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1. Introduction

The significance and scope of tourism as part of modern life and society can no longer be denied. International tourism is a significant part of modern society, and the impact of millions of people's tourism-related movement, presence and activities around the globe seems impossible to overestimate in any respect, and neither does the impact of tourism on people's lives, since travelling has now almost become an intrinsic part of life in the parts of the world where circumstances allow it.

Within the field of tourism – in the industry and academia – it seems essential to understand the world of the tourist in order to accommodate increasing demands for specific tourism products and services that satisfy a large variety of wants and needs widened over the years. It is also a well-known contention that the emphasis on experiences as part of consumption and of tourism consumption in particular has increased in contemporary society. In the tourism industry, the aim is to gain competitive advantages in a market that is more rapidly changing than ever, and thus tourism businesses continuously crave new insight and perspectives on changes among tourists, as consumers of tourism, in order to stay alive as a business. In academia, the aim seems to comply with these insights, although academia also includes an additional element of a more fundamental dimension of generating knowledge of why people become tourists, why they make the choices that they do while being tourists, and what tourism means to them in their lives.

These aims are anything but simple, and it is reasonable to assume that they are not obtained through simple observation, reasoning or description, wherefore complexity is inevitable. Several commentators observe that today's tourists seem to live in and thus behave according to a much more complex reality than at the rise of mass tourism (Gabriel & Lang, 2006; Singh, 2004; Rosenkrands, 2004). This is not to say that tourism consumption has not always been somewhat complex, but consumption patterns and the availability of products seem increasingly complex and thus also complicate the world in which these consumers of tourism live. This entails that the purpose of tourism is no longer as evident and obvious as previously assumed, e.g. travelling for relaxation,

recreation, education etc., but has shifted into a much more elevated status, which has caused further complexity, making generalisations across the tourism market more difficult as well. To give an example of this new status, Gabriel & Lang argue that in relation to consumption in general "*consumption is not just a means of fulfilling needs but permeates our social relations, identities, perceptions and images*" (2006:1), which indicates the significance and complexity of consumption to the individual, since assumedly meaningful elements of human life are affected by consumption.

The connection between the changed reality of tourists and behavioural changes in terms of consumption is illustrated by the following comment from a report by a German consulting company, representing the business perspective mentioned above, on contemporary consumer choices:

> "Today, the consumer's world is subject to rapid change and temporary fashions. Because of demographic, structural and mental changes, formerly homogenous target groups are disintegrating into a mass of individuals. Furthermore, more and more consumers make seemingly inconsistent decisions on what to buy" (GCI Hering Schuppener, 2004:12).

Already in 1990, Rutherford states in relation to perceptions held by the consumer that "*it's no longer about keeping up with the Joneses, it's about being different from them*" (1990:11).Therefore, it is an underlying assumption that an academic challenge is still evident in terms of addressing this so-called mass of individuals, which seems to be the reality in which tourists nowadays exist.

This indicates that not only has the world of consumption changed into a vast landscape of endless opportunities, due to societal changes at several levels, which makes it difficult to generalise across broadly defined target segments. In addition, consumers seem to focus increasingly on unique opportunities and ways of setting themselves apart from the masses. In other words, consumers are – although probably unknowingly – essentially trying to avoid clearly defined target groups, which obviously complicates the issue for the tourism industry.

The irony of it all is that by being determined not to conform to mass consumption by attempting to stress individualism, one runs the risk of exactly becoming part of the masses, i.e. the mass of individuals, because this tendency of individualism seems to be the prevalent consumer attitude according to the above quotes. It may be argued, though, that there is also a prevalent desire to conform to certain defined norms, which pulls in a more collective direction for consumer choices and thus opposes the individualism just mentioned (Douglas, 1986). For example, in a tourism context there often seems to be a strong tendency to identify with certain behaviours and not with others, e.g. distance oneself from the stereotypical, loud, obnoxious tourist who does not know how to behave appropriately and thereby ends up disrespecting everybody and everything. This implies that acceptance at a more collective level plays a role as well, as does individualism, both of which add to the identity that we, as tourists and consumers, aspire to obtain.

Narratives perceived as a major part of tourism play a central role to this study, and as such form a vantage point for making a connection between the above discussion of tourism and identity, which will be explained further. Noy (2004) makes a statement that suggests that tourism entails an inherent need for communication.

> "The observation that tourists are garrulous folk seems commonsensical, one that does not call for thorough empirical research. Within the modern world the myriad forms of tourism and the varied experiences that these forms make available to the individual supply much of what people have to talk about" (Noy, 2004:78).

Because of the vast supply of tourist experiences in contemporary society, a discursive need thus occurs that engages people, i.e. tourists, in conversations of various sorts to express lived tourist experiences, and because of this need, discourse and specific touristic narratives may provide a look into the meaning of tourism to the individual tourist. It is this meaningful discourse around the tourist experience that is going to be explored throughout this study, in order to establish a basis for understanding identity construction as part of tourism and tourist experience in particular.

However, the tourist experience is a complex concept that is constructed in various ways, some of which are individual and personal (Pine & Gilmore, 1999), and some of which are of a more collective and social nature (Vetner & Jantzen, 2007). On this basis, it is hereby also suggested that the tourist is a central focus for exploring the tourist experience, because only the tourist contains both types of constructs, and thus may be able to express them – consciously or unconsciously.

Belk's statement: "*we are what we have*" (1988:139), as the most powerful fact of consumer behaviour, thus suggests that our tourist experiences become part of who we are, because we have them within us, and consume them for our sense of self and for the outside world to see who we are. Simultaneously, Desforges' (2000) suggestion that meaningful tourist experiences are stories that need to be maintained discursively to confirm identity, thereby suggests that tourist experiences are combined in expressed narratives to form meaningful and coherent stories in which identity is constructed for the purpose of understanding self and other. Consequently, it may be valuable to explore tourism consumption as a way of expressing and maintaining a sense of *what we have* and therefore who *we are*.

1.1 Tourism Consumption & Identity - Central Concepts

An underlying assumption throughout this dissertation is that tourism, as complex as it may be, is modern day consumption. This is suggested by several authors, e.g. Page & Connell (2006:63), Gabriel & Lang (2006:64) and to some extent by Urry (1990) who argues that the tourist gaze is visual consumption, thereby demonstrating the complexity of tourism consumption processes.

Along these lines, it is readily claimed that modern tourism, as well as consumption in general, is characterised by a high degree of individualisation, flexibility and rapid changes, which is also entailed in the aforementioned contention of a mass of individuals. Unlike its original meaning of *sameness, continuity and distinctiveness* (Gabriel & Lang, 2006:79), identity has taken on a rather different meaning of differentiation, as difference has become the main

objective of consumer choices, as mentioned by Rutherford (1990) and Baudrillard (1988), who suggests that people only buy goods to be different from others. This indicates that identity has come to contain elements of uniqueness rather than sameness to the individual. A need or desire to fit in still prevails, though, as mentioned above, and this is suggested by the idea of tribe membership (Maffesoli, 1996), where the individual behaves according to specific norms of conduct in order to become or remain accepted by the other tribe members.

The postmodernist argument that consumption is an opportunity to display one's identity (Gabriel & Lang, 2006:37) suggests that tourism is a means to this display, whether the aim is to stand out or fit in. In the light of the self and other positions evidently ingrained in tourism, there seems to be a link between tourism and consumption as a display of identity, which will be the central tenet to this dissertation.

1.2 A Focus on the Tourist Experience and the Travel Career

Furthermore, tourist experiences accumulated over different periods of one's life are deemed extremely important to the identity construction taking place via tourism consumption, in the sense that identity can be viewed as an ongoing process of negotiation, which is here assumed to be accessible through these accumulated tourist experiences, or more accurately through the positioning of self and others within narratives of and discourse around these experiences. According to Giddens, negotiation of lifestyle choices through the ways people consume will eventually be a means to identity construction:

> "Identity can be seen as a story that a person writes and rewrites about him or herself, never reaching the end until they die, and always rewriting the earlier parts, so that the activity of writing becomes itself part of the story" (Giddens in Gabriel & lang, 2006:83)

Therefore, the process of writing and rewriting identity through tourism consumption is a central means to understand the meaning of tourism throughout this dissertation. Writing is here perceived figuratively and not literally, since "writing" can take place through various means of communication,

e.g. orally or behaviourally, and thus can mean telling a story just as well as actually writing one. This is based on the fact that text may be understood to be many different things, hence so is writing text, particularly within a hermeneutic understanding (Kvale, 1997:56). In the context of this perception, the accumulated tourist experiences that constitute the so-called travel career become a central means of communication, which thus entails the negotiation of identity throughout several stages of tourism consumption.

For the purpose of exploring the narratives of identity, the concept of the travel career originally introduced by Pearce & Caltabiano (1983) has been included. The concept has been addressed on several occasions by Philip Pearce in collaboration with others (e.g. Pearce & Caltabiano 1983; Pearce 1988, 1991, 1993; Pearce & Lee 2005). The travel career approach started out as the travel career ladder (TCL) and was then revised and renamed the travel career pattern (TCP). The idea was to find links, between people's levels of travel experience and life-stage, and their different motivations to travel based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs[1] and a hypothesis that the hierarchy would be reorganised by the satisfaction of the most immediate needs through a travel experience – which would then motivate different needs to travel at a later stage, hence the ladder metaphor. The hypothesis was revised to open up for more arbitrary links not necessarily linked in a hierarchy, but possibly in patterns. The theory was refined to a great extent, and the link to the travel career approach in this study will relate directly to the idea of a travel career pattern.

As individual experiences are viewed as isolated parts in the TCP theory and then put into a framework forming a larger pattern, there are still particular aspects of the accumulated tourist experiences as a coherent whole that are unexplored and may be fruitful to a general understanding of tourism. If there is in fact reason to speak of a travel career, it seems logical to address it as an entity, although it obviously consists of several parts, i.e. travel experiences, but which is linked through the individual and his or her reasons for changing motivation and behaviour. Thus, a frame of reference exists in the individual as a focal point for exploring shifts at different levels.

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[1] First introduced in 1943 – Maslow, Abraham "*A Theory of Human Motivation*" in Psychological Review, Vol. 4.

Therefore, it is an underlying assumption in this dissertation that the travel career in its entirety is a reflection of the individual's choices based on the sum of several different influences, e.g. historical and social circumstances, and thus also reflects the changes that occur over time due to different circumstances, including changing life paths, changing needs, past travel experiences etc. The role of the travel career throughout this dissertation will be illuminated as the research design unfolds in the following, but it must be emphasised that the motivational focus that originally drove the travel career theory is not directly applied here. What is applied is the idea of the travel career forming certain patterns that represent all tourist experiences the individual has had at different points in the individual's life.[2] It is this idea that is explored throughout this study, because it is assumed that the shifts between different experiences, that have different surrounding circumstances, will enable explorations of identity, as it is perceived and portrayed by the tourist in the present. Hence, the aim is to explore uses of the travel career, i.e. the accumulated tourist experiences, in the construction of present identity, and not to explore identity at various stages of the travel career, as these are somewhat inaccessible due to the fact that they will always be viewed in light of the present. It is therefore also crucial to explore the expressed experiences more so than the actual experiences on which the identity construction is based. These expressed experiences will thus form the basic contention of this study, as it is perceived a little researched area within the field of tourism.

1.3 The Best-Ager Segment as an Empirical Focus

The so-called best-ager[3] segment seems to contain a number of characteristics, which make it an interesting choice for investigation in terms of identity construction and tourist experience. Firstly, there is an underlying assumption that members of the current best-ager generation have had opportunities to

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[2] Here in the form of a narrative coherence that interviewees construct

[3] Also referred to as empty-nesters, baby-boomers, 50+ etc., according to a vast number of factors used for definition. Further definition and description will be provided later, but at this point it should be stressed that the group of interviewees at hand falls within the 50-65 age group

travel throughout most of their lives.[4] They are perhaps the first generation with that opportunity, broadly speaking, wherefore they do have travel careers to talk about and relate to, and from which renegotiations of identities are sought generated. Secondly, this segment is to some degree characterised by flexible, individualised behaviour (Rosenkrands, 2004), which fits well with the assumptions of a changed reality, less predictable tourist behaviour, and a wide variety of tourist experiences. Thirdly, a rather significant characteristic of this segment of tourists is often characterised as being relatively resourceful in many respects, e.g. a large group of them tends to have stable economic situations, high cultural capital, and solid job situations. Although this might be true only for a group within the group, it may very well be a significant group in terms of tourism due to the fact that travelling is a possibility and perhaps a prime interest for this group for several reasons, for example because they have experienced changes in opportunities, or because they are possibly in a time of transition in their lives.

This group has therefore been selected for the purpose of exploring these particular issues - because its participation in different negotiation phases makes it an interesting focal point in terms of identity construction through tourism. The direct empirical implications of choosing this group will be addressed further shortly.

1.4 Objective and Research Questions

The fundamental questions of why people travel and the meaning and significance of being a tourist are the general interests and driving forces for this research. The objective is that these very broad perspectives on meanings of touristic behaviour and experience for the individual tourist may provide insights into inherent meanings of tourism. Of primary concern within these fundamental perceptions is the exploration of meanings of tourism for tourists themselves in relation to identity construction via modes of consumption of tourism related experiences. This is explored through the tourist experiences that make up the travel career, i.e. the accumulated tourist experiences that are being expressed when narrating the travel career. Hereby, the expressed tourist experience is

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[4] Individual life circumstances aside

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different from the actual tourist experience, and the focus is here on the former, because this is where identity construction can be explored.

From this point of view, it may be assumed that identity plays an important role in modern tourism, and the ways in which identity construction takes place in relation to the tourist experience will thus be in focus throughout this study. Consequently, one main research question and three sub-questions, which all pay special attention to an aspect of the main question, are posed. The structure of these questions is that all of the sub-questions each add a new dimension to the main question, in the sense that question 1 addresses an exploration of the tourist experience, question 2 addresses an exploration of the connections between these tourist experiences, which leads into question 3, linking these issues to the constructed identity. It is hereby assumed that an in-depth exploration of the main question is obtained.

How is the travel career, as an expression of accumulated tourist experience throughout an individual's life, instrumental in constructing identity?

1. How is a tourist experience characterised by members of the best-ager segment?
2. How is the travel career used discursively to construct a narrative of identity at present?
3. Are the tourist experiences accumulated decisive for the identity constructed and if so, in which ways?

The core of the dissertation is thus concentrated on understanding the role that tourist experiences play in identity construction. The objective is to make sense of tourist experiences in such a way that a deeper understanding is obtained of how tourism enables an understanding of self and the surrounding world for modern day consumers. The dissertation also aims to make a contribution to research within the field of tourism that combines tourism, consumption and identity through a unique framework relying on methodological and theoretical approaches, e.g. narratives and accumulated tourist experience, which have not been widely explored at this point.

1.5 Methodological Considerations

A methodological challenge lies in the application of this framework to an empirical base, but nevertheless it is crucial for the project that it is transferred to an empirical base, as this is a somewhat intangible element that needs a tangible focus to be explored, developed and illustrated. In addition, empirically based results are perceived as important and relevant in this respect, since discussions of experience and identity are often kept at a theoretical level, and the aim is thus also to add to the empirical base of the presented aspects of tourism.

On these grounds, an empirical base has been chosen for the exploration of these research questions. To avoid culture-specific conclusions, a somewhat broader scope is sought via a cross-cultural dimension, hence, Danish and English tourists are chosen as this study's empirical base. The two places of residence are chosen because they are relatively compatible in a number of ways that may affect travel patterns, e.g. politically, economically and to some extent geographically, at least to the extent that similarities are expected to occur. The two places of residence will thus form a broader contextual basis for exploring identity construction and relations to tourist experiences. However, it must be stressed that it is not assumed that by including two places of residence all cultural specificity has been eliminated, but rather that some of it might.

In terms of addressing identity construction, qualitative interviews in Denmark and England will be conducted,[5] which will follow the line of thought that identity is constantly constructed and negotiated. The interviews will explore multiple aspects: the interviewees' travel careers, different experiences within these travel careers, and identity construction. This set-up assumes that interviewees within the best-ager segment have a somewhat extensive travel career that can be addressed in the interviews, which means that representatives from this segment seem appropriate for a number of reasons, as already stated above.

The project design thus entails that elements of the travel career can be explored through narratives around touristic behaviour, which is meant to reveal the

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[5] The choice of method will be addressed in section 2.2.1 Qualitative Interviews

negotiations of identity taking place over time through tourism consumption and portrayed in these narratives. Hopefully, this can be used as a means to explore links between identity construction and tourism. Eventually this is expected to give new insights into tourist experiences, but also into the meanings of tourism to the individual in contemporary society. Further methodological considerations will be dealt with in Chapter 2.

1.6 Structure

The structure of the dissertation reflects a three phase process, the introductory chapters that explain the academic reasoning behind the research. These entail Chapter 1: Introduction; and Chapter 2: Methodology, concerning the wider methodological considerations and the actual methods applied, both at an abstract philosophical level, and at a more specific level of approaching the problem at hand in a particular manner.

The theoretical foundation for the dissertation is then established, firstly by addressing the segment in focus, and secondly in the sense that it concerns aspects of identity constructions in tourism and the tourist experience, and it presents descriptions and reflections of existing theory and research, which will then eventually be transformed into a theoretical framework for the dissertation. Chapter 3: Best-Agers introduces the segment in focus; Chapter 4: Tourism, Consumption and Identity; and Chapter 5: Tourist Experiences and Identity Construction each adds to the framework that will help inform the empirical data in the analysis.

The analytical parts of the research include Chapter 6: Developing a Framework for Analysis, which sets the frame for the analysis; Chapter 7: Step 1 - Implications of the Tourist Experience, which presents some empirical core themes of the tourist experience based on the data material, and also offers reflections on the theory presented; Chapter 8: Step 2 - Experience Relations Within the Travel Career, which explores the idea of the travel career as accumulated tourist experience; and Chapter 9: Step 3 - Construction of Identity in Tourist Experience, which draws on the previous two steps and combines it all to form an understanding of identity construction in tourism.

Lastly, Chapter 10 offers a final conclusion to the project as a whole and addresses possible answers to the research questions. Moreover, future perspectives are suggested. The structure of this project is hereby set forth to benefit the reading and understanding of the topic as a whole. The structure is also intended to underline the main points and arguments throughout the dissertation, which should benefit the reader as well as the overall argumentation and conclusion of the research.

2. Methodology

A multidisciplinary approach seems particularly suitable in this study considering the fact that several theoretical perspectives are traditionally applied to the study of tourism. As Cohen states:

> "The complexity and heterogeneity of the field of tourism suggests that there is no point in searching for *the* theoretical approach to the study of tourism, just as there is no point in searching for *the* conceptualization of the tourist. Rather, a pluralistic and even eclectic research strategy is advocated" (Cohen, 1979b:3)

Additionally, because of the emergence of tourism studies as branches of other, more established, classical fields of studies, it seems that no "normal science", or paradigm if you may, according to Kuhn's terminology (Kuhn, 1970), has formed within the field.[6] Cohen (1979b) thus indicates that a normative strategy may not be particularly desirable in this case, and therefore it seems appropriate to consider a suitable, multidisciplinary approach to tourism in order to gain from these different traditions and perspectives. This is also the aim set forth throughout this study, which draws on perspectives of consumer theory, social identity theory and tourism.

From this perspective, it seems logical that the specific choice of approach is essentially dependent on a combination of the issue at hand, i.e. the problem entailed in the research questions, and the perspective that the researcher wishes to apply to that issue, e.g. the paradigm within which the researcher operates. Research can therefore arguably be perceived, in any given case, as subjectively linked to the researcher (Benton & Craib, 2001), based on the fact that presuppositions, individual choices and interpretations are inevitable in any type of research and will eventually affect the outcome, and this dissertation is no exception.

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[6] In 1962, Thomas Kuhn introduced the conception of scientific revolutions in which a state of normality in terms of agreed upon practices for research within a given scientific community is a prerequisite. The field of tourism studies has assumedly never established this state, and thus the vantage point is not a single paradigm, but rather a set of coexisting paradigms, which may be incompatible and thereby pull the field of tourism into different directions, but nevertheless coexist.

Before moving into the methodological concerns of the project, it may be appropriate to discuss the meaning of the terms 'tourism' and 'tourist' in this context, referring to a particular type of tourism and a particular type of tourist. There are innumerable definitions, descriptions and explanations of tourism, and there is no, and probably should not be, one agreed upon definition of the concept. In this study, and for the purpose of linking the issue at hand and the definition used, the following characterisation of tourism offered by Urry (1990) has been chosen, in which he explains tourism and travel:

> "[…] about how and why for short periods people leave their normal place of work and residence. It is about consuming goods and services which are in some sense unnecessary. They are consumed because they supposedly generate pleasurable experiences which are different from everyday life" (Urry, 1990:1)

By choosing Urry's definition, a lot of aspects related to the study at hand are captured in the definition. First of all, it is a definition that relates to the demand side of tourism, as the tourist is the main focus of this study. Secondly, the fact that short as opposed to longer periods of travel are mentioned – although these are relative – corresponds well with the data material in that tourist experiences, i.e. main holidays of one week up to a month, have primarily been addressed in the interviews, i.e. leisure and pleasure tourism, and as such business tourism and longer, more extensive journeys interfering with everyday life have been ruled out. It needs to be stressed though, that it is not always possible to separate these types of tourism completely, when the individual tourist is in focus, but the focal point has been holidays of a certain length, even though e.g. short breaks or other have been mentioned at the same time. The reason for choosing holidays as the focal point will be addressed later on.[7]

Thirdly, the consumption aspect mentioned by Urry relates well to the perspective applied in this study, in that tourism is also here perceived as consumption, and to a great extent symbolic consumption. This may fall under the mentioned category of unnecessary consumption, which is opposed to the functional side of consumption. Also, the final comment on experiences being

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[7] See section 2.3 Collecting Data

different from everyday life implies the postmodernist contention of searching for understanding of self in places away from one's ordinary environment, which links this to identity - a direct premise for this study.

Likewise, the concept of the tourist has numerous explanations, and Urry's definition of tourism logically also entails indications about the tourist. For example, the tourist is perceived as a consumer, consuming unnecessary products in unfamiliar places, for the purpose of obtaining pleasurable experiences that are different from everyday life, which goes well with the intentions of this study. Several tourist typologies have been suggested over the years, which entail various perceptions of the tourist, e.g. by Cohen (1974), Smith (1977), and Plog (1977), each based on different approaches to the tourist: Cohen (1974) uses destination impacts to define the tourist; Smith (1977) uses social and cultural impacts; and Plog (1977) uses psychographics to determine tourist motivation resulting in specific types of destination choices. Common for all of them is that they tend to have a supply side perspective, although this may include considerations of a tourist perspective. None of them are thus adequate in terms of understanding the individual tourist as a complex being, and as such do not offer more in-depth explanations to the tourist's perspective, which is a central element of this study. Therefore, these typologies are mentioned as nothing but a point of reference in tourism research, which is somewhat inadequate for understanding more profound issues of the tourist, and as a consequence, have not been applied to this study.

However, it is also a central element of this study to let the data material suggest the focal points as much as possible, and therefore, only a few initial characteristics have been predetermined concerning the tourist. As just mentioned, the tourist in this case is a leisure tourist and, moreover, a member of a defined segment of best-agers, which will be defined and discussed along with the reasons for choosing this segment in more detail later on.[8] In addition, it needs to be stressed that in order to capture the flexibility that is assumed to exist in the individual tourist, and which is not always implied in the abovementioned typologies, no particular type of tourists, besides the

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[8] See chapter 3 Best-Agers

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characteristics just mentioned, has been chosen as a focal point, because the idea is to take a vantage point in the individual tourist, and how he or she understands him- or herself at different points in time, implying that each tourist can be many different types over time. Therefore, the tourist in this study is someone who engages in tourism, as described above, in many different ways, which will be explored through the interview data and the analysis.

2.1 Applying Social Constructivism

A basic contention is also that identity is a social construction, whereby social constructivism becomes the ontological standpoint of this study. Constructivism suggests that a phenomenon is perceived to be constructed by people collectively, and is not a natural given that exists independently. This also indicates the phenomenon being grounded in history and thus not eternal but temporary by nature, and in addition, variations in history are assumed to be the result of differences in people's ways of thinking and reacting (Collin, 2003:249). Although this construct can be found at an individual as well as a collective level, social constructivism implies the fact that the collective level is in focus, based on an assumption that certain phenomena are reflections of social processes and human interests, whereby they are determined (Ibid.).

According to Gergen (1994), self is constructed at a collective level where descriptions of each others' character are negotiated based on interpretations of our actions expressed in narratives. This means that the past is represented in a certain way, either going upward which suggests success or downward which encourages sympathy – in both cases the stories will need confirmation in the surroundings to become a social reality (Collin, 2003:271). This is supported by Kvale (1997:47) who argues that conversation is fundamental for understanding knowledge.

Throughout the study, identity is thus perceived as a social phenomenon that is constructed by people, or primarily in the interaction between people, although individual constructions are also influential. It is also evident that identity in this context is historical in the sense that the study can only present results that relate to identity as perceived and described through empirical data that is

generated and thus represents the present. This means that identity is perceived to be flexible and changeable, and moreover, a construction based on perception rather than actual facts, which is also how it is explored throughout this study. This is also linked to the fact that the self is perceived to be constructed and sought confirmed through narratives, which are the primary data explored.

Likewise, this exploration is in itself a social construction in that it has taken place in a setting that is created by people and between people, wherefore it is not a neutral, isolated research subject, but an interaction between the researcher and the researched from which the subject emerges. For example, the fact that confirmation plays a role to the perception of self may influence an interview situation and therefore, one needs to pay attention to the constructions that may be part of the research itself, and thus may influence the subject of research, and this will be addressed throughout the analyses when relevant.

2.2 Generating Knowledge through a Hermeneutic Process

Because the aim of this study is to understand and explore meanings in the relationship between tourist experience accumulated throughout the travel career and identity construction, an approach has been applied that entails a hermeneutic process, in which empirical data and theory both contribute to the process and thereby also the end result.

Hermeneutics can be described as the perception of human sciences being centred on the interpretation of something meaningful, which means that human activity and the consequences of such activity are explored. Because such activity stem from people's inherent meanings and wants, they become meaningful phenomena that are sought explored in the human sciences, as opposed to the natural sciences which seek to explain non-meaningful phenomena (Pahuus, 2003:140). Hermeneutics are thus linked to the study of humans, and as such forms the outset for this study as well.

Hermeneutics in the 20th century has transformed into a modern, existential hermeneutic tradition, different from historical hermeneutics of earlier times, in that humans are part of the world that surrounds them and forced to exist in that

world, and this is always a part of the individual. This is opposed to historical hermeneutics, in which it is possible to step out of the existing world of the present and through empathy and abandonment of existing prejudices to understand other human worlds of other historical periods (Pahuus, 2003). The consequence of this change is found in the perception of objectivity, which historical hermeneutics support and existential hermeneutics question, at least to the extent that it is not a given nor does it consist in neutralising prejudice (Cristoffanini, 1998:29), and objectivity is not a constant fact, but may change over time.

In continuation, Gadamer[9], one of the central figures in existential hermeneutics, is critical towards conventional notions of objectivity. Benton & Craib (2001) describe his critique as follows:

> "[Gadamer is] … insisting that knowledge is not a product of coming to understand the action of the individual (*à la* Weber) but of achieving an understanding of the movement of history, and history is the development of a common aim; we can only understand a text when we make ourselves part of that common aim out of which it emerged" (Benton & Craib, 2001:103-104)

It is thus inferred that researchers can only obtain understanding by emerging themselves in the subject matter. This implies that objectivity is not helpful, but subjectivity is, because the so-called fusion of horizons[10] is an end in itself, i.e. finding a common ground for certain understandings shared between pre-understandings and the issues that they are challenged by. So, the researcher starts out with a set of understandings that may change in order to move forward in the process of gaining new knowledge. Therefore, the issues of pre-understanding and prejudice are viewed as assisting in obtaining understanding rather than being an obstacle for it, in the sense that when pre-understandings or prejudices are being challenged, new understandings will be obtained, i.e. fusion of horizons will occur to the extent that common ground is found.

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[9] Most notably his book *Truth & Method* from 1960
[10] Gadamer's term

Hereby, discussions of the hermeneutic circle have already been initiated, in that the main idea of the circle is that as pre-understandings and prejudices are challenged, new knowledge is obtained, which then becomes a new understanding that may at a later stage be challenged again. At a given point in time, an understanding becomes a new pre-understanding; the circle continues, and the possibility for gathering new knowledge is assumed to be indefinite (Benton & Craib, 2001). This circular process will be addressed in the context of this study shortly.

A hermeneutic approach is taken throughout this study at two different levels. Firstly, there is a prevalent perception throughout this study of human beings as dynamic and highly flexible by nature, thus possessing a prevalent ability to adjust to change, as individuals are influenced by and subsequently changed according to their social worlds. This entails the contention that understanding the whole, i.e. the individual in the social world, requires understanding the parts that make up the whole, and both need to be explored in order to understand a specific situation, in this case the tourist experiences constituting the travel career, and eventually the travel career constituting identity construction. Benton & Craib describe the relationship between the changing nature of human beings and the understanding of it as follows:

> "Understanding is inevitably historical; the nature of a human being is itself historical and open to change. The process of understanding is paradoxical, involving the 'hermeneutic circle': we cannot know the part without understanding the whole of which it is a part, and at the same time we cannot understand the whole without understanding the parts that make it up." (Benton & Craib 2001:104)

Therefore, the parts that make up the whole are sought explored throughout this study, in order to be able to obtain some level of understanding of the whole, i.e. the individual tourist's identity construction on the basis of tourist experiences experienced over time. The parts that need to be explored concern: individual context, e.g. individual life situation affecting needs, choices etc.; collective context, e.g. historical factors affecting outlook and consumption; and travel career, which may be the most evident and tangible materialization of the whole

process, and therefore, the travel career will be addressed specifically for the purpose of exploring the parts that constitute the whole.

The hermeneutic circle is thus directly linked to the approach taken to the issue at hand in this study, since hermeneutics entails a pre-understanding, which might thus be challenged by an experience, which then causes a revision of the existing pre-understanding and forms a new pre-understanding (Thurén, 1998), or a fusion of horizons between the initial pre-understanding and conflicting new knowledge, to use Gadamer's terminology, which then forms a new understanding, i.e. a fusion. This works on several levels, i.e. when approaching an understanding of the tourist experience, and when transferred onto the issue of tourist experience for tourists themselves. The tourist's initial pre-understanding (pre-und. 1) consists in certain accumulated tourist experience that sets the scene for expectations etc. New experience is gained through travel experience, causing new understandings of previous experiences, and at the same time creating the base for a new pre-understanding (pre-und. 2) that will precede the next tourist experience, as illustrated below. Even when travelling for the very first time, a pre-understanding is very likely to exist due to influences from surroundings.

Figure 2.1
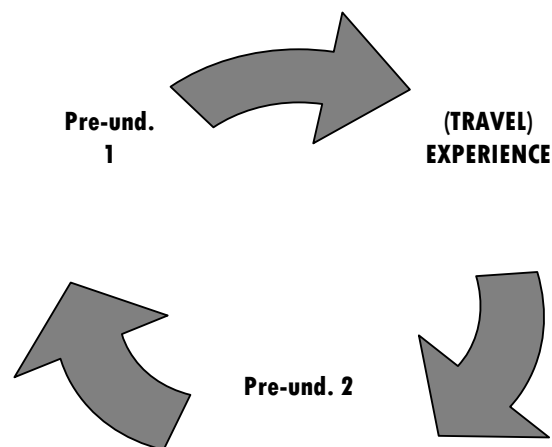
It is thus evident that experience is a central concept to the methods applied, since it is applied indirectly by a hermeneutic approach to generating knowledge, and directly by application of the hermeneutic circle into the research of people's

tourist experiences. A hermeneutic process is thus evident in the tourist's identity construction via tourist experiences and in the understanding of this. One author who imported hermeneutics into the human sciences was Dilthey[11] (Benton & Craib, 2001:103), who among other concepts had great focus on experience – *Erlebnis* in German, referring to the immediate experience as opposed to the internalised, accumulated type[12] – as a means to reconstruct experiences in another person when trying to understand that person, whereby recognition occurs and understanding emerges. This is done through the interpretation of an inner life expressed outwards (Cristoffanini, 1998:26). It is thus assumed that the inner life of the tourist may also be explicitly expressed through narratives of the travel career, and thus becomes accessible to further interpretation.

As a final comment to generating knowledge in the course of this study, the issue of induction versus deduction as methodological approach needs to be addressed. It may be argued that induction in the light of hermeneutics is complicated by the fact that one can never approach data without pre-understandings of some sort, and therefore, a purely inductive method can never take place, since data is never viewed from a completely neutral or unbiased perspective. At the same time, deduction will also be less straightforward, because the hermeneutic process entails shifts back and forth between theory and data, and not just a straight line from theory to data. However, there is still something to be said about these approaches and the relationship between the research questions posed, theory, empirical data and the answers or conclusions reached. The outcome of each type of method is very different, i.e. induction proposes new, exploratory studies, eventually suggesting new theory, and deduction provides proof and tests existing theory. One could say that induction takes a vantage point in specific cases or situations, and from there expands the scope of research into theory, whereas deduction takes a vantage point in existing theory and tests theory on specific cases or situations (Andersen, 1990:26). Enderud (1984) illustrates the relationship between the four core elements of research as follows:

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[11] Most notably for his book: *The Rise of Hermeneutics* in 1972

[12] See also section 5.1 The Tourist Experience – Dual Notions and Perspectives for further distinction

Figure 2.2
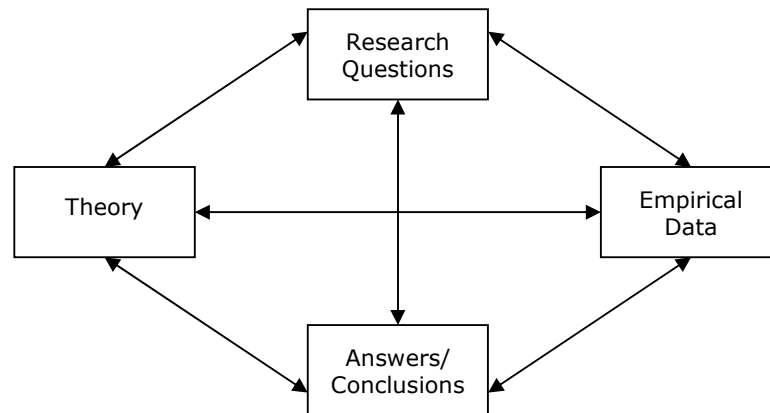
Based on Enderud, 1984:48 (own translation).

The model implies that the process of going from research questions to answers can be complex, and everything depends on the directional choices made along the way. The process of this study is claimed to be of an inductive starting point, although the hermeneutic process to some extent interferes with this approach. The study can be characterised as inductive by nature by seeking to explore specific cases, i.e. interviewee perceptions, through the data collected, whereby it is exploratory by nature – in contrast to a deductive approach aiming to test hypotheses by logically cohesive conclusions based on existing theory (Thurén, 1998:22). Induction has also been applied in the fact that the collected data has been the vantage point for decisions on the theoretical framework that has later been established. It needs to be stated in this connection though that obviously one is not completely free of pre-understandings of the topic at hand from the outset – being a scholar of tourism, and having chosen the topic due to perceptions of a fruitful field of research – as the hermeneutic approach prescribes. Moreover, collecting the data also affects the data itself, wherefore pre-understandings will always have an impact, whether they be highly theoretical or more general observations and perceptions.

As such, the hermeneutic process and the inductive features of this study are not in complete concurrence with each other according to theoretical perceptions, nor does the study seem to be in complete concurrence with neither inductive nor deductive methods in their purest forms. The idea of the next illustration

(Figure 2.3) is that, first of all, another element comes into play, i.e. a research topic, before the final research questions are formed. This has to do with the pre-understandings that are necessary for the rest of these elements to form, in that the link between research topic, theory and empirical data is the initial stage of forming the study in very broad terms. The research topic, empirical data and theory thus play into each other at the very first stage. This forms the initial basis for developing the research questions. Finally, the answers to the research questions are reached through this process of shifting between theory and data, which means that both are equally relevant in informing the answers.

Figure 2.3
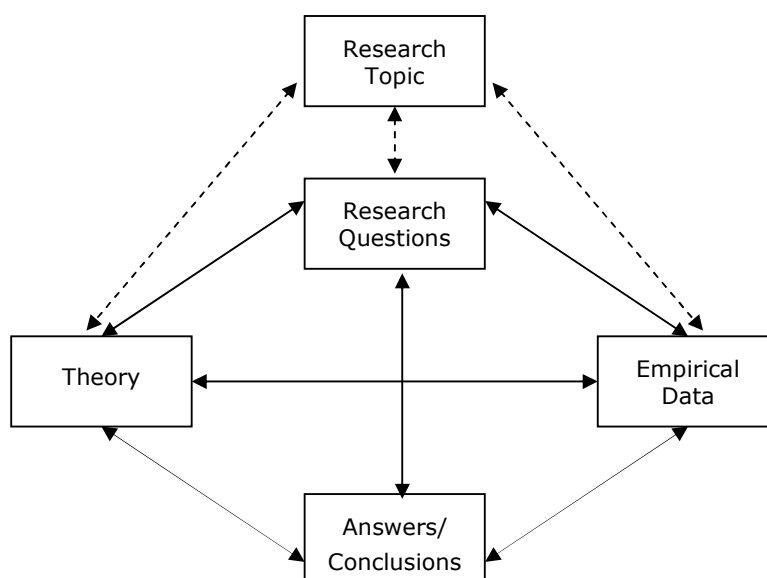
It thus seems that although this particular study has evident features of inductive methods, which were initially chosen as the method for generating the particular type of conclusions that were the aim of the study, the hermeneutic process has taken over in the sense that it has made good sense to make several shifts between these elements of the process.

This section has established the use of a hermeneutic approach throughout this study to support the understanding of the relationship between the individual tourist's travel career and identity construction. This implies that the aim is not to obtain decisive knowledge, but rather to arrive at a level of understanding that is possible and reasonable at this point in time, but which will most likely change in the future. However, it is also assumed that this is a necessary step towards

an understanding of the present, which will benefit the understanding of future developments.

2.3 Collecting Data

The choice of data for a research project is – or should be – determined by the purpose that data serves in terms of the research questions posed and the type of answers that one wishes to reach. Often, the difference between quantitative and qualitative research methods is referred to by the use of numbers and figures (Andersen, 1990:13). Quantitative studies aim to use large amounts of data from which general tendencies can be identified and explained, whereas qualitative studies aim to make in-depth explorations of specific cases. Some of the characteristics of these research methods entail issues of purpose, ways of generating knowledge, the role of the researcher, and the nature of the conclusions reached, and these will be commented on in the following sections.

In light of the purpose and aim of this dissertation, it can be argued that some choices are predetermined based on the choice of topic, problem and perspective, which might guide the study in a certain direction, e.g. the focus on discourse of tourist experiences as a determining factor for identity construction, which may suggest a certain type of research focus and interest on part of the author. In this case, the topic would indicate a qualitative line of thinking: In qualitative research *"researchers use a language of cases and contexts"* (Neuman, 2006:157), and identity construction in tourist experiences as such links cases of identity constructions and contexts of tourist experiences. In comparison, quantitative research is characterised by *"a language of numbers"* (Ibid.), which does not bear much meaning to the topic at hand.

In addition, another sign in the set-up for this study pointing in the direction of a qualitative research project is evident in the described purpose of obtaining an understanding of the role tourist experiences play for identity construction and thereby the meaning of tourism in that respect. The generally exploratory purpose in understanding and gaining knowledge of tourist experiences and identity construction in combination and the meaning of these two concepts when combined, rather than describing universal truths, strongly indicates a

qualitative outlook (Neuman, 2006:149), which then becomes a natural choice of data for this project.

Another typical characteristic of a qualitative research method which seems appropriate to apply to the framework of this research is a certain level of flexibility and openness to alternative solutions, which is in contrast to a pre-determined problem and systematic testing of hypotheses entailed in quantitative research. Because the research conducted here is not part of a firmly established research tradition and moreover is interdisciplinary, a prescribed set of accepted methods is not available. It therefore seems obvious to adjust to given circumstances as research evolves, also in the light of the hermeneutic process applied. Inductive methods, which are part of the discussion of hermeneutics above as well, also play a role, as it is described in the following:

> "A qualitative researcher develops theory during the data collection process. This more inductive method means that theory is built from data or grounded in data. […] It makes qualitative research flexible and lets data and theory interact." (Neuman, 2006:158)

Since the purpose of this study is to understand tourists from a tourist point of view, which only becomes available through the data material, a certain level of flexibility and willingness to adapt to shifting focal points seems necessary, as unforeseen issues may come up along the way through the data material. Moreover, it seems only natural to have a dynamic design when exploring a dynamic and flexible issue such as identity construction and experience.

By the same token, the quantitative researcher's aim is to reach general conclusions that may be repeated by oneself or other researchers with the same end result, whereas for the qualitative researcher, the interest lies in the uniqueness of a given situation influenced by the interaction between researcher and subjects being studied, and understanding, meaning, and action in the given context becomes the goal (Andersen, 1990:29).

It is hereby established that based on the purpose and aim, a qualitative research method is most suitable for this study. The data collected for this study consists

in qualitative interviews, and the reasons for this will be discussed in the following section.

2.3.1 Qualitative Interviews

Since identity is perceived to be inherent in the individual tourist, as well as a construction that takes place between the individual and the surroundings, it is assumed that identity construction is best explored through the tourist. Direct access to a tourist perspective on the issue at hand is therefore crucial, and for that particular reason, qualitative interviews were chosen as the foundation for the data material generated throughout this study. Interviewing is a qualitative method that serves the explanatory purpose of obtaining an understanding of tourist experiences in relation to identity construction, and furthermore, there is possible access to perceptions and attitudes as well as narratives and life history (Kvale, 1997:108), which is highly relevant to this study.

Because consumer research, as one of the perspectives used here,[13] rests on the assumption that consumption is a narcissistic project in which a desire for meaning prevails – obtainable through consumption – the consumer is not perceived only as a rational being, but also as highly emotional one. In-depth interviews are therefore assumed to be an appropriate method, because it will be possible to address "*the heart's desire*", i.e. the interviewee's inner emotions (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000:17-18). The consumer is therefore also metaphorically positioned, by Østergaard & Jantzen, as a tourist searching for new experiences rather than someone trying to fulfil wants or needs, whereby the obvious link to this context of tourism and identity is described, and whereby the personal or narcissistic project just mentioned becomes evident.

Another perspective used in this study is consumption studies,[14] which entail that the consumer is a tribe member looking for recognition – through consumption – by other tribe members, thus indicating that consumers are not just narcissistic beings, but also part of a social world in which they are trying to find their place. The consequence is that symbols signalling tribe membership are in focus, and

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[13] See section 4.1 A Consumption Perspective for further explanation
[14] Also described in section 4.1. A Consumption Perspective

the symbolic surface is more important than anything else (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000:19), whereby the positions taken by the interviewees throughout their interviews are a way of gaining access to the symbolism entailed in tourist experiences, eventually contributing to identity construction.

The type of research interview that is used throughout this study is characterised by Kvale (1997) as a semi-structured life-world interview, which is defined as: "[…] *an interview which serves the purpose of collecting descriptions of the interviewee's life-world in preparation for interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena*" (Kvale, 1997:19). In this study, the collected descriptions are those of the interviewee's perceptions of tourist experiences that they have had over time, and which entail taking certain positions according to the tourist experiences and thereby constructing identity. These descriptions then serve the purpose of enabling interpretations of the meanings of tourist experiences and identity construction.

These interviews also entail interviewee narratives of tourist experiences, and an overall narrative of the self, constructed by the use of the first mentioned narratives. Thus it may be useful to address the narrative specifically in this context. The narrative is firstly perceived a means to understand the tourist experiences expressed by the interviewees, and secondly, a means to understand inherent identity construction, i.e. a coherent narrative of the self through discursive positionings of the self in the narrative. Elliott (2005) defines the narrative as follows:

> "[…] a narrative can be understood to organize a sequence of events into a whole so that the significance of each event can be understood through its relation to that whole. In this way a narrative conveys the meaning of events" (Elliott, 2005:3)

It is evident that by this definition, the narrative works on several levels throughout this study. It may be inferred that the sequence of events, i.e. the whole, is the travel career, and the events are each tourist experience. At the same time, the whole may also be perceived as the self, which is organised by the travel career, whereby the narrative of the self conveys meaning of tourist

experiences entailed in the travel career. These different levels of the narrative are also included in the framework for analysis described later on.[15]

According to Elliott (2005:36), there has been a growing interest in narrative constructions of identity, which seems to follow the shift from an understanding of the self as a stable core towards a socially constructed self shaped by interaction and discourse. This perspective is also applied in this study, and therefore the narrative is a central aspect of the interviews and the subsequent analysis. However, a narrative analysis has not been applied as an analytical framework, because a more holistic approach is applied in which narratives, discursive positions, the individual and social context and the travel career are sought explored as contributors to identity construction. As stated by Carson et al. (2001:207): "*the object of taking a holistic outlook in any research is to gain a comprehensive and complete picture of the whole context in which the phenomenon of interest occurs*," the central point being the phenomenon of interest, in this case identity construction in tourism. This is not to imply that a narrative analysis could not serve a purpose in this context, but merely that a different perspective is applied, in which other aspects are in focus, i.e. attempting to understand various impacts on identity construction in tourism, as opposed to solely understanding the narrative as an element of identity construction in tourism.

By the same token, there are always several types of data that can be used for any type of research, which is also the case here, although the fact that any alternative would have to entail the incorporation of both the time dimension entailed in the travel career and identity construction, which has to be linked to text of some sort, written or spoken, and therefore, actual alternatives are limited. The first alternative that springs to mind is longitudinal studies, which is not a real possibility in the scope of a dissertation such as this one, ranging over a period of three years. Secondly, it may be argued that variations of what has been done here could have added different elements to the study, e.g. focus group interviews or existing written texts. Both pose various problems, e.g. the effect of focus group participation on identity construction – being placed in a

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[15] See section 6.2 Empirical & Theoretical Themes

group and thereby constructing identity in relation to that group during the interview. Text concerning tourist experiences and written over extensive periods of time, might be a good alternative in terms of incorporating time and issues of identity. However, the approach to the topic would have to be somewhat different due to the fact that access to texts written by "regular" tourists would not be readily available going back in time, and today's online travel journals and blogs are assumed to attract certain groups more than others. Certainly, the group chosen for this study would not be one of them – at least not at this point in time, according to the interviewees' statements. In addition, the approach to written text would be very different from what has been attempted in this study, as issues of genre, formality, audiences etc. would have to be accounted for.

On the basis of these considerations, it is thus assumed that collecting data through qualitative interviews is the optimal source of information for this project. Nevertheless, an element that might have supported this data is incorporation of various types of data in triangulation, but because of changes and adjustments made along the course of the study, there was little time available to collect and manage several sets of data. Furthermore, the interview data collected were already rich of information, and thus appeared apt to base a project on.

2.3.2 The Empirical Data

In this study, tourist experience is incorporated as a central element in the exploration of identity construction in tourism, which makes the choice of interviewees essential in terms of getting data that does contain elements of tourist experience. A particular group of people has therefore been chosen as the focal point, namely the so-called best-ager segment.[16] The reasons for choosing this specific segment is, as mentioned, firstly that they have had opportunities to travel at different stages of their lives; secondly, the segment is characterised by very varied and individualised behaviour; and thirdly, they are also characterised by being relatively resourceful, which makes travelling interesting and possible for them. Therefore, they pose an interesting case for exploring tourist experience as part of identity construction.

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[16] See section 1.3 The Best-Ager Segment as an Empirical Focus

Besides the element of tourist experience, elements of age, place of residence, and family status have been considered in the selection of interviewees. Experience and age go hand in hand in the sense that experience at different stages of one's life requires a certain age; place of residence is included because this study is not a case study, but a more generic exploration of identity construction; and family status because identity is perceived to exist both on a personal and social level, and family is the most immediate influence on tourist experiences, wherefore it is also included. These elements were defined according to the factors explained below:

- Tourist experience: based on an estimate of travel activities, domestically and/or internationally, on a regular basis, i.e. at least every other year over the past ten years – based on an assumption that travel activities have increased over the years, and thus travelling may not have been regular at all life stages, and variation in travel activities throughout these stages was also pursued.
- Age: 50-65 – based on an assumption that people of this age are for the most part still in the workforce, wherefore time and money for travelling are assumed to be influences by the work situation. At the same time, children in the family are grown up and thus not travelling with the interviewees on a regular basis. There are variations to these rules, and eventually retirees were also included in the group because they were often part of a couple.
- Place of residence: Aalborg, Denmark or Sheffield, England[17] – based on a desire to make the study relevant in terms of exploring identity construction at a level not that is not case specific, and on an assumption that cultural differences in this respect would be relatively limited in a European context. Aalborg and Sheffield were chosen for practical reasons explained below.
- Family status: single or couple – based on the idea that travel partners influence tourist experiences greatly, and thus identity construction.

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[17] Specifically in or in proximity of these two cities

The interviewees were chosen based on these considerations. In practice, the interviewees were initially found through a process of snowball sampling in the author's network, simply by letting people know that interviewees that would fit these characteristics were needed. Subsequently, each contact was accessed in terms of these characteristics and their relations to the author, i.e. people that the author had met before were ruled out. The result of this selection process is illustrated in the table below, which obviously includes the fact that they do have the required age and experience.

Table 2.1

	Aalborg, DK	Sheffield, UK
Working	17	18
Retired	4	3
Single	3	4
Couple[a)]	18	17
Number of interviewees	21	21
Number of interviews	12	13

a) Individuals in a couple.

The interviews were semi-structured interviews based on an interview guide of themes to be covered in the interviews.[18] The interviews were structured in such a way that the interviewees were asked to bring photos of their choice that would then work as a vantage point for the interview and served the purpose of getting the interviewees started. When needed, the interviewer would bring up the themes from the interview guide. This means that most often, the interviewees set the structure of the interview, and when not, the interviewer would return to the interview guide[19].

The interviews took place at the interviewees' homes, or of another place of their choice, e.g. at a university meeting room. It was important to create and environment that was relatively comfortable for the interviewees, and to a great extent the interviewees provided that by themselves by opening up their homes

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[18] See Appendix 1.

[19] All interviews have been recorded and transcribed, but only one example has been included for illustration – see Appendix 2. All transcripts and sound files can be provided if required. Contact the author: ksmed@ihis.aau.dk

at this occasion. Also for the reason of comfort, the only technical device used was a voice recorder, as only the spoken word was important in this context. It seemed relatively easy though to find people willing to speak about their experiences, and very often the interviews lasted longer than anticipated, which is perceived a sign of the interviewees' great willingness to address these issues. It needs to be added that it might have been a great advantage that the interviewees were contacted through personal connections, because a sense of trust may have been invoked by this, for the interviewees as well as the interviewer. This personal connection may also have had some negative effects, but the advantages were deemed more significant than the disadvantages.

The choice of Aalborg in Denmark, and Sheffield in England needs to be specified a bit further as they will be included in the study on completely similar terms. If differences appear, they will be addressed. Denmark is a straight forward choice because of interest, accessibility and language efficiency – the author being a Dane, a native Danish speaker and living and working in Denmark.

In terms of identifying an appropriate second case, the same practical approach would have to be applied for this research to be possible at all. Moreover, there would be sense in choosing a cultural context that is to some extent similar to the Danish, but at the same time different, because of the possibility to determine different variables within each context, and their influence on the topic at hand. Based on these considerations, England is chosen, because the same tendencies within the best-ager segment also apply in England, and because a general geographical, political, social and economic compatibility can be established at a macro level between Denmark and England. Therefore, unity between these two contexts seems plausible in the light of this research and its objectives.

2.3.3 Generalisability, Reliability and Validity

The issues of generalisability, validity and reliability in this qualitative study need to be addressed in order to verify the project and support its purpose. Generalisability may seem irrelevant, since the purpose is not to make general conclusions, and some qualitative researchers would reject it on the basis that it

rests on a positivistic understanding of truth and knowledge that undermines the very essence of qualitative research (Kvale, 1997:226). However, an important element of this study is to enable some level of generalisability in terms of the explorations that have been made and the understandings that have been reached, so that useful conclusions can be stated and used for various purposes.

According to Silverman (2006:306), there are two sampling methods that can support the choice of cases to study and accommodate issues of generalisability, i.e. purposive and theoretical sampling. The former method implies that cases are chosen on the basis of their appropriateness for the issue at hand, in this case accumulated tourist experience and identity construction, and according to the parameters deemed significant, in this case the above mentioned age, place of residence, travel experience etc.[20] In addition, there may be practical complications to this selection process, e.g. inaccessibility, wherefore theoretical sampling is applied to verify additional choices made. The former method thus consults purpose of the study, and the latter consults theory based on relevance for the research questions, and thereby the total sample is the result of several meaningful considerations. This is directly related to the hermeneutical process, in which data, theory and research questions are assessed continuously, and this has also been the dominant method throughout this study.

The issue of reliability in qualitative interviews is highly relevant to a discussion of generating useful and valuable knowledge. Reliability may be described as the consistency of research results (Kvale, 1997:231) or the independence of accidental circumstances of their production (Kirk & Miller in Silverman, 2006:282). Silverman (2006) addresses two ways of obtaining reliability in qualitative research: 1) transparency of the research process; and 2) theoretical transparency. Both of these concern the writing process, in which it is essential to clarify the choices made and the consequences of these for the results, and the aim has been to pursue both types of transparency in this dissertation through meta-communication as every level of writing.

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[20] See section 2.3.2 The Empirical Data

Validity may be defined by a question of whether or not a study explores what it is supposed to explore. According to Kvale (1997:237), this entails controlling, questioning and theorising the generated knowledge, although he also stresses the fact that there are no concise prescriptions for determining validity in qualitative research, wherefore these various methods are continuous. Controlling entails a critical perspective of the analysis, which is meant to prevent biased interpretations. Questioning is a way of validating the content and purpose by attempting to understand the questions that are being answered through specific results. Lastly, theorising addresses the fact that asking specific questions also entails the application of theoretical perspectives, whereby it is possible to determine whether or not a study is actually fulfilling its purpose (Ibid.). All of the above have been included continuously in the hermeneutic process applied to this study, and therefore, it is assumed that the appropriate steps have been applied in order to increase validity.

2.4 The Research Design

All aspects of the problem posed through the research questions thus need to be accommodated in the research design. The type of data that may be necessary for the purpose of this research is not expected to be immediately granted, since access to the type of data required may rely heavily on applied data collecting methods.

All of these issues have been considered in the creation of the research design, and it might therefore be explained most easily through a figure illustrating the different parts that each contributes to the end result and the relationship between these parts. Figure 2.4 is constructed to present different aspects of the research design that will be sought generated through the data material:

Figure 2.4
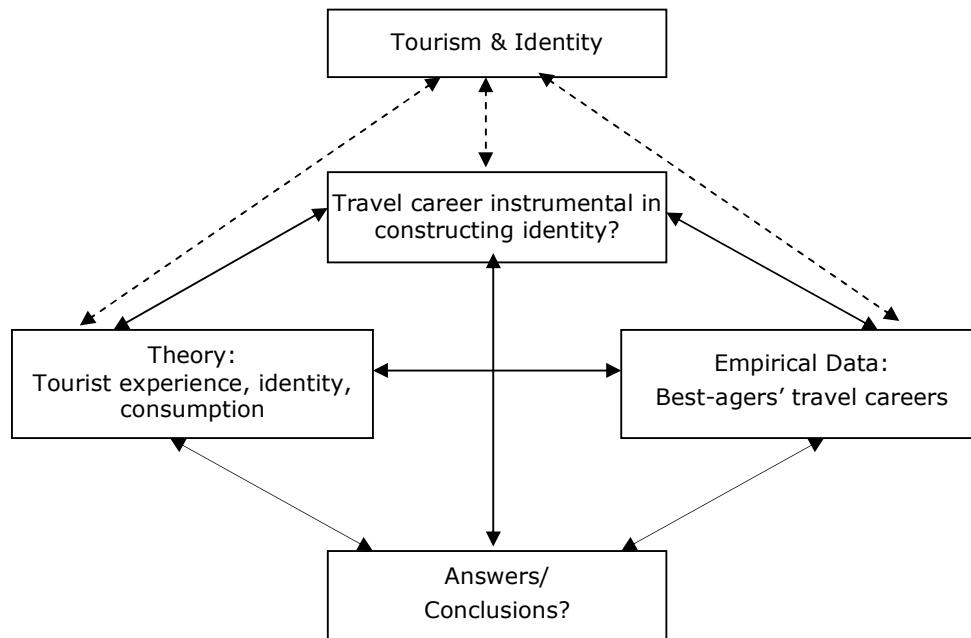
The methodological foundation for this project is thus established and summed up in Figure 2.4, which takes both methods and methodological approaches into consideration in that the hermeneutic approach is sought illustrated, based on explanations made earlier on, and the methods applied to the collection of data. Related considerations of the specific segment in focus for this study will be addressed in the following chapter, and the analytical framework will be addressed at a later stage.

3. Best-Agers

Since the primary aim of this study is to explore constructions of identity through tourism by means of the travel career and the tourist experiences that the travel career entails, it has been a vital part of the methodological framework to identify a source of information through which these different concepts come into play. As explained in the methodology chapter, this has a number of implications, e.g. access and validity, which has been addressed in various ways through several practical and theoretical considerations.[21] As a result of these considerations the so-called best-agers have been chosen as a focal point for this study.

A practical issue of addressing the travel career has been one of the main reasons for choosing the best-agers. The very simple fact that there needs to be an actual travel career, i.e. a number of experiences, to address as the main content of the interviews has been a significant factor in this choice of interviewees. It was assumed that tourist experiences of various kinds would exist among members of this particular group, because some have travelled quite extensively, starting at an early age with their parents. Some would have started later in life, but overall it was assumed that travelling is not unfamiliar to this group, and as it turned out, it was not difficult to find people within this group who were willing to share their tourist experiences in an interview. Moreover, the fact that travelling at different stages of ones life gives a more dynamic account of the travel career has been an important factor as well. Again, this made the choice of best-agers obvious since members of this particular segment today seem to concur with these premises, i.e. a significant part of this segment does seem to travel every now and then, and they have also travelled at different points of their lives.

Best-agers thus constitute the focal point of this study, in the sense that they are a source for obtaining the aims set forth in the research questions.[22] The purpose of this section is therefore to describe and discuss the specific characteristics of this particular group of interviewees, or segment if you like. However, the extent

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[21] See chapter 2 Methodology for further explanation
[22] See section 1.4 Objective and Research Questions

to which they can be defined as a segment may be up for discussion, as a segment may be defined very differently across the spectre of research, and according to several factors, which are not all applied here – these issues will be discussed shortly. Nevertheless, the purpose of characterising this perceived segment is sought fulfilled by looking into existing literature on similar types of stated segments. In addition, the more specific implications of using best-agers in this study will be discussed.

