one I propose to make here. However, this following passage from *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* is illuminating in terms of understanding the importance of both belonging and of enjoying human relationships as ends rather than means:

When communist *workmen* gather together, their immediate aim is instructions, propaganda, etc. But at the same time they acquire a new need – the need for society – and what appears as a means has become an end... Smoking, eating and drinking, etc., are no longer means of creating links between people. Company, association, conversation, which in turn has society as its goal, is enough for them. The brotherhood of man is not a hollow phrase, it is a reality, and the nobility of man shines forth upon us from their work-worn figures. (Marx 1992 [1844], p.365)

‘Work’ and ‘society’, in this passage, are fundamental to ‘man’ (*sic*). Through work – equitably shared and productive in a worthwhile sense – is fundamental to the workers’ ‘nobility’. This work, as Marx saw it, is communist in nature, and the society, in turn, is for the perpetuation of communist ideals, but subsequent to this, is *for itself*. In the volunteer community, too, the society is *for* the protection of the turtles – what it is *for* is the same as what it *is*, and in it, volunteers are united and they flourish. In contrast, in capitalist work, you will remember from Chapter 1, ‘the *division of labour* is nothing more than the *estranged, alienated* positing of human activity as *real species-activity* or as *activity of man as a species-being*’ (ibid.p369). However, species-being, for Marx, is more than just *having* a species being, but it is experiential and fundamentally sensuous – *being* a species being. Being is imperative to belonging – the volunteers were able in this site to *be* themselves, to be at one with the rest of the society of volunteers (p192-3), and to foster a more direct relationship with nature itself –touching, smelling, hearing and seeing the sea, the sand, the turtles – and, importantly, one another (see p.173-4).

Autonomous activities and ‘work-for-oneself’

To return briefly to the productive work of the volunteers, I now re-visit Gorz’s concepts of ‘work-for-oneself’ and ‘autonomous activities’, introduced in Chapter 1. These forms of ‘work’ are classified as non-commodity activities; they have *use*-value, but not *exchange*-value. The definition of work-for-oneself as ‘the production of that use value of which we are ourselves both the originators and sole beneficiaries’ (Gorz 2011 [1989], p.153) can be mobilised here, with an understanding that ‘we’ refers to the volunteer community as a whole. This type of work contrasts to the conservation and PA shifts performed by volunteers and impacts upon how volunteers become embedded in their environment and integrated into the community. Work-for-oneself in this environment includes daily tasks such as cooking and cleaning, as well as more sporadic tasks such as maintenance and improvements to the campsite and building and taking down the camp at the beginning and end of the season, as discussed in Chapter 5. As Claudia noted (p.166), it is rare for us to engage in so much ‘work for oneself’ in the ‘real world’, where most people live in pre-built homes and as such there is no need for many of us to actively ‘create’ our own environment to the extent that volunteers do here. This is especially true of those arriving in the first weeks of the project when the camp must be set up anew, the beach measured, and the community itself ‘reborn’.

Daily ‘work-for-oneself’ in the volunteer community – such as cleaning communal areas and emptying the dustbins – is enacted through a reasonably equitable distribution. Whilst most of the volunteers performed these tasks with little complaint, and some even did so quite happily in addition to their scheduled shifts, not everyone enjoyed these tasks. Cleaning was a task over which certain volunteers expressed particular irritation. Whilst several volunteers explicitly stated that they did not enjoy cleaning, this was often because of the frustration of having to clean up after *other* people (see Chapter 5, section 5.1.1)⁶². Furthermore, as discussed in

⁶² Though perhaps also because of the unpleasantness of some of the tasks, such as emptying the toilet bin or, for the more squeamish, encountering the writhing compost heap! The latter task, however, seemed less grotesque to the later volunteers, whose stomachs were strengthened by repeated exposure to maggoty excavations.

Chapter 5, this was a shift allocated on the rota – and thus an activity performed to fit the demands of the community at times when it was necessary rather than at the leisure of the designated cleaner. In contrast, the physical maintenance and improvement of the camp environment discussed in Chapters 5 and 6 – including building new furniture and facilities, improving those that were already there, working on the garden and creating aesthetic decorations or home-made games – were tasks which were only ever undertaken willingly and, significantly, voluntarily.

The contrasts between these two forms of work-for-oneself centre, firstly, around their allocation – designated by the rota in the case of cleaning and elected by the volunteer in the case of the maintenance of camp – and secondly around the degree of autonomy afforded to the volunteer. The types of enjoyment which volunteers professed about building and maintaining their own environment as well as cooking food for themselves and other volunteers – tasks performed almost always of their own choosing and enacted as the volunteer wished – were much more consistent than, for example, enjoyment of the cleaning shift. Autonomy was greater in both the motivation to contribute to ‘camp maintenance’ (self-motivated rather than rota-obligated, and as such activities in which only *some* rather than *all* volunteers engaged) but also in the *performance* of the tasks (self-guided rather than directed by rigid norms such as those found in the more formalised conservation, PA or cleaning tasks). As regards the latter point, this self-direction – in which volunteers choose for themselves how, for example, to repair a bench or make a raft – fulfils a liberal maxim which ‘respects the autonomy of the individual’, necessarily including ‘the freedom to make their own mistakes’ (Sayer, 2011, p232). These are freedoms less often realised in the forms of employment found in capitalist societies, in which our daily activities may be dictated by our superiors and heavily supervised, and our very need to be employed dictated by the structures of capitalist societies and the moral status of work itself in these societies.

7.2.2 Work as leisure, leisure as work

The data presented in the previous three chapters, when considered in this context, highlight the various ways in which volunteering makes participants happy and facilitates their ability to flourish both as individuals and as members of the wider

volunteer community. This is, I have argued, a direct consequence of the types of freedom afforded to them in their work, and the greater proportion of leisure time found in this environment. In traditional Marxist terminology, the volunteers were able to experience their *species-being* through the formal and informal work enacted whilst on the project (Marx 1992 [1844]). Work, as such, was central to the enjoyment of many of the volunteers, rather than antithetical to it. In contrast to the presumed opposition between work and leisure that predominates in the traditional literature on tourism (Urry and Larsen 2011; MacCannell 1999 [1976]; Rojek 1993; Cohen and Taylor 1976; Dann 1977; 2002), work and leisure become hybridised here in a site where volunteers choose to spend their leisure time working, and through this work experience enjoyment and pleasure. This point demonstrates the continuing relevance of Gorz and Marx's view of performing work – *free* work – as something which is necessary for the realisation of human potential and solidarity with and membership *in* one's 'species-being' (Marx 1993 [1939]; Gorz 2011 [1989]). To reiterate, the decision to volunteer is free in the sense that it is chosen rather than coerced, and it is non-remunerated. Furthermore it requires, as noted in my exploration of MacIntyre's work in Chapter 1, section 1.5.3, the experience and embedding of the volunteers within these practices, so that the 'goods' of this kind of work – which originate within the practice and are constitutive *of* the practice – might be identified and enjoyed by volunteers (MacIntyre 1985). The observation that the greater the intensity with which volunteers seemed to work, and in most cases the longer they stayed, the more they got out of the project, bears testament to this point (see Chapter 6, section 6.1.1).

In this volunteer community, then, work takes on a different character to that found in the 'real world', and there are further implications to this point regarding the relationship of volunteer tourism to tourism more generally. Tourism was presented in the earlier chapters of this thesis as a means through which individuals seek temporary 'escapes' from the constraints placed upon them by the structures of employment in capitalist societies. However, as noted above, the assumed polarisation of work and leisure discussed in Chapter 2 and found in the work of Urry (1990; Urry and Larsen 2011), MacCannell (1999 [1976]), Cohen and Taylor (1976) and Dann (1977), amongst others, is problematic in this context and in need

of modification in several respects. In the first place, and as discussed above, work is a central element both of the experience of volunteering and, for many volunteers, of the *enjoyment* of volunteering. This is reconcilable with Urry's suggestion that tourism entails novelty because, as I have argued here, the forms of work are themselves somewhat novel. This is not, however, an experience *opposed* to work.

In Chapter 2, I posed the question of whether we need leisure to make *work* palatable, or whether it is the very tedium of work which gives us such 'zest' for play. It seems here that when work and leisure are combined in the specific ways found in this environment that both work *and* leisure become distinctly satisfying. Zest is found for work, because the work is enjoyable, seen as worthwhile, and is rewarding. Moreover, the zest the volunteers have for leisure is evident in the energy and joy with which they proceed about their leisure time – not just relaxing to 'recover' for more work, but creating aesthetic or practical items, swimming, visiting local sites of interest, or playing volleyball. Furthermore, the project is not opposed to work in the sense that, of the volunteers, around half were studying the natural sciences and saw this instance of volunteer tourism as a means to enhance their CVs and thus improve their career prospects, as illustrated in the table in Appendix 6 and discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.1.3. In this instance we find a further contradiction to both the assumed dichotomy between work and leisure and the assumed alignment of volunteering with tourism; volunteer tourism is regarded by these individuals as a part of a broader project of employability – providing participants variously with skills, 'networks' or experience which they hope will give them a head-start in the competitive labour market. What can volunteers' accounts of their motivations (RQ2b) tell us about the contemporary relationship of work and leisure (RQ3)?

7.3 Volunteer tourism and employability

As discussed in Chapter 4, in all cases, participants' accounts of their motivations for volunteering were multiple rather than singular, and included hedonism, the stated desire to help to conserve the natural environment and/or an endangered species, and instrumentalism oriented towards the personal benefits of volunteering, such as

career development or self-improvement. This echoes the findings of previous studies (Cloke *et al*, 2007; Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003; Clary 1996; Bruyere and Rappe 2007; Wearing 2001 and 2004; Campbell and Smith, 2005 and 2006; Snee, 2014; and Broad and Jenkins 2008). As earlier studies of volunteering have found, the disparate ways in which participants accounted for their decision to volunteer in this study were almost invariably influenced by numerous factors relating to education, upbringing and personal interests (Wearing, 2000). However, it is the more traditionally instrumental reasons volunteers offered, framed in relation to their educational and career ambitions, which are important for this point, alongside the implications of the assumed career benefits accrued from volunteering as regards social class inequalities.

Volunteering is inextricable from the labour market for many of these volunteers, inasmuch as it entails consideration of one's own future labour market success, rather than the withdrawal from work which traditional tourism is normally assumed to entail. The more direct benefits such as networking and relevant experience were prominent in 'arrival' interviews, whilst benefits pertaining to personal development emerged more explicitly in the 'departure' interviews. Evidence for what Brown *et al* (2003) call 'soft skills', which I discussed in Chapter 2, was found in these interviews, with many volunteers saying that they felt more confident having learnt so much about themselves as well as turtles and conservation. Importantly, they also suggested that they felt empowered by being able to teach these skills to others (see Chapter 6, section 6.2.2). However, these 'skills' were not presented in the instrumental manner which some of the literature discussed in Chapter 2 seemed to predict. The prominence of discourses of 'growth' inherent in Ehrenreich's (1990) work introduced in Chapters 1 and 2 thus seems to be diminished in this environment; whilst these discourses are certainly prominent upon arrival, the manner in which the participants talked about the sorts of personal development resulting from their experiences was not framed within discourses of employability on departure. This suggests that volunteers are less cognisant of the subtler ways in which volunteering might contribute to their employability than they are of the more concrete benefit of 'CV enhancement', as suggested by Simpson (2005). Furthermore, the lack of references to employability or 'networking' in the

later interviews, when considered in comparison to their arrival interviews, raises questions about the hegemony and the durability of these discourses. In contrast, the celebration of 'doing something worthwhile' or having given something back in both arrival and departure interviews suggests that perhaps these more self-transcendent discourses are more durable. This is commensurate with Fevre's demoralisation thesis, which suggests that economic rationality (as manifested in apparently instrumental accounts of motivations for volunteering), whilst dominant, cannot provide substantive guides to action, but instead only ersatz moralities (2000).

Volunteers seemed to greatly appreciate the personal value of learning about themselves and developing certain personal characteristics (as suggested by the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and empirically illustrated in Chapter 6, section 6.2). This appreciation however does not translate for many volunteers into the exchange-value of this development for employability, but seems instead to be limited to the personal use-value of these changes rather than the commercial benefits of self-development. This is particularly interesting in the light of the suggestion by Lyons et al. (2012) that, whilst ostensibly a form of resistance to neo-liberal ideologies of self-serving individualism, the co-option of the volunteer sector as a means of enhancing employability actually *reinforces* these ideologies. Whilst there is strong evidence for instrumental accounts of *motivations* for volunteering which certainly supports this view, the emphasis on the self-transcendent motivations for and benefits of volunteering – such as doing something good or worthwhile – and the emphasis on personal benefits which are *not* framed in these neo-liberal discourses of growth and competition complicate this.

This complexity raises a methodological issue, not to mention having implications for discussions of morality and sense-making. On a methodological level, it highlights the importance of distinguishing between the accounts of motivations for and benefits of volunteering, and designing research in such a way that these can be effectively distinguished. If volunteers draw on discourses of growth and employability to account for their motivations, but then fail to locate the benefits they accrue from this experience within these same discourses as Chapter 6 suggests, then this indicates that greater attention should be afforded to the manner

in which these accounts are constructed. It also highlights the socially constructed and bounded nature of these discourses. When volunteers are taken out of contexts such as higher education or advanced capitalism more generally, the prominence of ideas such as personal development as something to be utilised in a constant quest for employability swiftly declines, as variously more sensual, hedonistic, self-transcendent and communitarian 'goods' are realised (both in the sense of being 'achieved' or 'enjoyed', and being 'recognised'). On a theoretically informed empirical level, then, this has implications for understanding the ways in which internal goods come to outweigh external goods in this environment, in which sense-making can be seen to be modified. I return to this point in more detail shortly.

The relationship between volunteering and the broader career trajectories of participants found in their accounts of motivations frames this project as something which volunteers hope will directly contribute to their 'employability'. Whilst the mechanisms by which this expectation of employability enhancement might be fulfilled are evident neither in the volunteers' accounts (as my data shows) nor in the academic literature, it is clear in both academic discourses and participants' accounts that such an expectation exists. However, it is also important to remember that opportunities for enhancing employability through volunteer tourism are not evenly distributed. As discussed in Chapter 2 (from p.52) structural and practical barriers exist which prevent those from lower social and economic classes from enjoying the benefits which volunteering is supposed to provide. There is certainly strong evidence for this inequitable distribution of membership within my sample. Over half of the volunteers who were still studying had at least one parent in higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations, while all but four of the other student volunteers had parents working in intermediate occupations (see Appendix 1 for a breakdown of these classes). It is very likely that, if the project was more expensive – as many volunteer opportunities are⁶³ – this social class

⁶³ The sea turtle conservation project studied by Campbell and Smith, for example, cost US\$1,360 for one week, \$1,785 for 2 weeks, and \$2,075 for 3 weeks in 2001, and current opportunities to volunteer for the Sea Turtle Conservancy in Costa Rica start at \$1554 (Campbell and Smith 2001; Sea turtle Conservancy [online] 2014).

discrepancy would be all the more marked. It seems, therefore, that social class inequalities may well be reproduced in volunteer tourism.

