

Transformational Journeys:
Volunteer Tourism,
Non-Elite Youth
and the
Politics of the Self

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Declaration

I, Ruth Cheung Judge, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

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Abstract

This thesis examines short volunteer tourism trips involving young people from non-elite backgrounds, run by youth groups based on London council estates and travelling to Kenya and Zimbabwe. Based on ethnographic work both in the UK and during trips, this thesis argues that participants narrate the trips as sites of self-transformation. They see themselves as becoming more ‘grateful’ for their relative wealth, ‘charitable’, and ‘aspirational’ in terms of having the desire and dreams to make their own future. Though these findings echo those pertaining to middle-class volunteers, there is a disciplinary aspect to the way imaginaries of personal transformation through volunteer tourism mesh with longer-standing efforts at reforming working-class youth, and amplify pressures on young subjects to take individual responsibility for their own betterment.

Rather than examine these problematic politics as an imposition of discursive power, this thesis makes a close reading of emotion and affect in volunteer tourism. Affective circulations, embodied acts, and cultivated emotions constitute depoliticised approaches to global poverty and national inequality and give them a visceral felt authenticity. However, emotional intensities also disrupt the overarching narrative. Young people emphasise their enjoyment of the trips as spaces of collective fun rather than individual reform, express desires to connect across transnational difference, and contrast their enjoyment of status and meaningful labour abroad with the constraints they face in UK society.

This thesis argues that volunteer tourism is a site for subject formation that is deeply entangled with both relations between ‘the west and the rest’ *and* young subjects’ social navigations in the national context. It offers a corrective to mapping a global-local dualism onto classed subjects and totalising analyses of volunteer tourism which assume an archetypal elite white volunteer acting at the whim of ‘neo-colonialism’ and ‘neoliberalism’. It contributes to better understanding the relationship between emotion, affect and politics, and using this understanding, offers a more nuanced reading of the transnational encounters of volunteer tourism.

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Volunteer Tourism, Young Subjects and Emotional Identifications	14
2.1. Introduction	14
2.2. Volunteer Tourism, Global Imaginaries and Experiences.....	15
2.2.1. Global Cosmopolitanism or Neo-colonialism?	15
2.2.2. Volunteer Tourism and Neoliberal Politics of the Self	20
2.2.3. Situated Explorations of Volunteer Tourism in Practice	25
2.2.4. Archetypal and Missing Subjects	27
2.3. Young Subjects.....	29
2.3.1. Moving Beyond Dualisms in Studying Young People	29
2.3.2. Marginalisation and Agency for Classed and Racialised Young Subjects	32
2.3.3. Forces of Improvement and Subject Formation in Spaces of Learning	36
2.3.4. Young People's Social Navigations of Global-Local Intersections	41
2.4. Emotion, Embodiment and Identification.....	46
2.4.1. A More-than-Representational View of Social Life.....	46
2.4.2. Emotional Understandings of Identity and Difference	49
2.4.3. Visceral Politics and Power Relations.....	53
2.5. Conclusion: Young People's Emotional Subject Formations via Volunteer Tourism	58
3. Ethnographic Research with Young Volunteer Tourists.....	61
3.1. Introduction	61
3.2. Overview of Data Collection and Case Studies	65
3.2.1. Data Collection: Multiple Methods and Multiple Interviews Over Time	65
3.2.1. A Tale of Two Youth Groups: Introduction to Cases	69
3.3. Talking the Talk: Interviews and Focus Groups.....	76
3.3.1. Interviews and Focus Groups: Rationale and Locations	76
3.3.2. In-depth Interviews: Telling Stories	78
3.3.3. Focus Groups: Sharing Feelings	80
3.3.4. The Ethics of Talk: Power Dances	82
3.4. Walking the Walk: Participant Observation at Home and Abroad	86
3.4.1. The Richness of Participant Observation	86
3.4.2. Degrees of Immersion and Dilemmas of a 'Youth Worker' Role	87
3.4.3. Performing Participation	89
3.4.4. Inscribing Observations.....	91
3.4.5. 'Successful Failures' with Participatory and Creative Methods	94
3.4.6. Ethics in Participant Observation: Fights, Failures, Friendship and Fun	96
3.5. Making Sense: Data Analysis and Writing.....	99
3.5.1. How Does Data Become Theory?.....	99
3.4.2. Writing: Cooking a Story, Serving a Story	101
3.6. Conclusion: Feeling my Way Through the Field	105

4. Before: Transformational Narratives, Imagined Journeys and Ideal Subjects	107
4.1. Introduction	107
4.2. A Transformative Journey	108
4.2.1. Be the Change, Make a Difference	108
4.2.2. Shifting Identities Via Mobility: Becoming Grateful and Motivated	112
4.3. Imagined Journeys from Spaces of Vice to Spaces of Virtue	118
4.3.1. Home: It's Hard to be Good in the Hood: Negotiating 'Badness'	118
4.3.2. Away: African Myths: Lions, Disease and Happy Poor People	123
4.3.3. From Home to Away: Gaining Respect and Virtue	128
4.4. Volunteer Tourism as a Site of 'Neoliberal' Governmentality	130
4.4.1. Active, Passionate and Aspirational Subjects	130
4.4.2. Conversion from Gangsters to Young Entrepreneurs through Adventure	133
4.4.3. Putting Faith into Action: Active Christians, Active Subjects	136
4.5. Contested Reform Narratives	140
4.5.1. Hard Work or Holiday? Claiming Deservingness and Negotiating Responsibility	140
4.5.2. Will It Change Us? Asserting Respectability and Alternative Visions of Home and Away	144
4.6. Conclusion: Anticipated Transformations	148
 5. During (1): Emotional Templates, Surfacing Identities	 150
5.1. Introduction	150
5.2. Charitable 'Compassion': The Visceral Gaze and Performing Pity	152
5.2.1. Affective Intensities and Emotional Templates	152
5.2.2. Emotional Impressions of Difference and Need	154
5.2.3. Stepping into Performances of Grateful and Generous Donation	158
5.3. Responsibility: Voluntary Labour and the Constitution of Western Privilege	164
5.3.1. Embodied Efforts: Surfacing Responsible Masculinities	164
5.3.2. Emotional Labour: Surfacing Religious Identifications	169
5.4. Irresponsibility: Celebrating Western Privilege and Particularistic Identities through Fun	175
5.4.1. Lads on Tour: Reinforcing Classed Masculinities in Exotic Africa	175
5.4.2. Authenticity, Risk and Classed Experiences of Volunteer Tourist Leisure	179
5.5. Conclusion: Emotion as the Medium and Outcome of 'Making a Difference'	183
 6. During (2): Excessive Feelings and Ambivalent Resistance	 187
6.1. Introduction	187
6.2. Refusing Reform and Reworking Moral Lessons	188
6.2.1. Teenage Kicks: Flirtation, Friendship and 'Having a Laugh'	188
6.2.2. Fights, Fun, Forgiveness and Collective Betterment	195
6.2.3. Ambivalent Disruptions to Charitable Performances	201
6.3. Relating to Africa: Transnational Connections	205
6.3.1. Claiming African Connection: 'Blending in' ... but not too much?	205
6.3.2. Globalised Pop Culture Connections	209
6.3.3. Religiosity as a Forum for Dialogue	213
6.3.4. Bonding with 'New Mates' and 'Friendship Politics'	216
6.4.5. Resonances of Urban Vulnerability	219
3.6. Conclusion: Excessive Feelings	222
 7. After: Projects and Politics of the Self	 225
7.1. Introduction	225
7.2. Charitable Aspirations	228
7.2.1. Becoming Charitable: Grateful Helpers of the Grateful Poor	228
7.2.2. Becoming Self-Made	235
7.2.3. Aspirational Charity Dreams	240

7.3. Dissonances, Fractures and Frustrations.....	245
7.3.1. Incomprehensible Poverty and Ambivalent Charity	245
7.3.2. Visceral Feelings of Disenfranchisement, De-motivation and Discontent	249
7.3.3. Glimpses of Alternative Narratives of Volunteer Tourism	254
7.4. Alternative Readings of ‘Success’.....	257
7.4.1. The Trip as ‘Proof’ of Worth and Agency	257
7.4.2. Beyond Pity: Affective Excess and Relationships of Mutuality	260
7.4.3. Changed Lives: Self-Made Facades and Supportive Foundations	264
7.5 Conclusion: Projects and Politics of the Self.....	269
 8. Conclusion	 272
Bibliography	285
Appendix 1 – Participants – ‘Cast of Characters’	300
Appendix 2 – Semi-Structured Interview Themes	309
Appendix 3 – Consent Form	310
Appendix 4 – ‘Diary Room’ Video Diaries	311
Appendix 5 – Feedback Presentation to Springboard	312

List of Figures

Figure 1: Satirical newspaper ‘The Onion’ takes on volunteer tourism	2
Figure 2: Locations of two main case studies	66
Figure 3: Housing on the Alton Estate.....	70
Figure 4: Members of Kingsfield Church at a community event	74
Figure 5: Examples of life maps	79
Figure 6: Section of Participatory Map.....	95
Figure 7: Jumping over the wall between the estate and the golf club	141
Figure 8: Jumping off logs on the walk	141
Figure 9: Embodied voluntary labour in Kenya.....	166
Figure 10: Volunteering through play in Zimbabwe	172
Figure 11: Fun times and sleeping outside in Zimbabwe	191
Figure 12: The affective intensity of fun on long bus journey sing-alongs.....	192
Figure 13: Gearing up for lion walking in Zimbabwe	194
Figure 14: Being brave and tough.....	194
Figure 15: Embodying an understanding of the trips as about mutual support	198
Figure 16: Dancing in Kenya (Volunteer and boys' home residents)	209
Figure 17: Wearing Dashiki style shirts in Kenya.....	212
Figure 18: Participants' words echo the logics of a competitive world	239
Figure 19: Worldchangers (anonymised)	242

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1. Introduction

Open a glossy magazine or turn on the television and you will often see western individuals somewhere in the global south – usually sub-Saharan Africa – engaging in some charitable good works – mostly captured by photographs of them embracing smiling young children. Speak to your friends and neighbours, and chances are that they, or their children, have spent some time abroad volunteering. Perhaps they went to Kenya with their school and built a sanitation block, perhaps their church youth group did a summer ‘mission trip’ to India and ran a kid’s activity camp, or maybe next year they are hoping to volunteer for several months in Zambia, teaching in a primary school.

Various forms of international volunteering, travel and ‘volunteer tourism’ to the global south have become a popular rite of passage for many young westerners, and images of philanthropic works in the global south have become widespread in celebrity culture. Like anything with great popularity, these practices divide opinion. Newspapers periodically print biting criticisms of the cultural improprieties and problematic projects of gap-year volunteers. Satirical pieces make us snigger at the hyperbole of volunteer tourists’ claims (see Figure 1) or the superficiality and entitlement of elite young people’s globe-trotting ‘gap yahs’¹. And yet time and time again, the individuals returning from these trips speak in earnest, heartfelt tones about how their travels were ‘incredible’, ‘the best thing they’ve ever done’, and how they are different, and better, people for having done them.

This thesis speaks to what there is to say *in between* these polarised normative claims. It asks: what does ‘volunteer tourism as a social and political phenomenon say about how we understand the world and our moral and ethical responsibilities’ (Sin et al. 2015: 121)? Why are such experiences surrounded with claims by volunteers of transformation and deep, identity-related significance? What do young volunteers’ claims reveal about the wider politics which shape their social navigations towards

¹ Viral comedy video ‘Gap Yah’ depicts upper-class idiot ‘Orlando’ recounting voyeuristic encounters with impoverished people in several countries, interspersed with chortling at his binge-drinking exploits.

adulthood? Short voluntary trips are now facilitated by a range of actors, including youth groups, schools, religious groups, and diaspora associations. Supported by grants and community fundraising activities, a range of young people far beyond those who can afford to pay commercial gap year companies are now participating in volunteer tourism. A key contribution of this project is to ask how volunteer tourism plays out for non-elite young subjects positioned very differently to the privileged volunteers whose actions and attitudes are the subject of existing debates.



Figure 1: Satirical newspaper 'The Onion' takes on volunteer tourism

The origin of my interest in this project stretches back to 2009, when I was working as a researcher in the international development sector and at the same time began volunteering at a youth group on a council estate. I frequently reflected on the classed nature of the international development sector, working mostly with middle-class, white, highly educated colleagues. I gained greater awareness of the prejudice facing the young people I was volunteering with, much of it conceiving of them as set apart in a highly localised, problematic estate-based social world. I puzzled at the missing links between engagements around global and UK poverty and inequality. When I found out that a youth worker on the estate had taken young people to volunteer in Kenya, I was fascinated. There is an intriguing drama to the idea of young people stereotyped as thugs and wastrels participating in a practice represented as shiny, happy 'do-gooding'. Participating in a trip in 2011 opened up many more questions. These trips were suffused by some very emotive stories of life-

transformations. Volunteer tourism was clearly imagined to ‘improve’ and ‘empower’ ‘urban youth’.

This thesis examines short volunteer tourism trips involving young people from non-elite backgrounds in the UK, run by youth groups based on London council estates, travelling to Kenya and Zimbabwe. Based on ethnographic work both in the UK and on overseas trips, the thesis argues that young participants narrate the trips as sites of self-transformation. They see themselves as becoming subjects who are more ‘grateful’ for their relative wealth, ‘charitable’ in terms of subscribing to general, depoliticised visions of global aid, and ‘motivated’ and ‘aspirational’ in terms of having the desire and dreams to make their own future. There is a heightened disciplinary aspect to the way imaginaries of global charity mesh with longer-standing efforts at reforming young subjects who are the objects of concern as potentially deviant or apathetic. These volunteer tourism trips thus fit in with the pressures on young subjects to take individual responsibility for their own betterment in contemporary Britain.

The research contributes to academic debates about the geographies of volunteer tourism, youth geographies, and broader debates in the social sciences in several important ways. It presents novel empirical knowledge about a more diverse group of young international volunteers. This pushes scholarship on volunteer tourism beyond totalising critiques of an archetypal elite white volunteer acting at the whim of ‘neo-colonialism’ and ‘neoliberalism’. By offering an in-depth study of volunteer tourism in practice, the thesis illuminates questions of why volunteer tourism might be *both* problematic and popular. In its specific focus on non-elite young volunteers, the thesis argues that volunteer tourism is a site for subject formation that is deeply entangled not only with transnational relations but with particular young subjects’ navigations of constraints and opportunities in the national context, and enduring gendered, classed and racialised hierarchies. In this, it offers a corrective to bounded and dualistic visions of young subjects, showing how non-elite young people engage with ‘the global’ in agentic ways, rather than being determined by ‘local’ structures. Finally, by making a close reading of the dynamics of volunteer tourism in practice, it also contributes to an understanding of the relationship between emotion, affect and embodied politics.

--- *Context* ---

A little more context can be given to situate the project. Volunteer tourism should not be understood as wholly new but as linked to a range of historical antecedents such as colonial exploration, missionary work and ‘development volunteering’ (Butcher and Smith, 2010; Devereux, 2008), as well as being linked to the embrace of voluntarism in liberal democracies (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003). The scale of volunteer tourism is significant: a 2008 study identified a dramatic growth since 1990, and estimated it to be an industry worth up to £1.3 billion, with 1.6 million paying participants (TRAM, 2008). This surge in popularity has been analysed as one pillar of a renewed ‘popular humanitarianism’, where charitable work in the global south, particularly in Africa, plays a central role in celebrity culture and corporate marketing (Daley, 2013; Mathers, 2010). The 2008 TRAM scoping study of volunteer tourism was based only on volunteer service organisations (both non-profit and commercial), but as mentioned, participation in short voluntary tourism trips is now also facilitated by youth groups, schools, religious groups, and diaspora associations. Comprehensive data on these smaller-scale initiatives has not, to my knowledge, been collected. However, it is clear that volunteer tourism has moved from being an elite to a mass phenomenon. It is now a feature on many young people’s aspirational horizons, as expressed by one of my participants, Dave, a working-class young man living on a south London council estate:

I’ve always wanted to go to Kenya and that, or Africa, and achieve something out there, help people [...] I’ve always wanted to be someone who could make change, and it just seemed like a dream that I could make reality.

(Dave, Roehampton)

As will be laid out fully in Chapter Two, much of the academic work on international volunteering and volunteer tourism, scattered across the social sciences, is dominated by trenchant critiques that it reinforces neo-colonial western privilege (Darnell, 2011; Simpson, 2004). Further critiques centre around volunteering as strengthening class privilege (Heath, 2006), and as subsumed into the individualising and commodifying drives associated with ‘neoliberalism’ (Ballie

Smith and Laurie, 2011; Mostafanezhad, 2013a). The implicit or explicit subjects of the critical literature are ‘western, often upper-middle class, often white, and often young’ (Tiessen, 2011: 575). Young volunteers are frequently portrayed as an all-powerful global elite, acting upon a powerless locality. Whilst the elite nature of these mobilities remains relevant, as outlined above, volunteer tourism and its constitutive imaginaries are increasing in reach and popularity.

There is little research on non-elite international volunteering, aside from some study of ‘Platform2’, a national scheme under the UK’s last Labour government – a £10m programme running from 2008-2011 - which aimed to widen participation in international volunteering. Its stated aim was to “‘unlock the potential’ within disenfranchised young adults to ‘become better global citizens” (DfID 2008, in Diprose, 2012: 3). This project engages with the intriguing questions Platform2 raises about the relation between classed subjectivities and global volunteering. In its focus on small-scale trips initiated by individual youth groups in London, it acts as a ‘window’ onto popular (rather than expert or state) visions of ‘good works’ in the global south, even as they are derided as a sort of ‘bastard offspring’ of ‘serious’ visions of international aid.

This thesis is based on in-depth ethnographic research with non-elite young people engaging in volunteer tourism. I engaged with two main case studies. The first of these was a youth charity, ‘Springboard’, based on a council estate in south-west London. I accompanied a 9-day trip of theirs to Kenya in February 2013, and interviewed the young participants both before and after the trip. I also undertook weekly participant observation with the charity in London over the course of 14 months, and interviewed youth workers, business funders, and young people who had been on trips in past years. The second case study was a youth group from a church, ‘Kingsfield Church’ based on a council estate in east London. With them, I accompanied a 3-week trip to Zimbabwe in August 2013, and interviewed the young participants both before and after the trip. Beyond the central case studies, I interviewed a number of other key informants and those who had been involved with similar trips.

My two main case studies were both physically located on council estates in London

and were groups that explicitly aim to work with young people facing socioeconomic vulnerability. The majority of young participants in this study were framed by youth workers, teachers and local authorities as ‘from lower socioeconomic backgrounds’, ‘marginalised’, ‘urban’ or ‘at risk’ in relation to their performance in formal education, proximity to criminal behaviour, or difficult familial situations. Most were living in low-income households on the estates. Such terms such as ‘marginalised’ and ‘urban’ carry denigrating baggage. Furthermore, young participants expressed to me that they had little identification with the label ‘working class’. They preferred to see themselves as ‘normal’. Thus, I have chosen to characterise them as ‘non-elite’, more ‘normal’ than the minority of elite youth whose positions and perspectives we often take for granted. I do, however, draw on literature on working-class youth and use this term also.

--- Contributions ---

Through examining non-elite subjects’ engagements with volunteer tourism this project extends geographies of volunteering, and studies of ‘popular humanitarian’ global imaginaries. It contributes an understanding of the dynamics of volunteer tourism in practice, and how this always intersects with volunteers’ situated social positions. Rather than producing a polemic that volunteer tourism reinforces difference, conceals structural inequalities and is ‘self-serving’, this project asks: *how* does it succeed in reinforcing difference and concealing inequality? *Does* it achieve that completely? And if it is ‘self-serving’, what *types of selves* are being built through it, and why? In this, it responds to calls to build understandings of people’s engagements with the ‘global’ as always mediated by gendered, classed and racialised hierarchies, and material, lived practice (Katz, 2001a; Nagar et al., 2002). In particular, it opens up understanding of how volunteer tourism is implicated in building subjectivities, and how contemporary imaginings of ‘good works’ in the global south are constitutive of subjectivities and exert a political force in the global north (Baillie-Smith, 2013).

The second area of scholarship that the thesis contributes to is youth geographies. More specifically, studying the transnational mobility of young non-elite people

challenges the pernicious tendency to map a global-local dualism onto classed subjects. As already noted, work around volunteer tourism tends to examine how it epitomises and reinforces elite young people's privilege (Tiessen, 2011; McGehee, 2012). On the other hand, images of 'marginalised youth' are linked to particular local spaces. Popular representations of deviance and social dysfunction are 'read' through urban space - in the UK, the council estate - and though academic work has provided rebuttals to negative stereotypes of working-class young people, it can reproduce the framing of these young people as living highly localised lives, seemingly determined by economic exclusion, prejudiced policing and the 'codes of the street' (Wilson and Chaddha, 2009). This project counteracts the confounding of 'global' with 'elite' and 'local' with 'marginalised', which limits our understanding of how places both near and distant are entangled in multiple, complex ways in young people's lives.

The thesis reads young people's engagements with volunteer tourism – in particular the identity work they do around it – as engagements with the political. In this, it develops an expanded notion of the political in youth geographies. Analysis draws upon an understanding of young people as on the 'frontline' of contact with pressing political-economic issues of the moment, for example, around education and work (Jeffrey, 2013). The way young people are 'acted upon' is telling of adults' political-economic concerns (Katz, 2008). Their spatial engagements and everyday intentional actions - to care, avoid or disturb, or articulate narratives in ways which are based on their positions in society – are 'political' in that they respond and enact agentive action in regard to the political-economic context (Skelton, 2013). In particular, the thesis contributes to an understanding of how young people's emotional self-actualisations are a site of power and politics (Gagen, 2013), and how they negotiate social constraints via 'multiple expressive registers' (Kraftl, 2008: 15).

Thirdly, the thesis contributes deeper understanding of how affective dynamics relate to the ideologies, subjectivities and politics that volunteer tourism fosters. It does so through giving a 'deep' and 'wide' ethnographic account over time, with particular attention to emotion and embodiment. The methodological framework of this project - engaging with young people before, during and after trips – provides rich understanding of the way the experience of volunteer tourism is both felt with

an individual immediacy *and* drawn into mediated collective narratives, which have an anticipatory power and extended life through memory and re-telling. This study's 'more-than-representational' reading of volunteer tourism offers nuanced theorisation of the ambiguous, co-constitutive dynamics in the transnational encounters of volunteer tourism, and how these reinforce or reconfigure volunteers' understandings of self and place. In this, it is also situated broadly in the 'mobilities turn' (Sheller and Urry, 2006) which challenges the way much research has been 'static', and focusses on the physical and virtual movements paradigmatic of contemporary society. Evidently, the mobilities in focus in this study are 'extraordinary' in the sense they are experiences unusual in the life course and accompanied by an emotional intensity. But studying the 'extraordinary' and the departures, contrasts and breaks with 'normality' involved in travel, in fact provides a productive dialogue through which to interrogate the ordinary (Urry and Larsen, 2011).

--- *Research Aims* ---

This research aims to explore 1) how volunteer tourism is a site for young people's subject formation; 2) how, as a site for subject formation, it is shaped by various representations, material relations and affective practices; and 3) how the dynamics of volunteer tourism as a site for subject formation play out for non-elite young people in marginal social positions. To meet these aims, I set out on fieldwork guided by the following broad research questions:

1. What are the frameworks and visions which shape volunteer tourism initiatives with non-elite young people in the UK?
 - a. What are the aims and understandings of the organisations, youth workers and funders who run and support such initiatives?
 - b. Do non-elite young people adopt or contest adult frameworks and visions of volunteer tourism through their verbally expressed views and embodied actions?
 - c. What are the implications for these initiatives in practice?

2. How are the identifications of non-elite young people in the UK shaped by - and how do they shape – their experience of short volunteer tourism trips?
 - a. How are young people’s intersecting identifications around class, ‘race’, gender and spirituality affected by the experience of volunteer tourism?
 - b. How do volunteer tourism trips relate to - or foster – young people’s idea of the global south, transnational relations and normative ideas of ‘doing good’ globally?
 - c. What are the ‘pivotal moments’ of embodied and emotional experience during volunteer tourism trips? What is the nature of these moments and spaces? How do they influence the relational construction of identity for the young volunteers?
 - d. How does volunteer tourism fit into young people’s social navigations of opportunity, constraint, and the hierarchies of cultural capital back in the UK?

--- *Thesis Summary* ---

Chapter Two, ‘Volunteer Tourism, Young Subjects and Emotional Identifications’, reviews literature relevant to this project and elaborates on how this thesis advances, contests or modifies others’ work. It highlights that despite valuable insights, much of the existing literature on volunteer tourism is limited by a monolithic vision of the volunteer-subject and the power relations of the encounter. The chapter synthesises work from youth geographies and beyond to outline the structural and representational inequalities facing young people in marginal social positions in the UK, particularly along the intersecting lines of class and race, and their expressions of agency amid constraint. The chapter situates volunteer tourism in a ‘politics of aspiration’ facing young working-class subjects and highlights the need for accounts of young people which move beyond dualistic discussions of structure and agency. One way to do so is to turn to the debates around emotion and affect. The final

section of the chapter draws inspiration from work which argues that emotion and affect are always involved - in ambivalent ways - in power struggles and identity dynamics. It ends by synthesising insights from across these bodies of literature to summarise this project's framing of volunteer tourism as a site of young people's emotional subject formation.

Chapter Three, 'Ethnographic Research with Young Volunteer Tourists' lays out methodological approaches and reflections involved in this project. Data collection, conducted from 2012 - 2014, included: interviews with 60 individuals - young people, youth workers and other key informants; focus groups; and participant observation with two groups in London and through accompanying them on short (2-3 week) trips to Kenya and Zimbabwe. The chapter engages reflexively with the benefits of using multiple methods and the challenges of participant observation across classed boundaries. In-depth ethnography offered extremely rich data on the embodied and emotional experiences of volunteer tourism, and a research design engaging with participants before, during and after trips generated findings about how young people engage in dynamic identity work over time, and how emotion and affect relate to discourse. Given the ethnographic depth needed to write meaningfully about young British volunteers across the boundaries of class and in a multi-sited field, I made a decision that it was better to try to do justice to this, rather than give a 'thin' account from two angles, or include African voices in a tokenistic manner. Therefore, the thesis did not directly study the perspectives of those in the destination contexts, nor does it engage with 'development studies' literature. The scope for other studies to do so is discussed further in the conclusion.