3.1 Previous Studies and Characterisations

A common argument for the increased attention to mature consumers in recent marketing research, consumer behaviour research etc., also within the field of tourism, is based on the fact that populations in most western countries are getting older and increasingly interesting as consumers, due to their growing spending power and willingness to spend money, e.g. on leisure activities such as travelling (see e.g. Horneman et. al, 2002; Morgan & Levy, 2002; Tréguer, 2002; Harris, 2003; Wolfe & Snyder 2003; Sellick, 2004; Littrell et.al, 2004; Reece, 2004; Røpke, 2004; VisitDenmark, 2008). The importance of this particular market, and thus a shift away from a focus on youth as the most important consumer market, has been stressed, also within tourism. Sellick (2004) goes as far as to say that the mature consumer market is particularly well suited for the tourism industry, because they have an increased awareness of possibilities to travel, they take more holidays than other segments, and also spend far more while on holiday. In addition, mature consumers are said to be eager to learn more about themselves and the world around them, and tourism is ideal for fulfilment of this particular desire (Sellick, 2004:55-56). This also adds to the contention that best-agers are suitable for exploring identity construction through the travel career.

Defining a complex market segment such as these mature consumers is by no means a simple task, and by attempting to generalise in order to do so, one always runs the risk of making generalisations that are too broad and thus do not serve the intended purpose. Therefore, the market of mature consumers has at times been divided into sub-segments, e.g. thrivers (aged 50-59), seniors (aged 60-69), and elders (aged 70+) (Lavery, 1999), for the purpose of

minimising the size of the segment, and thereby possibly making generalisations more applicable and effective. In another study, Tréguer (2002) proposes four segments: the Masters (aged 50-59), the Liberated (60-74), the Peaceful (75-84), and the Elderly (85+). On the other hand, Røpke (2004) merely distinguishes between baby-boomers (age 50-70) and seniors (age 70+). It should be mentioned that some of these definitions of age are based in a particular time of writing, e.g. baby-boomers as the generation born in the years before, during, and just after WWII, and as such, the age definition will obviously change over the years. As Harris (2003:10) explains, sociologists are aware of the importance of this type of differentiation linked to a social and historical process as a basis for social behaviour, rather than using a specific life stage as the only measure for behaviour, which is a more common approach used in market segmentation. Harris (2003) thus suggests that approaching every segment with consideration of both life stage and social and historical processes. In practice, this means that every time there is a shift in the social and historical context of e.g. the group aged 50-60, a new approach to that specific market needs to be taken, with considerations specifically linked to this group at this point in time, rather than consideration of age in isolation. These considerations are also made in the context of this study, so the historical context in terms of travelling will be considered later.[23]

At a general level, the mature consumers are thus referred to in a number of ways, including seniors, baby-boomers, empty nesters, best-agers. All these labels are defined differently by different authors,[24] as some of these sub-segments also illustrate: e.g. the masters, the liberated and the peaceful. These are not just age-related labels, but carry other connotations, which bear witness to the various features that characterise this group of mature consumers. Different definitions related to the references above entail different segmentation strategies among researchers. For example, the reference to baby-boomers entails an approach defined by the time in which members of this segment were born and growing up and assumptions of the way that particular time has shaped

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[23] See section 3.2 Context and History

[24] This is also the case here, which means that the best-ager segment referred to here is not always 100% identical to other references used throughout this discussion, but it should be clear in the text which definition is referred to when

them. Empty-nesters refer to the family lifecycle approach, and the state of family relations at a particular point in one's life. 'Best-agers' is a more lifestyle related reference to a time in life with fewer obligations and vast possibilities due to various factors, e.g. a more solid financial situation and fewer family responsibilities, so this term relates well to the purpose of this study. Again, this illustrates the complexity of characterisations across a broad segment of the population. Segmentation may be carried out in numerous ways, and the only factor that seems to determine the choice of one way over another is the purpose that the segmentation strategy serves. However, a detailed understanding of a segment, and thus more specific knowledge of how to attract the segment, may thus go through a combination of several strategies, as Harris (2003) suggests. Therefore, several aspects of the mature consumer market in a broad sense and how they relate to the best-agers, as defined and applied to this study, will be explored next.

3.1.1 Mature Consumers as a Segment

In an advertising context, Lavery (1999) has pointed out some of the main stereotypes about mature consumers held e.g. by younger advertisers, which often tend to create communicative barriers between advertisers and the mature consumers. Figure 3.1 shows an extract of a list compiled by Lavery in 1999 of some of the misperceptions of the mature consumer in contrast to facts – keeping the contention in mind that these age-groups are linked to specific social and historical contexts and thus may change over time.[25]

Figure 3.1

Fiction	Fact
The "youth" market is the most free-spending and most influential consumer group.	On average, the over 50-65 consumer outspends their under 50 counterpart by around 20 per cent.
Mature people have limited leisure interests and tend to hold on to their money.	They take more holidays than any other age group and outspend the young on leisure.

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[25] Since this is related to the American market, it should be stressed that there might also be variations across different cultures because of the shared social and historical processes that may vary from one culture to another. However, at this point, there is no obvious reason to assume that these facts, or the fiction that they are opposed to for that matter, would be different in other western cultures such as England or Denmark

Mature consumers are indifferent to new technology.	In the USA the over-50s are the fastest-growing group online
Everyone over 50 thinks in much the same way.	Difference in attitude between a 50- and 70-year-old can be as great as that between a 20- and 40-year-old.
The only thing you can sell the over-60s are trusses and incontinence pants	They are discriminating shoppers with defined but catholic tastes. Lifestyle is more important than chronological age.
Mature consumers are too unsophisticated to resent the way they are portrayed in advertising.	Research shows they resent atypical "glamorous" models as well as "wrinkly" ones.
Mature consumers stick with products they are used to.	Some sectors report that up to 30 per cent switch brands annually.

Source: Lavery (1999:2)

Although possibly exaggerated, and presented with slightly sarcastic overtones, several of these misperceptions are also pointed out by other researchers, e.g. Horneman et al. (2002), who point out the fact that the mature consumers are often, although mistakenly, characterised by uniformity and conservatism; Sellick (2004) points out that they tend to travel more than other age groups; and Wolfe & Snyder (2003) point to the fact they like any other age group carry their own values and beliefs, also in terms of consumption, and thus may object to stereotypical characterisations often presented to them. Much to that effect, these are fairly recognisable as commonly held stereotypes in western populations at large. It seems, though, that the increased importance of mature consumers as a powerful segment might have caused increased attention to these stereotypes, and thereby to the need to change the portrayal and understanding of mature consumers. The aim would be to attract them in specific consumer contexts and to create a more nuanced view of mature consumers that they can actually relate and respond to through consumption choices.

This may explain the many proposed strategies for segmenting mature consumers. Some of the most common segmentation strategies include age, as the most basic factor, demographics such as education and socio-economic position, and psychographics such as lifestyle and attitudes, all of which provide different possibilities for analyses of various sorts. For example, it may be argued that age at a given point in time is determining for the historical context that one is a part of and has gained experiences from, which means a specific outlook on life influencing ones behaviour (e.g. Røpke, 2004, and Tréguer, 2002). An

example is the term 'baby-boomers' as a descriptor of this segment. However, age in itself has already been argued to be insufficient for explaining consumer behaviour. Others might stress lifestyle, and/or other psychographics, to a greater extent, e.g. Morgan & Levy (2002), Wolfe & Snyder (2003), and Horneman et al. (2002) who include values, attitudes and interests in the segmentation process.

The best agers in this study have been identified primarily by age, nationality, family status and lifestyle in terms of their travel activity. Age and lifestyle as determinants of behaviour are complicated by the fact that experience to some extent comes with age, and thus there might be correlation between age and aspects of general life experience. The way age, and thus experience, comes to affect behaviour goes through the perception that experience contributes to the formation of preferences, including lifestyle choices. Since experience is not isolated from the context in which it is obtained, it will influence the individual and the way behaviour is motivated through specific experiences related to age and a certain historical time.

One of the main issues enforced by different researchers around the best-ager segment, despite the frequent misperception of the opposite, is prevalent heterogeneity, which is possibly its most striking characteristic at this moment. It makes segmentation very complicated, which is evident through the several segmentation strategies that have been applied in attempts to capture the essence of this particular segment – and its possible sub-segments – which is of great interest to many businesses and thus marketers. Although the characteristic of heterogeneity may be particularly striking within the mature consumer segment, perhaps due to prevailing stereotypes of the meaning of certain ages, heterogeneity is, however, not a characteristic that only applies to this segment, and thus the question remains, what are the characteristics of this particular segment? And to answer this question, several studies have been consulted to form a broad picture of the best-ager segment.

According to Wolfe & Snyder (2003), the best way to market a product to what they call the *new customer majority*, i.e. people aged approx. 45 and above, is through values instead of the traditional segmentation tools such as attitudes,

opinions, demographics and life stage, which are changing due to life events and circumstances (Wolfe & Snyder, 2003:163). Although there are shared experiences among members of a certain age group, the claim is that the way in which one interprets these experiences through a values lens is the determining factor, not the experiences themselves. Hence the correlation between age, life experience and lifestyle mentioned previously.

Therefore, Wolfe & Snyder (2003) operate with so-called value portraits, which are stated to be a classification of mature Americans (45+) into subgroups of a similar mind-set that is claimed to predispose each group to behave similarly (Ibid.). The results of these value portraits are that 14 dimensions for the age group 45-61 and 13 dimensions for 62 and above were used to summarise each of the held values for these two groups. These dimensions are illustrated below:

Figure 3.2

Importance	Age group 45-61	Age group 62 and older
Most	Altruism	Self-respect
	Family ties	Family ties
	Intellectual curiosity	Faith and religion
	Psychological well being	Warm relationships
	Spirituality	Kindness and compassion
	Balance	Intellectual curiosity
	Leadership	Health and well-being
	Civility	Fun and happiness
	Warm relationships	Conservative attitudes
	Excitement	Financial security
	Regret	Power and recognition
	Conservatism	Excitement
	Recognition	Material possessions
Least	National security	

Based on Wolfe & Snyder's value portraits (2003:166-169).

Evidently, these dimensions are not detailed descriptions of what a particular value entails, as this is not assumed to be the most relevant point in the context

of this project.[26] The main point to consider is that although these values might exist for most humans, they exist in different groupings and with different levels of importance according to individual experiences and how these have been interpreted to form particular preferences and beliefs, much like it is assumed to be the case with aspects of the travel career, as mentioned earlier. Therefore, as the same values seem to be present within both of these age groups – 45-61 and 62 and older – with a few exceptions and based on slightly different definitions, the point is that attention is on the order of these values more than the actual values. E.g. the value of excitement is present in both groups, but placed differently in terms of importance, wherefore it might, in a tourism context, take slightly different priority when a tourist experience is chosen.

Although these portraits might vary between the two age groups, there are some similarities that could be said to represent the points of impact in relation to this study entailing members of both age groups, e.g. family ties and intellectual curiosity are rated high in both groups. The value portraits themselves, as presented above, are thus meant to illustrate one method used to explore this segment and the results, i.e. a different view of the segment, based on a different set of measures, i.e. value portraits, than previously used.

3.1.2 Mature Consumers of Tourism

Some researchers have also paid specific attention to segmentation according to best-agers' touristic behaviour and preferences, which has resulted in various classifications. One example is Morgan & Levy's (2002) research on American consumers between the ages of 40-54 and 55+ and the travel activities of these two groups, which suggests 5 types of travellers, according to their travel habits, preferences and behaviour:

- **Highway wanderers** – characterised by a sense of limited time and money to spend on holidays, wherefore they tend to travel domestically by car or recreational vehicle. They perceive holidays as a time to visit friends and family, which is considered a rational choice when money is scarce. They

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[26] The inherent values are described in more detail in Wolfe & Snyder's value portraits (2003:166-169)

tend not to plan ahead very much, and they try to avoid the masses, but enjoy nature instead. They are loyal visitors if they find a place they like, and they do not seek thrills or adventures in other cultures. They rely on travel clubs, such as the AAA, and friends and family for travel information.

- **Pampered relaxers** – money is not a central consideration, and holidays are perceived as a time to enjoy oneself and be pampered, and not strain oneself physically or mentally. The activities engaged in are e.g. sitting on the beach, visiting theme parks, casinos, shopping or fine dining, most often by themselves. Cruises are one of the preferred types of holidays. They do plan a bit in advance, although not in great detail, as they often go back to the same place if it works for them, and they prefer flying. They use travel clubs and travel agents.

- **Global explorers** – There is an inherent need for adventure and to engage in many activities, intellectual and physical, as they seek out new experiences and destinations. A main premise is meeting other people and cultures, and they want authentic, non-touristic, encounters with locals. They enjoy cruises and all-inclusive packages, and they prefer to meet new people rather than travel with people they already know. Although flexible, they tend to fly on holiday. They are very well informed, as they read extensively about travelling. Generally, they use all kinds of information, and they do tend to plan in some detail. Money is not a problem.

- **Independent adventurers** – Avoiding crowds and discovering unique places, preferably of great natural beauty, is core, so group travel is out of the question. They do consider costs and look for bargains, but do not mind roughing it when they get what they want, i.e. authentic, adventurous experiences and possibilities for trips to the beach, fine dining and relaxation. They mostly rely on the Internet and insider information, and they are very spontaneous. Travelling with several generations is found appealing, and they prefer flying and possibly car rental.

- **Anxious travellers** – safety is a determining factor for where and how they travel, thus they rely heavily on information from travel agents. They tend to plan in detail and far in advance to minimise fears of the unknown. Money is an issue, and thus group travel provides both safety and a bargain. Activities include museum visits and other cultural activities,

although not in the sense of meeting the locals. They expect a relatively high level of service while on holiday, e.g. when dining out. They prefer flying on holiday and are positive towards train travel, but not driving.

As mentioned above, this study was based on two age groups, which were compared by percentage within each type of traveller category to illustrate age related differences. The following figure was provided, also by Morgan & Levy (2002:77), to illustrate this specific purpose:

Figure 3.3
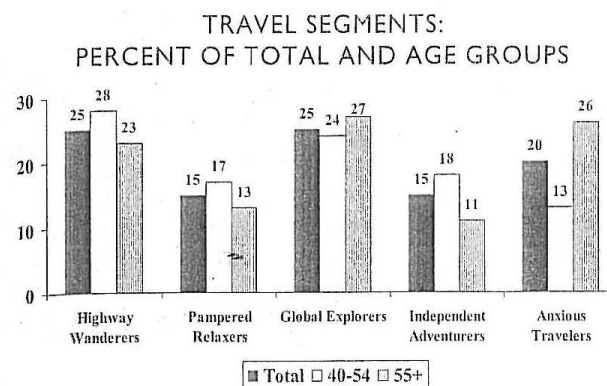
The most conspicuous difference between the age group 40-54 and 55+ is in the category *Anxious Travellers*, where the 55+ age group is represented by a significantly higher percentage, i.e. 26% as opposed to the 40-54 group of 13%. In the other categories, the differences are less obvious, but there are slightly more independent and spontaneous types of travellers in the younger age group, i.e. highway wanderers and independent travellers, and the two groups that are less concerned with financial restrictions are the most evenly represented of the two age groups. It has to be stressed though that this is an American study that may be affected by the American context of e.g. types of domestic travel, which is particularly evident in the *Highway Wanderers* segment, as elements of it seem to be a typical American concept.

It is thereby also implied that results might vary from the American to the European context that is explored in this dissertation, i.e. Danish and English, although at first glance this does not seem to be the case. Although this study

focuses on a slightly different age group (50-65), the 5 types of travellers do comprise elements that concur quite well with the interview data for this study. For example differentiation between adventure seekers and non-adventure seekers, planners and non-planners, and general purpose of a holiday, such as visiting family and friends, relaxation or a more experiential purpose are factors also evident in the scanning of the data material. Traveller types will therefore be addressed further in the development of the analytical framework.[27]

The main characteristics of the best-agers as a market segment, and the ways in which they have been approached by researchers have been presented in terms of their relevance to the study at hand. Some main tendencies describe its status at this point:

- A shift has taken place away from youth as the primary market segment of interest, particularly in a tourism context.

- Best-agers are most often divided into sub-segments, which are related to the perceived importance of differentiation being linked to both social and historical processes and life stage segmentation.

- Various segmentation strategies have been applied according to purpose.

This segment also seems to be characterised to some extent by prevailing stereotypes that need to be revised in order to portray the segment adequately. Widely used segmentation strategies include the basic issues of age and lifestyle, which are linked together in experience, which comes with age, and affect lifestyle choices. These choices again affect further experiences, whereby tourist experiences contained in a travel career might suggest an alternate, more individual segmentation strategy.

A value portraits approach as an alternative was suggested by Wolfe & Snyder (2003), who also suggest that the actual experiences are less important than the values through which they are interpreted, which is also a contention explored throughout this study. Lastly, Morgan & Levy (2002) suggest five types of travellers within the mature consumer market, which may relate to the best-ager

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[27] See section 6.1.1 Travel Unit Stages

tourists in this project. This will be explored later, when the data material is included in the analytical framework. Beforehand, it will be useful to explore the historical context of tourism in the period that these best-agers have engaged in tourism, considering the contention mentioned above that social and historical processes need to be linked to the segment at hand. Therefore, the following sections will focus on such socio-historical developments within tourism.

3.2 Context and History

Social and historical circumstances are determining factors for the tourist experiences that can take place at a given point in time, and these circumstances thereby also set norms for the general perception of tourism at that particular time. Therefore, such circumstances and the way they affect tourism at a general level are also perceived to play a role to identity construction in the present – in light of the norms that once prevailed and how people's tourist experiences are related to that norm in the construction of identity. Therefore, a short presentation of the socio-historical circumstances that may have influenced tourism throughout the lifespan of these best-agers will be made, thus including the socio-historical context in which the best-agers' tourist experiences are anchored in the discussion of identity construction at a later stage.

Weaver & Lawton (2006) have explored the factors that seem to have the most significant impacts on developments in tourism from 1950 and onwards, which corresponds well with the best-agers generations in terms of their travel careers and the time in which they have been formed[28]: The factors are economic, social, demographic, technological and political, some of which are more complex and wide-ranging in influence. Their relevance to this study will be described in the following.

In terms of people's participation in tourism, a link to the general economic developments in society has been outlined by a reference to Burton's four phases

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[28] None of the respondents explicitly express having travelled before the 1950s, probably because of vague recollections of these tourist experiences for those that might have – respondents were all born between 1942/43 – 1957/58

of a tourism participation sequence, which illustrates the shifts that have taken place in the relevant period when the best-ager segment is concerned.

Figure 3.4

PHASE	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS	TOURISM PARTICIPATION
One	• Mainly subsistence-based and pre-industrial • Rural, agrarian • Large gap between poor masses and small elite	• No mass participation in tourism • Elite travel to domestic and international destinations
Two	• Industrialising • Rapid growth of urban areas • Growing middle class	• Widespread participation in domestic tourism • Increased scope of international tourism by elite
Three	• Almost industrialised • Population mostly urban • Middle class becoming dominant	• Mass participation in domestic tourism, and increase in short-haul international tourism • Elite turn towards long-haul international tourism
Four	• Fully industrialised, 'high tech' orientation • Mostly urban • High levels of affluence throughout the population	• Mass participation in domestic and international (long-haul and short-haul) tourism

Source: Burton (1995) in Weaver & Lawton (2006:70).

These four phases illustrate the economic developments that came with the industrial revolution in Europe, among them affluence as the main factor of economic development in relation to tourism (Weaver & Lawton, 2006:69; Burkart & Medlik, 1974:25). The phases relevant for describing the best-agers' socio-historical context are phases three and four.

According to Weaver & Lawton (2006), phase three in western European countries, the UK at first, was initiated during the post WWII period, and a bit later also in Denmark based on interviewee statements. In this phase, the majority of the population is relatively affluent and travels to domestic and nearby international destinations is a mass tourism tendency. The so-called discretionary time aspect, i.e. time left for leisure activities and rest after work, also plays a role, in that quotas for various activities have changed. In addition, the realisation that more leisure time to consume the goods produced was needed caused a shift in focus from production to consumption, which came

along with the democratisation of labour time that provided annual holidays for all. The annual holiday makes long-haul tourism more accessible to the general population (Ibid.).

For a while now, phase four has become evident in these same countries, which can be seen in the fact that they have moved into a high tech oriented society, in which tourism is also increasingly high tech, and mass participation in domestic and international tourism is well established. In addition, discretionary household income seems as high as ever in these western economies, which may result in increased spending on luxuries such as holidays, and it is a fact that tourism expenditure worldwide has been rapidly growing,[29] and that phase four countries are major players in this respect (Weaver & Lawton, 2006). When it comes to aspects of time, the fact that work time has become more flexible in the fourth phase has changed general tourism participation and travel patterns. Leisure time has also increased in phase four and moreover, attitudes have changed from *play in order to work* to *work in order to play*, which has given more focus as well as time to spend on tourism activities. Leisure time has become an end in itself (Löfgren, 1999:273), and thereby the focus on consumption over production is reinforced (Weaver & Lawton, 2006:72-74). However, Weaver & Lawton (2006:74) note that in phase four, in order to maintain a certain lifestyle, additional time may need to be spent on extra work, which may take time away from tourism activities. This is part of the paradox in the work/leisure dichotomy that has a significant impact on tourism.

Part of the reason for exploring tourist experiences in the first place is based on the idea that demographics have changed considerably in the later phases of this development process. As a consequence, the tourist experiences that form the travel career may be influenced by changed demographic circumstances around people engaging in tourism, and they may differ from previous tourist experiences. Besides the actual baby-boom, the number of people in a household

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[29] Tourism is heavily influenced by the world economy and other global phenomena, and since the global economic crisis is a fact at the time of writing, tourism has also been affected by this in recent months and a decline in tourist arrivals has been noted (WTO, 2009). The influenza threat of early 2009 may also have influenced this decline, and thus deterioration rather than growth is now a fact. This only goes to show the dynamics of the tourism system.

has decreased in most western countries. As women have simultaneously moved into the labour force, thereby contributing to a growing discretionary household income, time and money have been made more readily available for tourism in the family.

Furthermore, life expectancy has increased, which means that life after retirement is much longer and offers more possibilities than before in terms of tourism, also in light of the fact that health concerns have generally diminished over the years for the older part of the population, perhaps as a result of decreased work hours as well. As Weaver & Lawton state:

> "From a tourism perspective, one critical issue is how much the retiring baby boomers will continue to influence the development and marketing of tourism products, as well as tourism policy" Weaver & Lawton (2006:79)

This implies that not only are the baby-boomers an important segment in tourism at this point, but may become even more significant in time because they constitute a sizeable segment, and during their retirement years may have strong incentives to travel, such as time, money and unrestricted opportunities.

Lastly, it is appropriate to mention briefly the developments in modes in transportation, since they seem to have had quite an influence on the developments in the type of tourist experiences that the interviewees within this segment have had over the years. The most significant change is the increased availability of passenger flights and the use of these by the masses for tourism purposes by 1970 (Burkart & Medlik, 1974:24). Figure 3.5 shows this development for German pleasure tourists since the 1950s, the main points of which are a heavy increase in automobile and air traffic, and on the reverse, the heavy decline of bus and railway transportation:

Figure 3.5
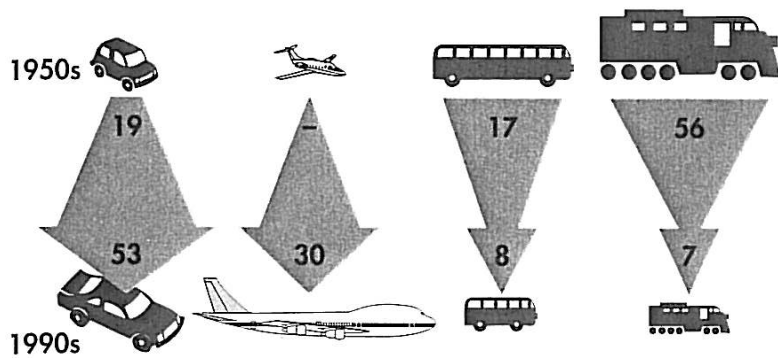
Source: Weaver & Lawton (2006:81).

It may very well be that these modes may have changed a bit since the 1990s. However, they are meant to illustrate the main influence on transportation in a tourism context, in which the best-agers have actually pursued travel. It should give an idea of the changes, the most revolutionary in terms of tourism being the fact that aircraft has become accessible to the general population (Burkart & Medlik, 1974), making long-haul international travel accessible as well.

Hereby, a short presentation of the socio-historical developments that have taken place throughout the period that these best-agers chosen for this study have travelled, have been provided. In the data material, there are several indications of this specific context playing a significant role to the tourist experiences obtained, and therefore this section will be useful to the analysis of the interviewees' tourist experiences and the links to their context.

4. Identity, Consumption & Tourism

To form a solid foundation for discussing identity in the context of tourism consumption, several theoretical perspectives will be included in this chapter. Firstly, the relationship between identity and consumption will be addressed as a central premise for this study. Precisely because consumption is assumed to entail an inherent element of identity construction, it is relevant in this context. In other words, consumption entails identity constructing features, which are essential for this study, because it provides a link between tourism, as a form of consumption, and identity construction, wherefore it will be applied here. Tourism consumption, as a distinct form of consumption, will be included in this discussion in order to understand the implications of consumption specifically in the context of tourism, and subsequently its impacts on identity constructions.

Secondly, the concept of identity will be explored further in terms of the workings of identity for the individual, both as an internal, psychological construct of who "I" am, and as an external, social construct of who "I" am in the world around me, defined according to codes of conduct in the surrounding environment and the other in it. Consequently, the display of identity that is entailed in the empirical data for this study needs to be considered in terms of both of these perspectives, since they both contribute to the ways in which identity is constructed, and since they place the individual in a multifaceted and at times contradictory environment, which is deemed important to include in explorations of identity construction as a relevant depiction of how the world works. A preceding discussion will be useful and is provided below.

Although it may seem to be an entire academic undertaking in itself, it needs to be addressed briefly that both of the terms 'identity' and 'self' are used to address this issue, and they are distinguished by their relation to the individual. Identity is used as a more generic term for what will later be discussed as personal, individual identity as well as social, collective identity, i.e. it has to do with one's personal sense of who "I" am, but also one's sense of who "I" am on a larger scale, in a group and in the world, and how others perceive the individual under these circumstances. Self is used as a more specific reference to the individual's sense of who "I" am, as perceived by the individual (self). Identity is

thus used as a broader term and in fact the main focus of this study. However, self is inevitably an aspect of this, particularly in light of the interviewees' discursive positions, as they entail self positionings, although as a means to an overall identity construction. Although this may be a somewhat simplified application of these multifaceted terms, the distinction is deemed adequate for the purpose at hand and no further elaborations seem necessary at this point.

Third and lastly, specific tourism related issues of identity will be identified through existing literature on the topic, in order to pinpoint key elements addressed previously by others. The purpose is to address tourism specifically in this connection, and to explore the field of tourism and identity in order to add new knowledge.

4.1 A Consumption Perspective

Before moving into these discussions, however, it may be useful to establish a general understanding of the role of consumption in this respect, since consumption is the overarching perspective applied for understanding identity and tourism throughout this study. A simple definition of consumption is proposed by Arnould et al. who state that consumption has to do with "*people's acquisition, use, and disposal of products, services, ideas, and experiences – their behavior as consumers*" (2004:6). This definition applies to the study at hand as a vantage point for the discussion of consumption, although consumption is here viewed specifically as consumption of tourism, which means that consumers are tourists and consumers of tourism products, services, ideas, and experiences, which become part of their consumer behaviour. Behaviour is here interpreted as an end result that goes through various processes of reflection, evaluation etc. before it is transformed into actual behaviour, e.g. acquiring ideas is behaviour at a fairly abstract mental level, although this is not explicated in the above definition. What this type of consumption entails will be explored further throughout the following sections and eventually also in the analysis.

Østergaard & Jantzen (2000) identify four approaches to the study of the consuming individual, based on the differences in perspectives on consumers and

consumption. The four approaches are outlined as historical developments, but are also assumed to co-exist throughout the history of consumer theory as a discipline, each with a peak in different historical periods, roughly ranging from 1945-1997 (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000:11). The four so-called ideal types are outlined and assembled in the table below, based on Østergaard & Jantzen's text, and the order suggests the historical development from one ideal type to the next, keeping in mind that they are by no means mutually exclusive:

Table 4.1 Developments in Consumer Theory

Historical Emergence	Early 1960s	Late 1960s	Early 1980s	Early 1990s
Perspectives	Buyer Behaviour	Consumer Behaviour	Consumer Research	Consumption Studies
Focus	Buying and how buying takes place	The process of consuming products, including before and after purchase	Consumers' everyday lives, influences of consumption on understandings of self, and creating images through consumption	Consumer culture in general, with focus on relations between consumers

The study at hand – focused on consumer identity and tourism – represents a combination of two approaches, i.e. consumer research and consumption studies, in that everyday life circumstances are taken into consideration, understandings of self are essentially related to understandings of and relations to others, and group relations are presupposed to create symbolic consumption in direction of certain identity constructions. Thus, a mix of different perspectives entailed in both approaches, and ways in which these may support each other, is applied. About the break away from the two first-mentioned approaches entailed in consumer research, it is stated:

> "[…] the consuming individual is conceived as a *tourist* who is looking for new experiences via consumption. This is not done due to a need for it or due to a need for fulfilling wants to get beyond a cognitive dissonance. Instead, it is based on a *desire* for a meaning in life (Østergaard, 1991) because the consuming individual, in this approach, uses the consumption of products and services as bricks in the construction of a meaningful life. It is an ongoing project for the consuming individual to construct meaning, and it is based on

emotions and feelings where the single consuming individual tries to create a coherent life" (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000:17)

Apart from the linkage to tourism that this quotation obviously entails, an important statement is made in saying that a desire for a meaning in life is at the core of consumption from a consumer research perspective, which is a main premise for the study at hand and the relevance of it in the first place. Moreover, it is proposed that consumption offers a way of constructing meaning in life in a coherent manner, which also plays a vital role to this study as part of the overall framework, in which the travel career perspective, i.e. coherent representations of the tourist as a consumer, that will be addressed later on, plays a central role.

Another vital premise for this study which combines the consumer research perspective with the consumption studies perspective is that in the latter, the individual is seen as a tribe member who seeks recognition from other tribe members, and thus acts according to what is supposed to be of a positive symbolic value, rather than merely out of individual choice (Østergaard & Jantzen, 2000:19). This means that meaning in life is sought not only on an individual level, as suggested by the consumer research approach, but also at a collective level in relation to others, both of which will be applied to this study. This discussion will be addressed further in later sections.[30]

The position taken on the issue of consumption is hereby sought explained as a combination between two approaches that both entail useful perspectives for this particular purpose, and the following sections will thus be based on these considerations.

4.2 The Significance and Meaning of Consumption

Viewing tourism as consumption calls attention to the fact that tourism is here to be studied from the inside out, whereby the obvious focus on the consumer, i.e. the tourist, entailed in consumer theory is crucial. Consumption as an academic topic and its relevance to the study at hand will be discussed in the following, starting with a brief introduction to the development of the consumer society, for

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[30] See section 4.3 Constructing Identity

the purpose of understanding the grounds on which this study rests and the line of thinking that comes with it.

According to McCracken (1988), who addresses the consumer revolution[31] as a significant cultural and social change in western society, a companion to the industrial revolution often neglected in the social sciences (McKendrick, 1982), there are three defining moments in the history of consumption when consumption changed dramatically in scale or character, contributing to the gradually increasing significance of consumption in modern society.

McCracken points firstly to 16th century Elizabethan England, where consumption became a means of government and social competition in the sense that Elizabeth I used excessive extravagant consumption to communicate power and status not only inside British society, but also to the outside world. The noblemen of that time were encouraged to arrange extravagant celebrations and events in honour of the queen to express their status and position in society, whereby social competition was reinforced. Likewise, Williams points to the issue of status competition in France in the era of Louis XIV (McCracken, 1988:8), and consumption as a political instrument, a so-called method of rule at the same time (Ibid.). Although at the time social competition took place at the top of the social ladder, as part of an elitist method for signalling wealth and superiority, it is assumed that in time, such elitist norms and perceptions may eventually have seeped through to the masses. This is supported by the trickle-down effect proposed by Simmel (1904) and also mentioned by McCracken in this context (1988:6), in which it is suggested that goods eventually become accessible to the masses. Western culture is therefore claimed to be dependent on and integrated with the new consumer goods and practices that appeared from this point onwards (Ibid.).

Secondly, McCracken points to the 18th century, where new opportunities for purchase arose. New markets emerged, which widened the range of the consumers' choices and gave more consumers a chance to take part in

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[31] The consumer revolution entails the idea that goods and products which had previously been reserved for the upper classes became available to the public at large. It took place roughly from the late 16th to the 19th century (see e.g. McCracken, 1998).

consumption, all of which gave rise to the consumer society. All in all, these changes address the fact that consumption had taken on a different form, constructing new meanings, which are also found in contemporary society (McCracken, 1988:22). McKendrick et al. expresses the effects of changed consumption patterns on social life as follows:

> "What men and women had once hoped to inherit from their parents, they now expected to buy for themselves. What were once bought at the dictate of need, were now bought at the dictate of fashion. What were once bought for life, might now be bought several times over. What were once available only on high days and holidays through the agency of markets, fairs and itinerant pedlars were increasingly made available every day but Sunday through the additional agency of an ever-advancing network of shops and shopkeepers. As a result 'luxuries' came to be seen as mere 'decencies', and 'decencies' came to be seen as 'necessities'. Even 'necessities' underwent a dramatic metamorphosis in style, variety and availability" (McKendrick et al. (1982:I) in McCracken, 1988:17).

It is stressed that consumption has taken on a different form and in many ways has become a more influential and obvious factor of life, perhaps to begin with only for the upper class, as described above in the 16th century, but eventually for the masses as well, which goes hand in hand with the aforementioned trickle-down effect. Via these changes, consumption has also taken on a symbolic side, which did not previously exist, as an addition to the functional side of product consumption that has always existed. Mukerji (1983) speaks of hedonistic[32] consumerism[33] as a non-utilitarian form of consumerism, and in doing so, stresses the point that consumer goods carry cultural meaning in that goods become a medium for the expression, transformation, and even the innovation of existing cultural ideas, adding to the notion that consumption is symbolic by nature (McCracken, 1988:9).

Lastly, McCracken points to the 19th century where a new consumer lifestyle emerged, in which interaction between persons and things increased, new marketing techniques were employed, and more and more social meaning was

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[32] A pleasure-seeking type of consumption tied closely to tourism consumption
[33] Consumerism entails the idea that one's personal happiness is attached to consumption (see e.g. Campbell, 1987)

transferred onto products and thereby implicitly onto the act of consumption and the actor, i.e. the consumer (McCracken, 1988:11-24). By the same token, McCracken points to the possibility of consumers' fascination with consumer goods in the 19th century, because these objects were "*increasingly the residence of cultural meaning and new opportunities for defining self and the world*" (Ibid.:24). This was apparently an underestimated element of the impacts of consumerism on social change at the time of writing, emphasising the meaning of consumer goods in people's social worlds.

McCracken further concludes that the historical significance of consumerism stands out because it was probably the first time in history that social change was caused continuously by a nonreligious agent at a level that changed every feature of social life (Ibid.:29-30), which is still holds true. He moreover states:

> "Western, developed societies have distinguished themselves as an ethnographic oddity by their willingness to submit to continual change. Unlike "traditional" worlds, the modern West has made itself, in the words of Lévi-Strauss (1966:233), a "hot" society, one committed by ideological principle to its own transformation through continual change." (McCracken, 1988:131)

The argument is proposed that goods, as an instrument of change, become a means with which a group can negotiate its identity, which is a significant element of consumption in contemporary society. Negotiation is of course assumed also to take place at an individual level, which is supported by Belk, Mayer and Bahn (1982) in stating that individual choices of consumer goods, e.g. leisure activities, are often "*rich in implied and inferred meanings about the consumer making these choices*" (1982:523). Simultaneously, it is argued that a need for continuity might emerge, and consumer goods might also serve this specific purpose. Culture for example, as an intangible, abstract concept by nature, may be concretized by consumer objects, which thereby establishes a sense of stability, consistency and continuity (Ibid.). McCracken further adds that if goods were a substantial part of the making of Western society, it continues to be so, and consumer goods are therefore means to the self-transformation inherent in Western society, also in the present (1988:130).

It is hereby described how there has been a historical development from a predominantly functional to a highly symbolic direction for consumption, which entails that power and status may be communicated through consumption; new meanings of consumption have emerged, and socially valuable meanings have been applied to consumer products and the act of consumption. This is essential for understanding identity construction in tourism, mainly because of fairly similar developments in tourism consumption, which have now moved in a more symbolic direction. For example, the grand tour as a phenomenon of the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe had a specific functional purpose of education and learning. The first tourists resembling today's mass tourists were recreational tourists (Weaver & Lawton, 2006:63), whereas now it is argued that tourism and experiences in general are a way of making sense of the world in which we live, and of constructing ourselves in that world, as stated by Østergaard & Jantzen.[34] It is, however, also assumed that these early types of travelling also entailed symbolism, e.g. symbols of class or status, which indicate that these things are not clear-cut but may entail various degrees of functionality as well as symbolism. The symbolism within tourism as modern consumption is nevertheless indicated by the desire for sense-making when it comes to shaping world views and the understanding of self entailed in modern tourism.

This is not to say that no functional and utilitarian characteristics exist within tourism products, but they are essentially complex products that offer great potential for both, even though the general developments may point in direction of symbolism. Certain elements of tourism may be functional to a greater extent than others, e.g. a plane ticket or a hotel room are assumed to be predominantly functional rather than symbolic, although parts of these products may be symbolic, e.g. flying first class – or not – or staying at a specific hotel or type of hotel. Moreover, tourism products are claimed to have shifted from luxuries to decencies, wherefore they serve a less utilitarian purpose, but nevertheless have a function in the lives of the consumers, e.g. creating a stronger bond within the family, or creating a base for relaxation and recharging, both of which play a role in life after a holiday.

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[34] See introduction to this chapter (4)

Tourism consumption in this context is thus assumed to entail elements of functionality as well as a high degree of symbolism that is vital for this study. Although functionality is seen as an implicit means to symbolic uses of tourism, and thus is quite important as well, the following sections will focus on symbolic consumption in more detail, because the relation to identity construction concerns symbolic consumption more so than functional consumption, due to the fact that identity relies on interpretations by others of the symbolic actions that are undertaken.

4.2.1 Symbolic Consumption

As just mentioned, the symbolic value attached to consumer goods has been acknowledged for decades, and the idea that self-concept plays a role in determining human behaviour is also well researched (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967:24), which offers a possible link between symbolic tourism consumption and actual tourist behaviour that goes through perceptions of one's own identity, and the need to display that identity.

Martineau (1957) took the position that product or brand image symbolises buyer personalities, and Belk (1988) contends that possessions are symbolic extensions of the self. Levy (1959) noted that the concept of the *economic man*[35] that used to prevail in philosophies of business needed revision, due to the less functional and more symbolic side to consumption – an attached meaningfulness that might be illogical from the perspective of the economic man. He adds: "*Modern goods are recognized as essentially psychological things which are symbolic of personal attributes and goals and of social patterns and strivings*" (Levy, 1959:119), implying that tourism, as a modern good, is symbolic at its core. By the same token Pandya & Venkatesh conclude in a study of symbolic communication in different consumption contexts that consumers are very aware of and therefore use the fact that products carry values of lifestyle and status (1992:149). This is supported by Solomon (1983) and Johnson & Thomas (1992) in referring to the social information inherent in products used to shape self-image, which is thus also the case in the context of the study at hand, where

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[35] The economic man refers to the consumer concerned about getting the most out of his money, both in terms of quantity and quality.

tourist experience is explored as a means to shape and form identity as it is sought projected through discourse.

The claims that Levy put forward in 1959 also entail aspects that may be directly linked to tourism consumption, the most significant in this context being that once the basic existential needs are satisfied, humans will search for a more abstract level of satisfaction, all part of what he refers to as *the wave of human preoccupation and self-examination* (Ibid.:117), which concurs with other theories like Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs that is specifically based on this contention. Such theories have been contested later on though, e.g. by Arnould et al. (2004), and Pearce & Lee (2005), for being too static in their assumptions,[36] since needs do not necessarily occur in a specific order according to existential circumstances, but may also spring from a social dimension in the surrounding environment, which encourage or prescribe people to act in certain ways. For example, a particular type of clothes for a wedding ceremony, which are socially and culturally prescribed, may be prioritised over food on the table for significantly longer time, which suggests that at times social needs do take priority over existential needs.

Another significant claim put forward by Levy (1959) was that all commercial products carry with them an element of symbolism, which determines consumers' assessments of a given product and eventually the decision to purchase, that is, if a product is deemed desirable in terms of symbolic value, either consciously or subconsciously. On the same note, Grubb & Grathwohl state that "*the self represents a totality which becomes a principal value around which life revolves, something to be safe-guarded and if possible, to be made still more valuable*" (1967:24), indicating that an individual will tend to use the consumption of goods as a means to enhance his or her self-concept.

This adds to the contention that an act of purchase – of a tourism product as well as any other – is affected by the self-concept of the individual, i.e. the buyer, and thus presumably affects motivation to buy in the first place, and therefore, identity construction may as such be an initial motivation and eventually affect

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[36] See also section 5.3 The Role of the Travel Career

behaviour as well. Grubb & Grathwohl (1967) termed this the self-conception approach to understanding consumer behaviour. The approach implies that consumption of symbols is a means to self-enhancement and is based on the following assumptions:

1. An individual does have a self-concept of himself
2. The self-concept is of value to him
3. Because this self-concept is of value to him, an individual's behaviour will be directed toward the furtherance and enhancement of his self-concept
4. An individual's self-concept is formed through the interaction process with parents, peers, teachers, and significant others
5. Goods serve as social symbols and, therefore, are communication devices for the individual
6. The use of these good-symbols communicates meaning to the individual himself and to others, causing an impact on the intra-action and/or the interaction processes and, therefore, an effect on the individual's self-concept (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967:25-26)

This approach thus entails that not only is enhancement of one's identity an individual process that is central in the individual's life, evident through statements 1-3, but just as importantly, it is also a social process highly reliant on social experience in order to determine which goods will have the desired effect on the self-concept, by matching the self with the meaning of a good, as addressed in statements 5 and 6. In addition, the self-concept is shaped and enhanced by social recognition given by significant reference groups, as statement 4 implies, an essential feature of symbolic value and meaning creation, as noted by Johnson & Thomas (1992:58). A subsequent assumption is that social meanings are fluctuating, because social symbols are likely to change over time, and thus change meanings of consumption of specific goods. This is congruent with another one of Pandya & Venkatesh's conclusions that "*a product does not continue to convey the same information forever*" (1992:149), wherefore discourse may also play a central role in negotiating identity when meanings are changing, which will be a central element in addressing identity in tourism, particularly in the light of applying the travel career.

It may be deducted from this that the travel career aspect that is applied to this study plays an important role in terms of exploring such changes, and that the articulation of reasoning behind, perceptions of and evaluations of travelling may carry valuable information of self-conceptions within the individual tourist, and thus identity construction through tourism consumption may become evident within this framework. The following sections will briefly address tourism consumption as a particular type of consumption in the context of identity construction, which will constitute the final aspect of consumption that is going to be addressed in this chapter.

4.2.2 Tourism Consumption

In many respects, tourism is perceived a key element of modern society by several theorists, and to understand the impact of tourism on the individual's life, it may be necessary to include modernity in this context. MacCannell notes that "*our first apprehension of modern civilization, it seems to me, emerges in the mind of the tourist*" (1976:1), and further concludes that the tourist might be a valuable model for exploring modernity in general. The tourist is thus perceived to entail the essence of modernity.

Such a statement rests on specific perceptions that modern society is by definition unstable, fragmented, alienating, inauthentic and thus unreal, wherefore reality is assumed to be elsewhere, i.e. "*in other historical periods, and other cultures, in purer, simpler life-styles*" (MacCannell, 1976:3). This is where the tourist mind becomes a reflection of a general perception within modern society, and tourism becomes a so-called quest for the real, authentic life that is missing in modern society (Cohen, 2004:103). This poses the question that Wang presents: "*Does not tourism indicate that there may be something wrong with the existential condition of modernity*?" (2000:11). This particular notion is fundamental to the search for an understanding of the self in unfamiliar environments that is entailed in tourism, and is furthermore related to the assumption that consumption, i.e. tourism consumption, may be used to find meaning in life. Likewise, Krippendorf argues that "*man was not born a tourist,*" but travel needs have been created by the social structures and lifestyles of modern society (1987:xiv). Hence, tourism is suggested to be a counter-reaction

to a general development and an inherent feature of modern society in which the search for the "real" is directed inward towards the self rather than outward towards a society that has already been deemed unreal (Berger, 1973:88).

MacCannell (1976) and Wang (1999) both address the search for authenticity as an essential part of the condition for tourism, but in very different ways, the former reflects on an outward authenticity in the surrounding environment, and the latter on an inward authenticity within the individual itself. Wang (1999) uses the terms objective and existential authenticity to describe the two, and objective authenticity refers to the perception that authenticity lies in the objects observed, e.g. a historical tourist sight, whereas existential authenticity refers to a sense of an authentic self, which may be found within the individual tourist in any kind of environment. In this respect, MacCannell (1976) and Wang (1999) each represent a period when certain perceptions prevail, and the development towards authenticity as a feeling within, which the notion of existential authenticity represents, goes hand in hand with the abovementioned conditions of modernity moving towards reality within. Wang (1999) makes the point that because of this shift in focus, the search for authenticity is still a highly relevant element to the tourist condition, although authenticity may in this respect serve a somewhat different purpose. The pertinence of identity in tourism is hereby suggested, in that an inward search for the real self implies searching for ones identity, and since tourism sets the scene for this quest for authenticity, a link between identity and tourism becomes evident.

On the basis of these considerations, tourism may be an expression of the quest for reality and self that characterises modern society described above, but tourism in late modernity has been classified to a great extent as mass tourism, which contradicts several factors and perceptions of the past, as pointed out by Wang:

> "[…] for a long period of intellectual history, travel and movement have not been seen as essential features of the human condition. On the contrary, the sedentary state is perceived to be a characteristic of civilization. As for the hordes, they are usually defined as people who have not yet been civilized and remain barbarous. The same was true for the gypsies in the past. Indeed, in civilized society the movement

of populations is often associated with human tragedy: war, pestilence, flood, and drought" (Wang, 2000:1)

Wang also states that tourism in modern society, and late modern society in particular, has become an accepted part of life, and even a habit for some people (Ibid.:13). Graburn concurs by stating that travelling has become the norm for *normal adults*, and those who are unable to travel may thus be considered outcasts (1989:23). Haukeland also sees travelling as a marker of social well-being (1990:179). Mass tourism thus contradicts past world views, and may as such make a statement in itself as a mark of a new direction in social structures and perceptions, as pointed out by Graburn. This entails that tourism is for the masses in today's society and accepted as a necessary and important part of life, almost as a human right (Wang, 2000:13). Again, the shift from luxury to decency and then eventually to necessity becomes evident as an exemplification of this.

According to Britton, tourism is: "*one of the quintessential features of mass consumer culture and modern life*" (1991:451), and the significance of consumption in modern society has already been established previously. It thus seems that mass consumption and tourism may be linked together to form a complex foundation for exploring identity construction as a way of making sense of the world in which we exist, i.e. modern society with all of its contradictions and existential conditions, some of which have already been pointed out.

In addition, Wang states in relation to the social construction of identity in tourism: "*tourists are away from home to experience the heightened consciousness of self by searching for reference images and signs of others*" (Wang, 2000:2), implying that the quest for authenticity, i.e. an authentic self, entails a notion of and opposition to the other, which is most often naturally embedded in tourism, as part of most tourist attractions, being in an unusual environment, being subjected to unfamiliar customs etc. Therefore, addressing identity implicitly relies on a notion of the "other" as well as an eventually increased understanding of the self, which will be dealt with in greater detail later in this chapter.[37]

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[37] See section 4.3 Constructing Identity

Tourism consumption is hereby argued to be central to an increased understanding of the meaning of tourism to individual tourists living in contemporary society, i.e. what Bauman (2000) terms *liquid modernity*.[38] In obtaining this understanding, identity is further argued to be an important component, due to still increasing feelings of uncertainty and chaos that are inherent in liquid modernity. A more changeable society demands new ways of organising our lives, according to Bauman (2000), to create a sense of stability in an unstable world, and because of this, people need to be highly flexible and ready to adapt to new circumstances, e.g. in terms of understanding and negotiating self. This may very well be a fragmented process, but nevertheless one that adds up to the overall narrative of identity explored throughout this study. Therefore, the following sections are devoted to creating a foundation for exploring the concept of identity and self to the extent that it is applied to this study.

4.3 Constructing Identity

> "[…] more fundamentally they [people] are products of history, culture, and society. They are socially constructed. Their views, opinions, values, activities, and means of communication are learnt or acquired from others. Their behaviour is largely governed by norms, or agreements between people, concerning appropriate or acceptable ways to behave and opinions to hold under particular circumstances. Without such agreement, communication, which lies at the core of human existence, would be impossible […]" (Hogg & Abrams, 1988:1)

The above quotation illustrates the initial position taken throughout this study on the issue of identity, which is that it is socially constructed, and thus relies heavily on external influences from the surroundings and on the interplay

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[38] The uses of modernity are various throughout academic literature. Late modernity implies a continuation of modernity, as it is claimed that there have been no markedly different developments that call for a redefinition of the term modernity. This contradicts arguments of postmodernity, which goes beyond modernity, and thus implies a new era of philosophical thought. Liquid modernity is here used as a reflection of both views, since Bauman's term entails developments in late modernity that resemble modernity, but are radical enough to require a distinction from modernity, in Bauman's terms, solid modernity.

between the surroundings and the individual. This view is in contrast to a traditional psychological approach, in which identity is developed internally in the mind of the individual only, and in which a stable core is the essence of identity.[39] However, developments within the genre of social psychology have suggested a socially attached conception of identity, which is more dynamic, while still considerate of the psychological self. Tajfel & Turner (1979), who will be addressed as this discussion progresses, are great contributors to this approach with their social identity theory, which as the name implies entails a social side to identity theory, as well as the personal side that has traditionally been focused upon. In more recent writings, Jenkins (2008) states that identity has often been subjected to these static interpretations in which it is addressed as "*some<u>thing</u> that simply <u>is</u>*" rather than looking at identity as a "*process of 'being' or 'becoming',*" and as he further states, it is "*never a final or settled matter*" (Jenkins, 2008:17).

Moreover, the contention above that social constructions of identity may affect behaviour is an essential prerequisite for the application of this study to future considerations of tourism, which Jenkins also enhances by stating that the act of identification is an active process that is done, not a passive object that can be had (Ibid.:5). It is hereby indicated that identity is *doing*, and thus may be reflected in behaviour.[40] Another important factor in this quote is that communication is said to play a central part in shaping social norms by which identity is constructed and measured, which means that a focus on communicating certain positions that one takes are important for identity construction. This supports the methodological choice of in-depth interviews communicating tourism norms as a means to understand identity construction in that same context.[41]

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[39] Erikson (1968) is a representative of this tradition.

[40] This direction will, however, not be explored directly in this study, as the main objective is to address other issues, mainly the discursive construction of identity in the context of tourism, and not the behavioural aspects of identity construction in this respect.

[41] It should be mentioned though that interviewing also actively contributes to constructing an understanding of identity, which will be dealt with in the methodology chapter – Chapter 2.

This section will thus address the implications of social constructions of identity, specifically in the shape of an in-group/out-group perspective as a measure for appropriateness of certain behaviour and opinions, since this particular issue seems vital for individual understandings of identity in the surrounding world. The theory of social identity, developed by Tajfel & Turner (1979), will be included in this discussion, because it carries central elements to the understanding of the individual as a group member, which is a prerequisite to identity as a social construct. Moreover, social identity theory suggests that both society and individual are contributing factors to identity construction, which is also a perspective supported e.g. by Deschamps & Devos (1998) included in the discussion below. This is also a basic assumption of this study.

Subsequently, throughout the analysis, tourism consumption as a social construction of identity will be explored by way of interviews with tourists that are assumed to express group membership in various ways, which eventually project understandings of identity in relation to tourism – the main objective of this study. It is thus necessary to form a basis for this discussion by looking into various theoretical perspectives on this matter, the primary ones being social and personal identity, which hereby follows.

4.3.1 Social and Personal Identity

There is general theoretical agreement on the fact that all individuals contain multiple identities, i.e. have different groups to which they feel that they belong, e.g. at a religious, political, ethnic, cultural, or generational level (Hogg & Abrams, 1988:2; Jenkins, 2008:6). The general perception in contemporary identity research is thus that individuals have several flexible identities, as opposed to previous perceptions of a static core of one's being.

Obviously, the different levels of identity might overlap at times. In a tourism context, a person may be both an adventurous traveller and a family traveller, but these co-existing identities may very well serve different purposes and carry different values at different points in time, e.g. when a holiday is planned. This means that membership of a specific group may vary in terms of significance, depending on the situation. In this context, Jenkins (2008) suggests that group

realities only exist when people think they do, and that they belong to specific groups. He further states: "*Only the individuals who constitute supposed groups – their members – can be said to exhibit these attributes, not the groups themselves*" (Jenkins, 2008:10). It is thus implied that the group only exists in the individual members, although at times it may be depicted to almost have a mind of its own. This means that people themselves play a central role in constructing the group and their own relation to it, but nevertheless, there seems to be an element of membership that relies on other members and not only on the individual itself.

These group memberships imply that you can be either in or out of the group, based on the appropriateness of one's behaviour and opinions. The paradox is that group membership indicates inclusion and a sense of belonging, but as a consequence there has to be an element of exclusion for those who do not comply with the attributes that exist somewhere in the esoteric structure of this group formation. Thus, there is always a risk of exclusion, wherefore a constant need to construct and express one's membership occurs – or a need to deconstruct membership if undesirable. It is this inherent communication of identity in tourism consumption that forms the basis for this discussion.

Group membership is to be understood as an implicit contract between group members, more than an actual, explicit agreement that one can opt in and out of as one pleases. Hence it is an esoteric structure that exists among members (Turner & Bourhis, 1996:28), and within the members as stated by Jenkins above. It can be an unconscious membership at times, which can be ascribed to the individual by the collective rather than the individual choosing membership for him- or herself, and sometimes it is the other way around. To give an example, the terms 'tourist' and 'traveller' carry certain connotations, the former very often negative, and the latter more positive.[42] For that specific reason most people may aspire to position themselves as part of the traveller group rather than the tourist group because it is more desirable. Individuals attempt to assign themselves membership of that group, but whether or not that means that this

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[42] There are indications in tourism literature that *traveller* is perceived as a more positive term than *tourist* (Dann, 1999; Elsrud, 2001), which is also confirmed by the data material for this study.

particular individual is in fact a member of the traveller in-group is questionable, because a certain collective agreement needs to confirm this membership in order for the individual to feel accepted in the group. This indicates that the individual's own perception of group membership may be completely different from the collective perception, i.e. personal identity and social identity, which will be addressed later, are contrasting.

There might not be a right and wrong in this case, since both individual and collective perceptions are valid points of reference to the construction of identity, although a conflict between individual and collective perceptions of identity might obviously occur, and an imbalance may arise when identity comes into play, e.g. if a certain status in a group is sought obtained, and the desired outcome is not granted, giving the individual reason to revise self-perceptions. As Jenkins (2008) also points out, elements of identity are not disinterested in the sense that people might at times act upon interests that may conflict with their identity as it is usually perceived, because identity may be constructed to fit interests of the constructor rather than the individual in question, and this may work at an individual as well as a collective level.

However, looking at identity as a social construct, there is obviously a fundamental striving to become like other members of a desirable group, who as a whole set the norm for what is desirable, i.e. to fit into a collective frame of reference for a desirable identity, and this is obviously completely disregarded or overlooked in the above example. The point is then that there might be an individual agenda in terms of constructing a self-perception that may be satisfactory on an individual level, but as soon as the collective perspective is taken into consideration, other elements come into play that may change fundamental perceptions of self, because self-perception relies on a collective agreement and confirmation of group membership of a desirable group. For that specific reason, it is also a prerequisite for the stability of one's self-perception that identity is confirmed – again and again – at a collective level, which again relates to the constant need for communicating identity as an integral part of obtaining confirmation.

As mentioned, the need to feel a sense of uniqueness as well as a sense of belonging are both central elements in the construction of identity, i.e. the struggle that Deschamps & Devos refer to as "*[…] social visibility versus conformity, on short the conflict of the individual versus the group*" (1998:2-3). This opposition between individual and group is also made into a distinction between personal and social identity, which are both inherent yet contradictory elements within the individual. According to Deschamps & Devos, this distinction is based on the idea that…

> "[…] every individual is characterized by social features which show his or her membership of a group or category, on the one hand, and by personal features or individual characteristics which are more specific, more idiosyncratic, on the other" (Deschamps & Devos in Worchel et al., 1998:2).

By this definition, it may be said that social identity has to do with sameness or similarity within a group, but at the same time this entails an aspect of differentiation from other groups. Likewise, personal identity has to do with difference from other individuals, who are essentially members of the same group to which a person is trying to ascribe sameness among individuals, while at the same time having a sense of being able to identify that person's personal identity, i.e. uniqueness, which requires a level of recognition of sameness in time and space within that person (Ibid.:3). Thus, both concepts are equivocal and complex in themselves, and also in comparison, which suggests a complex composition of sameness and difference that operates on several levels, i.e. psychological and sociological, to construct identity, and arguably affects behaviour as a consequence (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994:79-80).

Thereby, it is also noted that interpersonal as well as intergroup relations are at play, in that personal identity lies between individuals distinguishing between self and others, and social identity lies between groups distinguishing between us and them. Since these levels are intertwined and both contribute to identity construction, shifts may take place between them, i.e. when a particular group is emphasised, a shift to an intergroup level takes place, and when certain personal characteristics are emphasised, a shift to an interpersonal level takes place (Ibid. p.5-6), both of which are part of the individual. This may in very specific ways

contribute to understandings of the tourist and identity construction in this respect, in that shifts between these levels may become evident through the further analysis.

In terms of intergroup distinctions, the social identity theory that Tajfel & Turner finalised in 1979, focussing on the process of identity, suggests that there are four central elements to group identification: 1) categorisation, which entails labelling self and other; 2) identification, which entails association with in-groups; 3) comparison, which entails comparing selves with out-groups and seeing a favourable bias towards the group to which we belong; and 4) psychological distinctiveness, which entails a desire for own identity to be both distinct from and positively compared with other groups (Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994:78). These four elements all contribute to understandings of group membership and to the way the other is conceptualised by the individual in any given group. There is thus an ingrained assumption of a desire for a positive identification of self and the group to which one belongs in this theory, which is essentially what causes the need for differentiation in the first place. On this note, Deschamps & Devos also state about the relationship between personal and social identity:

> "[…] it must be underlined that on the basis of this asserted dichotomy between interindividual and intergroup behaviour, one can say that the stronger social identity is, the less important is personal identity, and the more prominent a personal identity is, the less the individual needs a social identity, since social identity and personal identity satisfy the same need for a positive self-image" (Deschamps & Devos in Worchel et al., 1998:6)

It is thus evident that the positive identification of self, also underlying for social identity theory, is reflected in these different levels of behaviour, as it seems to be an inherent need ingrained in all human beings. In addition, another claim put forward by Deschamps & Devos (1998) is that when membership of a particular group becomes more desirable, for whatever reason, the self will be emphasised less, i.e. focus on personal identity will be dimed while social identity will be illuminated, and moreover, intergroup differentiation will be emphasised and vice versa, which indicates that these two dimensions may be mutually exclusive in

the sense that only one of them exists at any given point in time, and simultaneously, they are negatively dependent, as one cannot be explained without the other, even though it may rule out the other (Ibid. p.8).