7.3.1 Drawing boundaries

The specific type of tourism under discussion warrants some further attention here, so as to address my research questions in which I asked whether volunteer tourism reflects existing class inequalities in society (RQ2c), and how we can understand the contemporary popularity of this type of tourism (RQ2). As well as being different from the lives volunteers live at home, volunteer tourism also differs from other types of tourism. Volunteers' accounts illustrate ways these differences are understood and constructed by these participants. The main contrasts in the data exist between volunteering and more explicitly recuperative types of holidays, 'city' tourism, and 'drunken' tourism. Sayer echoes Bourdieu, in arguing that individuals 'attempt to distinguish themselves from others through moral boundary drawing, claiming virtues for themselves and imputing vices to others' (2005 p.4, see also Bourdieu 1984). The virtues in this case are working for a good cause and adhering to a self-transcendent outlook on life, as opposed to the vices of self-interest and inactivity experienced in 'other' types of tourism (see Chapter 4, section 4.3). This type of 'boundary work' is particularly evident in the volunteers' attempts to distinguish themselves from 'other' types of people and tourists, those who want to 'lie around on a beach' or 'just get drunk'.

A class element is also at play here, with volunteers' accounts functioning to distance these individuals from what Corrine describes as 'the typical British person [...] like the people who go to Zante or whatever'. In the British context, this kind of discourse relates to the classism found in recent TV shows such as the documentary series *Sun, Sex and Suspicious Parents* (BBC3 2011) or the sitcom *Benidorm* (Johnson et al. 2007) as well as the academic literature discussed in Chapter 2, p.50 (Briggs 2013, see also; Karlsdóttir 2013; Urry and Larsen 2011; Macnaghten and Urry 2001; Bourdieu 1984; Prieto-Arranz and Casey 2014). Getting drunk and 'misbehaving' abroad are used by these respondents as distinctive signs of unrefined proclivities amongst the working-class 'mass tourists' from whom they are distinct. An interesting contrast to this dominant middle-class discourse in my data comes from

Chris, who you will remember from Chapter 6 said that his traditional working class friends would not like the ‘middle-class’ participants found on the volunteer project. His working-class youth was apparently ‘mental’, contrasting starkly to the ‘safe’ and well-behaved teenage years of the other respondents. In Chris’s account, efforts are made by the respondent not to identify *with* but to distinguish himself *from* the larger group of middle class volunteers, with whom he gets on well, but from whom he considers himself inherently ‘other’. His account illustrates effectively the manner in which his working-class habitus must be negotiated around his current more ‘middle-class’ status⁶⁴. How the volunteers made sense of their experience in contrast to other tourists, and how they made sense of themselves in relation to other ‘types of people’ was a rich and complex topic, and warrants further scrutiny elsewhere.

7.3.2 Individual responsibility and life-politics

The ‘career environmentalists’ discussed above, who cited relevant work experience or ‘networking’ as factors which had contributed to their decision to volunteer, can be understood as ‘working’ upon their ‘life projects’. This project is not just instrumental – though it is often framed in these terms – but is assumed to require a commitment to realising one’s own *values* (Giddens 1991; 1994; Bauman 2007). By realising these values through leisure practices I argue that volunteer tourism is able to offer a type of enjoyment which is more than just hedonism (see RQ1d). Ethical consumption, as previously discussed, supposedly influences tourists’ choices of destinations and activities (Butcher, 2002; Smith and Butcher, 2010; Wearing, 2000), and evidence for this was identified in my interviews (see Chapter 4, section 4.1.1). Through engaging in volunteer tourism, individuals participate in a form of tourism which seeks to simultaneously avoid harm and ‘do good’. This ‘good’, as my research and earlier literature have shown, is both for the individual volunteers in the form of CV enhancement and personal development, and for the social or environmental cause which the specific project is intended to benefit. In my data

⁶⁴ Alongside this classed difference, Chris stood out in contrast to the majority of the volunteers in terms of his age (44) and gender (male, in a predominantly female group). These factors are likely to further explain his understanding of his own difference, but unfortunately are not issues which can be adequately explored at this juncture.

these discourses of doing good for the 'other' are manifest in the oppositions drawn between volunteer tourists and other types of tourists who may stay in hotels, drink too much, and show a lack of care for the social or environmental impacts of their actions.

Within the empirical findings of this research there are also numerous references to the importance of species conservation, very often presented in terms of personal responsibility. Volunteers spoke in Chapter 4, section 4.1.2, about how they felt obliged to mitigate anthropogenic threats either to particular species or the wider ecosystem, saying things like they should help because they *can*, in other words implying that 'what is' dictated 'what they ought' to do. Others asked who would protect the turtles if they did not, and several referred to conservation as something which was inherently right. In each case, the values of the volunteers are demonstrated, providing examples of life-politics 'in action', with volunteer tourists seeking to effect positive change through engaging in activities that reflect and reinforce their individual concerns and values. These values and concerns are themselves highly prominent in contemporary discourses of environmentalism and are reinforced within this site. Each of these accounts seemed to privilege the self as the site for societal change or environmental protection, rather than national or international politics being held accountable for these concerns which are clearly *collective* issues.

7.3.3 Tourism and authenticity

Also of importance here is the topic of authenticity. In Chapter 2, I introduced MacCannell's seminal analysis of tourism, in which he argues that tourism primarily entails a quest for authentic experiences of 'the other' (1999 [1976]). This is usually understood in terms of the interactions between tourists and the local people visited. I therefore asked what types of authenticity might be being sought in a site such as this in which interactions between the volunteers and the 'host' population were minimal. The mediation between 'hosts' and 'guests' found in MacCannell's use of Goffman's 'front' and 'backstage' concepts is of limited relevance here: volunteers have few interactions with the local Greek population in part because the camp is several kilometres from the nearest village. Few participants (3%) said they were

seeking 'cultural experiences' from volunteering (see Appendix 5), the volunteers are not, on the whole, seeking 'back-stage' encounters driven by a desire to experience the 'real' Greek culture.

This does not, however, contradict the idea that volunteers seek authentic, 'real' experiences which may be denied to them if they were merely 'lying by a pool' or 'sitting on the beach' for a week. Their belief in their ability to make a difference and to see what their work could achieve (discussed in Chapter 6, section 6.4), their enjoyment of the basic human interactions experienced whilst volunteering (section 5.1.1), and their sense of privilege at seeing the nesting turtles and their hatchlings (Chapter 5 section 5.1.7 and Chapter 6, section 6.4) bear testament to this. These are experiences which contrast with the superficiality and detachment from nature experienced in the 'real world'. MacCannell's use of Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor in the tourist encounter can be more usefully mobilised here. The volunteers live in a relatively enclosed environment, working and socialising within this environment with the same people, who are also, importantly, the same 'type' of people – as implied by the volunteers' celebration of being with like-minded people who care about the same kinds of issues (see Chapter 4, section 4.3.2 and Chapter 6, section 6.1)⁶⁵. The ability of volunteers to maintain any kind of 'front' is compromised here, and this is illustrated by the way in which many volunteers speak of feeling able to 'be' themselves or to develop themselves in this milieu, discussed in Chapter 6, section 6.2.3. In part, this may also be a consequence of the limitations on volunteers' privacy whilst on the project, as discussed on p. 160, as well as the intensity of the interactions between volunteers in this environment.

The various discussions of volunteers feeling either able to 'be themselves', or to undergo some degree of personal development also support the critiques of MacCannell offered by Wang (2000) and Cohen (1984). These authors suggest that tourists seek 'self-actualization' (Cohen 1984), 'authentic selves' or 'inter-subjective authenticity' (Wang 2000) more prominently than experiences of 'the authentic

⁶⁵ As you may remember, volunteers come and go throughout the season. However, these arrivals and departures are dispersed in such a way throughout the season that it is very rare for any one departure or arrival to impact significantly upon the group dynamic. The dynamic does, understandably, shift more gradually as the season progresses; new arrivals accompanied by the departure of established members combined also with the shifting patterns and fluctuating intensity of the work ensures this.

other'. In my data, a strong discourse of self-development runs through volunteers' accounts of the project, in which they suggest that living with like-minded individuals, with whom they shared space, skills and ideas, helped them develop themselves as individuals. Rather than primarily seeking difference, as implied by Urry's concept of the gaze and MacCannell's suggestion that through touristic experiences we seek authentic experiences of exotic others, these volunteers sought similarity and solidarity (Urry 1990; MacCannell 1999 [1976]). The forms of strong social solidarity which emerge here again offer a significant contrast to the weakening or fragmenting of these bonds found outside, over which sociologists as far back as Durkheim have expressed concern (Melucci 1996; Offe 1996; Durkheim 1997 [1893]). Where economic relations fill this void in capitalist societies, linking individuals to the collective through both dependency upon and responsibility to others, non-economic bonds based on values, interests and conviviality flourish within the volunteer community.

The suggestion by Redfoot (1984) that tourists seek interactions with other tourists as much as with hosts, then, finds support here. This is evidenced in volunteers' reports of the forms of community developed within the project as well as the prominence volunteers saying that they wanted 'to meet new people' (33%). Many volunteers came to the project with either a friend (32%) or partner (16%), but due to the structuring of teams on conservation and PA shifts these friendships rarely stood out as factors which shaped the volunteers' experiences as fundamentally different to those of volunteers who came alone, at least in terms of the argument presented so far concerning the particular forms of work and communality found here⁶⁶. In part the social pleasures afforded by participation in this project were a consequence of associating with people with similar ideals and interest, as opposed to 'exotic others'. It also, however, offers support for the assertion that 'tourism is an immensely popular way for ordinary people to escape from the everyday, manufacture meaning in their lives, and pursue a more intense reality elsewhere' (Lindholm 2008, p.47), discussed in Chapter 2. The volunteers find an intense and

⁶⁶ On a micro-sociological level, however, there may be differences which would be fascinating to explore. However, these are beyond the scope of this research, which is more concerned with the relational analysis of the project and volunteers' accounts and sociological theories about the 'real world' than with the interactions unique to individual participants.

authentic 'community', united by the bonds of hard work, common interests and shared virtues. They relate with one another without the mediation of currency or computer screens, and interact more directly with nature, both in physical terms with the exotic turtles and in a sensuous manner - breathing fresh air, running around in the sunshine, swimming in the sea and digging (endlessly, it sometimes seems) in the sand.

7.3.4 'Seeing' or 'doing'? Interacting with nature

The subjects of the volunteer tourists 'gazes' are not always 'rendered passive and submissive' by this gaze, like the landscapes discussed by Urry and Larsen (2011, p.110). Instead, interaction rather than pure observation characterises the relationship between the volunteers and this environment, with volunteers not just looking at the sea, but swimming in it; not just enjoying the moonlight, but using it as a means to navigate the beaches and see emerging turtles; and not just watching the turtles (although as Chapter 5, section 5.1.7 shows this was an important element), but also smelling, touching, tagging and measuring them. This highlights the persistent importance of the visual found in Urry's analysis of tourism (2002, Urry and Larsen 2011), but alongside rather than in contrast to the other variously sensual and interactional experiences of touristic enjoyment. As you will remember from my earlier discussion of species being, Marx argues that the supersession of 'being' by 'having' compromises the 'integral being' of the individual, the distinctly human ways in which we relate to the world: 'seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, contemplating, sensing, wanting, acting, loving' (Marx 1992 [1844], p.351). These senses are each variously exercised by the volunteers in this site. Indeed, the various references to being able to *be* themselves found in Chapter 6 also bears upon this point – volunteers are able to *be* themselves – through both *being* a member of their species and *having* a species-being.

Nature in this experience, as discussed earlier in this chapter, is something which volunteers seek to preserve, and something which they attempt to aid in 'flourishing'. As MacCannell notes, and as discussed in Chapter 2, this is a distinctively modern way of understanding nature, whereby solidarity is created amongst individuals by a desire to protect rather than conquer or 'survive' nature

(1976, p.80, see also Urry 1995). Moreover, in the volunteers' enjoyment of living a simplified life discussed in Chapter 5, section 5.1.2, at least temporarily, we see evidence for MacCannell's suggestion that the tourists believe in the inherent authenticity of a more natural way of life. He states that 'modern man (*sic*) has been condemned to look elsewhere, everywhere, for his authenticity, to see if he can catch a glimpse of it in the simplicity, poverty, chastity or purity of others' (1976, p.41). It is in this simplicity – 'the pristine, the primitive, the natural, that which is as yet untouched by modernity' (Cohen 1988, p.374) – that a more authentic way of life may be glimpsed. In this environment, however, volunteers do not 'glimpse' simplicity or nature, they 'live' it: it is their own austerity which helps them to find their own 'nature', as well as through interacting with 'the nature' around them. As this chapter has already noted and my data illustrates, beyond these sensory elements of volunteers' enjoyment, another prominent component of the enjoyment found in the project is the emerging recognition by volunteers of what is needed (and not needed) for human flourishing (see RQ1b and subsidiary questions). This realisation is facilitated by the types of work performed by the volunteers, which formed the cornerstone of this discussion, and are revisited now in relation to Stebbins' concept of serious leisure.

7.3.5 Work versus leisure: Volunteering as serious leisure

So far, the contemporary relationship between work and leisure (RQ3) has been explored primarily in terms of the comparisons between the types of work performed by volunteer tourists and those found in the 'real world' (RQ3a), the relationship between volunteer tourism and the labour market (RQ3b), and the forms of non-alienated work which exist in this environment. This discussion has allowed me to address my research questions concerning the contemporary relationship between work and human flourishing (RQ3b.i), drawing upon the idea of non-alienated work rooted in a Marxist perspective and the relationship between work and leisure discussed in the preceding pages (RQ2b). The forms of authenticity available to volunteer tourist were also discussed RQ2b.i). At this juncture, I now seek to unite these ideas through mobilising Stebbins' concept of 'serious leisure' (2007), illustrating how this concept is supported through the data discussed thus

far. This in turn brings us closer to understanding the contemporary relationship between work and leisure manifested in this case study.

As you will remember from Chapter 2, Stebbins suggests that in contrast to 'casual tourism', in 'serious leisure' pursuits individuals' interests and values are reflected and that furthermore these interests are furthered and nourished through pursuing these activities. However, what about *volunteer* tourism, and the fact that it is an experience which is temporally bounded? It was asked whether this was still 'substantial' enough to generate the 'deep personal fulfilment' which Stebbins proposes can be found in serious leisure pursuits (RQ1d.i). The fact that even one-off volunteers find the types of satisfaction discussed in the previous chapters suggests that perhaps temporal bounding is not necessarily detrimental to the forms of satisfaction available through project-based as opposed to 'serious' leisure pursuits. For one-off volunteers, volunteering is perhaps better understood within Stebbins' conceptualisation of 'project based leisure', which 'is not, as serious leisure is, intended to be an enduring activity lasting well into a person's future', and 'unlike serious leisure, fails to become a central life interest' (Stebbins 2007, p.75). I would suggest that for most volunteers, at the outset, engagement in sea turtle conservation is a form of project-based leisure: 'a short-term, reasonably complicated, one-off or occasional, though infrequent, creative undertaking carried out in free time' (2003, p.7), and it is only a small minority for whom it becomes a form of serious leisure. For this minority, those few 'habitual' volunteers, including Lucy, Jenny, Eric, Victoria, Bob, Alex, Josh and Dave, volunteering becomes a central feature of their lives around which their leisure and sometimes even paid employment may be structured. Here we can find evidence for cases in which 'the individual finds [in project-based leisure] hidden talents and aptitudes fanned by a strong desire to develop these in a supportive social milieu that respects them' (Stebbins 2007, p.75-76). For these volunteers this form of leisure becomes more 'serious' and enduring than it does for 'one-off' volunteers.