Chapter Four, 'Before: Transformational Narratives, Imagined Journeys and Ideal Subjects', examines the aims and understandings of youth workers' and adult visions of the trips, and young people's understandings of the volunteer tourism prior to travel. It finds that the trips are encapsulated in extremely strong discourses which link participation in 'popular humanitarian' action with virtuous personal transformation. In initiatives with non-elite youth, the way that volunteer tourism is understood to prompt transformation, improvement and progress is strongly infused with longer-standing ideas of the need to 'reform' young working-class subjects. This dominant narrative is based on prejudicial imaginaries of both low-income

urban space and sub-Saharan Africa, with the hope that as young subjects move between spaces of ‘vice’, to ‘needy’ spaces, more virtuous and aspirational subjectivities will be catalysed. The coherent discourses around volunteer tourism can be read as ‘neoliberal governmentality’, a form of persuasive power that encourages young people to self-govern by adopting efforts to become more grateful, responsible and motivated. But this is not totalising and young people negotiate pressures to reform and denigrating place-myths in both verbal and embodied ways.

Chapters Five and Six both focus closely on intersubjective emotions and embodied encounters *during* young people’s time overseas, drawing on participant observation data. In most existing literature, emotion has either remained peripheral, implied to be part of the ‘unfounded’ positive claims around the trips (Simpson, 2004), or seen as a potential catalyst for progressive development education (Diprose, 2012). These chapters avoid portraying emotions as intrinsically ‘good’ or ‘bad’ but rather explore them as a connective medium and circuit of power (Bondi, 2005, Pedwell, 2012). Emotion and affect work in multiple ways, in some cases to sediment well-worn stories about identity and difference, and in other cases open up possibilities to transcend these power relations.

Chapter Five, ‘During (1): Emotional Templates, Surfacing Identities’, explores the way affective circulations, embodied acts and certain sanctioned emotional responses during volunteer tourism trips help constitute depoliticised approaches to global poverty and national inequality, and give them a visceral felt authenticity. This contributes a more nuanced reading of the way volunteer tourism echoes colonial histories, and inculcates self-governing, ‘responsible’ subjectivities through ‘emotional governmentality’. It also lays out that the dynamics of this always intersect with volunteers’ existing identifications, in these cases, of class, gender and religiosity in particular. As a counterpoint to these arguments, Chapter 6, ‘During (2): Excessive Feelings and Ambivalent Resistance’, presents the way that emotional and embodied dynamics do not only reproduce power relations but exceed them, in untameable ways. Young people emphasise their enjoyment of the trips as spaces of collective fun rather than individual reform and express desires to connect with those in the host contexts across difference. These dynamics do not

straightforwardly represent ‘resistance’ but signal that there is much potential for re-working the encounters of volunteer tourism.

Chapter Seven, ‘After: Politics and Projects of the Self’ draws on post-trip interviews to explain how young people engage their experience of volunteer tourism in their social navigations back in the UK. Young people express positive accounts of the trips as achieving ‘personal transformation’, and making them more charitable and aspirational. This can be read as them engaging in identity-work shaped by the ‘politics of aspiration’. However, they also give emotional accounts which trouble this discourse. Their enjoyment of feeling respected and engaging in meaningful labour overseas brings into sharp relief feelings of disenfranchisement in the UK, in ways that implicitly conflict with the idea of individually-driven ‘betterment’. I make alternative readings of why the trips ‘work’, arguing that volunteer tourism trips give young people an affective ‘proof’ of their inherent self-worth, and some of the transnational connections they make *are* meaningful. Adopting the ‘dominant discourse’ around trips is a way to ‘label’ these as meaningful experiences whilst offering a chance to strategically ‘rebrand’ themselves and claim visible forms of respect (Smith et al., 2010) in ways which counteract negative classed and racialised stereotypes.

Finally, Chapter Eight, the conclusion, underscores my key contributions. Overall, this thesis contributes an understanding of the way global volunteering and class are imagined to relate to one another - that in the cases of this project, volunteer tourism is hoped to ‘cast[s] disenfranchised young people as grateful, responsible UK citizens’ (Diprose 2012: 4). Discourse and affect combine to produce the problematic politics of tourism. However, through engaging closely with young people’s own experiences and views, we can see – in the ways in which they draw volunteer tourism into their understandings of themselves - attempts to navigate the political-economic context in an enabling manner and to assert self-respect. Problematic politics are exceeded – though not counteracted - by young people’s emotional responses and agentive reworkings around volunteer tourism. These findings offer theorisations that link ‘neoliberal governmentality’ to emotional and affective dynamics; develop understandings of young lives that are not bounded and are shaped by a dynamic interplay of structure and agency; and present an

argument that teleological drives to 'development' in 'global' and 'local' spaces can be intertwined and amplify one another, as young volunteers are engaged as objects of a logic of 'improvement' through acting upon other young people with the same logic.

2. Volunteer Tourism, Young Subjects and Emotional Identifications

2.1. Introduction

This project examines volunteer tourism as a site in which young people engage in identity work in ways that are revealing of wider political power geometries (Aitken et al., 2007). This chapter reviews literature relevant to the project. The first section outlines the state of debate on volunteer tourism. Where popular understandings of volunteer tourism construct the experience ‘in a kind of romance that transforms both visitors and hosts’ (Vanderbeck, 2008: 1144), academic work is characterised by polemics on it as ‘neo-colonial’ and ‘neoliberal’. More nuanced critiques of it can be made by analysing it as part of broader contemporary forces of ‘popular humanitarianism’, and there are a few valuable studies of volunteer tourism in practice. The section ends by highlighting limits to the vision of the volunteer-subject in existing literature. The volunteer is often portrayed as an archetypal, all-powerful white elite subject. There is thus great potential to study non-elite volunteers, both in terms of filling an empirical gap on their experiences, and also to a corrective to the polarised and totalising analyses of volunteer tourism.

The second section of the chapter reviews a range of work on young people relevant to understanding volunteer tourism as a site of subject formation for non-elite youth. It highlights that spatial and temporal framings are central to the way young people are acted upon as ‘in development’. These forces are amplified for young subjects in marginal social positions. The section outlines the structural and representational inequalities facing young people in the UK along the intersecting lines of class and race, and young people’s expressions of agency amid these constraints. We can situate volunteer tourism in a ‘politics of aspiration’ where young working-class subjects are asked to take responsibility for their own betterment through adjusting their dispositions (Brown, 2013). Much critical work on education makes incisive Foucauldian analyses of young people as subject to ‘governmentality’, power that

operates through their own self-management. However, some explorations of informal education explore more ambivalent dynamics. Emerging interests in embodiment, emotion and materiality offer ways to develop nuanced understandings of young lives and volunteer tourism. Therefore, the final section outlines work on emotion and affect, and its relationship to identification and politics. Volunteer tourism is an emotionally saturated, embodied experience, and the literature reviewed highlights that there is much scope to explore how the affective dynamics of volunteer tourism may both produce possibilities that transcend relations of oppression, and animate longstanding ideas and practices which bolster inequality. The review concludes by bringing ideas together from across the different bodies of literature to establish a theoretical framework for the following empirical chapters. This framework sees volunteer tourism as a site of affective subject formation for young non-elite volunteers. The trips are conduits for adult visions of 'improvement' and are spatial practices that young people engage in their emotional identity work. Through examining these dynamics, we see how young people are making social navigations through the UK's contemporary political economic context.

2.2. Volunteer Tourism, Global Imaginaries and Experiences

2.2.1. Global Cosmopolitanism or Neo-colonialism?

'Volunteer tourism' is a term that would have been largely unfamiliar to many a decade or two ago, but is now firmly lodged in the public consciousness. It is the most salient label for the trips I studied: containing a mix of voluntary work and leisure, they were short term (10 days - 3 weeks) and asymmetrical (British volunteers travelling one way rather than participating in an exchange). This review draws on research examining diverse initiatives: commercial volunteering programmes (Simpson, 2004, 2005; Mostafanezhad 2013a,b,c), national state-sponsored schemes (Diprose, 2012; Griffiths, 2014b), conservation volunteering (Cousins et al., 2009; Lorimer, 2010), faith-based volunteering (Baillie Smith et al., 2013) and 'sports for development' volunteering (Darnell, 2011; Tiessen, 2011) - as

well as incorporating insights from literature on backpacking (Desforges, 2000; O'Reilly, 2006), study-abroad programmes (Mathers, 2010) and slum tourism (Frenzel and Koens, 2012). This project contributes a detailed portrait of a *particular* type of initiative, in contrast to literature criticised for glossing over distinctions between trips with markedly different aims and durations (Everingham, 2012; Jones, 2011). However, in this review, I do not draw typologies since many insights are of cross-cutting relevance. Furthermore, my participants used multiple and shifting framings of their trips as faith-based, charitable and leisurely, referring to 'mission trips', 'volunteering', or simply 'an adventure'.

Much literature has at its heart the debate between whether international volunteering and volunteer tourism might cultivate 'global cosmopolitan citizenship' - conceived as values, attitudes and politics of respect and equality across transnational difference (Jeffrey and MacFarlane, 2008; Tiessen, 2011) - or whether it is entrenched in 'neo-colonial' relations. I define neo-colonial in terms of whether international volunteering is implicated in 1) *differentiation* - between self and other, imaginative orderings that have powerful embodied effects, 2) *disremembering* - ongoing forgetting of mutuality and that the political economies of the 'developed' world depend on those of the 'developing'; 3) *appropriation* - making others into that which can be used; and 4) *erasure* - a denial that others can be radically different and lack of respect for the actuality of others' lives and knowledges (Noxolo, 2011, 2012). These dynamics re-inscribe relationships of dependency and exploitation between former colonial powers and colonies, and the 'global north' and 'global south' more broadly.

There are many normative evaluations of trips. 'Optimists' argue that well structured initiatives can create cross-cultural understanding and solidarity, and contribute to 'capacity development' in destinations (Devereux, 2008; Raymond and Hall, 2008). Others outline benefits for volunteers. Jones (2005) assessed two gap-year schemes as having 'dramatic benefits and personal development effects' in building soft skills such as: confidence, teamwork, problem solving, and communication skills, and argues that it dispelled stereotypes of other cultures (as based on volunteers' self-perceptions). Work which focusses on interventions such as industry guidelines to achieve 'the right balance between encouraging positive

impacts and minimizing negative side effects' (Ong et al., 2013), has valid pragmatic concerns with the effects of different programme designs. However, a focus on maximising an assumed potential 'positive impact' leaves many critical questions unasked.

Many others ask critical questions and come to damning conclusions. Overall, much literature argues that volunteer tourism reproduces rather than deconstructs established legacies of relating to the global south. For instance, Simpson (2004, 2005), examining commercial gap year programmes, argues that perceptions of 'positive impact' are embedded in a westernising, modernising development model. Companies sell trips to 'disadvantaged communities' without histories or politics. She sees volunteer tourism as providing 'consumable experiences of "the other"' which legitimise unskilled young westerners' expertise to 'do development' without attention to skills, sustainability or accountability (Simpson, 2004: 683). Assumptions that 'seeing equates to knowing' can strengthen stereotypes (Diprose, 2012). The seemingly universal language of 'global citizenship' or 'development' masks that western volunteers are constructed as global subjects, while host communities remain objects of globalisation (Tiessen, 2011). This reproduces 'common sense' notions of difference which echo colonial representations of the incapacities of non-whites (Darnell, 2007).

Mary Mostafanezhad presents some of the most well-elaborated critiques of the 'neo-colonial' dynamic. She outlines how volunteer tourism relies on an aestheticization of poverty as 'authentic', 'cultural' and a symbol of host contexts' 'uncommercial' nature. This is depoliticising, leads to a desire for a 'development freeze' and replaces structural understandings of social justice with discourses of individual 'helping' (Mostafanezhad, 2013c). Within the volunteer tourist imaginary, there is a 'geography of compassion'. Volunteer's desires are informed by a hierarchy of imagined authenticity, with destinations such as Thailand seen as a starting point towards more 'risky' destinations such as India, and culminating in Africa (Mostafanezhad, 2013b; Sin, 2009). There is a huge power to the idea of 'saving Africa', an essentialising imaginary 'often made possible by mobilizing the tensions between stories of suffering and stories of smiling in the face of that suffering. This seeming contradiction helps to render African people as not just close

to nature but as nature itself' (Mathers, 2010: 156).

Mostafanezhad further articulates the argument that relations of gendered generosity towards poor children are central to volunteer tourism, and 'Madonna and child' iconography resonates across celebrity culture, volunteer practice and social media self-presentations (Mostafanezhad, 2013a). This echoes critiques that children from the global south become de-contextualised objects to be 'helped' in the aid industry (Aitken et al., 2007), an effective tool serving international development NGOs' institutional survival (Manzo, 2008). Mostafanezhad argues that volunteers' feelings of pleasure are embedded in a sentimental colonial legacy, where children as dependent mirrors a feeling towards the 'third world' as in need, and legitimises and inflates the volunteer's sense of 'doing good'.

Further critical discussions add a useful focus on volunteer subjectivities in exploring how volunteers feel discomfort, yet that this feeling does not translate into significant action on inequality (Crossley, 2012; Darnell, 2011; Schwarz, 2015). For instance, 'sport for development' volunteers, after 8 months in African and Caribbean countries, expressed humility and guilt that they 'gained more than they gave'. Darnell (2011) argues this functioned as a 'strategy of innocence' and helped them separate contradictory feelings about the difficulty of substantially addressing poverty from their own sense of 'selflessness'. The experience was one of 'discovering and solidifying the self as moral', rather than gaining awareness of western injustice and committing to support the agency of those in the destinations (Darnell, 2011: 981). Crossley (2012) argues that volunteer tourists respond to finding poverty unsettling through: a) casting it as 'redemptive', a force for their internal moral transformation from ignorant to 'appreciative', b) seeing it as a feature of an 'exotic landscape' conflated with authentic culture, or c) assert a belief in the 'happy poor'. These responses can prevent the development of critical awareness or engagement and, problematically, satisfaction can be gained from witnessing trivialised and romanticised material deprivation. Poverty remains understood as random luck, rather than as a symptom of inequality and oppression (Simpson, 2004, 2005).

Similar findings about 'colonial fantasies' and the romanticisation of poverty are

present in literature on tourism to the global south. O'Reilly (2006) writes that backpackers' desires include: the idea of the 'native' who has never seen a white person; nostalgia for 'traditional' life outside the west; the 'happy native', poor but immune to suffering; and the backpacker as a brave, intrepid explorer. Notions of authenticity are paramount to 'travellers', who differentiate themselves from 'mainstream tourists' and seek to visit places that are 'really different' (Desforges 1998; Noy, 2004). These desires have exploitative impacts as travellers seek 'uncommodified' experiences such as local rates and free information. The idea of poverty as authenticity is also a driver in 'slum tourism', now a globally significant practice, growing out of politically motivated tours in South Africa and Brazil (Frenzel and Koens, 2012). Slum tourism incorporates aesthetic appreciation of both 'beauty', in a nostalgic vision of slums as traditional and 'organic', and 'the sublime', a heady mix of horror and pleasure in the face of the unknown and overwhelming. The 'shock' of crossing boundaries becomes an experience to be consumed, providing some benefits for residents but also 'fixing' them (Dovey and King, 2012). This work suggests the centrality of the visual to westerners' engagements with the global south. The tourist gaze is 'socially ordered and systematised' (Urry and Larsen, 2011), shaped by particular filters and playing a role in reproducing orderings.

In summary, many strongly conclude that international volunteering is 'neo-colonial' rather than 'globally cosmopolitan'. Or, drawing on critical work on cosmopolitanism, it could be said that it exemplifies a supposedly neutral 'cosmopolitan' vision of working for global good that in fact allows 'western societies [to] rewrite their particularity as universalism' (Hall 2002: 28; Breckenridge et al., 2002; Calhoun, 2002). This critique of volunteer tourism is both convincing and rather totalising. Much in these studies rings true, but it gives a sense of western volunteers as all-powerful global elites, acting upon a powerless and faceless 'local'. This both gives a very 'one-sided' view of the encounters of volunteer tourism, and also can limit space for exploring dynamics beyond 'colonial fantasies' that might drive volunteers' motivations. For instance, as well as reproducing a 'self-other' distinction, volunteer tourism is clearly driven by particular contemporary political-economic influences upon 'self-building'. I outline work on this next.

2.2.2. Volunteer Tourism and Neoliberal Politics of the Self

Many critiques of volunteer tourism as 'self focused' imply this as meaning initiatives should be dismissed as 'lacking substance'. However, this project is interested in building a greater understanding of the popularity of volunteer tourism despite its problematic elements. International volunteering and travel are arguably practices of middle-class symbolic distinction in the global north (Mowforth and Munt, 2008). Heath (2006) analyses international volunteering as a mode of gaining cultural capital that fits into a classed 'economy of experience' in the UK. With the expansion of higher education and the knowledge economy, a 'personality package' (a combination of credentials, 'soft skills', and charisma) becomes a marker of employability. Volunteer tourism helps young people gain the edge amid 'increasing 'commodification' of the socio-emotional embodiment of culture, incorporating drive, ambition, social confidence, tastes and interpersonal skills' (Brown, 1995 in Heath, 2006: 93). Travel experiences are collected as markers of taste and distinction which can often be converted to economic capital (Desforges, 1998; O'Reilly, 2006; Snee, 2013). Jones (2011) analyses international volunteering as linked to the 'globalisation of work' - that contemporary work is constituted by networks that link the distant and the immediate, and blurs distinctions between formal/informal and public/private. He argues that young volunteers might be ill-informed about histories and politics, but are in part rationally driven by employers' valuing of a loosely defined 'global consciousness' in workers.

Volunteer tourism - as a forum that claims to foster self-reflection, self-development and flexibility - also fits theories of 'reflexive modernity' and 'risk society'. Sociologist Beck (2010[1999]) puts forward that industrial modernity has led to a proliferation of opportunities and risks, a diversification of life choices and 'disembedding' from traditionally prescribed rites of passage. Thus:

the ethic of individual self-fulfilment and achievement is the most powerful current in modern Western society. Choosing, deciding, shaping individuals who aspire to be the authors of their lives, the creators of their identities, are the central characters of our time.

(Beck, 2010 [1999]: 222).

His idea of 'individualization' is distinct from those of individualism, individuation (becoming unique) or atomisation: it denotes the fact that the contemporary subject needs to take individual risks and manage their 'reflexive biography' (self-discovery and self-determination) well. Volunteer tourism can be read as evidence of 'life politics' where instead of formal politics, privatised individual morality and lifestyle choices underpin efforts for social change (Butcher and Smith, 2010).

However, theories of 'risk society' have been criticised for overemphasising choice and agency and neglecting questions of who has the power to recompose their identities, a point clearly relevant to this project's focus on non-elite youth (Huq 2006, Rogaly and Taylor 2011). Ansell (2008), drawing on both these theories and their criticisms, argues that 'risk' is engaged around gap years as part of a mediation between modernity's emphasis on risk control and postmodernity's drive towards risk and individualisation. Desirable danger is 'sold' alongside a strong emphasis on safety (Ansell, 2008; O'Reilly, 2006; Simpson, 2005). Volunteer tourism can be seen as evidence of the partial, idealised push towards 'reflexive individualisation' as young subjects face both encouragement to make choices with 'risk' and freedom, and pressure to make the 'right' choices.

Many read volunteer tourism as characteristic of 'neoliberalism'. Volunteer tourism is implicated in the broader shift of responsibility for development away from the state to a 'challenge' to be 'overcome' privately and commercially by individuals and corporations (Mostafanezhad, 2013c; Sin et al., 2015). It arguably extends 'neoliberal cultural logics' of commodification as a product in 'moral markets' where apolitical solutions to poverty are purchased (Mostafanezhad, 2013a; Simpson, 2005). For instance, Baillie Smith and Laurie (2011) discuss volunteering partnerships between the state, international development sector and the private sector. These provide benefits to companies in terms of attracting and rewarding personnel and foster learning useful in competitive knowledge economies. Volunteering becomes a forum for creating 'global' citizens suited to neoliberal Britain, in which 'development and the global south then provide and demarcate a space in which such citizenships can be practised, rather than shaping, challenging, and defining those citizenships' (Baillie Smith and Laurie 2011: 554).

Thus, volunteer tourism can be seen to foster ‘neoliberal subjectivities’, as a ‘technology of the self’ through which subjects constitute themselves as competitive, entrepreneurial, responsible and self-improving (Baillie Smith and Laurie, 2011; Sin et al., 2015; Vrasti and Montsion, 2014). Cremin (2007) argues that gap years have the appearance of liminal liberation but actually prepare young people to be amenable to an insecure and flexible labour market through encouraging certain types of subjectivity – enterprising (overcoming limits, taking opportunities, realising ambitions); enjoying (the obligation to be more than your formal work, to ‘live your dreams’); and ethical (in the colonial sense of ‘helping’). The empirical chapters of this thesis explore the idea of volunteer tourism as shaped by such forces, but also question wholesale readings of it *merely* as ‘neoliberal governmentality’.

Indeed, we must precede with some caution around such analysis. The term ‘neoliberalism’ has been subject to criticism as an over-used abstraction, obscuring more than it reveals about the way that privatisation and marketisation are actually enacted by particular actors, and as providing reductive understandings of power which do not aid us in understanding socio-cultural processes or collective action (Barnett, 2005; Castree, 2006). Castree (2006) argues for specificity but concedes perhaps it is a ‘necessary illusion’ that allows connected conversations, whereas Barnett (2005) makes a case to avoid its use. In this project, I try to minimise my use of the term as an explanatory stopgap, but its widespread use demands engagement. These criticisms highlight that analyses of ‘neoliberal’ international volunteer can be, like the criticisms of the ‘neo-colonial’ nature of international volunteering, totalising. For instance, Lyons et al. (2012: 368) write that ‘processes of neoliberalism have begun to co-opt gap year volunteering’. Such statements are limited and limiting in their simplistic use of ‘neoliberal’ to portray a vague hegemonic power.

Furthermore, even as critics condemn them, volunteer tourism initiatives continue to gain popular force. How can we understand better the fact that volunteering ‘still feels like a risk, still feels exciting’ (O’Reilly, 2006: 1006)? Work on ‘popular’ and ‘celebrity humanitarianism’, a contemporary backdrop to volunteer tourism, is illuminating. This highlights the prevalence of the ‘celebrity-charity-corporate

complex'² in shaping ideas of global moral action (Brockington, 2014). Popular humanitarianism has been criticised as furthering both the inequalities of neoliberal markets and western interventionism. For instance, special 'ethical' products can further capital accumulation for multinationals who fund 'social responsibility' from outside their profits; spectacular events such as Live8 can foster consensus that free market capitalism is the 'legitimate' pathway to global justice rather than protest, local activism or alternative transnationalisms (Biccum, 2007); making development 'sexy' serves charities' institutional interests; and celebrity activism on 'moral issues' such as conflict can depoliticise western interventions (Daley, 2013).

Seeing volunteer tourism as embedded in 'popular humanitarianism' contextualises the argument that it is informed by 'neoliberal' political economic relations, whilst simultaneously treading the paths made by colonialism. Its logic mirrors popular representations such as those contained in reality TV show 'Survivor', which stage the 'plot' of transforming western lives through sentimental encounters with a generalised 'Africa', at the same time as being embedded in logic of surveillance and competition as contestants calculate to 'win' (Hubbard and Mathers, 2004). For instance, in the UK government's International Citizenship Service, volunteers are asked to add value to themselves by enthusiastically joining efforts to tackle the 'challenges' of poverty, including through setting up enterprises (Griffiths, 2014a). This casts the global south as an untapped market and fosters the competitiveness of UK volunteers as well as remaking differentiating divides.

These contemporary imaginaries which shape and energise ideas of what is 'good' across borders have distinct historical parallels. Pratt (1992: 52) writes of the 'sentimental mode' in European travel writing - which exploded in popularity at the end of the 18th century - as narratives of 'anti conquest' which "underwrite" colonial appropriation, even as it rejects the rhetoric, and probably the practice, of conquest and subjugation'. In contrast to the way early colonial explorers wrote in a

² Since the 1980s celebrity involvement in development has become increasingly formalised, systematic, and competitive. UN agencies have celebrity ambassadors, charities send celebrities on publicised field trips, international charity is central to the 'personal brands' of celebrities like Angelina Jolie and Bono, and celebrity-fronted spectacular events like BandAid make an imprint on the popular imagination. 'Non-contentious' issues (e.g. education) in Africa are the focus of much celebrity action (Brockington, 2014).

disembodied manner as ‘masters of all they surveyed’, sentimental travel writing was full of human drama and emotion in a way that ‘explicitly anchors what is being expressed in the sensory experience, judgement, agency or desires of the human subjects. Authority lies in the authenticity of somebody’s felt experience’ (Pratt 1992: 74). Idealised stories of reciprocity counter the writers’ involvement in exploitative commerce, as colonial interactions began to be more aggressively driven by capital accumulation. Similarly, the UK’s Empire Marketing Board poster campaign (1926-33) evoked ‘uplift’ and care for the colonised to promote commerce within the British Empire (Kothari, 2012).

Historical examples of edifying the imperial ‘self’ through encounters with the global south (Willinsky, 1998) clearly have a strong resonance with volunteer tourism. This is resonance rather than exact repetition. It can be argued that contemporary volunteer tourism rejects the visions of modernising development and national interests central to European imperialism and earlier development volunteering such as VSO and Peace Corps, framed by the Cold War context (Butcher and Smith, 2010). Though Butcher and Smith (2010) argue from this basis against an analysis of volunteer tourism as ‘colonial’, this seems a narrow understanding of ‘colonial’ dynamics as explicitly proclaiming western dominance. The flexibility of narratives of ‘anti-conquest’ in the postcolonial present may both acknowledge the failure of modernising projects but continue to call for western intervention (Hubbard and Mathers, 2004; Baillie Smith, 2013: 403).

Postcolonial analyses of European imperialism draw attention to how intimate relations and the ‘schooling of desire’ were central to imperialism (Stoler, 2001). These authors analyse colonial contact not simply as omnipotent exercises of domination, but as a co-constitutive ‘contact zone’ (Pratt, 1992) of ‘tense and tender ties’ (Stoler, 2001). Attention in colonial encounters ‘to the distribution of appropriate affect (what sentiments could be shown toward, and shared with, whom)’, worked to police both the exterior and interior frontiers of citizenship - i.e. the boundaries of class within colonial society as well as its borders (Stoler, 2001: 3). These more nuanced critiques raise questions about how volunteer tourism plays out in practice. It is to such explorations that I now turn.

2.2.3. Situated Explorations of Volunteer Tourism in Practice

This project analyses volunteer tourism in practice. The polarised visions of cynics or apologists for volunteer tourism can lead to ‘erasing the social relations through which subjectivities are produced’ (Baillie Smith et al. 2013: 7; Lorimer, 2010; Sin et al, 2015). Smith et al. (2010), in the context of UK-based volunteering, highlight that volunteering is always ‘situated’ both in material place and volunteers’ life courses, is a fundamentally social practice, and suffused by emotions such as belonging, pleasure, sorrow and anger, and embodied experiences which often exceed state or third sector logics. This section discusses situated explorations of volunteer tourism.