The above contention may be taken quite literally, i.e. to the extent that a person is only focussed on one of these two levels of identity for a period of time, where one or the other is more desirable to that person. It may thereby also be the case that these shifts become evident in discourse meant to communicate identity, and thereby an application to the interviews conducted for the purpose of this study may illustrate different identity positions in the light of tourism and past tourist experiences of the interviewees. By the same token, it is mentioned by Eiser & Smith (1972) that because of the ingrained desire to be positively evaluated, people tend to prefer "*favourable rather than accurate evaluations of themselves*" (in Taylor & Moghaddam, 1994:79), which obviously affects the communication of accurate identity to become desirable identity, when discourse of selves are concerned. This will therefore become a useful element in the analysis of tourist experiences and identity. The four elements entailed in social identity theory just mentioned might also be helpful for the purpose of group and other identification in a tourism context, which will support the above identity positions explored in the analysis.[43]

4.4 Identity in Tourism

The relationship between identity and tourism has already been mentioned, and the purpose of this section is to explore various perspectives on this particular issue, which constitutes the core topic of research throughout this dissertation. The purpose of this section is more specifically to explore existing literature and perspectives on this topic in order to determine the nature of previous studies that incorporate aspects of identity in relation to tourism, and thus also determine the focal points that have been explored at this point in time.

This section is divided into three subsections according to topics that carry an aspect of interest and relevance to this study. Moreover, it needs to be stressed that the texts included are not meant to portray an exhaustive list of the existing

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[43] See chapter 9 Step 3 - Constructing Identity in Tourist Experience

literature on the topic at hand, but more so to illustrate some of the central points of relevance in relation to the central perspectives of this study. The three subsections defined as the core themes by which these texts can be labelled are: tourism and the other, tourism narratives, and tourism as transition, which will be explained and explored further in the following.

4.4.1 Tourism and the Other

As a starting point, a few comments on tourism and the other will be made, more as an addition to what has already been presented above about the concept of other than an actual independent topic. Firstly, a statement that underlines the identity constructing potential in tourism, as previously addressed, and some additional observations.

> "[…] considering that travelers can acquire experiences and undergo transformations, the journey may be seen as a type of *passage* in time. The interlocking dimensions of time and space make the journey a potent metaphor that symbolizes the simultaneous discovery of self and the Other. It is precisely this capacity for mirroring the inner and the outer dimensions that makes possible the 'inward voyage', whereby a movement through geographical space is transformed into an analogue for the process of introspection" (Galani-Moutafi, 2000:205)

Hereby, it is suggested that tourism may be a means to a transformation of self, symbolised in the journey, that in fact takes place in tourism, not only physically in space, but also mentally as a time for introspection related to the movement in space, and transferred into individual experience, which in time enhances the understanding of self. The other is thus illustrated to be very present in a tourism context, both through a theoretical lens, as just described, and in the light of the data material for this study, in which there are frequent references to the other, as the analysis will explore further.

An inherent element of understanding one's self and one's own identity is thus to understand the other, as discussed previously, which becomes a way of gaining insight into the world in which one exists and of making sense of oneself in that world. The other in a tourism context thereby exists in two different ways: 1)

being away from everyday life routines, normalised, profane life, as opposed to the sacred life of travelling, i.e. a type of spatial other as described above; and 2) encountering other tourists and locals, who might be radically different from oneself in terms of cultural traits, norms etc.

There might be a paradox in this focus on the other, however, because it may be seen as an opposition to the tourist, which it also often is, but nevertheless it is also part of the attraction in tourism. Munt (1994) points out this contradiction in a reference to a small company offering: "*exploratory holidays to those keen on discovering real qualities and real places […], the intention is to know the other side so rarely seen*" (Munt, 1994:105). This statement is clearly related to the search for authenticity already addressed as a central element of tourism, and moreover, may be linked to the previous discussion of a search for an authentic self through encounters with the other.

Therefore, it seems that the other in tourism may have different 'faces', i.e. space, time, attraction, opposition, but nevertheless serves the purpose of creating a basis for understanding the self, whether it be by exploring one's authentic self in an unfamiliar environment, or by discovering what one is not when relating to other tourists and locals in that environment. Either way, the journey entailed in touristic activity may transform the individual in the encounter with other of some sort.

So, even though the other is seen as a contrast with which the tourist compares, the other is also inherent in the tourist's search for self, whereby the touristic self and other are not independent elements of the tourist experience, as was also stated in the above discussion of self and other.[44] Although tourism has become somewhat of a necessity, or an inherent part of modern life, the idea of the sacred holiday might still apply, and certainly the idea of the other seems very much present in modern tourism, which adds to the perception of the other being away from and very different and separate from home life and the familiar. The contention is that by view of the other, the self becomes more distinct, and through tourism, which entails an intrinsic element of the other, the self is thus

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[44] See section 4.3.1 Social and Personal Identity

more obviously explored. This means that the other is a central analytical instrument in exploring identity in tourism, which will also be applied to this study.

4.4.2 Tourism Narratives

It has been claimed that the meanings of travel and tourism are often revealed through storytelling, which is guiding assumption in this study, and as such needs to be addressed theoretically as well. According to Dann (1996) tourism is without a doubt grounded in discourse, as most people would agree without further evidence that tourists are quite talkative, eagerly describing and exchanging their experiences with an audience (Noy, 2004:78), wherefore a certain level of communication around tourism and tourist experiences is bound to take place. Nevertheless, Dann (1996) also claims that there is a lack of research on tourists concerning language, communication, rhetoric etc., and as a consequence, research on the implications for constructions of personal and collective identities is also lacking.

Likewise, Desforges (2000) points out the lack of research including actual tourists' statement of what tourism means to them, which also emphasises the relevance of this study, where tourists' own stories about tourist experiences constitute the empirical data and is treated as a way into the construction of identity via tourism consumption. Additionally, according to Noy (2004) and as addressed in the analysis,[45] discursive positionings are equally if not more important than actual behaviour in constructing identity, again a reason for putting increased focus on discourse in this respect. Desforges describes the role of narratives in relation to tourism and identity as follows:

> "Telling stories is a central part of conveying the meanings of travel. Like all stories, however, they have to be worked upon and built up if they are to communicate to others in a form that will confirm their identity" (Desforges, 2000:938).

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[45] See chapter 7 Step 1 - Implication of the Tourist Experience + chapter 9 Step 3 - Constructing Identity in Tourist Experience

This quote thus entails elements of negotiating identity according to changes in everyday life and in tourism, and according to changed perceptions of desirable identities and the symbolism that tourist experiences carry. It is, however, also noted by Giddens (in Desforges, 2000:931-932) that an ongoing story of the self is required to provide a sense of continuity in one's identity, thus the story facilitates both change and continuity, as suggested above. In addition, Giddens (1991) speaks of a "*fateful moment*" in which self and identity are formed or transformed, i.e. constituted and negotiated, in the stories that are told (Giddens in Noy, 2004), moments which may very well be acts of tourism or specific tourist experiences. Thus, the idea of constant negotiation by means of specific tourist experiences that may be used narratively to convey identity is central to this study, and therefore such means will be explored in the analysis.

Another element in this relation is the travel career concept, which has already been mentioned. This study deals with narrated tourist experiences that are explored in relation to each other, i.e. in the framework of the travel career, forming a whole, which is essentially an expression of negotiated identity at a particular point in time, namely the present. In this connection Noy (2004) says:

> "The term narrative or story generally denotes the sequential linkage of certain selected events in one's life, depicting a personal trajectory that begins in the past and continues into the present" (Noy, 2004:84)

It may thus be argued that this *personal trajectory* in a tourism context is the travel career – a series of *selected events*, i.e. the tourist experiences that one chooses for the purpose of constructing the narrative of one's travel career and oneself in it. By the same token, Giddens (in Desforges, 2000:931-932) points to the fact that an autobiographical account requires a certain level of reflexive ability in order to position events in a coherent way as part of one's own past and future, i.e. the story told, but it also provides tourists with the opportunity to construct "*a narrative of the role of travel in their lives, and the ways in which they use it to present themselves to other people*" (Desforges, 2000:932).

This means that the travel career, in its narrative form, which is accessible in the data material for this study, is reflecting personal interpretations, reflexivity, of

tourist experiences that may be used for the construction of a desirable identity, and more importantly is also reflecting the way in which these experiences may be used narratively to position oneself according to a desirable identity, e.g. to construct or confirm it. Elsrud (2001:598) describes other central functions of the narrative as follows:

> "Identity is not regarded as a fixed state which is already within a person, waiting to be (re-)discovered, but rather as a continuous construct describing an ongoing life-process, multifaceted, and changeable. As such, it is closely related to the "life-story" concept encompassing not only an individual's biographical ordering of events (Alheit 1994), but also all the bits and pieces, the discrepancies and the detours, which are healed and connected through self-narratives (Ochs & Capps 1996)."

Hence, the narrative is not only used to position or confirm desirable identity, but also to navigate through undesirable positions that may otherwise seem out of the context of one's present identity. In other words, the narrative is used to construct a coherent story of the self, regardless of different positions taken in the past. This argument goes well with the aforementioned, that it is discourse more than actual behaviour that is used to construct identity. This concerns an external as well as an internal level, because the construction of identity through discourse is seen as an expression of an internal perception of self, which may concur or conflict past perceptions, and in the case of conflict, it is being solved through an external, discursive negotiation that attempts to make sense of the past, no matter how much it conflicts with the present.

The travel career narrative may thus contain a source for insights into the mind of the tourist, in that certain positions are taken on what a desirable identity is, and how specific tourist experiences may reflect such. It is therefore an explicit aim of the analysis to enable an understanding of the relationship between such tourist experiences and the attached identity constructions.

4.4.3 Tourism as Transition

Because this research design suggests that change – life stage, experiential, historical – plays a big part to tourism, the role that tourism plays in our lives, as

well as the way in which we engage in tourism, it may be useful to look at tourism from a perspective of transition, e.g. as a means to transition, when everyday life is routinised to the extent that it may be unsatisfactory, or as a facilitator of transition, when a difficult transition in life is underway. As Therkelsen & Gram (2008) suggest, transition phases may highlight the status of products for identity construction, as they become direct expressions of change. The idea is therefore that by looking into signs of transition in the data for this study, which may be a number of things, e.g. changed family patterns or work relations, the meaning of tourism to the interviewees will become clearer. Moreover, the way identity construction and negotiation are taking place around these transition phases will illuminate the role of tourism in relation to identity construction when transition is at play.

Transition may be seen as the feeling of emptiness stemming from an ending of some sort, which has not yet led to a new beginning, indicating that changes have occurred in the social context in which one defines oneself, and new points of reference for a sense of self have not yet been identified (Bridges, 1996), i.e. the link between continuity and change is yet to be formed. According to a study by White & White (2004) on what they have termed mid-life and older long-term travellers' motivations for and experiences of travelling in the Australian Outback, endings may refer to the death of a partner, moving into a stage of empty nesting, i.e. children moving out of the home, changed health issues, changed work life, or the end of work life altogether. Also, social disconnection with the surrounding community was found to be significant to the feeling of ending (Ibid.:215-216), although this disconnection may be argued to stem from the above life changes, wherefore it may be an expression of the lack of points of reference for one's sense of self, as it has been perceived up to this point. Hence, disconnection may be a reinforcement of the feeling of ending rather than an end in itself.

Transition in this relation is described by White & White as follows:

> "The idea of the transitional zone derives from the notion of "liminality", the state of being between successive participations in social milieux. The experience of being "between" is a rite of passage,

a "transition rite" that accompanies every change of state, social position, or particular points in the life cycle" (White & White, 2004:201)

Transferred to a tourism context there are several aspects to consider. Firstly, a transition that entails changed life circumstances is most likely reflected in travel patterns, wherefore tourism, and the travel career in particular, may be used as a means to understand the meaning of tourism in the light of everyday life circumstances. Secondly, tourism is a physical, geographical transition from one environment to another, which requires transition of some sort in order to adapt to new circumstances, which to some might be a welcome opportunity for change, and for others might be a much more forced need to adapt. But the act of travelling may nevertheless work as a transitional zone, a "between", in both instances, since transformation is going to take place during the span of a journey. Thirdly, a mental transition possibly takes place as a consequence of a physical transition, as it has been argued previously that experience forever changes individual perceptions, and thus may be a means to mental transition, particularly in terms of transformation of identity in a group of mature consumers, where the usual factors of identity construction, such as family patterns or work life, may have changed significantly in recent years (Therkelsen & Gram, 2008). This particular group of so-called mature consumers is also the subject of this study, so it seems natural to assume that these aspects would also play a role in this context.

For the purpose of applying the aspect of transition to the analysis of this study, it may be useful to look into descriptions of a three-phased marking of transition. There are several ways of describing these phases, and Schouten (1991) divides the phases into a separation, a transition, and an incorporation phase, whereas Turner (1976) uses the terms: separation, margin (*limen*), and reintegration/ re-aggregation, but essentially they agree on the fundamentals of each stage before, during, and after a period of transition. White & White (2004) state…:

> "The first phase comprises symbolic behaviour signifying the detachment of the individual from either a position in the social structure or from an established set of cultural conditions. According to Turner, the individual becomes a "passenger". During the

intervening liminal period, the "passenger" is "neither here nor there". He or she is between all fixed points of classification, passing through a symbolic domain that has few, if any, of the attributes of a past or future state. At this time, the person is in a state of "outsiderhood", situationally or temporarily set apart from the social system, either as a result of a voluntary decision, imposed circumstances, or both (Turner, 1976:234). In the third phase, the passage is consummated and the "initiand" or "neophyte" re-enters the social structure (Turner, 1976:231)." (White & White, 2004:201-202)

It is thus described how an individual abandons one state, goes through a liminal period of neutrality, and moves on into a renewed state of being. This seems to be directly relatable to the issue of accumulated tourist experience, in which past experiences form the basis for future experiences and are drawn upon as a frame of reference.[46] These perspectives concur with the transition phases that are described here, and it is thus important to stress that it is a *re-entering* that takes place, and not a complete abandonment of the past, which implies once again that an internal rather than an external state of being is at stake, which will be explored in more detail in the analytical chapters.

4.5 Chapter Summary

To sum up, it can be stated that identity is clearly linked to tourism by way of consumption, all of which it was the aim of this chapter to discuss. As a vantage point it was established that a combination of two approaches to consumer theory is applied to this study, namely consumer research, which is focused on constructing meaning through consumption, and consumption studies, which focus on the consumer's relations to others, and this combination provides a point of view that contains issues of individual and collective identity.

An exploration of developments of the consumer society further showed that three defining moments in history possibly have influenced contemporary society. Firstly, consumer goods as a means to social competition in the 16th century; secondly, the widening of consumer choices for the masses in the 18th century, which eventually led to new meanings of consumer goods; and thirdly, the impacts of symbolism on goods as well as the consumers buying them, which

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[46] See section 5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective

is essentially the point that is sought addressed throughout this study as well. A final point of great significance is the fact that consumption has become a significant means to social change, in that contemporary western society is characterised by continual change, and consumption offers a way of creating a sense of stability and continuity, as well as a way of negotiating identity according to occurring changes.

These tendencies are related to symbolic consumption, which has also been addressed. In particular, the issue of self-conception was focused upon as a possible approach to understanding consumer behaviour, and the fact that people in contemporary society consume symbols thus becomes a means to self-enhancement. However, social meanings are fluctuating by nature, which reinforces the need for negotiating identity. In relation to tourism consumption, modernity comes into play, because tourism is perceived as a counter-reaction to the fundamental condition of inauthenticity in modernity. Thereby, tourism becomes an inwardly directed search for self, because reality is found in unfamiliar places perceived as pre-modern.

Identity is stated to be a social construction in the sense that external factors and the interplay between the surrounding environment and the individual are highly influential in identity construction. Social identity theory offers a perspective on identity construction that does entail both individual, personal elements to identity construction as well as collective, social elements, which may, however, at times be contradictory but also interdependent, e.g. in the case of identifying self and other. All in all, it is assumed that several identities coexist and are flexible, which also goes for group memberships, even though these exist within the individual. This is also why one's self-perception may need confirmation to maintain a certain sense of stability along with continual change. In addition, group membership entails an inherent element of inclusion as well as exclusion, which may be conscious or unconscious, but nevertheless requires confirmation as well.

Identity in tourism was explored through existing literature, with a specific focus on tourism and the other, tourism narratives, and tourism as transition. The presence of other is claimed to be particularly evident in tourism, because of the

unfamiliar settings in which tourists exist, and the other people in it that may be significantly different from the tourists themselves. The other entailed in tourism thus creates the attraction as well as the opposition to self. This opposition becomes even more evident through discourse, which is stated to be inherent in tourism, as an ongoing story of the self that may be constructed through tourism activity. In particular, the travel career becomes an expression of negotiated identity as a consequence, because it is used to create a desirable position for oneself in terms of identity. It is thus suggested that discourse serves a more important role than actual behaviour to identity construction in the present. Lastly, tourism may be used as a transitional zone between to phases of stability and confidence in self-perceptions, because the tourist is physically and mentally transformed through tourism, and thus may return as a transformed individual.

The theoretical basis for discussing identity, consumption and tourism as components of the study at hand has now been established. The different perspectives presented will be useful for further discussions, and eventually the final analysis and conclusions.

5. Tourist Experiences and Identity Construction

The centrality of the tourist experience to tourism studies is well known, and the exploration of it has taken many forms, e.g. tourism/leisure in opposition to work and everyday constraints (Durkheim, 1912; Dann, 1977); tourism as a religious event, pilgrimage (Graburn, 1989); tourism as novelty-seeking and change (Cohen, 1974; Dann, 1977), or tourism as a search for authenticity – as a counter reaction to modernity – (MacCannell, 1989; Wang, 1999) – all of which seem to imply certain expected outcomes of the tourist experience. Research of the tourist experience in any of these forms aims to understand what the tourist experience does for the tourist, and as such also what it means to the tourist. If an understanding of the tourist experience can be established, it ultimately reveals meanings ascribed to tourism, wherefore this is a key element in exploring the meaning of tourism. The direction chosen to explore further meanings of the tourist experience is 'tourism as identity seeking', as e.g. proposed by McKean, who suggests that:

> "Underlying tourism is a quest to see, and perhaps to understand, the whole inhabited earth […]. Tourism can be viewed as not an entirely banal pleasure-seeking or escapism (MacCannell, 1976), but as a profound, widely shared human desire to know 'others,' with the reciprocal possibility that we may come to know ourselves" (1989:133).

This position indicates that tourism, and thus tourist experiences, may serve the purpose for the modern tourist to make sense of oneself and the world in which one lives, and consequently how one might fit into that world. Therefore, tourism may offer a unique possibility for looking into ways in which identity is constructed in modern society, particularly in opposition to the 'other' if McKean's contention above is taken into consideration. The reason for choosing this specific angle is therefore founded in the contention that the presence and awareness of the other is quite conspicuous in a tourism context, because it is naturally ingrained in the underlying conditions for tourism, i.e. tourism building on a profound desire to know others and oneself, as the above quote suggests.

In consumption studies, much attention has been paid to identity as a key aspect of the consumption process over the years (e.g. Levy, 1959; Belk, 1988;

Solomon, 2004; Gabriel & Lang, 2006), and increasingly also to the experience of consumption (e.g. Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Thompson et al.., 1989), and the link to identity in this respect (Vetner & Jantzen, 2007). Recent literature within the field of tourism seems to focus increasingly on identity as a key element of the tourist experience, particularly in relation to the experience of place but also in relation to the individual tourist and perceptions of self. To give an example, an article by Elsrud (2001) underlines the notion of the adventurous traveller – as opposed to the mass tourist – and the attached importance of adventure and risk for defining self in this respect is underlined by a Kierkegaard quote: "*To venture causes anxiety, but not to venture is to lose one's self*" (Elsrud, 2001:597). This stresses a strong sense of identity through the desire for adventure, and although *venturing* might be somewhat anxiety-provoking, a life without adventure is considered more horrid, because it is simply who the traveller is, and one would not be one's true self without such adventure. Arguably, adventure may be subject to individual interpretations, which complicates the traveller vs. tourist distinction, but the point of the matter is that travelling is being used to construct identity through experience (of adventure in some form, as the idea of adventure is strongly connected to travelling according to Elsrud, (2001:597)). This is further underlined by a statement that the adventurous traveller is often regarded a "*real traveller*" as opposed to the tourist (Elsrud, 2001:598).

The present chapter will thus be used to discuss the tourist experience, first and foremost as a concept for exploring meanings of tourism, based on the assumption that experiences – by two different notions, as will be described below – are at the core of tourism, and therefore reveal ascribed meanings. In addition, by looking into existing literature, ways in which the tourist experience may contribute to constructions of identity will be explored and presented as a basis for the further analysis. Lastly, the role of the travel career is suggested to offer a link between tourist experience and identity construction, wherefore it will be defined in the context of this study.

5.1 The Tourist Experience – Dual Notions and Perspectives

Although discussions of the experience economy as an emerging form of society have only gained ground within the past decade or so – e.g. with the release of Pine & Gilmore's book, *The Experience Economy: work is theatre and every business a stage* in 1999 and several others in its wake – an ongoing debate on the importance and significance of tourist experiences is not a recent phenomenon, but has always been an underlying element of tourism studies. In the media, in public debates and in academia, experiences have been ascribed different meanings. For instance, academia has voiced some scepticism of the emerging phenomenon of the experience economy, and it has been debated whether this is simply *old wine in new bottles* (Jantzen & Rasmussen, 2007). The popular discussions of the experience economy may, however, have influenced perceptions of the tourist experience, and thus pointed research and other developments in new directions. If nothing else, this new wave of attention towards the tourist experience as a key concept in tourism has inspired research within this particular aspect of the tourist phenomenon. Therefore, it seems appropriate to place the perception of the tourist experience in this study according to these ongoing debates.

As a starting point, it may be helpful to say a few words on a definition of the tourist experience. It is this author's clear perception that the tourist experience should not be narrowed down to one understanding, as it is a complex concept that deserves a complex explanation, but at the same time it is evident that in the context of this study certain perceptions are in focus, which will be discussed in the following sections. However, at its core, throughout this study, is the fact that the tourist experience springs from travelling activity which becomes internalised inside the tourist, i.e. it becomes part of the tourist (Mossberg, 2007:60) and thus of the tourist's identity.[47] In addition, the contention that the tourist experience is also a part of the context in which tourists live their everyday lives is another side of it. Not only does travel activity rely on a number of factors related to everyday life, e.g. family pattern or a need for escape, but the expectations and outcome may be greatly influenced by such factors as well, whereby the experience is later evaluated, and thus internalised for future

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[47] See section 4.2.1 Symbolic Consumption

reference. Therefore, the perception of the tourist experience in this study relies heavily on internal constructions within the tourist, and the effects of the surrounding environment, which will be explored as the discussion moves on.

The new turn in the recent debate of the experience economy entails that the individual is to a greater extent actively involved in the construction of their own experiences (Mossberg, 2003; Andersson, 2007), and thus implicitly also to a greater extent able to and responsible for obtaining desirable outcomes of activities that he or she engages in – touristic activities as it is in this case.[48] But experience as a phenomenon is not merely a conscious perception that may lead to a choice of participation in a given activity, but also exists as a partly conscious/partly unconscious recollection of past experiences (Vetner & Jantzen, 2007; Larsen, 2007). In other words, implicit memory of a touristic as well as a non-touristic nature, which may cause somewhat automatic choices and behaviour, as described by Vetner & Jantzen (2007), who speak of the habitual level of experiencing ingrained in our minds and bodies. Therefore, the tourist experience is perceived to entail an inherent personal and individual element to it, as suggested by Pine & Gilmore (1999) and Mossberg (2003), as well as a collectively shared social element which is present in any experience of consumption, as suggested by Douglas (1996) & Vetner & Jantzen (2007), all of which obviously makes it a complex concept to capture in an academic sense.

Therefore, the tourist experience seems to operate on many different levels, which all contribute in different ways to the final outcome. In this study, the conceptual level is initially stressed by the fact that the tourist experience is placed at the centre of identity construction in tourism, and thus the link between the two is the vantage point. In addition, the travel career reinforces this link, and it is therefore part of the overall conceptual framework as well. This framework will be discussed in the following.

The tourist experience has a dual role in this study, since A) experience may be understood as an actual, specific activity that gives a certain – instantaneous to some extent – experience at a particular moment in time; and B) experience

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[48] Responsibility may play a role in terms of discourses of tourism, and particularly in discursive identity constructions, which will be dealt with at a later stage.

may be understood as a mental state of accumulating knowledge, feelings, impressions etc. through a more generic experiencing of different situations, events etc., such as the ones mentioned in notion A, in everyday life as well as in tourism contexts in particular, and this will supposedly leave more long-lasting impressions in the tourist's memory. Larsen (2007:9) makes the distinction by saying: "*One could probably say that Erlebnis* [notion A] *is something people have in a "here and now" fashion, whereas Erfahrung* [notion B] *is something the individual undertakes, goes through or accumulates.*"[49] Quite often it seems that tourists may relate the concept of the tourist experience to tangible travel experience, i.e. the actual behaviour, wherefore notion A is to be viewed as directly related to behaviour more so than notion B, which is at a more abstract level. Based on this, the relationship between notions A and B is illustrated below as the core of Figure 5.1 – the travel career and identity construction in this relation will be explained shortly.

Figure 5.1: Relationship between experience, travel career and identity construction
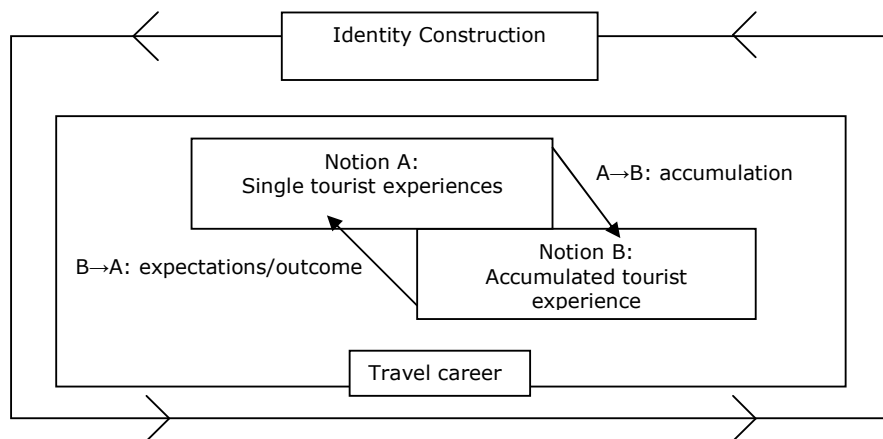
The distinction made here is between single tourist experiences, referring to notion A, and accumulated tourist experience, referring to notion B, which will be the terms used throughout this dissertation. The distinction is based on the

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[49] In some languages a linguistic distinction is made between the two notions. Notion A is called *oplevelse* (Danish), *Erlebnis* (German) and notion B, *erfaring* (Danish), *Erfahrung* (German), but as the English language does not make this distinction, a further explanation has been necessary.

considerations above and the purpose at hand, i.e. to explore relations between tourist experience and identity constructions, which relies on a clear distinction between a somewhat demarcated tourist experience, e.g. going on a safari, going to a theme park, going hiking in the mountains, going skiing etc., and an intangible and more affluent experience inherent in the tourist, such as having travelled in different ways, to different parts of the world, and with different travel partners, thus providing the tourist with a personal frame of reference for a number of factors and inputs concerning travel, which may influence travel in the present and future.[50]

Csíkszentmihályi (1990) speaks of flow as a balance between competencies and challenges which provides the individual with a sense of accomplishment without a sense of being overwhelmed at the same time. The contention is that the level of competence increases with experience and hence so does the need for bigger challenges. Andersson (2007) speaks of skills as a resource in the consumption of experiences, and the Optimal Level of Arousal (OLA) as the balance between a positive level of arousal, which may give rewards of some kind, e.g. increased self esteem or status, and a negative level of arousal, which causes fear and potential punishment, e.g. by getting into an uncontrolled and potentially "dangerous" situation. All in all, it is thus assumed, based on Csíkszentmihályi and Andersson, that the ability to handle an unknown and challenging situation and the level of comfort with which one is able to approach and handle that situation may increase with accumulated experience. Therefore, new and challenging experiences are needed to keep the individual in flow, because the optimal level of arousal is changing with increased accumulated experience. Naturally, accumulated experience is individual, and thus so are the challenges needed, and moreover it may be argued that if tourist experience may not accumulate, e.g. in situations where the same type of notion A experiences are sought for every holiday, the need for new challenges may not occur, and flow and OLA are obtained in other ways. Thus, the basic assumptions of flow and OLA may not apply in all situations.

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[50] The focal point here is travel and tourism, but obviously general life experience and consumption experience play a role in this as well, although this may not be the centre of attention throughout this dissertation.

Vetner & Jantzen (2007) refer to an additional reflexive level in which emotions are stored and used, when experiences are processed to make sense in terms of individual identity projects that take a vantage point in the past, and then point in a certain direction for the future. For example, in the case of a tourist experience that may have gone wrong, a reflexive evaluation may explain and help understand the experience and how it fits into the travel career as an expression of one's self-perception at present. It is therefore assumed that experiences are internalised in ways that affect the individual perception of identity, and because identity is transmitted to the surrounding environment through symbols that always have a degree of social origin. According to Durkheim,[51] experiences are meaningful in an individual as well as a collective context, because identity is meaningful in both respects.

When construction of identity is concerned, there is thus an obvious link to notion B, accumulated tourist experience, which is instrumental in such constructions, because of the inherent 'building of character'[52] within this notion – through individual and personal experience accumulated throughout an individual life context, although obviously affected by the collective context as well. It is hereby claimed that accumulated tourist experience and identity are linked in a profound way, the essence of which will be explored through the application of the travel career concept. The travel career entails different stages of single tourist experiences (notion A) that form a foundation for accumulating tourist experience altogether (notion B), and thus entails a coherent narrative of the construction of identity.

Entailed in the experience and in identity construction are two different levels, one of consciousness and one of unconsciousness, and where experience is concerned, notion A represents the conscious level, whereas notion B can be relatively unconscious. For example, when the interviewees are speaking of their experiences, they tend to speak of the specific experiences of notion A, going on a specific trip or to a specific destination, which they are obviously very conscious of. On the other hand, the interviewees have more difficulty expressing their notion B experience, e.g. going through certain routines when

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[51] See section 5.2.2 Personal and Social Experiences for further explanations
[52] I.e. making a coherent story of who one is

travelling, possibly because it is unconscious. Where identity construction is concerned, there is a conscious construction that takes place on the reflexive level. For example, the interviewees are trying to be a certain person through their experiences, and there is an unconscious construction of becoming a certain person based on experience, e.g. because perceptions of the world are shaped by certain experiences. Therefore, experience and identity construction are closely related in this respect, and the conscious and unconscious levels are intertwined and shape expressions of both experience and identity.

Figure 5.1 was created to illustrate the relations between core elements of this study, as perceived by this author and as applied to this theoretical framework. The figure illustrates the two notions of experience in relation to each other, both contributing to the travel career. Without the specific tourist experiences, referred to as notion A, there is no foundation for accumulated tourist experience, notion B. Likewise, it is very unlikely that one can avoid accumulating experience (B) when tourist experiences are taking place (A), which indicates a reciprocal relationship between the two notions. It is this particular relationship that forms the travel career, thus containing both notions of experience. Moreover, the figure is meant to show that identity is an ongoing process, which surrounds and intertwines with the ongoing process of developing a travel career, and the travel career is perceived to be instrumental in the process of identity construction. In addition, the identity constructing discourse related to the different stages of the travel career, as it takes place in this particular study, surrounds the travel career in a more symbolic way, as the arrows on the identity continuum in the figure also implicitly suggest. Eventually, these core elements, notion A and B of experience, the travel career and identity construction, will contribute to the framework for analysis, and the illustrated relationship between these elements will be further explored through the interview data.

5.2 The Tourist Experience and Relations to Identity

Pine & Gilmore's (1999) work,[53] and particularly the introduction of the concept of an experience economy, is often the vantage point for discussions on tourist experiences. These authors have put their mark on the debate, mainly by suggesting that the experience is a central issue in a business environment of contemporary society, hence the claim that we are now dominated by the experience economy. This claim is based on an argument that experiences enable businesses to differentiate themselves from competitors by adding value to the business encounter, a product or service, which will be distinctly different from any encounter a customer might have with a competitor.

Although Pine & Gilmore (1999) apply a business economics perspective, there is a natural element of trying to understand the consumer entailed in this perspective, e.g. by looking into different dimensions of the experience. In doing so, Pine & Gilmore construct a model consisting of two axes; one that indicates the level of participation, and another that indicates the so-called *environmental relationship* between the participant and the event or performance at hand – to use Pine & Gilmore's own terminology. The model is depicted below:

Figure 5.2
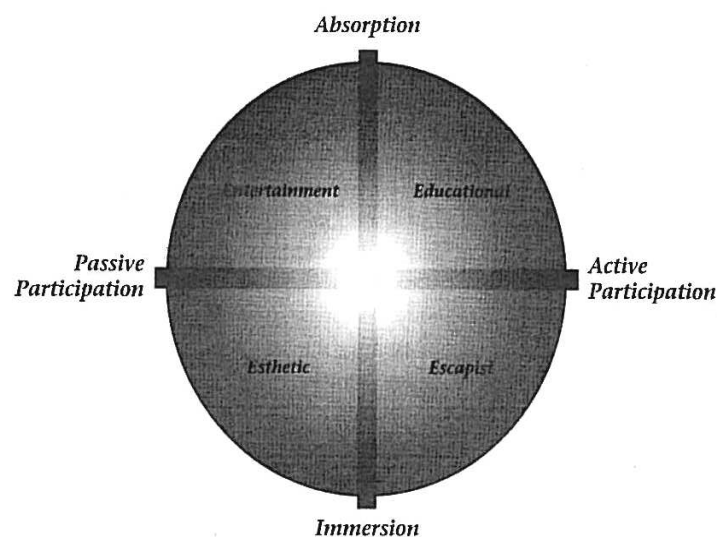
Source: Pine & Gilmore (1999:30).

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[53] The book *The Experience Economy: work is theatre and every business a stage*

The horizontal axis indicates the level of participation of the individual involved, ranging from passive to active in terms of participation in the event that is the basis for the experience eventually obtained. The vertical axis indicates the relationship between the individual and the event, ranging from absorption to immersion in terms of the way the individual interacts with the event. Pine & Gilmore (1999:30-31) distinguish between the experience going into the individual (absorption) and the individual going into the experience (immersion). Between these axes, four so-called experience realms are formed: Entertainment, education, aestheticism and escape, which make up "*mutually compatible domains that often comingle to form uniquely personal encounters*" (Ibid., p.31).

This model is to be seen from a point of view that rests on an acknowledgement of a methodological paradox that entails, firstly, that a theoretical framework is needed to be able to capture the nature and essence of tourist experiences, and, secondly, that no model or theory is able to capture every detail or anomaly, particularly in the case of tourist experiences as complex phenomena. Therefore, Pine & Gilmore's model is obviously not without problems – a main problem being that the model is largely based on theoretical reasoning, and as such does not entail a strong empirical base. This means that it might be difficult to place all types of experiences in the model, for example a mainly social experience, because of a shift in the level of focus, which the model perhaps is not developed for and therefore cannot encompass. Another central problem is exactly the opposite, namely the difficulties distinguishing between the different realms. Also the fact that several of the experience realms are present in most experiences makes it difficult to differentiate experiences on the basis of this model, which also makes it imprecise as a practical tool. In fact, Pine & Gilmore (1999) themselves describe the ultimate experience as the intersection between the two axes, that is, where all four realms are represented – called the sweet spot. This indicates that experiences are very rarely clear-cut and easily placed in one of the four realms. So, the model seems both too general and too specific at different levels. Nevertheless, Pine & Gilmore do offer some valid points that are central to this discussion, e.g. that an experience is a complex concept that does entail several elements all at once, which is a central point in this study, and for

that specific reason, perhaps a clear distinction should not necessarily be the ultimate aim.

Therefore, the model may need additional considerations from other theoretical viewpoints in order to be useful in the context of this study. However, it is not the aim to actually apply the model as it is, but more to initiate a discussion of the tourist experience which takes a vantage point in a much used theoretical model, and thereby to a great extent affects the current debate on the issue at hand, and from there move on to a directly relatable theoretical foundation, which can be applied to this study.

As mentioned, there is a clear focus on the business aspect of an experience in Pine & Gilmore's work, whereas another side to it, i.e. the consumer, tourist, aspect is in focus in this study. The discussion thus needs to be explored in greater detail, as this study has a wider focus than commercial experiences, and this is another reason for adding alternative theoretical considerations.

5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective

Mossberg (2003) applies another dimension to Pine & Gilmore's model, which does suggest that the customer, i.e. the tourist, is a central, active participant in the formation of experiences. The main point to be added to the discussion is Mossberg's time/space dimension,[54] a before, during and after any given experience, which heavily influences the outcome, and which also has to do with the extent to which the experience is ordinary or extraordinary. For example, having visited a destination previously might affect expectations to a new visit to that same destination. Likewise, not knowing what to expect, because one has never been to that specific destination or anything similar, might affect the outcome of the experience. At the same time, previous visits might lower the sense of the extraordinary due to inherent familiarity in the individual, and the other way around when it comes to visiting unfamiliar destinations, which might then strengthen the sense of the extraordinary.

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[54] "*Kundens förflyttning i tid och rum*" (Mossberg, 2003:71pp.)

Thereby, there is a shift in time, based on the individual's unique, personal history, and a shift in space in terms of the shift from ordinary, everyday environments, mental or physical, to extraordinary, unfamiliar environments in which the experience takes place. The model in Figure 5.3 illustrates these aspects of the experience:

Figure 5.3

Entertainment	Education	
Aesthetics	Escapism	

Before experience   After experience   → Time
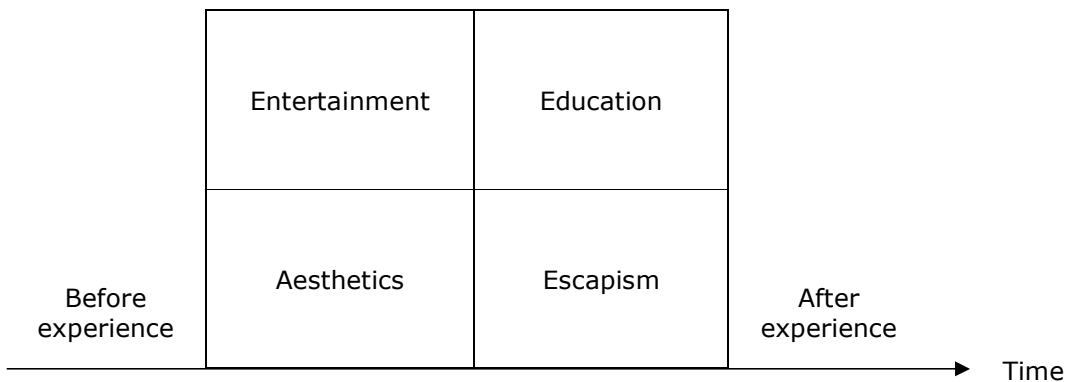
Based on Mossberg (2003:81).

The foundation of this model is a perception of everyday life being the norm, the ordinary, which the timeline at the bottom of the model indicates. Sometimes, there are extraordinary "bumps" on that line, i.e. extraordinary experiences indicated by the four realms as a whole. The idea is that "before" preconditions us to specific wants, needs, preferences etc., based on which each individual makes specific choices, e.g. in terms of choosing a specific type of holiday, becoming the actual experience itself, i.e. the "during", and eventually the experience is processed in the "after" stage, where evaluations are made, thus forming the grounds for future holidays.

Much in line with Mossberg (2003), Larsen (2007) operates with three stages of an experience: expectations, which become evident trough the planning process; events, the actual undertakings during a holiday; and memories, the internalised remembering of the events that have taken place. Larsen (2007) describes expectations as an ability in the individual to create certain anticipations, beliefs and predictions of future events. This means that to a great extent it has to do with the individual's characteristics and circumstances, which Larsen lists as the following: "*motivation, value systems and attitudes, personality traits, self-*

esteem and states of affect (mood and emotions)" (Larsen, 2007:9), some of which are strongly linked to the contention of shared thoughts and experiences that Douglas (1986) also suggests[55] – as will be addressed at a later stage.

When it comes to the actual events, Larsen (2007) states that perception is a factor in terms of understanding what our senses tell us, and the individual tourist forms perceptions based on previous experiences, competences and expectations in particular. The current event is thus processed through a lens made up of all these factors, forming a specific perception of the event at hand. It is moreover stated that perceptions are conditioned by the following factors: "*the individual's personal values, opinions, worldviews – including attitudes – and self-perceptions*" (Larsen, 2007:12), which again suggests that experiences are individual and personal, but keeping in mind that several of these factors are socially constructed and anchored in a specific social context.

Lastly, memory is addressed by Larsen (2007) as the final stage of the experience, and he describes how holiday memories are among the so-called "flashbulb" memories that people consider highly significant to them personally. However, flashbulb memories in the original meaning suggested by Brown & Kulik (1977) imply less individual events and more collective and *dramatic world events* (Eysenck & Keane, 1995), such as Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon or the events of 9/11 in the US. Holiday experiences may be dramatic to some extent, but rarely in the sense of being shocking, and moreover, they are almost the opposite of world events, as they are of a relatively personal nature. Therefore, a different perspective may be relevant to include in this context, and that is the idea that self is an important factor in increasing memory (Rogers et al., 1977), because the need for confirmation of self is activated by events that may support self-perceptions, and subsequently memories of these events are enhanced (Eysenck & Keane, 1995:187). The following proposition is made in this respect:

> "It is likely that people's personalities help to determine what they can readily recall of their lives and the errors and distortions in their personal recollections. After all, one of the reasons why people read

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[55] See section 5.2.2 Personal and Social Experiences for details

autobiographies is because they believe that what the author remembers, and how he or she remembers it, sheds light on the author's character" (Eysenck & Keane, 1995:186)

In this study, it is thus evident that the memories of tourist experiences expressed by the interviewees may be strong representations of own identity, because such representations are assumedly stronger memories than other events, and moreover, remembered in a way that confirms one's perceived identity. The expressed tourist experiences can thus be seen as constructions of identity. Consequently, flashbulb memories in Larsen's terminology may have more to do with this self representation than the dramatic world events that the concept is also stated to comprise, and this specific interpretation is perceived highly relevant to this study.

This means that upon recollection, people tend to be very confident that their memories of e.g. a holiday experience are accurate, even if they are not, because they represent themselves and are constructed to confirm selves. This means, not surprisingly, that which experiences people consider significant and how they remember them is quite important for future expectations, because they will be affected by people's self-perceptions, which will then affect future experiences. The relationship between Larsen's stages is illustrated in Figure 5.4:

Figure 5.4
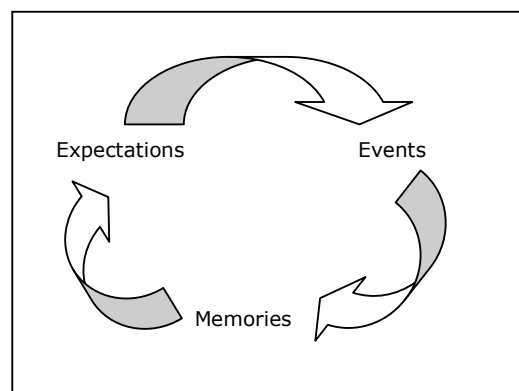
Also Vetner & Jantzen (2007) speak of experiences as ingrained memories in mind and body that become integrated in our past and future, as they are carried on from our past where they are experienced, and into our future in which we rely on past judgements in the way new experiences are experienced. Vetner &

Jantzen (2007) focus on two levels of the experience, which they define as the biological level and the reflexive level. The biological level is the instant experience of emotions that are stored in our bodies, whereas the reflexive level, which is the main focus in this study,[56] refers to the way the individual reflects on experiences and makes use of them in so-called identity projects. In such projects experiences become part of a personal history and are used to convey meaning internally to the individual as well as externally to the surrounding society (Ibid. p.35). Thereby, the reflexive level implies an *extended temporality*[57] that influences past, present and future due to continuous processes of reflection.

It is thus indicated by Mossberg (2003), Larsen (2007) and Vetner & Jantzen (2007) that there is a process of continuation inherent in tourist experiences that relates to memories and experience. Therefore, Mossberg's timeline in Figure 5.4 is in theory indefinite, as it follows the individual lifetime, and every experience is connected to previous and future experiences, which is a central contention to the overall framework of this study, as will be elaborated throughout this text.

An important comment in this connection is also that although the timeline is meant to indicate everyday life, this does not indicate that one goes back to "things as they were," but rather that one goes back to the physical space of one's ordinary, everyday life, but because of the shift in time, due to the extraordinary experience that has taken place, one's mental space might – or most definitely will – have changed, which may be evident in the fact that the next time around, one might choose a different holiday.

The issue of novelty-seeking in tourism, which has been used to explain people's fundamental desire to get away from their home environment, plays a role in this respect, because novelty is directly linked to the level of contrast between "*present perception and past experience*" (Lee & Crompton, 1992:733), which means that novelty carries different meanings as experience is gained and perceptions changed. This may also be referred to as the experience spiral

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[56] Although the two levels are logically inseparable since the biological level is subconscious

[57] Author's translation (Vetner & Jantzen, 2007:35)

(Rasmussen, 2008), because once the extraordinary has been experienced, it risks becoming less extraordinary. Thus new measures for the extraordinary will be used, and the demand for new experiences therefore seems never-ending, as Mossberg's timeline also suggests. The indefinite timeline can be illustrated as follows:

Figure 5.5

| Before | During | After/Before | During | After/Before | During | After |
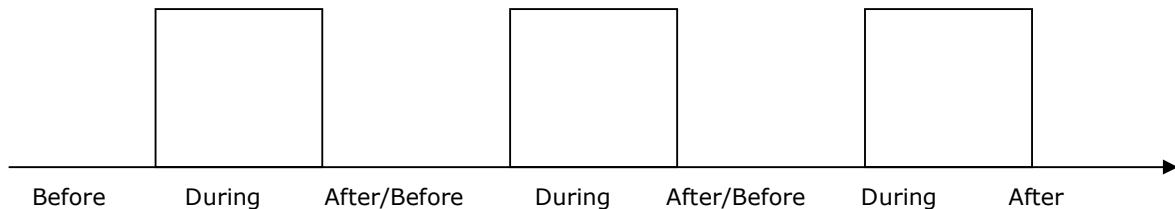
This process of continuation is rather complex, in the sense that what is ordinary, the before and after, or extraordinary, during, is defined according to a vast number of parameters by individual tourists, and as such may be difficult to detect. Furthermore, extraordinary experiences may occur within the *during* phase, which means that experiences may take place within the overall holiday experience, as the focus for attention throughout this study. Also, there is no indication that the experience spiral manifests itself necessarily as a need for new or different experiences as notion A, which becomes vital for all tourists, as some might prefer the same, familiar experiences. Lee & Crompton states: "*The antithesis of novelty is familiarity*" (1992:733), and it is thus assumed that the concepts of novelty and familiarity are connected and possibly function as opposites that define each other. Berlyne (1960) points this out in the contention that a "happy medium" between these two opposites is to be preferred, i.e. nothing too far from our experiential frame of reference, and nothing too close to home, so that aroused curiosity simultaneous with a sense of security in the familiar creates a firm basis for a tourist experience that draws on previous experiences as well as offering a move forward on the experience spiral – and eventually adds another level to the travel career, as will be addressed at a later stage.[58]

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[58] See section 5.3 The Role of the Travel Career

The point is then that notion B will always have changed from one notion A experience to the next, because it always builds on previous experience, related to everyday life or touristic life, creating a spiral of new perceptions in which to view the experience, whether or not it is an entirely new or a somewhat familiar experience. There are also examples in the data material that suggest the "happy medium" mentioned above between novelty and familiarity to play a significant role in this respect, since a lot of interviewees attempt to balance the holiday experience somewhere in the middle, drawing on both in the decision making process, and particularly when discursively constructing the experience in retrospect. It should be mentioned that novelty could be a desirable position to take in one's portrayal of tourist experiences for one reason or another, just as adventure might be, which obviously needs to be taken into consideration in the further analyses.

Another issue that is related to familiarity, and thereby indirectly to novelty, but which plays a slightly different role to the tourist experience is nostalgia, sometimes associated with the "*dear departed past*" (Holbrook, 1993:245). Nostalgia may play a vital role as a means to construct certain feelings or a particular atmosphere around a given tourist experience, in which previous tourist experiences set the mood for experiences to come, whereby the before, during and after dimensions come into play in this respect as well. Goulding (2001) presents an interpretation of nostalgia, which offers very significant perspectives for this study. It is stated that this specific conceptualisation of nostalgia entails:

> "[…] considering nostalgia as part of the consumption experience, and, therefore, part of preference or choice, but it is also conceptualized as a temporary coping mechanism and a form of escape from a society that can at times leave us feeling alienated and frustrated. It is further suggested that nostalgia may be used to understand behavioral responses to certain products and service offerings" (Goulding, 2001: 569)

It is thus evident that there are two sides to nostalgia that may play a vital role in setting the mood for a given tourist experience. First point mentioned relates to the consumer research approach, which is concerned with a consumption

preference that may be a result of this feeling of nostalgia that evokes positive feelings and attitudes (Holbrook, 1993). The second point made relates to the psychological sense of alienation already addressed earlier as a counter-reaction to modernity,[59] which has also been described as a central premise for modern tourism. In addition, Goulding (2001) states that nostalgia adds to the sense of continuity that is needed for a stable sense of self, and one's connection to one's past (Gyimóthy, 2005:113). Nostalgia in tourist experiences may therefore contribute to identity construction in this respect.

It is thus assumed that nostalgia plays a significant role to tourism and moreover may function as a link between the past, and past tourist experiences in particular, in which the feeling of nostalgia is based, and the present and future, in which these same feelings become lived experiences. As Gyimóthy (2005:113) states: "*Nostalgic representations always draw on the past, although the motives for what is chosen to be represented and what is not, are a product of the contemporary*." Goulding does, however, also stress that nostalgia only offers a possible explanation for a given experience when additional influences are taken into consideration, and therefore it is not an explanation in itself (2001:574).

Lastly, adventure may as such be used to communicate identity through touristic narratives that discursively position 'us' and 'them' and contain an inherent code of conduct for specific groups by way of the tourist[60] experience. It may even be said that to some travellers/tourists, the ideal is adventure, whereby it becomes a desirable feature of identity. It may also be said that novelty and difference, which are essential elements of the adventure (Arnould & Price, 1993:25), are also needed, because narratives of adventurous identities often rest on perceptions of the other (Elsrud, 2001:606), i.e. what is new and different from the known and the self – an important element in identity construction, as previously established.[61] In fact, the purpose of Elsrud's article is to explore risk and adventure as a means to narrate identity, and not to understand adventure as a touristic activity per se. She states:

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[59] See section 4.2.2 Tourism Consumption

[60] The tourist is thus not related to a particular type of travelling in the context of this dissertation, nor does the term carry negative connotations in any way. On the contrary, the term is used to refer to any type of activity that involves travelling.

[61] See section 4.4.2 Tourism Narratives

"It is not necessarily the content of an act, which defines it as with or without risk. It is how the act is experienced, when and where it takes place, and what mythology has to say about it that creates the definition. Thus, for instance, a bus-ride in India may be experienced differently (and as riskier) by a traveler than a bus-ride in England or Germany would, regardless of the actual danger involved. Furthermore, this bus-ride, irrespective of the actual danger, can then serve as an important ingredient in an identity narrative, or as Goffmann would have it, the expression of 'strong character' (1967)" (Elsrud, 2001:603)

The strong character mentioned at the end may thus be perceived as a desirable identity of being an adventurous traveller. Moreover, the experience in itself is the individual's subjective interpretation of adventure, in the light of previous experiences, cultural norms and so on, with which the particular individual meets a new or different experience. In addition, part of the mythology referred to in this quote has to do with the fact that gender plays a role to perceptions of adventure, in the sense that it carries different meanings to men and women, and also still entails inherently masculine features. Men tend to stress certain features of identity in their narratives, whereas women may deliberately conceal the same features due to predetermined perceptions of gender roles (Elsrud, 2001:602). In the data material for this study, there are also examples that may be related to this specific element of adventure as a particular feature of identity, and this will be addressed further in the analysis.[62]

These different aspects of the tourist experience will all be explored further in the analyses on the basis of the different models and perspectives, so that links between experiences might become more visible, particularly in the process of identity construction.

5.2.2 Personal and Social Experiences

Evidently, Mossberg (2003) and Larsen (2007) indicate that experiences are considered to be highly individual and personal, because each individual has a unique precondition for experiencing and processing experiences in a certain

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[62] See section 7.2.2 Adventure

way, and thus the outcome becomes unique and personal. As a consequence, the increasing influence of the tourists themselves and the decreasing influence of the tourist organisations in shaping the experiences obtained are brought to attention, and the position taken by Mossberg (2003) and Larsen (2007) is that experience is to a large extent individual and personal, as indicated by the above emphasis on the internal construction of an experience. The internally based outset for tourist experiences is hereby underlined, which again links the two notions of experience via the accumulated experience in notion B and establishes their interdependence, particularly in the light of Pearce's travel career approach[63] in which one shapes the other.

On the other hand, Vetner & Jantzen (2007) imply a social as well as an individual dimension to the experience. British anthropologist Mary Douglas (1986) adopts a view that the individual may not be highly independent in terms of thoughts and opinions, because all individuals are affected by social environments and institutions that allow them to think and behave in specific ways, as was also suggested by Maffesoli's (1996) contention of individuals as tribe members.[64] Much of Douglas' work is based on Durkheim's work (1912) in which individual thought always has social origins. Douglas writes of Durkheim's work:

> "Classifications, logical operations, and guiding metaphors are given to the individual by society. Above all, the sense of a priori rightness of some ideas and the nonsensicality of others are handed out as part of the social environment. He [Durkheim] thought the reaction of outrage when entrenched judgments are challenged is a gut response directly due to commitment to a social group" (Douglas, 1986:10)

Therefore, individual thought is in one way or another part of a larger social institution and as such shaped by it. As Douglas (1996) explains, one often thinks that an experience is completely personal until it is discovered that other people might feel the same way, and moreover, people often tend to agree to disapprove of people who do not feel the same way as they and their discovered like-minded peers.

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[63] See section 5.3 The Role of the Travel Career
[64] See introduction to chapter 4 Identity, Consumption & Tourism

In this respect, Douglas refers to *thought style*, a concept she adopts from Fleck (1935), that entails a frame that defines "[…] *the context and sets the limits for any judgment about objective reality*" (Douglas, 1986:13). Based on this, Douglas argues that there must be some level of common experience in a given social group, that is, a process of *culture in action* that offers a measure for standardising experience (Douglas, 1996). In this relation, Ryan (2002) also views the tourist experience from a perspective of tourists as social beings, being part of a particular social history in which they construct themselves, and the meaning of holidaying in light of that particular social frame of reference.

In this dissertation, this view of the nature of experience, proposed mainly by Mary Douglas, serves the purpose of addressing the experience as a commonality between individuals in a particular social group, i.e. in a thought collective to continue Fleck's (1935) terminology. It is recognised that much popular literature at the moment does consider experiences to be individual and personal as mentioned above. Nevertheless, it is hereby claimed that a level of common consciousness exists, which may be used as a necessary frame of reference in terms of constructing identity through tourist experience. This is because identity is constantly measured by perceptions of self and other, i.e. through perceptions of who one shares a common consciousness with and who one does not. Because of this, some level of common experience, or perhaps more accurately, an ability to convey a particular experience that other members of an in-group can relate to, is necessary for the construction of identity in this respect. Thus this view of a thought style in relation to tourist experience is applied here in the sense that there is an assumption of socially constructed commonalities shared at some level within a group, even when it comes to abstract and assumedly individual concepts such as experience and identity.

This discussion is not meant to undermine the individuality and personal nature of the tourist experience as such, but merely to say that a more detailed understanding of these individual and personal experiences, which are assumed to have social connotations of some sort as well, may work as an advantage for understanding tourism at many levels. This perspective on the tourist experience is therefore pursued throughout the dissertation, and the position furthermore

supports the focus on the individual tourist – and the individual as a social being – and the meaning of tourism rather than the more market-oriented approaches, which appear to have been explored widely – as evident in the extensive use of business and marketing texts such as Pine & Gilmore (1999) and Jensen (1999) within the field of tourism related experiences. These popular approaches and the tourist approach applied here are not necessarily mutually exclusive though, and one may very well come to support the other.

5.2.3 Ascribed Meanings of Identity

Ryan (2002) states that regardless of the marginal role that tourism seemingly plays in an individual's life – its centrality in modern life could also be argued –it offers a potential for recreating[65] oneself and thus for significant life change (Ryan, 2002:1). Vetner & Jantzen (2007) similarly state that regardless of the ways people use experiences, i.e. for private or social purposes, the results are much the same in that "*the individual gets confirmation or readjusts points of reference for the understanding of self and the surrounding world*"[66] (Vetner & Jantzen, 2007:27). It is thus indicated that experiences affect how we perceive ourselves and the world around us, which makes them meaningful to everyday life as well. Ryan further states:

> "Tourism possesses the potential to challenge the status quo – not directly, but through its sheer existence as a world of non-work, of a world wherein tourists might find themselves as re-created persons, as an alternative means of ordering structures for individuals, both individually and societally, then tourism has a potential to challenge accepted ways of doing things" (Ryan, 2002:5)

There is here a clear link to a basic assumption that is fundamental to the premises on which this study rests, namely that existing constructions of identity may be challenged and re-created by tourism, since the normality of everyday life which usually defines and maintains such constructs is abandoned. Therefore, as Ryan also implies, possibilities for *recreation*, i.e. reconstruction and negotiation, of the individual self are vast in a tourism context. Furthermore, these reconstructions can subsequently become a means to change existing

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[65] Wordplay on recreation as a significant part of leisure tourism, i.e. recreational tourism
[66] Author's translation from original text in Danish

structures of normality in everyday life as well, as experience becomes inherent to the individual, who may attempt to transfer touristic experiences onto everyday life normality. There are many incidents in which people's tourist experiences have profound impacts on everyday life situations, e.g. skiing holidays turning into semi-permanent jobs as skiing instructors, which then become everyday life; retirees adjusting so profoundly to a lifestyle, for example in Spain while holidaying there, that they choose to move there permanently; or having a particularly insightful encounter with another culture, which inspires the tourist to change home life.

By the same token, Vetner & Jantzen (2007) refer to experiences – here viewed as an inherent part of tourism – as a constituent of identity, the main objectives being 1) to understand the in-groups that we are part of and define ourselves according to; 2) how we understand ourselves in relation to past experiences (notion B – accumulated experience) and future life projects; and 3) which preferences we construct and why they make good sense both privately and socially (Ibid. p.1-2). In the light of these perceptions, the experiences of a holiday, i.e. how life could be and how we understand ourselves in our daily lives and the world in general, may affect ordinary or "non-touristic" life. The interdependence of these social worlds is thus evident, and this will of course be explored further throughout the dissertation.