The link between choosing to volunteer and one's career aspirations, as well as the development of skills and knowledge facilitated by volunteering, have also been discussed in the preceding pages. This point is paramount to understanding what this research can tell us about the contemporary relationship between work and

leisure. Volunteers in this site seek forms of leisure inextricable from broader personal narratives of employability, reproducing neo-liberal discourses of individualism, growth and employability in their accounts of why they had chosen to volunteer, which were discussed at various points in Chapters 1 and 2. However, the emergence of alternative practices and values found within a small scale, ephemeral community of volunteers, and the aforementioned feelings of fulfilment, satisfaction and enjoyment that these provide, are demonstrative of the 'unique ethos' which develops here. For those who find this, and consider themselves able to shape their lives in such a way that volunteering *can* be habitual rather than sporadic, volunteering ceases to be a one-off activity but a leisure *career*. Volunteer tourism is then, a potential site in which the distinction between 'serious' and 'project-based' leisure become complicated. Stebbins notes that the transition between both casual leisure and project-based leisure and what he refers to as serious leisure is an area which requires further empirical and theoretical exploration, and this research highlights this need (Stebbins 2007). I argue that, despite the short-lived and for many the one-off nature of this experience, volunteers are able in this site to experience *eudaimonia*. This enjoyment is rooted not simply in pleasure: it requires forms of satisfaction and fulfilment described in Stebbins' concept of serious leisure which transcend hedonism.

7.4 Volunteer tourism and alternative hedonism

A further form of satisfaction which volunteers find here can be understood in light of contemporary debates about the deleterious consequences of commodity consumption discussed in Chapter 1. In the context of the environmental volunteer project examined herein, a site exists in which commodity consumption is drastically reduced: one encounters minimal material possessions; a lack of concern for appearances; and an almost constant unmediated human engagement amongst the volunteers, as illustrated throughout Chapters 4-6. That is, the 'symbolic' role of commodities we supposedly find in contemporary capitalist societies was reduced if not entirely eradicated in this milieu. Data discussed in Chapter 5 described this as a kind of 'out from reality' experience in which participants felt able to 'be themselves'. Periods between conservation shifts were spent neither purchasing nor

using commodities, instead this leisure time was spent swimming, socialising or engaging in various craft and/or practical projects – relating with other people and with nature in direct and non-mechanised ways. Forms of hedonism alternative to those based around commodity consumption are thus perpetuated and celebrated in this environment.

In this respect, Kate Soper's concept of alternative hedonism finds some empirical support here. As discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.4.3, this is a counter-consumerist form of hedonism, through which the lauding of rampant and unchallenged consumption is disputed. As should be clear at this juncture, there are clear corollaries between the kinds of concerns which inform the consumer choices of Soper's alternative hedonists, and those of the volunteer tourists discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.3. For example, both groups wish to do something different (alternative), and to engage in practices which they can feel good about, or, at the very least, do not feel guilty about. There are certain types of pleasures which volunteers enjoy: such as being dirty; being outside; working hard and as a member of a team; making things out of 'beach crap'; and relating to one another on a level which is unmediated by technologies like the internet or telecommunications. These are alternative, in the sense that they differ from how almost all of the volunteers live and interact in the 'real world', and they are pleasurable, as evidenced by my repeated observations and interviews.

RQ1b asks whether this site provides an environment in which certain needs are better fulfilled than in the 'real world', and if so, how? Soper's concept of alternative hedonism requires a reconsideration of the concepts of needs and goods which diverts attention away from commodity consumption and economic growth. However, are the alternative goods accessed through volunteering which I have discussed above *sought* by these volunteers, and thus constitutive of a form of alternative hedonism, or are they instead *found*? I suggest that there is some ambiguity in the extent to which volunteering can be understood as a form of 'alternative hedonism'. In many cases, it seems, the discovery of specific forms of enjoyment and satisfaction discussed previously are a consequence of volunteering,

rather than a motivation for it⁶⁷. The volunteer community under study comprises members from a diverse range of backgrounds, some of whom have volunteered at this project before, some for other ARCHELON projects, and some for other causes, as well as many who have never volunteered before and indeed may never do so again. For returning volunteers, the pleasures that may be enjoyed in this environment are more likely to be sought, whereas for 'first-timers', the extent to which disengagement with paid work and material consumption – albeit briefly – is only discovered to be inherently pleasurable as a consequence of engagement. In this respect, as with Stebbins' concept of serious leisure, it is perhaps only returning volunteers who might be accurately referred to as alternative hedonists. This specific type of hedonism is, I suggest, all the more satisfying because of its shared characteristics with serious leisure, in which pleasure and productivity are united and self-expression and autonomy exercised.

If pleasures, of the types that Soper describes and which volunteers enjoy in this project – including disengagement from the inequitable social or environmental forces entailed in commodity consumption and production, increased sensual engagement with one's surroundings, etc. – are a consequence of volunteering rather than discourses which emerge in volunteers' accounts of their motivations, then can volunteer tourism be understood as hedonism *per se*? Furthermore, whilst Soper's alternative hedonists might be seeking to assuage individual guilt by withdrawing from these inequitable relations, and doing so *intentionally* – as an apparent motivation for their actions – alternative hedonism surely entails more than the alleviation of guilt⁶⁸. Of course, it is in this precise element which the *hedonist* element is found: alternative hedonists seek pleasure through avoiding guilt-inducing practices *and instead* pursuing other practices which are, necessarily, enjoyable. The seemingly expanding 'politicisation' of contemporary consumption practices found in 'ethical' forms of consumption noted in Chapters 1 and 2 is of further relevance here. In this site, through engaging with activities which are

⁶⁷ This could be, as I have argued elsewhere, because motivations are a poor indicator of what actually matters to the volunteers, providing instead socially accepted reasons (Smith 1981) or post-hoc justifications for action (Swidler 1986).

⁶⁸ Indeed, if a lack of guilt is as close to feeling pleasure as contemporary subjects might get, then this would itself be a very bleak conclusion.

worthwhile *and* enjoyable, which correspond to personal moral concerns *and* contribute to the alleviation of environmental issues, in which the self can be developed *alongside* the experience of being a part of a community in which solidarity is high, I argue that forms of pleasure beyond simple hedonistic gratification or the assuagement of guilt may be found. This point also implicates debates which emerged throughout the earlier chapters of this thesis over the inadequacy of either commodity consumption or employment as ways of providing us with meaningful social relations and means of self-expression. In this analysis, it seems, seeking pleasure in this alternative, reflexive and somewhat *politicised* manner provides greater access to these forms of sociality and expression than work is able to.

The pleasures found in this site are short-lived and isolated life events: for many volunteers, this is a one-off experience (around 20% of the sample comprised returning volunteers, and only about 20% returned in the following season). This offers some evidence for Bauman and Wang's suggestion that contemporary individuals are preoccupied with novelty seeking (Wang 2002; Bauman 2007). Furthermore, it adds another dimension to Urry and Larsen's assertion that the enjoyment of tourism is founded on the ways in which these experiences contrast to the everyday (2011). Tourist experiences must also differ from previous tourist experiences, because 'contemporary tourists are often *collectors* of gazes and appear less interested in repeat visits to the same sites' (ibid p.226, original italics). However, whether isolated or habitual, through volunteer tourism one finds an environment in which economic forms of work and consumption are decentralised, and in which forms of satisfaction such as 'love, friendships, solidarity with others, mutuality, security, autonomy and so on' are fostered (Lodziak 2000, p.117), and nature is nurtured and celebrated. One consequence of the decentralisation of economic activities and the dominance of non-economic forms of satisfaction to which I have already alluded is that new forms of sense-making emerge in the volunteer community and alternative visions of the 'good life' also materialise. However, to adequately address the notion of the 'good life' in relation to my research question concerning the emergence of new forms of sense-making (RQ1c), some further discussion of the relationship of this project to wider contexts found in

the volunteer tourism and tourism literatures is first required. Only then can an adequate assessment be made of how 'the good life' is re-envisioned and of how new forms of sense-making emerge on this project.

7.5 Contrasts to the 'real world'

Tourism, Urry suggests, involves the experience of elements which differ from those found at home (Urry 1992). Brits then may seek warmer, sunnier destinations as a reprieve from frequent rain and an unpredictable climate. Those with less money wish to experience luxury, whereas those with greater economic resources seek to 'slum it' (Gottlieb 1982, Lindholm 2008). As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.6.2, daily routines are adapted, inverted, or simply absent. Pedestrian and perhaps stereotypical as these examples may be, the point is that tourism requires a noticeable *contrast* to one's normal life (Urry 1992; MacCannell 1976). Volunteer tourism, I have argued, is no exception. The elements which volunteers enjoyed so much – sensual and physical engagement with their surroundings, increased contact with nature, breathing fresh air uncompromised by pollution and stress, engaging in a strong community and performing 'sense-full' and enjoyable forms of work – are all experiences which may be in relatively short supply in the predominantly urban lives of the volunteers in the 'real world'.

While volunteering on the project, as the preceding chapters have illustrated, these scarcities seem to become abundances. As well as the ways in which experiences of the volunteer tourists in this study are 'other' in the absence of economic relations qua remunerated labour and commodity consumption, a sensual and physical engagement with nature is experienced and celebrated in volunteers' accounts. This experience is communal in the sense of being experienced with other volunteers – either directly experienced with other team members, or experienced separately but by all volunteers throughout the season – whilst simultaneously being isolated from the 'hordes' of mass tourism. Volunteers experience living 'outdoors', sleeping in tents rather than flats or houses, eating and cooking in the open air, and socialising on the beach, in the sea, and at the kitchen table, which is, again, outside (although sheltered). These are important elements in which alternatives to the experiences of

the largely urban group of volunteers in their respective 'real worlds' are found, and again, these distinctions are explicated in volunteers' accounts, specifically in their 'departure' interviews.

Support is found here for Urry and Larsen's assertion that it is through contrasts to the 'norm' that the enjoyment of touristic experiences is to be located (2011). Time is plentiful, both idle *and* productive. Sociality is persistent and convivial, rather than sporadic and/or competitive. Various forms of physical contact with nature are common: volunteers swim and sunbathe frequently; they work with natural resources such as bamboo; and they interact directly and indirectly with an endangered species. As illustrated throughout Chapter 5, they also come into contact with nature in more sensual ways, such as witnessing the sun and moon rise and set, seeing shooting stars lighting up the night sky, smelling the unique scents of rotten un-hatched eggs, or local herbs growing in the sand dunes, hearing the incessant chirping of the cicadas, and breathing fresh, largely unpolluted air.

7.6 *Sense-making, morality and eudaimonia*

This chapter concludes by addressing the forms of sense-making employed by volunteers (see RQ1c), and considering how this relates to the manner in which this form of volunteer tourism allows participants to flourish (RQ1b and subsidiary questions) and experience *eudaimonia* (RQ1d). The idea of 'sense-making' is relevant to the discussion of morality prefigured in my literature review and has been implicated in various ways in the discussion of my data thus far. Volunteers talk about sense-making explicitly in several different respects. Some refer to their jobs as not making sense, some to saving the planet or the turtles as making sense, and others yet still talk of doing this specific project at this specific time as making sense. However, sense-making can also be discussed at a more abstract level as referring not to usage of the terms 'make sense', 'sense-full' or 'sinnvol', but looking instead at the specific *types* of sense-making that are used in volunteers' accounts of their motivations for volunteering as well as their experiences within the volunteer community. I begin this discussion by exploring the transformation of sense-making which occurs when volunteers withdraw from the economic forms of interaction

which characterise so many of our relationships in the ‘real world’, before moving on to explore the implications of this for contemporary moralities.

In my earlier discussion of the instrumental accounts of motivations provided by volunteers, I suggested that these accounts of motivations may not match the benefits which they accrue from participating on this project. Often the forms of sense-making employed when volunteers discuss their experiences of volunteering are not economically reasoned, but are instead sentimental (Fevre 2000), unconscious (Bourdieu 1984) or ‘gut’ responses. Does this show a more substantive form of deontological ‘morality’ than the consequentialist ‘doing something because it makes you feel good’ implied by the volunteers accounts in Chapter 4, p.126, or the instrumental accounts of motivations of volunteers seemingly preoccupied with personal growth and employability discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.1.3? MacIntyre’s concept of internal and external goods is mobilised below to address this question.

The work performed by the volunteers is considered valuable in and of itself, rather than being valued for what it can do for the actor or those around him or her – such as the largely economic ‘ends’ of employment⁶⁹. The work which volunteers perform during their participation can be variously hard, smelly or tedious, and it is perhaps inevitable that at times morning surveys or kiosk duties are something to be endured rather than enjoyed. Nonetheless, it was very rare for these shifts to be performed without due care and attention, even if enthusiasm sometimes waned. The valuation of ‘hands-on work’ within the project came from shared views amongst the volunteers about what is important; including environmental protection generally and sea turtle conservation specifically, but also, I argue, from a human *need* to engage in productive and useful activities identified by Marx. The views of the volunteers are affirmed and reinforced by both the practices and the discourses which emerged within the volunteer project discussed throughout Chapters 5 and 6. It is in this respect that I refer to work in this scenario as a ‘virtue’. The idea of work as a ‘virtue’ in the project is related to various themes developed in

⁶⁹ Which are themselves, in fact, simply means to further ends such as providing for the family, paying taxes or generally contributing to the economy

my data analysis: 'working together'; 'seeing the fruits of your labour'; 'being amongst like-minded people'; and 'oppositions between meaningful work and senseless employment', as well as the more theoretically driven interest in the intrinsic values of human work (Marx 1992 [1844]; Rose 1988).

In MacIntyre's terms, the virtues identified above are the 'goods' which exist within the practice of sea turtle conservation. The practice of the sea turtle conservation project defines the virtues that exist therein, with practice understood in the way in which MacIntyre defines it (see Chapter 1, p.42). The goods internal to sea turtle conservation are, necessarily tautologically, the successful conservation of the sea turtle population, and they become 'goods' through the volunteers learning to perform them to the best of their abilities and with their subsequent application of both care and skills. These 'goods' and the virtues necessary for their realisation 'can only be identified and recognised by the experience of participating in the practice in question' (MacIntyre 1985, p.189). The virtue of work is a 'good' internal to the community. Failure to perform designated shifts conscientiously can impact either upon the turtles (an unprotected nest may be predated, or the hatchlings may become disorientated upon hatching and fail to reach the sea) or upon fellow volunteers (who may have to work harder).