Mathers’ (2010) study of American travellers (tourists, political tourists and study abroad students) visiting South Africa (for 1 month to 1 year) confirms many critical findings, but adds understanding of how they shape and are shaped by particular identities. Travellers saw South Africa in ways that conformed to entrenched stereotypes of a homogenised Africa. However, the ‘reverse gaze’ and encounters formed a ‘contact zone’ where, through the ‘sense of being observed and labelled, [travellers] experience a fundamental shift in their own understanding of their position in the world’ (Mathers, 2010: 44). In Mathers’ case it was national identity that was stabilised through this contact. Travellers faced feelings of discomfort and shock at ‘seeing’ America for the first time as a despised and adored nation. For many this reinforced a drive to rehabilitate Americanness by enacting responsibility as citizens of a global power through ‘saving Africa’. It also strengthened working-class, African-American and Mexican-American travellers’ sense of the ‘American’ side of their hyphenated identities. They became ambivalently more comfortable in the ‘organisational skin’ of national identity. Mathers illuminates that ‘colonial’ dynamics of volunteer tourism should be examined in relation to national identity and classed and racialised identifications within the nation.

Han (2011) makes a nuanced reading of how ‘neoliberal’ dynamics were animated in resonances between national, religious and capitalist ideologies during a South Korean short-term mission trip to East Africa. Mission volunteers’ exaltation of diligence and personal responsibility as worthiness emerged from a complex

‘assemblage’ of evangelical theology, national history and development discourses. Volunteers’ personal stories had narrative arcs centring on survival, feelings of gratitude, and pursuit of service - which resonated with selective readings of Korean national history: of ‘being saved from communism and poverty’ by the US and through the controversial state-led industrialisation of the 60s and 70s. Both resonated with narratives of salvation and progress found in Christianity. Embodied practices such as teaching and chanting, and emotive moments were constituted by this ‘hodgepodge of a political-theological discourse...’ (Han, 2011: 152), and helped nurture and reproduce evangelical-capitalist subjectivities.

Others working on faith-based volunteering also explore hybrid blends of discourses. Baillie Smith et al. (2013) found that faith-based international volunteering in Latin America fostered ‘global’ subjectivities shaped by multiple sources such as ‘faith based imaginaries of global community, public imaginaries of development, discourses around the ‘gap year’ and everyday negotiations of cultural and religious difference and inequality’ (Baillie Smith et al., 2013: 3). A sense of transnational faith-based unity and equality was mixed with assumptions of superior western capacity in comparison to their hosts. Young volunteer’s diary reflections revealed that critical questions were present, but internalised. Olson (2015), from the same project, considers international volunteering through the lens of rites of passage. Trips abroad were a liminal space in which young people ‘tried on’ religious adulthood, but also took on uncritical views of economic inequality, as struggles with encountering suffering ended in accepting the suffering of others. Upon their return, volunteers ‘make sense’ and reconcile their experience with ‘normal’ life, resulting in a rite of passage that, overall, steels them to put up with inequality and suffering. Similarly, others conclude that volunteer tourism can function as an ‘inoculation’ to the inequality of the ‘real world’ (Schwarz, 2015).

Situated studies often provide a corrective to totalising visions of volunteer dominance, that these are agentic negotiations, despite ongoing power differences. For instance, Everingham (2015) found that volunteers at a local organisation promoting reading, the creative arts and language exchange in Ecuador did (though not inevitably) hold critical discourses around development, colonialism and the commodification of volunteer tourism, and experienced feelings of respect, humility

and mutuality in the equalising experience of having to speak Spanish. Diprose's (2012) analysis of Platform2, with its strongly designed 'development education' aspect, identifies how pre-departure training, reflective discussions, and the emotional and humanised connections from living and working under local conditions at times undercut a sense of 'volunteer heroism' and supported social justice pedagogy. Palacios (2010) proposes a distancing of volunteer tourism from development discourses, arguing that an emphasis on intercultural exchange and solidarity can provide two-way benefits in social capital, language competence and global awareness. Much of this more ambivalent and thoughtful engagement with normative questions draws on Freire's (1970) ideas of dialogue-based pedagogy to build 'critical consciousness'.

Work in tourism studies highlights more ambivalent disruptions to dominance, such as the discomforts of the 'reverse gaze', particularly around photography. A prolonged stare or questioning look from the photographee can prompt visceral feelings of embarrassment, and 'capture and objectify the tourist photographer as a particular type of tourist' (Gillespie, 2006: 347; Mathers, 2010; Ntarangwi, 2000). Work on sex and romance tourism highlights that bodies and emotions play into the 'reverse gaze', for instance young Gambian men's sexual encounters with European and American female tourists are wound round with narratives of romance and entrepreneurship which greatly complicate simple 'victim/oppressor' categories (Ebron, 1997). Situated studies of volunteer tourism – and related journeys and encounters – are enriching. Relations of dominance, though remaining relevant, are never total. 'Neo-colonial' and 'neoliberal' dynamics intertwine, play out in relation to particular national, classed and racialised identities, and are not the whole story. This project contributes to furthering such arguments.

2.2.4. Archetypal and Missing Subjects

The above sections have summarised the burgeoning literature on volunteer tourism, highlighting the need for further studies contextualised in the political economy, in popular representations, and attending to practice. A limitation of much of the work on volunteer tourism is that it portrays the subjects involved as archetypes - representatives of an all-powerful 'West'. The imagined subject of

much existing literature is wealthy and elite, and uses the experience to solidify their privileged position. To a great extent this is valid (Heath, 2006; Tiessen, 2011) and we must not lose sight of the highly asymmetric nature of global mobility that allows certain bodies to travel for leisure, and constrains the movement of others in the service of capital accumulation which benefits the global north (Bauman, 1998; Gogia, 2006). Despite the fact that the unequal nature of these mobilities is still highly relevant, the arguments are problematic in their broadness and bluntness. Crude visions of elite volunteer tourists illuminate little other than the overarching critique. For example, one author writes:

... the economically and socially *powerful volunteer tourists* (who are, *by nature*, in possession of enough economic power that they have the discretionary time and income to travel to a distant destination)... and the *less powerful host communities* (who are, *by nature, being exploited* or dominated by forces that place them in the position of being “voluntoured”). This relationship in itself shatters any notion of human emancipation...

(McGehee, 2012: 93, emphasis added)

Despite the legitimacy of the argument that volunteer tourism perpetuates inequalities, such a fixed, dualistic vision obscures more ambiguous, co-constitutive dynamics in the transnational encounters of volunteer tourism, and reifies (even, in the quote above, naturalises) the power dynamics it seeks to criticise (Griffiths, 2014).

This project offers a corrective to this, and addresses a gap in the literature in its focus on volunteer tourist trips which engage young people from working-class backgrounds. Current work on volunteer tourism can implicitly strengthen the view of particular young subjects as ‘global’ and others as ‘local’. But critical theorisations of scale have highlighted the problematic dualism between global and local as based on the idea of hierarchically ordered bounded units (Herod and Wright, 2008). This gives ‘the global’, as associated with globalised neoliberal capitalism, a seemingly inevitable power (Gibson-Graham 2008), and ignores how globalised social phenomena are produced by material practices which cross multiple scales including households, communities and bodies, and are always mediated by gender,

race and local 'structures of feeling' (Katz, 2001; Nagar et al., 2002). This project is a study of the 'situated globality' (Blok, 2010) of particular volunteer tourism trips.

In its focus on non-elite subjects engaging in volunteer tourism, the project explores the contingent outcomes of volunteer tourism for particular actors. Though visions of 'global citizenship' often imply a privileged subject, elites do not have a monopoly on the globality or charity of volunteer tourism. As volunteer tourism expands in popularity, we 'lack a clear understanding of how factors such as class, locality, gender and religiosity come together in different ways at different times to shape the specific ways citizens in the global north engage with and act in relation to development issues' (Baillie Smith, 2013: 401). This project addresses this by putting non-elite volunteers' experiences front and centre. It asks how volunteer tourism and popular humanitarian imaginaries relate to the subjectivities of those on the 'receiving end' of policies of austerity (Baillie Smith, 2013), and with experiences of social exclusion, which in existing literature are usually framed as being 'covered over' by spectacles of global citizenship (Biccum, 2007). To do so requires reviewing work on the lives of young people situated in marginal positions within the UK.

2.3. Young Subjects

2.3.1. Moving Beyond Dualisms in Studying Young People

This project is about non-elite young people's subject formations through volunteer tourism. It is informed by - and contributes to - diverse work across youth geographies and other social scientific scholarship on young people. Most broadly, the project contributes to countering static and dualistic understandings of young people's lives. Nicola Ansell (2009) points out the limits of much children's and youth geographies, based on critical theorisations of scale and space. She argues that young people are often associated with 'agency' at the 'local' scale, and portrayed as acted upon by forces of 'structure' at a higher 'global' level. Instead, she invites us, following Massey (1998), to understand young people as not simply autonomous individuals either acted upon or wholly agential, but always situated in

networks which connect multiple places. Such a focus does not mean space is devoid of power relations: spatial claims remain central to strategies of inclusion and exclusion, and certain spaces have more ‘intimacy’ for young people, who often have less capacity to influence locales than adults (Ansell, 2009). Investigating volunteer tourism provides a direct forum in which to unpack the influences of both ‘the local’ and ‘the global’ upon young people, and how they engage space with agency.

The project particularly disrupts dualisms of structure and agency, local and global in relation to understandings of classed youth (see also Cheung Judge, 2015b). The last section highlighted a need to move beyond portrayals of volunteers as all-powerful, entirely mobile, elite subjects. On the other hand, although literature on working-class young people illuminates how many of them face severe inequalities, a blinkered focus on their experiences in ‘the street’, neighbourhood and school can reproduce a framing of them as living particularly localised and bounded lives. This project takes seriously both the way non-elite young participants are subject to intense forces of ‘improvement’ but also exert agency that exceeds these, and how the transnational mobility of volunteer tourism is drawn into both these dynamics. This concern with moving past dualistic views of young people mirrors the way I take issue with polarised views of volunteer tourism.

This section will first review work on the socioeconomic contexts relevant to the young participants in this study. Literature highlights how young lives often become ‘spectacle’, ‘a tremendously fertile figuration upon which all manner of things, ideas, affective relations, and fantasies are projected’ (Katz, 2008: 7). Young people labelled as ‘urban youth’ face intersecting prejudices around class and race and are asked to become ‘more aspirational’. The section proceeds to discuss how work on spaces of learning – informal and formal education – can illuminate processes of subject formation relevant to the study of volunteer tourism. Young people are acted upon as ‘becomings’, and spaces of learning are often driven by anxieties about constituting the ‘normal’ subject in ways which reinforce social hierarchies. However, there is room for diverse relationships and dynamics and learning spaces are often enjoyable. The section will end by looking to going ‘beyond’ repeating the refrain that young lives are framed by adult anxieties, or that young people’s agency

must be recognised (Kraftl, 2013). Theorising young people as navigating shifting constraints and opportunities through mobility and emotion furthers our attempts to understand volunteer tourism as a process of social reproduction or its potential for social transformation.

Before embarking on the core of this section, I must briefly make reference to some conceptual debates on young people, 'transitions' and 'becoming'. Although this review has had to be selective within the huge range of work on young people, it is hard to avoid reference to these debates, given that common-sense understandings of volunteer tourism portray it as a catalytic point in young people's transitions towards adulthood, an experience preparing young people for independence and the labour market. Notions of 'transition' have been criticised as based on the idea of a passage through the life course which is not universal but based on western psychological approaches to 'healthy development'. This plays into normalising visions of young people as in linear progress towards the 'higher' destination of adulthood (Jeffrey, 2010), which has been a powerful logic for governing young people. In contrast, drawing attention to ideas of childhood and youth as socially constructed has been a key tenet of the 'new social studies of childhood'. This argues that the modern Western binary view of young people as innocent 'angels' or potentially anarchic 'devils' emerged from the historical specificities of the industrial revolution (Hopkins, 2010; Valentine, 1996; Skelton and Valentine, 1998) and emphasises that children and young people are (political) agents in their own right. These pertinent critiques form a backdrop to the discussion at hand: non-elite adolescent youth are subject to moral panics, volunteer tourism work with children idealises childhood as a time of safety and freedom from responsibilities and politics (Valentine, 1996; Boyden and De Berry, 2004), and trips seek to 'develop' young people as 'becomings'. In this study, these dynamics were exacerbated by the way particular young people are subject to more intense efforts of 'improvement' than others, which is the focus of the next section.

2.3.2. Marginalisation and Agency for Classed and Racialised Young Subjects

This project writes about ‘non-elite’ young people, and there is a delicate balance to be struck in this between avoiding sensationalism³ and examining the realities of social inequality for young people. Representational violence abounds. In this study, many young participants were framed by schools and youth groups as ‘at risk’, a label linked to imaginings of difference and criminalisation. Under New Labour, ‘risk’ became applied in policy to wide-ranging concerns about young people, from youth offending to generalised ‘failure’ and ‘not reaching potential’. The slippage between seeing young people as ‘at risk’ and ‘risky’, means that the label often justifies pre-emptive intervention and individualises responsibility for making ‘bad choices’, assuming ‘agency within the individual to overcome, or at least navigate through, inequalities and structural barriers that exist’ (Turnbull and Spence, 2011: 948). Ambiguous use means that factors such as class and race become ‘risk factors’, subjecting certain individuals and families to scrutiny.

Cindi Katz theorises the interconnections between structural inequalities, spectacular representations and young lives. She argues that global economic restructuring (rapid and highly uneven industrialisation and deindustrialisation) and the erosion of the welfare state has caused a ‘disruption of social reproduction’, that is, the physical and cultural practices by which the labour force is maintained. In this context, adult anxieties about the political-economic future have dramatic material effects on young lives. The lives of some are saturated with economic and psychological resources as privileged parents attempt to ensure their kids ‘make it’ (Katz, 2008). On the other hand, many young people worldwide are managed as ‘waste’ in terms of being an ‘excess’ population whose bodies need to be contained and disciplined. An example of the way representational and material violences

³ A ‘spectacular’ focus on marginality goes back to early social scientific interest in young people, in Chicago School studies of youth ‘delinquency’ in the 1950s and ‘60s. Straightforward views of deviance were problematised by the scholarship of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham in the 1970s, much of which explored young white working-class men’s ‘subcultures’ of resistance - through leisure or in school - as an affirmation of working-class identity (Willis, 1977). These studies opened a valuable interest in style, culture and class, though were criticised for a romanticised and blinkered focus on young men, and a tendency to portray subcultural identities as an ‘authentic’ and cohesive class resistance (Huq, 2006).

mesh can be seen in ‘the school to prison pipeline’ where dynamics of under-education, surveillance and unforgiving punishment are accompanied by a rhetoric of personal responsibility for young men of colour in the US (Katz, 2011:51).

Young people face intersectional prejudice. The young people who participated in this project lived on, or were associated with youth groups based in council estates (low-income urban areas). ‘Inner city’ and ‘urban’ can be tropes which link danger and social dysfunction with minority communities (Kulz, 2014; Vanderbeck, 2008). In the UK, prejudicial readings of council estates go hand-in-hand with a renewed demonisation of a ‘failing’ underclass (Gunter and Watt, 2009, McKenzie, 2013). Prejudice congeals around intersections of age, race, class and gender, as well as comportment, dress, speech and ‘attitude’ (Allen et al, 2013; Vanderbeck, 2008). In particular, young men of colour in low-income areas are associated with ‘gangs’. While tight loyalties, territorial belongings and criminal activity do occur and young people themselves talk of ‘gangs’, the term is also used to pathologise young people and their social bonds (Lucas, 1998). These representational violences have deeply embodied effects⁴. Experiences of being feared in public space inscribe racialised hierarchies onto young people’s bodies (Day, 2006). Relations with police are a visceral form of everyday prejudice, particularly ‘stop and search’ policies, which subject young people to intensely painful experiences of being ontologised as criminal, asked to ‘prove their innocence’ in a huge range of spaces and times. Disproportionate policing of young men is experienced collectively as community discrimination, as women and older people feel intense anxiety about young male family members and friends (Cahill, 2015)⁵.

Many young people also face narrow future socioeconomic horizons. A strong vein of work critiques education as a powerful forum for reproducing inequality in the UK. For instance, the intensified privatisation of education through Academy schools arguably undercuts redistributive models of localised provision. As schools

⁴ Representational violence can have directly violent effects, even constituting a ‘politics of death’ (James, 2014). Increasing awareness of the deaths of young black men and women at the hands of police at the US illustrates this idea with visceral power. However, it is also present in the contexts of this study, as the catalytic role of the fatal shooting of unarmed Mark Duggan by police to the UK’s nationwide riots in the August 2011 shows.

⁵ In the borough of Haringey in April-June 2011, in the lead up to the riots, there were 6894 ‘stop and search’ instances, in 6806 of which there was no conviction (Back, 2012).

face pressures to market themselves as ‘successful’ this can cut time for relational care, and increase the criminalisation of ‘problem’ pupils. Outside of education, young people face flexible, insecure service-sector employment (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2007). In London, ‘sweated’ labour - involving long hours, poor conditions and extreme job insecurity - has become paradigmatic of sectors such as cleaning, care, construction and hospitality (Wills, 2015).⁶ Employers avoid responsibility for the social wage under euphemisms of ‘flexibility’ and ‘freelancing’. Following Katz’s call for ‘counter topographies’ - associations with analytical similarity which cut across space (2001b, 2011) - we see resonance between the constraints young people face in the global north and south: education as a route to social mobility is limited in the face of privatisation, and young adults face chronic employment insecurity which frustrates achieving ‘successful adulthood’ (Jeffrey, 2010; Langevang, 2008; Mains, 2007).

In the UK, a ‘politics of aspiration’ takes shape against the backdrop of these issues and concerns about welfare dependency (Allen et al., 2013; Brown, 2013). For instance, Kulz (2014) examines how a much-lauded strict Academy school⁷ runs on a discourse of ‘urban children’ as chaotic subjects requiring discipline. Beneath the veneer of ‘aspirational citizenship’ it is non-white young people who are asked to ‘adjust themselves’ - in speech, comportment, dress and the performance of mixing across ethnic lines. Brown (2011) examines how discourses of aspiration in higher education policies focus interventions on working-class young people deemed ‘not aspirational enough’. Through affective ‘wow’ moments such as university taster days, these initiatives have had success in raising desires to attend to university. These cultivated ambitions come into painful conflict with facing the difficulties of the withdrawal of state support (e.g. high university fees) and actually achieving social mobility post-university.

These scholarly explorations, and dramatic events such as the UK’s August 2011 riots, powerfully highlight that young people experience a sense of disposability and

⁶ In London in recent years there has been a fall in real wages and around 18% of the workforce are paid less than the living wage. A huge proportion of those at the bottom end of the spectrum are migrants (Wills, 2015).

⁷ Which, despite a pseudonym, I surmise that several of my research participants attended.

‘blocked futures’ (Back, 2012). However, such work can underplay how ‘received meanings and relations are refused or reworked’ (Katz, 2011: 56). Young people are not just ‘pliant victims’ but resourceful negotiators seeking alternative forms of learning, and enacting politics of ‘reworking, resilience and resistance’ (Katz, 2001a, 2004; Jeffrey, 2010: 500). Young people’s ‘agency’ and ‘resistance’ can take the form of explicitly political action (Jeffrey, 2013), but also be seen in everyday intentional acts and is often seen as ‘inappropriate’ (Skelton, 2013). For instance, ‘street culture’, a term which should be used with caution⁸, can be understood as a form of ‘bounded agency’. James (2015) analyses violent grime music produced by young people in east London as an ironic and nihilistic reproduction of the ‘appetites of neoliberalism’ as young people face unemployment against constant reminders of consumer ‘freedom’. Bourgois’s (2002) beautiful ethnography of Puerto Rican crack dealers in New York argues that fundamentally, they are ‘in search of respect’ in the face of unemployment, racial prejudice, and a lack of ‘cultural capital’ to navigate the formal economy. Drug dealing provides a forum for responsibility, stability and self-worth as well as economic benefits, even as it incurs degrading and damaging costs in its use of violence for reputation-based control. These performances can be understood as deeply ambivalent forms of resistance, a sort of ‘negative agency’ (Jeffrey, 2010).

Less spectacularly, Gunter and Watt (2009) found that in east London young men viewed ‘living on road’ as a form of work, refusing the low pay, subservient performances and everyday racism they faced in formal jobs. Dipping in and out of ‘hard graft’ manual labour work and the street economy is part of the local labour history of east London (Gunter and Watt, 2009). These agentive performances can be contextualised at the intersection of spatialised ‘structures of feeling’ over time, informed by expressions of pride at a masculinity formerly dominant, but now out of place in the context of gentrification and feminised service-sector labour (Kraack and Kenway, 2002).

⁸ These terms should be approached with caution given the propensity of the term ‘culture’ to essentialise, and ideas of ‘urban-ness’ to serve as a vehicle for racialised prejudice. Many analyses of ‘the codes of the street’ have been criticised as poor theorisations ‘sealed off’ from political-economic dynamics (Wacquant, 2002). It must be emphasised that spectacular forms of hyper-aggressive behaviour are only embraced by a small number of young men, but exert a wider imaginative influence on many other young people, or may be temporarily and opportunistically embraced by others (Bourgois, 2002; Gunter and Watt, 2009).

Volunteer tourism is a phenomenon in which spatial mobility is central to young people's efforts towards social mobility. These accounts of youth agency amid socioeconomic constraint support the focus on 'space not as a static container for action but as actively entangled in the drama of youth in practice' (Jeffrey, 2012: 249). 'The street' is a forum for negotiating reputation and status. Scholarship from diverse contexts provides examples of how young people's agentic performances are deeply spatialised. Young adults in a low-income area of Accra, Ghana, constantly move around the city to evaluate opportunities and sustain social networks in differentially gendered ways. Balancing a constant state of readiness with 'aimless' waiting is a tactic of improvisation towards 'becoming somebody' (Langevang, 2008; Langevang and Gough, 2009). Middle-class young men in urban Ethiopia seek a 'spatial fix' to blocked employment opportunities, moving to avoid the shame associated with low-status occupations (Mains, 2007). Young Ghanaian men, seen in western eyes as victims of football trafficking, see themselves as agentic 'entrepreneurs of the self', embracing a dream of 'being a footballer' in Europe in contrast to constrained labour options at home (Esson, 2013). Although volunteer tourism originates from a much more privileged position, this project engages questions of how non-elite British volunteers draw the experience of mobility into their aspirational identity work. However, the trips and their visions of ideal young subjects are also strongly defined by adult agendas. To explore this, I review work on education and subject formation.

2.3.3. Forces of Improvement and Subject Formation in Spaces of Learning

The volunteer tourism trips in this research can be situated as 'informal education': semi-structured collective experiences which are conceived of as pivotal points in 'transitions to adulthood' and catalytic of improved subjectivities, dispositions and skills. Literature on spaces of learning highlights that in them, temporal framings and spatial practices are engaged to shape young people who are seen as vectors of the future. Boundaries of class, nation and other particularistic identifications are also made in learning spaces. Analyses of 'governmentality' and classed capital allow

us to see how young subjects are subject to forces of improvement through discipline, surveillance, and self-regulation, though work on informal education suggests dynamics that exceed this.

If young people are often overlaid with ideas of purity, pathology, or promise - of particular importance to education are ideas of promise. Learning spaces attempt to 'utilise and prioritise the liminal period of youth as a critical and necessary stage in the life course in which to harness and secure an individual's (future) potential and political capital for their cause(s)' (Mills, 2013:123). Anderson (2010) writes that we should consider 'the presence of the future', how it is anticipated and acted upon. He argues that older visions of the future saw it as subject to rational improvement, whereas current concerns over terrorism, climate change and pandemics, 'figure' the future as anarchically flowing out of complexity. Arguably, we see young people's 'individual' futures are subject to logics of controlled progress against visions of the political-economic future as uncertain (Katz, 2008). Utopian narratives of 'childhood-hope' often suffuse efforts of 'doing good' for children which obscure recognising young people's actual hopes in the present (Krafft, 2008). Spatial as well as temporal framings are crucial. Formal education has often 'developed' young people in relation to imagined spaces of empire and nation. State volunteering schemes such as Platform2 and the International Citizenship Service could be analysed as contemporary efforts to create 'citizenly consciousness' and 'strategic subjectivities' for the British state through overseas engagements (Gagen, 2013: 2). On a more everyday spatial level, in schools, norms are inculcated via strict surveillance of bodily movements; and there are idealised links between particular environments and 'character development'⁹ (Collins and Coleman, 2008; Gagen, 2000; Mills, 2013).

Foucauldian analyses of education have great scope to illuminate volunteer tourism as a site of subject formation. Foucault's extremely influential body of work has been read and applied in diverse ways. In regard to the discussion at hand, his

⁹ While citizenship education, a formal part of the curriculum in English schools since 2002, has been an area of rich literature beyond the scope of this review, we might see citizenship as an idea that 'functions simultaneously as a claim to rights, a call for participation and a carrier for competing social projects' (Mische, 1996: 158 in Mills, 2013:122).

theorisations highlight that contemporary disciplinary power is no longer violent and spectacular, as 'sovereign power' was, but plays out in de-centred ways through regimes of discourses, experts and institutions; and often monotonous managerial processes of monitoring, observing and surveillance. Visibility in particular is a key mechanism of control. 'Governmentality' or the art of governing, works by training and regulating - not merely constraining or denying - desires. Individuals internalise norms and play an active role in governing themselves (Foucault 1984; 2007). Under such an analysis, we see learning spaces - including, perhaps volunteer tourism initiatives - not as simply drilling obedience in young people but 'instill[ing] skills for the long-term practice of self-government' (Gagen, 2013: 2).

The idea that power functions through self-government can also be seen in the mirrored dynamics of 'improvement' that are central to this project. In the volunteer tourism initiatives this trip studied, there is a resonance between projects of 'developing' young subjects *and* the global south (Aitken et al. 2007). Gagen (2007) explores how in early twentieth century USA - entering into imperial relations, and undergoing domestic anxieties around the urban poor - there was an 'interpenetration' of stories about racialised backwardness overseas and America's children. Casting colonised people as childlike was mirrored by ideas in child developmental psychology that *all* children were 'primitive' and in need of being 'civilised'. The logic of training and improvement was enacted in both encouraging US colonies to self-govern in line with along American norms, and urban reformers' work to create modern civilised citizens through playground programmes encouraging physical discipline (Gagen, 2007).