Ryan (2002) also refers to what he terms the de-differentiation of work and leisure, in which the strong demarcation of work life and leisure is argued to have changed into a fuzzy boundary that no longer separates the two spheres but re-connects them. The examples that Ryan provides are the recognition of recreational needs in the workplace, such as the establishment of gymnasia, spas etc., and business travellers occasionally incorporating leisure activities, such as visiting friends and family, attending a sports event or other, into a trip with the main purpose of doing business (Ryan, 2002:6-7). He further argues that work as an identity constructing factor is still very relevant, which he claims is evident in the vast number of people prioritising work over family. Work becomes instrumental to a certain lifestyle involving a level of freedom to travel, among other things, and thus with work comes a particular lifestyle that enables a

particular identity, which is not fragmented in terms of work and leisure (Ibid.:6).

Therefore, the work/leisure distinction is far from clear-cut, but it is evident that there is definitely a relationship of interdependence between the two, in which one does not exist without the other. Moreover, there are certainly indications that both work and leisure are central to identity construction, wherefore the holistic manner in which this study is conducted is enforced as a central tenet to this dissertation and its contribution to research within this field in general. Consequently, the tourist experience has to be viewed in the light of this fuzziness of both work/leisure interdependence and tourism/everyday life social spheres, because the accumulated experience of the tourist exists in different spheres in which experience will play a role, e.g. to constructions of identity and self.

It is argued that the tourist experience exists in a complex system of connections between different, sometimes opposing but yet interdependent, elements such as individuality/collectivity, past/future, and the ordinary/extraordinary. It is also argued that identity is central to this discussion of tourist experience, and as Vetner & Jantzen (2007:51) describe, experiences (notion A: tourist experiences) are primary experience (notion B: accumulated experience) of who one is and what one is able to do, i.e. the actual self, which is defined against what one wants to be or be able to do, the ideal self, and what one feels obligated to be or able to do, the normative self. Therefore, the relationship between tourist experience and identity construction has been established as the main focus of this dissertation, and due to the dynamic nature of experience, as discussed above, a central element in trying to understand this relationship goes via the concept of a travel career, which will be explained in the following sections.

5.3 The Role of the Travel Career

The application of the travel career to this study and this particular theoretical framework needs to be established, and the general conception is that the travel career is an expression of accumulated tourist experience (notion B) based on single tourist experiences (notion A). This means that the travel career consists

in a number of single tourist experiences (notion A) that have taken place throughout the life of a tourist, and together they form a travel career. In the process, however, tourist experience has been accumulated (notion B), which affects the next experience, and the connections entailed in the travel career may be used to understand the role of experience in the context of constructing identity, as indicated previously.

The following paragraphs mainly addresses the two articles on the Travel Career Ladder (TCL) (Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983) and the Travel Career Pattern (TCP) (Pearce & Lee, 2005), which are key articles in the development of the travel career approach in that they are respectively an early version and the latest version of this approach so far. This is meant to explain some of the fundamentals of this line of inquiry by including the initial article and its more recent, updated status.

The key point in the travel career approach, developed by Pearce, is that motivation, and to some extent also behaviour, changes according to people's level of travel experience, i.e. "*people may be said to have a travel career, that is, a pattern of travel motives that change according to their life span and/or accumulated travel experiences*" (Pearce & Lee, 2005:227), which means that a travel career is made up of a number of motives that are based on the tourists' present age, state of mind and past experiences (Ibid.).

The initial aim of the first travel career approach, the TCL, concerned motivation for specific on-site tourist experiences, not pre-travel motivation (Ibid.) and post travel evaluation, which are highly relevant to this study. It is, however, necessary to stress firstly that the travel career concept is used invariably throughout this dissertation as accumulated tourist experience, prior to travel as well as on-site. Secondly, in light of the study at hand, there are obvious similarities between on-site and pre-travel motivation, e.g. financial considerations and compromise decision-making, and thus a clear-cut distinction is of minor importance. Moreover, the later TCP approach offers a more generic conceptualisation of (pleasure) travel motivation (Pearce & Lee, 2005:227) than what was initially proposed in that a more dynamic, multifaceted view of the

patterns of motivation was applied, which is much more in line with this piece of research.

The TCL is based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs in terms of the following needs' motivational nature: physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, self-esteem needs and a need for self-actualisation, the order being that the first mentioned are the lower order needs,[67] and then increasing from thereon up in the hierarchy, which is shown in the figure below:

Figure 5.6
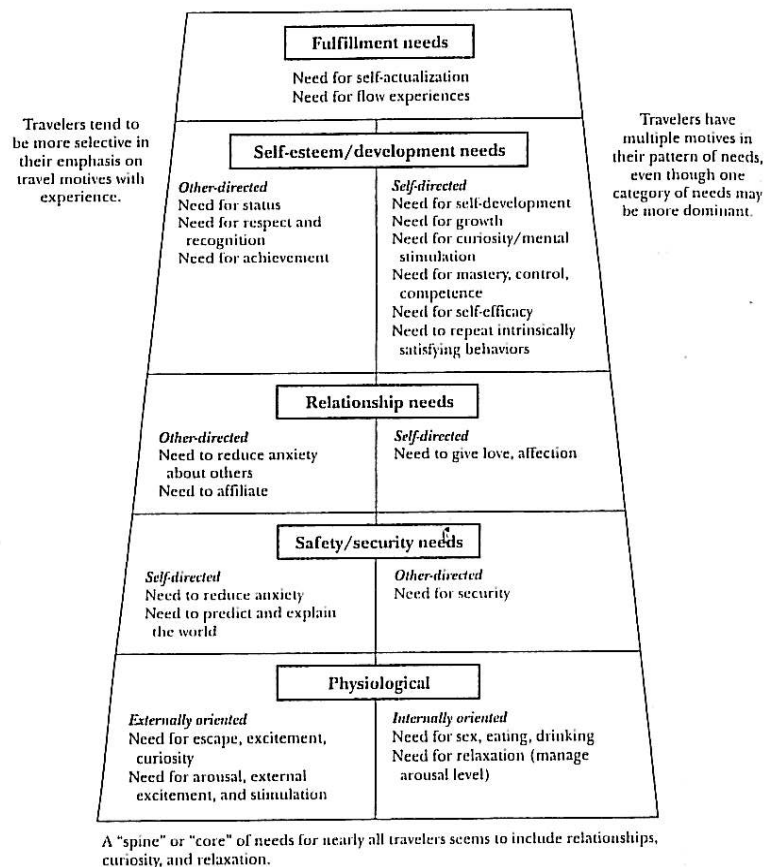
Source: Goeldner & Ritchie (2003:254)

When the TCP was introduced as a revision of the TCL approach, it was evident that the system might not be as "hierarchical" as first assumed, since there was no evidence that needs at different levels could not coexist or reoccur after they

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[67] Using Maslow's terminology of a hierarchy of needs divided into levels with the most urgent needs at the bottom as a base for the hierarchy

have been satisfied, and even be turned upside down, so that higher order needs were sought satisfied before lower order needs, e.g. relatively poor people buying luxury goods (Arnould et al., 2004:270-271). Thus a revision was made that focused on "*the dynamic, multilevel motivational structure* […] *that reflect and define careers*" (Pearce & Lee, 2005:227).

The idea of accumulated tourist experience influencing identity construction will be explored, and the inherent idea of developing a career as a tourist has a unique place in this study, as it serves the purpose of being a point of reference for a series of tourist experiences throughout the life of an individual, thereby supporting or facilitating the individual's construction of identity. The travel career, and thereby the accumulated tourist experience of which the career essentially consists, thus becomes a means to explore identity through the use of these accumulated tourist experiences conveyed by the individual. Moreover, such expressions are present time constructions and negotiated identity, and thus reasoning behind past experiences is viewed in the light of present level of experience in terms of tourist experience, history and social experience used to express or construct present day identity.

The identity that is sought conveyed through these tourist experiences is reflecting a perception of what is a desirable identity and self as understood by the individual, the ideal self. It therefore also functions as a way of constructing or negotiating identity, which is also part of the reflexive level that Vetner & Jantzen (2007) refer to as a continuous sense-making that also entails maintaining narratives of our lives, e.g. of a travel identity. Hence each single tourist experience of the travel career is perceived as a means to construct and negotiate identity.

As already discussed, the individual is part of its surroundings. This means that the individual does not construct meaning in an isolated setting but through perceptions of social selves and others and their value systems and prevailing codes of conduct. This also means that the aim, although more or less conscious, is not necessarily to stand out and be unique, but to fit into specific social groups, which may be a central point to the construction of identities. This is not to say that being unique cannot be an aim for the individual, which may be part

of a trend or norm in identity construction at a given point in time or a given social group,[68] but being unique in a way that does not go beyond the boundaries of the group norms that one wants to be accepted by, i.e. without being so radically different that one becomes the other. Vetner & Jantzen (2007) suggest that perhaps uniqueness may be defined not as new or unfamiliar experiences, but as experiences that are useful to people's individual identity projects and thereby become unique to the individual that experiences them. Therefore, identity is sometimes contested by the experiences one may have, and thus a need to compensate may occur in the narratives constructed to maintain a desirable identity, e.g. as the case often is in this study, in narratives of the travel career.

Applying a term like "career" to the act of travelling creates certain connotations of travelling for a living, which several interviewees commented on during the interview sessions. Some of them said jokingly that they would love to make a career out of travelling if they could, pointing out the fact that travelling is a leisure activity, not a job description or a paid position, which has been addressed in various ways by several theorists (e.g. Durkheim, 1912; Leach, 1961; and Graburn, 1989). Nevertheless, the career concept does leave room for an alternate interpretation in which a leisure activity such as tourism becomes a career, in the sense of training and development in skills and understandings leading to changed behaviour in the future, in tourism as well as in a job situation. This is also supported by the theorists mentioned above, i.e. Mossberg (2003), Larsen (2007), and Vetner & Jantzen (2007), whose perceptions of the experience entail exactly the point that each experience offers a new foundation for future experiences.

Particularly in the light of the travel career approach introduced by Pearce (1988, 1991, 1993), in which a ladder was initially proposed as a metaphor for gradually conquering bigger travel challenges with the increase of travel experience, tourist experiences may very well function as training. In contemporary western society, tourism may be pursued as a desirable leisure time task over a substantial part of people's lives, in some periods more actively than others, wherefore the idea

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[68] As it was also described in the introduction (Chapter 1) as a mass of individuals and as Rutherford (1990) speaks of being different from "the Joneses"

of a travel *career* may not be as far fetched as initially indicated. Moreover, there are indications in more recent literature that the distinction between work and leisure is not as clear as it once was, and thus experiences gained in one area of life, e.g. tourism, are not necessarily isolated from other areas such as work (Ryan, 2002; Douglas, 1996).

It is a known fact that a professional career, a job as it may be, has strong identity shaping qualities that to a great extent shape who we are in the eyes of our peers and in our own minds, i.e. our identity to the surrounding world, and our sense of self in that world. Similarly, the fact of the matter is that lifestyle, which includes consumption and leisure activities as well as a professional career, is more and more defining for who we are, although the boundaries between work and leisure may in fact become more and more blurred (Ryan, 2002). It is thus suggested that the career that some interviewees may have rejected in terms of travelling at first is in fact present and visible as an identity constructing element in many people's lives.

Therefore, consuming tourist experiences as part of an overall travel career may very well be a key element in shaping who we are, and the need for an exploration of the inherent career in tourism furthermore becomes apparent. This gives reason to the emphasis on the travel career, which will be explored further throughout this dissertation.

5.4 Chapter Summary

An underlying assumption in this chapter is that the tourist experience is at the core of tourism, and thus essential in understanding the meaning of tourism. Simultaneously, identity is inevitable in tourism because the other is highly conspicuous in a tourism environment which is unfamiliar in the sense of being different from the home environment, but also entails the human other in locals as well as other tourists. The concept of the tourist experience is thus applied to this study in order to address meanings of tourism and identity construction in particular, e.g. in terms of adventure as a means to find oneself.

The tourist experience has been established as a complex concept, where the focus in this study is on the internalisation of the tourist experience in the tourist, whereby it becomes part of the tourist and his/her identity, but also on the fact that individual identity is related to the context in which the individual exists. So, there are both individual, personal elements as well as collective, social elements contained in the tourist experience. Two different notions of tourist experience have been identified: A) single tourist experiences, which are specific activities, instantaneous to some extent, and B) accumulated tourist experience, which is a more generic, mental state of experiencing and generating long-lasting memories and knowledge. These two notions together form the travel career as an ongoing construction of tourist experiences that are also instrumental in constructing identity. In addition, reflexivity works as a means to construct identity through the evaluations and perceptions of the tourist experiences in retrospect, whereby they can be transformed into desirable identity, which can then be expressed. Accumulated tourist experience is thus linked in a profound way evident through the travel career to identity.

A discussion of the existing literature on the tourist experience took a vantage point in Pine & Gilmore's business economics perspective (1999), which was then moved into a customer perspective, primarily represented by Mossberg (2003). Particularly, the idea of a time/space dimension has been applied, because the application of the travel career builds on an assumption that before, during and after play a role to the tourist experiences obtained, and just as importantly in this context, how they are perceived by the individual tourist and subsequently used to construct identity. Also, the concept of memory plays a role in this respect, because the connection to self-perception increases the ability and desire to remember specific experiences.

The perception of the tourist experience as both personal and social may seem contradictory, but is nevertheless the perspective applied in this study, because the concept of the tourist experience is not simply explained, and thus needs a nuanced portrayal. A contribution to existing literature within the field of tourism is thus also suggested.

In addition, the possibility of re-creating one's self through tourism was addressed, because normality is abandoned when the individual engages in tourism activities. However, the social worlds of everyday normality and tourism abnormality are interdependent, as one does not exist without the other, which presents yet another complexity in issues relating to the tourist experience. Tourist experiences are thus stated to exist in a complex system of somewhat opposing yet interdependent perspectives, such as individual/collective, past/future, and ordinary/extraordinary, which all contribute to the complex understanding of the tourist experience applied to this study.

Lastly, the travel career concept has been discussed in order to apply it to this study, as a way of gaining insights into the accumulated tourist experience (notion B) based on single tourist experiences (notion A). The travel career serves a unique purpose, as a point of reference for a series of tourist experiences taking place throughout the life of an individual. It thereby offers a possibility for supporting the construction of identity that goes on in the present, in that the narrative of the travel career becomes a way to construct desirable identity through coherent stories of the self. Eventually, the constructed career may be seen as part of who one is, and tourism may have come to be a more significant factor in that respect than ever before.

The theoretical framework for addressing the tourist experience in light of identity construction has hereby been established. The relations between various perspectives of the tourist experience have been addressed, e.g. personal and social elements of the experience, and the role of the travel career. This illustrates the complexity of the concept, and this will be continued in the analyses.

6. Developing a Framework for Analysis

The approach taken throughout this project entails a hermeneutic process in which empirical data together with a theoretical foundation points out the direction for the analysis. This means that in practice random theoretical considerations have set the interview scene in that literature has been considered prior to the interviews, as part of the specific preparations and as part of a general pre-understanding of the issue at hand. Likewise, the empirical data has been viewed as a way to focus the analysis, in that the analysis basically reflects recurring themes in the conducted interviews, as they were used and conceptualised by the interviewees. Subsequently, theory has also been consulted in terms of understanding the empirical data, and as such theory plays a central role as part of a framework in which these themes can unfold. This process has affected the choice of the analytical method that Kvale (1997) refers to as ad hoc meaning creation, in that the findings that have come from it have inspired various ways of analysing data, e.g. in terms of extracting themes, compare and contrast, as they have seemed appropriate for the process. The development of and explanations for this hermeneutic process of shifts between empirical data and theory that constitutes the analytical framework will be presented in the following.

A central part of the framework is the travel career, in the sense that it is an expression of tourism experiences, both in terms of the actual experiences that people have engaged in (notion A) and are conscious of having experienced to the extent that they are able to tell about them, and the accumulated experience from engaging in different tourist experiences (notion B),[69] which may be unconscious to a great extent and thus implicit in the stories told about tourist experiences. Therefore, the travel career offers a framework for exploring identity in relation to tourist experiences, because narratives related to these tourist experiences in cohesion will assumedly reveal elements of identity construction and negotiation.

The first step in creating this analytical framework is to get an overview of the different elements that the travel career entails in terms of the experiences the

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[69] See also section 5.1 The Tourist Experience – Dual Notions and Perspectives

interviewees express to have had. To obtain this overview, experiences will be addressed as they are presented by the interviewees themselves, i.e. conscious and reflexive recollections of past experiences, and not factual descriptions, and as such are assumed to entail identity constructions to be discovered through further analysis.

The travel career will be illustrated by first of all looking into the different stages of a travel career and what they might entail. This will be done by consideration of shifts in different ways, e.g. modes of travel or travel partners, as expressed specifically by the interviewees themselves, and which relate most obviously to notion A, single tourist experiences. Second, consideration of more internal and perhaps to some extent unconscious issues in terms of what is obtained through these experiences, i.e. notion B, accumulated tourist experience, will be addressed.

These aspects are then explored in order to a) explain travel career stages as conceptualised in this study, and b) to describe types of experiences at a fairly general level as they seem to take place at each of these stages. This combination will be used to form common types of tourist experiences and their ascribed outcome at each stage of the travel career, which will create an overview of what is dealt with in the data material in terms of expressed tourist experience. Also, it will generate a basis for discussing expressed behaviours entailed in certain types of tourist experiences and eventually how the interviewees relate to this behaviour in terms of constructing identity.

The extracted types of tourist experiences will serve the purpose of capturing a broad spectrum of tourist experiences that the interviewees have had. They are likely never to be identical, but nevertheless share some similarities, which makes them useful as a way of managing the data material. It must, however, be stressed that the aim is not to undermine the subtle differences in the interviewees' experiences, but to create a tool that pinpoints the essence of the data material and facilitates further analysis.

6.1 Developing a Travel Career Framework

The centrality of the travel career as a means to understand identity construction has thus been established,[70] and the purpose of this initial part of the analysis is to create an overview of the different stages of the travel career, and eventually how the stages relate to each other. The point of departure is the line of thinking used in theories of the family life cycle (FLC), where different life stages and circumstances underpin different needs, demands, motivations and derived consumption patterns, which in this case is a means to identity construction. However, due to some of the issues that the FLC is generally criticised for, e.g. lack of consideration of demographic and psychographic trends, the FLC has not been applied directly for this specific purpose. It only serves as inspiration for the development of the travel career stages, which will be presented below. The relevance of this line of thinking, i.e. a stages approach, is that not only is it a widely used approach to capture the consumer, i.e. the tourist in this case, it is also related to the line of thinking implied in the travel career pattern.[71]

Therefore, it has been necessary to look into different ways of capturing the travel career stages, while simultaneously relating travelling to the general life situation of the tourist, which may have an impact on travelling, as the FLC suggests to impact consumption in general. The travel career concept was originally developed to focus on the level of travel experience and its possible influences on the tourist, and not necessarily on the significance of surrounding circumstances for the individual, which may play an equally important role to choices and experiences related to tourism. When researching aspects of the travel career, the intention is therefore to broaden the context in which the tourist is situated and by doing so expand the understanding of the tourist's world and the tourist in it.

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[70] See also section 5.3 The Role of the Travel Career
[71] See section 5.3 The Role of the Travel Career

6.1.1 Travel Unit Stages

The present focus on the individual tourist has inspired the use of the travel unit,[72] i.e. people travelling together as a unit, as the dominant determinant, forming the main premise for travelling. Based on the data material, it seems that many choices in relation to decisions of tourism are initially based on considerations of the members of the travel unit as a whole, which eventually forms the basis for the travel career of the individual - since the two, individual and unit, are not isolated from each other. Likewise, previous research has shown that compromise decision-making prevails in tourism purchase decisions (e.g. Jenkins, 1978; Nickerson & Jurowski, 2001; Gram, 2007). So, the relationship between individual and collective in terms of tourism decisions is somewhat blurred, because the individual is entangled in different relations, e.g. with family or friends, and not isolated from its surroundings, and the presence of travel partners may thus play a major role in shaping an individual travel career.

Table 6.1

Travel Unit	Description
+ Parents	The interviewee travelling as a child with his/her parents
+ Friends or relatives	Different points in time where the individual is travelling without a partner but with friends or relatives. Examples are: an adolescent travelling around Europe with a friend, a divorcee travelling with a brother or sister, or someone travelling without their partner for specific interests, e.g. golfing, rock climbing or work[73]
+ Partner	Couples travelling just the two of them. It needs to be stressed though that a partner appearing at one stage of an interviewee's travel career may not be the same partner appearing at other stages, e.g. in the case of divorce

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[72] The term 'travel unit' has been developed for this specific purpose and refers to the group of people travelling together, and thus the people that are all taken into consideration when travel decisions are made, although some may have more decision-making power than others. The centre of the unit is, however, the individual tourist, in this case any given interviewee, regardless of the role this particular individual plays in the travel unit. The general idea is that no matter what, individual travel behaviour will be influenced by the travel unit.

[73] Although the main focus is on leisure travel, work-related travel must be included as well. The overall travel career in many cases includes this type of travel, and the two cannot always be distinguished. Moreover, work-related travel may motivate leisure travel, so they are not isolated travel experiences in this respect.

+ Partner and friends or relatives	A couple travelling with another couple or a couple travelling with parts of their family
+ Family	Travelling with a partner and one or more children – your own, your partner's or your children together
+ Family and friends or relatives	Travelling with the family and with others outside the immediate family, e.g. another family or grandparents
By oneself	This is used relatively, as opposed to the other stages, and indicates someone setting out to travel without any travel partners that they already know. This does not mean, however, that they are necessarily isolated while travelling by themselves, e.g. they may join some sort of group travel or visit friends or family along the way

For these reasons, shifts between different travel units will be used as the main determinants of the different travel career stages. These shifts have been identified through the data generated for this project, which means that the stages reflected here derive directly from the data and not from theory as such, although the stages approach is inspired by related theory, such as the FLC. Table 6.1 shows the different travel units mentioned by the interviewees – as seen from the perspective of the individual.

These stages will form an overall picture of the different travel units represented in the data material, and they are assumed to have a direct effect on the travel career and the tourist experiences accumulated throughout. Looking more closely at the data, it becomes evident that although there are several variations of patterns made up of these travel units, the patterns below seem to be very well represented in this sample of interviewees, which will be dealt with in more detail later on in the analysis.[74] At this point, these are meant to be illustrations of possible patterns within an individuals travel career:

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[74] See section 8.1 Travel Career Patterns

Table 6.2

Pattern 1	Pattern 2
+ parents	+ parents
↓	↓
+ friends or relatives/by oneself	+ partner
↓	↓
+ partner	+ family/family and friends or relatives
↓	↓
+ family/family and friends or relatives	+ partner
↓	
+ partner	
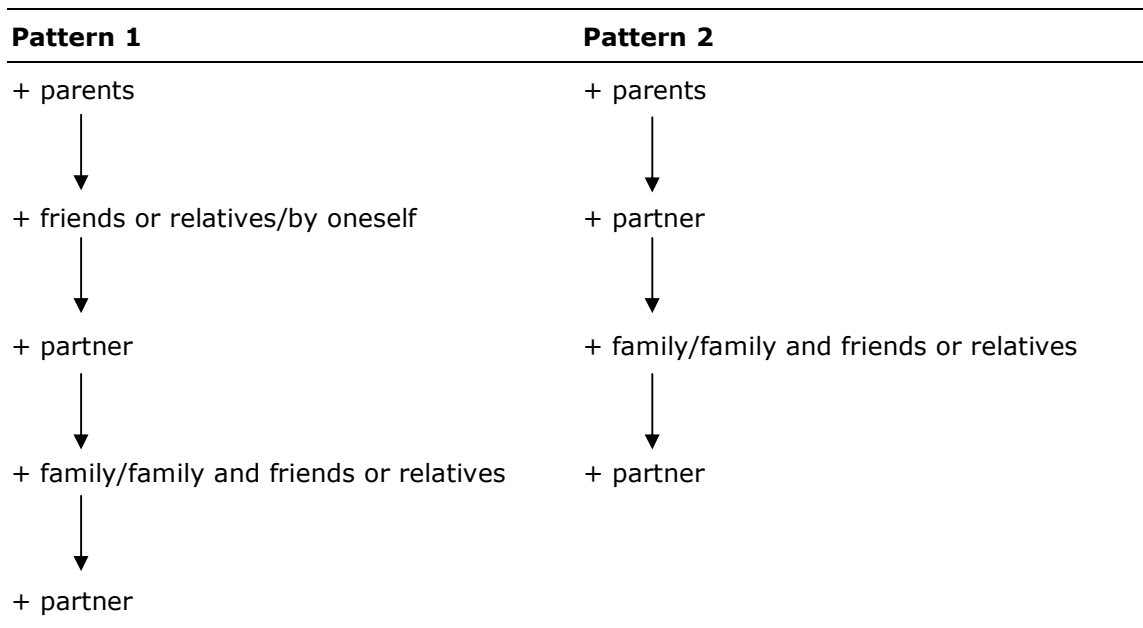
Evidently, each of the travel units mentioned above may thus appear at different times throughout an individual's travel career, and although one type may dominate at a given point in most interviewees' lives, as indicated in this illustration, the idea is to be able to form dynamic portrayals of the travel careers that seem to exist among the interviewees. This also means that several possible patterns are not illustrated here, because the purpose at this point is to draw a general picture of the social world around these tourists, which is assumed to play a central role to the travel career and thus to the tourist experience. Obviously, the more details put into these patterns, the more complex, and possibly the less tangible, they become. The reasoning is that the social world does make a difference and is extremely important to the tourist's decisions and eventual behaviour and evaluation. Therefore it is important and useful to include this aspect in the analysis for the sake of understanding the basis for tourist experiences, which may otherwise be lost. At the same time, it must be stressed that the understanding obtained at this level is meant to be of a general nature, whereas more detailed, complex explanations are sought elsewhere in the analysis.

Now that the travel units have been addressed as a means to define different stages of the travel career, the next step is to address the tourist experiences

that each stage may entail. The purpose is to describe different types of tourist experiences that illustrate connections between the individual tourist as a member of a travel unit, and related tourist experiences, whereby a possible illustration of the travel career is proposed. This is the purpose of the following section.

6.1.2 Types of Tourist Experiences

The assumption is that by identifying different types of tourist experiences, based on the empirical data, for each travel unit, the notion A tourist experiences that tourists undertake at different stages of their lives and travel career will become more tangible. This will facilitate illustrations of a travel career and its relations to surrounding life circumstances and, eventually, the construction of identity. It is important to stress that the aim is not to generalise to the extent that there is only one type of tourist experience for each travel unit, which is not at all the case. It is the aim, however, to try to capture some of the tendencies that can be found in the available data without disregarding the uniqueness of every single tourist experience mentioned by the interviewees. However, it is this author's clear impression that some similarities exist within these unique experiences and the way they are discursively addressed by the interviewees. These types may therefore serve a purpose of illustration and, equally importantly, some level of tangibility that may provide more clarity in the conclusions obtained. The purpose is thus to create an overview of the material at hand in terms of expressions of tourist behaviour and the relation to these, i.e. when identity is constructed on this basis.

The types are constructed by looking closely at the data material and categorising the different tourist experiences presented by the interviewees according to e.g. domestic or international travel and modes of transportation, in order to make a reasonable suggestion of the most prevalent tendencies at each travel unit stage. In the following sections, each travel unit stage will be explained in terms of tourist experiences, i.e. mostly in terms of notion A, single tourist experiences, but to some extent reaching into notion B, accumulated tourist experience, due to expressions of outcome which have been accumulated

through the experience. Each travel unit stage and related types of tourist experiences are presented in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3

	Types of Tourist Experiences	
Travel Unit	**Tourist Experiences** **(notion A)**	**Accumulated Tourist Experience** **(notion B)**
+ parents	Travelling by car to a domestic seaside destination, camping for a week during the summer, swimming, sunbathing etc.	Novelty - a sense of adventure as a change from everyday life
	Visiting family and friends at a domestic or international destination for a couple of weeks during the summer, swimming, sunbathing, social gatherings etc.	Togetherness – as a family
+ friends or relatives	Travelling by car or public transportation to an international destination, usually moving around, using cheap accommodation along the way, sometimes working, "roughing it" for 2-4 weeks, in some cases months	Education Adventure – through independence and a sense of freedom
	Travelling domestically or internationally for 1-2 weeks, engaging in specific hobbies, staying at accommodation appropriate for the activity at hand	"Doing what I like" Togetherness – a sense of community
	Going on a package tour to an international/European destination, by plane, for 1-2 weeks, doing typical beach activities, most often combined with organised tours	Novelty – change from everyday life Relaxation
+ partner/+ partner and friends or relatives	Flying to a remote international destination for 2 or more weeks' holiday, staying at cheap hostels, B&Bs or hotels doing cultural activities, sightseeing and relaxation	Novelty – experiencing new, unfamiliar cultures and places Adventure Relaxation Togetherness – as a couple or group
	Going on a package tour abroad for 1-2 weeks, staying at a hotel, doing typical beach activities, sometimes combined with organised tours, or going by car or public transport to a domestic destination for short breaks, staying at B&Bs, cottages	Relaxation - Comfort Togetherness – as a couple or group
	Visiting family and friends at a domestic or international destination for a couple of weeks during the summer, swimming, sunbathing, social gatherings etc.	

	Types of Tourist Experiences	
Travel Unit	**Tourist Experiences (notion A)**	**Accumulated Tourist Experience (notion B)**
+ family/+ family and friends or relatives	Travelling by car or public transport to a domestic seaside destination, staying at a B&B or camping for a week or for day trips during the summer, swimming, sunbathing etc.	Togetherness – as a family and sometimes with other travellers (particularly the children) Relaxation Novelty – change from everyday life
	Going on a package tour to an international destination, by plane, bus or train, for 1-2 weeks, staying at a hotel or camping, doing typical beach activities	Togetherness – as a family and sometimes with other travellers (particularly the children) Relaxation Novelty – change from everyday life Education
By oneself	Flying or going by public transport to an international destination, backpacking, usually moving around, staying at anything from cheap hostels or camping to regular hotels, walking, climbing, swimming, sunbathing, reading, for 2-4 weeks	Novelty Adventure Togetherness - with other travellers
	Flying, driving or going by public transport to an international or domestic destination, visiting friends and family for a couple of weeks or more, mainly engaging in social and cultural activities.	Togetherness – as a group/family members Relaxation
	Going on a package tour abroad for 1-2 weeks, staying at a hotel, doing typical beach activities, sometimes combined with organised tours	Relaxation – Comfort Togetherness - with other travellers

A few comments on each travel unit stage are in order. When travelling with their **parents**, the interviewees seem to paint a fairly clear picture of a somewhat repetitive pattern of domestic travel, i.e. travelling to the same or similar domestic destinations several times. Some would occasionally go abroad, mainly to visit friends or family. These elements all relate to notion A, tourist experiences, but when it comes to issues reaching into notion B, accumulated tourist experience, some of the experience expressed as gathered outcomes from the above entail a sense of novelty, in that holidays were not regular occurrences and as such did provide change in everyday life as it were, and were also seen as a bit of an adventure because of that. Togetherness in terms of often visiting or being on holiday with the extended family is another expressed outcome and is the starting point for most interviewees' travel careers. Keep in mind that in the 1950s and early 1960s in the UK and in Denmark, tourism was still not a mass activity.[75] It is therefore no surprise the interviewees did not travel extensively at that stage, and for those who did travel, the type of travelling was fairly similar, as possibilities were rather limited at the time. Also because of the scarce possibilities, the outcomes expressed have to be viewed in light of these issues, which means that e.g. adventure is relative to that time and the individual experiences. This obviously goes for every stage, how they are placed in history, and in the individual's travel career.

When travelling with **friends or relatives**, it becomes a bit more complicated as this travel unit stage may occur at several points in time. Chronologically speaking, the first time that it may occur is during adolescence, where quite a few interviewees have travelled with some sort of educational element attached. It may also be the case, usually at a later stage, that while the interviewee is with a partner, a specific hobby or interest inspires some travelling without that partner, but with others with similar interests instead. Lastly, being single but travelling with friends or relatives is quite common for the singles among the interviewees, whether or not they are single now or were in the past.

In the first mentioned example of adolescent travellers, the experience is often educational in some way. Moreover, independence and freedom were sought out, which resulted in an adventurous feel to the experience, and as such was expressed

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[75] See section 3.2 Context and History

as a significant outcome. In terms of pursuing a hobby, some of the expressed experiences have to do with "doing what I like," without having to drag along a partner who is not really interested, and being with likeminded peers, whereby a sort of community is formed. Lastly, the single traveller has fairly specific experiences, the most important being novelty, i.e. a change from everyday life.

Travelling with a **partner** generally seems to be characterised by two specific tendencies: either travelling to remote destinations to explore places that are culturally and socially different from home, or travelling to fairly familiar destinations close to home for relaxation and comfort. Some couples may do both, and some tend to do one and not the other, or one more frequently than the other. There are also be several variants of both types of travelling. Travelling with a **partner and friends or relatives** should be seen as an extension of this stage, as it does not seem to vary much in terms of the type of travelling undertaken by this travel unit. However, a main difference is that social activities are stressed more as a significant element of the experience, and explained by the fact that part of the purpose is to be together socially with these particular people. Activities are somewhat similar in these two cases, but they are ascribed very different meanings, as will be explained later on.

The **family** as a travel unit is rather complex and thus several types of travelling dominate this travel unit stage. An element that adds to its complexity is the fact that the time span of the family as a travel unit is relatively long, and the children involved go through different stages which may affect the tourist experience. The pattern that seems to exist within this unit, however, tends to portray progression from one type of travelling to others during the time span of the family as a travel unit. For the most part, relaxation and togetherness, and to some extent novelty in terms of a change from everyday environments, seem to be what is desired and gathered from these family holidays, although there are exceptions where other elements are expressed. For example, an educational element is sometimes expressed as an important outcome on behalf of the children, and at times it seems to be a very significant driving force for holidaying abroad in particular, and there are incidents where interviewees believe that children have had a learning experience from a particular holiday. Like it was the case before, travelling with **family and friends or relatives** does not seem to change the type of travelling undertaken by this travel unit very

much. And it also seems to be the case here that social activities are more predominant, because the present company is part of the experience.

Travelling **by oneself** entails by far the most diverse modes of travel among the interviewees. Logically, the decision to travel in a certain way, to certain destinations, engaging in certain activities is less complicated when it only involves one person, and perhaps that is the reason for the greater diversity within this travel unit. However, other prerequisites, e.g. finances, safety etc., may be more significant within this travel unit than others. The type of outcome expressed here entails for the visiting friends and family part that togetherness is part of this stage, although the traveller can opt in and out of it and move on to do other things, whenever he or she feels like it. Also relaxation seems dominant as part of this experience. A wide range of experiences are obtained through this, obviously because there are many different types of travelling involved. For most of them it seems that although they travel by themselves, they do experience a great deal of togetherness with other travellers and consider that a positive addition to the experience.

6.2 Empirical & Theoretical Themes

After this foundation has been established, an additional element of core themes raised by the interviewees is going to be presented. An initial scanning of the interviews has been conducted in such a way that issues raised in each interview were noted, and the themes that seemed most prevalent by recurring in several interviews were chosen as the themes to focus on in the analysis. This means that the data material to a large extent suggests the content of the analysis. In addition, theory as presented in previous chapters[76] will be applied to the analysis at a later stage as a means to understand the empirical themes raised during the interview process. The aim is that theory and empirical data will correlate in a way that reflects the hermeneutical process behind this piece of research, i.e. theory will enhance understandings of empirical data and vice versa.

The core themes that have been extracted from the interviews are presented below. The data review forms a basis for generating these specific themes, which operate on

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[76] See chapters 4 + 5

many different levels. They are issues expressed by the interviewees, and not factual descriptions of what has taken place in terms of tourist experiences. The subsequent analysis will address these themes and related theory.

- **The Tourism Context :**
  (Defined as issues that surround a specific tourist experience, and thus influence it)
  - o Individual circumstances, e.g. practical considerations (finances, time, compromises etc.) forming a particular frame for the experience
  - o Collective influences, e.g. historical developments, i.e. travel opportunities and norms at a point in time pointing out certain directions

- **The Tourist Experience**:
  (Defined as issues related to the tourist experience itself – both notion A + B play a role in this respect)
  - o Approach to the tourist experience (focus on the number of different experiences vs. getting a lot of details out of one experience)
  - o Adventure (risk and danger vs. trivialisation)
  - o Novelty (opposed to familiarity)
  - o Atmosphere – underlying the experience as a frame of reference (nostalgia, ideals and dreams)

- **Outcome:**
  (Defined as issues that relate to what is gained from the tourist experience in retrospect)
  - o Memories & Togetherness (forming bonds based on experience)
  - o Recharging: Relaxation and escape (getting away and preparing for everyday life)

It is thus assumed that the core of it all is the tourist experience itself, but surrounding it are aspects of context and outcome that do play significant roles for the way the experience is discursively positioned. There is a high correlation between these empirical themes and the theory presented previously, in that Mossberg's

time/space dimension of an experience[77] entails a before, during and after, which may very well correspond to the above themes. Aspects of the tourism context may be said to relate to the *before* dimension, since practical considerations, historical developments etc. are part of considerations and influences on any given holiday and the choices that precede it, and hence the upcoming tourist experience. The tourist experience naturally relates directly to *during*, in terms of notion A, since all of the mentioned topics within this theme have to do with the experience itself. There are, however, aspects that relate to the way the experience is internalised in the tourist, i.e. notion B. Although aspects of both notions are implied by the interviewees, notion A is in focus at this point.

Last but not least, outcome relates to the *after* dimension where there is a sense of having gained something from a holiday and a specific tourist experience. In this sense, the before and after dimensions are surrounding circumstances that affect the choices made, as they go into the process of the travel career. *During* the experience is a process in itself that operates on different levels, as described and discussed in the theory chapter.[78] The core of the following model described previously is the process of experiencing at two different levels, described as notion A and B as shown in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1
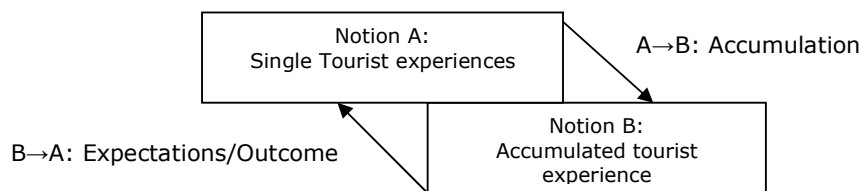
The contention is that this process, *during*, within the process of a coherent before, during and after, entails an accumulation process that affects the experience at both levels (A and B) via generated memory, whether it is unconscious (implicit) or explicit (conscious). As mentioned earlier, the conscious and unconscious levels of experience play into these two notions, because notion A is primarily conscious and notion B may

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[77] See section 5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective.
[78] See section 5.1 The Tourist Experience – Dual Notions and Perspectives

be conscious at some level, but to a great extent it is unconscious. They both play into the tourist experience at an analytical level as well, because the expressed notion A experiences are tangible and thus also accessible methodologically speaking, and notion B experience is hidden and thus also somewhat inaccessible. However, it is assumed that notion B can be made accessible through the data material and the ways notion A is characterised and positioned by the interviewees.

There seems to be a link between the presented theory and these empirical themes, and the hermeneutic process of this study will continuously address both theory and empirical data, which will also affect the later analysis. The steps below are thus meant to illustrate the analytical process in relation to previous theoretical concepts, as described in Chapters 4 and 5, and more directly applied to this study above. This is also meant to illustrate the incorporation of the empirical data into this analytical structure:

Figure 6.2

STEP 1: **Experience** **Sequence**	Tourism context (Before) Notion A: Single tourist experiences Notion B: Accumulated tourist experience Outcome (After) Tourist experience (During)
STEP 2: **Travel Career**	Notion A: Single tourist experiences A→B: accumulation B→A: Expectations/Outcome Notion B: Accumulated tourist experience Travel Career
STEP 3: **Identity Construction**	Identity Construction Notion A: Single tourist experiences A→B: accumulation B→A: Expectations/Outcome Notion B: Accumulated tourist experience Travel Career

The idea is that the three core themes form step 1 of the analysis, which also entails an application of theoretical perspectives of before, during and after, as presented in the theory chapter 5. The first step is primarily concentrated around notion A of the experience, although in light of issues connected to notion B as well, because they are not completely separable notions. Moreover, the discourse on these tourist experiences is as important to the experiences entailed in this step as anything else. Step 2 incorporates the travel career by linking interviewee experiences and analysing

them as coherent entities. It is in relation to the application of the travel career that the above mentioned travel units, patterns and types of tourist experiences may be useful as a way of moving from a generalised description into more detailed levels of understanding. Step 2 will be moving into notion B of the experience, in that relations between experiences will be explored. Eventually, identity construction will be explored at step 3, the final step of analysis, drawing on the former two levels of analysis and theory previously introduced,[79] in an attempt to answer the research questions.

The results of the analyses are therefore expected to be rather complex, but also a reflection of a field that has many different levels, which means that the complexity of the results represents a certain value. The reasoning behind this approach is that by looking into these themes, generated from the empirical data but analysed through the theoretical framework, it will be possible to explore tourist experiences and their different connotations in the world of the tourist. When related to the travel career, it will also become possible to explore the shifting experiences, at least to the extent that they are being reflected upon and narrated by these interviewees, which then becomes the constructed identity resting on tourist experiences. Identity construction in terms of the way these travel careers are composed narratively is more important than anything else. This is not an attempt to understand the shifts in actual behaviour, but the way they are used discursively to construct identity. That is the aim of the analysis and this study in general, and therefore also where the analysis ends. In the following chapters, the above framework will be applied as the analysis is conducted.

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[79] The analytical process has nothing to do with ways in which identity is constructed, i.e. these three steps do not imply steps of identity construction, but merely steps of the analysis to explore identity construction.

7. Step 1 - Implications of the Tourist Experience

The structure of the analysis (Chapters 7, 8 and 9) will follow the steps[80] outlined in the framework in Chapter 6. The purpose of the present chapter is to explore step 1 of the overall framework for analysis which entails two different notions of the tourist experience. Step 1 will mainly address notion A, the single tourist experiences[81] as addressed by the interviewees. However, this entails elements that may reach into discussions of other aspects of tourist experience, as it is argued that a complete separation of the notions is not the aim, even though an attempt is made to do so for practical, structural reasons. Later on, correlations between the two notions will be discussed, drawing on both notions as they have been described throughout these analyses. The result should be a more detailed and in-depth understanding of the tourist experience and of identity construction.

Furthermore, theory related to this first step will be explored. Theory previously presented[82] suggests that the phases before, during and after an experience are actually interconnected parts of it, which all contribute to the processing of the experience and the experiences to come. The three phases in time are therefore related and play important roles in terms of understanding the experience. As mentioned, it seems as though the empirical themes extracted from the data material comply with this in the sense that the first theme, tourism context, can be seen partly as the foundation for the before phase; the second theme, tourist experience, is the during phase; and the third theme, outcome, concerns the after phase. These themes and phases cannot be clearly separated, because elements of one phase reach into the others, and the themes are also at times related to several phases at the same time. The whole idea is to view these as interconnected aspects of the experience. For example, *before* reaches into *during*, and eventually into *after*, because the experience is evaluated based on expectations in the before phase and whether they were met in the *during* phase. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this analysis, it may make sense to separate the different parts, and merely connect them again as the analysis moves along.

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[80] See section 6.2 Empirical & Theoretical Themes
[81] See section 5.1 The Tourist Experience – Dual Notions and Perspectives
[82] See section 5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective

The objective of this first step of the analysis is to explore the empirical as well as the theoretical aspects of the tourist experience. However, the empirical data were used as a vantage point, because they were consulted before any profound theoretical framework was constructed, and as such lay the grounds for the empirical themes that structure this chapter. First, the tourism context will be addressed; second, the tourist experience; and third, outcome, as the three main themes generated from the scanning of the empirical data.[83] It needs to be stressed that various theoretical considerations will always have an impact on generating data, wherefore theory is obviously never completely excluded from the empirical data. Nevertheless, this analysis has taken a vantage point in the empirical data generated, since the aim is to explore the interviewees' perceptions, and not to test or explore theory. The role of theory is discussed further in the methodology chapter.[84]

7.1 The Tourism Context

The tourism context entails issues surrounding the tourist experience, and as such may affect the given tourist experience. This is arguably a rather unspecific definition, and the reason is that the interviewees brought up a number of issues that were not directly part of the experience, but seemed to influence it, and therefore may play a role in the travel career. These different factors seemed similar in the sense that they were surrounding issues of the tourist experience, hence part of the context in which tourism exists. It should be mentioned that this approach also means that not everything that could possibly be thought to have an impact on tourist experiences is necessarily accounted for in this analysis, but only the dominant issues brought up in the interviews. This method is also used to separate the most significant impacts from the less significant impacts in terms of setting the scene for travelling and accumulating experience, in the sense that what is mentioned is considered significant. In this connection, what is significant obviously has to do with constructing identity through the stories told of the significance of context. What is actually said is most significant, as it assists identity construction, and this will be discussed in Chapter 9.

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[83] See section 6.2 Empirical & Theoretical Themes
[84] See chapter 2 Methodology

The tourism context seems to refer to two different contextual levels, according to how the issues brought up by the interviewees relate to the individual tourist. The first level is therefore individual circumstances, i.e. practical considerations like financial status, time available, the individual's reference groups and the ways they may affect travelling. The second level entails collective influences in the shape of historical developments, such as travel opportunities and norms e.g. for choice of destination, type of travel etc. The analysis relates to the two levels by examining how they have been described by the interviewees. The analysis explores statements in the interviews that directly or indirectly concern the topic at hand, i.e. the tourism context, and includes relevant theory in the discussion.

7.1.1 Individual Circumstances

As expected, the empirical data suggests that individual circumstances (like practical issues, e.g. finances and time) inevitably affect travelling. However, the impact of such circumstances at different points in time and at different stages of the travel career seems very different across and within interviews. Not only does it vary from one interview to another, but also within the same interview when referring to different experiences. For example, the following quote shows an expressed change in attitude to money as a result of a changed living condition for this particular individual:

> "I'm less tolerant now, I suppose, to cheap travel. I know friends, like Robert, that looks for bargains. […] I mean, my means are better now than when I was younger, I suppose, obviously because I was a student for so long, and I think I'm sort of more profligate with my resources than some, and I don't look around for the bargains. So I just think where I would like to go and go there." (Interview 9-UK, Mark p.8)

It is evident that this interviewee finds that changed circumstances have affected his travelling to some extent, and the change seems to lie in the fact that travelling has become a bit more comfortable over time due to increasing means. There may also be an element of a shift in perspective in that often when there is enough money to spend, time seems more valuable, which may be the case at this point in Mark's life,

contrary to times when money is scarce, and more time is spent saving or stretching money.

Naturally, the impact of such practical issues on travelling must be viewed in the light of each interviewee's individual, personal context, which makes it complicated to make generalisations. It is noteworthy that there are no indications among the interviewees' statements that such practical issues, as different as they may be for each individual, are limiting in terms of obtaining valuable and meaningful tourist experiences. This may indicate a balance between what they wish to do (expectations *before* experience), what they can do (practical considerations), what they actually end up doing (the notion A experienced – *during*), and what they take away from it (outcome *after* experience). This balance seems to shape perspectives on the tourist experience in terms of before, during and after dimensions, and thus also for the relations between one tourist experience and another, which will be addressed in the second step of the analysis. The next quote illustrates this balanced perspective on the tourist experience and what it requires.

> "Another problem is our jobs. They prevent us from going away for more than four weeks. That would not be popular. It would not be easy for us to come back after more than four weeks, so that is perhaps a limiting factor. […] But I don't think we want to either … to be away for that long. We have a house that needs maintenance, a garden and such. You'd need to live in an apartment then, I think." (Interview 1-Dk, Hans p.17[85])

It seems that people tend – at a discursive level that is – to adapt to the practical circumstances of what is actually within their reach, here concerning time, and just as often concerning money. It is, however, suggested that there might be some level of discursive justification in these types of statements, portraying a particular identity and attempting to position oneself in a certain positive role that concurs with a desirable identity, e.g. of being a happy, successful individual, which suggests that admitting that something was missing in a particular tourist experience would be a sign of failure. This tendency is repeated in the following example, which happens to

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[85] The Danish interviews are in Danish, and all of the Danish quotes have therefore been translated by the author.

be from the same interview as above, which suggests that husband and wife confirm each other in this position. The example adds a new dimension to this idea:

> "I think that I would feel bad getting myself into debt just to be able to go on holiday. I really want to go on holiday, but I would much rather find a different type of holiday that would fit the budget that I knew we had. I'm sure I would be able to do that." (Interview 1-Dk, Karen p.16)

Obviously, in this specific example there is an expressed attitude as to how far one will go to obtain the desired tourist experience. However, the central point is that the last sentence indicates that accommodating to certain circumstances is not perceived as a problem, indicating that going on some sort of holiday is more important than not going. The scope of what is desirable will be reduced instead, according to these specific practical circumstances, i.e. expectations will be adjusted and the outcome will obviously be evaluated according to these adjusted expectations. Therefore, there seems to be a natural balance built into this framework, which in the end affects the way different tourist experiences are perceived and hence also the construction of the travel career.

Not surprisingly, it is inevitable that individual circumstances, such as time and money, affect the tourist experience. It seems that practical considerations – of almost any kind – do not restrict the act of travelling, i.e. actually going on a holiday, but more the ways travelling is played out, evaluated and discursively positioned. This means that a frame of reference exists, which does take practical issues into consideration, but which does not seem to limit the discursive functions these experiences may serve in the overall narrative of the tourist experience. The contention pointed out by Desforges (2000), Giddens (1991) and Noy (2004) that narratives of important experiences are constantly used and negotiated to fit a particularly desirable identity, and also to form a coherent story of the self in order to construct or confirm desirable identity, suggests that actual behaviour is less significant than discursive positionings in terms of affecting identity construction.[86] It is thus suggested that practical issues such as time and money may be highly influential in terms of obtaining specific tourist experiences that end up shaping the individual travel career, but at the same time such practical issues are not perceived

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[86] See section 4.4.2 Tourism Narratives

as significant in terms of constructing identity through the tourist experiences that are nevertheless obtained. In addition, practical issues are not influential in terms of who one aspires to be and discursively attempts to construct by means of these tourist experiences. These aspects will be included in the discussion of identity construction in step 3 of the analysis.

Another issue of the individual context that seems to affect the individual to a great extent is travel choices influenced by various reference groups. Different sorts of reference groups were addressed frequently and in many different ways by the interviewees. Reference groups in the individual's immediate social environment seem to have quite an impact on choices. One could argue that this moves into the more collective influences in the tourism context, but nevertheless this is considered to be part of the individual circumstances, because reference groups are specific to the individual and may have different impacts on different individuals. Therefore, it is here perceived to be an individual frame of reference.

Acquaintances' opinions, e.g. about a certain tourist destination, are often mentioned as influential, partly in terms of making specific choices, before and during the holiday, and partly in terms of shaping opinions, before, during and after the holiday, which is essentially the core of the before, during and after dimensions. The following example is very explicit in terms of expressing how other people's opinions might influence the individual tourist's choices:

> "W: "Yes. We went to Egypt together a few years ago and that was more or less on the recommendation of a friend of mine. And he told us how to go about it. The best way of doing it and that sort of thing
> M: … where not to stay and where to stay and that sort of thing. And your brother, he's got an apartment in Goa, hasn't he?! And he has told us to go up in India for some years, so we finally went there a couple of years ago"
> (Interview 6-UK, Will & Mary p.9)

The example illustrates the power of word-of-mouth, because the couple indicates that they would not ordinarily have gone to Egypt or India had it not been for these stated opinions by this close family member. The point is that the people we are surrounded by play an active role in influencing certain choices, and consequently also behaviour and opinions. Therefore we are not completely free or independent in the

ways we choose to travel – although these influences may at times be hidden from us in our unconscious mind. Arguably, the *thought style* is ingrained in the unconscious mind, and as such may affect us without our conscious approval or acceptance, but nevertheless will play a role in the way we perceive our own and others' tourist experiences. The people by whom we are surrounded, our reference groups, immediate as well as more distant, have quite an impact on the individual tourist experiences, and eventually the travel careers that are formed, and the construction of identity that takes place by means of the travel career. The inherent tourist experiences of the travel career directly connected to these reference groups, since they inspire what we desire to do and be, and what we do not. It implies that reference groups affect *before* by affecting what is desirable. They affect *during* in that tourist experiences are usually obtained in the company of members of the individual's reference groups, and they affect *after* by reflexivity in terms of how the experience is evaluated according to the current norm and at a later stage according to other norms. It is thus evident that this is where the link between individual and group becomes blurred in the tourism context, in that the individual is never completely free of these different group memberships. This eventually affects behaviour and perceptions of the tourist experience, and therefore these reference groups are focused on the individual but at the same time affected by a larger whole that the individual is also part of.

The individual relates to numerous groups in everyday life, e.g. the most immediate, individual reference groups such as family, friends or colleagues, or more distant, collective reference groups such as cultural, religious, political groups etc., and they all play a role in one's outlook in different situations, tourism being one of them. At times, membership of certain groups is sought out in such a way that it has a direct impact on the tourist experience and the underlying thinking that goes into decisions about travelling:

> "You see; I always want a sea view, and we had a little bit of an argument about this, because I've always wanted a hotel with a sea view, and so do the other girls at work. It's the most beautiful. I know you pay more, but to me, to wake up and look at the sea. Now, this particular place in Italy, haven't got that, and David said to me, now look Joan, we get up in the morning, eat breakfast and we're out. We're not actually going to be in

there to look at the view. And it was a quite bit more expensive, and we debated whether it was worth paying that bit more, just to have a sea view, and we decided that it wasn't. But some of my friends at work will not go unless they have got the sea view. It's a must" (interview 4-UK, Joan p.17)

The same interviewee also states:

"Well, yeah I wouldn't, because I guess, I am a bit of a snob when it comes to that. I want to make sure that it's quite nice. You don't want to get there and find it is 2 star. We, all girls at work, go for 3 star or above. That's important, we won't go below" (interview 4-UK, Joan p.20)

Joan refers several times to *girls/friends at work*, who are used as a supporting argument in having specific wants that this group apparently concurs with. Moreover, it seems that the couple uses different reasoning (first quote). Where Joan refers to her in-group at work telling her what is a high priority, David, her partner, refers to a more practical logic of not being able to really enjoy the sea view, which means that it would be a waste of money to pay extra for it, and therefore she is forced to compromise her rule of always wanting a sea view. It thus seems that there is some sort of misfit in their levels of argumentation, in that Joan's argument to do what serves the purpose of being part of a particular group, and functionality, in the form of David's rational logic. Both arguments play a role as they end up affecting the experience, but the main point is that to Joan the reference to the group at work is very important, and thus a strong argument in this discussion.

These quotes show that both rationality and feelings are valid parts of the experience, but also that the interviewee, Joan, tries to relate to a group of work colleagues by positioning herself in a certain way according to this group, i.e. as a member who seems to share specific characteristics in their touristic behaviour. Joan furthermore seems to attempt to reinforce her group membership through certain tourist behaviour, i.e. having a sea view and a 3-star hotels. Although her partner, David, distances himself from this particular rationale of being member of this particular group, he also positions himself in a certain way, which he might find more appropriate and desirable, e.g. as the rational, educated, reasonable tourist, who will not be trapped into paying extra for something that may not benefit them in terms of

functional gains, but only as symbolic value, which Joan might implicitly be advocating. Hence the argument that symbolic consumption is a significant factor in this respect,[87] although the functional argument won in the end.

Another type of membership is also found to occur via tourism, in the pre- and post phases of the actual tourist experience. In this next example, there is a distinct process by which decisions are if not definitively made then at least initiated:

> "When going to South America, we just said, let's meet one night to have a holiday evening. Then we [four individuals in two couples] bring along a closed envelope each, and then we have written down where we would like to go" (Interview 5-Dk, Gitte p.19)

The idea is that a democratic decision is made between the four members of this travel unit. It may not always be followed through, e.g. because of power issues within the group. A community between these four people is established through this almost ritual, sacred act,[88] which initiates their discussions on where to go for the next holiday. This way they also manage to extend the holiday so that it begins even before it begins, so to speak. Likewise, a similar bond is found on the other side of a holiday, e.g. upon return when experiences are shared with other people:

> "R: [...] We got friends coming next weekend and we'll probably be showing them slides on the computer. But what that shows is the post-holiday experience, I'm still trying to relive it – the slides of Egypt of Cairo, and I still wanted to be there long time after we got back, when Mark was showing them on a slide.
> M: But you don't do that on your own. You don't sit down and look at it, you do that in a company"
> (Interview 9-UK, Mark & Robert, p.17)

So, there seems to be a certain value in sharing experiences with other people, and possibly position oneself as part of a group. Extending a time that is positive in the mind of the individual is another important factor, which adds to the desire to position oneself in particular group memberships.

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[87] For further discussion see section 4.2.1 Symbolic Consumption
[88] Which draws lines to Graburn's sacred/profane distinction (1989) in which tourism is sacred and everyday life profane

Throughout the interviews, there are several references to *who I am* and *who I am not*, based on different group memberships. It tells a story of the individual as a tourist and as a modern consumer conscious of the symbolic value of one's choices, i.e. both in terms of choosing specific types of tourist experiences over others and behaving according to specific norms of certain groups that they consider themselves members of or desire membership of while being a tourist. These specific references will be addressed later.[89] It is evident, however, that reference groups and group memberships are influential in terms of the tourist experience. It exists in the mind of the tourist, consciously as well as unconsciously, and may be hidden to the tourists themselves. This makes an in-depth analysis of group memberships and their role in tourism interesting and relevant to this project, and travelling and tourism arguably become central elements of identity construction in this respect. This will be explored further in step 3 of the analysis.[90] For the time being, it is merely pointed out that different reference groups are surrounding circumstances for the individual tourist experience, and as such are referred to by the interviewees, which indicates that they are incorporated into the framework of the before, during and after processes around each tourist experience.

Hereby, the role of individual circumstances to the tourist experience has been explored as expressed by the interviewees. The main point among the practical circumstances is that considerations of time and money are very influential in the type of notion A tourist experiences that can actually take place, but the way they are used to construct identity is not affected by practical circumstances, however limiting or "un-limiting" they may have been at the time. Another point of attention is the role of the individual's reference groups in travel choices and subsequent evaluations. It was pointed out that immediate reference groups may at times be highly influential in terms of affecting travel choices. This aspect is closely linked to collective influences, due to the dynamics of group membership and individual preferences.

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[89] See section 9.2 Tourism Inherent in the Individual
[90] See chapter 9 Step 3 – Constructing Identity in Tourist Experience

7.1.2 Collective Influences

As mentioned earlier,[91] there is a more general historical development at a collective level in disposable income for leisure activities such as travelling, combined with the fact that travelling has become more and more accessible in terms of price and availability, and this obviously affects the individual level just described as well. This means that over the period the interviewees have been travelling, resources to do so have increased. So there is a natural progression in travel frequency that relies on this development, and which has made it easier to travel at any given time and with fewer financial resources. Statements such as "*people just didn't do that back then*", "*nowadays people have been everywhere*" and "*it was just as expensive then as it is now*" reveals this perspective. Obviously it is from this perspective that the interviewees now address the issue of practical circumstances getting in the way – or not – of travelling. E.g. the contention that *we will travel no matter what* is easier said than done, particularly when looking back in time, when it was more expensive and less accessible. The following section explores these collective developments and their influence on tourist experience further.