In contrast to the external goods sought through employment – primarily money, but also power and/or status – these goods are internal to the practice and sought as their own ends. The practical achievement of these 'goods' can be measured in various ways; such as the number of nests laid compared to other seasons (indicating the longitudinal success or failure of a project) and the proportion of successfully found and protected nests within a season (indicating the efficacy of the volunteers *within* this season in the act of finding and protecting nests). Furthermore, the exercise and evolution of these goods work to the ongoing benefit of the project, rather than to the personal benefit of individual volunteers. On an individual and embodied level the realisation of these goods can be ascertained by the level of commitment and the interest in the work performed by any given volunteer.

Interest in turtles, and in conservation, the skills acquired there, and the requisite commitment and work ethic are virtues internal to the practice of sea turtle conservation, without them the achievement of the goods of successful sea turtle conservation cannot be realised. These are virtues which cannot be 'cheated' at without compromising the goods of the practice. For example, pretending to be skilled at correctly identifying nesting versus non-nesting attempts compromises both the actual conservation of an unidentified nest as well as the longitudinal success of the project. The goods available through this practice which might be understood as external are certainly not absent from this environment, as Chapter 4, section 4.1.3, illustrated and my discussion of volunteers' accounts of instrumental motivations demonstrated. However, the argument which has been developing throughout the preceding pages is that it is the *internal* goods which are celebrated by the volunteers are goods which participants are able to experience and appreciate only through their engagement in this 'practice'. These goods include learning to be a member of the community, as well as conservation skills such as acquiring proficiency in nest identification and turtle tagging and practical skills such as building or plumbing. These skills are found in a practice initially engaged in by many volunteers as part of a vaguely defined route to the external good of 'employability', but they are ultimately enjoyed as *internal* goods, valued as ends rather than means. Though external goods are sought, and thus prominent in accounts of *motivations*, it is the internal goods found there which provide satisfaction, allowing the volunteers to flourish.

When volunteers reach the project, they do so from environments in which *external* goods dominate. Especially I suggest, because most of the volunteers have either recently finished school or are engaged in higher education, and are as such, as Chapters 1 and 2 of this thesis indicated, at a life-stage in which employability is discursively emphasised. Thus, when asked within a few days of arrival why they are doing the project, the rhetorical reproduction of these neo-liberal discourses such as employability is to be expected, as these are justifications which are socially produced and acceptable, as well as being highly 'rational'. However, as Chapter 6 demonstrates, after a month or so of living in this community, various *internal* goods become much more prominent. Thus benefits – such as the forms of self-

development accruing from life in this environment, engaging in the various forms of work discussed so far, and becoming part of the community of volunteers – are valued for their own merits, rather than for any material advantages they might in turn bring to volunteers. Personal development seems, here, to be celebrated as an end in itself, rather than as a means to employment. Furthermore, the *longer* volunteers participated, the greater their appreciation of these goods seemed to be. The pride volunteers expressed in being able to learn and teach the skills of conservation which they have learnt to others is testament to this accumulation of proficiency in the virtues of conservation illustrated throughout the empirical chapters, but especially in Chapter 6, and furthermore contributes to volunteers' sense of integration into the volunteer community. The sense of purpose or *telos* which structures the daily activities of the volunteers, then, contributes directly to the manner in which volunteers are able to flourish within this environment, working towards a worthwhile end – the conservation of an endangered species – and doing so by performing non-alienated, variable and 'hands-on' forms of work.

Whilst accounts of motivations are largely framed by volunteers in consequentialist terms, this consequentialism seems to have more to do with the reproduction of dominant discourses than serving as evidence that these forms of motivation are necessarily more important than deontological ones. Furthermore, whilst around half of the volunteers were explicitly instrumental (consequentialist) in their motivations, a third of all volunteers simultaneously displayed deontological motives. They wanted to do that which they saw as *right*. Whilst it may be unsurprising that people act upon *both* consequentialist *and* deontological concerns, the important point here is that activities which are pursued, or perhaps in this case *enjoyed*, for their own ends offer greater potential for *eudaimonia* than those pursued as means to other ends. Thus, the 'internal goods' which volunteers experience – such as performing hands-on conservation work, developing a community together, having done something useful and having developed as people through living in this alternative way temporarily – are recognised and celebrated, whilst the potential importance of these developments for further ends such as their 'personal growth' or employability come to be disregarded. This empirical case provides evidence for the kind of site which MacIntyre hypothesises but does not

identify in *After Virtue*, in which, supporting Fevre's argument, new forms of sense-making emerge to allow for the development of these virtues (2000). If we return to Fevre's idea of sense-making here, we can understand the volunteers' accounts in relation to the decline of sentiment-based types of sense-making in capitalist societies which is, at least partially and temporarily, overcome here.

As discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.5, Fevre suggests that too often the type of sense-making employed in a given situation is erroneously selected. Common sense, Fevre argues, is currently the most prolific form of sense-making and economic rationality is a prominent example of this type of sense-making (2000). For Fevre, morality as it is manifested in contemporary Western society has become a sham – based on what can be known or sensed rather than on any form of belief. The version of the 'good life' found in contemporary western society – preoccupied with material accumulation and calculable ends – is the logical conclusion of this form of sense-making in which religion (non-human belief) and sentiment (human belief) have limited roles, and the calculable, knowable and sensory dominate in the form of science (non-human knowledge) and common sense (human knowledge). This dominance is hardly surprising in a society characterised by economic relationships and interactions. Our interactions in the 'real world' are not only very often economic in nature, and they also often occur with virtual or total strangers.

In contrast, the day to day interactions of the volunteers are very different. Volunteers do not spend 3 hours digging for a single clutch of eggs because the mother turtle might remunerate them for their efforts. They do not pay a driver to get them to the beach in the morning, and, in all likelihood, every individual they interact with that day they will know, often quite well (or, if they're a 'new' volunteer, they will do soon). Of course, items are purchased by volunteers, and participation in the project comes at an economic cost. However, financial interactions are relatively infrequent here. Given this degree of separation from the economic interactions of daily life in advanced capitalism, and the strength of community or 'belongingness' experienced by the participants discussed in Chapter 6, there are important consequences for the types of sense-making which volunteers' employ. On arrival, as discussed in Chapter 4 and above, volunteers are much more likely to display instrumental and economical forms of rationality in

their accounts: they say that they volunteer *because* it's good for their careers. This represents, echoing Fevre's analysis, reference to a specific form of common sense (or human knowledge): economic rationality. This form of rationality, however, can only get a person so far according to Fevre (2000) and MacIntyre (1985). From Fevre's perspective this is because economic reason is frequently applied in the wrong place – there are areas in our lives where we *should* rely on sentiment and belief to make decisions. For MacIntyre, the limitations lie in the types of goods which can be acquired through an action. In this sense, economically informed decisions are invariably those which are tailored towards what he refers to as 'external' goods such as money, status and power. External goods, however, tend to be means – such as power or money – that are not sought for what they are but for what they can provide, and cannot, as such, facilitate individual flourishing or *eudaimonia*.

Volunteers' accounts of their motivations were commonly founded on economically rational bases. Motivations, however, are *accounts* of the impetus and the rationality for an action. These accounts are informed by dominant discourses, or in Fevre's terminology, by dominant forms of sense-making, and as such are limited. Ultimately, they tell us more about these discourses and the resources which volunteers have available to them for explaining their choices and actions than about any substantive characteristics of the population under study (Smith 1981). Participants, however, did not draw solely on economically rational or common sense discourses to explain why they volunteered. They also drew upon environmental discourses, of both a scientific and, to a lesser extent, a kind of religious rationality. These accounts entail 'religious' forms of sense-making, in the sense in which Fevre uses the term, because they are informed by 'non-human belief', through which volunteers talk about the importance of the turtles as a sort of 'flagship' species of symbolic importance to the environmental movement and as integral to the workings of this planet as a whole (see Chapter 4, p.145). In the scientific respect, volunteers talked about the importance of turtles and biodiversity more generally for the ecosystem, as discussed in Chapter 4, section 4.1.2.

Within these findings, self-transcendent acts are often reported to make the volunteer 'feel' better, implying that 'sentimental' reason, based on non-human

belief, is also at work here (see Chapter 4, section 4.1.1). Interestingly, in these accounts, 'feeling better' is frequently abstracted from the individual, so rather than saying 'I feel better/well', volunteers instead said things like '*you* feel better/well'. Saying 'you' feel better generalises the sentimental response to 'doing good things' from the individual to people in general, suggesting a belief that this is how *anyone* may feel. Furthermore, the use of 'you' rather than 'I' works to consciously or otherwise distance the interlocutor from accusations of claiming higher moral ground. Again, this could be seen to demonstrate a new form of sense-making emerging in volunteers' accounts. Within this form of sense-making, an act of belief is required to identify that there are certain conditions which are required for humans to flourish. These conditions include the ability to impact upon one's environment, to engage in acts which one believes to be inherently 'good', and to live in a site of conviviality in which autonomy can be exercised, free from the constraints of employment or commodity consumption.

While participating, then, what volunteers find is an environment in which *sentiment* – or human belief – is increasingly important. Volunteers learn in an environment where sentiment based reason is not only permitted but is a prerequisite for the smooth running of the project. Belief in the commonality of human needs is fostered and nurtured here, in an environment where volunteers work communally towards certain goals around which this practice is structured (sea turtle conservation and associated accurate data collection). There are then various forms of rationality at work here, and those based upon *belief* in a common humanity flourish in this site, to the detriment of those based on what can be *known* or measured, such as 'knowledge' of one's future employability. This supports Fevre's suggestion that the environmental movement could be a site in which new combinations of sense-making might emerge (2000).

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the research questions developed in relation to the theoretical frameworks introduced in Chapters 1 and 2. Based on the above discussion, work and leisure do not seem to exist as oppositional categories in this

environment, but rather are hybridised. Consequently, work and leisure merge on this volunteer project: participants not only seek forms of leisure in which work must be performed, and that *contribute* to their own perceived employability – implicating *future* work – but, while there, they find enjoyment and satisfaction in the formal conservation work and informal maintenance and camp-improvement work. These forms of work furthermore allow for their own personal development and that of a community around which this work is structured. This work is, on the whole, enjoyed, and it is performed with care based not upon a desire to ‘outperform’ colleagues or to benefit oneself, but because the work itself is recognised as valuable and important. In doing so, it differs significantly from the alienated forms of labour found in much employment. Volunteers are doing something that *makes sense* to them, contributing to their environment and experiencing their ‘species being’.

The contrasts between volunteer tourism and other types of tourism were also discussed in this chapter, and it is clear that these categories have much in common. Following Urry and Larsen (2011), I have suggested that, as with other types of tourism, it is through the contrasts between this experience and those found in the ‘real world’ that we can identify what is different and subsequently pleasurable for the volunteer tourists. Volunteer tourists seek the exotic, enjoying those elements which contrast most significantly with life in the ‘real world’. These ‘differences’ are not restricted to different sites, literally gazed upon, nor to other sensual experiences, whether tasted, touched, heard or smelled. In this community of volunteer tourists, new ideas, practices and values emerge, facilitated by the ‘otherness’ of the site. Fundamentally, in this site new ‘goods’ can be explored. The ‘goods’ or virtues emerging here, however, extend beyond the temporally bound individual experience of volunteering, and do so year after year, leaving a legacy both on the land, the turtles, future *helonades*, and upon the volunteers themselves. This experience can, for some volunteers, be understood as a form of ‘serious leisure’ (Stebbins, 2007), an activity which, to borrow from Marx, is not performed for ‘mere fun, mere amusement’. Instead, in this activity, one must *persevere*, using skills and expertise learnt within this environment, and further, it is one in which a career might one day be found. Again, in this conceptualisation of volunteer tourism

the opposition between work and leisure is dissolved. Most of the participants *enjoy* lying on the beach, swimming in the sea, and enjoying the company of the other 'tourists', and they take no shame in either experiencing or enjoying these activities. However, it is through experiencing these types of pleasure alongside those found in the work enacted in this site that the specific and fulfilling form of work-as-leisure is able to emerge. The premise that tourism is characterised by the escape from work discussed in the first half of Chapter 2 is therefore problematic here, due to the various ways in which the experience of volunteer tourism is inextricable from discourses of work and employment as well as from the practices of work. Furthermore, the purely hedonistic elements of tourism are less evident here. Whilst volunteer tourists seek and find fun, they also express a desire to 'do good' alongside the wish to contribute to their 'selves', increasing their employability through enhancing their CVs. Self-transcendent accounts of motivations, instrumentalism and hedonism are thus combined in a manner we would be unlikely to find in other forms of tourism. Indeed, the participants' accounts of the ways in which they consider themselves 'different' to other tourists attest to this.

In this respect, volunteers are engaging in a form of alternative hedonism, though as I argued above certain caveats are required in order to modify Soper's concept, recognising that the pleasures of living in a community, engaging in hands-on work, and being outdoors for example, are for many volunteers pleasures found rather than sought. Nonetheless, the fact that volunteers wish to mitigate anthropogenic threats to the sea turtles is fully commensurable with Soper's concept, as she argues that the more purely hedonistic pursuits are often coloured by the implicit knowledge of their 'troubled' nature (1990; 2007; 2009). Similarly to ethical consumption, alternative hedonists like these volunteer tourists are seeking to avoid the detrimental personal impacts which result from being responsible for certain 'troubles'. Self-transcendent accounts of motivations – framed as seeking to do some good for others – thus become inextricable from self-interest here, not in the sense that self-transcendent actions make one feel good, *per se*, but because they can prevent the guilt involved in knowing that one's actions are harmful. Although the difference is subtle, it is important to highlight this additional element of the discussion of altruism and self-interest found in Chapter 2.

The overarching theme emerging throughout Chapters 5 and 6 was that the contrasts between the volunteer community and life in contemporary western societies serve to construct an ephemeral world for individual respondents which is in some senses *other* to that found in the 'real world'. Within this world, new combinations of sense-making emerge which lead to the development of the aforementioned virtues, including meaningful and non-remunerated work: communities based on conviviality and mutual interests, rather than economic relationships and the accident of geography, and a commitment to environmental conservation. The economic (common sense) forms of sense-making dominant in the volunteers' accounts of their motivations decline as communitarian and fundamentally *sentiment* based forms of sense-making are developed in the practices engaged in by the volunteers, as they develop a grounded belief in what is required for human beings to flourish. In the final chapter, future directions for this research are explored and further discussions of both the implications and the potential pitfalls of this project are offered.