Dynamics of 'improvement' are also present in non-elite young subjects' experience in formal education in the UK. Literature on UK education focusses on the reproduction of classed inequalities, drawing heavily on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus'. Habitus conceives of the embodied and internalised dispositions through which people perceive, judge and act as both 'structured' - in that they emerge from the social conditions and positions in which young people grow up in - and 'structuring' in that they shape the choices of present and future possible actions. 'Habitus' is a marker of existing or strived-for 'capital' (economic, cultural, social) which defines position in particular arenas of life, or 'fields', but is open to a

certain amount of malleability and is key to actualising the social distinctions of class (Wacquant, 2007).

Much of this scholarship emphasises that working-class and racialised young people must disavow a disparaged working-class habitus to succeed in education. Gaining social mobility involves taking on discourses of aspiration which ‘locate the “blame” for disadvantage or inequalities in the outcomes of young people’s lives within the (pathologized) working class/minority individual’ (Archer et al. 2007a: 562).

Resisting this, some seek self-worth and respect through performing a strong working-class habitus: performances of ‘street culture’, ‘hyper masculinity’ and ‘hyper femininity’ and around conspicuous consumption (Archer et al. 2007b; Harvey et al., 2013; Gunter and Watt, 2009). These performances may gain young people situated cultural capital among peers. However, in the dominant cultural economy, classed habitus’ serve to ‘fix’ them in place. For instance, at school, girls performing hyper heterosexuality and boys performing ‘urban’ masculinity are read as ‘anti-education’ (Archer et al. 2007b; Harvey et al., 2013).¹⁰

This view of subject formation in learning spaces emphasises that young people, particularly working-class and racialised youth, are pressured to ‘self regulate’ their bodies and minds, as ‘the social order masks its arbitrariness and perpetuates itself by extorting from the subordinate practical acceptance of, if not willing consent to, its existing hierarchies’ (Wacquant, 2007: 264). However, such analyses are very ‘dominance heavy’. Skeggs (2004) is critical of both Foucauldian and Bourdieuan analyses as portraying a strategic, exchange-value seeking self, and reducing accounts of working-class life to ‘resignation’ in relation to the ‘dominant symbolic’. She argues this underplays the autonomous cultural life and value of the ‘dominated’, asking:

What about the elements of working-class culture that we know have value not just for the working-class: the creative hedonism; the anti-pretentious humour, the dignity, the high ethical standards of honour, loyalty and

¹⁰ Young women may be in a particularly difficult position, as they are marked out as having an ‘attitude problem’ if assertive, in contrast to ‘at risk’ boys whose ‘challenging’ behaviour may be seen as more normal by teachers (Archer et al., 2007a).

caring? And what about how practices such as respectability, assumed to be middle-class, are significantly reworked and re-valued when lived by the working-class... These are the values beyond the dominant symbolic...

(Skeggs, 2004: 88)

Thus, in the actual everyday happenings of learning space as sites of social reproduction, as young people grow up, are educated, play and learn, many other social relations exist and arise (Katz, 2008). Work on informal education provides some slightly more open arguments to draw on in exploring volunteer tourism as a site of subject formation. Youth volunteering and youth work are significant in shaping young people as citizen-subjects through enjoyable activities, developing skills and fostering 'character', dispositions transferrable to other areas of life in the present and future (Way, 2013). On the one hand, many of these initiatives do reproduce social hierarchies and gendered identities. Working-class youth were seen as particularly in need of scouting's messages of responsibility, and scouting was suffused with stirring masculinist calls to 'character' and 'duty' (Mills, 2013). Early twentieth century American urban playground associations attempted to inculcate 'heroic qualities' of strength in boys through sport, whereas girls' development focused on domestic skills through craftwork, songs and dances (Gagen, 2000). A contemporary sports programme for girls in the USA, despite aims of 'empowerment', socialised girls into 'appropriate' gendered emotional expressions of deference (Way, 2013). Observations about how gendered, as well as classed, racialised and religious identities are formed in the space of volunteer tourism cut across this thesis.

However, this work also underlines that such spaces are used by young people for their own ends at the same time as they foster and monitor normalised identities (Gagen, 2000). Diverse knowledges and subjectivities are produced and negotiated in informal education (Mills, 2013). For instance, where youth were constructed as unruly and deviant, the Scouts' 'Bob-a-Job' week temporarily enacted a counter narrative of encouraging young people's action in urban space, and often involved young men taking on feminised roles of unpaid domestic service (Mills, 2014). Wood (2012), in research on citizenship education, finds that young people complied with formal, adult-initiated learning but also constructed and acted upon

their own meanings around this. For instance, they took on an anti-bullying lesson beyond the gaze of adults via their own transformative ‘friendship tactics’ and public demonstrations of care. Young people were ‘simultaneously docile and unruly in the use of their bodies’ (Wood, 2012: 342). These agentic expressions were temporally bound ‘tactics’ rather than ‘strategies’ of resistance.

In summary, work on classed young subjects’ experiences of learning spaces shows that they are often subject to ‘forces of improvement’. Such analyses are certainly relevant to the volunteer tourism initiatives in this research, but can risk reproducing an understanding of young lives as determined by structure. More ambivalent dynamics in learning spaces do exist. Young people’s agency exists at multiple scales, varies in space and time and is not just individual but often engaged through social bonds and performances of ‘spirited mischief and irreverence’ (Jeffrey, 2012). This ambivalence can be seen in terms of the ‘politics of aspiration’ that the previous subsection highlighted. On the one hand, spaces of informal education can encourage self-reliant citizens ‘sentenced to hope’ that individual dispositions will counteract structural inequalities (Brown, 2013; Way, 2013). On the other hand, youth work initiatives can provide space for young people’s own articulations of hope - which connect to their everyday, local, specific experiences and desires for happiness, ‘self-esteem’, and resilience (Kraftl, 2008). There is much to be gained in understanding young lives as both structured and agentic, and the final part of this section outlines theories which help us do so.

2.3.4. Young People’s Social Navigations of Global-Local Intersections

So far, the work reviewed in this section shows that the theorisation of young lives is, at times, caught between rather dualistic discussions of structure and agency. Many present a ‘mantra’ that children should be given greater voice and recognised as agents (Kraftl, 2013). Although clearly voice and agency remain crucial, they are often presented as a static counterpoint to developed analyses of structuring forces, rather than something always in dynamic coexistence with structural constraints. There are, however, some nuanced theorisations of young lives useful for this study. This thesis uses the term ‘social navigation’ in terms of anthropologist Henrik Vigh’s

elaboration of the concept (2009). Vigh takes inspiration from the etymology of 'navigation' as meaning sea-sailing, conceiving of social navigation as 'the way we move in a moving environment'¹¹ (Vigh, 2009: 420). This pushes beyond analysing how agents move within implicitly static social fields, to focus our attention onto the interaction between an agent's tactics and the constantly shifting constellations of possibility, limit, pressure and structure that surround them. Both our movements and that of the environment change the 'horizons', our points of view, hoped for destinations, and ability for manoeuvre.

Time can be considered as non-linear and playing a dynamic role in young lives. This allows exploration of youth as a liminal state of possibility, whilst avoiding narrow ideas of 'transitions'. For instance, Johnson-Hanks (2002) proposes 'vital conjunctures', intense points in young lives - 'experiential knots during which potential futures are under debate and up for grabs' (Johnson-Hanks, 2002). Worth (2009) argues that young people's sense of self evolves in 'lived time', and the past and future exist in the present to shape young lives. We can see the trips as sort of 'vital conjunctures', and as moments of lived time whose intensity makes them seem particularly extended, and which exert a force on young people's 'becomings' prior to, and after, their literal duration.

This project is interested in the way physical mobility - in the form of volunteer tourism - plays a role in young people's 'movements' or 'navigations' of the life course. In exploring young people's mobilities it contributes to counteracting the 'sedentarist' nature of much social scientific work (Sheller and Urry). Mobility is a key resource and tactic in young people's expressions of agency (Jeffrey, 2012). It often plays a role in 'facilitating a transformation of identity' and actualising a narrative of progress for young people (Mains, 2007). 'Localities have their own particular economy of mobility' (Thomson and Taylor, 2005: 327) at the levels of material, cultural and fantasy, and young people's engagement of mobility as an agentive tactic 'occurs not just with movement but also by referencing symbolic

¹¹ Though Vigh developed the concept in the context of research in Guinea-Bissau and young people's attempts to survive in situations of high instability he also argues that in the context of austerity measures and the uneven effects of global capitalism, social forces feel volatile for those in the global north in less 'sheltered' positions.

qualities associated with other spaces' (Mains, 2007: 669).

In terms of the symbolic import of mobility, despite Ansell's (2009) critique, there has been some valuable work on how young lives are always touched by 'global' processes and cultural imaginaries. Pain et al. (2010) find that the 'global' and the 'everyday' are not separate in young people's emotional lives: their fears and hopes represent both a place-based and scale-jumping critical reflexivity as they navigate the present and look toward the future. In the north-east of England, Nayak (2003) found a fascination and close engagement by youth of all ethnicities and 'far beyond global metropolis' with the signs and symbols of a 'global', 'black' urban culture. For white working-class people, this was in part an attempt to escape denigrated classed versions of whiteness.

Young people draw on diverse 'global' cultural sources to negotiate 'local' issues (Frederiksen, 2000), and in their attempts to find 'an enabling interlocking of the different 'cultures' in which they find themselves' (Massey, 1998: 122). While I cannot do justice to the work on the globe-spanning hybridity, fluidity and creativity of 'youth cultures', one example would be hip hop. Although too broad a genre to be analysed in a singular way (Huq 2006), from its roots in US black urban settings, hip hop has gained global resonance as a mode of youth expression where 'all one needs is a voice and an attitude', including in fuelling a sense of 'diasporic intimacy' between African youth and the US (Samper 2004: 40). Work on 'vernacular cosmopolitanism' highlights that we should consider non-elite young people's engagements with 'the global' - through volunteer tourism or otherwise - as potentially: strategic in ways driven by necessity or their own agendas (Baillie Smith and Jenkins, 2012; Kothari, 2008); as about more-than-strategic pleasures (Datta, 2009); as drawing on various 'cultural repertoires' - for example connected with religion - to engage with difference (Lamont and Aksartova, 2002), as ambivalent, temporally limited, and closely intertwined with anxious counter-discourses (Jeffrey and McFarlane, 2008; Skrbis and Woodward, 2007) - and crucially, always materially grounded in objects, food and embodied connections (Datta, 2009).

The idea that engagements with the global are always material and embodied links to a further emergent theoretical approach in work on youth: a greater focus on

emotion and materiality. Echoing broader debates throughout the social sciences, youth geographers have argued for greater attention to ‘non-representational’ forces in young lives. Everyday spaces such as parks, events like the first day of school, and embodiments such as being clumsy may ‘matter’ a lot to young people and add to our understanding of the ‘lived vitality’ of growing up (Horton and Kraftl, 2006; Kraftl, 2006). Linked to this are calls for more attention to children’s emotions and more relational studies of young people. For instance, friendships, central to young people’s lives, are brought into being and maintained through emotion, and material practices that are both inter-corporeal and also stretch intimacy across space. They are chosen relationships which cannot be fully mapped onto social categories and thus are related to both reproducing and defying the social order (Bunnell et al., 2012).

The focus on emotion and materiality has not gone without debate. Mitchell and Elwood (2012) critique ‘non-representational’ work as rather self-referential, missing a sense of young people’s ‘voice’ and lacking attention to ongoing systemic forms of inequality that deeply affect many young people. They question the labelling of all youth action and emotion as political, which they argue is paradoxically de-politicising. Kraftl (2013), defends the work, arguing that narrow views of voice and agency can be too individualising, underplaying the relational nature of children’s lives. He asserts that a focus on the non-representational and embodied can be part of resisting projecting adult aspirations, concerns and agendas into ‘voice’ and agency’, respecting the ‘otherness’ of children - in terms of acknowledging the partiality to our views of them (Jones, 2001, 2013). This project takes inspiration from calls to examine emotional, affective and material specificities of young people’s experiences, and is interested in how these might complicate our notions of agency, the subject and the political significance of young people’s actions. However, it also shares Mitchell and Elwood’s frustration that many who have focussed on materiality and emotions have not applied this to pressing relations of inequality. Furthermore, it shares their caution that representational codes *do* matter. Young people are both acted on by stories, engage in representational practices to enact agency, and these come together in the ‘master narratives’ of identity (Wells, 2014).

In summary, this section has reviewed a wide-range of work from youth geographies and beyond which pertain to analysing volunteer tourism. Volunteer tourism is shot through with ideals of ‘helping’ children in the global south, and exhorting young people in the global north to become responsible subjects. In both visions there is a seeming inevitability to ‘international development’ or ‘self-development’ in the name of progress, highlighting that young people are particularly often objects of projects of improvement, cast as ‘becomings’ in projects with a logic of ‘teleological closure’ (Aitken et al., 2007). The section has underlined that young marginalised subjects feel such forces particularly sharply. In contemporary British educational settings there is a particular emphasis on ‘foster[ing] and call[ing] forth an entrepreneurial and self-sufficient self’ (Katz, 2011: 49) through the ‘ratcheting up on disciplined self-fashioning’ (Katz, 2001: 52). Such dynamics precede their current guise as part of ‘neoliberal governmentality’: vocational schools in the Dutch Indies in 1870s centred on ideas that “‘desire to work’ was the ingredient lacking; it was sentiment that had to be kindled and redirected, not opportunity that needed to be changed’ (Stoler, 2001: 20).

However, despite the strength of such analyses, multivalent dynamics occur around normalising projects (Mills, 2013). More nuanced theorisations of young people’s ‘social navigations’ enable us to see a dynamic interplay between structure and agency, and space and time are not just containers for action but drawn into young people’s navigations towards enabling futures. An emergent interest in materiality and emotion adds a further layer of richness to how we conceive of social life, power and agency. This raises questions around how young people’s emotional and embodied experiences of volunteer tourism may be part of navigations which are both structured and agentic. To explore this further we must delve into theorisations of emotion and affect.

2.4. Emotion, Embodiment and Identification

2.4.1. A More-than-Representational View of Social Life

Preceding sections of this literature review have referred to forces *beyond* political and economic structures which influence and constitute subjects. Sentimental tropes shape the affective imaginations, desires and actions of volunteer tourists.

Emotionally loaded concerns drive disciplinary forces upon young people. Attention to their emotion and embodiment aims to uncover what matters in young lives. This section explores questions around emotion and embodiment and how they relate to the formation of subjectivities and power relations. It outlines theoretical debates, and reviews relevant work around how emotion relates to constructions of identity, difference and politics. The section ends by bringing together insights from across this chapter relevant to analysing young people's emotional and embodied subject formations through volunteer tourism.

An upsurge of interest in emotions and 'affect' in the social sciences is linked to a broader renewed focus upon 'more-than-human, more-than textual, multi-sensual worlds' (Lorimer, 2005: 83). A heavy reliance on only analysing texts and representations arguably leads to deadened understandings of social life. Instead, work on practice, performance, feeling, and senses beyond the 'gaze' may provide richer perspectives (Lorimer, 2005). Bondi (2005) traces geographer's interest in emotion specifically as emerging from three strands. Humanist geography in the 1970s emphasised the importance of phenomenological perceptions of places. Feminist geography explored emotions in relation to gendered experiences, and argued for the importance of recognising emotions in research. In this, nuanced accounts of emotions as fluid, embodied and relational were articulated in tension with the use of straightforward articulations of emotion as part of feminism's political agenda to 'give voice' (Bondi, 2005; Pile, 2010). Finally, recent 'non-representational theory' posits that human experience cannot be (fully) brought into language or other representations, and we should try to attend to the 'myriad of transient and unarticulable practices that constitute everyday lives in ways that exceed representation' (Bondi, 2005: 437).

Non-representational theorists are interested in ‘affect’, something beyond the ‘nameable states’ of ‘emotion’ (Bondi, 2005). Affect has been described as ‘the motion of emotion’ (Thien, 2005: 451); as a transpersonal capacity (between bodies); something ‘prior’ to knowable emotion, ‘below’ or ‘beyond’ cognition, and not limited to human subjects. Thrift writes about affect as: 1) a doing of emotions; 2) similar to, but broader than, Freudian concepts of ‘drives’ (particularly desire) as root sources of human motivation; and 3) linked to the theory of ‘emergence’ – affect as an outcome of encounters between human and non-human bodies which increases or diminishes these bodies’ capacity to act. Attention to somatic forces is valuable in pushing us to complicate or question views of the ‘coherent, bounded, self-aware and universal human subject’ (Pile, 2010: 7). Implications for our view of the subject vary. Crudely put, ‘emotional geographies’ remains interested in a psychological subject *in* the body, where identity is a ‘first principle’, recognised, filled and defined by emotion. On the other hand, affectual geographies see bodies as revealing transpersonal affect, and take identity as a ‘second principle’, contingently produced by the capture of emotions and in interactions (Curti et al., 2011; Pile, 2010).

There has been considerable debate around conceptualisations of emotion and affect. One key area of difference is around representability. Those interested in affect argue that emotion is a type of ‘capture’, an objectification or simplification of something more complex and contradictory. This can lead to a suspicion of verbal expression of emotions as rehearsed or already ‘engineered’ (Thrift, 2004; Pile, 2010). Others criticise non-representational theory as unclear, lacking empirical support, and distant from people’s sense-making (Thien, 2005; Lorimer, 2005). They argue that writing on affect can seem *unemotional* and *disembodied* despite interests in these things. Thien (2005) argues that affect theorists’ leanings away from expressed emotions mirrors the binary between reason and emotion: that the concept is employed in ‘masculinist, technocratic and distancing ways’ (Thien 2005: 452). Pile (2010) points out that insistence on affect as *completely* ‘sealed off’ from consciousness means it should not be a concern to social scientists.

Pile (2010), in a review paper, criticizes both theorisations of emotion and affect for leading to politics that are too comfortable: either a ‘politics of caring’ and

‘emotional transformation’, or a concern with resisting ‘manipulation of affect by powerful elites’. He suggests psychoanalytic theory as a way forward: in particular its idea of a dynamic relationship between the inexpressible unconscious and the expressive (and repressive) work of the conscious. Pile’s review was criticised by a group of authors on several grounds (Curti et al., 2011). They argue that he draws an unhelpful division between emotion as connected with the mind and affect with the body, when both are concerned with challenging mind/body dualisms. Secondly, they argue that his criticism of ‘comfortable politics’ neglects the way thinkers in both areas have raised significant questions around identity and difference, in regard to what ‘potentially overflows (affect) and what is captured (emotion)’ (Curti et al., 2011: 592). Finally, they argue that interests in materiality and relationality offer more open, politically engaged and ‘geographical’ avenues for future exploration than psychoanalysis (Curti et al., 2011).

Though these debates are thought-provoking, as Hadfield-Hill and Horton write (2014: 137): ‘most people - including our research participants and us - do not habitually display such a rigid distinction in everyday talk about experiences and ‘feelings’’. Less polarised notions of emotion and affect are more helpful tools to examine young people’s experiences of volunteer tourism. For instance, Anderson (2009) proposed that the everyday term ‘atmosphere’ may hold a series of oppositions together. Atmospheres can be sensed and arouse feelings, though are hard to adequately express in words. They create intensive space-times, are shifting and emerging, and ‘overflow’ from objects and subjects, without ‘belonging’ to them. Feminist scholars’ also emphasise the transpersonal, emotions ‘not as belonging to one person or another but as always inspired relationally and contextually’ (Bondi 2005: 441). This links to Sara Ahmed’s (2004a, 2004b) work, which I discuss further later. She writes that emotions emerge, and work to shape our perceptions of others, in the ‘contact zone of impressions’. She theorises emotions as seeming at once ‘new’ and ‘personal’, but also shaped by social histories. These ‘more-than-representational’, rather than ‘non-representational’ approaches (Lorimer, 2005) recognise that affect and emotion are shaped by and contribute to social power, without taking a teleological reading of ‘sensations as symptomatic of a politics of identity’ (Holloway, 2006: 185).

A particularly valuable intervention which pushes beyond dualisms around ‘cognitive’ emotion and ‘embodied’ affect is Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy’s (2008, 2010) focus on the ‘visceral’, which they conceive of as both biological and social, encompassing:

...internally-felt sensations, moods and states of being, which are born from sensory engagement with the material world... we include in visceral experience the role of the cognitive mind; visceral refers to a fully minded-body.

(Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008: 462)

In this holistic view, neither mind nor body come ‘before’ the other: ‘thought’ can be visceral and affective, and feelings shaped by cognition (Hayes-Conroy and Martin, 2010). Where non-representational theorists tend to place great emphasis in ‘excess’, they argue that biological and material are not beyond power or ‘pre-social’ (Hayes Conroy and Hayes Conroy, 2010) but are linked - always, but ambiguously - to discursive regimes and social differentiation. This allows us to be simultaneously aware of how political-economic inequalities play out within and between bodies, *and* of the destabilising ‘potentialities’ of bodily practice. They argue a theory’s focus on the unknowable is politically ineffective: rather, representational power and identity categories articulate in ‘real’ ways, whilst also being potentially undermined through practice. This leads us to work which relates emotion and affect to identity and politics.

2.4.2. Emotional Understandings of Identity and Difference

Work on emotion and affect has much to bring to this project’s interest in young people’s subject formations through volunteer tourism. Discussion of how emotion and affect expand our ideas about subjectivity will be aided by a brief outline of how selfhood has been conceived in the social sciences more broadly. Though contemporary common-sense ideas of ‘identity’ see the self as an individual project, much academic interest focusses collective dynamics of differentiation. Debates about the self link to those about structure and agency - the potential for reflexive

self-fashioning or the role of institutions in forming identities - and the role of identity work in the reproduction or disruption of social power (Elliott, 2013). Language relates loosely to these debates, with terms such as ‘identity’ and ‘the self’ signalling continuity (either imagined or ‘real’), against de-centred analyses of ‘the subject’ and ‘subjectivity’.

Elliott (2013) traces major framings of identity in the social sciences. Early sociological views understood identity as a ‘symbolic project’ as individuals adjusting self-understanding oriented to the social world. These were criticised as portraying a self too cognitive and individual, and giving a weak account of dominance. Contemporary sociological theories of the ‘reflexive’ self - that self-definition is a site for navigating the dramatic transformations of modern society - have also been criticised as romanticising a ‘sovereign’ self (Elliott, 2013). Contrastingly, there has been interest in the social sciences in psychoanalytic perspectives on selfhood as fractured and ambivalent, for instance how ‘drives’ - such as hateful projections, or the satisfaction of consumer capitalist desires - shape society. These ideas have been criticized as overemphasising inner worlds over social oppression. Both of the above are broader reference points: volunteer tourism is framed with the *ideals* of reflexive selfhood, and psychoanalytic perspectives prompt intriguing questions around forces that are glimpsed in longing and memories around travel.

More central to the approaches of this thesis are Foucauldian and feminist perspectives. Feminist perspectives had a radical impact in suggesting we become ‘men’ and ‘women’ through social construction rather than biology, and examining how the social reproduction of gendered selves plays into domination. This put forward ways of conceiving identity that are still highly relevant: identity as *relational*, as emerging from *processes* of identification and dis-identification (Rogaly and Taylor, 2011) that can shift over time and be influenced by space and place; and as having multiple, ‘intersecting’ dimensions which ‘interact, overlap and play off each other in complex ways’ (Hopkins 2010: 10). Identification processes engage both discourses and performances: ‘doing’ is shaped by involvement with culture and language. Performance is a helpful metaphor incorporating ideas of characterisations, dramas, and ‘directed’ action with the idea that practice can also contain the unexpected (Crouch and Desforges, 2003). Performance signals that:

The body is entangled with fantasy and discourse; fantasy mobilizes bodies and is expressed through discourse; and discourse, well, discourse is disrupted by fantasy and interrupted by the body. And all of these relations are articulated spatially; their performance articulates space.

(Rose, 1999: 258 in Cater and Cloke, 2007)

An interest in ‘discourse’ points us to Foucault. As outlined in the prior section on young subjects, Foucault’s theorisations highlight that contemporary power plays out through regimes of discourses, experts and institutions in which the shaping power of language ‘seduces’ us to conform to the limits of what is sayable or doable (Elliott, 2013). This includes ‘techniques of the self’ such as self-policing, self-control, self-examination and self-stylisation (Foucault, 1984; 2007). A key argument is that, in the western context, emotional ‘management’ and emotional ‘learning’ have become fundamental to imaginings of the subject and therefore how power is enacted. Thrift (2004) writes that ‘I think, therefore I am’ has been replaced by ‘I feel, therefore I am’. Individuals act upon themselves through the self-actualisations of psychology. ‘Affective cues’ are used to prompt behaviours (Thrift, 2004: 66). In this framing, volunteer tourism could be seen as a site for self-management that feels ‘empowering’ but is a way in which the subject becomes acquiescent to dominant social forces. The affective subject ‘governs itself through calibrating its feelings’ (Fortier, 2010: 27).

Interests in emotion and affect complicate and complement these framings of identity and subject formation. Where discourse-heavy perspectives can leave little room for alternative possibilities, explorations around ‘corporeal feminist theory’ and ‘materialising race’ emphasise fluidity whilst still taking identity politics seriously. Colls (2012) understands differentiated subjectivities as always relationally produced by the provisional coming-together of biological and material flows as well as discursive constructions. ‘Forces’ within and outside of the human constitute the subject. Work on ‘race’ has explored similar theoretical concerns, driven by concern that social constructionist analyses lead to a ‘thin’ account of racism as simply ‘all in the mind’ (Swanton, 2010). Arun Saldanha (2005, 2006) proposes a ‘materialist

ontology' of race. In this account, the 'event of race' has no fixed basis but emerges through bodily and material forces. Racial divisions and intimacies emerge through configurations of bodies and non-human elements such as music, light, phenotypical visibility, corporeal movements, desires, tastes, and collective rituals (Saldanha, 2005; Slocum, 2008; Swanton, 2010). This view of race as 'simultaneously fluid and fixing' (Lim, 2008) provides an understanding of identification in which emotion and embodiment have a central role.

There is much to gain from a closer focus on the relational, embodied forces which produce identity, rather than seeing bodies as a site onto which identity categories are inscribed. Bodies are 'always socially labeled' (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008: 462), but never neatly governed by discourse. Identification emerges through relational feelings that engage the entire minded-body. A key argument of this thesis is that volunteer tourism's problematic power relations are powerfully *felt*. This point draws closely on work which emphasises, in contrast to views of affect eluding power, that 'unspeakability certainly does not make corporeal experience exempt from power relations' (Saldanha, 2005: 716). This point is similar to, but distinct from, Foucauldian views of norms disciplining bodies. Rather, though social power operates through the body, this is through 'sedimented' performative repetition rather than being inevitable (Hayes-Conroy and Martin, 2010). Bodily actions can destabilise representational categories.