The supply of tourism products has changed over the years and obviously, at a particular point in time there are certain opportunities and norms for tourism set by the surrounding community, which of course have a great impact on the ways identity is constructed and evaluated at the time. Some interviewees refer to shifting opportunities and norms in various ways, and some examples will be discussed below.

> "[…] Then we went on the ferry, and then train from Harwich to London. It was about three times we did that, and half of Denmark did that. It was unbelievable how many people travelled like that. Those big ferries were stuffed with people, about 1500 people. It was a complete crusade of Danes on those ferries. That was a big hit at the time." (Interview 8-Dk, Erik p.5)

This example addresses the fact that norms and trends change over time, and this clearly illustrates that shifting trends may have a great impact on tourism, and the way it takes place and is perceived afterwards. As mentioned in an earlier discussion,[92] travel to nearby destinations was a trend when this group started

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[91] See section 3.2 Context and History
[92] See section 3.2 Context and History

travelling with their children. It later changed due to a shift in modes of transportation, and it definitely seems that this event is positioned as a thing of the past in the way it is described: the ironic distance to the whole scenario, "*crusade*" and "*stuffed with people*", and the emphasis on the fact that it used to be a *hit* at a distant point in time as opposed to now. All in all, it thus seems that this interviewee, Erik, is aware of these shifting trends, and therefore also positions himself according to these shifts. He indicates that at the time they followed the current norms and trends, although this way of travelling may be viewed in a different light nowadays, perhaps more negatively. He certainly does not let on that it would be something he would enjoy today, also because possibilities have expanded and he has changed.

The time dimension thus implies that what was desirable and acceptable *before* and *now* is obviously different, so that *after* rationalisations have caused some sort of change due to collective changes of norms and trends that eventually end up affecting the individual perspective. As Weaver & Lawton (2006) describe this as a change in attitude towards *work in order to play* and away from *play in order to work*, which is instrumental in changing perceptions of past holidays, e.g. in Erik's case, where he would have completely different requirements to a holiday, in that the holiday and travelling has become an end in itself, and not just a pastime while recharging for work.

Obviously, the individual is part of the collective, and therefore such collective changes are not just external to the individual. They also come from within and are shaped partly by the individual's own perspectives on the tourist experiences obtained, which then in reverse become a contribution to the general opinion or perspective on the matter. This means that individual and collective influences are not strictly separated, but play into each other, and perhaps there is an element of the so-called experience spiral described previously[93] that makes new experiences more interesting and attractive and old ones outdated and undesirable in retrospect, wherefore these developments of what is and is not desirable occur. What occurs at a given point in time probably has to do with supply and demand in combination, which are both part of the bigger picture of these different mechanisms, i.e. opportunities at a given point in time, which supply tourist experiences to be had, and what the

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[93] See section 5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective

collective of tourists seem to demand – or desire – based on what they might have done in the past. Thus, the interplay between supply and demand sets the stage for collective developments that end up influencing individual experiences.

The next example addresses a general change in society, which is perceived to have changed holiday patterns considerably, because of a wider scope of opportunity when it comes to travelling, here suggested to be related to both tradition and cost:

> "The seaside is a very traditional holiday. Especially 40 years ago, 50 years ago we would have gone to the seaside. Few people went abroad, but not many. And then costs became more available to people" (Interview 11-UK, Susan p.2)[94]

It is here implied that because of the drastic changes in people's private economy and the cost of travelling, there have also been drastic changes in holiday patterns, as explained earlier with reference to Weaver & Lawton (2006). It is evident that perceived opportunity for tourism has expanded over the years, and when there are more opportunities, with time, norms become more widespread as well, as people expand the scope of travel behaviour. This will be addressed in more detail later, and was earlier illustrated by Burton's four phases of tourism participation related to economic developments.[95]

Below is another example that relates to changed opportunities. Tom has gone from being an employee to self-employed, which he comments on in relation to travelling:

> "One of several important reasons was that I wanted to have control over my life, and I kind of changed my view on holidays and travelling, so that I wanted to be able to travel more, and because of the technology these days, then it's particularly easy, not without problems, but easy to travel and work" (Interview 3-UK, Tom p.3)

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[94] This example is from an English interviewee, but similar examples are found among the Danish interviewees. It is assumed that the two groups of interviewees perceive similar patterns of change in this respect.
[95] See section 3.2 Context and History

Because of the vast technological possibilities of today, the high-tech orientation of Burton's phase four mentioned before,[96] Tom sees an opportunity in changing his life into something more satisfactory. He accommodates his wish to travel as much as possible without being restricted by work by taking work with him. The understanding of opportunity is extended to encompass the increasing opportunities in the surrounding environment that somehow facilitates travelling. The direct impact on tourism is addressed by several interviewees.

The question is whether these changes were caused by demands from consumers, who were eager to travel more or in different ways, or by more general changes and developments in society, e.g. changed economic or technological terms, that made it possible to arrange travel to fit consumers' living conditions and leisure time better. At this point, one can only speculate about what caused these changes, and probably, the interplay between several factors has caused shifts in the market. Nevertheless, it is safe to say that opportunities have been expanded over time, and thus play a role for changed holiday patterns, i.e. what people do during their holidays, their perspective on the holiday, and consequently what they take with them from the experience, which has also been expressed throughout these interviews and the aforementioned description of historical developments.

Moreover, there is an element of social history that affects memories and perception and puts a mark on the tourist experience, and this is presumably linked to a broadly defined social environment.[97] The following quote, which is actually more of a train of thought than a cohesive statement, illustrates this implicit relationship between history as part of the interviewee's social environment at a certain point in time and its significance in terms of shaping worldviews and perceptions:

> "There'll probably be things that I'm seeing on telly in our culture, as it widened out in the 60s … I was interested from my mid teens in international politics and, you know, in what was going on in Vietnam and around the world, and of course 68 was a … well, a lot of things happening there, but anyway … I can't think of really why I did it [travelled to France]" (Interview 3-UK, Tom p.8)

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[96] See section 3.2 Context and History

[97] Anything from a relatively small reference group based on common interests, political views or other, to a whole nation sharing certain cultural traits

Tom attempts to explain a connection between the interviewee's history and his existence in a particular time and current perceptions of his own touristic behaviour (the last "it" in the quote refers to a specific tourist activity). There seems to be a perception of a link between a certain historical, cultural context in the form of a statement: *"telly in our culture as it widened out in the 60s,"* indicating that the exposure to other parts of the world and perhaps the influence of media was increasing at the time, and the current touristic behaviour which might be influenced by certain worldviews that are to some extent based on media exposure at a time when the world was opening up in a lot of ways. Thereby the role of the media is also reinforced, and this link to perceptions and certain positions of tourist experiences in the interviewees' lives today is further established below:

> "When we talk about our childhood stories … we would have liked to go to Kenya, and that was because of those stories. South Africa as well, because of Karen Blixen[98] and the nature also" (Interview 7-Dk, Ole p.8)

It is implied that childhood memories and the extent to which other parts of the world have been accessible via cultural channels in the social environment have a great effect on what is desirable to visit today, when there is an opportunity, which might not have been the case earlier on. There are clear indications that the social history in which people exist and which has influenced and shaped their memories and perceptions is significant to their touristic activities in the present. This is in line with thoughts of shared experiences that Douglas suggests, as a so-called *thought style* emerges from this shared social history and contributes to shaping perceptions of what is acceptable or desirable at a certain point in time across a specific group of people, e.g. a cultural entity, as suggested in the earlier quote[99] concerning the ferry rides to Harwich from Denmark. Also, the fact that this group of interviewees has lived through a period with great changes in travel behaviour and possibilities may have a great impact on their desires. The trip to Kenya, in the footprints of Karen Blixen, may have seemed almost unattainable during the early stages of their lives, and thus the actual possibility to do so is more inconceivable and therefore more desirable, as will be addressed further shortly.

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[98] Danish author known for her stories of life in Kenya in the 1920s.
[99] See p.143.

Opportunities seem to have expanded considerably, and norms for what is acceptable or desirable have become increasingly complex and broad, because the degree of variation in what people do for their holidays is much higher than it used to be. Also, a certain value is found in being unique and different in contemporary society, which means that people might tend to go more to the extreme than previously – which then may become the norm.[100] This makes "the norm" less straightforward, because so many different tourist experiences may be expressions of a current norm. A good illustration of such changes is expressed in the following quote:

> "[…] Mary just said 'have you realized that we've almost gone to all the places, we used to look at in books when you were little in school and BBC tell you about', and we never thought we would be able to get there, you know, to us, it's almost like going to the moon. The reason why you thought you never could go there is because going back 20-30 years, for most people travel wasn't … it was too expensive really" (Interview 6-UK, Will p.17)

While capturing the changing norms in the first part of the quote, by referring to these alien places – *like the moon* – that have now become somewhat ordinary, i.e. within the norm for their touristic behaviour, the opportunities that defined those norms are addressed in the second part of the quote, when referring to the limited resources for travelling that people generally used to have. It thus seems that although a practical issue of financing travel is a central factor, there is also a change in attitude towards the whole phenomenon of travelling and obtaining tourist experiences of various sorts. It used to be almost unthinkable to go to certain places, whereas now this couple actually do go, and thus have a different view of what is within reach for them, and with experience, what becomes normal touristic behaviour for them.

It seems that these different collective influences play a role as a shared frame of reference for tourist experiences, which then comes to set the norm at a specific point in time. Looking back on past experiences, the interviewees share some sort of common consciousness about the type of tourist experiences they have had and what they were at that time in terms of positions according to the norm. It seems that the main effects on tourist experiences and the way these are now perceived have to do

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[100] See discussion on the experience spiral section 5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective

with changes in possibilities, and with that, changes in demands for a desirable holiday.

7.2 The Tourist Experience

Moving on from the tourism context, this section concerning the tourist experience deals with the perceptions of what a tourist experience entails, and the way this group of interviewees has expressed perceptions and conceptualised the tourist experience through different statements, eventually positioning themselves according to these experiences. It seems that the tourist experience is described in terms that relates to specific touristic elements already somewhat familiar to tourism researchers.[101] For example, the tourist experience is often characterised by statements relating to the approach to the experience, the level of adventure, the level of novelty, and the atmosphere, although the different expressions of these seem to entail various connections, and as such are not entirely separable. The exact definitions, however, are not the main concern in this respect though, since it is the use of all of these possible positionings entailed in the construction of identity that is sought explored here, and the main concern is thus to explore variations of these, a discussion of which this section will be used to present.

7.2.1 Approach

The following section addresses the approach to the tourist experiences as experienced and expressed by the interviewees, since there seems to be some differences in the perceptions of what is required in order to obtain a good tourist experience. It seems that some of the interviewees are concerned with experiencing a lot of things in as short a period as possible, whereas others are more concerned with getting the most out of a single experience. One could say that the first group portrays a view that is more concerned with widespread experiencing and the second with in-depth experiencing. It should be stressed that the interviewees do not necessarily approach tourist experiences in the same way all the time, but may have an expressed preference in their interviews. An example from the group portraying a widespread approach to experiencing is provided below:

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[101] See chapter 5 Tourist Experiences & Identity Construction

"I: What about your list [one they made beforehand], have we gotten all the way around that?

S: Norfolk, Wales, Devon, Morocco, Florida. We have friends who have a house in Florida. We went to see them three times, and I think that's one of the things where we are going January for ten days, we go and play golf. If we're not doing that, then there is not much to do in America. It's only like a more expensive version of Britain. But I mean yes we have had some decent times over there. America is an easy place to get around, because they all speak the language. Portugal, Spain I hate, they are worse than the French. Spain is as bad as the French. Well, Spanish, French and the English are natural enemies.

I: Yeah ...?

S: Spain is ... the Armada, it's a religion thing, cause they were Catholic and we weren't. We went there this year and it was awful. ... Cornwall, Egypt, Maldives, Antigua, Paris, New England, Tuscany and that's it, yeah"
(Interview 5-UK, Simon p.21)

Besides the fact that this interviewee and his wife have made a list of places they have been to in preparation for the interview, which indicates that the number of places and not forgetting any of them is important to express in this respect, the most conspicuous statements here are the very bold statements about the nature of America and Spain as tourist destinations. Statements such as *there is not much to do in America* underpin the impression of an individual who is not concerned with the details of different experiences and moreover is more concerned with having been there than actually enjoying the things that are there. America must be said to have rather big tourist attractions, so it must be possible to have a satisfactory experience. The next example is more moderate, but falls into the same category of quantity in tourist experiences:

"D: we might do in England [go back to the same place], you know, if we're going to the Lake District we have a few places, or a few areas that we tend to stay in, or Scotland, but if we're going outside the UK, we usually go somewhere different

I: Why do you think that is?

E: Because it's a big place, and we're here a short time"
(Interview 12-UK, Doug & Emily, p.9)

The idea here is to cover as much as possible in terms of destinations, although there seems to be a distinction between domestic and international travel patterns for this couple. Nevertheless, there is an element of wanting to do as much as possible rather than doing everything in depth, as it is the case in both examples.

In contrast, the second group usually revisits the same places over and over. At least they do not venture off into unknown or unfamiliar territory; they pretty much have the same type of holiday every year. The tendency in this group is to dwell on the little things in their touristic activities and they have a different, much slower pace than the first group, which allows this dwelling. The British interviewee, Liz, who has only had a few holidays abroad but has had quite a lot of experiences in Britain with her husband, talks about a trip to Wales:

> "[…] It was a farm house, cottage, and there were about four cottages around in a courtyard and that was it. There was nothing else around, but you were about three miles down to the main drive up to Conwy and to Llandudno. So that was really lovely. We had that and we went to Lake Craftnent, Lin ... as they say in Wales, Lin Craftnent, and everybody went for a walk and left me to it […]. And I just sat there and I thought 'this is absolutely fantastic'. It was just so peaceful. It was a Sunday afternoon in March, end of March, and I actually wrote a poem, which I don't do, occasionally but not much, but it really … it was inspirational" (Interview 13-UK, Liz p.8)

The focus here is on a particular atmosphere or mood that she suddenly finds herself in during this trip. It might be this particular place that causes this peacefulness and tranquillity, or it might be something within her, which means that she could potentially experience it in a different place. Either way, she has a deep, inner experience, which is a new experience of a familiar place. Likewise, the next interviewee, Cathy, who is actually looking for novelty and difference to some extent, finds value in a subtle change such as the gradually changing landscape when driving through Europe:

> "I think it's just seeing different things [that she gets from travelling], I remember when we used to … – I know we fly, when you go abroad now, you fly – but you don't see the changing countryside in a plane, whereas when we used to drive, we'd drive from Britain, get on the ferry, and then

you're in Northern France, and you could actually see the landscape changing when you're driving south, and I'm talking about the buildings, they're all grey to start with and then you might get little dots of terracotta roofs and then further south you might get some white washed buildings, and even the windows are large to start with, and then they start getting smaller and smaller, and then the light changes. And you see all that when you're in a car, you don't see that when you fly, but you see it when you're actually travelling, and that's what I remember, and that's what I like, just seeing the changing countryside, even going from England to Scotland, going across the borders, you're just seeing that different countryside, and I feel comfortable and relaxed and you're not thinking of anything" (Interview 8-UK, Cathy p.12)

Although Cathy is looking for difference, she pays attention to the subtle differences that may be overlooked when flying to a distant destination, which thereby takes part of this experience away from her. She probably tends to find value in the little things rather than in grand experiences, which is supported by the statement "*you see it when you're actually travelling*", as opposed to what you are doing when flying over everything without taking notice. So, the prolonged movement in time and space entailed in *actual travel* seems to underpin Cathy's desire for an in-depth experience, whereas the sudden dipping into a different environment may suggest a different approach to the tourist experience. In addition, prolonging complicates the before, during and after dimension, in that the beginning, middle and end is much more difficult to determine, when the so-called *actual travel* seemingly becomes part of the experience.

To sum up, it is thus evident that interviewees approach experiencing differently. One approach is concerned with the number of different experiences, in the sense that it is very much a matter of being in many different places, and through these obtain many widespread experiences. The other approach is more concerned with experiencing in-depth within oneself, which seem to be possible in almost any place, even if you have visited it many times before. Finally, it is important to stress the fact that although the interviewees generally seem to comply with one of these approaches in their interviews, it is assumed that one does not necessarily rule out the other at any given point in time. It may be that one is more evident than the other, e.g. in these interviews, but if one were to look into the details of specific experiences, it may be a different matter. However, as this has to do with identity construction more than the

actual level of experiencing, these approaches are assumed to position the interviewees in certain ways that they wish to position themselves, and as such this level serves the purpose.

7.2.2 Adventure

The idea of tourism as adventure – as opposed to everyday life experiences that are ordinary and unexciting – poses various perspectives on the tourist experience and the role that it plays to the individual tourist. An example of the discursive positioning of a specific experience as extraordinary and thus adventurous is given below by the British couple, Emily and Doug, who travelled with their three children on this specific occasion:

> "We tried to drive to Greece when the kids were quite small and we gave up in Italy, cause it was … you know, the kids were sticking to the vinyl seats and there were more flies in the car than there were outside … so we just stopped at a place called Vecchio in Italy, and actually had a fantastic three weeks really, all be it that the car broke down … we broke down near Pistoia at half past four, we were about to get a trade [another car to replace this one] at half past four in the morning, it was a time when the guy … there were a lot of deaths really, because a lot of people had been murdered by … the Florence motorway murderer, you know, so we had a thrill of breaking down and every time a car stopped, we were thinking ahh … Anyway, and then we rode around on bikes for two weeks didn't we, cause we didn't have our car, we didn't have any clothes, cause the car had been broken into when it was in the garage, and the kids … we had to buy the kids t-shirts with Firenze written all over them, but we had a great holiday, and we never stayed still." (Interview 12-UK, Emily, p.28-29)

The purpose of bringing up this narrative is that not only does a story progress of the journey itself, but a sense of the adventure that the narrator sees in it also emerges. At first, the failed attempt to drive from Britain to Greece, resulting in a break-down in Italy becomes an adventure, because of a certain element of the unexpected along with a sense of risk and danger, and that continues until the end of the story. This indicates that risk is part of the adventure, as suggested by Elsrud (2001).[102] Moreover, as it turns out, the mode of travel in itself, driving around Europe, camping,

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[102] See introduction to chapter 5 Tourist Experiences & Identity Construction

is not unusual for this specific point in time. It is therefore not the adventure as such, but a number of elements, the unexpected, an attached story, things going wrong, in the experience are experienced as such by the interviewee, and thereby positioned as such in the narrative. Presumably, any type of experience could potentially entail such elements, as Elsrud (2001) also suggests, by the contention that it is not the act itself but the experience of it that defines it as with or without risk. An example of the opposite, i.e. a somewhat adventurous or unusual mode of travelling that is trivialised, is presented below:

> "I think it became a bit difficult a few years ago, because of the big political surge. It got a little bit excited in Nepal [...]. Tourists have been fine – they have always been safe. They've been robbed, but apparently it's all very legitimate robbing. So there has never been a worry, and I still wouldn't worry now." (Interview 11-UK, Susan p.4-5)

It seems as if a factor that could be somewhat intimidating to some tourists is downplayed as merely being part of the experience, and not an unusual addition to a tourist experience. The pivotal point is therefore the narrator's attitude and philosophy of life, which determines the way such elements are experienced and consequently the perceived role of tourist experiences to the narrator. This also entails a positioning of self, perhaps as an experienced traveller for whom it takes more than a few minor incidents of robbery, in Susan's case, to get all excited and to prevent her from doing what she wants in terms of travelling to specific destinations.

A sense of risk and danger are expressed by several interviewees as part of the tourist experience, and in all cases it adds to the sense of adventure in the specific tourist experiences, which is obviously defined differently by each interviewee, and as a consequence, risk and danger are relative terms, as previously stated by Elsrud (2001). Here is an example of the risk and danger element from the data material:

> "[...] the one [holiday] in Sardinia was a bit different. The man I was married to was a bit of an adventurer. We took turns deciding what to do every day, and he got me to do this long hiking tour, in Sardinia, where we couldn't find anywhere to stay for the night, because we were out in the countryside, so we had to spend the night in some bushes, and that was a real test, but I still remember that trip very vividly" (Interview 12-Dk, Lone p.3)

The essence of this example is that the element of risk and danger was not necessarily intended, although it seems to have become a memorable part of the experience, perhaps even to the extent that it stands out from other experiences and thus adds to the level of experience of this particular interviewee. This does not mean that it was necessarily a particularly risky or dangerous situation, but that it was experienced as such by the interviewee, and thereby helps position this experience among other experiences, i.e. in the overall travel career, of this individual, which says something about the identity of this tourist.

Evidently, risk and danger are at times related to specific types of travels, and they tend to reinforce a discursive "adventure" in which the interviewees position themselves according to certain norms of what is ordinary behaviour to them. The above example illustrates a typical package tour to a Southern European destination in which a sense of risk and danger is unexpected and not part of the package that was planned. Others actively pursue adventure – or risk and danger – as part of the experience, e.g. Susan from the example above, who tends to go to more extraordinary environments to obtain her tourist experiences. Others again may hope for and cherish adventure when on holiday, but do not know in advance what things are going to be like, e.g. Emily who was going to Greece and ended up in Italy with her family.

In continuation, a different type of indication of adventure is expressed in the following example:

> "[…] there is something exotic about Bornholm [a Danish island in the Baltic Sea], it doesn't look like the rest of Denmark over there. And the fact that you had to go by boat to get there and to Christiansø, in that sense it was different from other places we had been in Denmark." (Interview 1-Dk, Karen p.8)

The adventure can consist in something merely being different from regular patterns of tourist behaviour for each individual tourist, which then crosses over into the category of change and novelty, as Arnould & Price states to be part of adventure[103] –

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[103] See introduction to chapter 5 Tourist Experiences & Identity Construction

this will be dealt with shortly – rather than risk and danger. The level of change and novelty may vary, and is of course relative to each tourist, which is then detected through these discursive positionings, e.g. via statements that Bornholm is exotic, although this interviewee is Danish and thereby assumed to be familiar with Danish culture, nature etc., which Bornholm is a part of. This only goes to show that these different categories are not isolated from each other, and in this case, part of the adventure category may entail elements of novelty.

Perspectives on the experience as adventure entail an element of trivialisation as well, which was also indicated by Susan's robbery example above. Some interviewees tend to trivialise their experiences, sometimes because of repetitiveness, sometimes because of a specific nature of the holiday, and sometimes because travelling is not unusual in modern society, which means that its status as adventurous in itself has worn off. The following quote addresses holidays as an inherent part of modern society:

> "Well, it's just really boring isn't it, other people's holiday experiences, especially when they get the photographs out, unless they've done something really, well … different, then it's a bit boring isn't it. […] We don't even bother taking a camera now, it's just … you know, there's just nothing to photograph that's new or different" (Interview 1-UK, Judy p.18)

Judy indicates that holidays are becoming part of ordinary life in the sense that it is not really unusual for people to go on holidays that are similar to the ones this couple are having, and therefore she sees no point in sharing these experiences with other people. This is completely opposite an earlier interviewee who wanted to do that, i.e. making it a social activity to show holiday photos.[104] Perhaps Judy is less concerned with constructing identity explicitly to the surrounding social world than with merely having a quiet, relaxed holiday every now and then, but we have to keep in mind that this is a stated viewpoint, which may also position this interviewee in a certain way, e.g. as someone who is just a "normal" individual, who goes on these ordinary types of holidays, which means that they fit into the world around them. Nevertheless, this example trivialises holidays by downplaying them as boring and uninteresting, even though the holidays themselves are highly valued by the interviewee and her husband.

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[104] See quote p.141.

Perhaps because there is an underlying assumption that holidays need to be more adventurous than this to be interesting, and that is simply not part of who this interviewee is or attempts to be for that matter.

In contrast, as illustrated earlier, some of the interviewees tend to position tourist experiences as adventurous, no matter what kind of tourist experience they are referring to, be it camping at a domestic destination, a package tour to Southern Europe or backpacking in Nepal. The nature of the experience is thus not essential[105] in terms of positioning self, but the discourse around it makes all the difference and is diametrically opposed to the trivialisation mentioned above. It is thus evident that a certain attitude or philosophy of life might play a huge role to the positioning of tourist experiences as great adventures or trivialised habits, which then becomes more important than the actual behaviour that follows.

7.2.3 Novelty

The next element that is very evident in the data material is novelty, which is here combined in a discussion of familiarity as well, since familiarity may be perceived as the opposite of novelty in tourist experiences, and as such may function as a means to explain or position novelty discursively. Some tourists will most often be drawn to the novelty aspect of a tourist experience, and others to the familiarity aspect, and sometimes even both of them come into play, although they may appear to be contradictory. It seems that quite often a combination of the two is ideal in terms of obtaining the perfect tourist experience, and a little bit of familiarity in a novel experience may thus be a more accurate description of the familiarity aspect in this connection. This is what Berlyne (1960) refers to as a "happy medium" between the two seeming opposites of novelty and familiarity.[106] It must be stressed that it seems that this combination is not necessarily obtained within the same holiday or experience, although it does occur, but it is more likely to become evident through the combination of different types of holidays over a period of time. Tom expresses this tendency quite well:

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[105] Although certain types of experiences are more likely than others to be positioned as adventurous or trivial in contrast
[106] See section 5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective

"[speaking of things that affect the decision-making process] … and then places that I know or am curious about, I'm very fond of places that I've been, which I'd like to go back to, but similarly to places that I don't know well, like Brittany, I know the Alps a bit, I've lived there, I'd love to go back to tread the same path, Brittany I went to for the first time last year and thought it was absolutely wonderful." (Interview 3-UK, Tom p.8)

It is evident in this case that Tom prefers different elements at different times, i.e. places that he already knows and would like to revisit, and places where he can discover new things. He tries to take different holidays in this respect, adding to the relevance of looking into travel patterns rather than individual holidays out of its full context. It does happen, nevertheless, that interviewees try to put this mix of aspects in the tourist experience into the same holiday. Another interviewee, Emily, addresses this dilemma of trying to fit in an element of novelty, while at the same time feeling at ease and finding comfort in visiting something familiar:

"[…] when we went back to Skopelos, there were some nice bits about it, and I could see why people would keep going back to such a place, because there's an element of security I think in going somewhere that's familiar, and also … I guess you have a greater feeling of belonging […] … so I can see why people would go back to the same place, cause you would actually slip into that [knowing where things are] very quickly, and it might start to feel like your place in a way that it doesn't when you go somewhere that's different and you're not quite sure about the etiquette of the place or where's a safe place to go where's a nice place to go, but then that's part of the thrill of going somewhere different, isn't it, it's blinding all those things out, so it was nice to go back. There was some bits … because we did go back to have meals in places where we'd had them before, and it hadn't changed much in four years, partly that was nice and partly that was … oh god I remember eating this four years ago, you know, so … [laughing]" (Interview 12-UK, Emily p.9)

It is evident that Emily is leaning more towards the novelty aspect in her experiences, e.g. expressed by the reference to a generic "*people going back to the same place*" as opposed to what she usually does – thereby positioning these *people* as the other. Nevertheless, she and her husband have apparently also tried this type of experience, causing some level of empathy and understanding towards such a choice of experience, which eventually causes a dilemma.

At the same time, some interviewees will claim that there is an element of novelty, or perhaps more accurately change, in a familiar type of holiday at a familiar destination, which also gives reason to assume that it is never just one or the other, but exactly a combination of both, although one of them, familiarity or novelty, may be the main objective of the holiday. The following example illustrates the wish to make the holiday experience a little bit of both:

> "H: […] there is possibly a little bit of a security issue with us, we need to feel safe and secure, and not too much out of our element. But it's not like we go to the same place every year. There has to be something new, even if it is the same place, that's best for us.
> S: But one week when you go, that's not always enough to see all the things that you find out is there. Then you go home after one week, and then you realise that maybe you should have seen this or that, and then it is actually very nice to go back to the same place and see some of the same things again, as well as something new
> H: […] We're certainly not going to be the types of people that will be seen as part of the family of the hotel owners or camp site attendants."
> (Interview 2-DK, Henrik & Susanne, p.11)

It seems in this case that familiarity is the main objective, but without committing completely to that one side of the experience, e.g. implied by the final comment about not being the type of people that become friends with people attached to a particular destination, that one has visited year after year. On the contrary, they seem to distance themselves from this particular type of people, perhaps because the novelty aspect is more desirable from their perspective. This is underlined by the fact that they express great interest in this novelty aspect when they do go to these somewhat familiar destinations.

To understand what takes priority, familiarity or novelty, e.g. in a dilemma like the one described by Emily above, it might be useful to look at the interviewee statements that clearly express a preference. The first example is an interviewee who expresses preference for novelty in tourist experiences. It must be be stressed here that these are expressions, and not necessarily actual behaviour or facts, which means that the definition and identification of novelty as an aspect in certain tourist experiences and

perhaps not others are the interviewees' own, and not defined according to a theoretical definition or discussion of what novelty is.

> "It's about the remoteness really [what she looks for in a destination]. The difference – the different culture, it's completely different than in the West. So if I go to Germany, go to France, go to Austria, it's different but the same. But this [Africa and Nepal] is a third world country with minimal resources, with people that are very miserly and you meet people that are quite different from ourselves, completely different, different values, different everything. I like that difference, I like to meet with that and look at how people manage their existence really. I spend time with them and you get that in the Nepal, in India and Africa and even when we went to Yugoslavia all those years ago or Poland, because in Poland you've got … it's a quite upcoming economy. There are places in Poland that are quite rural that still have very old ways. (Interview 11-UK, Susan p.11)

This interviewee is consciously looking for something different from everyday life. There is even a physical remoteness that seems to function as an indicator for novelty, although the main theme is more of a socio-cultural difference between home and the tourist destination. Novelty as a determining factor for specific tourist experiences is thus evident in the data, and might thus also function as identity constructing, which will be explored further in step 3 of this analysis.

A significantly different vantage point is portrayed by this next interviewee, Tove, who refers to the comfort of familiarity in tourist experiences, and why she and her family tend to choose more familiar types of holidays and destinations:

> "I: So, have you tried something a bit further away, for example Thailand, South America or USA?
> T: No, no, no way, that's too far away
> I: Why is that?
> T: The food is too strange
> I: Okay, so it's not because it takes too long to get there, or is too expensive or …?
> T: I think it's because it takes too long as well, I don't like flying for that long, I really don't, but I also think that going to Thailand is way too strange and foreign for me" (Interview 4-Dk, Tove p.5)

Tove is saying that the unknown is not to her liking by definition, and she prefers the security of the familiar to the extent that she could never see herself choose to go to a remote and foreign culture such as Thailand. It is also evident that familiarity, e.g. based either on issues of security, ease or comfort, is part of the experience for some interviewees, just like novelty is for others, and familiarity might even be a specific reason to go to a specific destination. Nevertheless, when asked why they, these types of interviewees, go away for holidays then – given that familiarity is necessary – they do express wishes for novelty after all. In this next example, a couple, Thomas and Rikke, prefer some level of familiarity, Rikke in particular, which she expressed earlier in the interview. But they both feel that sometimes it becomes more pressing to see and do something new and different:

> "[…] I think mostly about going somewhere to get new experiences … it's not about getting away from all of this. It's not because I think, oh … I have to get this done, so let's get out of here. I don't feel like that. It's about going somewhere to see and do things" (Interview 10-DK, Thomas, p.36)

This raises another aspect as well, since there is a clear indication of going towards something rather than going away from everyday routines in this quote, although it is questionable that this is a clear-cut distinction and not yet another combination of several elements. It seems to be the case here though, that this couple does not go away for the holiday just for the sake of doing exactly that, but more likely because they have a specific purpose. This is also stressed by the fact that they state early in the interview that they do not go anywhere for every holiday, sometimes there are several years in between holidays away from home. However, the point made here is that novelty seems to play a role even in cases where familiarity is a high priority, which makes sense because it would seem irrelevant to go anywhere if it did not.

There is a more theoretical distinction between aspects of familiarity that comes into play here though, because it may be interpreted as familiarity with the culture that is visited. This was the case in Tove's example above, where things that were too culturally different from her own culture were too intimidating and thus undesirable. Familiarity may, however, also lie within the destination itself, because of previous visits providing a sense of security and familiarity, and perhaps also people at the

destination, other tourists or locals, which give the destination a more familiar touch and becomes less intimidating because it has been overcome before. Although the difference is subtle, there may be distinct differences in tourists' behaviour based on this, because one may be prone to revisit the same places over and over, and others may visit different places, though with relatively similar cultural traits to their home environment.

It may thus be gathered that although novelty, in terms of visiting different places and cultures, engaging in different activities etc., is evident as a significant factor to the interviewees and their tourist experiences, an element of familiarity is also important, although to some more than others, mostly by two different understandings, i.e. familiarity of place or of culture. It seems that individual levels of novelty seeking are at play, and a happy medium is most often sought. One element that seems to play quite a central role, perhaps mostly in relation to one type of familiarity, i.e. familiarity of place, is nostalgia, which is a main element in setting the atmosphere around the tourist experience. This is the object for discussion in the following section.

7.2.4 Atmosphere

Nostalgia plays its primary role in visits to places that have earlier had a positive impact on people's lives and thus give positive memories and connotations for the interviewee. For example, one couple got married in Skagen, Denmark (Interview 1-Dk), so Skagen has a certain nostalgic status in their minds. A similar example of nostalgia for a tourist destination is provided below:

> "First of all, we look at this [a photo of Julianehåb, Greenland] every day. There is a reason that we have let it stay there [as a screensaver]. This view is just so amazing! It was almost the very first thing I saw, when I first came to Julianehåb. We've both been there on holiday, and we've lived there, and we've experienced this view both in snow and at sunset. And then because it is an important part of our lives, the period of time that we were there. So, we were not just there as tourists, but we went back as tourists, because it had meant so much to us. And we are going to do that again in ten days." (Interview 2-Dk, Susanne p.2)

It does not necessarily entail physical places; some sort of mental place of recognition and feelings may have the same effect. As discussed earlier, nostalgic representations

of the past may evoke certain positive feelings and attitudes,[107] and therefore an actual visit to the same physical place is not the only way to obtain this sense of nostalgia. Representations that evoke similar feelings can work in the same way. This means that a place can work as an end goal in itself, but also as a means to another goal, e.g. specific feelings of freedom.

In the Skagen example as well as the Julianehåb example, nostalgia is at the core. The places produce happy memories because of the good and positive experiences these couples have had there, and therefore they have become recurring holiday destinations for them. The element of nostalgia thus has a direct impact on their choice of destination and holiday experience.

In the next example, nostalgia is found in the memory of a specific tourist experience, which is being used as a frame of reference in terms of the changes that have taken place since this first tourist experience:

> "I tried to find some really early ones [photos], and that … I was only 20, and that was my very first holiday abroad, and that sums up how I felt, that was in Benidorm, I could never dream of going to Benidorm now, but in the 1970s […] I was only 20 there, so that was 1971, first holiday abroad with two of my friends, so three girls, first holiday away from home, in Benidorm, and I can honestly say that I don't think you can ever have a holiday that matches up to your first one away from home, cause we had a lovely time, just the three of us in a hotel in Benidorm for two weeks […] we were able go get off and enjoy ourselves, so that is just me, stood in the balcony, typical 20 year-old at that time, away from home, a bottle of Bacardi a bottle of champagne and here I am" (Interview 8-UK, Cathy p.1-2)

The memory of this young, innocent girl, Cathy aged 20, off on her own for the first time is a fun, happy memory of the first travel experience, which was a big deal at the time, and it brings back memories of a good time, and particularly of being off on her own for the first time and what that felt like. This specific holiday now functions as a point of reference for positive tourist experiences early in a travel career, but also as the opposite of what is now, later in the travel career, a positive experience, i.e. it has become a representation of the *dear departed past* as Holbrook (1993) terms it. This

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[107] See section 5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective

means that this is definitely a thing of the past for the interviewee, but nevertheless a fond memory of a specific time and a specific tourist experience in her life. Nostalgia may thus work as a direct motivator for present holidays in that the same place may be revisited due to nostalgic memories of that place, but it may also work as a more indirect motivator pointing out a different direction for the future. Hence the link pointed out previously between past, present and future.

Nostalgia is thus something familiar in one way or the other, either in the destination or in the feelings and fond memories of a particular tourist experience. It is also noteworthy that when speaking of this type of nostalgia, the interviewees tend to drift into a mode of narration, more so than in other situations, which also gives a sense of living out dreams or fantasies through these nostalgic memories. It is therefore evident that nostalgia may serve the purpose of constructing specific memories that may end up becoming a significant part of the travel career, both in terms of actual experiences, feelings of a specific time and experience, and the related discourse.

Another dimension to the atmosphere that underlies the tourist experience is a sense of freedom and independence in the individual stemming from memories of past circumstances, e.g. as in Cathy's recollection of being off on her own for the first time. An example of a direct statement of freedom being at the core of tourist experiences is provided here – one which entails a differentiation between different types of holidays in terms of giving the best possibility of freedom and independence:

> "We have done that ever since [driving on holiday ever since the first time they tried it]. It is this freedom to decide for ourselves [that they enjoy about it]. We had passed 50 before we ever went on our first package tour" (Interview 8-Dk, Erik p.7)

Tom's quote below illustrates the dilemma in setting out to do something that might seem completely irrational from a practical perspective, but nevertheless there is an irrational side to it that is related to this feeling of unrestricted freedom, perhaps especially during adolescence:

> "Wanderlust is a word that describes it very well [why he does what he does]. It just seemed … I've no idea where it [a trip to France when he was young] came from, why you should want to sort of set off carrying stuff and

hitchhike in very kind of … not always very comfortable conditions, and we even slept out one or two nights, so I don't know. It's just … the world is such an interesting place, isn't it, and also a kind of restlessness, dissatisfaction, maybe a bit of romanticism, you know, feeling, falsely probably, kind of romantic in the broadest sense of the term to travel rather than just being in your own familiar environment all the time, and so, I can't really find anything more to say about that really" (Interview 3-UK, Tom p.7-8)

As mentioned previously, not only rational logic plays into these tourist experiences. It is evident that an experience like this carries memories of a feeling of freedom and independence, and this may very well have set the standard for what is sought in future experiences. Also, it discursively plays on a certain positioning of self that will be discussed later.[108]

Ideals and dreams are also elements that significantly affect the atmosphere of the tourist experience in the sense that they are sought experienced through tourism. The tourist experience thus functions as a way of realising dreams that are not obtainable in everyday life, or at least simulating, much in the same way as described by Helen, when referring to the general purpose of having holidays:

> "[…] generally it's just getting away from the stress of life, and eating and drinking, and discovering local places and having a bit of an adventure" (Interview 2-UK, Helen p.5)

This implies that you have to get away from ordinary life to experience *discovery* and *adventure*, which again goes hand in hand with the sacred/profane distinction. In the next example it is more explicitly stated that dreams are obtained outside ordinary life and that tourism becomes instrumental in doing so:

> "I'm always pursuing what I feel I've never had, I suppose. That's what the ideal is, I suppose. It's sometimes looking for a lost opportunity or something you think you ought to have done, when you were in your thirties maybe, and I feel that there was a lot of things that I just didn't do in my thirties, or in my twenties for that matter, for various reasons […]. So that features in my little holiday idealism. So the idea of the desert island holiday is the classic myth of the holiday, where you're lazing around

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[108] See chapter 9 Step 3 - Constructing Identity in Tourist Experience

for maybe two weeks, and some just love the Canary island thing, and I suppose that's why I think of that. I never went up to Queensland for a coral reef holiday, which a lot of my chums would have done. I've never really done that. But I think for me, a couple of weeks in a tropical paradise would be cool. But once I've done that, I'll probably think of something else." (Interview 9-UK, Mark p.24)

There are two essential statements here: First, there is a link to the past. Mark says that the experiences he has missed out on earlier in his life are the experiences that he is looking to fulfil and which have become the ideal, to use his own words. Second, and building on the first statement, the idea of a holiday in a tropical paradise becomes a dream, since this seems to be something that he missed out on when that was the norm for others in his social circle. Dreams, or ideals as it may be, are thus both a touristic ideal in its own right and an extension of what cannot be obtained in everyday life.

Another aspect of the dream in a tourist experience is the role of imagination and fantasy, i.e. becoming lived experiences through tourism, which the following example illustrates:

"In my perception, it was almost like a fairytale, that whole thing with the castle and the royal family [in Monaco], and that was really, really good" (Interview 4-Dk, Tove p.6)

The discursive means used to enforce the sense of fairytale experience are imagination and fantasy, which position this experience as somewhat unreal or incomprehensive to this interviewee. The unreal is evident through the use of fairytale expressions, e.g. the reference to the castle in Monaco as a fairytale landscape. The adventure hereby takes the shape of something out of a fairytale, and it is evident that the dream element can take different shapes but nevertheless is quite visible discursively in this data material.

In conclusion, it may be said that although the contents of this section, the theme of the tourist experience, concerns the *during* dimension, this dimension has direct connections to *before* and *after*, and cannot be separated from these other dimensions. The before dimension has a great impact on the underlying atmosphere

of the experience, and the evaluation and hindsight perspective on the tourist experience depend on the before expectations and how these were met in the during phase. Altogether, they form a basis for a new after that becomes a new before phase, which will then be sought in future tourist experiences. It may thus be concluded that these three dimensions in time cannot be clearly separated on the experience level, but have to be viewed in relation to each other, i.e. through the travel career as a whole.

It is hereby illustrated that several dimensions of the tourist experience, i.e. perspectives on approaches to tourist experiences, adventure, novelty and the atmosphere that surrounds the experience, affect the way it is perceived and used discursively. This also suggests that these elements may affect its uses in terms of identity construction, which will be explored further later on in the analysis.

7.3 Outcome

During the interviews, the perceived outcomes of touristic experiences as expressed by the interviewees were addressed, and a number of factors were repeated by different interviewees throughout the interviewing process. The most consistent factors fall under the theme of memories and togetherness; and recharging, which were outcomes that were mentioned by several of the interviewees independently of each other. The following sections will explore these themes further as part of the after dimension of the tourist experience.

7.3.1 Memories & Togetherness

Firstly, the theme of memories is directed at statements expressing the importance of memories to ordinary life, in the sense that memories may create a link to good times – or sacred times – that may be highly valued by the individual, and the experience may be prolonged into the sphere of everyday life, as one interviewee mentioned in an earlier quote[109] and as discussed earlier.[110] An additional aspect of this memory issue is that experiences shared within a travel unit seem to create a bond between

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[109] See p.141.
[110] See section 5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective

the travel partners that form togetherness between them, and eventually a shared memory of that experience. This tends to strengthen togetherness, and as such, memories seem to be a strong component of togetherness in this respect. Moreover, Eysenck & Keane (1995) claim that memory is enhanced when self representations are entailed in the event of the memory. It thus seems that togetherness may be enforced by events that are significant to the selves involved. Togetherness in itself may have different forms and may be related to simply travelling together or experiencing things together, and thus being able to be together in a way that may not be possible in everyday life, i.e. a sort of quality time spent together, which is also expressed by the interviewees. Another form of togetherness seems to be formed at a more abstract level, e.g. by having experienced similar things like the same tourist destination, although not together or necessarily at the same time, but more as a common frame of reference formed by a shared level of experience, which then functions as a bond between people.

The reason these two aspects seem appropriate to combine into one in this context is that a lot of times interviewees stress the value of experiences in creating a feeling of togetherness, e.g. as a family. Eventually the shared memories of such experiences seem to strengthen togetherness, i.e. the self of the travel unit, as well in the after phase, and therefore a great part of togetherness is the memory aspect, at least among these interviewees, and the statements they make about this issue.

The following examples address the theme of memories and togetherness, but this first example addresses togetherness in itself as a highly valued component of the tourist experience.

"I think it's a sense of being away and sort of forget all of this and just get immersed in something quite different is good. I think the fact that you're doing it together means ... and being somewhere else there is so much to talk about and share ideas about that, again, it probably wouldn't be the same if you didn't go somewhere, having those new experiences together is good, and I suppose just to have the opportunity just to talk to one another and spend time together almost irrespective of where you are, because that's something you don't often get the opportunity to do, or we don't actually use the opportunity when we are here. When we're here, Peter [son] is probably going to be on the computer, leaving or something

like that, but if we are away somewhere, then, I don't mean he's got to talk to us, but I mean we do spend time together and enjoy spending time together" (Interview 10-UK, Ed p.11)

This illustrates, although in a somewhat complex manner, that togetherness is quite central to the tourist experience for this interviewee. Actually tourist experiences facilitate togetherness, because it seems that people in the travel unit might be more present in the moment than they are in everyday life, and they are doing more things together as well. In this case, where the travel unit is a family of two parents and two children who are usually in the same household and thus normally have lots of opportunities for togetherness, this may be a very clear indication of the power of these tourist experiences and settings for adding something else to the lives of these people, and this family in particular. Thereby tourist experiences become instrumental in creating togetherness to the extent that a bond within this family is formed.

This next quote builds onto this idea, but adds another dimension of a type of learning experience that this family can share and use in their everyday lives; not least their son Rune, whose experience this couple seems to put a lot of value into. A response to a question of what they gain, i.e. the outcome, from their tourist experiences is as follows:

"There are some good memories to have afterwards, for example travelling together as a family and having some good experiences that we can reflect upon […]. Something we have talked about is that it has actually also been good for Rune [son]. Our first time in Kenya … that was the first time he went to a place where everything was significantly different from back home. We had prepared him for the fact that it was a poor country and that sort of thing, but when we sat on the bus from the airport to the hotel, he was crying, tears were running down his cheeks, and he just didn't think they were going to be that poor, and that is also valuable to take with you. You can watch all these things on TV, but you can always go make coffee, if you can't stand it, and even if you choose to watch, you have some sort of filter, which isn't there when you are in the middle of it. So, you gain an understanding for the conditions that other people live under, and perhaps you become more satisfied with what you have in your life. You understand that we live a protected life compared to others. I also think that we have experienced a lot of places where compared to our standards, they live under extreme conditions, but they have a certain satisfaction in life and a certain spark that perhaps we are sometimes missing, in spite of our

abundance. I also think that we as human beings can take something like that with us and benefit from it back home, also Rune" (Interview 9-Dk, Karin p.21-22)

It thus seems that besides sharing these experiences, which creates a bond between the members of this family, they also serve an educational purpose, for their son in particular, but also for the parents, and they create awareness and understanding that may give new inputs and perspectives to life at home. This also illustrates the in-depth approach to the experience, in which several purposes are fulfilled by a single tourist experience. Evidently, such inputs obtained via tourist experiences can be used in several ways, in this quote as a type of education for their son; along with appreciation for ones own life, as a result of experiencing other people with different life circumstances, and how these people tend to handle what might seem like a miserable situation to Western tourists. Therefore, it seems essential to this interviewee to gain an understanding, together with her family, through tourism, which makes her more capable of understanding her own existence.

The following example is a continuation of a conversation between a couple, and it started out with a rather long narrative which takes its beginning in a description of a photo that Susanne would have shown, but she was not able to find it, so she tells about it instead. At this point, the conversation takes a turn towards the issue of shared memories and togetherness.

"S: This was completely new to us [their first holiday abroad, being in Italy], a completely different world that we experienced, and the kids loved it. Of course they also loved it because they had us to themselves. Nobody else took our attention away from them.
H: Yes, and then on this end [of their holidays], it was important to us that they [their now grown up kids] wanted to visit us in Greenland [when they stayed there for work]
S: Definitely
H: Also the fact that you are able to explain what it is that you have experienced up there. They came home with thousands of photos …
S: … which most people really didn't care about. Ellen and Tage [friends] also say … we've never really shown them our photos, we haven't really attempted to show them off a lot … but now that they are going [on the next holiday to Greenland], there is a purpose to showing them these Greenland photos" (Interview 2-DK, Susanne & Henrik p.25-26)

At first, the issue of togetherness is stressed by the fact that they are in Italy with their children and no one else, which seems to facilitate quality time together. At the same time, the long and fairly detailed description of a particular photo in relation to this holiday (prior to the quote) indicates that this is a positive memory to the interviewees. As the conversation moves on, it becomes about the issue of sharing experiences and memories, firstly with their children, who visited them in Greenland when they were working there and thus took part in an important part of their lives, and secondly with their friends, who are about to take part in one of their tourist experiences, and thus the bond between them seems to be strengthened, because of a new shared frame of reference.

In addition, all the quoted examples in this analysis are expressed memories of some sort, and according to theory described earlier, flashbulb memories[111] that stand out from other more ordinary experiences. For this reason, memories in this respect are less explicitly addressed by the interviewees than some of the other aspects, but they are nevertheless evident through quite detailed and enthusiastic narratives, which indicate fond memories. Moreover, togetherness seems central to many of these memories, and this aspect seems important as an addition to everyday life relationships. Thus, there are benefits of these particular experiences that go into the after phase, as previously mentioned. This is also a central tenet to this next aspect of outcome, i.e. recharging.

7.3.2 Recharging

Recharging while on holiday is quite often mentioned by the interviewees as an important outcome of touristic experiences. This entails a number of different dimensions though, because different interviewees are recharged by different activities. For example, having time to read a book, or immersing oneself in beautiful scenery are part of this thematic constellation that is one of the most frequently mentioned outcomes of the interviewees' tourist experiences, possibly because these are things that are not highly prioritised in everyday life. When the next interviewee, Alice, was asked what she gets out of her holidays, she replied:

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[111] See section 5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective

> "Relaxation, and enjoyment of being in other countries and other places and the beauty of other places, so when I went to the Dolomites, which are breathtaking, it's just a sense of awe" (Interview 7-UK, Alice p.8)

Alice appreciates the peacefulness that she gets through the tourist experiences that she chooses, perhaps because everyday life is quite stressful and hectic for a lot of people, Alice included as she indicates at some point. This type of comfortable relaxation seems to serve the purpose of recharging the batteries so to speak for everyday life circumstances. Because of time restraints, some of these low paced activities may not be prioritised in everyday life, and perhaps they are not possible because one's mindset is different in everyday life situations. The experiences of everyday life will thus always be different from holiday experiences.

The following example is a bit ambiguous, but there is an emphasis on peace and relaxation as a valuable aspect of a good holiday. Carol starts out by referring to a discussion with her children when they were at school and beginning to pay attention to their friends' holidays, and the fact that she takes some exception to their way of holidaying, perhaps due to negative connotations of the package tour or beach holiday type of travelling:

> "They [children's friends] would go on sort of package tours to somewhere where it was obviously sunny, there was swimming pool and that was all they did. Whereas I think, I mean I'm quite happy to have a mixture. I would prefer to do some sightseeing and to get to know a little bit about the actual country you're in that's equally nice. Particularly when I was working full time: to have a break and sit and read and do nothing if that was what you wanted to do. Sightseeing is extremely tiring. We came back from places like Egypt, Singapore and Hong Kong and Thailand, although they were interesting and the children by large enjoyed them, I felt so I needed a holiday, when I got home." (Interview 5-UK, Carol p.5)

There is an obvious negativity towards overly relaxed, lazy types of holidays, but it seems that a different type of relaxation in the form of reading a book or, as it is stated, to *do nothing* is accepted, and at the end of the quote, it is actually stated that sightseeing is quite tiring, and therefore relaxation is acceptable and desirable for a good holiday. Specific types of relaxation are thus acceptable in the eyes of this interviewee, but it is clearly a desirable outcome. Carol's husband, Simon, gives a

perspective not only on relaxation being a desirable outcome, but also on escape as part of recharging, the last theme in this connection.

> "As far as I'm concerned, it has been sometimes a break that I wanted to take. […] I think holidays are something which you look forward to maybe a months before you go and look back on for a few days after you get back. But hopefully you feel better when you get back, relaxed, renewed. It's really, as far as I'm concerned, an interruption to work, or not an interruption but an interlude away from work rather than the holidays being an end in itself. I've got to see this, I've got to do this, I must do that. So to me, it's a break from work rather than an end in itself I think."
> (Interview 5-UK, Simon p.20)

Simon clearly states that a break away from work and everyday hassles is really the most desirable outcome for him in most cases, and therefore it is logical to assume that a specific pull towards a destination or activity is weaker than the push away from his home environment. In other words, the escape aspect is very dominant in this case, as opposed to an example mentioned earlier by Thomas,[112] where the "pull towards" was much more dominant.

Another similar view is found in the following example, which also relates to this element of escape from specific circumstances in one's life:

> "Well, I would say that a part of the holidays that I had when I was working was very much about getting away. It was more of a choice of not staying home, one could say, than a choice to go somewhere, because when I was home, which I sometimes was during the summer, I was never free from my work, you know, because then I would read the paper or watch TV, and even though it might not concern my county [where his job was], then just parliament politics and so on. I had to get up in a plane in Kastrup [Copenhagen airport], then I could relax. Then I was away from it all for a while, and didn't watch TV or read newspapers or anything where I was" (Interview 7-Dk, Ole p.13)

Like Simon, Ole is trying to escape work and everyday life, which to him often is a lot of work, so it seems that also in this example, there is a strong sense of push rather than pull, at least at the time when he was still working. Today he has retired, and travelling has become more of a pull to him, he explains, because everyday life is not

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[112] See p.163.

such a strain on him, but now it has become more about doing things that he has not done before.

It is illustrated that outcomes of tourist experiences among these interviewees vary but all fall under the categories of memories and togetherness or recharging. Memories and togetherness are linked together by the interviewees in that shared memories seem to reinforce aspects of being a unit and acting as a unit, and being able to refer back to a specific shared event, hence togetherness. Recharging has to do with a certain push away from home rather than a pull towards a specific destination or tourist experience, and that being filled with various types of activities that the interviewees find recharging, e.g. complete relaxation, laying at the beach or other, or sightseeing, getting new inspiration for everyday life. The way these two categories play a role in this context is that the outcome affects the perception of a particular tourist experience in hindsight, i.e. in the after phase, and therefore also plays into experiences to come, the next before phase. There is thus also a significant influence on the travel career as a whole, because it is shaped by these perceptions, as they are carried out in actual behaviour, i.e. becoming actual tourist experiences. It should be mentioned that the different elements of the recharging category, e.g. peace, quiet, relaxation and escape, are all elements that take place during the experience, but they all contribute to the recharging that is obtained upon return to everyday life, and at the same time they are all expressed as outcomes by the interviewees, whereby this link is reinforced.

This chapter presents the dominant themes of the data material, which comes down to the three main themes of the tourism context, the tourist experience, and the outcome, each with a number of sub-themes attached. The theoretical framework has also been applied to these empirical findings, and a summary of the most central aspects of the analysis are presented next.

7.4 Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to address step 1 of the analysis, which entails different notions of the tourist experience and correlations between these, as well as connections between the *before*, *during* and *after* dimensions of the tourist experience. The results will be summarised in this section.

The tourism context includes two subsections: Individual circumstances and collective influences. An underlying assumption is that different individual circumstances have different impacts at different times. Some general tendencies emerge, the main one being that valuable and meaningful tourist experiences seem to be obtained almost no matter what. This indicates that notion A, single tourist experiences, obtained is dependent on these individual circumstances, but the way the experiences are processed into notion B, accumulated tourist experience, is similar to the process attached to other very different notion A experiences, influenced by different contextual issues. At the same time, a balance seems to exist between what people want, what they do, and what they obtain from this. This balance may, however, rely on a type of discursive justification, which helps position the interviewees in certain ways according to desirable identities.

The collective influences addressed by the interviewees reflect a combination of many factors. Firstly, it seems that an interplay between supply and demand may affect collective developments, and thus eventually individual experiences as well, because once an experience is there to be obtained (supply), and when it then is obtained, a need for something else will occur (demand), according to the experience spiral that is, which draws on the same process as illustrated in the notion A and B framework, i.e. between actual tourist experiences and a particular mindset gained from these. This means that on a collective level, experience may also be gained as part of the collective consciousness of what is new or different from the past. In addition, changed economic and technological opportunities have changed holiday patterns, and as such the norm for these. This spills over into the last subsection of reference groups, in which the main point is that group membership (sometimes desired) has a great effect on before, during and after processes of the experience, mostly by a symbolic gain in terms of identity construction, as dealt with in step 3 of this analysis.

The tourist experience includes four subsections: approach to the experience, adventure, novelty, and the atmosphere, all of which are related to certain positions taken by the interviewees on these issues. The interviewees are divided into two approaches to the tourist experience, in that one group is primarily concerned with experiencing as many things as possible, and others primarily with few things in-

depth, although either of these may come into play at different points in time for the individual tourist. This aspect seems mostly to reflect different perceptions of what tourist experience entails, i.e. the first group tends to evaluate their experience as a number of notion A experiences, whereas the second group is more concerned with accumulating an internal experience, notion B, which means that both notions are in play in the minds of these interviewees.

Adventure seems to be a discursive construct rather than an actual type of tourist behaviour, since any type of tourism seems to potentially entail adventure, mostly in the form of risk and danger, together with an element of the unexpected, and is often relative to the individual who experiences adventure. For example, less experienced travellers may emphasise great adventure, whereas more experienced ones may trivialise quite unusual experiences in order to confirm identity as exactly that: experienced travellers used to adventure. By the same token, novelty plays a role in the interviews as well, and very often in relation to familiarity, either in terms of culture or place. It seems that very often a combination is sought, and an element of novelty seeking always seems present even for the interviewees who prefer familiarity, which indicates that novelty is a main factor to them. Thus, *before* experiences play a great role in this respect, since both adventure and novelty are relative to the experience of each individual tourist.

The underlying atmosphere of the experience is mostly concerned with nostalgia, which may be addressed directly and actively through relations to a specific place and choices to go there because of that. It may also be a more indirect, passive relation to memories of specific feelings of past experiences that are no longer relevant to the individual, and as such do not encourage action. In this case, *before* plays a role as a frame of reference for the experiences obtained at present and how they are internalised as part of an existing frame of reference.

Lastly, outcome includes the subsection of memories and togetherness, and recharging. Memories and togetherness seem to go hand in hand, since tourist experiences are found to facilitate togetherness often neglected in everyday life, and memories of togetherness seem to be additions to everyday life relationships. Recharging is a general outcome of a number of touristic activities, e.g. the desire to

escape everyday life through a holiday contributes to the recharging, and so does relaxation, as defined by each individual. This last aspect of outcome thus seems to go through a process of accumulation, i.e. both notion A and B are influential in that the single tourist experience is the basis for accumulated experience resulting in memories and togetherness and/or recharging. Outcome may also be processed through the before, during and after dimensions, in the sense that memories are created through the process of these three dimensions. Togetherness may be desired *before*, obtained *during*, but spills over into *after*, and recharging relies on a *before* that inspires recharging, a *during*, which actually provides the recharging through various activities, and an *after* where recharging is pulled into everyday life.

Based on these findings, it may be said that the theoretical before, during and after dimensions of the tourist experience are fluid to a great extent, mainly because the experience is not a marked point in time, but also because it has two dimensions, notion A and B, that function on several levels, e.g. in terms of approaching the experience, which is a state of mind within the individual tourist. Therefore, notion A may be said to be part of the during phase, and notion B part of the after phase, which then together form the basis for a different before phase. Only in the very first tourist experience there is no impact of previous stages, although most likely, perceptions from other people and one's surroundings in general may affect the very first before stage. This means that overlaps are frequent and fairly difficult to manage in terms of research. Nevertheless, there appears to be a rather distinct disposition of these different phases when it comes to the themes extracted from the data material. Before, during and after are all brought up throughout these themes - the tourism context mainly concerns before, the tourist experience mainly before and during, and outcome relies on all three and to the greatest extent draws in the after dimension. It needs to be stressed, however, that the two different notions and the three dimensions in time operate on slightly different levels, and as such, they are not equivalent but interconnected and relatable.