8 Conclusion

This research has sought to offer a theoretically and ethnographically rigorous analysis of this instance of the phenomenon of volunteer tourism, asking how this experience impacts upon the volunteers and, on a broader level, what this might tell us about the contemporary popularity of this kind of tourism and the relationship between work and leisure manifested here. Chapter 5 and 6 offered an empirical understanding of how the environment studied provides participants with opportunities to flourish, both individually and socially. This empirical research was discussed in the previous chapter in relation to broader theoretical debates about the nature of contemporary society, introduced in Chapters 1 and 2, to try to understand *why* volunteering is able to provide specific types of enjoyment and fulfilment, and how the site provides both parallels with and contrasts to what some of the volunteers refer to as the 'real world'. These contrasts exist in an ephemeral community which is simultaneously *other* to the 'real world', and yet also constituted by and in relation to it. In this ephemeral 'other' place new ideas, practices and values emerge in dialogue with the volunteers' experiences of contemporary life. Alternatives to the economically dominant ways of living and making sense found in the 'real world' are temporarily experienced here, throwing into relief the manner in which economic rationality, whilst suited to environments where work and consumption dominate, declines in value in these alternative spaces.

Underpinning these arguments is a concern with what might be best understood as the 'good life'. The 'goods' of western capitalist societies – economic growth, competition and accumulation – seem weakly aligned with a *telos* of flourishing, happiness and well-being. The fact that every year a group of volunteers find felicity for a short period by disengaging from alienated forms of labour and consumption-oriented leisure is, of course, not sufficient evidence to argue that seeking an austere life, unfettered by paid employment or consumption, provides solutions to the various ills of capitalism. In these final pages, then, I discuss what this research *can* tell us, firstly by briefly summarising my arguments thus far, and later by relating these ideas to an alternative version of the 'good life' inspired by Kate Soper's work,

as well as an Aristotelian concern for *balance*, which is fundamental to achieving this. I also identify some issues which this research has been unable to address sufficiently, and consider some possible avenues in which these gaps might be addressed through future research.

8.1 Volunteer tourism in relation to the 'real world'

With the aim of establishing what contrasts exist between the volunteer project and the world beyond this, as well as between the volunteer project and other forms of work and leisure, this thesis commenced with a review of some sociological perspectives on contemporary western societies. Characteristics which fundamentally differ from those found in the volunteer tourist community were explored to develop specific research questions pertaining to volunteer tourism, flourishing, and happiness. In Chapter 1, various socially, environmentally and individually problematic elements were identified in advanced western capitalist societies, elements which, it was argued, may act to constrain individual flourishing through failing to allow for the realisation of individual capabilities or the exercise of autonomy. These include the centrality of paid work and large-scale commodity consumption, alongside a dependence upon economic forms of rationality, both to measure our individual successes or failings and to inform decisions made in our lives.

In Chapter 2 the idea that tourism provided various forms of escape from the inauthenticity (MacCannell 1999 [1976]; Rojek 1993), the anomic forces (Dann 1977), and the repetitive and constrained nature of employment in everyday contemporary capitalist society (Wang 2000; 2002) was explored. Volunteer tourism was suggested as a site in which these escapes are manifested in a very specific way, and this review subsequently explored this variety of tourism in more depth. Demographic trends within volunteer tourism were reviewed, and the literature on volunteer motivations was critically examined. It was argued in this chapter that the subjectivities of volunteers cannot be adequately understood without examining the broader societal influences on the volunteers themselves (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003) combined with qualitative research into the personal accounts and narratives of the volunteers under study (Wearing 2001).

However, research which looks specifically at volunteer tourism within the broader socio-economic context is limited in scope and variety, despite the numerous examples of this kind of approach in tourism studies.

In the empirical Chapters 4-6, a site was discussed in which a group of volunteers have, albeit temporarily, side-stepped some of the more problematic elements of contemporary life. In this site volunteers appear to experience authentic relationships with others and with the natural environment, alongside developing more authentic *self* understandings. Certain virtues and internal goods are allowed to emerge within this small and fairly isolated volunteer community. The importance of these goods is founded upon the contrasts between this environment and what the volunteers call the 'real world'. This literature suggested that the dominant 'goods' in mainstream capitalist societies are unable to fulfil individuals, to allow them to flourish. In these societies we lack a substantive moral code (Fevre 2000; Szerszynski 1996) and the virtues necessary to recognise the 'good life' (MacIntyre 1985). As such, certain elements of life in these societies can be at best unfulfilling, and are very often alienating to individuals (Marx 1993 [1939]; 1992 [1844]; Sennett 1999; Soper 2007; Gorz 1999; 2011 [1989]). Prioritised instead are economic 'goods': 'external goods', in MacIntyre's terminology (1985). In the volunteer project, on the other hands, 'internal goods' such as convivial human relationships, environmental conservation and communitarian attitudes are instead nurtured.

8.2 Transitions between 'serious' and 'project-based' leisure.

Chapter 7 demonstrated the use of 'serious leisure' as a concept for understanding the specific types of fulfilment volunteers find in this site, in which one must exercise effort and perseverance, using and developing 'skills, knowledge, training or experience' (Stebbins 2007). Going to see *Age of Stupid* (Armstrong 2009) or *An Inconvenient Truth* (Guggenheim 2006) may reflect one's environmental interests or values, but no *effort* or *skill* is required. Volunteering for a conservation project, conversely, requires a greater level of commitment and skills. Furthermore, in these

practices ‘communities’ emerge, within which develop ‘a unique ethos’ (Stebbins 2007, p.13). However, Stebbins’ understanding of serious leisure refers to longer-term and more regular forms of leisure than those encountered here. I therefore suggested that it is only for habitually returning volunteers that environmental volunteer tourism can be understood as serious leisure. Whilst I maintain this here, acknowledging that for some of the volunteers this is certainly more recognisable as an instance of ‘project-based leisure’, it seems that the intensity and isolated nature of the community warrants further attention. Can project-based, temporally bound forms of leisure provide the type of satisfaction which Stebbins attributes to serious leisure? This research suggests that it *can*. Through participating in pursuits which are not only worthy but also *challenging*, satisfaction of a specific type can be found. The types of satisfaction discovered here are, I argue, of fundamental importance for understanding the nature of contemporary social life, in terms of the various sources of *dissatisfaction* discussed in Chapter 1.

As the critical theory discussed in Chapter 1 showed, the hours spent in employment in capitalist societies limit the hours in which individuals might pursue personal interests and leisure activities. Time away from work is spent recuperating *for* work, whether in the weekly cycles of week days and weekends, or the longer term cycles of working or term-time and holidays (Wang 2002). However, because of the inextricability of work from this project, for those hoping to secure careers in environmental conservation or research I suggest that, even for volunteers who never volunteer again, this is part of a broader project of personal growth and as such cannot be considered as ‘project-based leisure’ *per se*. However, this form of leisure also fails to quite correspond to Stebbins’ description of serious leisure. It appears, for these career-focussed participants at least, as a stage between the two: too integrated into their career plans to be understood as project-based, but too temporally bounded to be an example of serious leisure. This discussion of serious leisure has implications for our understanding of the relationship between volunteer tourism and the labour market. Whilst this site provides a temporary and highly enjoyable reprieve from various elements of capitalist societies, it is fundamentally inextricable from various neoliberal processes, and the escape it ostensibly provides fulfils the demands of this economic system as much as it subverts them. Below, I

further elaborate upon the theoretical implications of understanding volunteer tourism in this way.

8.3 Self-transcendent instrumentalism

As the data have shown, volunteers often drew on discourses of instrumentalism and economic forms of rationality to account for their decisions to volunteer. However, as I have argued, the importance of the discourses of employability and instrumentalist personal 'growth' decline over the course of volunteers' participation. Volunteer tourism, in this respect, appears as a hybrid form of the usually opposed categories of work and leisure. It is ostensibly motivated by work (or, at least, employability), but whilst volunteering this work takes on a leisured quality. Work is sought by some volunteers beyond their allocated conservation and PA shifts, and through their participation in the project 'work' is the freely chosen use of their leisure time. Soper's concept of alternative hedonism can further aid in theorising this hybridisation. In alternative hedonism, as with volunteer tourism, instrumentalism and self-transcendence (or altruism, Soper's terms) is necessarily inextricable, and this inextricability contributes to the production of the hybrid form of work and leisure found in this volunteer tourism environment.

Alternative hedonism entails a broadly utilitarian approach to happiness, with alternative hedonists doing that which inflicts the least harm and results in the greatest pleasure. However, alternative hedonism is not quite this simple: indeed, it would hardly be a philosophically interesting idea if it were. As MacIntyre argues, 'happiness is not a unitary, simple notion and cannot provide us with a criterion for making our key choices' (1985:63). Some pleasures are incommensurable with one another, and it is this incommensurability of different types of happiness to which MacIntyre attributes the fundamental failings of utilitarianism. If happiness provides our 'guides to action', our *morals*, but certain types of happiness are mutually exclusive, how can the 'appeal to the criteria of pleasure' ever really tell us what to do (1985:64)? There are various forms of happiness, and some are in a sense 'self-interested' or instrumental, concerned with improving our own and our family's lives in some way. Others are more self-transcendent, concerned with alleviating or avoiding contributing to the problems facing other people or the environment. Both

types of pleasure are cornerstones to Soper's alternative hedonism, as individual happiness is denied by the recognition that the source of our own pleasure results in or is the consequence of another's suffering or exploitation – including our impacts upon the environment or other people or groups.

Alternative hedonism, in this context, also provides an interesting tool for understanding attempts to capture volunteer tourists' accounts of their reasons for volunteering, which are simultaneously self-transcendent (aimed at alleviating the social or ecological impact of the hedonist from a consequentialist perspective, or at 'doing something right' from a deontological one) and egoistic or instrumental (aimed at making the individual in question feel better about themselves, enjoying themselves or achieving some personal benefit such as CV enhancement). A deontological approach to Soper's alternative hedonism overcomes the need to ask whether alternative hedonists are actively *seeking* pleasures or instead *finding* them as a consequence of withdrawing from practices which they perceive as socially or environmentally inequitable. Alternative hedonists, like volunteer tourists, are people 'to whom things matter' (Sayer, 2011) and as such in *acting* on these concerns, they are able to find pleasure of a hybrid type in which the 'self' and the 'other' are simultaneously gratified. Volunteer tourism may then not only entail the hybridisation of work and leisure, but may concurrently transcend the assumed distinction between self-transcendent and self-interested – or, more narrowly defined, altruistic and egoistic – behaviours found in the volunteer tourism literature (Coghlan and Fennell; Benson and Siebert, 2009; Grimm and Needham, 2012; and Tomazos and Butler, 2008). In this analysis, both work *and* leisure become more 'meaningful' and are more intertwined than the forms of work or leisure found in the 'real world', where the former provides the means (money) for the latter, and the latter is targeted at recovery from (and for) the former.

8.4 Non-consumptive leisure and narrative unity

As discussed in Chapter 1, Bauman proposes that production (work) is increasingly fragmented and insecure, unable to offer us coherent identities or even consistent means for societal integration, and that consumption, of which leisure is part, increasingly occupies this role (1992). Consumption, however, cannot offer

authentic identities either, as you will remember from my earlier discussion, but can non-consumption based leisure practices like volunteer tourism? In the discussion of serious leisure above, the manner in which work and leisure come to be inextricably linked rather than opposed has been of paramount importance. Furthermore, if we view volunteer tourism as a form of alternative hedonism, we can see how this form of leisure ceases to be simply targeted at relaxation and becomes an active site of resistance, in which personal action is informed by individuals' concerns and values.

Through the type of ethically informed tourism found here, based on a desire to do something right, to mitigate anthropogenic harm, and to give something back, whilst simultaneously (actually or ostensibly) contributing to one's own employability, some coherence is provided to one's life story. These leisure pursuits are neither a break from participants' employment plans, nor from their passions, concerns or interests. Furthermore, the idea of commodity consumption as a form of distinction is undermined in this environment, as commodities are inconspicuous in this site, and how you behave in this environment is of far greater importance and is on much clearer display here. It is through these virtues that the practice is sustained, and the continuing commitments to both conservation and community found in this environment in this sense sustain the practice. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that whilst the symbolic role of *commodity* consumption declines here, this form of tourism is itself afforded a symbolic importance, represented as means of distinction between the ('good') volunteer and the ('bad' or 'mass') tourists.

For many of the volunteers discussed in these pages, the project may very well be a one off experience which will probably provide them with some excellent topics for conversations in the pub, hopefully some pleasant memories, and maybe even a slight head-start in the competitive labour market for paid environmental conservation work. However, in all probability it will be an experience which they never repeat. The failure of many volunteers to return – some of whom said that they would like to, but others who said from the outset that despite their enjoyment of the project, they would rather 'do something different' in subsequent years – suggests that perhaps tourism requires not only difference from the everyday but also from *all* other prior experiences. This kind of isolated series of life events can be

understood as characteristic of post-modernity; reflecting the ‘destructured habitus’ of the middle classes (Urry and Larsen 2011, p.105) in which life is no longer a consistent narrative determined by one’s upbringing, education, marriage and employment but instead a series of fractured and self-determined events (Featherstone 1987; 1991; Ehrenreich 1990; Bauman 2005).

It is in part to this fragmentation that MacIntyre attributes the lack of ‘virtue’ in contemporary societies (1985). Whilst individual lives and behaviours are ‘informed by some image of the future and an image of the future which always presents itself in the form of a *telos*’, these goals can be varied and disconnected from one another in a way which can become incoherent (1985, p.215). There is, of course, unpredictability in our life paths, but there must also be some narrative unity through which our *telos* may be intelligible. When our life story becomes too fragmented, the virtues targeted towards the *telos* of living the good life cease to be identifiable. When volunteer tourism is considered in isolation from the broader socio-economic context or from the individual narratives of the volunteer tourists it is easy to consider the phenomenon in the manner found in the above paragraph: as one in a fragmented series of life events. However, when studied in this more contextualised manner, it seems likely that volunteer tourism is consistent with the narrative unity of these volunteers.

8.4.1 Ephemeral experiences and flourishing

Despite unifying the experiences of work or study and leisure for these volunteers, the experience of volunteering is fragmentary in another sense. The personnel of ARCHELON’s projects change every year, and there is discontinuity both within and between seasons as volunteers depart and new ones arrive. Thus the dynamic of the group is a consequently shifting and ephemeral phenomenon. Furthermore it is an experience that, for many of the volunteers discussed in this thesis, may well have very limited impact on their lives beyond the volunteer encounter itself. For these reasons, the community of ARCHELON volunteers has been referred to as ‘ephemeral’ at several points in this thesis. However, this experience can only be understood as ephemeral for those members for whom volunteering is an isolated life event. Several of the volunteers with whom I spoke – including Victoria, Eric,

Jenny and Bob – are what might be best understood as habitual travellers and/or habitual volunteers. For these volunteers, environments such as this in which they may flourish are repeatedly sought, and what for others might be regarded as the ‘normal’ working week is instead the ‘limbo’ in which they dwell between bouts of travel or volunteerism. These volunteers, all of whom are older than the volunteer average of 23, may well in time be joined in this perspective by other ‘habitual’ travellers and/or volunteers who may yet emerge from within this sample.