Sara Ahmed's work on identity (2004a, 2004b) is generative for this project. Her work highlights the 'viscosity' of identity but also that it has an ontological status neither 'before' nor 'after' sensation. She argues that emotions 'surface' individual and collective identities. 'It is through the intensification of feeling that bodies and worlds materialise and take shape, or that the effect of boundary, fixity and surface is produced' (Ahmed, 2004a: 29). For instance, emotions of racist 'hate' and nationalist 'love' create the outlines of the nationalist subject and the racialised other - and aligns (or excludes) individual bodies with the social body of the nation. Using the metaphor of banging your knee against a table, she argues that it is in the moment of contact and 'impression' that we *feel* both the 'other' and ourselves through 'emotional intensities' (Ahmed, 2004a).

Ahmed argues that moments of contact with others are always shaped by past collective impressions. For instance, in discussing racism, she uses the example of a child running away from a bear. Despite the apparent ‘naturalness’ of the reaction, it is mediated, as the child carries collective meanings in her feelings of the bear as fearsome *by nature* and as the *cause* of fear (Ahmed 2004b). Ahmed’s writing stands in strong contrast to celebration of the ‘openness’ of the encounter. Performative ‘loops’ of emotion mean a form of ‘affective value’ accumulates over time. Certain emotions ‘stick’ intensely and stubbornly to certain bodies, which are read as hateful forward and backward in time. Mirroring a Marxist analysis, she writes that seemingly ‘truthful’ emotions hide the processes that produce them – ‘in other words ‘feelings’ become ‘fetishes’, qualities that seem to reside in objects, only through the erasure of the history of their production and circulation’ (Ahmed 2004b: 11). We can consider the ‘loops’ of emotional contact by which the encounters of volunteer tourism may be shaped, and how they may reproduce relations of difference, or be fractured. The next section explores work which addresses how emotion and affect may build solidarity or reproduce inequalities under particular circumstances.

2.4.3. Visceral Politics and Power Relations

Positive hopes for international volunteering are underpinned by the hope that face-to-face encounters might foster an emotional commitment to social justice and the lives of others, and a politics based on ‘solidarity’ (Baillie Smith et al., 2013; Baillie Smith and Jenkins, 2012). Work on activism underscores that emotional intensity is a crucial resource for collective action, underpinning counter-hegemonic politics. For instance, human rights movements in Argentina are suffused by strong ‘reactive’ emotions to state power (anger and pain) and ‘reciprocal’ emotions between members (love, friendship and kinship) (Bosco, 2007). These animate public performances, and function strategically to draw in members and sustain cohesion over time and distance. Routledge (2012) explores transpersonal affects of carnivalesque resistance mobilised by the ‘Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army’ (CIRCA) in UK protests. Exaggerated, playful interactions with the police subversively reveal the absurdity of power and disrupt the scripts and ‘feeling rules’

around ‘good’ and ‘bad’ protest. Laughter opens up space to create ‘sensuous solidarities’.

Askins (2009) writes about how her involvement in a small project with asylum-seeking families is saturated with emotion. Indignation drove the establishment of the project, mixtures of hope and anxiety compel participation, and emotions are constantly produced to sustain commitment. Cooking and eating together, or collectively shared emotions around a mother’s concerns for her children’s welfare, prompt ‘gut feelings’ that circulate across social and cultural difference and spill over the time-space of the project. Feminist scholars write about care and vulnerability as a way to ‘interrupt’ difference (Mitchell, 2007; McRobbie 2006). For instance, transnational social movements of mothers powerfully recognise others’ loss as of equal reality to our own; a ‘shared recognition of hurt’, for instance around being out-of-work, can create bonds between different disenfranchised communities (Waite, 2012); and the engagement created by apology can humanise across religious divides (Megoran, 2010).

Such work supports the potential in the emotional and affective encounters of volunteer tourism for ‘destabilizing and disorienting us from the categories, stereotypes, and prejudices that we hold, thus creating conditions of possibility for change and transformation’ (Sziarto and Leitner, 2010: 384). But this is not inevitable. For instance, during a US ‘Immigrant Workers’ Freedom Ride’, the emotive ‘time-spaces’ of storytelling and listening on bus journeys developed solidarity, but in other ‘time-spaces’ with different ‘power geometries’, such as an audience with a congressman, power asymmetries among participants came to the fore (Sziarto and Leitner, 2010). Colombian youth peace movement ‘La Legion de Afecto’ enacted visceral post-conflict reconciliation through bodily intensities of ‘learning to be affected’ across previous divides, such as through embracing or singing by a campfire together. However, the radical potential of emphasis on the pleasures of ‘being together’, is arguably being undermined as the movement has become incorporated into government schemes which emphasise knowledge and professionalisation (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya, 2015).

Valentine (2008), argues against romanticised notions that encounters break down

prejudice, and that we must pay attention to accrued social histories, material inequalities and ‘mediated contact’ through representation which shape the ‘starting point’ of encounters. An obligation to enact ‘positive contact’ can ignore experiences of marginalisation, and conviviality and kindness may be performances of ritual civility or ‘tolerance’ rather than posing significant challenge to exclusionary views. ‘Meaningful contact’ may emerge where different groups have shared interests and attachments. We might ask whether the contacts made in volunteer tourism are meaningful in ways that break open space for solidarity, or mediated in such ways that convivial moments are subsumed by wider narratives.

Rather more pessimistic discussions of how emotion relates to politics can be found in work which draws on Foucauldian analyses. Whilst, as outlined in the previous section, these accounts can lack recognition of the possibilities of emotion, they also present pertinent critiques of how emotion is ‘cultivated, demanded and rewarded... and to what ends’ (Gagen, 2013: 3). Gagen (2013) argues that the ‘emotional literacy’ agenda in British education is a form of governmentality over young people. Rather than emphasising civic duties, or even purely psychological routes to self-actualisation, popular ‘neuroscientific’ understandings of emotions form the basis of teaching students to monitor their somatic responses (e.g. feeling hot as a sign of anger) as the groundwork for self-management, for instance through breathing exercises. Impulse control is seen as a ‘master aptitude’ and a key feature of ‘good character’. Gagen criticises this as not primarily concerned with young people’s wellbeing, but as a marker of young subjects ‘success’ and a way of fostering citizens who respond in ‘measured and productive ways’ and, implicitly, will be good workers for a service economy.

Volunteer tourism often revolves around emotive narratives of personal transformation and can be understood as incorporated in dynamics of ‘emotional governmentality’ under ‘neoliberalism’. Or, if we wish to avoid using that abstraction (Castree, 2006), under a dynamic placing responsibility on individuals to ‘transform’, ‘manage’ and ‘enterprise’ themselves in response to social constraints. In this project, it is important to note that for non-elite subjects, pressure towards self-management and ‘reinvention’ often reproduces classed and racialised hierarchies (Allen and Mendick, 2013; Page, 2015). Self-realisation through learning

‘appropriate’ emotional response can erase structural violence which shapes ‘socially embedded emotions’. For instance, in the emotional literacy agenda, the ‘lockdown on anger fails to account for the contradictions and ambivalence that run through young people’s emotional responses to fear, violence and social injustice’ (Gagen, 2013: 8). This ‘ends up privatising and individualising negative feelings and isolating them from the historical and structural contexts that shape them and shape the violence to which they might give rise’ (Fortier 2010: 28).

Pleasant emotions in volunteer tourism might also play into depoliticised understandings of transnational encounters. Emotion may be ‘extended’ whilst erasing a wider view of alternative histories and imperial violence, and can function to reproduce the unequal relations it responds to (Ahmed, 2004b). Pedwell (2012) makes a prescient analysis of empathy in the international development industry. Empathy is valued as a professional skill and disposition. In the context of this depoliticised and instrumentalised cultivation of empathy, its propensity to function as a presumption to ‘know’ across difference may be exacerbated. Despite its ‘felt truth’ we might ask: ‘who is being moved, affected or transformed through empathy and who is fixed in place?’ (Pedwell, 2012: 164)

There have been some direct engagements with emotion and affect within the literature on volunteer tourism. Most of these take a critical view of emotions as encompassed in defensive reactions to poverty (Crossley, 2012), sentimental discourses of care (Mostafanezhad, 2013a), or the commodification of volunteering (Cousins et al., 2009). However, Mark Griffiths (2014a, b; 2015) argues for more recognition of the body as a site of autonomy from these power relations, and that many accounts of emotion and affect in volunteer tourism too easily write the body as ‘deferring’ to power. In his research on the UK’s ‘International Citizenship Service’, which can certainly be analysed in many ways as ‘neoliberal’ and ‘neo-colonial’, he writes of small ‘fleshy moments’ of affective encounter between volunteers and hosts such as laughter, hand-holding, and rich intersubjective intensities of solidarity, love and hope, which punctuate ‘self/other’ binaries and neoliberal imaginings of poverty (2014b, 2015). I remain cautious: affective moments that seemingly ‘dissolve’ power may be reincorporated into framing discourses. However, his intervention that the emotions of volunteering are not just

an ‘artefact’ or constrained by power is valuable, highlighting that the volunteers don’t entirely ‘colonise’ and neither should analysis of them.

This project’s analysis of volunteer tourism is informed by the idea that emotion is a ‘circuit of power’ (Pedwell, 2012) - neither necessarily emancipatory nor fully in the service of repression. Injustice, guilt and enjoyment might be intertwined in contradictory ways (Ho, 2009; Nava, 2002; Kingsbury 2005). For instance, humour, of increasing interest in work on the social sciences, and a frequent theme in my empirical data, is an example of how affect can ambivalently uphold *and* subvert power. Humour can play into maintaining social inequality, as linked to feelings of superiority, but can also question legitimacy, break taboos, provide healing release and foster interaction across lines of difference (Ridanpaa, 2014). Laughter passes through the body, is ‘a bodily act in which the affectual nature of social structures and the discursive nature of human emotions become revealed and established simultaneously’ (Ridanpaa, 2014: 706).

The emotional dynamics of volunteer tourism should thus be analysed as ambivalent. ‘Feeling rules’ and emotional norms may foster volunteers’ dispositions, but young people may also take emotional and embodied action that exceeds and subverts governance (Wood, 2015). Rabbitts (2012) argues that the cultivation of the self as moral through the ‘care’ of child sponsorship does not preclude more politically and ethically emancipatory notions of care grounded in humility and solidarity. She writes that ‘... charity opens up space not only for the achievement of idealised notions of the (ethical, faithful) self, but also for the thinking-through and (de)solidification of those ideals’ (Rabbitts, 2012: 929). ‘Political ideas, beliefs and self-definitions require a bodily kind of resonance’ (Hayes-Conroy and Martin, 2010: 269). Although much work explores the role of emotion in reproducing power, it is also clear that ‘challenging social norms involves having a different affective relation to those norms’ (Ahmed 2004b: 196), and that affect can underpin progressive action. I now turn to draw together implications for this project from across the literature reviewed.

2.5. Conclusion: Young People's Emotional Subject Formations via Volunteer Tourism

This chapter has reviewed work relevant to analysing how volunteer tourism - both in its imaginaries of 'the global' and the embodied encounters it fosters - is a fertile site to examine the subject formation of non-elite young subjects in Britain. This review has highlighted that accounts of volunteer tourism have tended to analyse it as a neo-colonial practice in ways that imply an essentialised dominant-victim relation. Though imperialist discourses and relations behind these mobilities remain central to my attention, we see that pernicious logics of improvement work in multiple directions. There is a double-dynamic of 'development' at work here - volunteer tourism is a site where young subjects are guided to (self-) 'develop' in certain ways - via the work of engaging in a broad ideal of 'global development'. Volunteer tourism as a site of subject formation for young classed subjects can be analysed as shaped by a longstanding resonance between 'civilising' dynamics both overseas and at the 'interior frontiers' (Stoler, 2001) of the nation (Gagen, 2007). The transnational encounters of volunteer tourism are bound up in projects of shaping - perhaps even, in the cases of this project, rescuing - young subjects. In these projects of improvement, relations of care and sentiment are not antithetical to, but entangled with relations of domination.

The logics of improvement, futurity and doing good for children (Krafft, 2008) which underpin the volunteer tourism trips as both reforming British youth and 'helping' needy children in the global south also highlight that the project fits into an established vein of work in critical studies on youth. The trips are an example of the particular ways spatial and temporal framings are engaged in efforts to form and reform young subjects. They are fuelled by a pernicious understanding of young people as 'developing', as bearers of an imagined future, which necessitates action in the lived present (Anderson, 2010; Krafft, 2008). As interventions targeted at non-elite youth, the trips that this project examines 'play[s] out against the figuration of the child 'at risk', and the spectre of a wasted childhood or the child as waste' (Katz, 2008: 12). The review particularly highlighted the context of 'aspiration nation' as key to the current landscape young subjects are navigating in Britain, and the way this meshes with longstanding classed and racialised inequalities. However, studies

on children and youth also highlight how young people resist and negotiate structural constraints and forces of improvement through expressive performances of agency. This project aims to contribute a 'grounded and lively' account of young people's resilience, re-working and resistance in their engagements with volunteer tourism (Aitken et al. 2007, Katz, 2001a).

There is room for both hope and critique in the way the trips can be construed as sites of 'social reproduction', in terms of being one of many 'material social practices' which inculcate cultures and subjectivities that contribute to the reproduction of the labour force and the differentiation of lives and bodies (Katz, 2001b). On the one hand, this project will examine the ways the volunteer tourism trips are situated in the context of the withdrawal of responsibility by the state and private capital for securing social reproduction. This requires young people to 'self-fashion' in disciplined ways. However, at the same time, relations in these spaces 'can exceed commodification, evade colonization, and recreate the means of existence and subjectivity in new registers' (Katz, 2008: 9). Volunteer tourism can be seen as part of the contradictory forces of learning spaces - both shot through with certain social opportunities and resources and also a way that young people are drawn into systems of inequality (Jeffrey, 2010).

This review has also argued for the potential of this project to contribute to more nuanced theorisations of structure and agency, space and time in young lives. For instance, the trips can be seen as 'vital conjunctures' (Johnson-Hanks, 2002) in young people's active 'social navigations' of shifting structures (Vigh, 2009). Additionally, the project explores how young people's lives are situated in relations to both near and far. It widens our understanding of non-elite young lives and transitions which, while often less socially and spatially mobile than those of young elites, are as engaged in 'drawing globalised spaces into the construction of localised identities' (Thomson and Taylor, 2005, Desforges, 1998: 191). Volunteer tourism trips provide a rich grounding in which to work out the ways imagined and actual experiences of 'globality' and distant places play into subject formations mediated by class, race, gender and religion, as well as more plastic contemporary materials of identification such as celebrity culture and aspirational discourses and dispositions.

Finally, the project contributes to debates about the role of emotion, affect in identity and politics. Volunteer tourism is part of the constitution of identity as young people move into new material spaces and take embodied actions which are framed by emotive discourses. Youth geographies and studies of volunteer tourism have been slower to embrace ontological debates in this area but nonetheless these debates are now important in both fields. Some embrace the affective as revealing how flows between bodies exceed the relations of discursive power and governmentality (Krafl and Horton, 2006 in youth geographies; Griffiths, 2014 in volunteer tourism). Others explore how affective experiences and encounters relate to the structural and ideological power relations that are often upheld, even as unruly moments escape (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008). Visceral experiences can constitute, and be constituted by, stories of self-development. This project will explore how the emotions of volunteer tourism trips ‘mediate social and political processes through which people’s subjectivities are reproduced and transformed’ (Routledge, 2012: 29), with particular attention to the intersubjective relationships that ‘surface’ emotion, identity and power.

In conclusion, this thesis examines volunteer tourism as a site for subject formation that is deeply entangled *both* with relations between ‘the west and the rest’ *and* young subjects’ social navigations in the national context, particularly enduring gendered, classed and racialised hierarchies. It traces how non-elite young people engage with ‘the global’ in agentive, situated ways. Finally, it seeks to contribute to an understanding of the relationship between emotion, affect and embodied politics; and the ways that close readings of these can offer more nuanced understandings of the ambivalent, co-constitutive dynamics in the transnational encounters of volunteer tourism. To do all these things required particular methodological approaches, designs and reflexive practices. This is the subject of the next chapter.

3. Ethnographic Research with Young Volunteer Tourists

3.1. Introduction

... hanging out, eating crisps and struggling to keep up with slang in a youth club...

... painting the walls of a children's home in Kenya...

... bowing my head in prayer with the families of participants in an east London church...

... singing songs on long bus journeys in Zimbabwe...

... reminiscing about trips abroad with youth workers over a cup of tea or a pint...

... conducting hilarious and moving interviews with young people...

This chapter is about the diverse research activities I undertook. It sets out the rationale for undertaking them, and the questions about constructing knowledge about social life that they led me to grapple with (Dwyer and Davies, 2010). The first section gives an overview of the data collected, and introduces the case studies. The second and third sections discuss 'talking methods' (interviews and focus groups) and participant observation respectively. Approaches to data analysis and writing are outlined in the final section. Throughout the chapter I provide reflexive accounts of power and positionality in conducting research with young people across classed divides, and in a multi-sited research field.

First, however, a brief outline of my methodological and ethical approaches. This study is grounded in the principles of qualitative methodology, reflecting the wider sea-change in the social sciences away from positivist research paradigms. Feminist and postcolonial interventions argue that knowledge production is always partial, situated and co-produced in the intersubjective research encounter. Furthermore, poststructuralist thinking has altered our understanding of social forces and individuals. From viewing these as bounded entities with essential qualities, they are now seen as constantly in production, and subjectively understood through 'lived experience' (Limb and Dwyer, 2001). These points of departure inform this project's questions - such as how identifications are negotiated and performed in

dynamic ways (Hopkins, 2010) - questions to which quantification is of little relevance. However, qualitative research must still aim to be compelling and rigorous, even if it is never 'pristine' (Luker, 2008). Understandings of rigour in qualitative research centre on considering our position and power as a way to resist claims of 'transcendent' objectivity and enhance accountability. Qualitative research is a 'view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body' (Haraway, 1988: 590).

More specifically, this project took an ethnographic approach. Ethnography emerged from British social anthropology, American cultural anthropology and the Chicago school of sociology, and at its core involves sharing the same social space as the research participants. Claims are based on observations grounded in context. Through engaging closely with research participants and taking part in the same activities as them, ethnography explores possibilities beyond pre-codified hypotheses (Herbert, 2000; Madden, 2010). Small specificities are understood as revealing wider social, economic and political forces (Crang and Cook, 2007). The subjectivity of the researcher is not seen as a problem to be overcome, rather insights are produced through questioning one's 'reactions, initial stumblings, discomforts, confusions and hard-fought competencies' (Herbert, 2000: 559). Ethnography, like any approach, has limits. Histories of studying the 'exotic' or 'deviant' haunt ethnography, and debates remain about how, and how far, ethnographic particularities can translate into broader arguments (Herbert, 2000; Madden, 2010; Banzanger and Dodier, 2004).

Ethnographic approaches suited this project excellently. I engage ideas of human subjectivity as more than just cognitive, and social processes as animated and emergent rather than fixed by discourse. Ethnography allowed me to 'take the sensuous, embodied, creativeness of social practice seriously' (Latham, 2003: 1998). It enabled me to engage flexibly with young people's emic understandings through things like songs and jokes, and share experiences of the material settings and immaterial atmospheres of volunteer tourism. Within an ethnographic approach, I used multiple methods, primarily the enduring methods of interviews, focus groups and participant observation, and also some creative participatory activities. The use of multiple methods provides a means to cross-check and enrich findings

(Hampshire et al., 2008), and provided diverse 'inroads' for participants with a range of preferences and abilities, giving them 'space and time... to communicate the complexities of their lives' (Langevang, 2007: 267).

This was also a 'multi-sited ethnography', spanning various geographical sites associated with volunteer tourism. The research physically followed the movement of young volunteer tourists as a way to investigate how the imaginative and material 'strands' that link 'home' and 'abroad' are 'forged, mobilized, negotiated, accepted, or rejected' (Mathers, 2010: 13; Marcus, 1995). I undertook much ethnographic research in London to engage with young people's meaning-making in the 'ordinary' settings of everyday life about the 'extraordinary' experiences of volunteer tourism (Thomson and Taylor, 2005). I do not believe that the project suffered a lack of depth through being multi-sited, since even a geographically bounded 'field' is always partial - created by the researcher through the construction of 'interrogative boundaries' (Madden, 2010: 53). The study achieves depth through following particular people and attending closely to their experiences.

There is an intimacy in ethnographic research which gives it an affective power over researchers and participants, but also makes it ethically charged. Responsibilities accompany forming close relationships, and we need to assess the validity of the ethnographer as the 'research tool' (Madden, 2010). Two crucial ethical concepts are reflexivity and positionality. Both are concerned with the fact the researcher is 'inextricably bound within a cultural identity and set of power relations... [and] data pass[es] through the prism of the prejudices, values and ideas of both the researcher and the researched' (Howard in Robson and Willis, 1997: 34). Reflexivity involves honest reflection and articulation of assumptions - 'constant scrutiny of 'what I know' and 'how I know it' (Cherry et al, 2010: 5). Reflecting on 'positionality' involves considering how the identities, values and relations involved in research may affect the data, that 'who we are and what we present of ourselves affects our interviewees' ability and willingness to tell various sorts of stories' (McDowell, 2001: 94). For instance, this chapter is suffused by reflections on the fact I occupy a privileged position in relation to many of my participants in the social hierarchies around age and class.

Ethical issues take on a heightened significance in relation to research with socially marginalised young people. I took inspiration from ‘participatory principles’, in particular, the emphasis that ‘people - especially those who have experienced historic oppression... hold deep knowledge about their lives and experiences, and should help shape the questions [and] frame the interpretations [of the research]’ (Torre and Fine 2006 in Cahill 2007: 298). I held space across all different methods for young participants’ voices, opinions and feelings to be taken seriously. However, I am hesitant to claim this research as fully ‘participatory’ as it was certainly not an approach as dedicated as Cahill’s ‘collective praxis’ (2007) or ‘participatory action research’, both based on Freire’s (1970) principles of raising ‘critical consciousness’ through cycles of action and reflection.

In practice research ethics are uncertain and complex - to be expected if we understand social life as always dynamic (Horton, 2008). Furthermore, my position as a research was not straightforwardly ‘dominant’, but shifting (Langevang, 2007). This project took as foundation the idea of ethics as ‘judgements in context’ on the basis of deep reflexivity (Reeves, 2007) and an ethics of care where ‘even the best code is no substitute for respect for and empathy with the participants of any social research project’ (McDowell, 2001: 98). Rather than ethics being seen as a set of guidelines to be neatly applied to ‘cover’ us:

We might accept, instead, that ‘ethics explodes with every circumstance . . . and hounds praxis unmercifully’; and thus ‘we can never get off the hook by appealing to a transcendental Ethics. We are always on the hook, responsible, everywhere, all the time.

(St. Pierre, 1997: 176, in Horton, 2008: 375)

With that in mind, further discussions of ethics – including specific standard ethical measures I took - will be woven through the chapter, linked to each of the research activities described.

3.2. Overview of Data Collection and Case Studies

3.2.1. Data Collection: Multiple Methods and Multiple Interviews Over Time

My fieldwork involved research with two youth groups. All groups and individuals are anonymised throughout this thesis. With each, I:

- 1) Conducted pre-trip interviews and focus groups
- 2) Undertook participant observation on a trip abroad
- 3) Conducted post-trip interviews and focus groups
- 4) Undertook participant observation in London both before and after the trips

The first of these was a youth charity, ‘Springboard’, based on a council estate in south-west London. With this group I accompanied a 9-day trip to Kenya in February 2013. I also undertook a long period of participant observation with them in London - weekly over 14 months - and interviewed youth workers, business funders, and older young people who had been on trips in past years, in addition to research with the young people I went abroad with. The second case study was a youth group from a church, ‘Kingsfield’, based on a council estate in east London. With them, I accompanied a 3-week trip to Zimbabwe in August 2013. These two main cases are described in further detail in the next sub-section. Beyond the central case studies, I conducted research with key informants and those involved with similar trips. The most important source of additional data was associated with a trip to Zambia run by a partnership of two youth charities in Hackney and Camden and a sports organisation. I conducted ‘before and after’ focus groups with young people involved, and valuable post-trip interviews with two young people and key informants associated with the trip. Table 1 (below, page 68) presents an overview of the data collected.

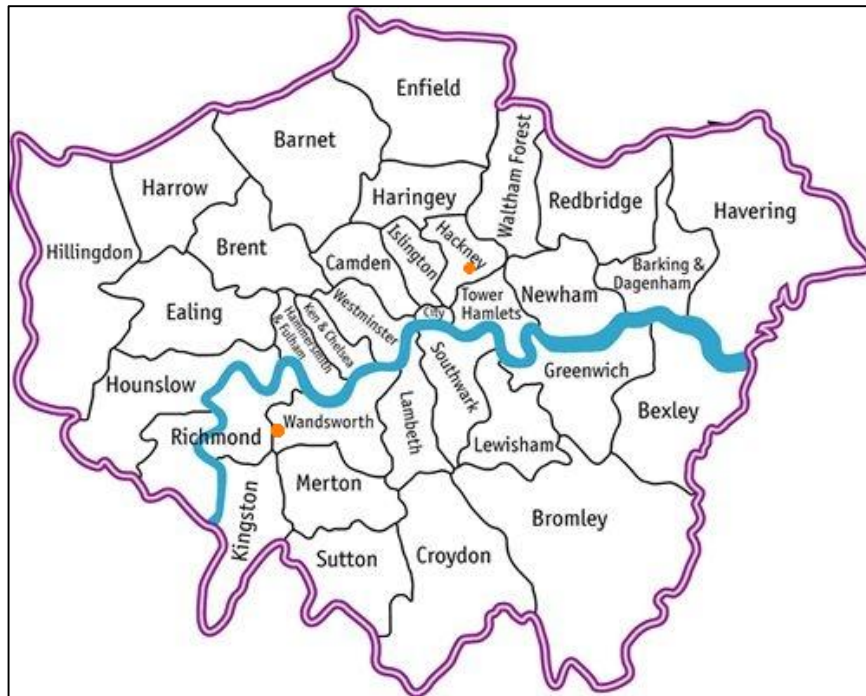


Figure 2: Locations of two main case studies

My ‘sampling strategy’ was purposeful, reflecting my targeted interest in initiatives engaging young people from non-elite backgrounds. Scoping research and key informant interviews revealed that trips engaging socioeconomically ‘non-elite’ young people are run by a range of actors, from youth charities, schools, churches, mosques and diaspora associations. An interview with a former staff member of national youth volunteering scheme Platform 2’, which explicitly aimed to ‘diversify’ volunteering, revealed that the scheme was more successful in engaging ‘diversity’ in ethnicity rather than class. This confirmed my interest in trips initiated by actors based in low-income areas.