Eventually these aspects add up to a complex picture of all of them being dependent on each other, and none of them being distinctively separable from the others. In an attempt to illustrate this complexity and sum up the analytical findings, Table 7.1 has

been assembled, although logically only a very rough description of the connections between these elements can be provided.

Table 7.1 Relation between theory and analytical findings

Theme	The tourism context	The tourist experience	Outcome
Time	Before	Before + During	Before + During + After
Notion	Notion A+B	Notion A	Notion B

The purpose of the following sections is to look into some of the remaining aspects, in particular the links between before, during and after, as these dimensions add to notion B of the tourist experience. Therefore, notion B will also be the focal point of the next chapter.

8. Step 2 - Experience Relations within the Travel Career

This step of the analysis explores the expressed tourist experiences described above, as they form coherent experiences into a travel career. Step 1 primarily addressed and discussed the single tourist experiences of the interviewees, i.e. notion A of the tourist experience, and possible implications of these for the interviewees' identity constructions. Step 2 addresses possible connections between notion A experiences, and how they are processed into accumulated tourist experience, i.e. notion B, by the interviewees as they narrate their travel careers.[113] The previous chapter takes a perspective that goes across the different interviews. This chapter takes a perspective that goes into the details of the interviews and explores expressed relationships between tourist experiences within one interview. The idea is that by doing so, accumulated tourist experience will become evident through the discursive positions. The identity construction that is sought explored throughout this project will also become accessible, because accumulated tourist experience is a personal and unique element of the individual tourist used to communicate identity. This step will thus be an essential element for conducting the last step of the analysis, Step 3, in which identity construction is addressed directly.

This chapter will address the travel units[114] as they form stages that in combination illustrate travel careers in terms of the travel partners the interviewees have had at different points in their lives. As described, two general patterns common among several of the interviewees in this study are formed (see Figure 8.1). They have been developed by looking into each interviewee's different travel unit stages, as expressed in the interviews, and thereby making an assessment of the patterns that emerge among the interviewees.

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[113] See section 5.1 Tourist Experience – Dual Notions and Perspectives
[114] See section 6.1.1 The Travel Unit Stages

Figure 8.1

Travel Career Pattern 1	Travel Career Pattern 2
+ parents	+ parents
↓	↓
+ friends or relatives	+ partner
↓	↓
+ partner	+ family/family and friends or relatives
↓	↓
+ family/family and friends or relatives	+ partner
↓	
+ partner	
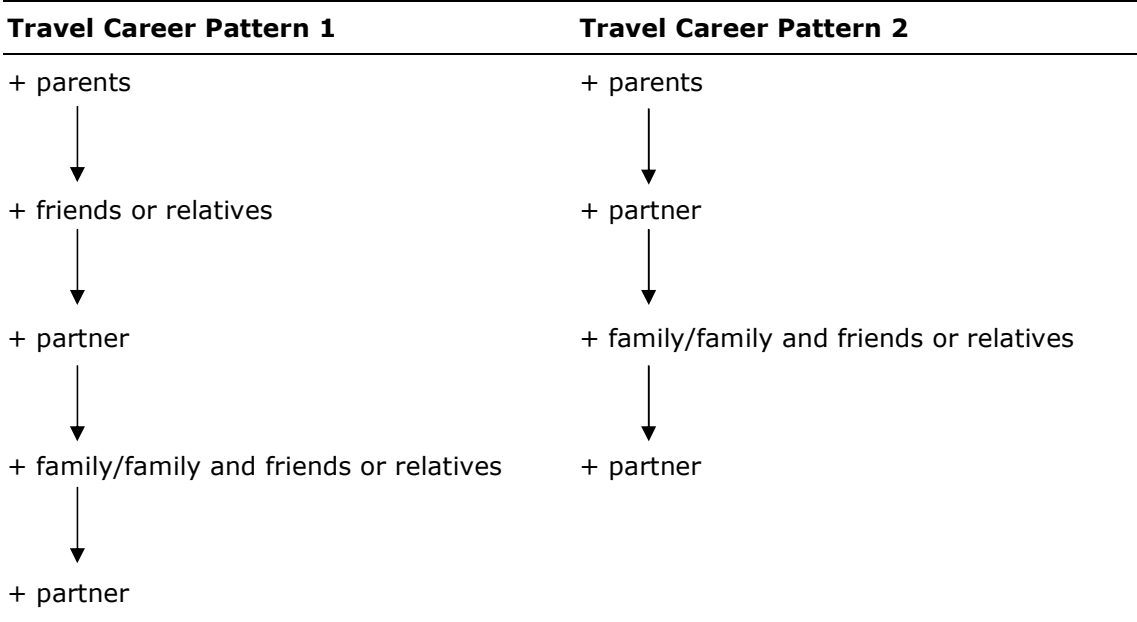
On this basis, it is found that the patterns 1 and 2 may, on a very general level, describe travel patterns that are common for many of the interviewees. It could be claimed, however, that there is no point in speaking of general patterns, since minor details will always vary between interviewees, and these patterns will to a great extent be individual as well. In theory, it should thus be possible to outline a complete pattern for an individual, but in practice it may be almost impossible, because several travel units are often in play around the same time. For example, you may travel with a partner for main holidays and with friends or relatives or by yourself to play golf during the off-peak season, and the units will shift several times over a long period. The patterns that emerge will then become extremely extensive and complex. Sequences of travel pattern 1 above may then look very differently, as illustrated in a random example in Figure 8.2:

Figure 8.2

```
                              + parents
                                  |
                                  ↓
   + partner   ←———————→   + friends or relatives   ←———————→   by oneself
                                  |
                                  ↓
+ family and friends or relatives   ←———————→   + family   ←———————→   + friends or relatives
                                  |
                                  ↓
```
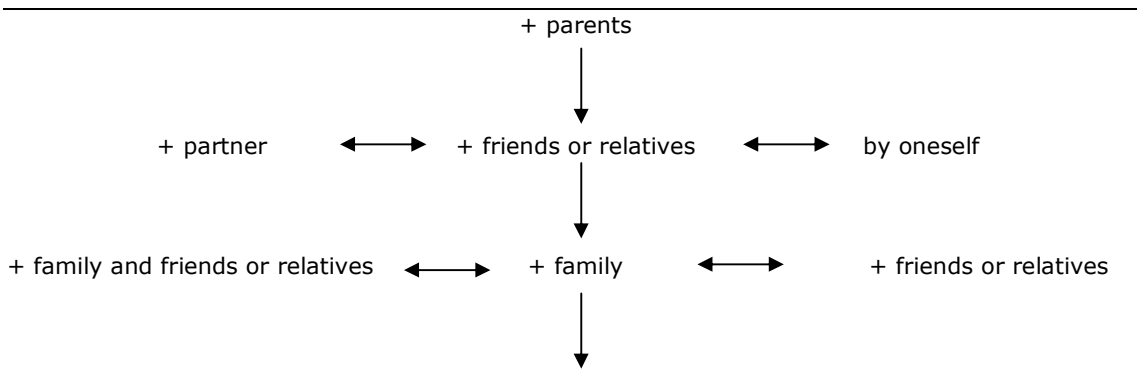
These sequences show that in practice, these patterns are very complex and dynamic, and not linear paths as it may otherwise be indicated, since several travel units may exist and intertwine throughout a period of time (indicated by the horizontal arrows). The vertical arrows indicate that there are primary stages that seem to dominate a time period, although other stages may appear occasionally around the same period. This corresponds with Pearce's contention that a travel career has to be viewed as a pattern and not a hierarchy or ladder.[115]

So, if one were to make this pattern exact in terms of actual behaviour, this type of outlining would require an accurate account of past tourist experiences, which will first of all set the interviewees even further apart, and second of all will be very difficult methodologically speaking, since the type of data required is almost inaccessible. Therefore, the aim is not to make accurate accounts of these travel careers as they have in fact been lived out in real life, but rather to explore travel careers highlighted by the interviewees and relations between the tourist experiences that they entail, and how these become narrative constructs of identity. To grasp the travel careers' inherent shifts in time and circumstances requires a manageable structure, which is why the travel units have been developed in the first place. The patterns form a basis for exploring meanings and uses of tourist experiences to the interviewees, since the ways they are outlined and related to each other may become means to identity construction, the focal point of the last step – step 3 – of this analysis.

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[115] See further details in section 5.3 The Role of the Travel Career

8.1 Travel Career Patterns

In order to get as nuanced a picture as possible of the interviewees and their travel careers, a group has been selected that represents different aspects of the entire group of interviewees, and this will be the focus of this part of the analysis. The idea is that later on, this type of analysis will provide insight into constructions of identity, because shifts in the travel career, i.e. moving from one travel unit to another, and from one tourist experience to another, will make the grounds for narrative constructions of identity, as the travel careers in their entirety, and thereby accumulated tourist experience, become evident, which is the objective of this step of the analysis.

The interviews were initially based on a number of requirements intended to give a varied picture of the particular segment of best-agers.[116] This variation has also been applied to the selection of interviews that will be used to explore travel careers. This means that both English and Danish interviewees, singles and couples, men and women are represented in this step of the analysis. A distinction between working people and retirees has been applied, although very few of the interviewees are in fact retirees. Specific life situations represented among the interviewees have also been taken into consideration. For example, the fact that some of the couples have been together for many years, and others only a few, may have affected travel career patterns in one way or another. A final element for consideration in this process is that certain positions were already pointed out in the previous chapter in terms of the way the interviewees perceive elements of the tourist experience, and position themselves according to these, e.g. according to aspects of adventure and novelty. These positions, in combination with the above factors, have been determining for the choice of interviewees, as the group as a whole is sought represented in the most accurate and nuanced way possible.

Consequently, five interviews with eight interviewees have been selected; two singles and three couples, a single from each country, two couples from the UK, and one from Denmark. One retiree was selected, representing the ratio of retirees in the group total. The characteristics of the selected group are summed up in Table 8.1:

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[116] All interviewees belong to the best-ager segment, so no specific considerations regarding age in this section

Table 8.1

Interviews	Residency	Gender	Family status	Work status
1: Cathy	UK	Female	Single	Working
2: Emily & Doug	UK	Female + Male	Couple	Working
3: Gitte & Kjeld	DK	Female + Male	Couple	Working
4: Ole	DK	Male	Single	Retiree
5: Joan & David	UK	Female + Male	Couple	Working

This table thus presents the tangible characteristics of the group. The additional reasons for choosing these exact interviewees, which have to do with the abovementioned positions regarding tourist experience, will be addressed as the interviewees' travel careers are explored. The positions that will mainly be in focus are approach, adventure, novelty, and atmosphere, because they specifically relate to the most central issue of the tourist experience, but also aspects of the tourism context and outcome when included by the interviewees. The aim is thus to explore various types of interviewees and their different travel career patterns, and how these may be constructed to fit into their social worlds.

8.1.1 Travel career 1: Cathy (UK)

The first interviewee is Cathy (Interview 8-UK), who is 56 years old, works as a public administrator, divorced mother of three, and recently single again after a relationship of 16 years. As Cathy puts it: "*I've been on quite a few holidays before the kids, with the kids, without the kids, so I've been through all these phases.*" All the phases, i.e. travel unit stages, that she mentions throughout the interview are summed up in Figure 8.3:

Figure 8.3

```
+ friends or relatives
        │
        ▼
+ partner          ◄──────►          + partner & friends or relatives
        │
        ▼
+ family           ◄──────►          + family and friends or relatives
        │
        ▼
+ partner          ◄──────►          + family
        │
        ▼
+ friends or relatives
        │
        ▼
```
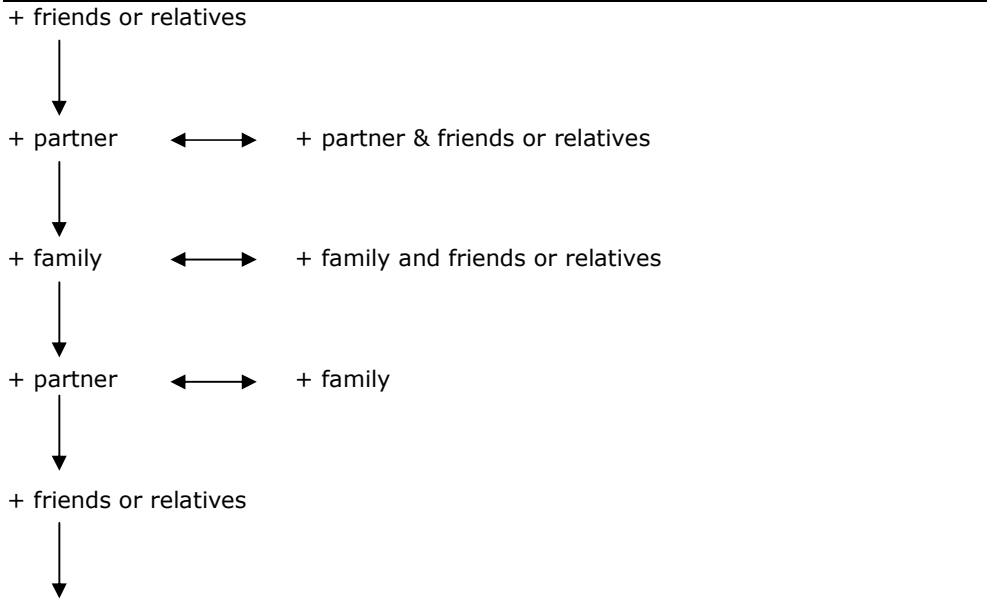
A few additional comments to this illustration seem appropriate. Firstly, the figure illustrates her travel career starting off with a journey with some friends, then generally following the units on the left hand side, occasionally engaging in the units on the right hand side, and ending where she is now, travelling with friends or relatives, for the most part her twin sister. Another issue is that at some point during the + family stage she gets divorced, after a marriage of 15 years. After a while she meets someone else and begins travelling with him, bringing along her children from the first marriage. So, the + family stage actually includes two different partners, and the first and second + partner stages, on each side of the + family stage, thus relate to two different partners. It is evident that these stages of the travel career are not straightforward, but always entail individual details that complicate the overall picture and the understanding of it. Therefore, exploring the specifics of these patterns may provide insights into meaningful variations in travel careers, which will be the case for all five interviews presented here.

When looking into some of the statements that Cathy makes about these different stages, it becomes clear that changes have occurred in the way she perceives the different tourist experiences, and thus the way she now positions herself.

Previously,[117] an example from Cathy's very first holiday abroad was presented, which represents the initial + friends or relatives stage, as she describes a trip to Benidorm with a couple of girl friends. She states: "*I could never dream of going to Benidorm now*," indicating that this belonged to that particular stage in her life and travel career and to who she is today. This also indicates that aspects of the context have played a role in this specific case, collective as well as individual. She had a different outlook at the time: She was a young girl, did not have a lot of money, but travelling was relatively expensive, she had never been abroad and just wanted to have fun with her friends. So, the circumstances around a holiday have changed, which implies that norms have changed as well for her, personally and socially as well. Cathy does state that although she would not go on a holiday like this today, this was a very special holiday, marking a starting point of some sort, i.e. a landmark or flashbulb moment if you like, which forms a nostalgic memory of a *dear departed past*.[118] However, the memory here is exactly of a departed past and of being a motivator for behaving in a similar fashion, visiting a similar destination, or trying to obtain a similar type of feeling. Therefore, it may even be said that it has the opposite effect in being a de-motivator for this type of activity in the present.

Individual and collective circumstances are thus used to explain this specific tourist experience as part of a certain time, but the internalisation of it is even more important here, because it creates a starting point for accumulating tourist experience, although apparently very different from this experience, in the sense that her first taste of tourism and travelling is a fond memory that she has internalised, also in saying that she has changed since then. Moreover, this trip is positioned as a novel experience at the time it took place, since it was her first time away from home. This reinforces the fact that she now has a very different perspective, because she has different measures for novelty and more experience to base this on. It seems that experience is accumulated in such a way that novelty has taken on a different form, which has previously been addressed in relation to the experience spiral causing a new outlook, as extraordinary experiences become ordinary.[119]

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[117] See p.165
[118] See section 5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective
[119] See section 5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective

The starting point of the next stage is the relationship with her husband. She describes their holidays as a time of freedom and independence: "*That was before family came along, so we were able to do that, just pick anywhere and just go for the nightlife and rest and relaxation, not having to consider anybody else*" (Interview 8-UK, p.2). In some way, it seems that this stage is only different from the first one in that she travels with her husband, and in hindsight she tends to emphasise that this was a very short period of freedom and independence, because the children were born very early on in their marriage. Freedom and independence, which may be viewed as expressions of a certain atmosphere entailed in these experiences, are aspects of the tourist experience at this particular point in time. They are emphasised as important factors at this stage in a certain nostalgic retrospect, but were put to a halt by the change in individual circumstances, i.e. children being born. It seems that freedom and independence are desirable elements of the atmosphere which would ideally be sought, had it not been for certain practical issues in the individual context. It may thus be claimed that freedom and independence are elements of the atmosphere that Cathy emphasises, and which have become part of her accumulated tourist experience that she can draw on as a valuable asset of a holiday at a later stage.

The next stage that Cathy describes is radically different in a number of ways from the earlier stages. Cathy states that they, her husband and herself, could not really afford to go abroad when their children were young. They would go to holiday camps in the UK or visit her family in Scotland. After a while they were able to go abroad with the children, and they would drive to Spain to camp, and about this type of holiday, Cathy says:

> "Our holidays were chosen with the kids in mind, when they were that age, we didn't take the kids on holiday, we took a holiday, if they were happy we were happy, so we fitted in with the kids, we didn't ask them to fit in with us" (Interview 8-UK, p.4)

It is thus evident that at this stage, Cathy has taken on a different role than previously. Whereas she has emphasised novelty, freedom and independence in her previous holidays, she is at this point emphasising her role as a parent, and is very much incorporating that perspective into the family's tourist experiences at this point in time. This change may be caused by elements in the context, but certainly

influences the choices made, but also the focus of the discursive positioning of self, which has moved away from the actual experience to the inherent qualities of engaging in specific activities. Cathy also mentions that later on they were able to afford a holiday flying to Mallorca, and "*the reason why I brought them is because of the experience.*" She indicates a shift back to the experience itself, in that another dimension is added directly to these holidays, which entails broadening the children's horizons or, using the terminology of this project, providing a basis for them to accumulate tourist experience through a novel experience, thereby reinforcing a good parent identity.

In addition, the discursive approach to the holiday experience is very much that of widespread experiencing. She wants her children to experience a particular type of holiday, i.e. travelling in a certain way, staying at a hotel, going to a different type of destination, that they have not previously experienced, rather than focussing on some of the elements mentioned above that remove focus from the experience itself, and puts it on more internal matters, such as togetherness.

In the context of the same example, Cathy also says that this was their first holiday abroad but adds "*well, on an airplane.*" There is thus an indication that this is a significant addition to their accumulated tourist experience, this being a special type of holiday. It might also be another starting point, because it is a different kind of experience for her and her family as a travel unit, i.e. a new stage within this stage. She does end up explaining, however, that this stage is rather short-lived, because she and her husband divorced, and for a while she could not afford to travel.

Subsequently, Cathy gets involved in another relationship and begins to travel again, and at this point her youngest child is still with them on holidays, which have taken yet another turn. They start to go outside of Europe, to Florida specifically, again indicating that widespread experiencing is explored at this point. Cathy characterises this as an adventure, simply because it was much further away than she had ever been, and the things they did are positioned as being very different, adding novelty to

the sense of adventure.[120] To give an example, she describes the experience of the theme parks:

> "We went to the theme parks, that was just magnificent, I mean, I don't think anybody can do theme parks like the Americans, I don't think they can, I mean we've got nothing in comparison to what they've got, and Haley [daughter] absolutely loved it and so did I, even as an adult, I loved it, I mean, they had the Blues Brothers, and that's just in the hotel, they had these figurines, sort of just scattered around in the garden and the pool area and everything, they had a mermaid that looked so real… […]. Obviously we went to Epcott and we went to Universal Studios, and I just… you know, all the films that were on at the time, like King Kong, Jaws, Earthquake, they had all these rides, and I remember Haley must have been on 'Back to the Future' about a dozen times, where you went in this car, and you really did feel as if you were going out of space or dropped down or… it's fantastic, they go through the clock and then it all like flashed and you fly sideways and things, it was absolutely fantastic, I've never experienced anything like that, when we went to Florida …" (Interview 8 – UK, p.5-6)

The quote shows that she is quite enthusiastic about this experience, which adds to the suggestion that this is another starting point in her travel career, although this is still within the + family stage. It also seems that an element of novelty is emphasised in a phrase like: "*I've never experienced anything like that.*" It explicitly addresses novelty as a factor of this experience also characterised as being an adventure, e.g. it is almost a fantasy world. Obviously, another factor may also have influenced the perception of this experience as being somewhat magical: Her daughter had a fantastic time as well, at least that is the impression that one gets from this description, and therefore it is assumed to be Cathy's perception and memory of it. Memories and togetherness also seem to play into this, since the magic is enhanced by the fact that this is a family sharing an experience. Thus Cathy's experience is a happy experience providing a memory of togetherness with her family, which adds to the perception of self in that family.[121]

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[120] See introduction to Chapter 5 Tourist Experiences & Identity Construction

[121] See sections 5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective and 7.3.1 Memories and Togetherness

Considering the contention that novelty and difference are central aspects of adventure,[122] the magic of this type of experience may indicate adventure to the extent that this is very different from anything else that Cathy has done before, and this magical theme park is in great contrast to other theme parks visited, and even seems to take her to another world, indicated by the realness of the figurine of a mermaid. These last examples show multiple starting points or new beginnings exist in the mind of this interviewee, for the most part as a result of new beginnings in her personal life, i.e. in the tourism context.

After her youngest child stopped going on holiday with Cathy and her partner, she talks about yet another shift, i.e. how their holidays changed into more "adult" holidays which were more in tune with her own rather than her children's interests:

> "You know it was split in half [Cyprus] because of the Turks and the Cypriots and … so it was basically all that history, and it was … I wouldn't say nice, that isn't the right word, but interesting to look at all that history, because obviously I could spend more time on that side of my holiday, whereas when you've got children with you, you can't, because they'd be bored to tears […]. They don't want to do that, so that's why my holiday was changing, because I was finding I was choosing holidays that would have … cultural interests as well as something interesting to me and not having to think about beach holidays always or entertainment for the children all the time (Interview 8 – UK, p.7)

It seems that because previous holidays were planned around the children and what was best for them, Cathy is now moving into a stage of accommodating her own preferences – or perhaps merely her desires for novelty in the experiences that she seeks – and this has had an impact on the type of holidays she has, mostly in terms of the activities that she engages in, e.g. cultural sights. This also indicates that who she is and her own interests are taking a primary role in her holidays, seemingly more so than they have done before. There is a new role of tourist experiences and Cathy's position according to these, e.g. being a more culturally and historically interested tourist than what was possible or desirable before, because her children's interests came before her own. In addition, a new need may have risen to construct identity on

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[122] See introduction to chapter 5 Tourist Experiences & Identity Construction

the basis of something other than parenthood, since the children are less obvious as a focal point at this stage of Cathy's life, and therefore, other things may take priority.

This new way of having holidays continues into the last stage of Cathy's travel career, when she is single again. She has done whatever she wanted, for example going to Sorrento in Italy with her sister, which she refers to as "*the start of me going on my holidays.*" She explains at some point that she and her sister pretty much like and want the same things, as opposed to previous partners and her children, so these holidays are just about doing what she wants. It is thereby also indicated that her holidays have increasingly become more and more about herself and her desires. One could assume that they are increasingly a reflection of who she is or aspires to be in the present, since these holidays are all viewed in light of her present perceptions and aspirations.

A final observation about Cathy is that even when she is not travelling, she is trying to prolong her experiences, thereby blurring the picture of before, during and after. To some extent she is also trying to draw on other people's experiences – to accumulate tourist experience herself – by asking them to bring her a souvenir, e.g. rocks from a beach. She explains it like this:

> "[…] My friend brought me Manly beach in Sydney, you know, so I would just write Manly beach Sydney, and that could be written on the rock, so that I knew that that rock has come all that way, it's from the other side of the world, and now I've got it. […] It's actually a part of that country that I brought back" (Interview 8 – UK, p.13)

Cathy gives an impression of a person who consumes these destinations to a great extent, and that this is not about the actual experience. She gets a lot of feelings out of these imagined experiences, such as a rock from a beach, which will take her on a mental journey to a specific tourist destination that she somehow seems to relate to. These rocks are not part of her own experiences, but nevertheless function as such in her mind. This may indicate that she has an in-depth approach to tourist experiences, however, there are several indications of more widespread experiencing in the above explorations. This is also implied by the idea of collecting rocks, i.e. experiences, through others, because it all comes down to marking different places in the world

that she can somehow relate to. Therefore, this is perceived as an expression of widespread experiencing on Cathy's part, although this may indicate that both approaches may come into play at various points in time for the individual interviewee.

Cathy represents a travel career pattern in which shifts taking place due to changes in her personal life, thereby changing the context of travelling, have had significant impacts on tourist experiences, primarily as markers of new beginnings in which reasons and opportunities to obtain novel experiences are exploited. In addition, there seems to be an inherent element of accumulating tourist experience when a shift takes place, e.g. because different types of experiences come into play, thereby giving grounds for accumulation of a different kind of experience in a widespread sense. Shifting discursive positions is thus used for different tourist experiences taking place at different points in time, moving more and more in direction of a true self as it is perceived and sought portrayed in the present. The positions on the tourist experience that are taken along the way logically all support the desirable identity of today, as this is being constructed in the present narratives, and in this case, there seems to be a significant focus on novelty. Moreover, the different positions reflect a person who searches for widespread experiences, in the sense that novelty is always a reason for engaging in specific experiences, and obtaining many different experiences, i.e. destinations, modes of travel etc., is a goal in itself. This is not to say that in-depth experiencing is never a part of it, but rather to say that widespread experiencing seems more important, particularly in terms of accumulating experience and in terms of positioning oneself discursively.

8.1.2 Travel Career 2: Emily and Doug (UK)

In the next example, there are actually two travel careers at play, since the interviewees are a couple, but their travel careers overlap to a great extent (Interview 12-UK). Emily is a 52 year old social worker, and she is married to Doug, a 57 year old general practitioner. They have been married for 14 years and been together for 37, which means that they were very young when they first met, and they have spent most of their lives together, including travelling. They now have three children and four grandchildren together.

As mentioned, Emily's and Doug's travel careers are to a large extent shared. Figure 8.4. combines their travel careers, but also points out differences, as part of the aim of this study is to explore individual travel careers.

Figure 8.4

+ parents (Emily)		+ parents (Doug)		
↓		↓		
+ partner (E+D) ← →	+ friends and relatives (D) ← →	+ by oneself (D)
↓				
+ family (E+D) ← →	+ family and friends or relatives (E+D)			
↓				
+ partner (E+D) ← →	+ partner and friends or relatives (E+D)			
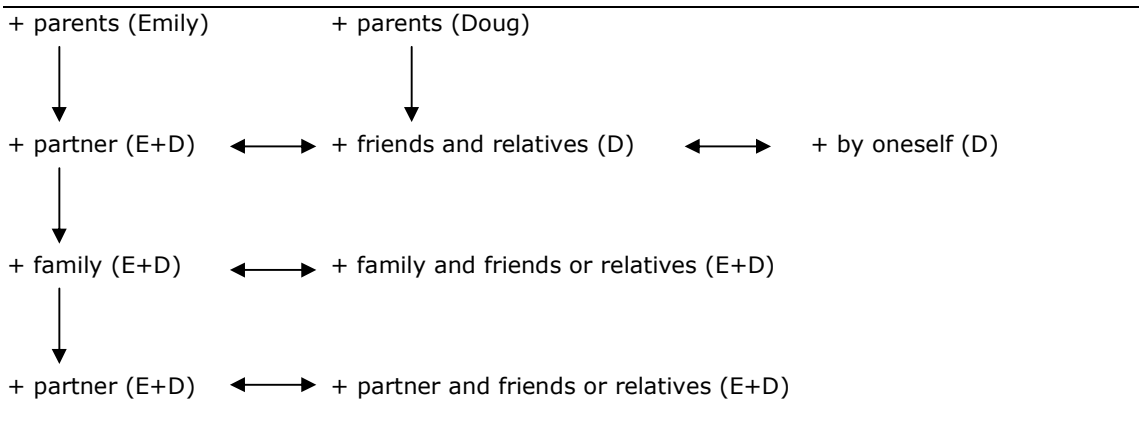
The figure illustrates that unlike Cathy, Emily and Doug began their travel careers by travelling with their parents. Doug has a few more travel units in the stages of his travel career than Emily, mainly because he is five years older and did some travelling before they met. At the beginning of their relationship he travelled regularly with friends or by himself, just as he would travel with Emily, which the second stage is meant to illustrate. After that, they have travelled together, so the major part of their travel careers overlap, which is illustrated through the rest of the stages above.

Looking at the first stage, in which both interviewees travelled with their parents, both of them seem to have been travelling mostly in the UK. Emily says she did not travel much as a child, but she and her family did do a few caravan holidays, otherwise mostly day trips. Doug had slightly different experiences as a child. Although he did go camping in the UK once, he mostly went to bed & breakfast type places in the UK and visited family members around the UK. As an adolescent, Doug began to travel with friends, camping or hitchhiking around the UK, and occasionally going abroad as well, either with friends or to visit friends. Doug also went hiking and climbing by himself, which is a hobby of his, and during his student years he went to Tanzania for three months.

According to these accounts, Doug has had more tourist experiences than Emily before they began to travel together, which means that he actually has travel units in his travel career that Emily does not have, i.e. + friends or relatives and by oneself. Doug thus has a stronger base on which to accumulate tourist experience than Emily and therefore may use this base differently. When the two of them began to travel together, it was often on Doug's motorbike around Europe or the UK, and often with friends. However, Doug says he still went climbing and such by himself during this stage. Doug has thus had opportunities to accumulate tourist experience which Emily has not, so his perception of later tourist experiences may be affected by this accumulated experience. However, only very rarely are there any references to the specifics of Doug's past experiences prior to travelling with Emily, which makes it difficult to analyse them extensively. However, Emily positions Doug as a more experienced traveller by referring to him travelling *all over*, so it does play a role in their relationship and them travelling together. He takes on the identity of knowing what he is doing due to accumulated experience, and possibly because Emily positions him as the more experienced and knowledgeable traveller. Doug's identity may be said to be ascribed to him by Emily in this respect, and he seems to act accordingly.

At the + family stage, when the children came into the picture, the traditional family holidays consisted in caravanning in the UK, and later on in driving to different places in Europe, camping as they went along. The reason for choosing camping is addressed in the following:

> "D: […] that was my fault, because that's what I'd always done, I'd been camping for years, these mountaineering, backpacking things, when I was a teenager
> E: Yeah, we just accommodated it, didn't we, and then we kind of …
> D: It was all my fault really
> E: … grew into it. But the kids have all gotten their own, you know, they're grown up now, they've all got their own tents now" (Interview 12-UK, p.5)

Doug's accumulated tourist experience based on a particular mode of travelling and perhaps Emily's lack of experience have a great impact on this family's experiences together, and eventually even on their children's experiences, as indicated by Emily's last comment. It seems that Doug's position as an experienced traveller does have an

impact in the sense that he takes responsibility for choosing these types of holidays, and thereby accepts his role as the experienced traveller. Hence, his accumulated tourist experience influences the rest of the family.

At several points throughout the interview, it is stated that camping was a constant element in their family holidays, although on one occasion they had rented a house in Spain with the youngest of their children, but that was an exception. Variants of camping holidays were used, e.g. staying at organised campsites around Europe, where the tents are already there, surrounded by lots of facilities. But camping was the preferred type of holiday due to a number of factors, e.g. specific preferences, being outdoors and close to other tourists, but also for practical reasons as camping was more convenient with the children and finances. It thus seems that, in contrast to Cathy above, who stresses new beginnings several times, this couple emphasises continuity, i.e. passing it on to their children. They stress a different perspective on tourist experiences, e.g. a family bond ingrained in the holidays that they have had, based on the tourist experiences they have accumulated together. Novelty seems to be less important to them at this point, or at least their definition of it varies from Cathy's, who emphasises difference and new experiences all around, i.e. in terms of destination, mode of travel or other, as significant elements of her travel career. Emily and Doug seem to be perfectly happy having similar holidays and trying to pursue tourist experiences from a similar vantage point each time, i.e. from a camping perspective.

This couple must then focus on other elements of the experience, and this may have a lot to do with their perceptions of e.g. adventure, as an earlier quote illustrates.[123] The quote refers to a holiday in which several elements add to a sense of adventure that comes from different unexpected events in an otherwise ordinary holiday. This may imply that this family approaches the tourist experience with a focus on in-depth experiences, or perhaps more accurately on getting the most out of any type of experience, even when the experience could be perceived negatively. This adventurous event may thus take place in relation to any given type of holiday, and is not dependent on outside circumstances, but more on the tourists' outlook and attitude. It thus also seems that the actual experience is not the issue for this couple,

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but rather the sense of adventure found within. Moreover, the definition of adventure is related to the in-depth approach, because novelty can be found if one looks for it, whereas adventure has a certain philosophy of life attached to it,[124] to which Emily and Doug subscribe.

At the stage where Emily and Doug are now, they have been on several holidays that differ from the camping element. First of all, they have increased the number of holidays, because it is easier now, without children and with increased opportunities, and they have the finances to do so, which has not always been the case. In the summer, they typically have a self-catering type holiday in Greece or Spain. In the winter, they go skiing, which they have done for about ten years, and now they also have a package skiing holiday with friends, usually somewhere in Europe, and one with their grandchildren as well. In addition, they have family holidays with their children and grandchildren every now and then, sometimes in the UK, sometimes further away. They also go on long weekends around the UK. A couple of years ago, they celebrate Emily's 50th birthday in Peru and went to see Machu Picchu. As Doug puts it: "*I think we have done more diverse things, haven't we, since it's just been us,*" which is obvious when compared to the stated loyalty to camping holidays.

There is thus a remarkable shift between what they have done in the past and what they tend to do now, although they do travel much more these days than before. Particularly in the light of their emphasis on continuity in terms of camping holidays, which they seem to have abandoned altogether, there is a remarkable shift in their holidays. The continuity is found in the fact that their children continue the tradition with the grandchildren. Perhaps the novelty and difference aspect[125] has come into play at this point in Emily and Doug's lives, as pointed out by Doug's reference to diversity above. Their possibilities have expanded, and tourist experiences have been accumulated in-depth in terms of certain types of holidays, and a new stage of the travel career is thus marked by this shift.

To sum up, Emily's and Doug's travel careers have merged into one, even to the extent that Doug's experiences prior to their shared travel career have shaped their

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[124] Also discussed in section 7.2.2 Adventure
[125] See introduction to chapter 5 Tourist Experiences & Identity Construction

experiences together. One reason is that he is ascribed greater accumulated experience than Emily, by Emily and to some extent by himself, and thus has taken on a significant role in their holidays together. Emily's and Doug's travel careers are differ in their expressions from Cathy 's. There is a stronger emphasis on continuity rather than new beginnings or novelty as it may be, which gives a different perspective to the meaning of these tourist experiences to each interviewee. For example, Emily and Doug emphasise a family tradition in the experience. In addition, it appears that in past travel unit stages, Emily and Doug have not stressed novelty very much, but today novelty seems to have emerged as a factor in their holidays. Thereby, a change in their positions may have occurred, in which they ascribe novelty great value, as they now perceive this a significant part of their tourist experiences. Emily and Doug may thus represent an in-depth approach to experiencing, and a shift from togetherness as a family – through adventurous tourist experiences – as the main purpose of the experience to an increased focus on novelty. Togetherness has not been abandoned as a purpose of the holiday all together, since family skiing and summer holidays are still part of their tourist experiences at this point, and obviously they still travel together as a couple. However, it does seem that other purposes, such as novelty, have taken higher priority at this stage.

8.1.3 Travel Career 3: Gitte and Kjeld (DK)

Gitte and Kjeld are also married (Interview 5-DK), which means that this example also entails two travel careers, as well as a great deal of overlapping. Gitte works as an export assistant and Kjeld as an insurance inspector. They are both 57 years old, married for 32 years, known each other for 38, and have a daughter together. Their travel careers are illustrated in Figure 8.5:

<u>Figure 8.5</u>

```
+ parents (Gitte)
       |
       v
+ partner (Gitte+Kjeld)
       |
       v
+ family (G+K)  <------->  + family and friends or relatives (G+K)
       |
       v
+ partner (G+K)  <------->  + partner and friends or relatives (G+K)
```
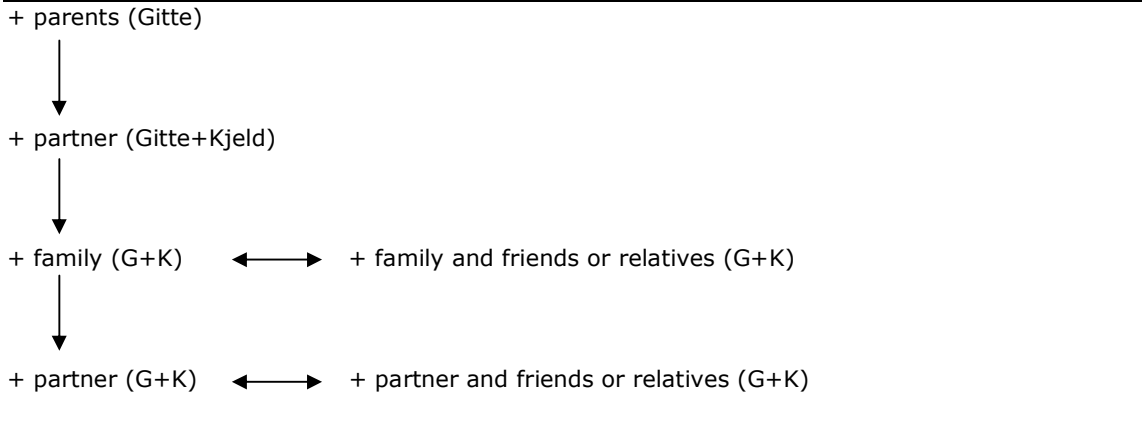
Gitte and Kjeld share almost their entire travel careers, since only one travel unit includes one of them alone, namely Gitte's very first stage, where she travelled with her parents, which Kjeld never did. Otherwise, the entire travel career pattern is shared by the two of them, and at some stages other people are obviously also included. This means that they share the same basis for accumulating experience and therefore will assumedly have similar perceptions of their own and each other's tourist experiences and their meaning, which will be explored further in this section.

In the + parents stage that Gitte describes, she went to Harzen in Germany as a child, as the only holiday with her parents: "*…we went to Germany and whatever people do*," as if that was not a great adventure but more of an ordinary holiday at the time, perhaps due to lack of novelty. Kjeld on the other hand explains that he really wanted to travel when he was a teenager, but never did with his parents. Perhaps for that reason, he never really had the courage to travel by himself. He wanted to go to a kibbutz in Israel and talked to his parents about it, but their opinion was that that was a dangerous endeavour, and "*you simply didn't do that,*" implying a certain perception of this type of travelling at the time. As a result, he did not travel until later in life. In contrast, he explains how he and Gitte to some extent pushed their own daughter into travelling, when she had a chance to go abroad but was hesitant. Kjeld did not want his daughter to miss that opportunity of trying to be on her own and gain confidence through that. There is thus an obvious element of education and learning passed on from the parents, based to some extent on their own experiences. This means that "non-experience," i.e. the lack of travel, has had a significant impact on the actual

travel that does take place, in this case on the part of their daughter. One could also imagine own experiences in this respect, because an incentive to travel might occur out of the lack of opportunity in the past.

The + partner stage is the time when the two began travelling together, and as they explain, they went camping in Germany a few times, but never really went very far away, as they would do at the following stage. At the + family stage, the first experience that Gitte and Kjeld address is a caravanning trip to Yugoslavia with a couple of friends, and as Gitte says: "*We discovered that we should not go on holiday with our friends anymore like that. We still have those friends, but it was just too intimate …*" As Gitte further explains, the whole situation with a young child and two couples in a caravan was simply too intimate for everyone, and although their friends did not complain about it, they all agreed not to do that again.

The implications are that the accumulated experience has caused certain choices about the future, which is a clear indication of a link between past and future, i.e. what they have accumulated from this experience, and how they might act in the future. After this experience, Gitte, Kjeld and their daughter went camping in Yugoslavia several years in a row, and eventually went to Italy to try something else. So after travelling in much the same way every year, a need arises for novel experiences that they decide to pursue. Around the same time as trying Italy for the first time, although they tried to uphold the principle of not travelling with friends, they were convinced to do so anyway by some of their friends, another family, and have done that almost every year since then, to different places around Europe. It thus seems that novelty came to play a role at a point in time when a certain level of familiarity had been established in the type of holidays they have had, and after a few novel aspects were applied, i.e. travelling to different places with others, another type of familiarity was established, camping around Europe with the same friends over an extensive period of time.

When their daughter stopped going with them, they began to go on package holidays with the same friends, initially to European destinations, and later on to Asia. They also went to the US once, with their grown up daughter, which was more of an independent holiday, driving around California mainly, that they had planned for

themselves. This time around, the friends that they usually travelled with did not go with them, and this may be an indication of their accumulated experience reaching a level where they are more comfortable than earlier in their travel careers to travel on their own. As Gitte and Kjeld explain, the trip to the US was a family holiday, where they had decided just to enjoy themselves as a family. Thus a focus on togetherness in this particular holiday becomes evident, and with it an element of both novelty and togetherness as well as a slight indication of an in-depth approach to experiencing.

Gitte and Kjeld have also had short holidays driving around Denmark, staying at motels and hostels, mostly outside the peak season, where they nowadays tend to go abroad. They have also had a couple of holidays to play tennis, which has become Kjeld's hobby over the years, but they usually go together on these holidays, even though Gitte does not play tennis. Usually their friends have also gone with them on these tennis holidays.

Gitte and Kjeld have thus had a fairly consistent way of holidaying all through the first stages of their travel careers. Even Gitte, who travelled a bit with her parents, did the same type of travelling as a child. However, in the last + partner stage, several other types of holidays have been included, as it was also the case above with Emily and Doug, and therefore it is assumed that different types of experiences may have been sought out and accumulated at this stage. This may imply that a significant change takes place at this particular stage, perhaps due to circumstances, or perhaps due to the experiences already entailed in their travel careers, which provides the basis for what might be desired in the present and future. In addition, Gitte and Kjeld represent a focus on familiarity in the earlier stages of their travel careers, although at times an aspect of novelty has changed behaviour slightly. Now the aspect of familiarity more or less consists in travelling with the same group of people repeatedly, but to various destinations around the world. It seems that in-depth experiencing has been dominant, although the search for novelty has inspired visits to more diverse destinations. This may very well be because the level of accumulated experience has increased significantly, and also because the extraordinary has become ordinary or

familiar to a certain extent due to their past experiences, i.e. the experience spiral has caused familiarity to be obtained.[126]

8.1.4 Travel Career 4: Ole (DK)

Ole is a retired public administrator (Interview 7-DK). He is 64 years old and single. He was married for 15 years and in another relationship for 15 years, during which a daughter was born. Ole has lived in Dubai for a while and has visited family there regularly. This is an important factor that has had a great impact on his travel career. During these longer stays and visits, he has travelled, as a tourist, from Dubai to nearby destinations, and sometimes also to destinations further away, but always with Dubai as the tourism generating region. Ole's travel career is outlined in Figure 8.6.

<u>Figure 8.6</u>

| + partner | ←→ | + partner & friends or relatives |

| + family | ←→ | + family and friends or relatives |

| + by oneself | ←→ | + friends or relatives |
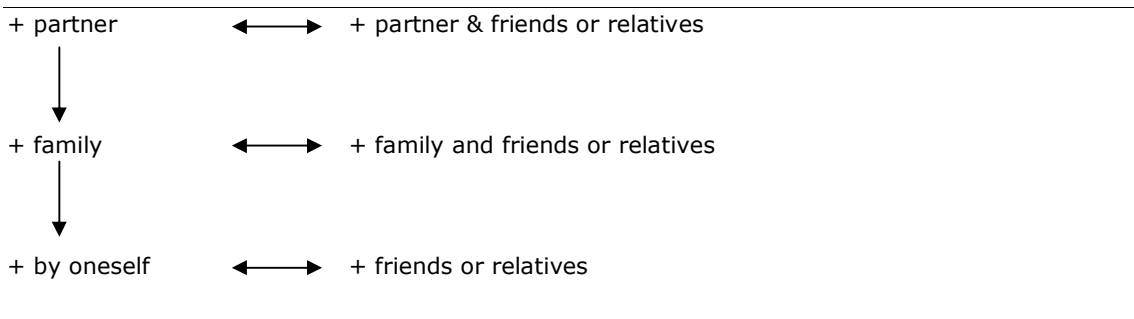
First of all, the figure shows that Ole began his travel career later in life than some of the other interviewees. He explains that individual circumstances in his family prevented him from travelling during childhood and adolescence. He also explains that a significant part of his travelling has taken place in later years, i.e. mostly after he began travelling by himself – in the third stage of this pattern. As a result, this pattern appears more compact than some of the others, and if one were to outline the tourist experiences that are entailed, there would be a very heavy weight on the last stage, which is where Ole is now and where he states to have done most of his travelling.

At the + partner stage, which is where Ole's travel career first began, he travelled with his wife, sometimes going on a package holiday, and sometimes bringing his mother as well, which is indicated by the + partner and friends or relatives travel unit

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[126] See section 5.2.1 A Tourist Perspective

also at the first stage. He also says that during his first marriage, they went camping a few times to places like Holland, Belgium or France, but as he says:

> "As I've gotten older, or as I've gotten richer, I don't know what it is, it has become luxury hotels more and more […]. I just don't want to wake up in a tent or a caravan, I really don't, and I don't even want to stay at three star hotels, I just don't anymore" (Interview 7-DK, p.6)

He indicates that things have changed and luxury has become more of a requirement, maybe because of age and experience, or maybe because a different level of comfort is now within his possibilities. He also indicates that at earlier stages this was not as much of an issue, so it may be gathered that accumulated experience has a great deal to do with this, in the sense of obtaining knowledge of what is and is not desirable in a tourism context. By the same token, Ole expresses a certain interest in a specific atmosphere in the places that he visits, e.g. in the form of nostalgia within himself,[127] or simply as a specific quality in the specific destination.

While travelling as a family, with his daughter and her mother, they had similar holidays to the + partner stage just described, so there does not seem to be any major changes when his daughter came into the travel unit, although it is stated that the level of comfort has risen since then. It may seem, however, that a certain level of familiarity in the type of holiday they have was established at this point, and thus familiarity is a dominant factor at this point.

During the time that Ole has been on his own and travelled by himself, he has also spent a lot of time with relatives in Dubai, and has travelled a lot with them from Dubai, e.g. to China, Thailand, Jordan, Bahrain, Oman and South Africa. Occasionally, he has also had holidays with relatives in summer homes in Denmark. Some time before that, while he was busy at work and had a hard time getting away from it, he used to take package holidays or self-arranged holidays to different European destinations, and later on to destinations outside Europe with relatives, e.g. to Cuba:

> "[…] in the beginning, I definitely saw myself as a tourist, but I probably don't do that anymore, just the way I travel is more of a traveller type

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[127] See p.149

way, you know. When I arrange Cuba … it's the first time I do that by the way … I do it all on the Internet" (Interview 7-DK, p.13)

Ole says that his touristic behaviour has changed with increased accumulated tourist experience, and altogether, he has travelled in different ways over time, but has eventually figured out what he likes. Perhaps for that same reason, he is now able to put together his own preferences when arranging a holiday. It thus seems that accumulated tourist experiences have changed not only touristic behaviour but also his perception of himself as a more advanced traveller than a tourist, which he at first perceived himself to be.

Ole's travel career is thus characterised by a heavy weight on the later stages in life, in that he did not travel as a child with his parents, or as an adolescent. There is also a significant weight on the last stage of the travel career, in which his travelling has increased in terms of frequency and geography, partly because he retired from work, with a significant pension to pay for travelling, and thus had more time and money to travel, partly because he travelled from Dubai, which offered different possibilities in terms of geography. It thus also seems that in Ole's case, there is a significant difference between this last stage, where he is at present, and prior stages, in that the first stages are dominated by relatively similar holidays, which signals familiarity, and this last stage is more varied in types of holidays and destinations. It signals a direction towards a greater extent of novelty, and certainly a widespread approach to experiencing, which is evident e.g. in the fact that Ole marks off all his travel destinations on a map that he keeps in his office. Ole is moreover also greatly focussed on the fact that atmosphere in different forms plays a role to his experiences, e.g. in the sense of a destination being a nostalgic retrospect on childhood, as it was indicated by the Karen Blixen and Kenya example.

8.1.5 Travel Career 5: Joan & David (UK)

The majority of the interviewees are couples,[128] and most of the couples have been together for a long time, and therefore share large parts of their travel careers and have an implied focus on the family in their shared history. However, there is also

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[128] 18 couples and 7 singles were interviewed, which means that 36 interviewees out of 43 live and travel with a partner at this point

another type of couple represented in the interviewee group, namely couples that only have a more recent history together. They obviously have longer separate travel careers behind them, and David and Joan are an example of this (Interview 4-UK) (see Figure 8.7).

Figure 8.7

+ parents (David)		+ parents (Joan)
↓		↓
by oneself (D) ←→ + friends or relatives		
↓		↓
+ partner		+ family (J)
↓		↓
by oneself (D) ←→ + friends or relatives		
↓		↓
+ partner (D+J) ←————————→ + partner and friends or relatives (D+J)		
↓		
by oneself (D) + friends or relatives (D)		
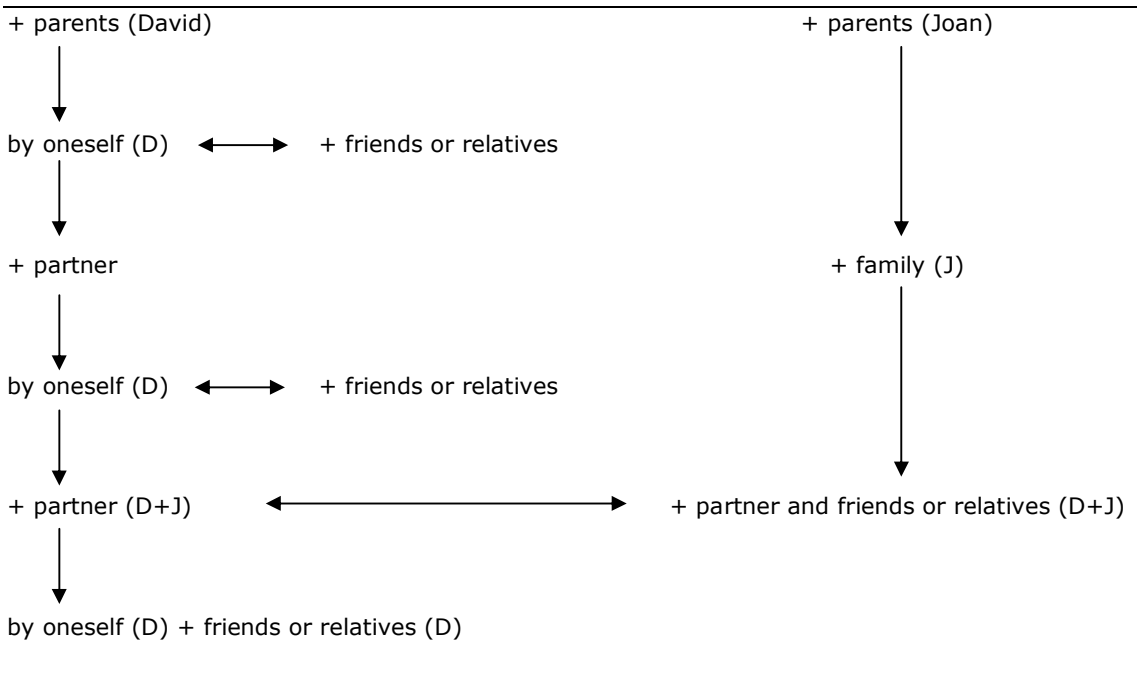
David is a 56 year old HR manager, and Joan is a receptionist. They moved in together a few months ago,[129] and have been together for about one year. David was married for a short while in his early twenties, and Joan was married for 27 years and has two sons from that marriage. David moved around a lot as a child with his parents, also abroad, and thus travelled as a child.

Although David's half of the travel career is quite extensive, there is a certain logic to it, when taking social patterns into consideration. First, he travelled with his parents, then as an adolescent because of a hobby – either by himself or with friends, he then got married in his early twenties and travelled with a partner. After he became single again, he travelled by himself and with friends – mostly for hobbies. Then Joan came

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[129] At the time of the interview in November 2007

into the picture, and he travelled mainly with her, but he will still travel for hobbies by himself or with friends, as the last two stages on the left hand side indicate.

Joan has had a more simple travel career, in that she travelled a bit with her parents, a bit when she was married, mostly in the UK, and then she met David and travelled with him. Joan points out that she has had more travel experiences abroad in the short time that she has been with David than throughout the rest of her life, which indicates that her travel career could also become more extensive as time goes by. It is thus evident that the basis for David's level of accumulated experience is more extensive than Joan's, which may be quite significant in their shared travel career and for identities constructed.

Obviously, this last example of Joan and David's individual and shared travel careers is complicated by the fact that two individuals who have only been together for a very short time are sought combined, keeping in mind that they may very well have very different levels of accumulated tourist experience. Nevertheless, it is highly relevant to include these examples in the analysis to explore the role of these very different individual travel careers in terms of their uses for identity construction in direct comparison, as they are both part of the same couple interview. This will be explored further on throughout this section.

Firstly, the + parent stage for David entailed mostly camping or caravanning trips around the UK, because up until about age 18, the travelling he had done abroad was when his family was living abroad, but not for holidays as such. Joan's first tourist experiences were also caravanning with her parents and her sister around the UK, which is quite similar to other interviewees.

During adolescence, David began travelling to different places in Europe by himself as part of his motor boat racing hobby. Nowadays, he is very much into golf and goes on golf trips by himself, also in his current relationship with Joan. An example is a trip to USA to volunteer at a golf tournament. Throughout the years, he has also travelled with friends quite frequently, both for golf and for regular holidays, e.g. driving to campsites in France and Italy, going to Morocco, Egypt and various places. He is thus a quite experienced traveller in terms of the places he has been to and the types of

travel he has undertaken. For this particular reason, it seems that a widespread approach to experiencing is sought out, in that any type of holiday is explored, and has become part of his accumulated tourist experience.

Joan's next stage after travelling with her parents as a child was with her first husband and her two sons. They would go to different places in the UK, and either stay in a caravan or at a hotel. Joan says about these experiences, first drawing on her experiences as a child:

> "I did like caravan holidays, I went with my family, my sister and my mom and dad, and I liked the fact of being in a caravan. I just loved it, because there was lots of people around you, lots of friends, and I think that's what I remember most about it. That everyone seemed to get on with everyone […] My husband and I would go in a caravan and we did go into hotels as well. But when they were little [the children], it was far easier to go in a caravan, where we could control rather than take them into a very nice hotel where they would be a little bit noisy. So we liked that part of it, as well as the freedom in a caravan, you can do what you want and when you want […] and I used to love the rain in a caravan, I know that sounds a bit … I just loved it […] I just loved being in the atmosphere. You know, do what you like and when you want. But yes we went to hotels as well, but it was a worry, and I never enjoyed it as much, because you got to control the children and they weren't allowed to run about, so the caravan definitely was our favourite, when they were little" (Interview 4-UK, p.8)

There is thus a connection between past holidays as a child and holidays later on with her own children, in which it is evident that Joan really enjoyed the caravanning experience – as opposed to David, who expresses dislike at some point – and therefore has carried it on to her own children. So although perhaps limited, her accumulated tourist experience is significant to some extent at this point. There is an issue of comfort though with Joan travelling with her children, which is also an obvious reason for her to choose this type of holiday. Nevertheless, she does like the experience for other reasons as well, such as the freedom and independence entailed in this type of holiday, indicating that this type of atmosphere suits her at this time of her life.

David got married in his early 20s, and started going on holidays abroad around that time – besides motor boat racing trips – and the holidays that he would often have with his wife at the time were package holidays. He has also had holidays at B&Bs around the UK and Europe at different points in time with a partner. Now that he travels with Joan, he says that "*we're pretty much open-minded as to what we do*," referring to the type of holiday they will have, i.e. a package tour or self-arranged, since they have had a package holiday together, and are planning a self-arranged one as well. They also go on short breaks around the UK. Obviously, David has already had extensive experience with a large variety of holidays, and therefore, this open-mindedness is not a big stretch for considering what he has done previously. However, this is a bit different for Joan. She comments on her newfound desires to go on holiday after meeting David:

> "Now I have an age, where I want to go to Italy, and David has told me all about it. And we want to go because we can and while we can, and obviously it's only two of us, where there are no children. Independently, we can just go where we want to" (Interview 4-UK, p.9)

This should be seen in the light of her past experiences where she felt somewhat restricted by her first husband and her children. Her husband did not want to go abroad very much, although they did a few times when the children were almost grown up, and she felt that she could not take her children just anywhere when they were little. She does not seem to blame anyone, but there is a time for everything, and this seems to be the time for her to go on these new types of holidays: "*I'm a beginner, so I'll have to go along with what David suggests,*" indicating that she is hoping to obtain different experiences, or experiences that she has not had before, i.e. novelty-seeking has entered her desires. Later, Joan adds to the issue of going to Italy and going to museums etc.: "*I really look forward to that, because it's new to me. You know, I haven't done anything like that,*" and later on David refers to it as "*making up for lost time,*" to which Joan adds "*why not do it, because I can now, no ties,*" again implying that she has felt restricted by practical issues when travelling in the past.

This means that although David may continue the same path as before meeting Joan, novelty is a central issue for Joan at this point, also as a reaction to the fact that there

are no longer any restrictions in her way. It is hereby also indicated that she may be looking for widespread experiencing more than David, but since he is further along in the experience spiral, he defines novelty in a different way and is already part of the experiences that he is used to obtain.

Altogether, it seems that Joan is at a stage where she wants to try things that were not present in past stages of her travel career. She want to accumulate tourist experience and therefore novelty is definitely part of her desirable experiences, and widespread experiencing is a must. David pretty much seems to continue his familiar way of travelling, which is quite varied and thus offers many possibilities – one could argue that it already is widespread experiencing. David thus tends to trivialise his experiences, because they are perhaps already familiar to him. Another focus that may be central for David could be togetherness, in that he seems eager to share experiences he has had in the past with Joan, and therefore, does not mind repeating similar holidays. It seems that Joan's past experiences play a role of being a counter position to what she wants to do now, i.e. a de-motivator, assumedly due to her feelings of having been restricted from doing what she wanted in the past. David's past experiences, on the other hand, function as a frame of reference in terms of what they are now doing in their holidays as a couple, i.e. David's tourist experiences are transferred into their shared experiences, as Joan is making up for lost times.

8.2 Chapter Summary

The focus in this chapter is on relations between different experiences in terms of perspectives expressed by the interviewees that relate to notion B of the tourist experience, i.e. accumulated tourist experience, and the way past experiences play into the present and future. The objective has been to explore each selected interview, as opposed to the more general observations and comments made in step 1. However, the findings of the previous step have been explored throughout this step as well, which resulted in certain profiles of the interviewees based on past experiences. This has been done by the use of travel units as a point of reference, whereby travel units have become a crucial tool for this exploration and development of travel career patterns in this analysis.