The practices and values discussed in this research develop and are nurtured within a particular type of community that is replicated and repeated year after year. The volunteer experience, whilst an ephemeral one for many of its incumbents, it is not ephemeral in the sense that every year it reoccurs. Every year, a group comprising both new and returning volunteers arrive at this site to protect the turtles. Through the actions of these volunteers, the camp is built, the turtles are observed, counted and protected, the stars are gazed upon in awe, the beach Olympics are planned (and almost never enacted), the beaches are cleaned, and relationships – enduring or short-lived; sexual or platonic – developed. These practices entail experiences which are notable for variously collective or romantic reasons, experiences which variously celebrate solitariness or conviviality. Beach Olympics, leaving parties, and the daily ritual of dinner-time require the *joie de vivre* and effervescence which can only be experienced communally. Lying behind a representative of an endangered and exotic species while she lays her eggs, however, holds greater potential for a sense of privilege the more the solitude of the event, enjoyed with usually only one or two other volunteers. The practices and values, which exist in this site, are, year after year, reborn, recreated, and re-enacted. They facilitate the ever-changing group of volunteers’ experience of a more fundamentally *sensual* engagement with the self-as-species and self-in-nature. It is in part to illustrate this continuity between seasons that this analysis has avoided a more traditionally ethnographic or micro orientation to the phenomenon.

8.4.2 Non-productive labour

I have argued above that some degree of narrative unity is regarded as necessary to realise the human *telos* of flourishing. Moreover, though, it seems that in this site the

telos of the turtles is also recognised, providing an ultimate goal for the volunteer project. As Rollin defines it, animal *telos* refers to 'the set of needs and interests which are genetically based and environmentally expressed, and which collectively constitute and define the "form of life" or way of living exhibited by that animal, and whose fulfilment or thwarting matter to the animal' (Rollin 1998, p.162). For turtles, in general, this includes the ability to swim safely in unpolluted waters, which is thwarted by human waste which is often consumed by the turtles, mistaking, for example, plastic bags for jellyfish, and by danger from speed-boats and dynamite fishing. Volunteers attempt to address these problems through beach cleans and public awareness activities. More gender and age specific *tele* of the turtles include the need to lay nests, undisturbed and unimpeded by fire, noise, deckchairs or buildings on the beach; to dig egg chambers, unimpeded by flippers lost to speedboat propellers; to hatch the nest and travel to the sea, oriented by the reflected moonlight rather than artificial lights. Again, ARCHELON as an organisation as well as individual volunteers are able to help the turtles achieve these 'goals' through engaging in and supporting attempts to protect stretches of the beach from development and through local public awareness efforts. Egg chamber digging can be aided, with rare but occasional success, and nests can be shaded or 'boxed' to help the baby turtles reach the sea. Volunteers are able, to frame this in the context of Ted Benton's re-reading of Marxism introduced in Chapter 1, to perform *eco-regulatory* rather than *productive* labour – facilitating and improving rather than transforming the *conditions* of (turtle) reproduction (Benton 1996).

Soper's idea of alternative hedonism discussed in Chapter 1 is premised on the idea that increasing cognisance of the impacts of unfettered growth and consumptive practices is seeping into the common conscience, accompanied by increased popular and political discourses about environmental degradation. We have, it is recognised, to a great extent 'mastered' nature, but at what cost? Pollution, increased economic divisions between and within societies, and a repression of our own 'species-being' through increased alienation from 'the rest' of nature. However, as Sayers notes, conflict of some kind is a necessary pre-requisite for change (1998). Indeed, he notes that neither Hegel nor Marx regards even alienation as wholly negative, instead considering it as a necessary pre-requisite for human development (Sayers 1998).

The 'disunion' or disharmony which characterises human/nature relations in industrialism is, perhaps, being reconciled in this 'post-industrial' phase of western capitalism. In this dialectical approach, then, it is only through human alienation from nature that we might recognise its intrinsic worth and its role in human development and self-realization. However, the 'class' who are leading this revolution are not Marx's proletariat, but instead a largely middle class strata of environmentalists.

8.5 The 'goods' of volunteer tourism

As discussed in Chapter 1, flourishing is dependent upon a certain degree of 'mastery' – not just doing something for the sake of doing it or for some other end, but for the very sake of doing the thing well. Attaining virtues, MacIntyre suggests, is a precondition for identifying the 'good life', and these are found in the 'practices' in which we engage (1985). Beyond this, however, it must also be noted that the virtues are not individualised. They are necessarily broader than this, located within traditions, and good not only for individual volunteers, but for the project itself and for the natural environment more generally. When volunteers arrive on the site, claiming to have been motivated to volunteer by a quest for what has been referred to in these pages as 'employability', they are seeking 'external goods': individualised *means* (employability) to further means (getting a job, itself primarily a means to make money). However, through the *experience* of volunteering – of being a part of this practice – these goods may shift. MacIntyre argues that

It is in the course of the quest and only through encountering and coping with... its episodes and incidents that the goal of the quest is finally to be understood. A quest is always an education both as to the character of that which is sought and in self-knowledge (ibid, 219).

Whilst the volunteers come here seeking employability, they leave with an altered set of beliefs about the conditions which humans *need* to be able flourish, beliefs that can only be developed through engagement with a practice like this where those elements which might otherwise constrain flourishing are inverted. Non-commodified goods such as human relationships and personal autonomy are of greater importance to these participants, as the internal goods which develop in and

contribute to this practice come to overshadow the external goods which seemingly motivated the volunteers to participate in the first place.

Moreover, the instrumentalism found in volunteers' accounts of their motivations is, for many, itself aimed at achieving a self-transcendent goal: securing 'worthwhile' or 'meaningful' employment in conservation. These jobs, as the previous paragraph suggested, may offer similar potential for individual satisfaction and flourishing – offering less alienating relationships with, variously, other people, beings or eco-systems, and fostering a similarly shared set of values amongst the volunteers found here. However, these volunteers may never get to experience their dream jobs. Their volunteer-enhanced CVs may not stand out from the numerous other applicants for these jobs and they may, instead, find themselves doing exactly the kinds of jobs some of them say they would never do – the kinds of 'bullshit' jobs which Graeber condemns (Graeber 2013). Furthermore, even though similar ethical virtues may emerge in a host of other environments – including 'meaningful' work environments, long term domestic volunteering, or intentional communities – there are certain elements of this study which make it empirically distinct from these environments. These include the temporary nature of the experience, the specific hybridization of work and leisure (conceptualised as 'work-as-leisure-for-work'), and the intensity and proximity of the volunteers' lives.

8.5.1 Shifting 'goods'

As discussed above, volunteers' accounts of their motivations for volunteering based around their career hopes are informed by economic rationality, and entail the pursuit of 'external goods'. In contrast, accounts which invoke ideas about doing something because it is *right* represent less consequentialist or deontological accounts of action. In either case, however, it must be emphasised once again that it was the development and nurturing of the internal goods of the practice of sea turtle conservation that the volunteers celebrated in their departure interviews and that have informed the majority of the previous discussion. Interest in volunteers' accounts of their motivations suggests that volunteer tourism is discursively intertwined with the needs of the neoliberal capitalist system, and volunteering is presented in these discourses as an economically rational decision. However,

examination of the *benefits* of volunteering suggests that there is potential here for the emergence of forms of sense-making which are not informed by economic rationality, as volunteers find new pleasures which neither result from nor benefit future or current economic status. As a consequence of this observation, and as I have argued previously in relation to the manner in which motivations have been mobilised as a concept in the literature on volunteer tourism, I suggest that the preoccupation with exploring motivations in tourism and volunteer research can only get us so far, and examining lived experiences seems to provide far richer insights into the more sustained values of individuals.

On a methodological level, motivations are too entwined in dominant discourses to tell us much about how people *feel* and what they *want* from life. These accounts are likely to be informed by the manner in which the project was marketed to them, the ways in which extra-curricular activities may or may not have been promoted at participants' schools, and whether their family members or close friends had participated in similar projects. This is, of course, not restricted to the instrumental accounts of volunteers' motivations – environmental concern is itself a dominant contemporary discourse, and provides both the 'unconscious dispositions' (Bourdieu 1984) which inform apparent motivations as well as justifications for individual action (Swidler 1986; Vaisey 2009). As Milton argues, 'environmentalism is cultural ... in that it belongs to people's understanding of the world' (Milton 2002). These understandings are historically and socially contextual and contingent, which is not to reject their basis in any objective reality, but simply to note that, again, reported motivations cannot be taken at 'face value', but should be treated always and only as accounts which reflect societal norms, expectations and values. Similarly, in my discussions of participants' employment experiences, all we have are *accounts* of the 'real world' lives and concerns of volunteers. The extent to which volunteers are simply echoing dominant discourses in their accounts of both their motivations and their lives in the 'real world' cannot be substantiated here, nor in any interview based research. When it comes to life within the camp, on the other hand, we are equipped with accounts *and* observations and interactions through which to understand the volunteers' behaviours, what they got out of volunteering,

and how they understood and accounted for these experiences using non-economic forms of sense-making.

We need, then, in research into this phenomenon to look at what volunteers *find* whilst volunteering, and to do so using ethnographic methods. I argued in the previous chapter that one of the things they find or develop in this environment is a set of beliefs about what humans *need* to flourish. The types of belief about humankind found in this environment are not new, nor are they unique to this site. Elements of this belief are found to highly varied degrees in intentional communities, the heroin addiction found in Guy Ritchie's *Trainspotting*, and the hippy movement of the 1960s. They inform the bohemian and romantic ascetic intellectualism of the 19th Century, and are manifested at music festivals and some protests. These beliefs are based on what humans do and do not need to *flourish*. Not to survive, but to enjoy life, to experience *eudaimonia*.

Having volunteered, I argue that the participants in this study are left with the belief that they *do* need to engage in activities which are meaningful to them, having engaged in forms of labour which are non-alienated, non-remunerated, and non-automated. They discover a human need to experience a form of community, one in which like-minded individuals can work together, exercising autonomy of choice and action, and a strong degree of equality. Finally, they need to be able to develop themselves through these activities, understanding what they do and why, developing their own personal characteristics, knowledge and skills, as suggested in Stebbins' serious leisure thesis (2007), and coming away with a sense of self-respect or even pride about what they have done. Through participating, they come to realise that they don't need iPhones, hot showers or comfortable beds. Furthermore, they are able to experience forms of work which contrast starkly to jobs which are perceived as sense-less and occasionally, as experienced by Clare, Hilda and Pete, detrimental to their self respect due to their treatment by superiors (for both Clare and Pete), the meaninglessness of the work itself (in Clare and Angie's cases) or because of their moral dissatisfaction with the industry employing them (for Hilda).

8.6 Future research into volunteer tourism

Volunteer tourism seems to have a transformative impact upon some volunteers. However, in all probability, as discussed above, for most of these volunteers these beliefs will fade over time. They will go home, finish their degrees, and get a job, a house, a family, and all the associated accoutrements. For this short period, however, they have experienced an alternative, and an alternative which is explicitly celebrated as variously manifesting 'something different' for these participants. In this environment, the volunteers experienced conditions in which they were able to flourish, feeling a part of something bigger than themselves and through doing so, I suggest, developing certain beliefs about the human condition which are rarely available in the 'real world'. As MacIntyre argues, 'to know what the good life for man is may require knowing what are the better and what are the worse ways of living' (1985, p.224). This experience of volunteer tourism offers the opportunity to recognise this.

This is not to suggest, however, that the 'real world' is *necessarily* alienating or unfulfilling, based either on the empirical data discussed in Chapters 4-6 or the theoretical literature reviewed in Chapters 1 and 2. Indeed, Urry's suggestion that what we seek in tourism is constructed as an opposition to what we experience in day-to-day life does not mean that 'touristic travel is compensatory behaviour for a life that is, compared to life on tour, unpleasurable, flat and dull' (MacCannell 2001, p.25). MacCannell proposes that Urry's suggestion that tourists seek the 'out of the ordinary' must mean that the 'ordinary' is necessarily uninteresting. However, lives lived in the 'real world' are diverse, and elements within them are variously ordinary and extraordinary, dull and exciting, pleasurable and miserable. Moreover, these experiences are not fixed but fluid (as Urry emphasizes in an interview with Adrian Franklin (Franklin 2001)). What counts as ordinary and as extraordinary varies culturally, historically, and individually. The contrast which does emerge in this thesis, however, results from the manner in which the volunteers themselves draw symbolic boundaries between the project and the 'real world' in their accounts of their time both on the project and in this 'real world'. These boundaries are variously drawn between the volunteers and other types of tourists, the volunteer

experience and their experiences of paid work (which is presented by volunteers more as an inevitable future or a current drudgery than anything more fundamentally awful), and the volunteers and their own past touristic ventures.

As well as providing something with which to contrast their experiences on the camp, the structural necessities of contemporary life – such as education, employment, and the expectation that one will settle down, have children, and ‘grow up’ – are likely to play a role both in the emergence and popularity of volunteer experiences like this, as well as the degree to which these experiences impact upon volunteers lives. For example, legally dwelling in permanent structures such as houses and flats is a contemporary necessity for any number of administrative purposes such as opening bank accounts, joining the electoral register, accessing health care and so forth. Moreover, these are not undesirable goals, as Bob notes on page 194. Material possessions and money, too, are an inescapable means of integration, as Bauman’s (2007) and Lodziak’s (2000) work suggests and Jenny’s discussion of having to spend money to ‘fit in’ on page 198 attests. Furthermore, the very idea of the ‘real world’ as that which exists beyond the temporary experience of volunteer tourism implies that this environment is in some way *unreal*. The ‘real world’, riddled with inauthenticity (according to MacCannell 1999 [1976]; Rojek 1993; Dann 1977) and various socially, environmentally and individually problematic characteristics (Soper 1990; Gorz 2011 [1989]; Fevre 2000; Szerszynski 1996), is the one which almost all of these volunteers will ultimately rejoin: buying houses and cars, having babies and getting jobs. The temporary break from this world offers a brief flight from the various obligations and expectations found here. Nonetheless, it is simultaneously tamed and sanctioned by its classification as a commodified and temporary ‘experience’: a break from rather than alternative to the ‘real world’. The ‘authenticity’ enjoyed by volunteers on this project is made available as an ‘experience’ for young people to access whilst remaining on their mainstream trajectories. Is perhaps the manner in which volunteer tourism is framed by participants as a discrete ‘experience’ simply representative of how western capitalist ideology can accommodate the phenomenon without being threatened by it? Volunteer tourism is both enabled by and further supports the neo-liberal and individualising nature of capitalism, as this

research has illustrated. The likelihood that the experiences of simplified living might, for example, lead volunteers to 'downsize', or that the enjoyment of non-alienated work may result in volunteers withdrawing from the labour market seem slim. However, these experiences may lead to less dramatic changes in their lifestyles, perhaps impacting upon their leisure choices or increasing their interest in and awareness of environmental issues. In any case, follow-up interviews would be necessary to understand the durability or otherwise of the impacts of volunteer tourism upon participants.