Seeking case studies, I ‘snowballed’ outwards from contacts in the youth work sector. Conducting research with two groups provided a breadth that supports claims of generalisability. As is common given the depth of ethnographic research, access was linked to personal connections (Crang and Cook, 2007). I was linked to Springboard through loose networks, and much more closely, the main youth worker in Kingsfield was a friend and in fact, my housemate at the time. In this case my research access was decided based on a written briefing about the research assessed by a committee of church leaders. These gatekeepers welcomed me with

incredible openness and generosity. In negotiating my relationship with Springboard, I accompanied a volunteering trip to Romania with them in August 2012 and kept a detailed research diary. This served as pilot research. I also drew on brief notes and reflections from a trip to Kenya in April 2011 (prior to my PhD) which I participated in as a voluntary youth worker.

Pilot research was instrumental in revealing the value in participant observation. It also highlighted the strength of transformative narratives around the trips, which led to the decision to conduct interviews both before and after trips in order to engage with questions about how the experience might be made sense of across time. This methodological framework produced a rich body of data and provided great insight into the way the experience of volunteer tourism is both felt with an individual immediacy and drawn into mediated collective narratives, which have an anticipatory power and extended life through memory and re-telling. I also accessed 'longitudinal' views through interviews with older young people (18-25) varying distances (1-3 years) from the experience of a trip (Thomson and Taylor, 2005).

In total, I conducted interviews with 60 individuals - 36 young people and 24 key informants - and with 20 of the young people I conducted both 'before' and 'after' interviews. The sample of young people was determined by who was involved in the trips. There was a notable gender imbalance in my youth sample, with 27 young men compared to 9 young women. This was in large part due to the gendered 'subculture' of Springboard, outlined further in the next section, combined with wider influences such as gendered discourses of adventure and burdens of caring responsibility. Young participants in the trips ranged in age from 14-18. Young people were of various ethnicities, and although identity categories often conceal as much as they illuminate, the 'headline figures' were: 11 Afro-Caribbean young people, 13 'White' young people, and 12 mixed-race or 'other' ethnic minorities. The young participants' socio-economic backgrounds were not captured in an easily categorisable way, but based on their housing situations, parental occupations and classed 'habitus', most could be categorised as 'working class'. In the Springboard case, almost all interviewees lived on the estate or surrounding estates. The majority of the Kingsfield group also did, but 6 out of the 16 research participants could be categorised as 'middle-class'. Appendix 1 provides further details on participants.

	Interviews	Focus Groups	Participant Observation
Springboard Roehampton - Kenya	7 pre trip 5 post trip 9 older youth 5 youth workers / volunteer youth workers 5 business supporters	1 Pre-trip 1 Mid-trip	Kenya Trip February 2013 (9 days) London - 1-2 days a week over 14 months: Weekly team meetings, 'hanging out', Weekly drop-in youth club (younger youth), Enterprise/mentoring workshops (older youth), Preparation for Kenya trip (Kenya cohort), Other events (community action days, meetings with funders, social events). Video diary entries Audio recordings during trips Mapping exercises and estate tour
Kingsfield Hackney - Zimbabwe	14 pre trip 15 post trip 3 youth workers	1 Mid-trip 1 Post-trip	Zimbabwe August 2013 (18 days) Meetings in preparation for and for follow up from the trip (every few weeks May to November 2013)
Other	2 post trip (Zambia trip) 2 youth workers 9 key informants	1 Pre-trip (Zambia F) 2 Post-trip (Zambia M/F)	Romania August 2012 Kenya April 2011
Total	60 people interviewed 36 young people (14-25) 20 of these interviewed multiple times 24 adults (25+) 10 youth workers directly involved in trips 14 key informants (business funders, youth work sector individuals)	7 focus groups 2 pre-trip 2 mid-trip 3 post-trip	Participant observation over 14 months 240 pages of typed research diary notes 130 pages from trips abroad 110 from London-based participant observation

Table 1: Data Collection Overview

3.2.1. A Tale of Two Youth Groups: Introduction to Cases

Engaging with two in-depth case studies in-depth, as well as touching on additional cases, allowed me to gather ‘thick’ ethnographic data, whilst also distinguishing wider patterns from phenomena particular to specific groups (Davies and Dwyer, 2007b; Lahelma et al., 2014). It is crucial to note that the two different cases, although ‘comparable’, were not understood as comparisons. Both youth groups were nodes in communities based on council estates which provided youth work services and facilitated trips abroad, but they were also very different in their organisational structures and ethos. They are two parallel stories, at times overlapping and at other times diverging. In moving between them, ‘making connections within the recognition of difference’ (Lahelma et al 2014: 53), resonances and contrasts emerged which clarified my arguments.

Springboard is based on the Alton estate in south-west London, one of the largest in the UK with 13,000 residents. Most of the estate was constructed in 1952-58, and is an example of ‘utopian’ mixed-development social housing of some architectural renown, with clusters of blocks spread out within green space, in 10 ‘neighbourhoods’ (Open University, 2001). It is in one of the strips of shops on the estate that Springboard’s offices and their youth club are located. Springboard’s organisational history has been driven by Gary, its founder. Having grown up nearby, the son of a mechanic, he moved onto the estate at 21. In 2000, aged 25, alongside ‘a group of mates’ including his wife Caris, from a charismatic Christian ‘house group’, Gary initiated a lunch club for elderly people and after-school activities for teenagers from a desire ‘to dream a bit about what we could do in this community [...] at the time in the estate there were a lot of boarded up shops, a lot of kids hanging around, seemingly not really doing much’ (Gary, Youth Worker). The services they provided were immediately popular. In 2006, they separated the youth work from the work with the elderly, Gary’s mum heading up a charity dealing with the latter.



Figure 3: Housing on the Alton Estate

At the time of research, Springboard's activities included: a football club, a music group called the 'lyricists lounge', mentoring, an 'enterprise group', a drop-in youth club, a double decker bus serving as a mobile youth club for surrounding estates, and the overseas trips. A core team of 6 staff, including Gary and Caris, ran the work supported by a number of sessional youth workers and a roster of volunteers. Springboard's faith position is complex. Gary and Caris see Springboard as 'faith inspired' rather than 'faith based' and about 'spirituality' not 'Christianity'. Spirituality is conceived as linked to 'the act of service, and community, and caring for one another' (Caris, Youth Worker). Their programmes do not contain any direct, planned religious element. Yet 'behind the scenes' and in informal discussions, a Christian theology of 'incarnation' - faith as embodied social actions conducted with and alongside people – and a vision of Christianity as about 'fun and adventure' (Isaac, Youth Worker)¹² is central to their approach. On trips, they have a positive orientation towards young people 'finding God' and an ambivalent attitude to proselytising by their overseas partners.

Springboard's distinctive ethos is strongly influenced by Gary's charismatic, laddy personality. The charity is all about fun, friendship and a 'can do' attitude. Gary relishes engaging with 'full on, hard-core, in-trouble sort of guys' and having 'proper adventures' (Gary, Youth Worker). Their risk-embracing, deeply inclusive approach is illustrated the fact many of the young people they work with and have taken

¹² John 10:10 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' (NIV)

abroad are involved in 'gangs' or are ex-offenders. All the young people I met expressed genuine, deep admiration for Gary and Caris and many testified that their loose approach to dispensing trust, affirmation and second chances has had a profound affect their life. One young person simply expressed that he liked that you don't have to have 'already changed' to get involved with the charity. However, it is not inclusive in all dimensions. The blokey, banter-filled, football-loving culture that underpins many close relationships also plays into a gender imbalance in the young people the charity works with. The need to expand work with young women was a topic of conversation during my research, but their informality impeded programmatic action, and Gary's ability to connect with 'high risk' young men is incentivised by its attractiveness to funders.

The overseas trips became a central part of the organisation's work after 2005, when Gary went to Kenya with a charismatic church group. He narrates the first trip with young people in 2006 as an experiment following a suggestion from Kenyans, saying: 'they said... why don't I bring some young people from London... So I said, alright, I'll see what I can do [...] thought – why not, let's give it a go...' (Gary, Youth Worker). The project Springboard visits is a children's home in Nakuru, the capital of Kenya's Rift Valley Province. The project has been financially supported from the outset by faith networks Gary and Caris are linked to, centring on a belief in supporting the 'vision' of the founder of the home - an ex-street child himself. From a small boys home, the project has expanded to increase the number of children it feeds and houses, set up a girls dormitory, provides the premises for a primary school and has a weekly feeding programme. It has three livelihood-supporting activities: a borehole water well, a fish pond and a garage. The bore hole was the only of these generating income at the time of research. The garage was the 'vision' of Liam, a young person from Springboard. The bore hole and fish pond were associated with other 'partners', mostly small groups of Christians from the UK, US, Canada and Norway. Volunteers stay in a local low-budget hotel and travel to the site, usually undertaking manual labour. The trip I accompanied painted three rooms, sanded and varnished wooden lockers, dug a trench for a water pipe, and ran a morning of children's activities.

The 'funding model' of the trips has also come from an ethos of embracing

opportunities,¹³ linked again to Gary, constantly full of new ideas and a natural ‘networker’. Networks with wealthy local volunteers from southwest London mean Springboard ‘punch above their weight’ to draw large amounts of unrestricted funding. A businessman, hearing about an early ‘success story’, helped raise money and was invited on the next trip by Gary. This grew into cultivating links with business people who fund the costs of their place and the place of a young person. This relieves a large proportion of the costs of the trips, otherwise funded by a combination of sponsored events and local authority funding¹⁴. A few years before my research they had secured a partnership with a high-level executive in a major bank who was funding £10,000 per year towards the trips, and were in discussions about formalising this through linking it into corporate social responsibility agendas. The partnerships with business are embraced for their financial benefits, but also in terms of an emphasis on ‘enterprise’.¹⁵

My second case study was with a youth group associated with Kingsfield Baptist Church. The church is located right in the centre of Kingsfield estate in Hackney. A socially-minded pastor lobbied for it to be rebuilt there after the original church building on the edge of the estate was destroyed in the Blitz. The estate is one of many large areas of social housing in Hackney, where nearly 45% of all households in Hackney rent from a social landlord, and the borough as a whole is the second most deprived local authority in England according to the government’s Indices of Multiple Deprivation. Hackney is well known for its multiethnic life, which forms a proud part of its identity. Non-white ethnic groups make up 41% of its population - and in particular has a large black population, 24% of the borough described themselves as ‘Black British’¹⁶ (London Borough of Hackney Policy Team, 2014).

¹³ Springboard’s adventurous opportunity-embracing ethos leads to back stories too outlandish to recount in full detail in this thesis, involving everything from pop-stars, youtube sensations, conmen and Richard Branson.

¹⁴ Such as ‘youth opportunity funds’ where young people apply individually for a few hundred pounds from the local council.

¹⁵ However, these financially powerful supporters are not upheld straightforwardly as figures of admiration. For instance, one day I watched Gary, with typical carnivalesque cheek, show a banking ‘business mentor’, how if you put your fingers in either side of your mouth and say ‘bankers’ it comes out ‘wankers’!

¹⁶ Within this, 11% identified as ‘Black British - African’, 8% as ‘Black British - Caribbean’, and the remainder as various categories of ‘Mixed’ or ‘Other’ Black. There are other significant ethnic

Hackney has also recently seen a dramatic and rapid rise in well-qualified young professional residents and associated processes of gentrification, part of a larger trend of ‘the movement’ of poverty to outer London boroughs and dramatic social polarisation in inner east London (London Borough of Hackney Policy Team, 2014; Wills, 2015). The estate in which the youth group is located sits amid busy streets filled with Turkish restaurants, Afro-Caribbean hair salons and several ‘hipster’ cafes.

The church is an important hub of community activity on the estate and a space where multiple ‘sides’ of Hackney meet. On any given Sunday, among the congregation of around 100, you see smartly-dressed Nigerian families, elderly Jamaican men and old white ladies, young black men in sports clothing, single mothers with small children, scruffily dressed white professionals and a significant number of mixed-race families. This diversity extends to the theological positions - from those celebratory of gay marriage to conservatives. This ‘unity in diversity’ is an explicit part of Kingsfield’s institutional identity: there is frequent emphasis and celebration of the church as a loving and accepting ‘family’ and ‘community’. It is underpinned by participatory governance structures combined with a low-resource base, which has given diverse church members leadership roles. It is also enacted through relaxed affective atmospheres, such as informality, laughter, electrifyingly loud and passionate worship, and open space for spontaneous ‘voice’, as well as ritualised ways of being together such as regular community lunches. Children and young people are central to the ‘meaningful contacts’ (Valentine, 2008) formed across classed and racialised divides. Of course the church should not be romanticised as ‘outside’ of social power relationships (Ehrkamp and Nagel, 2014). The middle-class white families in the church play a disproportionate role in leadership, and despite a high presence of immigrants, non-nuclear families, those living on state support, and a few openly gay congregants, the church is not explicitly ‘liberal’ from the pulpit on issues such as economic policy, migration or sexuality.

minority communities of South Asian (10%), Turkish and Kurdish, and Charedi Orthodox Jewish people.



Figure 4: Members of Kingsfield Church at a community event

At the time of research, youth work was run by Emma, who provided both religious youth activities such as bible studies, but also ‘community’ youth work, which included: a ‘girls group’ with activities and discussions on issues such as self-esteem, a mixed-gender sports group, a social club, and special holiday activities and outings. A separate charitable trust attached to the church undertakes financial and managerial responsibility for ‘community’ activities. Emma had in common with Gary a high level of confidence, energy, charisma and a laid-back attitude. Similarly, she was extremely well-loved by the community and excellent at connecting in a genuine and warm way with people across different backgrounds and had increased the engagement of many young black men in the youth group, despite being a white woman from an upper middle-class background. Her involvement in youth work had stemmed from personal experience of her sisters’ turbulent teenage years and had become her full-time occupation after a formal qualification from Goldsmiths. She combined a deeply participatory and open approach, engaging with young people’s voices and ‘where they were at’, whether soft drug use or family crises - with a strong focus on religiosity and a theologically orthodox reading of Biblical teaching. For instance, she would uphold a conservative position on young people’s sexual activity despite her open discussion with many of them about it.

The young people involved in the trip were from diverse backgrounds in terms of

their familial models, relationships to the education system and many of them were by no means stereotypical 'church kids' that spring to mind from a middle-class perspective. For instance, several of the young people were dabbling with drugs and drink, sexually active, in close proximity to - or involved in - territorial and potentially violent youth activity, and had a rough-edged humour and 'attitude'. But they were also positioned and positioning themselves as 'good kids' relative to much of Hackney's notoriety for 'street culture'. The church ensconced them in a celebratory support for their 'passions' - as well as their potential and responsibility as 'young leaders'¹⁷, a framing strongly present in the trip to Zimbabwe. The trip was planned by Emma as a one-off 'mission trip', in response to requests from the young people, though there had been a trip to India about 3 or 4 years earlier, organised by a prior youth worker.

The trip to Zimbabwe was arranged in conjunction with an organisation set up in 2001 as a logistical company to facilitate Christian missions by a group of white Zimbabwean friends, and has expanded rapidly, now employing 250 staff and 50 vehicles across several Southern African countries. The company run some 'secular tours' and offer a lower rate to Christian groups. One of their main clients is the USA's International Baptist Mission. They donate profits, which amounted to approximately \$300,000 USD in 2012. The organisation provided the Kingsfield group with a driver, overland truck and 'guide', a young white Zimbabwean woman who handled logistics and food, as well as linking the group with local projects to volunteer at. The main one of these was a faith-based project, run by a white pastor in an informal settlement (formed by political displacement) in Harare. As well as providing basic services, this focusses on 'economic empowerment' activities such as 'life skills training' and helping get people work placements. The organisation also arranged one-day volunteering opportunities at a street children's drop in-centre and a community garden. In addition, Emma arranged 3 days of volunteering for us with a couple (British wife and Zimbabwean husband, both white) she knew through faith-based networks who were setting up a local primary school. We

¹⁷ For instance, a bible passage I heard frequently referred to was the calling of Jeremiah, used to illustrate how young people can 'lead nations': Jeremiah 1:4-8 (NIV) '... I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.' "Alas, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young." But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' ... Do not be afraid..."

moved between four locations in Zimbabwe in the overland truck, interspersing short voluntary stints with leisure activities and bible studies planned by Emma. Having given a contextual portrait of my cases and an overview of data collection I now discuss specific methods in greater depth.

3.3. Talking the Talk: Interviews and Focus Groups

3.3.1. Interviews and Focus Groups: Rationale and Locations

Talking methods produced rich data. Here, I critically reflect on the processes and challenges in conducting interviews and focus groups. I outline the differences to pre- and post-trip research interactions, and how various dynamics influenced the data. I address both the direct ethical measures I undertook and some of the broader ethical questions raised by verbal interactions. Throughout, I primarily discuss research with young people as this was more methodologically particular and ethically charged than interviews with youth workers and key informants, which ran fairly smoothly. This was due to a degree of commonality in age, confidence, and in some cases socioeconomic background, but also due to my interest simply in adult discourses, in contrast to a closer interest in dynamics around identification for young participants.

Verbal methods are never straightforward reflections of the ‘primary experience’ of social life. They are discursive constructions, situated in a particular place and time which access how people talk about their opinions and feelings. However, I assert the continued value of the ‘common qualitative interview’ (and focus group) as revealing of practice and how understandings emerge through memory, narrative and language, as well as often being enjoyable and meaningful for participants (Anderson and Jones, 2009; Hitchings, 2012). Verbal accounts were not taken as unproblematic ‘truth, but as revealing of how stories about experience and the self are produced, and how young people are ‘trying out’ identifications at that moment (Miller and Glassner, 2004, Armstrong and Bennett, 2002). Furthermore, interviews are saturated with emotion and thus also provide data on the more-than-

representational.

My experience paid testament to one of geography's favourite declarations, that 'place matters'. The material and embodied positioning of research encounters amplified or eroded certain roles and shaped relations (Anderson and Jones, 2009). My choices were guided by trying to maximise participant comfort, privacy, and avoid a sense of myself occupying a 'higher' status (Secor, 2004). Though these concerns were certainly pertinent, in fact the power relations of the research encounter were always shifting and ambivalent (Gallagher, 2008) and the 'life' of certain spaces led to subtle influences on what may have been said or withheld (Anderson and Jones, 2009).

The majority of interviews and focus groups were conducted in spaces associated with the youth groups: the bright, trendy Springboard offices and the scruffy 'youth office' of Kingsfield church. The familiarity of these spaces to young participants provided huge advantages in terms of trust, evident in interviewees showing up and feeling at ease. However, it also embedded me in the broader power fields associated with the youth charity and church and was linked to a slippage in how my identity and role was perceived, as 'researcher/youth worker' (Anderson and Jones, 2009; Gallagher, 2008). This sometimes led to 'pro-Springboard' answers in the youth charity as if I were a staff member or evaluator of their programmes, or 'spiritualised' answers in the Kingsfield setting, as if I were an elder concerned with their spiritual growth. Where I noticed this, I explicitly reiterated my outsider, non-judgemental stance.

Despite these issues, the advantages in terms of trust and rapport in these 'safe spaces' outweighed the benefits of seeking 'neutrality', evident in some early interviews in cafes, where young people clearly felt less comfortable. More successful were a few outdoor interviews, on 'The Green' on the Alton Estate, and in Victoria Park in Hackney. These locations prompted discussion of the meanings of these everyday spaces to the young people. Practical concerns with weather and scheduling limited the number of such interviews. The final major location for interviews was in my home. I conducted a few of the pre-trip and the majority of the post trip interviews with the Kingsfield group at home, of course offering it as a

voluntary option. Whilst this was ‘my territory’, the space of the house was familiar to most through Emma being one of my housemates at the time. The location reflected and furthered the growing intimacy I had with this group as we reminisced about the trip over hot chocolate and toast.

3.3.2. In-depth Interviews: Telling Stories

Multiple interviews over time were central to my approach. Interviews before and after the trips were designed in distinct ways. Pre-trip interviews were approached as opportunities to build rapport and gain understanding of young people’s everyday lives and social contexts. I sought life histories and encouraged participants to tell personal stories. A biographical approach cut across different levels of confidence and allowed participants to frame issues that had meaning to them, as we discussed ‘critical moments’ in their lives (Reeves, 2007; Langevang, 2007). As a prompt, at the start of these interviews, I offered a voluntary ‘life mapping’ exercise which involved charting the ‘ups and downs’ of life through time. I illustrated it with a personal example, and participants who chose to engage in it would construct a map and tell me what they wanted from it. This exercise, despite a seeming boundedness, was designed to – and I believe did indeed - give young people more space to reflect on what they wanted to share outside of my direct questioning and to be an enjoyable way of sharing life histories (Hadfield Hill and Horton, 2014; Punch, 2002). I was somewhat anxious that this method reinforced narratives of ‘life management’ and aspiration, as Langevang (2007) highlights. In fact, while young people placed instances of external ‘successes’ and ‘failures’ on the maps, they primarily used them to raise discussions centred on family and friendship.

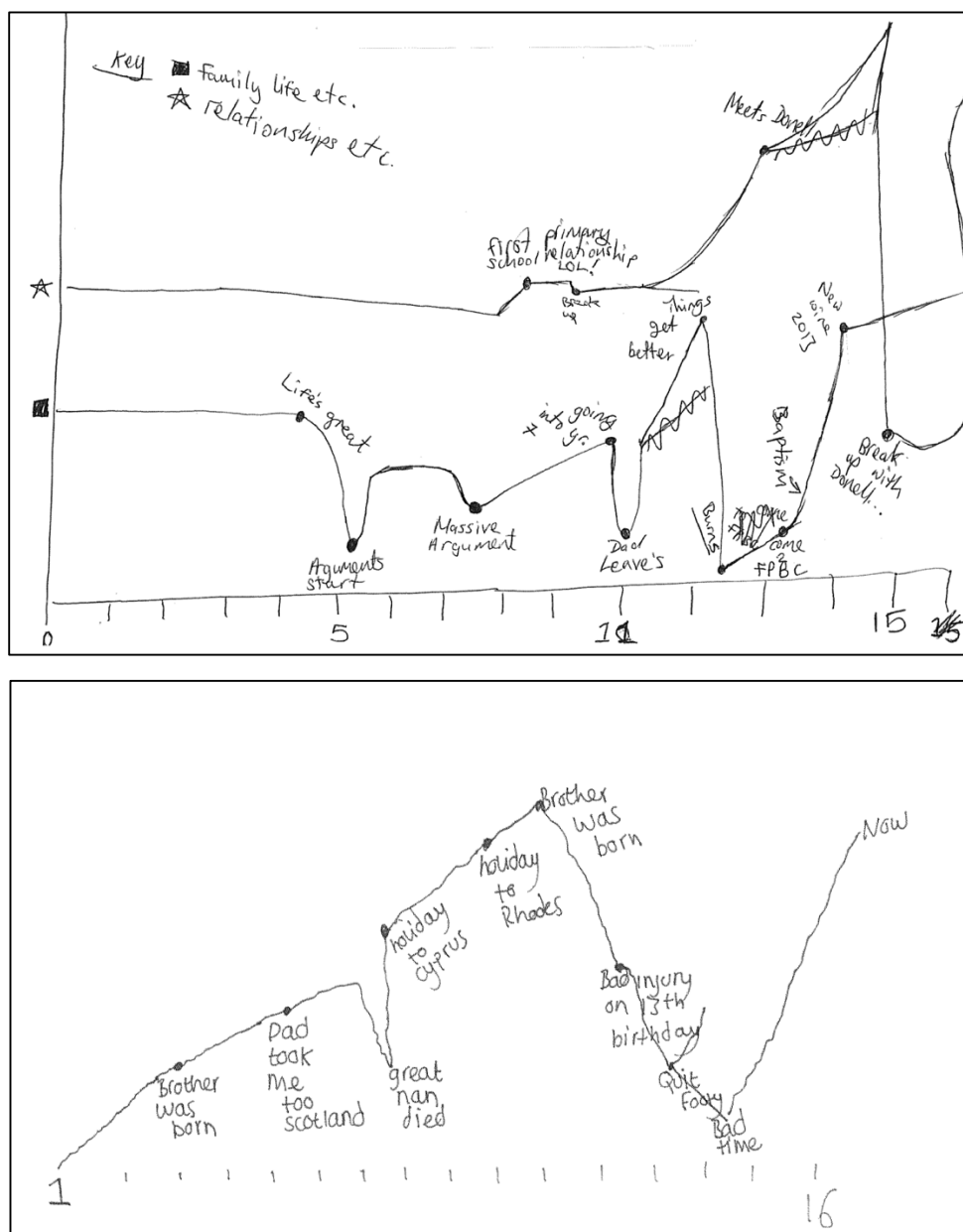


Figure 5: Examples of life maps

Post-trip interviews with young people generally flowed freely and lengthily as the experience of travelling abroad provided ample memories to explore. Most participants clearly enjoyed these interviews. I followed a semi-structured approach with broad themes (see Appendix 2). The challenge was that there were strongly rehearsed narratives about the trips. On the one hand, these interviews were highly revealing of the vocabulary, metaphors and imagery of ‘dominant discourses’ (McCormack, 2004). That participants slipped into reality-TV style accounts of how the trips ‘changed their lives’ highlighted a resonance between the interview as a

performance, the dominant discourses around the trips, and how both are ‘closely related to the technologies of the confessional, and those of the mass media’ (Latham 2003: 2007). The emotive nature of these interviews should not be seen as simply clichéd, rather as affective verbalisations that provide insight into the ‘more-than-representational’ through these ‘representational’ methods. Intersubjective memories saturated with happiness, nostalgia, thrill or confusion frequently ‘transported’ both myself and my research participants to the embodied, emotional experience of the trips, as Griffiths (2015) highlights in his account of getting ‘goosebumps just talking about it [volunteer tourism].’

Exploring the doubts, ambivalences or anxieties in participant’s accounts required care. Asking directly challenging or critical questions about the trips often closed down communication with young people whose knowledge and actions are often questioned (Miller and Glassner, 2004; Secor, 2004), revealing the importance for young people of performing ‘success stories’. Transcribing, I was struck by my non-confrontational approach, which elicited fuller articulations, but perhaps missed opportunities to test the boundaries of framings of the trip, and to transparently present and allow response to critical questions. However, I did get beyond the ‘dominant discourse’ through attention to pauses, tone, inflection, emotion, vague terms and moments where young people struggled with articulation, and gently probing at these points (Charmaz, 2006).

3.3.3. Focus Groups: Sharing Feelings

There are important distinctions between interviews, understood to provide in-depth individual accounts, and focus groups, thought to reveal how meanings are constructed and contested collectively (Secor, 2004). However, the boundaries between the two were blurred. For example, to build trust, I offered and conducted several paired interviews, this some ‘interviews’ had a collective dynamic. Howeverm situations involving multiple participants were not *always* characterised by a dynamic of collective engagement: in paired interviews and some early focus groups the dynamic was more one of ‘taking turns’ to answer.