Based on considerations of the composition of the total group of interviewees, three couples and two single interviews were selected, which equals eight interviewees in total, five English and three Danish, four men and four women. Variety in terms of positions on various issues in relation to the tourist experience was also a factor.

The first interviewee is Cathy, and what stands out in the way she reflects on her travel career is that it is very much a matter of different independent stages, one building upon the previous but adding a different dimension every time. Novelty always seems present in the discursive positioning of a travel unit stage and the resulting tourist experiences. She stresses the element of taking a new direction to a great extent, and Cathy's travel career thus seems to be a construct in the way that she describes the "building blocks" used, i.e. the different travel unit stages, and underlines the differences between each of them. Each block – or shift as it is – seems to mark a point of accumulated experience of a certain type, then moving on into the next block in which different experiences can be accumulated. Novelty is very evident in these shifts, as Cathy tends to underline this as part of the shift. As a consequence, widespread experiencing is also pursued as a goal in itself.

The second interview was with a couple, Emily and Doug, who have been together for a long time, and as a result share a great deal of their travel careers, although Doug seems to play the role of the more experienced traveller. In contrast to Cathy, this couple stresses an element of continuity in the way they have spent their holidays, extending to their children travelling with their families in similar ways. It thus seems that there is a focus on continuity rather than change in this interview. In addition, adventure in these family holidays is stressed in the sense that a certain attitude or philosophy of life is applied, thereby positioning the holiday as adventurous in some sense. This also indicates a focus on in-depth experiencing as an approach. At the current stage, novelty may also come to play a role, which it did not before, and a shift has thus taken place from togetherness as a family to novelty in tourist experiences.

The third interview is also with a couple, Gitte and Kjeld, who share certain central characteristics with Emily and Doug. They also share the largest part of their travel careers, as they met when they were quite young. They also express a specific mode

of travel that have been continuous throughout a great part of their travel careers, right up until the current stage, where greater variation is expressed and seems to dominate. A significant shift has also taken place at the beginning of this stage, perhaps as the level of accumulated experience has increased, giving grounds for greater comfort in travelling. This suggestion is linked to this couple's focus on familiarity, which is evident in their previous choices of holidays, and as such accumulated experience is instrumental in creating a sense of familiarity in future travelling. The contention is thus that this couple has also moved from in-depth experiencing to a more widespread approach to experiencing.

The fourth interviewee is Ole, who started travelling relatively late in his life, at least in terms of these travel units and other interviewees. Perhaps as a result of this, Ole's travelling has increased, and he seems to be doing it at a larger scale than ever, both in terms of frequency and geography, which seems to be a general tendency for a lot of the interviewees. In Ole's case it is evident though, that he is now travelling more than average for this group of interviewees, which then stands in great contrast to previous stages of not travelling at all. He is so to speak making up for lost times – times of travelling and gaining tourist experience – even to the extent that he considers himself as a traveller rather than a tourist. Ole's travel career is characterised by an increased focus on novelty and on widespread experiencing, and atmosphere is a large part of his experience.

The fifth and last interview is with David and Joan, who are different from the other couples in that they have only been together for a short while. This means that they have relatively long separate travel careers prior to their relationship, as opposed to the other two couples. The way this plays out between them is that David continues his pattern from before he met Joan, in which a widespread approach to experiencing is applied. Joan is much more inclined to search for new and different experiences, i.e. novelty-seeking, as it was also the case with Cathy, and by doing so making up for lost times like Ole. David on the other hand already has novelty in his tourist experiences, and therefore tends to trivialise the experiences. He may focus more on togetherness with Joan, in that he is trying to share experiences with her. Joan thus moves in David's direction in terms of travelling, which now forms the basis for their shared travel career.

The profiles of the interviewees can now be summed up in terms of these various aspects of the tourist experience and how the interviewees relate to them. Table 8.2 illustrates various categories related to the tourist experience,[130] and how they are represented among the interviewees.

Table 8.2

Interviews	Approach	Adventure	Novelty	Atmosphere	Other
1: Cathy	Widespread	Adventure	Novelty		New beginnings
2: Emily & Doug	In-depth	A	N		Continuity Togetherness
3: Gitte & Kjeld	I/W		Familiarity[a]		
4: Ole	W		N	Atmosphere	Making up for lost time
5: Joan & David	W	Trivialisation[b]	N		Togetherness Making up for lost times

a) Familiarity is mentioned as a counter position to novelty.

b) Trivialisation is mentioned as a counter position to adventure.

When considering the characteristics of the interviewees,[131] the main difference seems to be between the couples sharing a significant part of their travel careers, and the rest, i.e. the singles and the new couple, in that they adopt an in-depth approach, whereas the rest seek experience widespread. In terms of residence, gender, and work status, there are no significant differences in this respect, so these aspects are not included in Table 8.2. When it comes to each interviewee's level of accumulated tourist experience, the main factor is that the various focal points are relative to level of experience. For example, it seems that novelty is at play in most travel careers, but when exploring this in more detail, it is dependent on the level of experience, because the extraordinary may become ordinary with experience. Novelty is thus assumed to concern different experiences than would be the case for a less experienced person. These are focal points for further exploration in the next step of the analysis, i.e. identity construction in tourist experiences.

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[130] See section 7.2 The Tourist Experience

[131] See section 8.1 Travel Career Patterns

9. Step 3 - Construction of Identity in Tourist Experience

Now that key elements of the tourist experience, as they have been addressed by the interviewees have been pointed out and discussed in step 1, and links between tourist experiences have been explored in step 2, the aim is here to demonstrate that identity construction is entailed in this mix of various aspects and inherent perspectives on the tourist experience.

The way the different steps of this analysis come into play was presented in the analytical framework,[132] but a short repetition may be in order. Step 1 of the analysis presented the core of the tourist experience, in the sense that various issues brought up by the interviewees formed the content of Step 1 and as such laid the grounds for this discussion. The most central issues are obviously those related directly to the tourist experience. Nevertheless, the tourism context and outcome play a role in the way the tourist experience is perceived at the time it occurs and in retrospect. It is thus crucial that these are viewed in light of surrounding circumstances, because the discursive positions used to describe these experiences are clearly related to such perceptions. The dimensions before, during and after all come into play, although notion A of the tourist experience is the primary concern at this step.

The different positionings of tourist experiences entailed in Step 1, i.e. approach, adventure, novelty, and atmosphere, are thus important elements of this analysis, in that they form the building blocks for the steps that follow. This indicates that they constitute the very core of this analysis, and therefore function as the base on which to move into step 2 of the analysis, which serves the purpose of understanding the connections between these parts, i.e. how the building blocks are put together to form a construct, which in this case is a coherent narrative of the self, evident through discursive portrayals of the travel career. This narrative is part of the tourist's present self perception, entailing both notion A and B tourist experience, and thus forms a whole which is a reflection of present personal identity, as perceived by the tourist, but obviously influenced by the surrounding social world as well. Furthermore, the narrative entails a perspective on identity construction in that connections are discursively made between past tourist experiences, the social world in which they

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[132] See section 6.2 Empirical and Theoretical Themes

took place, and the way these may or may not support or confirm the desirable identity of the present. Hereby, identity construction becomes part of the discursive portrayal of the travel career, and this offers insights into identity construction in a tourism context, which this third step of analysis will also explore.

For the purpose of understanding the perspectives of the tourist experience as part of the identity construction based on these tourist experiences, theory presented previously will be applied to this mix, and eventually, the sum of the steps of analysis will illustrate the point at hand, i.e. identity construction via a travel career made up of coherent tourist experiences. Based on these considerations, this step of the analysis is going to address the various perspectives on identity that have come from the explorations made in Steps 1 and 2, theoretical perspectives, and interview statements, which are going to be applied throughout the course of this final analysis.

The main themes raised throughout the analysis in relation to identity seem to entail issues of the other, the undesirable other in particular, which has to do with the idea of the ignorant and obnoxious tourist, *turistus vulgaris*, and the fact that no one wants to be characterised as such. The issue of tourism becomes an inherent part of the individual to the extent that it will be a part of the individual's self-conception, i.e. who one perceives oneself to be; and the fact that various aspects of tourism are at times used in attempts to change existing identities or to obtain desirable identities. These three main themes will therefore form the point of departure in this chapter as well as the structure.

9.1 The Undesirable Other

As addressed in step 1, various aspects are being used to position oneself according to the tourist experience. The most apparent and central ones fall under the categories of approach, adventure, novelty, and atmosphere,[133] and underlying these are aspects of the tourism context, i.e. individual circumstances and collective influences,[134] and of outcome, i.e. memories and togetherness, and recharging.[135]

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[133] See section 7.2 The Tourist Experience
[134] See section 7.1 Tourism Context
[135] See section 7.3 Outcome

These positions need to be viewed in light of the consumption studies perspective, which includes the perception that consumers are tribe members, who seek recognition from other tribe members. Thus tourists will seek recognition from their tribe, i.e. their immediate peers and surroundings, through the appropriate positioning of self, in opposition to the other, in the tourist experiences that are conveyed, and the above categories are used to do so.

However, since not all interviewees consider themselves members of the same tribe, the positions that they take in this respect differ. Obviously, personal identity also plays a role in this, since the individual's perceived role in the tribe may affect the confirmation that is sought obtained. It is, nevertheless, quite clear in the data material that there is consensus on the existence of an undesirable touristic other, a turistus vulgaris to use a term that Löfgren (1999:264) uses to describe the process of *othering*, i.e. positioning the other that one does not wish to be associated with in any way. Although this type of tourist does exist in the minds of the interviewees, and even though it seems that similar characteristics might be attached to this type of tourist by different interviewees, there are – not surprisingly - no clear statements of a specific, unanimous definition of this touristic other and what that entails. Löfgren's also points out that this type of tourist is fluctuating, and more of a symbolic mass than an actual, specified tourist, which makes sense because different selves are the basis for these reflections of the other. There are indications, however, of the type of aspects often concerned when an undesirable touristic other is addressed and characterised, in the data material as well as in Löfgren's terminology. Turistus vulgaris are described as appearing in "*herds, flocks, droves, packs or swarms*" (Ibid.), whereby the mass tourist is clearly associated with this term. These aspects will be explored further here, as they become part of the process of positioning oneself according to the tourist experience in the above categories.

As stated, the aforementioned categories carry different connotations to the interviewees, and the way they are often revealed is in contrast to opposing perceptions, i.e. different approaches to the tourist experience with focus on in-depth and widespread experiencing; adventure is represented by different discursive positions in terms of the degree of adventure or trivialisation used to describe it; novelty is related to familiarity; and atmosphere often entails reasons to go or not go

to a specific destination or engage or not to engage in specific types of tourist experiences.

As such, the other becomes relative to the position that the interviewees take, which is then representing a certain kind of identity that is desirable for a certain type of tourist, as will be addressed further in the next section. However, there are also other, more direct representations of the other entailed in the interviews, which have to do with more arbitrary representations that have come up throughout the interviews. They are related to Löfgren's description of mass tourists above and will be addressed next.

Typically, the interviewees' examples of a touristic other play, as with the categories already mentioned, on contrasts to other tourists that the interviewees may have encountered, and definitely do not want to be identified with. The aspect of other thus becomes very clear in these examples, although they are generally vaguely defined:

> "[…] we have had experiences with people with the same travel agency as us, where they can spend two weeks being upset that the food doesn't taste the way they expected it to: Then go home to the good old-fashioned Danish cuisine! Things like that we really don't like." (Interview 9-Dk, Karin p.29)

The explicit others, in this example as well as the next, are other tourists the interviewees have encountered first hand and consider unacceptable, due to their narrow-mindedness towards the hosting culture. This other is out of order in the eyes of this interviewee, and considered to be insensitive to the local culture, which is perceived as unacceptable behaviour, and thus signals an undesirable other to this interviewee – speaking on behalf of herself and her husband, hence the "we" reference. It is thus logical that this is not someone to be associated with, and thus this couple distances themselves from this kind of cultural perspective by expressing great contempt. What it is exactly that they dislike in these other tourists behaviour is not clearly defined, but it is fair to say that some sort of cultural sensitivity towards the hosting culture, as defined by the interviewee, comes into it, in that there is an underlying assumption of adapting to the hosting culture, and perhaps this aspect is

reinforced by the fact that these other tourists are fellow Danes, which means a greater risk that this couple is associated with this type of cultural insensitivity.

In the next example, the other is more implicit, in that going on a particular type of holiday is assumed by the interviewees to cause certain positions and associations to whom they might be. This might bother them, obviously because they perceive themselves as different from the associations they are expecting, i.e. they do not consider themselves as the typical sun, sea and sand tourist, whatever that may be to them. Therefore, they try to distance themselves from this perception in the interview, although they do go on that type of holiday, being part of the herd, and thus risk being perceived as a specific type of tourist that they may not find desirable.

> "W: I sometimes feel when we tell people, we're off to the Caribbean for a fortnight on an all-inclusive, it can sound like you're just going to eat and drink as much as you want and lie around and do nothing. But well, we don't do it like that, do we?
> M: A little bit.
> W: A little bit of that yeah.
> M: But we wouldn't go and not see something of the country."
> (Interview 6-UK, Will & Mary p.7)

It is expressed here that "*to lie around and do nothing*" is an inappropriate depiction of who these people consider themselves to be, although they express the assumption that it may typically be associated with the type of holiday they are going on. At the same time, it is implied that inactivity during a holiday is a characteristic of a well-known touristic other that exists in the minds of these interviewees. As was the case in the example above with cultural sensitivity, there is here another underlying assumption on part of the tourist's behaviour that one has a certain obligation to see the country or destination that one is visiting, i.e. they act according to a norm that entails a certain level of activity. For this reason, they would not want their peers, or the interviewer, to place them in this category of the other, hence the need to stress that they are not part of this category, regardless of their holiday preferences and what that may communicate to the surroundings. Confirmation of tribe membership is thus sought upheld discursively rather than through behaviour.

Evidently, identity as a social construct is of great importance in this respect, since the portrayal of self is hereby most clearly projected through others. This indicates that the other is needed for the understanding and positioning of self, i.e. if other tourists were not present as a measure of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour, the conception of self would be less evident, which was also established earlier.[136] Moreover, identity as a social construction also indicates that it is a dynamic concept that may change according to the social world by which it is defined, as addressed in previous discussions, e.g. of historical developments and consequent norms.[137] In the above example, Will and Mary may very well be part of a shift in perceptions, the norm one might say, of the typical lazy beach holiday into an undesirable touristic activity, which has not always been perceived as something undesirable, but at this point is by this couple, and certainly by other interviewees as well, although it needs to be stressed that this is not a general characteristic across the whole group of interviewees.

Nevertheless, Hans, in the next example, also speaks of the reason why he and his wife do not like the idea of a package holiday and the guided tours that are often part of that. Although package holidays may be the norm for some people, he is quite clearly trying to separate himself and his wife, i.e. them as a couple, from people that do go on these types of holidays.

> "We like to control our own time, and then we don't have to wait for others to do things, and we know how to do it [on their own]. The target group for these kinds of things is often people who don't know how to do this, and we do. Normally, we can make ourselves understood in the language spoken, and read what needs to be read on a map, so we are not so dependent on others helping us out." (Interview 1-Dk, Hans p.5)

It is quite clear here that this interviewee has a certain perception of people who go on these tours, and why they do, which has to do with their inability to manage on their own in a foreign environment. Because Hans perceives himself quite capable of managing on his own, he tends to find the whole idea a bit irrelevant for him and his wife when they travel, also because they prefer being in charge of their own time and activities. He indicates that the target group for these types of activities is

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[136] See section 4.4.2 Tourism Narratives
[137] See section 3.2 Context and History

characterised by helplessness, travelling in herds, and automatically follow whatever the comfort of a package tour or guided tour presents to them. Therefore, it is also evident that he distances himself from that perception and puts himself in opposition to it, as the educated, knowledgeable tourist, with a mind of his own and the abilities to follow it.

Particularly the male interviewees seem do not want to be perceived as foolish or ignorant, or in any way incapable, and apparently it has little to do with their level of travel experience, or the type of travel experiences that they have, but more with their own perceptions of themselves and who they are. This is also addressed by Elsrud (2001),[138] who suggests that certain features of identity in tourism are inherently masculine, and this may be one of these features. Moreover, there is a possibility that traditional gender roles may still prevail in this generation. A certain male ideal entails being in charge of the family, and thus holidays as well, so the men may in this respect be perceived as having a different role than the women. The following example addresses this idea of being smarter than the average tourist, even with limited travel experience, but by paying attention to what is being said about a specific destination or other – by people who are more experienced than themselves - and thereby gaining an advantage over these average, ignorant tourists:

> "It [a Danish travel guide] is actually very good, because there is no reason to take on all the inconveniences that others have already learnt from, and we might as well learn from that and not make fools of ourselves like everybody else" (Interview 5-Dk, Kjeld p.17)

In this quote, the main concern is to be prepared for what is in store for them at the tourist destination, and coming out on the other side without regrets or having to face other people's perceptions of their experiences, perhaps as a failed or unacceptable holiday in terms of norms that these people set for themselves or others set for them. It is also implied that people who do not use guidebooks risk making fools of themselves, perhaps thereby becoming the undesirable touristic other, as they are not being smart about travelling. Kjeld puts himself in opposition to this foolish tourist, even though he has no experience with a particular destination or other.

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[138] See introduction to chapter 5 Tourist Experiences & Identity Construction

Likewise, Ed expresses similar concerns of being perceived in a certain way, if some level of awareness has not been raised prior to a journey. Although he does state that he and his family do not at this point make a big deal out of more than the necessary practical preparations, the issue of looking like a fool if he is too unprepared is also addressed:

> "[…] in fact we find that it's good to have less and less information about places, because otherwise you get such a strong sense of the place almost before you're there and then you're either disappointed or they are different, and you loose any sense of surprise and that's an important part of it, so actually it's quite good not to know so much, and I think, I don't know whether that has something to do with us or the availability of information, but I think we prefer now not to know so much about the places that we're going to, because of that. Obviously, we wouldn't want to just go somewhere and do something silly and you'd come back and people will go, ohh didn't you go do such and such or didn't you go there, not because it's something you've got to see, but because you've gone all that way, and it would have been worth doing it" (Interview 10-UK, Ed p.7)

So on the one hand, this family prefers not to over prepare, taking away the fun of discovering a new place – another type of positioning as mentioned in Step 1. Perhaps that is just part of having become more experienced travellers, as the interviewee states that he used to prepare a lot for these journeys. Or perhaps this is also part of a desirable identity of not making too big of a deal out of this. On the other hand, Ed does not wish to be a laughing stock for not doing/seeing what one is supposed to do/see under particular circumstances according to a particular set of norms in the surrounding social world.

In this case, Ed seems to want to represent a more compromising characterisation of himself as well as the other, in the sense that the other is represented both by the unprepared, silly tourist, and the overly prepared tourist, who does not get the most out of the experience of a new place. Instead of positioning the other away from himself, he actually takes on part of that identity by stating that he is neither one nor the other, but a bit of both, perhaps as a way of saying that he does not just behave according to the norm, but also sets himself apart from that, although only to the extent that he can still be recognised as part of the norm and not the other, i.e. as a tribe member. It may also be that the norm he abides by is a mix of both positions.

As suggested in step 1, the tourism context entails a number of factors, individual and collective, that will have an impact on the way the tourist experience plays out and subsequently is perceived. It was, however, also suggested that individual circumstances may at times be used as discursive justifications when perceptions of specific touristic behaviour and desirable identity conflict. An example is Hans, who states that package tours are not for him for a number of reasons, but who also states at another point in the interview that he has been on a package tour, when it was the cheapest option, i.e. when individual circumstances such as finances played a role in the choice of holiday. Hans thus implies that it was somewhat out of his control at the time. This may also have to do with the fact that collective influences have set a certain norm in time, which may have been desirable then but are not anymore, and therefore, when looking back, Hans feels the need for justification according to current norms.

In the examples above, it is evident that there are expressed touristic others in the data material, in the sense that various discursive positions are used in relation to specific aspects of the tourist experience to indicate others. It seems that aspects of cultural perspectives, types of holiday and entailed activities, and ability and knowledge may be quite significant in this respect, as they are used as discursive constructs to depict the other and thereby also self. It is conspicuous, however, that there is an implicit undesirable other, even if it is not clearly stated, that all the interviewees relate to in one way or another. One may wonder who that other is, since nobody seems to be that tourist, but everybody seems to have met that tourist, and be fairly capable of positioning oneself around that other tourist.

Obviously, there is a discursive dimension to this, in which almost any type of behaviour can be discursively negotiated and justified, so that the tribe membership previously described[139] is confirmed by the surrounding environment. However, if this is the case, there must also be an agreed upon norm of the tribe through which this negotiation takes place and is constructed to reflect this desirable norm. This implies that a common agreement of both a desirable other, defined through the tribe that

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[139] See section 5.2.2 Personal and Social Experiences

one desires membership of, and an undesirable other exist, which may then be characterised by the above mentioned components.

As such there must therefore also be desirable tribe memberships in tourism, which to a great extent depend on reflections on the undesirable other. Drawing on the previous considerations of market segments,[140] it may thus be possible to present a table of values that represents some of the characteristics of a touristic other among these interviewees, i.e. the thought style in this context, which then contrasts the most desirable touristic self (see Table 9.1):

Table 9.1

Tourist Other	Touristic Self
Cultural insensitivity	Cultural sensitivity
Passivity	Activity
Travelling in herds	Independence
Ignorance/inability	Knowledge/ability

9.2 Tourism Inherent in the Individual

There are several indications in the data material that interviewees tend to have an inherent understanding of who they consider themselves to be as tourists, which is of course also part of who they are not, or do not wish to be. As explained above, various categories are used discursively to construct a certain touristic identity, which entails accumulated tourist experience of various sorts, e.g. having been through various stages positioned in a certain way leading up to a novelty-seeking touristic identity at present, which is the case for Joan.[141] The difference from the above section is that from this angle, the individual itself and how tourism is seen as part of the individual are in focus, as opposed to the other being the main focus and a means to define self. In step 2, the relations between different parts of the interviewees' travel careers were explored, as they have been used to construct a coherent narrative of the self, presenting the perceived self of the present. A contention is thus proposed that these expressed travel careers have become internalised in such a way
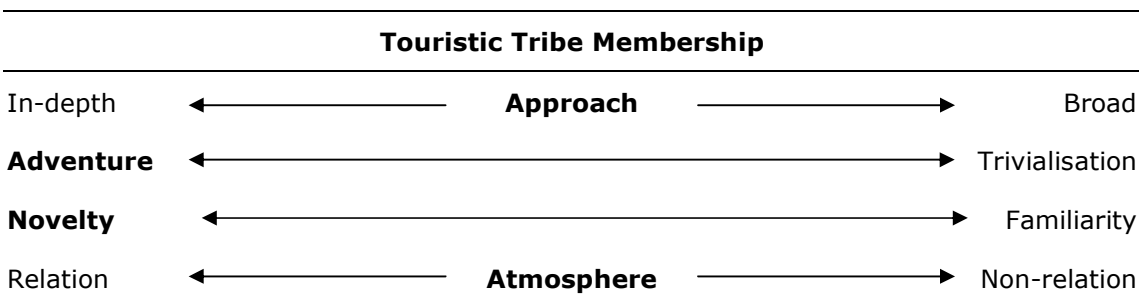
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[140] See section 3.1.1 Mature Consumers as a Segment
[141] See section 8.1.5 Travel Career 5: Joan & David (UK)

that they are part of the individual and the individual's self-perception. It can be said that tourism lies within the individual's frame of reference when it comes to narrating self and constructing identity, which will be explored further throughout this section.

Individual tourists position themselves according to individual perceptions of what is desirable and undesirable in terms of each individual's so-called tribe memberships, which are then based on the above categories of approach, adventure, novelty and atmosphere (see Figure 9.1):

Figure 9.1

Touristic Tribe Membership		
In-depth	**Approach**	Broad
Adventure		Trivialisation
Novelty		Familiarity
Relation	**Atmosphere**	Non-relation

The figure shows that these aspects can take different directions in terms of constructing identity, and moreover that these categories are central to the discursive positionings used to confirm specific tribe memberships. These memberships may thus entail different combinations of the categories.

As mentioned at a previous stage,[142] there is an inherent desire for meaning in life, and one way is through consumption, in that products and services will be used to construct meaning and a sense of continuity in a world that is constantly changing – no one is more aware of that change than the modern consuming tourist. Because the modern world is defined by change, products and services are also instrumental in causing change, as they carry symbolic meanings, according to Belk's contention that possessions are symbolic extensions of the self,[143] and thus products and services become a means to negotiate identity in a constantly changing world, which is also evident in the negotiation of previous tourist experiences to fit into a present identity

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[142] See introduction to chapter 4 Identity, Consumption & Tourism
[143] See section 4.2.1 Symbolic Consumption

or perception thereof. At the same time, products and services may offer a somewhat oppositional sense of continuity, which may also be needed in this changing environment, and which is created through a sense of stability and consistency in products and services. Hence, tourism as part of the individual's understanding of self, i.e. tourism as a way of constructing meaning in life, is significant in this respect, and becomes a way of understanding identity in tourism. Here are a couple of illustrative examples of *who I am,* described as an inherent part of these interviewees' identity:

> "Well, I did a lot of travelling, because I was born in the UK, and we travelled out to Australia, twice in fact, so I always vouched when I was a child that I had been around the world one and a half times, which I had. Because I was raised in Australia, and I had already travelled from Britain to Australia and back again and back again. And the transport in the fifties was plane and ship. And now I remember it all, you know, so it's part of my mythology I guess, so I was born as a traveller." (Interview 9-UK, Mark)

This illustrates the idea that Mark is born a traveller, in other words, it was inevitable for him, and he therefore belongs to a particular type of people who are natural travellers due to circumstances in their lives. Although possibly said with a hint of irony, e.g. by the reference to childhood exaggerations, there may be a grain of truth and meaning in it, reinforced by the statement of this travelling aspect being part of his mythology, i.e. how he came to be the person that he is. Thus, this is positioned as an inherent part of who he is, and moreover, it sets him apart from other people with other mythologies, via a different travel career. This clearly illustrates that travelling and tourism do play a central role in identity construction for this individual, and it also goes back to the very first stages of travelling. He accumulated tourist experience early in life, and these experiences have become part of him. This reflects Belk's statement that "*you are what you have*"[144]; internalised experiences are what you have and thereby what you, the individual tourist, are.

The next example adds to the perspective that tourism may at times be used as an extension of everyday life, in the sense that elements that may be desirable but not obtainable in everyday life are pursued, and accumulated if possible, in a tourism context, e.g. in an attempt to construct meaning when difficulty occurs. Particularly in

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[144] See chapter 1 Introduction for further explanation

a situation where work and everything related to that is not a point of reference for constructing identity anymore, this extension may be relevant,[145] in that non-work experience is accumulated through a slightly different lifestyle. This is the case for Bill, who is a retiree. The consequence of this new reality of a non-working identity seems to be that tourism activities become more personal and instrumental in constructing new identities when a profound change has caused a new perspective in life. The quote below is his answer when asked about why they, Bill and his wife, travel at all, rather than just stay at home:

> "Well, it [why they travel] varies doesn't it, over the years, like it's a lot different when you're employed and you're working to when you're retired, and it's a lot different when you're younger to you're middle aged to our age [in their early 60s], so you can only answer it now I suppose in terms of where we are, how old we are and our stage in life by being both retired, so what we do becomes a personal thing […].I think one of the most important things in life to us is climate, so therefore, winters are awful, as you, you know, get more leisure time, so you can enjoy yourself more outdoors, and therefore in summer time, spring time, you can fully take advantage of that, and in winter for quite a long period you're sort of very limited in what you can do, so I think we agree that to get away now on a holiday in the winter to a warmer climate extends our lifestyle, continues our lifestyle, doesn't it" (Interview 1-UK, Bill p.19)

The main aspect to notice is the last few comments on the fact that Bill sees holidays as an extension of their life at home, because he and his wife now have the time for more holidays as both are retired, and because the climate at the places they tend to go to offers more possibilities for certain outdoor activities that they enjoy. Their accumulated tourist experience is thus instrumental in providing certain desires for specific tourist experiences. Bill also states that what they do becomes a personal matter, indicating that the choices they make become a reflection of who they are at this stage of their lives, i.e. in the present. Tourism activities reflect part of them, due to the contention that consumption carries symbolic meaning for the consumer.

A slightly different perspective on tourism as an inherent part of the individual is provided in the following example, in which activities related to the way this interviewee approaches his holidays are recognised by his peers, and thereby

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[145] See section 4.4.3 Tourism as Transition

contribute to his identity. The discussion prior to this quote has to do with his extensive planning of holidays, which he is very open about and to some extent proud of and portrays as a desirable identity, even by mentioning this aspect of his personal relations:

> "I can almost publish a guidebook or something afterwards, and I have also done that. Friends and other people that I know subscribe to my guidelines afterwards, so they get it right there on a silver platter. I'm actually going to make a set of notes tonight for Mallorca, for that Spanish friend we have. So yes, we do spend a lot of time on that." (Interview 1-DK, Hans p.19)

It is thus evident that this interviewee is almost notorious for his meticulous planning for holidays, even to the extent that other people use his planning and thus benefit from his accumulated tourist experience. Hans seems quite happy to provide this service, assumedly because this is a desirable identity for him, i.e. being a meticulous planner, knowledgeable of particular tourist destinations etc., which his peers and Hans himself seem to agree upon. It thus seems that an activity that initially served a particular touristic purpose for Hans and his wife has now become a means to identity construction in that this planning identity is now part of Hans' identity to himself and his peers. He has accumulated a certain level of tourist experience, which his peers, i.e. his fellow tribe members if you like, also acknowledge.

The self-conception approach described earlier[146] suggests that not only does this individual behave they way he does, because of who he is, because of a self-conception of a valuable quality in being a meticulous planner, but the reinforcement in the surroundings, by his peers, or fellow tribe members, will enhance this aspect of his identity in his behaviour, because he will attempt to safeguard this valuable aspect of self, which is here being communicated through tourism behaviour. Thus, the social construction of identity is enhanced by this contention of a self-conception approach, and it is evident that the individual himself as well as his social surroundings, e.g. the tribe, have an impact on the construction of identity in this respect.

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[146] See section 4.2.1 Symbolic Consumption

Similarly, the quote below indicates that certain identities are ascribed on the basis of tourist experiences. Again the notion of consumption carries inferred meanings of the consumer, here the tourist, engaging in specific types of tourism activities - and at the same time a reference group may be formed between individuals on the basis of these ascribed identities. The issue in this quote is sharing experiences with others, and the interviewee is asked about whether she talks to other people about her travel experiences:

> "Yes, usually with others that travel as well. […] Vita who lives over there [the house across the street], she used to work where I work, they [other colleagues] were so sick of us, because we always talked about travelling. She actually travels more than we do, and we couldn't stop talking about it. The others didn't want to hear about it. You have been everywhere, they'd say, we don't want to hear it" (Interview 6-DK, Rita p.37)

In this case, a type of reference group is formed between these two experienced travellers, based on their accumulated tourist experience, and thus their shared identities, i.e. tribe membership, as opposed to the rest of their colleagues, who are apparently less experienced travellers. Apparently the colleagues ascribe Rita a particular identity of an experienced, enthusiastic traveller, speaking of these experiences all the time, and thus it becomes part of who she is to her colleagues, and to herself as part of this small group of experienced travellers in her working environment. Group or tribe membership based on tourism thus comes into play in this situation as one of the characteristics that define Rita. In the social situation of casual conversation, as described in the example, this membership tends to come to the forefront of who she is by her own self-conception and to her work colleagues, i.e. her social surroundings.

It is thus evident that meaning in terms of understanding who one is, is sought explored and constructed through tourism, accumulated tourist experience, and related discourse, in the shape of internal as well as external communication and subsequent confirmation by fellow tribe members. It moreover seems that a certain level of continuity is obtained through this confirmation, although change is a factor that needs to be taken into consideration as well, and perhaps for that exact reason,

certain discursive justifications are used to construct identity that concurs with the present self-perceptions.

9.3 Tourism as a Means to Desired Identity

The role of specific tourist experiences as well as accumulated tourist experience for perceptions of the other and reversely to perceptions of self has now been addressed, but there is a third perspective, which has to do with a desired self created through tourism and pointing out future directions for tourism activities for these interviewees. Inevitably, an element of dreaming and escape from everyday life becomes part of this discussion of tourism and its inherent meanings, and throughout the interviews, the idea of changing a certain state of being is brought up several times as part of the tourist experiences addressed. Also, the fact that new meanings may emerge from a changed social world may require changes or negotiations of existing identities. Therefore, it seems that at times, tourism may be a facilitator of identity construction or negotiation, i.e. a means to change an existing identity into something more desirable, as tourism may inspire or encourage specific identities. This is not to say that this is an entirely conscious choice, and more often than not, identity is most likely an unconscious factor of behaviour and discourse. Because of this, such desired identities are assumed to be found in less explicit forms than perhaps other aspects of identity construction. Examples of such desired identities will be explored throughout this section.

The first example is a couple discussing how holidays might be in the future for them, and how they would like them to be once they have both retired and thus get more time for travelling. The element of identity is not explicitly addressed, but there are certainly expressed desires for a change in terms of tourism and how that fits in with the life that they lead:

> "W: […] I have this sort of vision of the Greyhound bus and touring America. Going there, starting off in one city, very much living out of the suitcase, and moving when you're ready, or that sort of thing.
> M: Or even going perhaps in January to some of the places that are a little bit warmer and staying for a month. Perhaps not quite doing what we would normally do when we're on holiday. If we're self catering we go out every night, we just cater for breakfast and lunch, but we would actually

perhaps … because we like going in the local shops and buy local products, we would probably do that so just sort of live abroad for a while […].
W: I think when Mary has got more time, I mean when you finish work, the sooner the better for both of us really, I think we will be spending most of our time travelling or going on holidays if you like. I don't think we'll be stuck at home, we'll find ways of going places, because you know it's a big world out there so there's a lot to see." (Interview 6-UK, Will & Mary p.13-15)

The change that Will and Mary are talking about mainly has to do with the way they would like to travel, when there is more time for it. They would like to take longer, more extensive trips to some parts of the world they have yet not been. Will mentions America, but also some more familiar places where they can blend right in with the locals, as Mary implies by the reference to warmer places, as they have addressed earlier on in the interview. It almost seems as if this couple wants to take on another way of living once they get the chance, and thereby it is also indicated that they will take on a different identity as travellers, which is suggested for example by Will's comment that they will probably be spending most of their time travelling. A desirable identity that is at the moment out of reach for Mary and Will due to practical circumstances is addressed, but nevertheless, it becomes part of their identity construction, since this is a way to express what they really would like, i.e. who they really would like to be, if it was ever an actual possibility. In other words, they position themselves as extensive travellers based on what they would like to do, and not what they have already done. As touched upon previously, justification also seems to come into this example, since reasons for not living the way they would really like to, i.e. being exactly who they would like to be, are rationalised through practical, individual circumstances that they have to oblige to.

From a slightly different perspective, Hanne in the next example states that she has already changed into something she finds more desirable, in that she is no longer the same kind of traveller that she once was. She addresses the issue of guided tours, and her view on that in the past as opposed to now:

"Yes, I used to do that too [go on guided tours], but that has sort of passed, because now I have tried a lot of things, so now I might as well do things on my own and handle everything by myself, and I actually tend to

think that it's a bit more exciting to try to figure things out, instead of just tagging along …" (Interview 11-DK, Hanne p.7)

It is thus clear that Hanne has now detached herself from that group of people that she was once part of, i.e. the inexperienced tourists who do not know how to manage on their own, and moved into a different group of more accomplished, skilled individuals who can manage travelling by themselves. In addition, Hanne implies that not only is she now a different type of tourist, but also more excited about her tourist experiences. This way of travelling that she has discovered in time is therefore perhaps closer to who she really perceives herself to be, or perhaps desires to be.

This change in perception reflects the idea that past experiences may influence future choices, but also the fact that this might be related to identity construction and a form of negotiated identity. As suggested in step 2, various perspectives evident through the discursive constructs of the travel career suggest that tourism, and tourist experiences in particular, may be instrumental in constructing and changing identity to fit into the changes that are taking place within the individual as well as in the surrounding social world. These narratives of the coherent travel careers are being used to create a sense of continuity.

By the same token, Joan is concerned with being part of a particular group or tribe, in her case a very specific, defined group of peers, i.e. her work colleagues, who have a significant influence on her and her holidays. She gives several indications throughout the interview of her trying to accommodate the criteria expressed by this group during the planning process of her holidays with her partner.[147]

"Well, yeah I wouldn't, because I guess, I am a bit of a snob when it comes to that. I want to make sure that it's quite nice. You don't want to get there and find it is 2 star. We, all the girls at work, go for 3 star or above. That's important, we won't go below." (Interview 4-UK, Joan p.20)

The norm of this particular group has to do with a certain standard of quality that Joan is also trying to apply to her holidays in order to be part of that group. She probably already perceives herself as part of the group, but to remain so, she needs

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[147] See section 7.1.1 Individual Circumstances

to confirm her membership through particular behavioural features attached to this group, here reinforced at a discursive level. Joan definitely desires to become or remain part of this particular group of peers, and by expressing these types of relationships to the group, identity construction is reinforced.

Likewise, Susan expresses a desire to be perceived a certain way, perhaps as a member of a certain group, although she takes the position that perhaps she is just fooling herself, as she probably really is not very different from those tourists that she really does not want to be associated with. She makes the following characterisation of a tourist and then comments on her own behaviour.

> "I hate to think I was a tourist, because I always think about tourists as having cameras around their neck, shorts on, socks in sandals and going around with others tourists, taking photographs. But I guess I'm of the same token, I do exactly the same. I've been to these places and have taken photographs, but of different things really." (Interview 11-UK, Susan p.14)

Susan's point is that she really does not want to be seen as a tourist, because of some negative perceptions of what that is, but she acknowledges that she may be very similar to those tourists, even if she wishes to be something else, i.e. she explicitly expresses a desired identity. This indicates that the desirable identity is not that of a typical tourist, as Susan has described. This seems to have a lot to do with the connotations that the term of a tourist carry, as briefly mentioned before, and the fact that this has become a negative term at some point, rather than with the actual behaviour that comes with it. This is obviously a very distinct discursive position taken to construct identity, much more than an actual behavioural feature that comes with the tourist label. It may also be a consequence of the increasing variation in "ordinary" people's touristic behaviour, which means that the masses are no longer entirely homogenous, but tend to do all kinds of things, and may therefore be more difficult to identify. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the negative connotations still exist for some people.

Hereby, a few select examples have been provided to illustrate how tourism may be used as a means to obtain certain desirable identities by way of discursive positions in

relation to tourism, and how this is perceived by the interviewees. It seems that discourse of tourism can be a great facilitator in constructing or negotiating identity, perhaps desirable identities in particular.

9.4 Chapter Summary

The above analyses illustrate the main aspects of identity construction among the interviewees, as the aspects have been expressed in the interviews. The three main categories of the undesirable other, tourism as an inherent part of the individual, and tourism as a means to desired identity have been explored through theory when relevant, through previous steps of analysis, and through supporting examples from the data material.

It has become evident that a touristic other is at play and that it is a significant factor for identity construction, in the sense that various discursive positions such as aspects of cultural sensitivity, types of holiday and entailed activities, i.e. mass tourism or independent holidays, and ability and knowledge are used in relation to specific aspects of the tourist experience to indicate others. In addition, there is an implicit undesirable other that all the interviewees relate to, but no explicit consensus about what the other is, which makes sense because this is a collective reflection of the other, and not opposed to the individual self.

Understanding who one is as part of the tourist experience has also been explored, and expressions of tourism as internal as well as external communication and subsequent confirmation seem to be used in various ways. Although change is a defining factor in contemporary society, a sense of continuity is obtained through this confirmation of identity that discursive justifications are also used for.

The last section, tourism as a means to desired identity, addressed how tourism may be used as a means to obtain desirable identities by way of discursive positions in relation to tourism. It was also shown that a discourse of tourism can be a great facilitator in constructing or negotiating identity, perhaps desirable identities in particular.

Analyses in previous chapters resulted in various perspectives on identity construction as an element of tourism and inherent tourist experiences. In Step 1 of this analysis, implications of the tourist experience were addressed, and this entailed explorations of the tourism context, the tourist experience and outcome, as these were addressed in the interviews and subsequently related to theory of the tourist experience. The way in which Step 1 plays a role to identity construction, the main focus of this chapter, is as a means to understanding issues around the tourist experience in a more profound way, and thereby understand how this may contribute to identity construction.

The most central aspects of Step 1 in this respect are the various positions taken in relation to the tourist experience, i.e. the approach to the tourist experience, adventure, novelty and atmosphere, which all add to the overall identity construction, since all positions reflect the identity of the individual tourist. Step 2 of the analysis concerns aspects of related tourist experiences, and a coherently constructed travel career that points the interviewees in different directions in terms of identity, i.e. in terms of the meanings the interviewees apply to the different experiences when looking back and reflecting on past experiences.

It is thus evident that tourism is used to construct identity in a number of ways. It is also evident that it is used to negotiate identity, perhaps in a tourism perspective and perhaps in the light of changes or situations in everyday life, and to gain status by separating oneself from the undesirable tourists. Therefore, it is assumed that "who I am" and in particular "who I am not" plays an extremely central role in constructing identity through tourist experiences and the related discourse.

10. Conclusion

The primary aim of this study has been to explore tourist experience accumulated throughout an individual's travel career, and how this is instrumental in constructing identity. This aim contains the following explorations 1) How is the tourist experience characterized by members of the best-ager segment? 2) How is the travel career used discursively to construct a narrative of identity at present? And 3) Are the tourist experiences accumulated decisive for the identity constructed, and if so, in which ways? These explorations rely on a number of theoretical perspectives applied to inform the analysis of the empirical data, which underlines the fact that various parts of the study interact and support the conclusions. Therefore, these parts need to be included here, but first the methodology needs to be established.

The methodological standpoint applied to this study relies on a hermeneutic process which has shaped the study at several levels. An empirical base has been chosen for the exploration of the research questions, and this has been related to theory at various points throughout the process. A cross-cultural dimension has been added to open up for a broad conclusion rather than specific case conclusions. Danish and English tourists are chosen as this study's empirical base, due to compatibility at a certain level, and also due to a practical issue of language on behalf of the interviewer. 25 Qualitative interviews in the two countries were thus conducted addressing the interviewees' travel careers, different experiences within these travel careers, and identity construction.

Furthermore, the best-ager segment has been chosen for this study, firstly because of an underlying assumption that members of the current best-ager generation have had opportunities to travel throughout most of their lives. Secondly, this segment is to some degree characterised by flexible, individualised behaviour, and thirdly, a rather significant characteristic of this segment of tourists is often characterised as being relatively resourceful in many respects, e.g. in terms of stable economic situations, high cultural capital, and solid job situations. The methodological considerations for this study are hereby established, and the further theoretical perspectives will be addressed.

10.1 Theoretical Perspectives of Exploring Identity and Tourism

The starting point for these explorations rests on various circumstances surrounding the tourist in contemporary society, which affect the way tourism is ascribed meaning for the individual tourist. The fact that the reality in which people of today exist is highly complex and changeable has given tourism less specific purposes, in fact multiple purposes may coexist, and its meaningfulness has escalated and taken on a increasingly important symbolic form that is fundamental to this study.

Developments in consumer society have influenced contemporary society in such a way that consumption has become a significant means to social change in a continually changing reality. Consumption offers stability and continuity as well as a possibility for negotiating or readjusting identity according to social changes. Tourism is modern day consumption and as such a means to display identity, which is a crucial element of the constant negotiation of identity that takes place in the ongoing narratives of the self entailed in tourism. These narratives are focused on accumulated tourist experiences as a way of positioning self and other. The experiences are positioned at several stages of the tourist's life and the circumstances of those stages, whereby the travel career becomes a central concept of this study. Its most important features are the relations between various tourist experiences that make up a pattern that may be connected narratively to construct identity. This means that the different parts entailed in the travel career make up a whole which expresses the identity that the tourist desires.

Identity and tourism are thus linked via consumption, and a combination of consumer research focused on constructing meaning through consumption, and consumption studies focused on the consumer's relations to others, is applied, thus including issues of both an individual and a collective nature in the framework.

Symbolic consumption is a perspective applied to understand consumer behaviour, in which consumption of symbols becomes a means to self-enhancement. Since tourism is perceived above all as a counter-reaction to the fundamental condition of inauthenticity in modern society, the consumption of tourism becomes a symbolic search for self, although in some cases more explicit than others. A well-known aspect of encountering the other is incorporated into tourism, which has a consequence of

also encountering self, which places identity at the very core of tourism. The fact that identity in contemporary society indicates both difference and sameness plays a central role, because the inescapable narratives formed to describe tourist experiences draw on these conflicting perspectives, and as these narratives become stories of the self that need to be maintained, they may reveal implicit meanings of tourism to the individual tourist. The tourist then becomes a central means to explore identity in a tourism context, as narratives of tourist experiences are conveyed and made coherent to construct identity, i.e. in the understanding of self and other as perceived and narrated by the tourist.

In particular, the travel career becomes an expression of identity, because it is used to create a desirable position for oneself in opposition to the other. Discourse is more important than actual behaviour to identity construction in the present. Identity is thus perceived as a social construction throughout this study, because social interaction is perceived as highly influential in shaping identity in the context of tourism. Social identity theory has been applied to the study, because it includes both individual and collective elements, and thereby recognises that identity construction entails conflicting lines of thinking. Group membership also entails conflicting ideas of inclusion as well as exclusion, which adds to its complexity. It is thus assumed that several identities coexist and are flexible, and in order to obtain stability in this otherwise unstable and paradoxical context, self-perceptions may need confirmation.

The tourist experience is at the core of tourism, and identity seeking is inevitable in tourism because of the immediate presence of the other. The concept of the tourist experience is therefore used to address identity in tourism. The tourist experience has been established as a complex concept, and the internalisation of the tourist experience whereby it becomes part of the tourist's identity is important to notice. So is the fact that individual identity is related to the context in which the individual exists. This means that there are individual as well as collective elements in the tourist experience, just as there is in identity construction. Two notions of the concept 'tourist experience' have been suggested: A) single tourist experiences, and B) accumulated tourist experience. The travel career entails both notions, as they both contribute to the construction of tourist experiences that are eventually used to construct identity.

A consumer perspective of the tourist experience has been presented, and particularly Mossberg's (2003), idea of a time/space dimension has been applied, because the study as a whole builds on an assumption that before, during and after play a central role to the tourist experiences and how they are perceived and used by the individual tourist to construct identity. Memory plays a role in this time/space dimension in the sense that what is remembered and how it is remembered affects the way it is perceived to contribute positively or negatively to a desired identity, and therefore how it affects the next phase.

The social worlds of everyday life and tourism are interdependent, as the normality of one does not exist without the abnormality of the other. Re-creating one's self through tourism has been addressed, because normality is abandoned when the individual engages in tourism activities, thereby opening up for new interpretations of self. Tourist experiences therefore exist in a system of contrasts between individual/collective, past/future, and ordinary/extraordinary.

The tourist experience is linked to the travel career in that it is applied to the study as a structure for accumulated tourist experience (notion B) based on single tourist experiences (notion A). The travel career thus becomes a point of reference for exploring a series of tourist experiences in the individual's life. The travel career offers endless possibilities for constructing identity, in that the narratives of these tourist experiences can be discursively constructed to support a desirable identity in the present. The tourist experiences entailed in the travel career may thus become a significant part of who one is perceived to be and desires to be, and as such they form the basis for the discursive positions that construct the self in a desirable way.

The combination of the theoretical perspectives of tourism, consumption and identity has formed the theoretical foundation for this study, and has thereby functioned as a frame of reference for the analysis. The application of this theoretical frame is thus an attempt to create a holistic picture of the aspects entailed in, and their possible impact on, the construction of identity in tourism. The framework thus entails a broad spectre of theories that are not obviously combined in an extensive empirical study such as this one, wherefore the study is explorative in this sense. This means that the

explorative nature of the study has been highly prioritised as have the empirical findings in terms of choosing the theoretical foundation.

10.2 Empirical Findings of a Tourist Experience Framework

The basis for the study is first and foremost the empirical data, i.e. qualitative interviews, and this data have pointed out directions to take in the analysis, divided into three steps, each with a specific focus, i.e. the single tourist experience, accumulated tourist experience and identity construction, which relate to each of the sub-questions posed in the research questions. As the hermeneutic process suggests, theory has informed these data through an iterative process, and on this basis several findings can be presented, which will thus assist the answers to the proposed research questions.

Step 1 of the analysis addresses three main themes brought up by the interviewees: the tourism context, the tourist experience and outcome, each of which entails various aspects. This step is used to present the empirical data as well as broad tendencies across the different interviews. In relation to the tourism context, some general tendencies can be presented: valuable and meaningful tourist experiences seem to be obtained almost no matter what. This indicates that notion A, single tourist experiences, dependent on individual circumstances such as time or finances, but various types of notion A experiences may be processed into similar accumulated tourist experience, notion B, depending on contextual circumstances. Another tendency is that a balance exists between people's wants, their behaviour, and the outcome of this. This may be explained by discursive justification, which helps position the interviewees in a desirable position in terms of a desirable identity. On a collective level, experience is also accumulated, for example due to changed economic and technological opportunities that have changed the norms of holidays, and these interviewees are very much aware of this change.

Approach, adventure, novelty, and atmosphere are the four main categories that the interviewees position themselves according to when the tourist experience is addressed. The interviewees seem to orient themselves discursively towards either 1) experiencing as many things as possible, or 2) few things in-depth. This entails

different perceptions of the tourist experience, i.e. as a number of notion A, single tourist experiences, or one experience in-depth. Adventure is used as a discursive construct, e.g. by relatively inexperienced travellers emphasising the great adventure in almost any kind of single tourist experience, and highly experienced travellers trivialising quite extraordinary experiences in order to confirm identity as experienced travellers to whom this is not extraordinary. Novelty and familiarity are often used in combination as well, mostly in reference to culture or place, and often the interviewees lean towards one more than the other, although quite often a desire for both seems most appealing. Atmosphere concerns issues like nostalgia, which may be addressed directly and actively through relations to a specific place and choices to go there because of that. It may also consist in an indirect, passive relation to feelings of past experiences that are no longer relevant to the individual, and as such do not encourage action, but quite contrarily may cause a heightened awareness of the fact that it is the past, wherefore it would never occur to the tourist to act on it.

Outcome includes the fact that tourist experiences are found to facilitate togetherness to a great extent, and memories of togetherness seem to be additions to everyday life relationships. Another outcome of touristic activities is a sense of being recharged. These outcomes are thus processed through the before, during and after dimensions, in the sense that e.g. memories are created by going through these three stages. Togetherness may be desired *before*, obtained *during*, but spills over into *after* as it becomes a memory. Recharging relies on a *before* that inspires recharging, a *during*, which actually provides the recharging through various activities, and an *after* where recharging is obtained.

The before, during and after dimensions are fluid, since the single tourist experience is not a defined point in time, and since notion A and B are instant and long-lasting at the same time. *Before*, *during* and *after* are therefore all brought up throughout these themes at various stages. A complex picture thus emerges, in which all of these aspects seem to interconnect at various levels, and thereby before, during and after are fluctuating stages that relate to both notions of the tourist experience throughout the empirical themes raised in the interviews.

It is thus evident that the research question relating to the best-agers' characterisation of the tourist experience is not simply answered. However, it is best explained by reference to categories used by the interviewees as discursive positions on approach, adventure, novelty and atmosphere, and additional categories that are used at times to support these related to the tourism context, i.e. individual and collective circumstances, and outcome, i.e. memories and togetherness and recharging. The ways these are being used is by taking a position that relates to any of these categories when discursively addressing the tourist experience, whereby identity construction appears through this type of characterisation of the tourist experience.

Step 2 of the analysis is an in-depth exploration of the travel career, which focuses on accumulated tourist experience in five selected interviews - as opposed to the analysis made across all the interviews in step 1. Thereby, this second step adds to the understanding of the accumulation of tourist experience that precedes the identity that is constructed at present. As this is the second step of the analysis, it builds on the findings of step 1, and on this basis, certain profiles of the interviewees can be drawn, which entail the findings of step 1. Travel units have been developed via the interviews to describe a specific period in the life of an interviewee and the circumstances around travelling at that specific time, based on their travel partners. The interviewee profiles are based on the exploration of the travel career patterns made up of different travel units, indicating how the selected interviewees relate to the categories of step 1 in constructing identity in the present.

The main differences between the interviewees are between the couples sharing a large part of their travel careers, and the singles and the couple with mostly separate travel careers. An in-depth approach is taken by the first mentioned couples, and the rest tend to express widespread experiencing. Concerning levels of accumulated tourist experience, the categories in focus are relative to level of experience, e.g. in the case of novelty, where the level of experience defines ordinary and extraordinary.

Hereby, question 2 has been addressed, and the result is that various discursive positions are used to explain different stages of the travel career that the individual tourist may distance him- or herself from or use to express identity. Either way, it is

used to confirm present identity. Moreover, discourse plays a major role in constructing the travel career, regardless of the actual notion A experiences. In other words, discourse seems to overrule the tourist experience in the sense that discursive justification is used when actual, expressed tourist experiences may not correspond to the desired identity.

Step 3 addresses the core issue of identity construction. The preceding analyses have illustrated the aspects that are perceived to affect identity construction, as they have been expressed in the interviews. The undesirable other, tourism as an inherent part of the individual, and tourism as a means to desired identity are the remaining themes to address, as they are directly linked to the three steps of this analysis. In Step 3, these themes have been explored through theory, previous steps of analysis, and supporting examples from the data material.

A touristic other is at play and this is evident in various discursive positions taken on issues such as cultural sensitivity, types of holiday and entailed activities, and ability and knowledge, used to indicate others. There is thus an implicit undesirable other that all the interviewees relate to by using these issues. Tourism is expressed to be an internal as well as an external construct, but confirmation obtained through others seems to be used also for internal confirmation. Also a sense of internal continuity is obtained through this confirmation of identity that discursive justifications are also used for at an external level, supporting the contention that these levels are interdependent. Tourism as a means to desired identity addresses the discursive positions used in tourism to construct a desired identity. Discourse in tourism was found to facilitate construction and/or negotiation of identity – desirable identities in particular.

It is evident that tourism is used for negotiating identity, perhaps most obviously as a result of changes in everyday life, and for the purpose of gaining or maintaining a desirable identity by separating oneself from undesirable touristic others. Therefore, "who I am" and certainly "who I am not" are crucial for identity construction via tourist experiences, because related discourse is focused on this particular distinction.

Therefore, the answer to the third question is that the single tourist experience is decisive for the identity constructed in a fairly limited way, because self and others are defined by each individual tourist, and as such, self and others are not dependent on the tourist experience but on the positions taken by the individual towards these touristic selves and others. However, on a collective level the perception of others' accumulated tourist experiences may very well be quite decisive in the identity they are ascribed, and thereby it is evident that both individual and collective factors play a role to the identity that is constructed.

This study's overall aim of exploring how accumulated tourist experience is instrumental in constructing identity has thus been fulfilled by the results reached through the three step analysis. The results suggest that accumulated tourist experience relies on discursive positions of the tourist experience according to specific categories pointed out by the interviewees to express themselves as opposed to others. Furthermore, the actual accumulation of experience is expressed through narratives of the travel career, which presents discursive positions that support the desired identity of the present. Lastly, the single tourist experience is decisive for the identity constructed from a collective point of view more than from an individual point of view.

The application of this study to two different cultural contexts was meant to broaden the scope of the study in terms of exploring touristic identity construction in a generic sense, instead of making it case specific, e.g. by merely exploring identity construction among Danish tourists. The results of this have been that similarities are more evident than the differences, wherefore distinctions between the two groups of interviewees have been minimal. On that note it is noticeable that similarities prevail to such a great extent, which suggests that the tendencies found here might be universal, although the determination of this would require further explorations.

10.3 Final Remarks

The future perspectives of these findings are multiple. The scope and relevance of this study is therefore perceived to be widespread in terms of its possible uses in various contexts, which was also the initial purpose. First and foremost, the study is a piece of

tourism research, so its primary uses are obviously to be found within a tourism context. From an academic point of view, the study is related to the fundamental question of why people become tourists, which there are direct indications of throughout the analysis. For example the contention that tourism is by definition desirable and positive – in the discursive positions found – could suggest that the shift in tourism consumption from luxury to necessity is linked to the fact that the holiday is perceived as a useful means to maintain relations to other people with whom people travel, and thereby obtain positive relationships through positive holiday experiences.

Moreover, additions to the academic discussion of identity in tourism are made through the extensive empirical material on which this study is based, and this may possibly be expanded through further studies relating identity constructed through the consumption of tourism to identity constructed through other types of consumption.

The methodological framework that is used, which explores new ways of generating knowledge within this field, i.e. using the travel career as a central frame of reference, may also contribute to or inspire further studies. For example, the link between discourse and behaviour through additional studies of field observations could be an additional dimension to this study and the methods applied. Some of these perspectives may also be relevant to other academic fields, e.g. consumer studies in terms of understanding changes in behaviour over time.

From a practical point of view, its findings are perceived most valuable in a consumer and marketing context in that it offers knowledge of the tourism consumer from the tourist's own perspective. This is also most obviously applied to tourism marketing, in which knowledge of tourist perceptions, attitudes and desires are highly relevant for being successful, in particular in situations where behaviour and identity positions are highly separated, hence behaviour in itself does not reveal the tourist's perspective, which is essential in terms of appealing to these tourists. Specifically for tourist destinations, attractions etc., an understanding of the tourist's perspective needs to be established in order to attract tourists, and understanding the tourist's attachment to or detachment from a specific destination is valuable in a highly competitive market, where things are rapidly changing.

Evidently, pursuing a broad spectre of aspects entailed in identity construction and tourism opens up for numerous possibilities for further exploration. As the aim has been to make holistic interpretations, including a range of relevant factors rather than focus on a few isolated factors, there are several options for further investigation. The one that has appeared several times throughout the course of the study is the application of this type of study to other segments of tourists, which could determine several aspects of identity construction in terms of age and historical context. Also, a study concerning the developments over several stages for the same tourists, could give interesting perspectives to the results of this study. In addition, an in-depth intercultural analysis might add new perspectives to the findings of this study, as previously mentioned.

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Dansk Resumé

Dette studie tager udgangspunkt i turisme som en integreret del af livet i det samfund vi i dag lever i. Den verden turisten lever i er yderst kompliceret, hvilket komplicerer den opgave turismeindustrien står over for i forsøget på at imødekomme øgede forventninger til specifikke turismeprodukter og -services der tilfredsstiller mange forskellige ønsker og behov, hvilke tilsyneladende fortsat øges. I den akademiske verden foregår der lignende diskussioner i forbindelse med et mere fundamentalt spørgsmål rettet mod at forstå, hvorfor folk overhovedet rejser.

Formålet med turisme er ikke længere så ligetil som det var en gang, og turisme er blevet tildelt en mere ophøjet status, idet flere meningsfulde elementer af livet er berørt af forbruget af turisme. Samtidig antyder den individualisme der præger nutidens samfund, at forbrugerne i højere grad fokuserer på unikke muligheder og måder hvorpå man kan adskille sig fra masserne. Man ønsker i virkeligheden at skille sig ud fra tydeligt definerede målgrupper, hvilket er det turismeindustrien søger. Der kan dog argumenteres for, at der eksisterer et udbredt behov for at efterleve visse definerede normer, hvilket trækker i en mere kollektiv retning hvad angår forbrugeres valg og adfærd. Dette indikerer at både individuelle og kollektive mekanismer påvirker forbrugeradfærd.