Bringing the 'back-stage' with you

However, as noted in Chapter 3, several volunteers *do* bring aspects of the real world with them – not just in the form of socially produced discourses, values, and 'needs', but also in bringing friends and partners with them. A more thorough engagement with Goffman's work could be usefully employed here to offer a more micro-sociological approach to this issue, and a more grounded interactionist analysis of the relationships on camp could be used to explore the relative differences for volunteers who came alone or in company. For example, this might focus on the manner in which these relationships which have been brought *from* the 'real world' entail a sort of portable 'back-stage', to which those volunteers who come in company are able to 'escape'. However, as noted in this thesis, the manner in which shift teams are structured to incorporate new and experienced volunteers in every team means that volunteers are rarely on the same beach sectors as the friends or partners with whom they arrived. Nor even, in many cases, do these couples or friends necessarily share sleeping patterns, due to the disparate times of work found in the kiosk shifts, morning and night surveys, and cleaning duties. As such, these friendships do not seem to be overly prominent in determining volunteers' experiences – though for couples the story may be different due to tent sharing and the public exposure of relationships which might, in other environments, enjoy greater privacy.

Alternative avenues for flourishing

A further potential avenue for research would be to explore other sites where similar opportunities for flourishing might be found in the contemporary world. It

would be interesting, therefore, to apply this kind of analysis to alternative forms of tourism and more persistent forms of volunteering to explore how important the various elements of the experience are to the manner in which participants are able to flourish in these sites. Might the experiences of long-term 'backpacker' tourism provide escapes from the 'real world' which offer opportunities to experience the simple life found in volunteer tourism? However, what differences would the lack of work and the peripatetic nature of this practice of travelling have upon the types of enjoyment or flourishing found therein? Perhaps longer-term volunteering such as working for a local conservation project on a regular basis might offer further insight into the importance, for example, of non-alienated forms of work for volunteers' experiences. Conversely, to what extent might the same intrinsic work-centred benefits be found in *paid* work, such as in Stebbins' 'devotee occupations'? I suggest that it is the precise *combination* of elements found here which contributes to the narrative unity of the volunteers. These elements comprise a site which is temporary, fluid, largely isolated, barely mechanised, only marginally hierarchical, and with no social-class division between friends, cohabitants and colleagues which characterise relationships in the 'real world', and in which the work performed is non-coerced and non-remunerated. The particular 'goods' which can be found here in the non-alienated forms of work, however, are not unique – certain jobs undoubtedly do allow individuals to flourish. Equally, certain forms of voluntary work seem to be experienced as a chore, unpleasant obligations like those found in many forms of employment and domestic work – dull, tedious, repetitive work such as helping with the database⁷⁰, or unrewarding and frustrating encounters in the kiosk with tourists who do not share your language, or foul, rotten and exhausting excavations of un-hatched nests. Nonetheless, the recognition of the usefulness of given tasks, the worth of the overall cause, the pleasing social milieu, variation between (and within) most shifts, and short duration of both the shifts and, perhaps, the overall experience, serve to overcome these more negative elements. Moreover, these tasks are 'free from the realm of necessity' – insofar as they do not contribute to the subsistence of those who perform them – and are non-remunerated. As such, they are not 'means oriented' in the same way that paid work is. This seems also to

⁷⁰ This was a task, as you will remember from p.157, that no-one was ever asked to do, though several particularly dedicated volunteers assisted the leaders in this task throughout the season.

contribute to the particular forms of satisfaction which some volunteers derive from this environment (see p.127 and 196-7).

Volunteer tourism is not a homogeneous phenomenon: variations between sectors such as health, education or conservation are likely to be significant. Within sectors, too, one might find notable differences between data collected amongst volunteers paying several thousand dollars to work with leatherback turtles in Costa Rica for a week or ten days and from data collected amongst participants at this loggerhead sea turtle conservation project in Greece which cost only a few hundred Euros, and in which volunteers mostly participate for a minimum of one month. However, even in this relatively cheap volunteer tourist experience, a social class bias is evident in recruitment. Therefore, other types of volunteer tourism could also be explored, such as those focussed upon social issues such as health care or education. Is the environmentalist aspect of this experience constitutive of its 'sense-fullness', or would a study of a project targeted towards an anthropocentric concern have similar findings? Comparing these sites might help to explain the extent to which the specific forms of satisfaction found in this site derive primarily from the community, the physical work, the 'sense-fullness' of the pursuit itself, or the temporary nature of the experience, or indeed the unique combination of these elements found here.

CV enhancement and mobilising 'skills'

For many volunteer tourists, the experience contributes to a broader project upon the self, in which one seeks to enhance one's employability by accruing hard or 'soft' skills or by 'networking'. It was noted, however, in Chapter 2, that there is a dearth of research into the processes through which experience actually offers substantive benefits to 'gappers' and volunteers (Simpson 2005). Whilst some of the volunteers interviewed were explicit about the kinds of 'experience' or career benefits which volunteering would provide them, such as Claudia who referred in Chapter 4, page 130-1 to the need for 'Vitamin B' to gain a career in the environmental sector, most were somewhat vague about how volunteering might help them get jobs⁷¹.

⁷¹ This perspective was exemplified by Elle's statement (p.131) in which she explained that volunteering with sea turtles would not help her in her desired career but that volunteering in general was a good thing to have on her CV.

Experience, in the sense of ‘broadening one’s horizons’ as well as the diverse social interactions entailed through travel, was broadly recognised as inherently beneficial but was not well understood by volunteers as a process. Only one volunteer, Josh, referred to the ‘soft skills’ he had acquired whilst volunteering in the context of future work (see Chapter 6, p. 192). Several others, however, did note the benefits of developing both practical and personal skills which resulted from their participation. Further research, however, could be done to understand why employers see volunteerism as beneficial and volunteers as ‘employable’ (if indeed they do), and furthermore how the ‘soft skills’ attainable through volunteer experiences are understood and subsequently mobilised by labour market candidates. Beyond this, the declining importance of ‘external goods’ such as CV enhancement between volunteers’ arrivals and their departures also points to another issue for future consideration: what discourses do the advertising or promotional material of ARCHELON and other volunteer tourism providers refer to so as to recruit volunteers? Exploring this may contribute to an understanding of the reproduction of given discourses in volunteers’ accounts of their motivations.

Barriers to inclusion in volunteer tourism

The unequal distribution of resources – both in terms of economic assets with which to ‘buy’ these experiences and in terms of the availability of information about their apparent importance as a means of CV enhancement – also presents a topic which requires further exploration. Research suggests that state schools might be less likely to encourage pupils to engage in these kinds of extra-curricular activities than fee-paying schools (Bradley and Bathmaker 2013), and also that working-class individuals are less likely to be attracted to abstract ends. Given the poor understanding of *how* volunteer tourism might benefit participants in the labour market, it seems reasonable to suggest that the ‘benefits’ of volunteering, at this point at least, are somewhat abstract and therefore less appealing as well as being less accessible to poorer students. Uptake rates amongst working-class students for the schemes offered by VSO and ICS (mentioned in Chapter 2, p. 75) could therefore also usefully be explored.

Having not, in this research, explicitly explored the types of schools attended by these volunteers, what degree of encouragement or information from schools, universities, or career services foreshadowed their participation, or the types of discourses volunteers encountered in volunteer tourism marketing, I cannot comment much further on the extent to which these influenced their accounts of their motivations. However, as noted throughout, volunteers clearly recognised that volunteering was framed as a ‘good’ thing to do for their own career prospects. Furthermore, although the mechanisms underpinning this are insufficiently explored, it is clear that the volunteers in this research are almost exclusively from middle-class backgrounds. Questions for future research might include asking how employers *and* employees perceive the types of experience which volunteer tourism offers. Furthermore, if volunteer tourist experiences are valued by employers, a greater understanding of why they value these experiences and the kinds of projects which are most able to fulfil these criteria is important to broaden the participant base of volunteer tourism, in the interests of increasing the meritocratic character of the contemporary labour market.

‘Hosts’ and ‘guests’

At the time of this research, Greece is in a dire economic situation, saddled with austerity measures as a condition of the recent economic bail-out from Germany. This topic has been absent from this project, due to the focus upon the environment *within* the volunteer site and the broader context of post-industrial advanced western capitalism. However, both the impacts of this current situation upon the attitudes of local residents towards the conservation effort alongside the more general relationship between ARCHELON’s volunteer program and the ‘host’ Greek culture are topics which warrant further attention. The expansive and critical body of research concerned with the ‘host populations’ of volunteer tourism bears little relevance to my research questions. Nonetheless, in the interests of furthering academic research into volunteering and, much more importantly, the ultimate success of conservation projects such as this one, the vital importance of studying the relationship between local communities and the personnel of conservation projects cannot be understated. Research undertaken in Zakynthos provides precedence for this and offers a highly illuminating account of the relationship

between sea-turtle conservation(ists) and Greek islanders (Theodossopoulos 2004). However, language barriers and the focus of the research questions explored in this project prevented this topic from being addressed here.

8.7 Summary

It has been argued in this thesis that the community of volunteer sea turtle conservationists studied provides a site in which human needs of autonomy, self-worth and enjoyment are met through the experience of non-alienated and worthwhile forms of work. Authentic encounters with the *self*, with a community of like-minded 'others', and with an endangered and exotic species are offered here. These experiences, short-lived as they are at an individual level, significantly provide a glimpse of alternative ways of interacting with others, alternative forms of work, and new forms of sense-making based upon *beliefs* about human needs and capacities for flourishing. Various ways in which volunteers are able to flourish in this site have been identified. The environment is one of conviviality and mutual concern, and one in which the fragmentary character of 'high intensity market settings' is inverted. Rather than working in one place, socialising in another, and enacting the domestic elements of life somewhere else again – and with different people in each of these environments – work, play, leisure and domesticity are enacted within the same community and within a limited geographical domain. Moreover, this is not, for many of the volunteers, simply another fragmented experience in a fundamentally disjointed life-story, as these leisure experiences are coherent with volunteers' personal values and their career plans. These careers may very well diverge from this path, but for now, the experience of volunteering is not simply an escape, but forms part of the narrative unity of the volunteers' lives.

To reiterate Bauman's discussion of *eudaimonia* found in Chapter 1, page 27, 'a happy life ... is a well-balanced life, a life that steers clear of the Scylla of impoverishment and the Charybdis of intemperance, a life of harmony and a life confined to the care of goods worthy of desire and effort' (Bauman 2002, p.123-4). Volunteers in this environment are able to experience *eudaimonia*, treading that fine line between reason and pleasure, in which life is simple enough that 'you don't have all the distractions of technology' (Suzi) and 'you have all you need' (George).

Furthermore, the idea of the ‘worthiness’ of goods is of fundamental import here, and further elucidates the point made in the preceding paragraph. The project is identified as worthwhile, and the turtles are intrinsically worthy of effort – not for what they can do for *us*, but simply for what they are. Furthermore the work performed is perceived as meaningful and worthwhile by volunteers⁷². The *external* goods of instrumentalism which, for many, apparently motivated this instance of voluntarism, whilst never dismissed as *unworthy* nonetheless declined in rhetorical prominence in this environment. Living a simple life, at least temporarily, provided access to forms of flourishing which may be prohibited by the high-consumption and employment-focussed ‘real world’.

In contrast to what Olin Wright (2009) refers to as ‘emancipatory social science’, this thesis has been empirically concerned less with what *constrains* human flourishing (although this topic provided the substance of much of Chapter 1), and more about the concrete conditions which appear to facilitate the experience of flourishing. It has been argued that changes to sense-making practices are necessary to recognise what we, as humans, require to flourish. This is both an ethical and a practical concern, given the global financial crisis alongside burgeoning and increasingly confusing environmentalist discourses which seem so often undermined by economic concerns. In communities, such as the one studied here, values of togetherness, like-mindedness, sharing and mutual respect are nourished and pro-environmental behaviours and attitudes about recycling, respect for nature, and simple living are nurtured. Without follow-up interviews, it is not possible to say whether these values persist after volunteers leave the project, but that they are allowed to flourish and seemingly offer such great rewards to the participants offers some hope for an alternative to the consumer and employment driven elements of advanced, post-industrial capitalism.

In MacCannell’s *The Tourist* we find holiday-makers embarking on a quest for authenticity which will inevitably end in disappointment, and, in Cohen and Taylor’s

⁷² Data supports (and informs) volunteers’ perceptions of the work as ‘worthwhile’, especially as regards the protection of nests performed within ARCHELON’s projects. Data from one of the nesting sites indicates that predation has decreased from 57% before protection began to just 6.7% in 2001 (Rees *et al*, 2002, p.49).

Escape Attempts, similarly unsuccessful endeavours to flee from the anomic and fragmented capitalist enterprise are discussed. However, I don't think that the failure of Cohen and Taylor's escapees is inevitable, because I don't think the benchmark set is necessarily accurate. More useful an endeavour, I suggest, would be the identification and fostering of alternative forms of sense-making: new ways to make sense of the world we live in rather than seeking attempts to sidestep it. Nor can I agree with MacCannell's assertion that the touristic preoccupation with authenticity is inevitably doomed to failure, not only, as I have suggested, because the type of authenticity which he seems to prioritise is itself absent from this scenario. This is, I argue, also because authenticity *can* be found in the 'real world', in communities, friendships and work relations, and, more than this, in the performance of various kinds of work. These structure both the needs and capacities of these volunteers, which are realised here: the values which volunteers attribute to the specific leisured form of work found in this environment and the enjoyment and fulfilment they find in it do not result simply from a contrast to or an inversion of the world outside, but in dialogue with it. As previously emphasized, the values of conservation, environmentalism and eco-centrism more generally, evident in many of these volunteers' accounts, are historically and contextually bounded and contingent. This research provides an example of a *successful* escape, albeit a temporary one, from some of the more negative elements of advanced capitalism such as the experience of 'sense-less' or repetitive work, fragmented lives and the prominence of commodity consumption. However, it doesn't only provide a space where alienation and anomie can be avoided, but also generates and fosters the belief that humans are capable of creating and subsequently flourishing within these environments. Importantly, though, these experiences are not recognised as 'goods' simply because of their absence in the 'real world', but are structured by both 'goods' and 'bads' which exist within advanced capitalist lifestyles, lifestyles which are not, for many of us, either wholly dull, flat or lifeless.

It may seem somewhat obvious to suggest that people are happier when they are doing things that satisfy them physically and mentally, but despite the ostensible banality of this statement, these goods are framed by contemporary politics and press as available primarily through commodified and often commodity-oriented

leisure. Idleness remains negatively framed. Capitalism has provided us with a diverse range of leisure opportunities, but are these celebrated as opportunities to learn (as in Gerrard's 'learning ethic' 2014) and to develop, rather than simply to *be*. Perhaps if we worked fewer hours – as recently proposed by Professor Aston, the incumbent president of the UK faculty of Public Health (Campbell 2014) alongside theorists such as Gorz (1999; 2011 [1989]; 1985) and Hayden (1999) – and the work which we did was more socially useful or personally meaningful, we would have greater 'zest' for life (Sennett 1999; Russell 1993 [1930]): not just for leisure, or just for work, but also for sitting still, watching sunsets alone or with loved ones, doing nothing for the sake of doing nothing, not because there is no energy left after the week of work and the pursuance of more active forms of leisure to do anything else. Perhaps if non-economic activities were afforded the same rhetorical importance by politicians and media as are employment and commodity consumption, and more space were created for non-consumption based forms of leisure, the new combinations of sense-making which develop in this enclave may be allowed take root elsewhere.