I conducted seven focus groups at different points in time. Pre-trip focus groups were a light touch mode of collecting data when building initial rapport. Mid-trip focus groups were facilitated by youth workers as part of the planned 'reflection spaces' during the trips, revealing emotive 'real-time' reflections. Post-trip focus groups accessed emerging or solidified collective memories of trips. In early groups, I struggled with the ideal function of focus groups as spaces of discussion that de-centred the role of the researcher (Secor, 2004). I counteracted this with strategies from youth work and the advice of other youth researchers. For instance, I used 'icebreaker' exercises based on magazine pictures, and illustrated the discussion ethos by using a ball of string to visualise a web of interactions within the group, and in some groups used a 'question pot', where young people took turns facilitating discussion around pre-prepared open questions (e.g. 'tell us about a moment that surprised you on the trip'). This added an element of guidance, but successfully created freer-flowing discussion.

When focus groups worked well, they revealed how accounts of the trips were articulated through social interaction, and power dynamics between young participants (Schafer and Yarwood, 2008). Focus groups presented affective data on shared experience, often when their function as a 'research space' got forgotten (Secor, 2004). For instance, during the pre-trip focus group with the Springboard young men, unexpected news arrived that two of the group's friends had been arrested. Shouting, storytelling and heated discussion ensued, completely derailing my original agenda but telling me far more about their social worlds than answers to my questions ever would have. Post-trip focus groups were strongly revealing of the creation of shared moral lessons. For instance, young people finished each others' sentences, broke into song, and shared vivid collective memories to bolster the meanings they were making. Crucial to note is that in each focus group at least one youth worker was present, and sometimes co-facilitated. This had mixed effects. They at times slipped into 'speaking for' or pushy facilitating, but also were instrumental to an atmosphere of trust. Their interactions with the group provided another interesting source of data.

3.3.4. The Ethics of Talk: Power Dances

In terms of formal ethics, I gained informed consent, and for participants under 18 I also gained consent from parents and guardians. I verbally explained consent as well as using a consent form (see Appendix 3), and reminded participants during interviews that they need not answer questions, drawing on voluntary youth work experience to make judgements about sensitivity. Thus, I tried to mitigate the issues of participants feeling pressured into participating or sharing more than they felt comfortable. Several young people did decline to participate explicitly or simply by not showing up (Morrow, 2008). I assured participants of confidentiality and anonymity. However, interestingly, many young people questioned the need for anonymity and expressed a desire for recognition through being named. I chose to uphold anonymity as I felt participants had a limited understanding of the ‘irreversibility’ of being named, the potentially critical tone of academic research, and the unlikely prospects of gaining ‘fame’ through my PhD(!). However, I recognise them by name in the acknowledgements of this thesis.

The demand for recognition links to ethical principles of avoiding exploitation and ensuring reciprocity. Many researchers (McDowell, 2001; Cahill, 2007; Meth and Malaza, 2003) chose to pay their participants, in terms of providing tangible compensation for taking the time to answer personal questions, arguing this is especially important with participants in precarious economic situations (McDowell, 2001). However, others argue that payment may distort free consent, blurring boundaries between ‘incentive’ and something coercive, and that payment can ‘degrade the idea of a common good that research contributes to, and instead transform it into another marketised exchange’ (Head, 2009: 343), and can exacerbate distortion as participants try to ‘say what you want to hear’. Taking these arguments and my limited PhD research budget into account, I signalled my appreciation and aided conviviality by providing young participants with food and drink in interviews and focus groups.

In terms of a broader vision of ethics and power in talking methods, my experience testified to the importance of power dynamics associated with social status, and also to the fluid ‘dances’ of power that occur throughout verbal methods (Gallagher,

2008; Vähäsantanen and Saarinen, 2013). The relative formality of interviews and my classed and aged demeanour meant my positionality in them could resonate with that of an 'authority figures' such as teachers or even the police. For instance, consent forms, using a recording device, or awkward beginnings or endings engendered 'keenly felt' discomfort (Hadfield-Hill and Horton, 2014). This was particularly evident in one-to-one interviews with the young men I accompanied to Kenya with Springboard. Several of them 'opted out' of interviews, and these interactions contrasted with their expressivity in participant observation. I often felt frustrated with their rejection of the research rather than accepting it as critical disengagement.

However, power dynamics in talking methods were not static. My interview skills developed over time: transcribing revealed counterproductively pushy or rushed early interviews (Madden, 2010), and I got better at avoiding offering positions and interpretative frames (Charmaz, 2006). That said, radically non-judgemental openness is hard to enact in practice, as were 'neutral' responses when young people talked in ways I found violent or distasteful, even as I recognised many such responses come from internalised social prejudices (Miller and Glassner, 2004). One complex dynamic was self-disclosure, which I engaged aiming to create rapport and show transparency about position (Cahill, 2007). For instance, I intentionally illustrated the life map with personal experience to set the tone for talk about 'things that matter'. In other instances, I mentioned my mixed ethnic heritage in an attempt to disrupt presumptions of my 'whiteness', and made self-deprecating jokes acknowledging my 'poshness'. While sometimes this lowered participants' defences, at times it also felt like such moves reinforced difference and could be undermining participants sense of 'expertise' based on their own positionalities (Abell, 2006). Indeed, one might question whether it was ethical to attempt to minimise interviewees feelings of suspicion of my 'whiteness' and class background, when my upbringing has been one of white privilege. On the contrary, emphasising my uninformed status could allow young participants to claim an 'expert' role and offer corrections (Madden, 2010; Miller and Glassner, 2004).

Young people made use of different strategies to take control in interviews: 'maximising' (long answers leading 'off topic') or 'minimising' (giving short,

unrevealing answers), especially at the start of interviews as a form of ‘testing’. Furthermore, participants sometimes turned questions back on me (Christensen, 2004). For instance, one young man, when I followed up a question about his sense that ‘God is real’, replied ‘I dunno man, I just really felt something [...] You know. Like, when did you find God? When did you first experience.... God, in a sense?’ My spluttered, disjointed response testified to his effectiveness in reminding me of the discomfort and vulnerability involved in answering some of the deeply personal questions I was posing.

Telling life-stories sometimes elicited emotional memories. For instance, one young woman dissolved into tears as she recalled family bereavements, and a young man talked with hardly any provocation for two and a half hours about his fractured relationship with his family and his time in prison. Such moments led to questions of whether research caused distress and whether I was adequately equipped to respond to participants’ psychological needs (Meth and Malaza, 2003). None of them told me of ongoing situations of violence or anything else that raised significant concerns for their wellbeing, and I was reassured by the knowledge of their positive relationships with other trusted adults. I took every effort to treat participants at these moments with extra care, and believe that my sincere affective responses to these memories (‘listening noises’, facial expressions, welling up), as well as explicit verbal reassurance and thanks, made these moments a positive time of listening and catharsis (Meth and Malaza, 2003). This again links to issues of recognition - that participants ‘want to know that what they have to say matters’ (Miller and Glassner, 2004: 131). Some of the issues that have been highlighted in this section are explored in the vignette below.

Lived Ethics: Positionality, Trust and Reciprocity

My pre-trip interview with Dylan goes well. We talk about friends, school, family. He expresses earnest love for his mum and cautiously reveals that his dad is in prison. After I don’t show judgement he ends up talking about his dad with gruff pride. His dad’s a boxer, his grandad too, and he says they taught him what’s right and what’s wrong. When I ask ‘what do you feel are the most important things they taught you?’ the answer comes quick and firm: ‘Never back down.’ A short pause. ‘Never back down. No matter who you are’. Dylan thinks he might want to be a cab driver, if his other idea of being some kind of engineer doesn’t work. They both seem to be a way to

make a good living, and the things that come with that. He says - 'Everything's just money nowadays. You can't be a tramp, yeah, and then chat up the most nice girl... like, they... will NOT be attracted to you'.

I left the interview pleased with the rapport we created, and was surprised later when I heard he'd been excluded from school several times. In the intense whirlwind of the trip to Kenya, Dylan and I had some good interactions, but also a tense and frosty few days after I ended up playing a 'disciplinary' role one evening when the lads got drunk, noisy and aggressive. A few weeks after our trip, I went to meet Dylan at the recreation centre where they play 5-a-side. I'd been stood up quite a few times by various interviewees, and felt frustrated.

In the echoing sports hall I approach Dylan. I force a jovial tone - 'how about doing an interview then, Dylan?' - he jousts back that he will if I pay him, he's hustling, cos 'you're getting benefit ... I'm not at school now, I've gotta make money. If you give me five quid, I'll give you forty-five minutes, I'll tell you loads.' I joke back, 'do it for love not money!' - he retorts, annoyed - 'nah, it's all about the money for me'. I take a deep breath, say 'I take your point, but I can't afford to give everyone a fiver, I've got to be consistent'. He answers, 'No, you have to give me a fiver'. I am feeling a bit flustered now. His tone feels aggressive, aggressively entitled, and an unprompted inner voice says 'such insolence!'

I attempt to make things jokey again, saying 'stop trying to hustle!' - He snaps back 'You're the hustler! You come down here in posh clothes, Armani glasses, and then you say you can't give me a fiver!'. I say with a raised voice 'I don't get paid for coming down here every week!'. I claw back at my own rising emotions. I really want this interview. My data collection spreadsheet is looking so messy. I try whatever 'rational' argument comes out of mouth, something moralising about him having agreed to. Shamelessly, I try to use the leverage of Springboard, saying Gary has asked me to do a report. His anger is visible in his posture and face - 'nah! YOU ask Gary to get us to do stuff! You ask him, so he makes us do it for YOUR benefit... it's for YOUR research, YOUR benefit!'. I shut my mouth. He carries on angrily referring to the night on the trip I told them off - 'YOU grassed on us - YOU ruined the party!...' There's silence. We both turn and walk off, I'm close to tears, feeling like a research failure, and hurt.

Dylan and I never did have a post trip interview, though we eventually got to speaking terms again. But setting down the drama in my research diary gave me a lot to consider. His insistence on the

bottom line that the research process was fundamentally for my benefit rang true with a sting. I reflected a lot about insolence and entitlement. The insolence of my own sense of entitlement to an interview, a second extractive interaction when what Dylan had seen after his initial openness was me acting like another ‘teacher-like’ adult. And yet how hard it was for me not to project insolence and entitlement onto his demand for payment.

Back in the good interview, back before the pernicious tendrils of moralising, cross-class assumptions wound their way into my interactions with Dylan and cracked our fragile communication apart – I asked Dylan how he would describe himself. He said ‘I dunno... a nice young chap’ –and ‘Don’t want to be bad. Don’t get yourself anywhere without manners’. That night, I felt pretty pissed off at Dylan’s lack of ‘manners’. But reflecting on his righteous push-back, the other version of the story is the one that needs to be told. The story of a nice young chap. A nice young chap who never backs down.

3.4. Walking the Walk: Participant Observation at Home and Abroad

3.4.1. The Richness of Participant Observation

Participant observation was the bedrock of this research. As well as accompanying the trips abroad to Kenya and Zimbabwe, in London I spent one day weekly for 14 months conducting participant observation at Springboard: volunteering at a youth club, attending staff meetings as well as many other events, and with the Kingsfield group attended events in the lead up to and period after the trip, spanning a period of 6 months. The practice of moving back and forth between the intimate, embodied experience of ‘participating’, and the recording and nascent analysis of ‘observing’ brought insights into: 1) how micro-scale, everyday actions constitute, uphold or challenge macro-scale social structures; 2) the negotiations behind seemingly mundane activities; 3) the disjunctures between what people do versus how they describe it; and 4) how people act on and make intersubjectively shared meanings (Crang and Cook, 2007; Herbert, 2000; Lorimer, 2005). These things made this PhD much richer. In this section I critically reflect on the processes, challenges and ethical dilemmas of conducting participant observation, and

potential influences on data. I also discuss some partially successful experiments with some ‘creative participatory methods’.

Conducting participant observation was motivated by the desire to produce knowledge not over-reliant on discourse, but attentive to ‘shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions...’ (Lorimer, 2005: 84). ‘Being there’ fractured neat scripts about the trips in interviews. This was not only through observations but in using myself as a research tool (Lorimer, 2005; Crang and Cook, 2007; Madden, 2010), as I was swept up in the emotional intensities which animated the trips. Participant observation in youth groups was essential to understanding the way the overseas trips relate to young people’s wider lives. It also built trust through demonstrating interest in the ‘ordinary’ as well as the glamorous. Participant observation is never a tool for a detached researcher to access comprehensive knowledge, but a deeply intimate, messy method. The rest of this section explores some of the ‘mess’.

3.4.2. Degrees of Immersion and Dilemmas of a ‘Youth Worker’ Role

Ethnography’s roots are in immersive co-residential studies, however, my ethnography involved a ‘step-in, step-out’ approach and two sites (Madden, 2010). This led to negotiations over acceptance and role. In the case of Springboard, approximately one hour’s travel from where I lived, distance reduced the potential for spontaneity and sometimes reinforced my status as an ‘outside researcher’. However, the extensive period of participant observation gave me huge insights into the social world that revolved round the youth charity. In Hackney, I lived 5 minutes away from the estate and volunteered longer-term with the ‘girls group’ associated with the church, but proximity also constrained my interactions. For instance, one day after the Zimbabwe trip, I stood enjoying chatting with young people after a youth club had finished. One of them suggested going to hang out in the park - as a researcher I wanted to ask whether I could go with them, but felt too conscious that adults who knew me in the community would think this was ‘odd’.

Degrees of immersion were thus not my choice but always negotiated (Madden,

2010). My gendered, racialised and classed embodiment played into closeness and distance with research participants in diverse ways. Being a young woman in Springboard with mostly male participants and a strongly 'masculine' ethos often inhibited immersion. However, the primary identification which impacted relationships was that of 'volunteer youth worker'. This valued, trusted role was central to enabling my research through gatekeepers (Cherry et al., 2010). However, it raised ethical dilemmas in terms of consent. Although taking care to remind young people, they frequently forgot I was not a youth worker, particularly at Springboard where I was often in the offices, chatting and laughing with youth workers. The 'youth worker' role placed me in association with adult authority and thus limited my access to certain interactions. Although I tried to take the 'least adult' role (Christensen, 2004; Punch, 2001; Vanderbeck, 2005), this was often easier said than done, since youth workers are also trying to do so in comparison to teachers or parents. Many of the techniques of participatory research and youth work overlap: creating good atmospheres, fostering ownership, seeking to understand young people's concerns, being 'un-shockable' (Cahill, 2007). Therefore, I often appeared similarly adult, or even at times 'more adult' than my gatekeepers.

There was a subtle pressure to 'perform' as a youth worker out of a sense of obligation to gatekeepers (Ansell, 2001). In the Kingsfield case, this intersected with religious positionality to cause various dilemmas. My identification as 'Christian' was instrumental in gaining access and trust. However, although I was (and am) sympathetic to faith as a meaningful dimension to social life and take the view that religion *can* be politically progressive, I had a markedly more critical and theologically and political liberal position than my gatekeepers. Downplaying my position seemed unproblematic at first but led to ethical dilemmas. For instance, agreeing to play my part in the 'labour' of youth work on the overseas trip at times involved facilitating group discussions on religious issues. Assumptions of my 'insiderness' - that I was 'the same' as other youth workers whose primary motivation was spiritual guidance of young people - made me feel conflicted both in terms of concealment of my critical views, and in terms of being complicit in the 'disciplinary messages' exerted on the trips (Cherry et al., 2010).

These dynamics had a deep influence on the data accessed - in volume, depth and content, what I was told or not (Cherry et al., 2010). However, there was no other role that would have presented an 'ideal' alternative - this role allowed me to 'mov[e] with the flow of people's lives in as normal and everyday a manner as possible' (Madden, 2010: 82). The role also led to significant insights. My sense of being 'socialised' into this role enriched my analysis of the power fields between the young people, the youth workers and the organisational structures encompassing them (Gallagher, 2008). My ethnographic work gave me no easy recourse to a simplistic view of power and age: such as seeing adult youth workers as 'oppressively' imposing the problematic aspects of trips onto 'duped' youth (Gallagher, 2008). Nor was I entirely 'boxed in' to this role. A satisfying marker of ethnographic acceptance was receiving a tongue-in-cheek 'street name' of 'Dr Ruthless', a playful experimentation in engaging me as 'honorary young person', as well as 'youth worker' or 'researcher'.

3.4.3 Performing Participation

Central to participant observation is embodied performance. Firstly, we 'continually negotiate practice-based trust' through bodily gestures and ways of interacting (Cherry et al., 2010: 13; Crang and Cook, 2007). Secondly, we gain insights through having similar subjective bodily experiences as participants. In negotiating trust, many aspects of my embodiment beyond my control - such as markers of my middle-class identity compounded by the high education levels implicit in being a 'researcher' - marked me out prior to any engagement (Ansell, 2001) and I had no illusions about 'blending in'. However, I did attempt to manage some aspects of self-presentation, such as speech - in trying to temper my accent and vocabulary - and dress - avoiding strongly classed markers of dress such as 'bohemian' vintage clothing.

Linguistic performance illustrates the fine lines between fitting in and mis-fitting. In the youth club each week I tried to listen closely to young people's styles of speech and engage their emic terms. I stopped short of trying to use slang, which I learnt early in my voluntary youth work experience can come across as bogus (Madden,

2010) when one young woman informed me: ‘no offence Ruth, but slang don’t suit ya!’. An ‘interested outsider’ role often worked well and young people enjoyed explaining their slang. However, I was also brushed off as being ‘too interested’ in slang as young people protected space beyond an adult gaze (or ‘ear’). Full ‘participation’ is always somewhat of an illusion (Punch, 2001), and ‘trying too hard’ with teenagers can be counterproductive. I tried to embody a ‘hanging around’ role through practices such as listening attentively, expressing interest with smiles and enthusiastic responses, displaying calmness, and not being ‘too important’.

My bodily practices and responses were ‘tested’. For instance, food is a marker of class, and I broadened my tastes as young people took note of whether or not I consumed sugary snacks at youth clubs or shared their enthusiasm for Nando’s. Willingness to engage in certain activities earned me respect. For instance, participating in a 20-mile sponsored walk on a snowy day prior to the Kenya trip, and jumping over a wall to take a short-cut gained me more kudos than hours of conversation. Similarly, in Zimbabwe, choosing ‘Lion Walking’ out of the wildlife activities immersed me in a shared affective intensity of ‘toughness’, creating rapport with young men in the group I had found harder to connect with. At other points my behaviour prompted resistance (Langevang, 2007). For instance, on the first day in Kenya, the core group of young men piled into the back row of the bus, and I also moved towards the back to be ‘closer to the interesting data’. Other leaders sat close to the front. Suspicious looks and frosty body language sent signals that I should stick to a more ‘appropriate’ place.

I was not always in control of discursive and bodily responses which impacted participant observation (Cherry et al., 2010; Vanderbeck, 2005; Datta, 2008). Some of this was down to competence (Madden, 2010). For instance, the group of young men who went to Kenya lived and breathed football. Had I been able to play football, or better engage in conversations about it, a different relationship may have ensued. My frustrations at connecting with this group of young men are illustrated by a vivid dream I had during my research - which also perhaps reveals subconscious attempts to manage anxiety by infantilising and racialising participants:

I dreamt I was in the Philippines – volunteering – playing football with lots of small kids. I thought I was doing OK, but the kids got frustrated with me and I ended up having to sit on the bench because I kept messing up. [...] felt very hurt, but also stupid and annoyed with myself for feeling hurt by the situation – they're just little kids and it's just football. Still, I desperately wished I could play football!

(Research Diary Entry: 19th March 2013)

Humour is a form of embodied knowledge, and uncontrolled bodily reactions of laughing or not laughing at first marked my sense of humour as out of sync with my respondents. Gradually I got better at understanding, appreciating and even joining the quick-witted, irreverent, coarse 'banter' that was the currency of many participants. My research participants deserve credit for broadening my sense of humour. Other uncontrolled reactions vividly revealed my own judgements. For instance, in Kenya, when we were supposed to be serving the children at the children's home, one young man simply got a plate and sat down. Without forethought, I gave him an eyebrow raise and he immediately reacted with an angry look, and later muttered about how I 'wrote everything down', threatening 'I'll give you something to write down'.

Much of this testifies to the importance of gendered identities in shaping the research interaction. Gendered norms played into the barriers to rapport around football and humour, as well as the successful rapport around 'being one of the lads' on the sponsored walk and lion walk. Sexualising can also be part of the power play of research (Vähäsantanen and Saarinen, 2013) and I noted that with the Kenya group, sexualised banter was at times used to draw boundaries around their identity and exclude others – including myself as a 'prying' researcher - through discomfort (Vanderbeck, 2008).

3.4.4. Inscribing Observations

How participation comes to be 'data' through observing needs to be discussed. 'Vision is always a question of the power to see - and perhaps of the violence

implicit in our visualizing practices' (Haraway, 1988: 585). Looking back on early fieldnotes I see a 'gaze' with many distortions linked to the filters of my social position. Certain adjectives spring from my fingertips more easily: the 'grey' streets of the estate and the 'surly' tone of a young person's voice. Even if some of those adjectives are more or less fair, what I noticed and noted down is deeply partial. Thankfully, time, encounters, and ongoing conversations all changed and challenged my gaze, forcing me to engage with struggles over how to see and what my 'blindness' might be (Madden, 2010; Haraway, 1988). I began to see other stories: the knots of convivial laughter which congregated on street corners, loving family relationships, the way a young person's voice and face would flicker between soft and defensive influenced by how my own reaction to their 'surliness' might flicker across my own face. In observing young people as they travelled, it is easy to judge their 'gaze' upon difference, but there is resonance with the ethnographer, who gazes upon difference too (Mathers, 2010: 15; Ntarangwi, 2000).

I primarily captured observations through keeping a research diary, though I also took photographs, audio recordings and short videos. I ended up with a huge volume of notes which led to the feeling of 'drowning in data' (Crang and Cook, 2007), but supported important realisations as many 'tiny things' came together across different times and spaces (Allsop et al., 2004). In contextualising interviews and focus groups, and as a space for processing my emotions, fieldnotes added transparency and nuance to analysis (Reeves, 2007). Broadly speaking, observations from trips abroad were 'comprehensive', whereas notes in the UK were responsive, ranging from noting a few interesting turns of phrase to copious observations on a fight. A major strength was recording a large amount of informal conversations. This is evidence of an internalised enduring bias towards discourse, but provided vivid, frank and linguistically rich data which contrasted interestingly to interviews (Punch, 2001). There are also many reflexive notes about my struggles and how I was 'participating in relationships saturated with emotion' (Bondi, 2005: 441). At times these preoccupations left fewer observations about embodied actions than ideal. My notes could tend towards the already-analytical, but when I became aware of the 'filtering that occurs between the eye and the hand' (Madden, 2010: 119) I stepped back to ensure I was describing basic observations carefully.

In the UK, I inscribed observations mostly on my phone, easily transferred straight into typed documents. This ‘blended in’ well to the point of raising concerns about participants remembering my research role. On trips, due to our active nature, and the fact young people had been discouraged from using phones, I primarily used a notebook. The contrasting materiality of these practices prompted different types of notes, phone notes were curt, whilst physically writing often prompted flowing, ‘diary’ musings. I tried to type up and expand shorthand notes as soon as possible, but in practice there was often a delay. I managed anxiety about further fictionalising or sensationalising the already always ‘translated’ data of field notes by clearly distinguishing original notes from later expansions, and adding notes on uncertainties. Thus, though the time delay with processing fieldnotes was not ideal, this layering also provided a chance for further reflexivity.

The act of inscribing observations played into intersubjective research dynamics. When participants saw or recalled I was taking notes it could provoke conscious performances or discomfort around feelings of surveillance (Madden, 2010). I had to re-learn many times how sensitive young people were to perceiving my observations as trying to ‘catch them out’, as the example below shows. These blunders were a source of data. Richie’s reaction reminded me of the strong taboo around ‘snitching’ - and the constant suspicion around the risk of being exploited or unjustly accused - for my participants, and revealed an attempt to manage these threats through invocations of fierce, pseudo-kin loyalty:

... I ask Richie what the name of the song they were just singing along to was and he smiles and says ‘why?!’ And I say ‘I was listening’, and he says - ‘no way!’ And turns around and announces to everyone: ‘Ruth is tryna catch us slipping and get P! [money] She just asked for the name of the song for her little notes!’ [...] he says - ‘if someone I didn’t know did that, I wouldn’t like it, but I trust you, we’re like *family* ... but if you break my trust - *that’s it*’.

(Research Diary, 23rd August 2013, Zimbabwe)

Once again, power was not ‘possessed’ but negotiated. I felt the ‘reverse gaze’ of my participants as they monitored and observed me observing them. In the

Springboard case this often took a humorous form. One day Gary took a photo of me, saying ‘just for my research!’ - and on the bus, my research and I became the topic of the improvised football chants constantly being composed, such as ‘She asks what she wants! She asks what she wants! Oi our Ruth, she asks what she wants!’... Or ‘Ruth, Ruth where’s ya diary!...’. Or ‘Write it down, write it down, write it down!’ - chants which felt like they tread a fine boundary between affectionate teasing and defiant resistance.

3.4.5. ‘Successful Failures’ with Participatory and Creative Methods

The wordy notes of my research diaries were complemented by experimentation with creative participatory methods. For instance, I attempted ‘video diaries’ on trips abroad. I hoped this would be a space of participation and generate enlivened data. I introduced ‘The Diary Room’ - a mobile ‘space’ where participants could take my iPad and record a video diary entry either alone or with others. Several youth researchers have used solicited diaries in youth research (Ballie Smith et al., 2011; Cahill, 2007), and video diaries seemed like an interesting twist on this: as a ‘fun’ medium that young people already engage in their everyday lives, and which avoids the effort and shame in writing that some young people might feel (Cahill, 2007). More complexly, it also clearly mirrors popular cultural modes of self presentation (the name ‘Diary Room’ is lifted from reality TV show Big Brother) and I was interested in the ways it would elicit self-conscious performance (Latham, 2003). Issues of confidentiality were made clear both verbally and also on a printed card - that I would watch these, but they would be immediately transferred to a password protected file, and not used outside research (see Appendix 4).

The video diaries did not take off (four entries were produced from the Kenya trip and one from Zimbabwe) because although youth workers and young people were enthusiastic about the idea, it wasn’t built into the intense schedule of the trips. After giving multiple calls to get involved, I realised this ‘participatory’ work felt more like the imposition of another ‘official’ activity. This experience thus confirmed the significant investments of time needed for participatory work (Blazek and Hranova, 2012), and that it can in fact place burdens on young people (Holland et al., 2010),

or paradoxically reinforce an adult/youth divide by presuming power should be 'given' rather than attending to the ways young people are always claiming power through their own tactics (Gallagher, 2008). However, the data produced did show a resonance between how young people understand the trips and the norms of reality TV, as they performed 'self transformational' narratives in both playful and earnestly felt ways.