Narrativer spiller en central rolle i dette studie, idet turisme indeholder et naturligt behov for kommunikation. På grund af det massive udbud af turistoplevelser i nutidens samfund opstår der et diskursivt behov, der engagerer turister i forskellige konversationer med det formål at udtrykke udlevede turistoplevelser. På grund af dette behov kan diskurs og specifikke turistiske narrativer give et indblik i turismens betydning for den enkelte turist. Denne meningsfulde diskurs bliver undersøgt gennem dette studie.

Turisten er et centralt fokus i et studie af turisters oplevelser. Belks udsagn *"we are what we have"* (1988:139) antyder, at vores turistoplevelser bliver en del af hvem vi er, fordi vi har dem med os. Desforges (2000) foreslår, at meningsfulde turistoplevelser er fortællinger som skal vedligeholdes diskursivt for at bekræfte ens identitet. Som en konsekvens deraf vil det være af stor værdi at undersøge

turismeforbrug som en måde at udtrykke og fastholde en fornemmelse af *hvad vi har* og derfor *hvem vi er.*

De turismeoplevelser som folk har samlet over tid og som de dermed *har,* er grundlaget for den såkaldte rejsekarriere, og den er et centralt element i denne undersøgelse, da det indeholder forhandlingen af identitet gennem flere faser af turismeforbrug. Det er en grundlæggende antagelse, at ens rejsekarriere er en refleksion af individets valg baseret på udfaldet af diverse påvirkninger, f.eks. historiske og sociale omstændigheder, inklusiv ændrede livsbaner, ændrede behov, forudgående rejseoplevelser osv.

Det vigtigste element er at undersøge hvilken rolle turismeoplevelser spiller i identitetskonstruktion. Målet er at meningsgive turismeoplevelser på en sådan måde, at det er muligt at få en dybere forståelse for, hvordan turisme assisterer den moderne forbruger i en forståelse af sig selv og den omkringliggende verden. Studiet har også til formål at bidrage til forskningen indenfor turisme der kombinerer turisme, forbrug og identitet på en unik måde. Baseret på disse overvejelser, er følgende problemformulering blevet udfærdiget og fungerer som fokus for dette studie.

Hvordan er rejsekarrieren, som et udtryk for akkumuleret turismemæssig erfaring igennem individets liv, instrumentel for identitetskonstruktion?

1. Hvordan karakteriseres en turismeoplevelse af medlemmer af best-ager segmentet?
2. Hvordan bruges rejsekarrieren diskursivt til at konstruere et narrativ om identitet i nutiden?
3. Er de akkumulerede turismeoplevelser bestemmende for den identitet der konstrueres, og i så fald, på hvilke måder?

Best-ager segmentet er valgt til dette studie først og fremmest på grund af en grundlæggende antagelse om, at medlemmer af den nuværende best-ager generation har haft mulighed for at rejse gennem størstedelen af deres liv. For det andet er dette segment i nogen grad karakteriseret af fleksibel, individualiseret opførsel, og for det tredje er et ret vigtigt kendetegn ved dette segment af turister, at de på mange

områder bliver karakteriseret som relativt ressourcestærke, f.eks. er de økonomisk stabile, har høj kulturel kapital og høj jobsikkerhed. Selvom dette muligvis kun er tilfældet for nogle, er det formentligt en vigtig faktor i en turismesammenhæng, fordi det at rejse er en mulighed og måske endda en primær interesse for denne gruppe af flere årsager, f.eks. fordi de har oplevet ændrede muligheder.

Et empirisk fundament er valgt til at udforske problemformuleringen. En tvær-kulturel dimension er blevet tilføjet for at åbne op for en bredere konklusion frem for specifikke case konklusioner. Danske og engelske turister er valgt ud som studiets empiriske fundament, på grund af en vis sammenlignelighed og rent praktisk på grund af sproget. I de to lande blev der foretaget 25 kvalitative interviews omhandlende de interviewedes rejsekarrierer, forskellige oplevelser indenfor disse rejsekarrierer og identitetskonstruktion.

Identitet og turisme er forbundet via forbrug, og særligt symbolsk forbrug implementeres for at forstå forbrugeradfærd, hvori forbrug af symboler bliver et redskab til at forstærke selvet på. Idet turisme bliver opfattet som en modreaktion til den fundamentale tilstand af manglende autenticitet i det moderne samfund bliver turismeforbrug en symbolsk søgen efter selv. Et velkendt aspekt af at møde den anden er inkorporeret i turisme, hvilket resulterer i et uundgåeligt møde med selvet, og derved placeres identitet i centrum af turisme.

Særligt rejsekarrieren bliver et udtryk for identitet, idet det bruges til at skabe en ønskværdig position for en selv i modsætning til den anden. Derfor er diskurs vigtigere end faktisk opførsel i forhold til identitetskonstruktion i nuet. Identitet bliver opfattet som en social konstruktion idet social interaktion bliver opfattet som meget indflydelsesrig i forhold til at forme identitet i en turismekontekst. Social identitetsteori er blevet anvendt til dette studie, da det inkluderer både individuelle og kollektive elementer og derved accepterer at identitetskonstruktion indeholder modstridende tankegange. Flere identiteter eksisterer sammen og er fleksible, og for at opnå stabilitet i denne ellers ustabile og paradokse kontekst har selvopfattelsen behov for bekræftelse.

Kernen af turisme er turismeoplevelsen og konceptet *en turismeoplevelse* er derfor brugt til at diskutere identitet i turisme. Internaliseringen af turismeoplevelsen antyder, at det bliver en del af turistens identitet. Det faktum at individuel identitet er relateret til den kontekst som individet lever i trækker i en anden retning. Dette betyder, at der er både individuelle såvel som kollektive elementer i turismeoplevelsen nøjagtig som i identitetskonstruktion. To fortolkninger af konceptet 'turistoplevelse' er blevet foreslået: A) enkeltstående turismeoplevelse (Erlebnis), og B) akkumuleret turisterfaring (Erfahrung). Rejsekarrieren indeholder begge fortolkninger, idet de begge bidrager til konstruktionen af turismeoplevelser der over tid bliver brugt til at konstruere identitet.

Mossbergs (2003) tid/rum dimension er blevet tilføjet til forståelsen af turismeoplevelsen, da dette studie bygger på en antagelse af at før, under og efter spiller en central rolle for turismeoplevelserne, og for hvordan de opfattes og bruges af den individuelle turist til at konstruere identitet. Hukommelse spiller en rolle i denne henseende, idet hvad der huskes og hvordan det huskes har en indflydelse på den måde det opfattes at bidrage positivt eller negativt til en ønskværdig identitet og derfor hvordan det påvirker den næste fase.

Kombinationen af de teoretiske perspektiver: turisme, forbrug og identitet former det teoretiske fundament for studiet. Anvendelsen af disse er et forsøg på at skabe et holistisk billede af de aspekter konstruktionen af identitet i turisme indebærer. Derfor har den direkte anvendelse af disse teorier som et analytisk værktøj været mindre vigtig end en bredere undersøgelse af flere relevante påvirkninger, hvilket kan have forårsaget en noget abstrakt brug af de valgte teorier. Denne kombination indeholder et bredt spektrum af teorier der ikke åbenlyst kan kombineres i et dybdegående empirisk studie som dette. Studiet er derfor ekplorativt i den henseende, og undersøgelsen eksplorative natur er prioriteret højt, og de empiriske resultater er derfor prioriteret højere end den teoretiske anvendelighed.

De empiriske data har udstukket analytiske retninger, hvilke er delt ind i tre trin, hver især med et specifikt fokus. Trin 1 forholder sig til tre hovedtemaer som de interviewede har bragt op: turismekontekst, turismeoplevelse og udfald, som hver især indeholder forskellige aspekter. Dette trin præsenterer det empiriske data så vel

som brede tendenser på tværs af de forskellige interview: værdifulde og meningsfulde turismeoplevelser ser ud til at være opnået næsten uanset hvad. Desuden eksisterer der en balance mellem folks ønsker, deres opførsel og udfaldet heraf.

Tilgang, eventyr, nyhedsværdi og atmosfære er de fire hovedkategorier som de interviewede bruger til at karakterisere turismeoplevelsen og til at positionere dem selv i forhold til, når turismeoplevelsen er bragt på banen. De interviewede bruger en diskursiv tilgang til turismeoplevelsen enten ved at opleve 1) så meget som muligt eller 2) færre ting i dybden. Eventyr bliver brugt som en diskursiv konstruktion gennem overdrivelse eller trivialisering. Nyhedsværdi og familiaritet bliver ofte brugt i sammenhæng. Atmosfære drejer sig om emner så som nostalgi som den enkelte interviewede relaterer til et specifikt sted eller en specifik følelse.

Den enkeltstående turismeoplevelse er ikke relateret til et defineret tidspunkt, og derfor er det noget udefinerbart. Derfor opstår der et komplekst billede, hvori alle disse aspekter ser ud til at blive forbundet på forskellige niveauer, og derved bliver før, under og efter flydende faser, der relaterer til begge fortolkninger af turismeoplevelsen.

Best-agernes karakteristik af turismeoplevelsen er langtfra enkel at forklare. Flere kategorier bliver dog anvendt af de interviewede som diskursive positioner til tilgang, eventyr, nyhedsværdi og atmosfære, og yderligere kategorier der er relateret til turismekontekst, f.eks. individuelle og kollektive omstændigheder og udfald, dvs. minder og samvær og genopladning.

Analysens andet trin er en dybdegående undersøgelse af rejsekarrieren som fokuserer på akkumuleret turismeerfaring i fem udvalgte interviews. I og med at dette er andet trin i analysen bygger den på konklusionerne af første trin, og på denne baggrund er der blevet dannet specifikke profiler af de interviewede. Rejseenheder er blevet dannet via interviewene for at beskrive en specifik periode i den interviewedes liv og omstændighederne omkring det at rejse på det specifikke tidspunkt, baseret på deres rejsepartnere. Interviewprofilerne er baseret på en analyse af mønstrene i rejsekarriererne, hvilke udgøres af forskellige rejseenheder.

En dybdegående tilgang bliver valgt af de par der deler en stor del af deres rejsekarriere og de resterende har tendens til at udtrykke mere vidtgående oplevelser. Hvad angår akkumuleret turisterfaring, så skal de valgte kategorier ses i forhold til niveauet af erfaring f.eks. hvad angår nyhedsværdi, hvor erfaringsniveauet definerer det ordinære og ekstraordinære.

Resultatet af trin 2 er, at flere diskursive positioner bruges til at forklare forskellige faser af rejsekarrieren, og at de alle bruges til at bekræfte identitet i nuet. Diskurs spiller en stor rolle i konstruktionen af rejsekarrieren uanset de faktiske (fortolkning A) oplevelser. Det vil sige, at tilsyneladende har diskurs større betydning end turismeoplevelsen, idet den diskursive retfærdiggørelse bliver brugt, når den faktiske fortalte turismeoplevelse ikke harmonerer med den ønskværdige identitet.

Identitetskonstruktion bliver der fokuseret direkte på i trin 3. Trin 1 og 2 illustrerer de aspekter der bliver opfattet som vigtige, sådan som det er kommet til udtryk gennem interviewene. Den uacceptable anden, turisme som en integreret del af individet, og turisme som et middel til at opnå ønskværdig identitet er de områder der stadig ikke er berørte. I trin 3 er disse områder blevet udforsket gennem teori, tidligere analyser og underbyggende eksempler fra datamaterialet.

En turistisk anden er i spil og dette er klart gennem emner så som kulturel sensitivitet, typer af ferie og ferieaktiviteter, samt evne og viden, hvilke alle bliver brugt til at indikere andre. Der er derfor en underforstået uacceptabel anden som alle de interviewede forholder sig til ved brug af disse emner. Turisme udtrykkes både som en intern og en ekstern konstruktion, hvilket understøtter påstanden om, at disse niveauer alle er afhængige af hinanden. Turisme som et middel til at opnå en ønskværdig identitet henvender sig til de diskursive positioner der bliver brug i turisme til at konstruere en ønskværdig identitet. Diskurs i turisme fastslås at være et anvendt middel til at understøtte konstruktion og/eller forhandling af identitet.

Det tredje trin antyder, at den enkeltstående turistoplevelse er bestemmende for den identitet der konstrueres i et relativt begrænset omfang, idet selvet og andre ikke er afhængige af turismeoplevelsen men af de diskursive positioner individet tager i forhold til disse turistiske selv og andre. På et kollektivt niveau kan opfattelsen af

andres akkumulerede turismeerfaring meget vel være ret bestemmende for den identitet de bliver tillagt, og dermed er det klargjort at både individuelle og kollektive faktorer spiller en rolle i den identitet der er konstrueret.

Disse resultater antyder derfor, at akkumuleret turismeerfaring afhænger af turismeoplevelsens diskursive positioner i forhold til de specifikke kategorier der er udvalgt af de interviewede for at udtrykke dem selv i modsætning til andre. Den faktiske akkumulering af erfaring kommer til udtryk gennem narrativer om rejsekarrieren, som præsenterer diskursive positioner der understøtter den nuværende ønskværdige identitet, og den enkeltstående turistoplevelse er bestemmende for den identitet der konstrueres fra et kollektivt synspunkt mere end et individuelt synspunkt.

De fremadrettede perspektiver af disse konklusioner er mange. For det første kan de primært benyttes indenfor turisme. Akademisk set er dette studie relateret til det fundamentale spørgsmål om, hvorfor folk bliver turister. Tilføjelser til den akademiske diskussion af identitet i turisme er lavet gennem det omfattende empiriske materiale som dette studie er baseret på, samt det metodiske fundament der er anvendt. Dette kan spede sig til andre akademiske områder f.eks. forbrugeradfærd - i forhold til forståelsen af forandringer i adfærd over tid. Rent praktisk er disse resultater opfattet som mest værdifulde for forbruger- og markedsføringsbranchen, idet resultaterne kan tilbyde viden om turismeforbrug fra turistens eget synspunkt. Dette er naturligvis også mest relevant for turismemarkedsføring, hvor viden om turisters opfattelser, holdninger og ønsker er meget relevante for succes. Måden hvorpå dette studie er udført kan sandsynligvis også tilbyde muligheder for andre brancher end turisme.

Eftersom målet har været at foretage holistiske fortolkninger er der flere muligheder for nærmere undersøgelser. Anvendelsen af denne type studie på andre segmenter af turister kunne muligvis fastslå flere aspekter af identitetskonstruktion i forhold til alder og historisk kontekst. En kommunikativ tilgang til turisme, og den symbolik en sådan vil indeholde, fordrer også flere andre muligheder. Som det sidste kan nævnes erindring og erfaring, som er tæt forbundet, og en mere dybdegående undersøgelse af de psykologiske processer af disse og deres indflydelse på turismeerfaring kunne tilføje yderligere interessante og relevante perspektiver til denne diskussion.

English Summary

The present study takes a vantage point in tourism as an inherent part of life in contemporary society. The world of the tourist is highly complex and thus complicates the tourism industry's task of accommodating increasing demands for specific tourism products and services that satisfy a large variety of wants and needs that seems to continue to increase. In academia, similar discussions take place together with a more fundamental question of understanding why people travel at all.

The purpose of tourism is no longer as straightforward as it used to be, and a more elevated status has been ascribed, as several meaningful elements of human life are affected by the consumption of tourism. Simultaneously, individualism entailed in contemporary society indicates that consumers focus increasingly on unique opportunities and ways of setting themselves apart from the masses. They are essentially trying to avoid clearly defined target groups, which is what the tourism industry seeks. It is argued, though, that a prevalent desire to conform to certain defined norms pulls in a more collective direction for consumer choices, which indicates that both individual and collective mechanisms affect consumer behaviour.

Narratives play a central role to this study, because tourism entails an inherent need for communication. Because of the vast supply of tourist experiences in contemporary society, a discursive need thus occurs that engages tourists in conversations of various sorts to express lived tourist experiences, and because of this need, discourse and specific touristic narratives may provide a look into the meaning of tourism to the individual tourist. This meaningful discourse is explored throughout this study.

The tourist is a central focus for exploring the tourist experience. Belk's statement: "*we are what we have*" (1988:139) suggests that our tourist experiences become part of who we are, because we have them within us. Desforges (2000) suggests that meaningful tourist experiences are stories that need to be maintained discursively to confirm identity. Consequently, it may be valuable to explore tourism consumption as a way of expressing and maintaining a sense of *what we have* and therefore who *we are*.

The tourist experiences that people have accumulated over time and thereby *have* constitute the so-called travel career, and this is a central concept to this study, because it entails the negotiation of identity throughout several stages of tourism consumption. It is an underlying assumption that the travel career is a reflection of the individual's choices based on the sum of several different influences, e.g. historical and social circumstances, whereby it reflects the changes that occur over time due to different circumstances, including changing life paths, changing needs, past travel experiences etc.

The most important element is to explore the role that tourist experiences play in identity construction. The objective is to make sense of tourist experiences in such a way that a deeper understanding is obtained of how tourism enables an understanding of self and the surrounding world for modern day consumers. The study also aims to make a contribution to research within the field of tourism that combines tourism, consumption and identity in a unique way. Based on these considerations, the following research questions have been posed to form the focus for this study.

How is the travel career, as an expression of accumulated tourist experience throughout an individual's life, instrumental in constructing identity?

4. How is a tourist experience characterised by members of the best-ager segment?
5. How is the travel career used discursively to construct a narrative of identity at present?
6. Are the tourist experiences accumulated decisive for the identity constructed and if so, in which ways?

The best-ager segment has been chosen for this study, firstly because of an underlying assumption that members of the current best-ager generation have had opportunities to travel throughout most of their lives. Secondly, this segment is to some degree characterised by flexible, individualised behaviour, and thirdly, a rather significant characteristic of this segment of tourists is often characterised as being relatively resourceful in many respects, e.g. in terms of stable economic situations, high cultural capital, and solid job situations. Although this may only be true some of them, it may very well be a significant factor for tourism because travelling is a

possibility and perhaps a prime interest for this group for several reasons, for example because they have experienced changes in opportunities.

An empirical base has been chosen for the exploration of the research questions. A cross-cultural dimension has been added to open up for a broad conclusion rather than specific case conclusions. Danish and English tourists are chosen as this study's empirical base, due to compatibility at a certain level, and also due to a practical issue of language on behalf of the interviewer. 25 Qualitative interviews in the two countries were thus conducted addressing the interviewees' travel careers, different experiences within these travel careers, and identity construction.

Identity and tourism are linked via consumption, and particularly symbolic consumption is applied to understand consumer behaviour, in which consumption of symbols becomes a means to self-enhancement. Since tourism is perceived as a counter-reaction to the fundamental condition of inauthenticity in modern society, the consumption of tourism becomes a symbolic search for self. A well-known aspect of encountering the other is incorporated into tourism, which has a consequence of also encountering self, placing identity at the very core of tourism.

In particular, the travel career becomes an expression of identity, because it is used to create a desirable position for oneself in opposition to the other. Therefore, discourse is more important than actual behaviour to identity construction in the present. Identity is perceived as a social construction because social interaction is perceived as highly influential in shaping identity in the context of tourism. Social identity theory has been applied to the study, because it includes both individual and collective elements, and thereby recognises that identity construction entails conflicting lines of thinking. Several identities coexist and are flexible, and in order to obtain stability in this otherwise unstable and paradoxical context, self-perceptions may need confirmation.

At the core of tourism is the tourist experience, and the concept of the tourist experience is therefore used to address identity in tourism. The internalisation of the tourist experience implies that it becomes part of the tourist's identity. The fact that individual identity is related to the context in which the individual exists draws in a

different direction. This means that there are individual as well as collective elements in the tourist experience, just as there is in identity construction. Two notions of the concept 'tourist experience' have been suggested: A) single tourist experiences, and B) accumulated tourist experience. The travel career entails both notions, as they both contribute to the construction of tourist experiences that are eventually used to construct identity.

Mossberg's (2003) time/space dimension has been added to the understanding of the tourist experience, because the study builds on an assumption that before, during and after play a central role to the tourist experiences and how they are perceived and used by the individual tourist to construct identity. Memory plays a role in this respect because what is remembered and how it is remembered affects the way it is perceived to contribute positively or negatively to a desired identity, and therefore how it affects the next phase.

The combination of the theoretical perspectives of tourism, consumption and identity forms the theoretical foundation for this study. The application of these is an attempt to create a holistic picture of the aspects entailed in the construction of identity in tourism. Consequently, the direct application of these theories as an analytical tool has been less significant than a broader exploration of several relevant impacts, which may have caused a somewhat abstract use of the theory selected. This combination entails a broad spectre of theories that are not obviously combined in an extensive empirical study such as this one. The study is thus explorative in that sense, wherefore the explorative nature of the study has been highly prioritised, and the empirical findings have taken priority over theoretical applicability.

The empirical data have pointed out directions for the analysis, divided into three steps, each with a specific focus. Step 1 addresses three main themes brought up by the interviewees: the tourism context, the tourist experience and outcome, each of which entails various aspects. This step presents the empirical data as well as broad tendencies across the different interviews: valuable and meaningful tourist experiences seem to be obtained almost no matter what; also, a balance exists between people's wants, their behaviour, and the outcome of this.

Approach, adventure, novelty, and atmosphere are the four main categories that the interviewees use to characterise the tourist experience and position themselves according to when the tourist experience is addressed. The interviewees approach tourist experience discursively as either 1) experiencing as many things as possible, or 2) few things in-depth. Adventure is used as a discursive construct through exaggeration or trivialisation. Novelty and familiarity are often used in combination. Atmosphere concerns issues like nostalgia, the interviewees relating to a specific place or feeling.

The single tourist experience is not a defined point in time, and therefore somewhat indefinable. A complex picture thus emerges in which all of these aspects seem to interconnect at various levels, and thereby before, during and after are fluctuating stages that relate to both notions of the tourist experience.

The best-agers' characterisation of the tourist experience is not simply explained. However, various categories are used by the interviewees as discursive positions on approach, adventure, novelty and atmosphere, and additional categories related to the tourism context, i.e. individual and collective circumstances, and outcome, i.e. memories and togetherness and recharging.

Step 2 of the analysis is an in-depth exploration of the travel career, which focuses on accumulated tourist experience in five selected interviews. As this is the second step of the analysis, it builds on the findings of Step 1, and on this basis, certain profiles of the interviewees have been drawn. Travel units have been developed via the interviews to describe a specific period in the life of an interviewee and the circumstances around travelling at that specific time, based on their travel partners. The interviewee profiles are based on the exploration of the travel career patterns made up of different travel units.

An in-depth approach is taken by the couples sharing a large part of their travel careers, and the rest tend to express widespread experiencing. Concerning levels of accumulated tourist experience, the categories in focus are relative to level of experience, e.g. in the case of novelty, where the level of experience defines ordinary and extraordinary.

The result of step 2 is that various discursive positions are used to explain different stages of the travel career, all used to confirm present identity. Discourse plays a major role in constructing the travel career, regardless of the actual notion A experiences. In other words, discourse seems to overrule the tourist experience in the sense that discursive justification is used when actual, expressed tourist experiences may not correspond to the desired identity.

Identity construction is addressed directly in step 3. Step 1 and 2 have illustrated the aspects that are perceived important by being expressed in the interviews. The undesirable other, tourism as an inherent part of the individual, and tourism as a means to desired identity are the remaining themes to address. In Step 3, these themes have been explored through theory, previous steps of analysis, and supporting examples from the data material.

A touristic other is at play and this is evident through issues such as cultural sensitivity, types of holiday and entailed activities, and ability and knowledge, used to indicate others. There is thus an implicit undesirable other that all the interviewees relate to by using these issues. Tourism is expressed to be an internal as well as an external construct supporting the contention that these levels are interdependent. Tourism as a means to desired identity addresses the discursive positions used in tourism to construct a desired identity. Discourse in tourism was found to facilitate construction and/or negotiation of identity.

The third step thus suggests that the single tourist experience is decisive for the identity constructed in a fairly limited way, because selves and others are not dependent on the tourist experience but on the positions discursively taken by the individual towards these touristic selves and others. On a collective level, the perception of others' accumulated tourist experiences may very well be quite decisive in the identity they are ascribed, and thereby it is evident that both individual and collective factors play a role to the identity that is constructed.

These results thus suggest that accumulated tourist experience relies on discursive positions of the tourist experience according to specific categories pointed out by the

interviewees to express themselves as opposed to others. The actual accumulation of experience is expressed through narratives of the travel career, which presents discursive positions that support the present desired identity, and the single tourist experience is decisive for the identity constructed from a collective point of view more than from an individual point of view.

The future perspectives of these findings are multiple. First and foremost, its primary uses are within tourism. Academically speaking, the study is related to the fundamental question of why people become tourists. Additions to the academic discussion of identity in tourism are made through the extensive empirical material on which this study is based and the methodological framework that is used. These may spill over into other academic fields, e.g. consumer behaviour, in terms of understanding changes in behaviour over time. In practice, these results are perceived most valuable to consumer and marketing professionals by offering knowledge of the tourism consumer from the tourist's own perspective. This is also most obviously applied to tourism marketing, in which knowledge of tourist perceptions, attitudes and desires are highly relevant to success. The way this study is conducted may also offer possibilities for other businesses besides tourism.

Appendix 1: Interview guide

- permission to tape and use interviews

Introduction:
- about myself
- a research project for my thesis
- main theme and field of research is holidays and tourist experience

Using the results
- what am I doing with this interview?
- Series of interviews in Dk and Uk
- anonymity – I'm the only one with direct access to this material!

Photos from holidays:
- Respondents are asked in advance to select 3-5 holiday photos – representing different phases of their travel careers – e.g. selected from three decades - that they think says something about the type of holidays that they preferred at the time it was taking place
- Was it difficult, easy or other? (if not, make them relate to specific journeys, like if the photos were there)

Respondent characteristics:
introducing themselves – follow up on:

Present:
- Name(s)

- Age

- Education

- Occupation/status - work hours, spare time etc.

- Family (kids?)

Theme 1: Travel Career

- how much do you travel? (annually)

- travelling without being on holiday?

- travelling without your partner?

- <u>sum up the way your travel experiences have developed over time? how did it start out, and how did it become what it is today? (individually and together)</u>

- what type of holiday do you prefer? (Active, 3s, cultural activities, city breaks, backpacker, package tours etc., or no one in particular?)

- what type of activities have you most often participated in? (guided tours, museum visits, nature walks, sports etc.)

- Do you still do the same things as you did earlier? (e.g. before you had kids, when you were younger, and now)

- How have things changed?

- Why do you think they changed? (influences from others? Societal changes)

(photos – or make them think back on specific holidays)

- when are the photos from? what do they represent?

- Why these particular ones?

- how would you describe each of these holidays? (a few words)

- Are these holidays very different or very much alike? how?

Theme 2: The decision-making process
(directly about each of the holidays in the photos)

- who decided? (agreement, compromise, one determining factor)

- why did you choose this specific holiday? (type - activities, accommodation, transport)

- how did you decide on this destination? (and type? what appeals to you? why?)

- which circumstances had a significant impact on this holiday? (economy, friends, kids, the destination itself? determining factor?)

- are your holidays different from your friends' or family's or colleagues'? (how/how are they not)

- how do your immediate friends and family travel? Similarities or differences?

- is this normally the way decisions on holidays are made between you?

- how do you make decisions while on holiday? who? Based on what?

- Has it always been like that? has the way you make decisions changed?

- How do you approach a decision in relation to holidays compared to what you used to?

(relating to each holiday photo)

- what was the image that you had of this destination/locals/this type of travel before you went there?

- what did you know beforehand?

- how did you get that information and image?

- do you know anyone who has been there or tried anything similar? who? what?

- which expectations did you have to this holiday? (wishes/demands)

- how did it live up to your expectations?

- what did you get out of it? (the most important things – what you wanted or expected – something completely different?)

Theme 3: an ideal holiday

- what is an ideal holiday to you? (parameters? Price, quality, experiences, social aspects etc.) without restrictions at all and within reason?

- does this play a role, when you plan a holiday trip? How?

- Have you had any particularly great holidays? (perhaps bad?)

- how would you describe them?

- what made them good/bad?

- have your perception of an ideal holiday changed from earlier on? (are some things more important now? which?)

- if you were to mention one thing, which is more important than any other about an ideal holiday, what would it be?

Theme 4: Image of Self

- what type of experiences do you engage in at home - everyday life?

- what would you like your holidays to be like in the future? in 5, 10, 20 years?

- what would you like to do differently in your holidays, if you had the chance?

- how do you perceive yourselves as tourists (in a few words)? why?

- what is the main element of your holidays?

- what do your friends, family, colleagues say about your holidays?

- are your holidays similar or different to those of your friends etc? How? Why?

- do you compare your holiday experiences to those of others? how?

- does it change how you approach holiday choices?

Theme 5: The meaning of Holidays

- how do you prepare for a holiday? thinking around a decision to go and where?

- what do you think after you've been on them? what do you get out of them? use?

- what does holidays mean to you?

Closure

- Final comments?

THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING!

Appendix 2: Transcript Example

All interviews have been recorded and transcribed, but only one example has been included for illustration. All transcripts and sound files can be provided if required. Contact the author: ksmed@ihis.aau.dk

Interview 8 – UK: 12 Nov. 2007 in a small meeting room at Sheffield Hallam

Duration: 57 min.

C: Cathy – all names of interviewers have been altered for anonymity

I: Interviewer

(Introduction)

C: Right, my name is "Cathrine", I'm placement administrator at Sheffield Hallam in the faculty of organisation and management, I've been in my job in about 15-16 years, but before that I worked with local authority in housing benefits pole tax as it was then, before that when the kids were growing up, little part time jobs behind the bar, in a café, in a cress???, little fill in type jobs as the children were growing up, I've got three children, all grown up now, one's 30, one's 28 and one's 22, the youngest has just left home, I'm divorced, I've been divorced for about 18 years, well 19 years, because my youngest was only three when me and my husband split up, so I raised them on my own, but with a partner, for about 16 years, but I'm recently again on my own, and I've been on quite a few holidays before the kids, with the kids, without the kids, so I've been through all these phases

I: For how long were you married?

C: 15 years

I: So I guess there was some travelling during that period?

C: oh yes, we had lots of family holidays as the children were growing up, yes

I: and you did bring some pictures…

C: Yes, but I mean, I just grabbed a few

I: but that's fine, that's absolutely fine

C: but I did try to find some really early ones, and that, I was only 20, and that was my very first holiday abroad (pic35), and that sums up how I felt, that was in Benidorm, I could never dream of going to Benidorm now, but in the 1970s I was 20, I'm 56 by the way, I was only 20 there, so that was 1971, first holiday abroad with two of friends, so three girls, first holiday away from home, in Benidorm, and I can honestly say that I don't think you can ever have a holiday that matches up to your

first one away from home, cause we had a lovely time, just the three of us in a hotel in Benidorm for two weeks, and it was when all the budget holidays were starting to come in at the time, you know, in the 1970s, and before that it was only actually the rich that went on holiday abroad, I mean the rich tended to go in holiday camps and that in this country, but in the late 1960s and early 1970s air traffic took off and holidays became a lot cheaper, we were able go get off and enjoy ourselves, so that is just me, stood in the balcony, typical 20 year-old at that time, away from home, a bottle of Bacardi a bottle of champagne and here I am

I: So this was special, because it was the first one?

C: that's special because it was the first holiday. I'd always remember that because it was my first holiday abroad

I: Yeah, I guess that is a special thing

C: because it was a big thing in those days that you could actually, because you saved for months, booked you holiday at the travel agents, cause there was no Internet or anything like that, but you booked your holiday the year before, you went to the travel agent and got your holiday booked and then you started to save, and it took you a whole year to save, you know, for that holiday, so it was quite an effort, quite a big thing in those days, so that's why I remember it, that was my very first holiday. I'll try to get them in sequence (the photos). That was taken when my husband and I, before we had the family, and it's a bit discoloured (pic36), I think that's in Spain somewhere, and we just got married and it was our first holiday abroad together, and that's the only I chose that, because it's our first holiday away just the two of us before the family came along

I: So which year was this?

C: I was married in 1975, so I would say that's 75 or 76, and that's in Calella in Spain, and it wasn't just my husband and I, we went away with some work colleagues that I worked with, and their husbands and boyfriends, we went in a group and that was before family came along, so we were able to do that just pick anywhere and just go for the nightlife and rest and relaxation, not having to consider anybody else

I: Did you travel a lot before you had the kids with your husband?

C: No, because we had the kids fairly quickly, we… I think it was within 18 months, I had my first daughter, and then 18 months later my second daughter, and then there was a gap of six years and I had my third daughter, so no, we weren't married long, because within 10 months I was obviously pregnant, and then… in those days you didn't fly when you were pregnant, I don't know why, you just didn't, maybe we thought there was some risk or something like that, no we just didn't, but that was a quite good holiday in Spain, but then the kids started to… these are all… well that one (pic37), this was before Haley was born, that one was when we… we didn't have many holidays abroad when the kids were really young, not the first two anyway, obviously by the time the third one came along, we were a bit better off, so we could, so we spent holidays in this country, and that was from a holiday that we took in Dawlish in Devon, and that's my daughter, and she won a fancy dress for being a bumble bee, and I think my other daughter is there as wonder woman, and she didn't win, she's 18

months younger than Gail, so she was a bit nifty that she didn't win, but she won first price for being a bumble bee, and that was Haven holiday park, where quite a lot of people tended to go to these type of holidays if they couldn't afford to go abroad, you know, they would visit the holiday camps in this country, it was quite worth, it was quite common at this point, and Haven holiday camp, I think this was at Haven, and it was like caravans and… we weren't in a caravan, it was like a chalet, and it is all self-contained, you cook your own meals and everything, and you know, it's by the seaside, it's in Dawlish in Devon, and they put entertainment on every night, so we tended to go for those kind of holidays at that time

I: why was that?

C: it was financial, that was it, purely financial, and cause the children were younger we just tended to stay in this country

I: because it was easier?

C: It was easy, yeah, it was easier, and we didn't know how they'd react to the weather, you know, it being to hot, so we just tended to stay in this country, like I used to go… because I'm from Scotland, I'm Scottish, and we used to go up to Scotland a lot as well, so this is me going home (pic38), this is where I feel at my best, because I lived by the seaside anyway, that's my mom, that's me and that's my middle daughter, but I feel, as soon as I cross that border I'm home, because we used to go home every summer, we used to always go back up to Scotland, we lived on the east coast, a little fishing village, do you know St. Andrews? It's just further down the coast from St. Andrews where we lived and I used to go back home with the children, and we used to have a couple of weeks, that's just a day at the beach, that's taken over by the rock pools on the beach, you know, and that was a nice holiday

I: So you used to go back to Scotland and have a main holiday in England?

C: No, that would be instead of that…

I: So it wouldn't be every year that you did this?

C: hmm… not for a fortnight, I would try and go back every year to see my mum and dad, I would try and go back, but when we went back in the summer, that would be our holiday, but if we went at new years, sometimes we'd go at new years for a week or… but I don't consider that as a holiday, that's just going back home, just to be back home, but every year for two weeks, we'd go up there, for roughly two weeks, and we'd go all over, so that was that one. Then when the third daughter came along, the first holidays we used to go camping, cause that was cheap, and we could get abroad, and that's…

I: Where would you usually go?

C: Spain, we used to drive down, the first holiday with her was with a tent that was already in the park, it was… started in Spain, and they had a huge camping caravan holiday park, I mean it's not just in a field, it's purpose built, and they've got restaurants, bars, swimming pools, all sorts of things, it's absolutely huge and it is for the European… they came from all over, you know, Dutch… Holland, Germany, even

Danish, you know, Spanish, Italians, French, everybody went there, because it was the largest one in Europe at that time, and we used to get in the car, the first time we had… the tent was already there, but then we had about three holidays doing that and what I wanted was a trailer, and we used to drive through France, drive through Spain to get there, well it was actually just across the border, on the border, just in Spain, and we loved those holidays, I know it looks a bit raggy taggy, but the kids liked it as well, and they are my three and me, so it's obviously my husband taking the picture (pic39), but they could be outside all the time, entertainment at night, going down the beach, and our holidays were chosen with the kids in mind, when they were that age, we didn't take the kids on holiday, we took a holiday if they were happy we were happy, so we fitted in with the children, we didn't ask them to fit in with us. Because the children loved it, and we loved it, because it was really easy, we were in a tent and it was really safe, there were lots of little swimming pools about, you know, park, and shops, and entertainment, everything was there for them, fancy dress competitions, everything

I: How did you… did you choose this because of this place?

C: We chose it because of the place, because we knew it was purpose built, especially for families, and especially… lots of young children, loads of friends for them to play with, lots of entertainment to keep them amused, and the ideal location really, it wasn't too far to drive, because it was just across the border. We used to stop overnight in France, we'd have an overnight stop in France, a bit south, but even just… we used to go across on the ferry, so there was no channel or tunnel then, so we used to get the car and head off, get on the ferry, get across to France, you know, then start driving, even that was part of the holiday, because once you're in different country, you know, everything is different, isn't it, we used to have little stops, have picnics along the way, because it used to take us two days to get there, you know, we'd stop overnight, and then take off… it used to take us two days there and two days back, but that was included, we'd go for about say maybe sixteen or seventeen days, but it'd be a bit longer because of the travelling

I: So you would never consider saying, well it's too much trouble, let's just stay in the UK?

C: No, no, once we got a taste of fun holidays, going abroad, we went for the sunshine

I: So the weather had a lot…

C: the weather had a lot to do with it, and also just a different culture, yeah, and the children enjoyed it, it was an adventure, so they enjoyed it, so that was camping, we couldn't afford a hotel with all of that, so that was our cheapest option, going camping, and then from that we went with my brother and sister-in-law into a hotel with their family, so these pictures are when we were in Mallorca (pic40), and that was like the next stage when we could afford to take them abroad, we could afford to fly, and we could afford to have a hotel room, and we could afford to go as a big group

I: So are these (pictures) all from the same one?

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C: These are all… that one might have been… I'm sure it's the same place, but just a different camera, because those were all taken when we were in Mallorca. And that's my youngest, and they were all there, and we all did things together, and it was just because we could afford to do it, so we did it, took them abroad, and I think that was the first time they had been on an airplane. Obviously we didn't pay for Haley, because under two you don't pay, and I think, because there was a lot of these first child goes free or you can get a second child free, all that was starting to come in, so we were able to get holidays that way, but we still had to book early, there was none of that last minute booking, where you book a couple… two, three weeks before and you just take off, couldn't do that, I don't think even now you can do that with children, some do, but I think you need to know where you're going

I: yeah, you probably have to plan it a little bit more

C: Yeah, you have to plan it a bit more if you've got children. Yeah, but I remember, the reason why I brought them is because of the experience, getting to the hotel, and it was the wee hours in the morning and she was still in a push chair, the others are still pretty young, and there was no rooms for us and it was about two o'clock in the morning, so you can imagine that we were just obliged to sit in this little lounge area and we had to just sleep there all night and Haley was in a push chair and so we were… myself and my sister-in-law were absolutely furious, because the rep that had taken us from the airport with a coach to the hotel had just disappeared, so we were left with just a night porter, and there's nothing he could do. I think it happens to a lot of people, it's happened to me since, it's happened quite a few… so obviously when the rep came back the next day, my sister-in-law and myself, we cornered her, we wouldn't let her leave the hotel, we wouldn't even let her at the door until she got us sorted, and I think we did get a room by midday that next day, plus compensation, because of what had happened, so we did get it sorted out, but that was first holiday abroad, well, on an airplane, as a family group with my brother and nephews and… my children and my sister-in-law, and that's what happened, in the middle of the night and the kids were all strolled about either on the floor or sitting, or… so that was that and then… I'm trying to think of the next stage, Haley is not in here, so that was later on…. Then, I've got divorced, I didn't have holidays for two or three years, because I was bringing the kids up on my own, and then I met someone, and we went to Florida, managed to get to Florida and I thought that was an adventure

I: Was that the first time you went further away than Europe?

C: Yeah, yes, I'd never been outside Europe before that, and I didn't, two… they were older, so we only took Haley with us, there's me and my partner and Haley, only the three of us went, I tried to find some here… but I was just grabbing them, and I couldn't find them all, but I found this odd one (pic41), that was in the hotel that we stayed at, it was absolutely beautiful and I'd never been to America before, we didn't just stay on land, did the usual touristy thing, what we did was, we went to Naples, which is South West Florida, it's the… it's the gold coast I think, you know, and it's absolutely beautiful, in Orlando is just all your fun fairs and things, so we did two days when we arrived for Haley's sake in Orlando, we went to the theme parks, that was just magnificent, I mean I don't think anybody can do theme parks like the Americans, I don't think they can, I mean we've got nothing in comparison to what they've got and Haley absolutely loved it and so did I, even as an adult, I loved it, I mean, they had the blues brothers, and that's just in the hotel, they had these

figurines, sort of, just scattered around in the garden and the pool area and everything, they had a mermaid that looked so real that… and then there was… obviously we went to Epcott and we went to Universal Studios, and I just… you know, all the films that were on at the time, like King Kong, Jaws, Earthquake, they had all these rides, and I remember Haley must have been on 'Back to the Future' about a dozen times, where you went in this ??? car and you really did feel as if you were going out of space or dropped down or… it's fantastic, they go through the clock and then it all like flashed and you fly sideways and things, it was absolutely fantastic, I've never experienced anything like that, when we went to Florida…

I: So you stayed in a hotel?

C: We stayed in a lovely hotel in Naples, we had a hotel booked in Orlando for two nights, well we didn't have it booked, we just flew there on a fly/drive, I don't know if they do them now, it was just a fly/drive, which was just your flight and a car, you can get a hotel as easily as anything, so we just drove into Orlando from Sanford airport, got ourselves booked into a hotel for two nights, got ourselves tickets for the theme parks, and then that's what we did for two days, first two days, and then we drove from Orlando to Naples, because we heard that Naples is really… it's a bit quieter but beautiful beautiful beaches, and so then we stayed for twelve nights in Naples, and again, just drove, just found a hotel, just booked ourselves in, and that was fantastic, saw dolphins and everything, just swimming off… you know, off the… I forgot the actual pier, yeah, that's Naples pier (pic42), and there's dolphins, and they have beautiful sunsets and dolphins just swimming off and… people would swim out to these dolphins, yeah, it was just magnificent, and we went to zoos and bush gardens, we went to… we saw alligators from the road, we went to Miami, there's a route from Naples to Miami, and it's called alligator alley, because there's alligators, because it goes through the Everglades, and there's alligators, and they could be sunning themselves on the side of the road, and just to see things like that… and Haley held a little… we went to a… I wouldn't say that it's a zoo, it was more like an animal park, because they weren't in cages or anything, and Haley held a little alligator, it's snout was wrapped up, but she held a little alligator, and then a huge python, it was absolutely huge, it must have been about that wide, and there must have been about a dozen people holding it like that, so if I had to experience something like that, you know, she loved it, absolutely loved it, so that was the Orlando, that was the American… we went back about three times, so we did that because we enjoyed it so much, so we did that about three years on the trot

I: Did you go back and see the same places, or did you go to different places?

C: we went back to Orlando and Naples, but we travelled further a field and to different places from the base, but we went back to the same base, but we stayed at different hotels, because we liked that base anyway, we enjoyed that area, it was lovely, so yeah…

I: So with different ingredients, but the base was the same?

C: Yeah, but we enjoyed that. I've been to Cyprus, but I couldn't find anything, is that one from Cyprus? No, but I've been… then after that we went to Cyprus a couple of times, I haven't brought any pictures from Cyprus, hmm… and that was nice, I like Cyprus, different parts, Paphos one year, Potamos… Pathos twice I think, I've been

four actually, but then Pytamos twice, hmm… the reason we went back to Paphos… we took Haley the first time, and then second time we went on our own, just myself and my partner, and that was a different type of holiday. Right, and we went back then we went to Pytamos, didn't take Haley, cause she'd gotten older and she was going off with her friends, and Potamos we found was much nicer than Paphos, I wish we had chosen Potamos to start with, that's near hmm… that's on… you know, how Cyprus is shaped like that and Paphos is on the east, and Potamos is on the west, I know you've got the Troodos mountains there and Mount Olympia, on this side you're nearer Nicosia, and I liked to go into the city, and they had the… you know it was split in half because of the Turks and the Cypriots and… when they invaded Cyprus, so it was basically all that history, and it was… I wouldn't say nice, that isn't the right word, but interesting to look at all that history, because obviously I could spend more time on that side of my holiday, whereas when you've got children with you, you can't, because they'd be bored to tears

I: they don't want to do that…

C: They don't want to do that, so that's why my holiday was changing, because I was finding I was choosing holidays that would have… of cultural interests as well as something interesting to me and not having to think about like beach holidays always or entertainment for the children all the time

I: So you were looking for different things after the kids were grown up and all that?

C: Yes, I would say so, yes, because I only went, I must admit I did like the American holidays, I did like Florida, I really enjoyed that, but it's nice to go on holiday without the children now, because your holiday, well to me, my holiday was what the kids wanted, what they wanted to do, because as long as they are happy, you'll have a nice holiday, if they're bored, you won't have a nice holiday, because you feel as if you're just fighting with them all the time, you know, you will come and see this, this is what I want to see, you don't enjoy seeing it, so what's the point in doing it, there's no point, there's always time later on to do that, I think, and if the children are young, let them enjoy it while they're young, and then they will go on and find their own interests as they get older. I know some parents that'll take their kids on holiday, and they take them on the parents' holiday, they just drag the kids along, and I don't think that's fair, in my opinion, I think, if children are young, when you're taking them on holiday, you want a family holiday, and if they're happy, you'll be happy. It makes it a lot easier, rather than trying to drag them around museums and… you know, to see what they think is boring, they'll just be dragging their feet or else they'd be I'm bored, I'm bored and they won't want to stay

I: So what was it in Cyprus that you found particularly interesting, because you went there four times?

C: I went there four times, it was the scenery, the weather, the people, hmm… I think it was the people, they were really really friendly, more so than the Spanish, you know, I think the Cypriot people just got a kindness to them and they are just so open, and I like the music, I like the culture, I like the laid back attitude, there are so many different parts of their country that's different, like the east is so different from the west, and then you've got the Troodos mountains, and that alone is different, you could go up those mountains… you could leave your resort and it's baking hot, it could

be like oh 90 odd degrees, 100 degrees, and you go into the Troodos mountains and it's just like a lovely English summer day, you know, cause obviously it's a lot cooler, and there's just nice little villages that you can wander around, I think it was that and just the culture and the scenery and the people, that's what I liked, and I liked the city, I liked going into Nicosia to see the city, I liked… I went up the… they call it the Woolworth tower, but you can actually view right across, and you can see the boundaries… you know, straight on look real lane they call it, and I remember you could even walk up just a street, and it shot right off like that and there's guards controlling it, and two patrol towers, and I remember taking up a camera, just trying to take… no cameras and they've got guns and things just on their shoulders, so I couldn't take a photograph, but you could see through it, you could see how it was in the 1970s, exactly, you could go up the Woolworth tower, which was the highest point in Nicosia, and you could just go up the left and there's an observation tower and it tells you the history of what's happened and… so you could listen to all that and you could look out, and obviously you're getting… you're right across and it's a round tower, and you could see right across, and you could see the line, and you could see all the old evaporated buildings, you could see old cars just abandoned, you could see washing and everything still hanging on the lines

I: Oh really…

C: It's absolutely amazing, as if time has just stood still and you're looking across at a country that people, you know, fled from there or some were trapped in there, 30 years ago, you know, and it's just stuck, there's no money going in, you know, cause I think, most countries have sort of just vetoed that side of it, but I think there's plans in place now, isn't there, I know they've opened up some of the borders…, but they are still very very poor areas, you know, so, I think it was all that that I found interesting, so that was there, and then, my sister and I, we went to Sorrento, that was a holiday, that was absolutely beautiful, Sorrento (pic43), that was the start of me going on my holidays, and something that we can afford, something that we enjoyed doing, and something that was just for me and my sister, cause I'm a twin

I: Oh yes…

C: yeah, I've got a twin sister, and we started going away on our own now, just my sister and I

I: Just the two of you?

C: just the two of us, and we've been to quite a few places, I've been to Cyprus with her, been to Sorrento with her, been to Greece with her, been to Italy as well, but not Sorrento, Sorrento was the best, I would say, we just loved it, the scenery, the shops, we went to Herculaneum, we didn't go to Pompeii, but we went to Herculaneum, that was taken in Herculaneum, which is obviously for the, you know, what do you call it, the volcano in Naples over in Italy both, Mount Edna, is it Mount Edna, overlooking Naples Bay, well Herculaneum was buried with all of that and Pompeii… we didn't go to Pompeii purely because it was just a little bit further away and it was a whole day tour whereas Herculaneum was only a half day tour, and that's the mosaic in Herculaneum, and we saw… we walked along Roman… you know the Roman time, I mean it was a time, and the pathways are still there and there is the, the stones, as you… you know cause all of this would be drainage underneath muck and filth, so they

had these great stones, so you'd be able to cross the road, but you'd have to cross over on these stones, so you don't get yourself dirty, and there were loads of mosaics, there were baker shops, wine shops, there were… you could still see where they kept the bread, or where they baked the bread, where the kept the wine and big urns in like cold cellars, you know, cause they'd cut away of the ash and the puness??? and found obviously the relics and that underneath, that's the harbour, that's absolutely beautiful, we went to a little church, I think that's in a little church in the harbour, cause it looked nothing from the outside, and you know when you walk in, cause you can just walk in , they're all free and you can just walk in and they're absolutely beautiful, tiny, tiny little churches and you just walk in and they're absolutely beautiful. That was in Ravello right at the top, that was overlooking, that's the Amalfi coast, Ravello is absolutely beautiful. There's Sorrento, then further along the coast there's Capri, then you can go along the Amalfi coast, hmm… there's Amalfi Positano then Ravello at the top, and you look out and it's beautiful, I've never seen anything so beautiful. If you ever get a chance to go there, it's absolutely beautiful Sorrento, and music, there's music everywhere you go, we used to go and just walk into… they're not right village halls, but right little music concert halls, and you find a lot of these going on, and you walk in and it's children putting on shows but some adults and it's just musical extravaganza, it's absolutely wonderful, you know, and that was nearly every night, you'd just turn a corner, and there'd be some sort of musical event, and then we went to the opera, they had a little opera house, it was called theatre something and they put on this opera and it was… at the back of the opera it was like a courtyard overlooking Naples… overlooking Sorrento harbour and there was a big cruise liner coming in with all it's lights, I can still see it now, and it was one of those where you wore like a ball gown and you got your glass of champagne or something you know before you actually went into the theatre to take you seat, and I thought, well that's it, that's my holidays from… coming from just going to a budget type holiday to Benidorm like that to actually experience something like that is what I call a night out holiday, and the next one we're gonna have, is a cruise, I've never been on a cruise…

I: But you'd like to?

C: Yeah, I've got to try to experience a cruise, because I think I'd find that people going on cruises are mainly older people anyway, well, I'm getting towards that age, so I'm thinking…

I: But I've heard people change their minds once they go…

C: when they've had a cruise, they don't like it? I'm wondering if it might be too old for me yet…

I: Well, both ways I guess…

C: well, that's the next thing I want to experience is a cruise which I haven't experienced yet

I: Do you ever go on… like trips where you… I assume this was a package deal where you order the flight by yourself and buy the hotel separately or do you always buy package tours?

C: No, I don't always buy package, these were booked on the Internet, but just in recent years, I've booked everything on the Internet as I find it's cheaper, no, I'll do it myself now, but up to the point where I was going on holidays with the children that would be a package, but then once it started, where it was a lot easier for you to book your flight separate, your hotel separate, no, I'll just go on the Internet, and I'll just try to find the cheapest flight and the cheapest… like I've been to Rome this summer, only for a week, and that's all done on the Internet, just book a flight, book a hotel room, you know…

I: So you don't use travel agents and stuff?

C: Hmm… no, I haven't done recently. I wouldn't say I wouldn't, but I just think it's cheaper to do it yourself, because they must be taking a commission, what I would do sometimes though, is that I would go into a travel agent, I'll ask them what they've got, I'll get them to pool up some holidays, I'll take that information home, I'll then go on the Internet, and I'll then have a look and see if I can find it cheaper and I'll just book it myself

I: So do you usually plan a lot before you go?

C: I used to do, not anymore, no because we would usually book at the last minute, when I say last minute… I think the longest I've left it is two weeks, you know, because then you have to pick you ticket up at the airport, I don't like that, because that's when mistakes and things can be made, no, so really five to six weeks is ideal, I would say, because that's… I found that that's the time when… six weeks I would say is the time when holidays, not holidays, flights… if airlines haven't sold so many seats at that point, they drop the price, and so you can get airline seats a bit cheaper, about six weeks before the departure date, if you book… but if you leave it too late… they go up again, so you finally filling in??? and you think someone might come along and want something last minute, and your paying full price again, because I've already booked to go… every new year my sister and I go up to Scotland, on the 2nd of January, just for about four or five days we go up, but I've already booked my flights for that, because there was a sale on, only because there was a sale on, and they said if you want to book your flight early, it's with BMI Baby, and that's the only reason I've booked them early, because I got those cheap, flights are from, from East Midlands up to Edinburgh, because it only takes half an hour, 40 minutes, so that's that done

I: so, you usually travel with your sister now?

C: I usually travel with my sister

I: or would you ever travel alone?

C: I will do I think eventually, I haven't travelled on my own, I know a friend of mine has done it and she says, look it's not as bad as you think, Cathy, but I'm still a bit, hmm… I don't know

I: because of the safety or…?

C: hmm… yeah, that's something to do with it, social things, safety… I don't know, I think it's just a woman travelling on her own might be an easy target, I think that's how I think, different when a man travel on his own, I don't think anyone would take any notice, but you know, when a woman is on her own it's harder, well I think it's harder, maybe not for somebody younger, but for somebody older, if they're on their own, I think they look as if they are an easy target, for men, and I wouldn't like that

I: but you're considering it?

C: I would consider it, but I think if I did it, it would be like a group, go on my own but be part of a group

I: Okay, so how do you decide, like when your sister and yourself decide that Italy is the place we want to go to? How do you go about that? Why Italy?

C: well, the first time was because we'd never been to Italy before, that's… then hmm… I think, we always look for the weather, it's got to be hot, hmm… has to have a bit of culture, cause Spain doesn't appeal to me in the slightest now, I think because I did all those holidays with the kids when they were younger, so I think it has to have some culture, it has to have the weather, it has to be kind of mid market, I wouldn't want…, I would never go back to Benidorm, cause that would be almost like going to Blackpool, I would feel, so it has to have a certain feel to it, obviously the price has to be right, it has to be somewhere that maybe we would want to see and we've got to agree on, nice accommodation, cause in Italy I think the accommodation is nice, I think it's that little bit more upmarket than Spain, you know, the hotels that are in Italy, you might get a two star hotel in Italy that's equivalent to a three or four star in Spain, you know, it's just the standards are a little bit higher. I like the Italian language, you know, I like the music, I find it very musical, so I think again, it's the people, I think we just take all that into consideration, and my sister and I, because we are twins, we're very must alike, we like the same things, we want the same out of a holiday, we want a bit of relaxation, some nightlife, doesn't have to be nightclubs or anything, just at least some entertainment, some shops, got to have some shops and a bit of culture

I: So that's what you look for when you search for something?

C: Yes, and we like something to be fairly central, we don't like to be out in the sticks, we like to be in the middle of everything, so that we're not paying out for taxis here and there and everywhere, we like to be central, but not so that we've got noise surrounded by noise, but yeah

I: Would you ever consider places further away like Australia, India or…?

C: Yes, I'd like to go to China, I'd love to go to China, I just can't afford it yet, it's down to money

I: Because it's cheaper in Europe…

C: Yeah, oh, I'd love to go to Australia, China, I'd like to go to Hong Kong, I'd like to go to South Africa, oh, I'd like to go all over, but I just don't have the money to do it

I: So in time?

C: In time, hopefully, I'd like to go to Austria, you know, Switzerland, even Denmark. I remember when I was younger, do you still have that statue of the mermaid?

I: Yes, we do.

C: and everybody knows about it

I: Yes

C: Oh, I'd love to travel, I would travel all over if I could, I love travelling, even if it's just getting on a coach and going on a coach holiday, even just sitting on the coach looking out the window

I: So what is it that you get from travelling do you think?

C: I think it's just seeing different things, I remember when we use to, I know we fly when you go abroad now, you fly, but you don't see the changing countryside in a plane, whereas when we used to drive, we'd drive from Britain, get on the ferry, and then you're in Northern France, and you could actually see the landscape changing when you're driving south, you could actually see, and I'm talking about the buildings, they're all grey to start with and then you might get little dots of terracotta roofs and then further south you might get some white washed buildings, and even the windows are large to start with, and then they start getting smaller and smaller, and then the light changes, and you see all that when you're in a car, you don't see that when you fly, but you see it when you're actually travelling, and that's what I remember and that's what I like, just seeing the changing countryside, it's that that I like, even going from England to Scotland, when you're going through ??? or you go across the borders, you're just seeing that different countryside, it is different, and I feel comfortable and relaxed and you're not thinking of anything

I: What about your friends and family and all that, do you share your experiences with them? Do you talk a lot about it?

C: Oh yeah! My daughters, they… that's the next thing, they've been to New York, just shopping, you know, they've gone before Christmas, on separate occasions, they've not gone together, they've gone with their partners, and they bring back their photographs and they tell me, we've both done this this and this and then obviously they bring back gifts, and they've been to Bloomingdales and the Empire State Building, done this that and the other, they've been in a yellow cab, oh yes, and every time my daughters go on holiday, we always bring each other, it's only a little thing, but my fridge is full of magnets, because I say, don't go around looking for presents, because you're on holiday, a little fridge magnet, so we just all bring each other a little fridge magnet from another country that we've been in, and then there is one thing, I was actually just pick up stones, rocks, and then my friends were bringing me back rocks, because I've got rocks back from Sydney, Australia, from all over, I've even got a moon… space dust, because I remember one of the academics, he said, oh you like rocks, Cathy, I said well it's not so much that I like rocks, I just bring rocks back from places that I've been or I ask people just to bring me back a rock because it costs nothing, it's just to pick up a rock, at least it comes from that particular

country, so his brother worked for NASA and he brought me back space dust, so I've even got a container full of space dust, and it's like a green mineral type dust, so I've even got space dust. It sounds stupid, it's just rocks, but you know, I just like it, because that has come from that particular place

I: No, I understand… So it's the I guess attached meanings, like what this place is in your imagination, that's what it is…

C: Yes, like my friend brought be Manly beach in Sydney, you know, so I would just write Manly beach Sydney, and that could be written on the rock, so that I knew that that rock has come all that way, it's from the other side of the world, and now I've got it… because I've got rocks from Herculaneum and I think those rocks could be thousands and thousands of years old, so you don't know, so I just picked them up and just bring them home whenever I go, I always bring a rock or a pebble, I've got pebbles in my back garden, you know when I go back up to Scotland I always bring pebbles back from the beach, and I have them in my garden, shells, loads of shells from Florida, I always bring things like that back

I: It's a different type of souvenir…from that place

C: No, it's actually a part of that country that I brought back

(finishing up!)

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