Volunteer conservation, however ephemeral, is something in which, it seems, this occurs, allowing participants to have a quantifiable impact on an endangered population, to live in a community of like-minded people, to enjoy the beauty and the cycles of nature – the sun, sea, stars and the moon – and to live the simple life. I suggest that this is an experience which is simultaneously authentic and mutually beneficial, providing more than a simple break from the demands upon individuals exacted by capitalist societies. It creates a place where work contributes to well-being rather than undermining it, and where volunteers emotionally, socially and physically flourish. The existence of sites such as this is a cause for celebration: the site generates feelings of self-worth amongst participants and celebrates personal autonomy and high levels of useful and non-remunerated productivity in a communitarian environment. Moreover, it highlights virtues which are conspicuous in contemporary society through their frequent absence.

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Appendix 1: Collapsed NS-SEC (National Statistics [online])

Eight classes	Five classes	Three classes
1. Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations	1.Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations	1. Higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations
1.1 Large employers and higher managerial and administrative occupations		
1.2 Higher professional occupations		
2. Lower managerial, administrative and professional occupations		
3. Intermediate occupations	2. Intermediate occupations	2. Intermediate occupations
4. Small employers and own account workers	3. Small employers and own account workers	
5. Lower supervisory and technical occupations	4. Lower supervisory and technical occupations	3. Routine and manual occupations
6. Semi-routine occupations	5. Semi-routine and routine occupations	
7. Routine occupations		
8. Never worked and long-term unemployed	*Never worked and long-term unemployed	*Never worked and long-term unemployed

Appendix 2: Covering letter and participant information



Hannah O'Mahoney
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Glamorgan Building
King Edward VII Avenue
Cardiff
CF10 3WT

OMahoneyH@cardiff.ac.uk
07816952017

Dear Volunteer,

My name is Hannah O'Mahoney and I am currently undertaking a PhD at Cardiff University. My research for this piece is concerned with environmentalism; specifically, with those who engage in environmental volunteerism.

I would like to invite your participation in this research project. The following information sheet provides an outline of this research and explains how I will handle your data, and what will be expected of you, as the participant, and me, as the researcher. It is important that you read this sheet carefully before consenting to participation in this research so that you can make a fully informed decision as to whether or not to participate. If you have any questions at all please feel free to ask them of me and I will do my best to answer them.

Yours Sincerely,

Hannah O'Mahoney.

Information for Participants.

Who am I?

I am a PhD student studying at Cardiff University, conducting research with the kind approval of the Scientific committee of ARCHELON. This project is funded by the UK ESRC (Economic and Social Research Council) and undertaken within the School of Social Science at Cardiff University, under the academic supervision of Professor Ralph Fevre (Fevre@cf.ac.uk) and Dr Bella Dicks (DicksB@cf.ac.uk).

What is my rationale for this research?

There is a wealth of literature concerning attitudes, backgrounds and motivations of those who volunteer, but most of it is quantitative, which means that it is based on limited-response questionnaires and often very large-scale survey data. Whilst such research has been useful in assessing trends within the population at large, I hope to examine this issue from a more individualistic perspective. To this end, I wish to conduct in-depth interviews with a selection of volunteers from this site, yourself included.

What is required of you, as a participant?

I would like to interview you twice, once towards the beginning of your stay, and once towards the end. I will arrange a time which suits both of us to conduct these interviews. During the interviews I will ask you a few questions, but my role will be very limited as I am interested in you and your thoughts, and will encourage your elaboration throughout. I will welcome extended responses and accounts, and as such no time limits will apply to our interviews, which can be terminated at any point at your request. If you wish to withdraw your participation this can be done at any point, even after the interviews have been conducted.

What is required of me, as a researcher?

Nothing which you say to me will be discussed outside of the interviews and I will not discuss your refusal or consent to participate in this project with any of the other volunteers.

What will be done with the data?

The data resulting from your interview(s) will be used in my PhD thesis, and potentially other academic publications which result from this. You can expect me to take every practical precaution to protect the data resulting from your interviews. Interviews will be digitally recorded to aid accurate recall, but after our interviews I will transfer the files to my laptop, which is password protected, and the sound recording will be promptly deleted following transcription. The transcripts must be retained by Cardiff University for a period of five years after my research project is complete, but will not be publically available and will not be associated with you by name. As part of my agreement with ARCHELON the transcript data must also be available to them, but this data will be anonymous in adherence to the Data Protection Act, and no data containing identifying characteristics will be either required or recorded.

If you would like a copy of this for your records, please let me know and I will email it to you. My email address is omahoneyh@cardiff.ac.uk.

Appendix 3: Information for participants

**PLEASE LEAVE THIS ON THE FRIDGE
INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS : HANNAH O'MAHONEY: PHD RESEARCH.
omahoneyh@cardiff.ac.uk**

The following information is to explain to all volunteers what I will be doing this summer, and why. If you have any further questions about my project please feel free to ask me in person.

I am doing a PhD with Cardiff University in the School of Social Sciences, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). My supervisors are Professor Ralph Fevre and Dr Bella Dicks. I have been kindly granted permission by ARCHELON to conduct the following research here this summer, although individual participation is entirely voluntary.

**Research Project (working title):
VOLUNTEER CONSERVATIONISTS AND ENVIRONMENTALISM.**

I will be using three methodologies to conduct this research.

1. INTERVIEWS: I will approach many of you this summer asking if you might be willing to be interviewed. These interviews will take place at a time which is convenient to us both. I am a qualitative researcher, which means that I am not seeking simple factual data, but instead am interested in your views and opinions, and will welcome extended and biographical accounts. Further information will be provided to you about these interviews prior to the event, and your written consent will be requested.

2. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION (PO): I will be conducting participant observation throughout my time on the project. The use of this methodology is intended to supplement my interview data, so if I observe something which is theoretically interesting to me I can then use this to adapt my interviews. PO will also provide a means of locating my interview data within a more general narrative about the volunteer community as a whole and what ARCHELON volunteers actually do.

PO entails developing an understanding of a group (in this case the ever-changing community of volunteers) through total immersion and involvement in this culture, and is most frequently associated with the discipline of anthropology, sort of based on the idea that to understand someone it is necessary to walk in their shoes. As such, I am fundamentally a normal volunteer engaging in the same duties as the rest of you, but will sadly spend more time in front of a laptop transcribing interviews or trying to write my methods chapter in between morning surveys and cooking duties rather than lying on the beach or by the pool!

3. SURVEYS⁷³: At the end of the season ARCHELON have kindly agreed to electronically distribute a questionnaire to all volunteers from all the different projects. This will be accompanied with a covering letter to explain its purpose, so I will not go into depth explaining this here, but its main purpose is to offer a more general and quantitative view of who actually volunteers for ARCHELON as a whole, to locate my smaller sample which comprises those of you who are volunteering at Kyparissia.

THANK YOU for taking the time to read this, and again, **PLEASE** feel free to discuss any of this with me at any point!

⁷³ Due to poor response rates to this survey, the data have not been used in this thesis.

Appendix 4: Sample consent form

I.....consent to Hannah O'Mahoney interviewing me, and recording and transcribing this interview for use in her PhD thesis and subsequent academic publications.

I.....understand that my data, once transcribed, will be assigned a pseudonym and identifying characteristics removed to ensure anonymity.

I.....understand that the transcribed data will be retained for a period of at least 5 years.

Signed..... Date.....

Appendix 5: Information about respondents

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Education level	Discipline	Current status	NS-SEC Classification⁷⁴
Adonia	F	20	Undergraduate	Vetinary studies	Studying	3
Alex	M	21	Undergraduate	Economics	Studying	2
Angie	F	23	Undergraduate	Environmental management	Studying	6
Anna	F	21	Undergraduate	Equine studies	Studying	2
Basiliki	F	27	Undergraduate	Graphic design	Employed	3
Becka	F	19	Undergraduate	Philosophy/English lit	Enrolled	5
Beth	F	18	Undergraduate	Dentistry	Enrolled	1
Bob	M	33	Undergraduate	Studio art	Employed	1
Carly	F	22	Undergraduate	Music	Employed	2
Chris	M	41	Undergraduate	Environmental science	Studying	3
Christos	M	20	Undergraduate	Environmental science	Studying	1
Clare	F	25	Apprenticeship	Commercial systems	Employed	6
Claudia	F	23	Undergraduate	Marine science	Studying	6
Corinne	F	20	Undergraduate	Animal science	Studying	4
Dave	M	22	Undergraduate	Chemical engineering	Studying	1
Dianna	F	19	Undergraduate	Biology	Studying	1
Elle	F	20	Undergraduate	Dance	Studying	1
Emmalina	F	25	Masters	Maths and tourism management	Studying	1
Eric	M	31	Undergraduate	Computer engineering	Employed	1
Erin	F	19	Undergraduate	Marine science	Studying	1
Esme	F	21	Masters	Marine science	Studying	1

⁷⁴ Based on own occupation where possible, otherwise based on highest occupational level of respondents' parents.

Estella	F	20	Undergraduate	Biology	Studying	1
Fiona	F	21	Undergraduate	Biology	Studying	1
Gabrielle	F	19	Undergraduate	Biology	Studying	1
George	M	18	Undergraduate	Environmental engineering	Enrolled	1
Harriet	F	19	Undergraduate	Geography	Enrolled	1
Hayley	F	18	Undergraduate	Animal behaviour	Studying	1
Helen	F	23	Undergraduate	Environmental science	Studying	1
Hilda	F	18	Undergraduate	Environmental science	Gap year	1
Irena	F	30	Masters	Visual anthropology	Enrolled	2
Jana	F	18	Undergraduate	Tourism	Enrolled	2
Jenny	F	25	Undergraduate	Arts and education	Employed	2
Jess	F	26	Undergraduate	Marine science	Studying	2
Jodi	F	21	Undergraduate	Zoology and microbiology	Employed	2
Josh	M	20	Undergraduate	Mechanical engineering	Studying	2
Josie	F	21	Undergraduate	Biology	Studying	2
Julie	F	18	Undergraduate	Undecided	Enrolled	2
Katja	F	19	Undergraduate	Nursing	gap year	2
Kiera	F	20	Undergraduate	Biology	Studying	2
Kirsty	F	18	Undergraduate	Economics	Enrolled	2
Lara	F	19	Undergraduate	Medical	Studying	2
Laura	F	24	Masters	Marine science	Studying	2
Lauren	F	24	Masters	Ecology	Enrolled	2
Lena	F	30	Masters	Zoology	Employed	2
Linda	F	23	Undergraduate	Osteopathy	Enrolled	2
Liz	F	26	Masters	Consultancy	Employed	2
Louise	F	24	Undergraduate	Extended science	Enrolled	2
Lucy	F	31	Undergraduate	Vetinary nursing	Employed	2
Luke	M	21	Undergraduate	History	Studying	2
Lynsey	F	20	Undergraduate	Animal science	Studying	2

Maria	F	21	Undergraduate	Architecture	Studying	3
Marta	F	25	Masters	Environmental science	Studying	3
Naomi	F	23	Masters	Chemistry	Studying	3
Nicole	F	22	Masters	Genetics	Studying	3
Olivia	F	19	Undergraduate	Physics	Studying	3
Pete	M	24	Professional training	Mechanics	Employed	3
Pheobe	F	25	Undergraduate	Unknown	Employed	3
Phil	M	27	Masters	Tourism	Studying	3
Pierre	M	19	Undergraduate	Unknown	Studying	3
Raul	M	23	Masters	Marine and environmental science	Studying	4
Rob	M	21	Undergraduate	Film	Employed	4
Sophia	F	21	Undergraduate	Chemical process engineering	Studying	4
Stan	M	44	Masters	Environmental science	Studying	4
Sue	F	21	Undergraduate	Environmental science	Studying	5
Suzi	F	23	Undergraduate	Environmental science	Studying	5
Victoria	F	28	Undergraduate	Vetinary nursing	Studying	5
Zoe	F	19	Undergraduate	Geography	Enrolled	7

Appendix 6: Summary of volunteers' accounts of motivations

Primary category:	Account refers to...	No.*	% of all accounts**	% of respondents***
Experience	1. Career-relevant experience	37	10.5	55.2
	2. Life experience	14	4.0	20.9
	3. Learn about conservation	7	2.0	10.4
	4. Doing something 'different'	23	6.5	34.3
Total		81	22.9	
Nature focussed	1. Being outdoors/close to nature	5	1.4	7.5
	2. Interest in turtles	10	2.8	14.9
	3. Desire to see a turtle	9	2.5	13.4
	4. Love of/passion for animals	6	1.7	9.0
	5. Learning about turtles (Specific)	14	4.0	20.9
	6. Working with animals	9	2.5	13.4
Total		53	15.0	
Hedonism/Touristic	1. Sun, sea and sand	9	2.5	13.4
	2. Fun/enjoyment	13	3.7	19.4
	3. Travel	24	6.8	35.8
	4. Experiencing a new culture	2	0.6	3.0
Total		48	13.6	
Altruism	1. Doing something good/useful	23	6.5	34.3
	2. Mitigating anthropogenic challenges to nature	10	2.8	14.9
	3. Doing something for the environment	9	2.5	13.4
Total		42	11.9	
Pragmatic	1. Timing within life-course	14	4.0	20.9
	2. Low cost of project	15	4.2	22.4
	3. Geographical location	6	1.7	9.0
	4. Good reports of ARCHELON	22	6.2	32.8
Total		42	11.9	
Social	1. Meeting new people	22	6.2	32.8
	2. Meeting people who are like-minded	3	0.8	4.5
	3. Living communally	2	0.6	3.0
Total		27	7.6	
Personal	1. Developing personal characteristics	5	1.4	7.5
	2. Language skills	6	1.7	9.0
	3. Challenging existing mindset/gain perspective	5	1.4	7.5
	4. Learning what you're capable of	4	1.1	6.0
	5. Learning new things (General)	2	0.6	3.0
Total		22	6.2	
Work based	1. Working hard	2	0.6	3.0
	2. Doing something physical	3	0.8	4.5
	3. Hands-on conservation	8	2.3	11.9
Total		13	3.7	
Other	1. Escaping something at home	3	0.8	4.5
	2. Attachment to Greece	8	2.3	11.9
Total		11	3.1	

*refers to the number of volunteers citing this reason for volunteering

**refers to the percentage of times this reason was cited occurred in relation to the total number of all reasons provided by volunteers

***refers to the percentage of volunteers who uttered this account