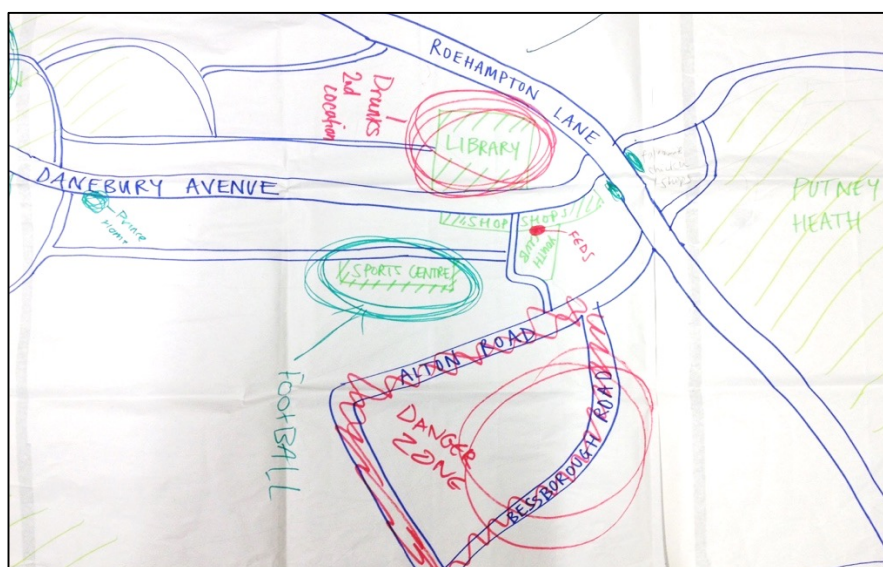


Figure 6: Section of Participatory Map

More successfully, in the UK I initiated various 'light touch' participatory activities. For instance, I used a mapping exercise, drawing a skeleton map of the estates and asking young people to scribble on it in red, yellow and green to indicate points of interest with positive, negative or ambivalent associations. These were productive entry points for discussion led by young people about their areas (Punch 2001, 2002). At other times I joined youth-worker initiated participatory activities, for example using prompt words or visual brainstorming to discuss priorities or aspirations. I undertook a 'tour' of the estate in Roehampton with one young participant, audio-recording his free-flowing commentary as we walked. Overall, these only-partially 'successful' experiments with participatory methods added richness in the reflexive process surrounding 'trying and failing' as well as producing interesting fragments of data.¹⁸

¹⁸ Though not a participatory method, I gathered audio recordings to capture the power of collective affect in moments where sound 'renders us speechless, charges our body or transports us somewhere

3.4.6. Ethics in Participant Observation: Fights, Failures, Friendship and Fun

The ethics of participant observation are murky. I adhered to the legal child protection standards for working with young people (CRB check, child protection training). However, informed consent becomes blurry where permission to research at youth groups and accompany trips was ‘given by’ adult gatekeepers. I repeatedly highlighted my research role and I respected behavioural signals such as distancing body language or avoiding talking to me (Morrow, 2008; Punch, 2001). As indicated above, I attempted to reflexively acknowledge my moral or exoticising judgements. In Blackman’s (2007) electrifyingly honest paper about ethnographic experiences ‘hidden’ by polished research accounts, he argues for more transparency about ‘emotional contact’ during research, illustrating this with his dilemmas around drinking, friendship, feeling threatened, sexual attraction, and intense feelings. Certainly, strongly emotional relationships shaped the knowledge produced and presented ethical dilemmas for me. I will discuss two of these in particular: failures of rapport connected with my ‘youth worker’ role, and the ethical dilemmas presented by friendship and ‘the intoxication of immersion’ (Madden, 2010: 85).

Firstly, playing a ‘disciplinary’ role towards young people was something I felt an acute tension about throughout the research process. Where McDowell’s (2001) strategy of not reacting to comments about criminal activity, sexism and racism seems desirable and possible in the context of interviews, it is not straightforward in participant observation. My personal instincts to react to such comments were compounded by the role of ‘youth worker’ expected by young people as well as adults, and the ethics of non-judgement becomes complex where there is domination between young people (Gallagher, 2008). For instance, at the youth club in Springboard, I was torn between ‘acting neutral’ towards ‘problematic’ behaviour, aware that judgements could obscure understandings and impede trust, with feeling compelled to intervene at overt aggression, sexism or racism. Over time

else’ (Lorimer, 2005: 87). In terms of the visual, I took my own photographs as memory prompts, but more importantly engaged with young people’s meaning-making around photography, such as examining how young people re-presented and circulated images on social media and in presentations, or acted as triggers for emotion and stories (Croghan et al., 2008, Langevang, 2007).

I drew a line between speaking up where actions were directed by young people to others, with generalised comments which I could approach more ‘open-mindedly’.¹⁹

This ‘disciplinary dilemma’ sometimes led to a ‘sense of failure’ as a researcher (Blackman, 2007; Horton, 2008). This was particularly the case with the Springboard group. Stepping into a disciplinary role one evening in Kenya where they got drunk and started being noisy, aggressive and fighting with one another had a significant impact on my closeness to them, as discussed in the earlier vignette. However, the benefit of reflexivity is of course that even ‘unsuccessful’ times can produce data (Horton, 2008). In hindsight, it became clear to me that my reactions towards ‘discipline’ belied my own classed distaste and my fearful feelings towards hegemonic masculine culture, and the young men’s reactions were amplified by the way my reactions mirrored the power relations they faced in other settings (Parr, 2001). Furthermore, the reason I had to play a ‘disciplinary’ role is that Gary and other male youth workers were out having a drink, which underscored observations about the gendered ethos of ‘lads on tour’ which suffused trips.

The ethical dilemmas associated with ‘successful’ access and rapport are little discussed in comparison to explorations of ‘negative’ feelings of guilt and judgement. Conducting participant observation for over a year meant relationships developed into friendships and ‘loving attachments’ (Porter et. al, 2012). Eating together, long journeys, affective moments of song and dance, inside jokes and memories all bound me to a sense of shared identification with research participants (Cherry et al., 2010). These transpersonal affects broke open space for rapport, sensitised me to new and unexpected insights (Lahelma et al., 2014), and led participants to have positive feelings towards their involvement in the research. However, it also presented dilemmas.

Loving attachments change what we are able to see, and feelings of affection shaped my gaze, as certain respondents and dynamics received repeated attention in my

¹⁹ However, these ethics were ‘messy’ too: a frequent dilemma was noting young men dominating the music choices with aggressively sexualised lyrics which made many young women feel uncomfortable - is this ‘directed oppression’ or not?

notes (Porter et al., 2012). It also shaped what I felt able to say. Close friendships made me far more sympathetic to the views youth workers had towards volunteer tourism as ‘all good’, and as I grew more embedded in the field, moving back towards the critical abstractions of the academy felt difficult. Elaborating more critical framings of the trips has provoked an anxious feeling of ‘betrayal’. Relatedly, my friendships in the field gave me a greater sense of obligation to meet young people’s desire for recognition (Hadfield-Hill and Horton, 2014), expectations difficult to fulfil both in terms of the practical constraints around the outputs I have been able to produce and in terms of the norms of critique. However, ultimately these loving attachments shaped my critique in ways I believe to be academically enriching, in forcing me to work beyond easy answers (Porter et al., 2012).

Sometimes ‘feel good’ moments raise ethical dilemmas. In this research, flirtation and drinking were two ethical ‘grey zones’. My gendered and heterosexual identity combined with the heteronormative norms of my research settings made some research encounters, particularly with the ‘young mentors’ and volunteer youth workers in Springboard (men in their 20s) flirtatious. This gentle flirtation was entirely within ‘appropriate’ boundaries, but such dynamics are too often ‘written out’. Such dynamics indicated complex power games: my attempts to use ‘charm’ to create openness, and research respondents’ playful challenges to my ‘authority’ and the objectivity of the research process (Blackman, 2007). Similarly, in the Springboard case, drinking alcohol with youth workers and young mentors was crucial for research relationships (Blackman, 2007; Donnelly, 2014). It often provided fantastic insights. For instance, one evening at the pub a young man initiated a toast as he was chatting up some young women, saying ‘here’s to Gary for letting us be part of Springboard so we’re interesting blokes and these ladies wanna talk to us!’, and I listened to anecdotes about wild times on trips highly unlikely to have been recounted in the cold light of day. These vivid moments provided rich data - about the culture of humour and adventure central to Springboard; the blurred boundaries between staff and young people; that memories of the trips act as a sort of affective social ‘glue’; the ‘social and cultural capital’ associated with them. However, drinking also required negotiating ethical dilemmas, particularly of informed consent. I re-checked consent on any loaded issues later, tried to remind participants of my role, and managed my own drinking

in order to not ‘distort’ research (Donnelly, 2014).

3.5. Making Sense: Data Analysis and Writing

3.5.1. How Does Data Become Theory?

At the end of 14 months of fieldwork, faced with over 83 hours of recorded interviews and focus groups, 240 pages of research diary notes, and other collected ephemera, I felt overwhelmed. Analysis and writing are both time consuming and laden with methodological decisions, but too frequently left to seem a mystical, intuitive process (Crang and Cook, 2007). Qualitative analysis is inseparable from practices of writing: we make meaning as we ‘write through materials’, reflecting, interpreting, revising and attempting to find resolution (Crang and Cook, 2007; Madden, 2010).

How does data - recordings of embodied experiences and observations - become theory - abstracted arguments which enable explanatory generalisation? My approach to this question was inspired by the ethos of grounded theory, developed by sociologists Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s as a ‘systematic’ alternative to deductive positivism. My research used many of its hallmark features of building ideas from the data up: theoretical sampling; an iterative process; the construction of ‘codes’ - categories which emerge from the data; and developing ideas through writing (Charmaz, 2006). However, I also take on board criticism that grounded theory’s emphasis on induction can lead to overly descriptive insights (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012; Wacquant, 2002). I embrace *both* the inductive practices of grounded theory that guide the ‘imaginative interpretations’ of analysis with sensitivity to the unexpected (Charmaz, 2006) *and* deductions from theory, which shapes and informs the very act of observing from the outset (Crang and Cook, 2007; Madden, 2010). Grounded theory involves ‘remaining open-minded but not empty headed’, and seeing theories as ‘points of departure’ which need to prove themselves against a respect for subjects’ perspectives which may challenge our assumptions (Charmaz 2006).

Transcribing and re-reading interviews was painstakingly laborious, but the foundation to analysis. 'It is in the systematic and repetitious revisiting of ethnographic data that we find meaning' (Madden, 2010: 155), and 're-reading' sounds simple but is in fact extremely intense. It led to emotionally loaded 're-living' of data collection, though with a 'double vision'. To illustrate what I mean here: in re-reading an interview I might simultaneously 'hear' the jokey tone I experienced, whilst a more serious meaning to the words would jump off the page. Or as I read a frustrated research diary entry, feelings of exasperation might flood back, whilst simultaneously, with distance, I could see my judgemental feelings as highly problematic. This sort of 'de-familiarisation' and textual analysis leads to new insights beyond the immediacy of the original experience (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012).

The second phase of analysis was 'coding'. The word 'coding' conjures spectres of positivist research paradigms, but is essentially labelling data to summarise and categorise it (Charmaz, 2006; Crang and Cook, 2007). Ideas emerge from the dynamic practice of coding. I coded all interviews and focus groups but not research diaries, partly in the interests of time and given that these were already saturated with my own analysis (Charmaz, 2006). I had two 'phases' of coding - an initial, free-flowing descriptive set of annotations, and a second more 'analytical' set of codes (Charmaz, 2006). In the initial phase, I drew on techniques from Charmaz (2006) to keep codes short and concerned with actions and participant's concerns - e.g. 'explaining poverty' - 'feeling left out'. I tried to use gerunds wherever possible to focus on processes, rather than making conceptual leaps to arguments or making assumptions about intention. I conducted this by hand. I struggled with oscillating between feeling like my codes were pointlessly obvious, or getting bogged down (Madden, 2010). From this I focussed on the most frequent or seemingly significant of the initial codes which might move across bodies of data and link to bigger ideas. In practice, this stage overlapped with writing. I entered my interview material into qualitative analysis software NVivo at this stage, but did not use it comprehensively due to time constraints and a sense that it was leading to a focus on finding the 'right' way to identifying content rather than flexible reorganisations of ideas (Charmaz, 2006; Crang and Cook, 2007; Madden, 2010).

At a certain point I felt I had got to a point of ‘saturation’. Analysis at times felt ‘maddeningly recursive’ (Crang and Cook, 2007) but repeated contact with the data was central in helping me uncover new levels of detail or unexpected things, crucial ‘findings’ in a project concerned with the embodied and experiential. It is the constant movement back and forth between data and abstraction that is ultimately most useful and challenging about a grounded theory and I only partially managed to take a truly iterative approach. Through flashes of insight, conjectures, moments which ‘tickle our brains’, and conversations (literal or imagined) with others inside and outside of the academy, we leap to understandings of how wider patterns may cross contexts (Lahelma et al., 2014; Timmermans and Tavory, 2012). Thus, data becomes theory not through a neat process but an ongoing, pragmatic ‘puzzling out’ which uses multiple ideas (‘theoretical’ and ‘commonsensical’) to stimulate insight and make sense (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012).

3.4.2. Writing: Cooking a Story, Serving a Story

Writing is central to ethnography - we write down, write out, write up. We are always constructing a story. Writing generates critical reflection, not just ‘a way to transmit a message but as a way to grow and cook a message’ (Elbow, 1973 in Cahill, 2007: 305). Therefore, writing overlaps with analysis. Grounded theory approaches early analytical writing as ‘memo writing’, writing fragments to elaborate hunches (Charmaz, 2006). Making short analytical notes during transcribing ‘kick-started’ my writing, aired doubts and inculcated connections. I also engaged creative writing approaches such as ‘free-writing’ about evocative moments, which fed into the vignettes interspersed throughout this thesis. However, academic work should not be a ‘story for story’s sake’ and it is important to think carefully about representational choices. I briefly discuss the concerns which guided my choices: incorporating subjectivity, better capturing lived experience, and producing work for audiences beyond the academy.

It is clear that reflexivity should apply to writing, as we consider our authorial agency and gaze (Crang and Cook, 2007; Dwyer and Davies, 2010). Throughout

this PhD, I 'write myself in' and include first person accounts of feelings. There are criticisms of such reflexive writing slipping towards narcissism and providing 'confessional' resolution, constructing the author as 'romantic hero' (Vanderbeck, 2005). It should be highlighted that power relations are never fully knowable and reflexivity should not serve to underscore the researcher's authority, but rather add richness to understanding of how knowledge is jointly produced by researcher and researched (Ansell, 2001). However, given the continued 'invisibility' of the researcher, I believe that inserting subjectivity into writing remains important. In this, reflexivity is hoped to enrich the interpretations available to the reader rather than achieve a fully 'transparent' account. I attempted to ensure writing about myself illuminated things beyond myself, such as the way I was positioned or related (Crang and Cook, 2007).

This thesis incorporates experiments with writing style in order to include more animated accounts of physical settings, embodied interactions, atmospheres and feelings. The primary tool for this is ethnographic vignettes, created from participant observation data, and written in a direct, descriptive and emotional register. Evoking a moving interaction or humorous moment is in part driven by the desire to produce something more pleasurable to read than conventional academic style. These vignettes also reflect an attempt to attend more closely to the sensuousness and details of volunteer tourism, whilst avoiding the stylised and obtuse experimentations of some 'non-representational' writing (Latham, 2003; Crang and Cook, 2007). The vignettes highlight situated experience and complexity better than de-contextualised interview quotations. Paradoxically, in them, the discursive power of narrative is re-engaged to better capture the 'more-than-representational' (Cameron, 2012). Such writing also links to the emphasis on reflexivity, though writing about emotions as relational rather than 'belonging' to individuals and knowable remains a challenge. (Hadfield-Hill and Horton, 2014). The vignettes are a product created from a series of reconstructions: firstly, of the experience by the teller (the research participants - or myself in research diaries), of the writer, and of the reader. In constructing them, I took every possible care to remain close to the 'original' (though never 'objective') data of research diaries.

The process of construction was broadly one of editing and elaborating research

diary notes. All actions, speech and atmospheres recounted are based on direct observation. All speech in quote marks are direct quotations noted at the time. Of course the very things I observed and noted, as well as the following layers of representational work are an interpretative act. However, no known information about action or intention was added and practices of reflexivity suffused the process. The most significant differences between the vignettes and my research diary notes is that sometimes vignettes compile the most interesting and dramatic occurrences over a span of time in the service of illustrating a point. I try to indicate the absences across time by the use of terms such as 'later', and always specify if observations span more than one day. I found that crafting a more performative writing style: '...can be highly rich and invigorating, attending to playfulness, respectful to people involved in research, and having a certain 'truthfulness' as understood as intellectual rigour and emotional resonance' (Latham, 2003: 2012).

The use of stories and affective writing is not 'merely' a tool to broaden our understanding of context, but has a politics. Writing is a performative practice which can be part of bringing alternative imaginings into being (Cameron, 2012; Griffiths, 2014a). Narratives surround the trips and I critically engage with the dynamics of power and knowledge which make dominant discourses around the trips 'legible, durable, and politically consequential' (Cameron, 2012: 583). Therefore, in my own writing, both in the vignettes but also in the thesis as a whole, I try to write in a way that grapples with what animates these 'grand stories' whilst recognising more heterogeneous dynamics and conflicted moments (Cameron, 2012; Hadfield-Hill and Horton, 2014). I hope this makes a small contribution to hopeful re-imaginings of how volunteer tourism might produce relationships and subjectivities.

One reason that writing is stressful is because it is the point at which we attempt to validate our research in the academic community at the same time as wanting to produce something that might benefit, or at least speak to, participants (Crang and Cook, 2007). As we fashion rhetoric, select and exclude data, we powerfully translate 'the reality of others' (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Despite a growing emphasis on 'public engagement', abstractions and codified critiques are still highly valued in the academy. I often struggled with the level of generalisation required for

academic analysis which felt violent at times, and the ways ‘the cold prose of the social sciences’ (McDowell, 2001: 97) is culturally coded to seem judgement-laden or incomprehensible to participants (Madden, 2010). The vignettes are one way I have tried to write in complexity in an accessible style. But even in these a level of generalisation and an ‘authorial voice’ contains judgement, and it can be ethically sensitive to present in-depth data to wider audiences, even when anonymised (Delyser and Sui, 2014).

I made some efforts in accessible dissemination and dialogue around research findings. I fed back preliminary findings in a two-hour verbal presentation and discussion at Springboard at the end of my fieldwork (January 2014, see Appendix 5). I gave all interview participants in the Kingsfield case a copy of their interview transcripts. The presentation was a nerve-wracking and sensitive exercise, but I derived immense satisfaction from seeing my participants engage with, agree with and refine my ideas, and the organisation engage with some critical questions I raised. At a certain stage I hoped to take this commitment further through conducting ‘participatory analysis workshops’. However, the presentation made me aware that this process would produce much new data which would take substantial time to reconcile or represent (Crang and Cook, 2007). Overall I have felt conflicted that the demands of producing the PhD have reduced my capacity to produce participant-focussed outputs. I could have been more realistic in setting expectations around such forms of reciprocity (Punch, 2001). That said, I still hope following PhD submission to produce a short report for a practitioner audience, and an audio podcast as a creative, non-textual output oriented at a wider ‘public’ (Dwyer and Davies 2007b).

Ultimately, writing this thesis has been an attempt to produce a ‘vulnerable text’ that tries to incorporate uncertainty and honesty about limits, that does justice to participants as ‘complicated and conflicted people’ (Crang and Cook, 2007: 165), and tries throughout to ‘retain a dialogue between what can be made a lively presence and what remains a telling absence’ (Dwyer and Davies, 2010: 89).

3.6. Conclusion: Feeling my Way Through the Field

This chapter has outlined the methodological approaches I took, the epistemological rationales behind these choices, and reflected on the benefits and challenges these methods. The chapter also described the particularities of the two main case studies I engaged with, and that they will be considered as parallel stories, whose resonances and dissonances are revealing, rather than direct comparisons. Finally, it discussed the methods of analysis which transform qualitative data into ‘findings’, and attempts to communicate those findings with both rigour and liveliness.

In reflecting on the process of conducting research and the ethical dilemmas I encountered, this chapter provides a rich unravelling of the way that power relations are constantly shifting and diverse. Understanding power as a constraining force possessed by one party (the adult, the researcher) over another (the young research participant) is a very limited view (Gallagher, 2008). From struggles to coax and persuade, to being swept up in intersubjective friendly feelings, I did not ‘give power’ to my young participants, nor act in deterministic ways upon them. Furthermore, struggles with enacting discipline in the ‘youth worker’ role highlight that young people’s agency should not be straightforwardly romanticised, as it may involve ‘oppressing’ other young people. Whilst at many moments I still had to grapple with issues of my ‘dominance’, this chapter also finds that dominance cannot be straightforwardly mapped onto positionality. Positionality always needs to be paid attention to, but ‘when one considers the complex, multiple emotional-affective moments in research... clear statements about positionality become increasingly elusive and complicated’ (Hadfield-Hill and Horton, 2014:149).

The methodological reflections in this chapter also underscore that emotion should not just be seen as ‘an object of study but as a relational, connective medium in which research, researchers and research subjects are necessarily immersed’ (Bondi 2005: 433). An interest in emotion and affect is a core thread running through this project and will be explored in the empirical chapters. In concluding this chapter, I would like to affirm that the emotional contacts of conducting research have played a significant role in constituting me differently as a researcher and an individual,

particularly in terms of my sensitivity to, and passion to work against, the classed and racialised judgements that deeply shape many young people's lives. The empirical findings reported in the next chapter provide discussion of these classed judgements in relation to volunteer tourism.

4. Before: Transformational Narratives, Imagined Journeys and Ideal Subjects

4.1. Introduction

Strong discourses of personal transformation surround volunteer tourism. Volunteer tourism is imagined to ‘do good’ in two dimensions - in ‘helping people’ abroad, and in ‘bettering’ volunteers as individuals. This chapter argues that in the cases of this research, the idea of ‘double productivity, helping the people you’re taking and also helping the people there’ (Isaac, Volunteer Youth Worker, Roehampton), is particularly pronounced. Concerns with reforming non-elite young people conceived as ‘at risk’ or problematic are fused with contemporary popular humanitarian ideals of ‘saving the world’. Prior to trips abroad, both young people and youth workers communicate pervasive expectations of volunteer tourism as a journey of personal transformation which is hoped to produce ‘new’ subjects. They adopt an anticipatory narrative that trips will make young people more grateful and motivated. The linguistic and ideological coherence to narratives about volunteer tourism across diverse cases demonstrates that discourses powerfully frame these initiatives.

The visions of the trips are underpinned by problematic spatial imaginaries - of low-income UK spaces and homogenising charitable visions of ‘Africa’. The trips are envisaged as enabling one set of young people defined as lacking - ‘urban youth’ - to escape the vices of this environment, through ‘helping’ another set of people defined as lacking - the needy in the global south. One problematic representational vision is used to leapfrog over another. This finding confirms the power of ‘neo-colonial’ imaginaries in volunteer tourism (Mostafanezhad, 2013a); that classed concerns amplify desires to ‘develop’ young volunteers; and that these two problematic drives are interconnected.

Furthermore, ideals of active participation in one’s own self-development towards aspirational dispositions cut across varied actors’ hopes for volunteer tourism. The

appeal of these ideas can be analysed as diffuse and persuasive ‘governmentality’, rather than top-down visions of particular actors. Power operates through a normalised narrative of trips which defines the boundaries of what seems possible to imagine. The visibility of ‘success stories’ shapes young people’s anticipation of volunteer tourism. These stories ‘enact[s] broader strategies of governance by circulating resources for self-transformation’ (Page, 2015: 2). Young people desire to participate in self-management in ways in line with a ‘neoliberal’ politics of aspiration that encourages young subjects to take responsibility for their own betterment through adopting hopeful, hardworking dispositions (Brown, 2011; 2013). However, these overarching ideals are, in part, challenged and negotiated between and amongst adults and young people prior to the trips.

4.2. A Transformative Journey

4.2.1. Be the Change, Make a Difference

Liam’s story goes like this. He grew up on a council estate in south London. In his teenage years he was ‘smoking a lot of drugs... in trouble with the police’. One of the few adults Liam got on with was Gary, a youth worker, who at times came to the police station to bail him out. In 2006 Gary planned a youth trip to Kenya and invited Liam. The local council funded the cost of Liam’s place, since he was on their list of ‘at risk’ youth, but they were struggling to engage him. Liam says ‘I thought, this could be an opportunity for me to get out... I was sick of what I was doing, it wasn’t helping me...’

Liam was ‘blown away’ by the trip. He found it good to have a break from smoking weed and reflect on life. A conversation with some Kenyan young people ‘really hit him’. When he told them about his mechanic apprenticeship, and they said ‘we can’t get jobs, we live on the street, we get our food out of dustbins, we want to be car mechanics’. He told the kids, ‘I’m going to build you a garage so you can have jobs’. When he returned to the UK, he stopped smoking weed, got baptised, and came to Gary with his apprenticeship pay to put towards the garage for several months. Six months later Gary and Liam returned to Kenya and bought land attached to the partner project they worked with in Nakuru.

From then, Gary's youth charity Springboard made trips from the estate to Kenya a regular part of their work. This was in large part driven by 'seeing the impact it had on Liam', and how he 'got a vision to help other people' that 'completely changed his life'. Since then, '...young people that have been heavily involved in gang life and street violence have decided that they want to make a difference, and they are now also going over to Africa...'. Liam now works as a mechanic. He enjoys 'inspiring' others with his story, and says: 'before I went out there... I didn't know where I was goin in my life, I just, like, didn't have no goals or no dreams. People helped me in my life, and changed me, so I wanna do that to other people'. When others go to Kenya, he believes 'guaranteed it'll have an impact' because they've 'experienced something that has touched their heart'.

(Sources: Gary interview, Research Diary notes and Springboard videos. All quoted speech verbatim from these sources)

Liam's story²⁰ exemplifies the narrative of personal transformation which exists around volunteer tourism. 'Life-changing...', 'I think it will change my life...', 'it changed my life...': this is how trips are described. The physical movement of volunteer tourism is imagined to catalyse an internally felt, socially performed, movement from a problematic 'before' to an idealised 'after'. Young people invest in this narrative of change in the literal time prior to undertaking trips. Volunteer tourism has a temporal reach beyond its practice, both in such anticipatory dynamics (Anderson, 2010) - and in the way that during and after the trips, they fuel future-oriented identity work (Jones, 2011). Ideals of personal transformation through volunteer tourism are encapsulated in the contemporary cliché to 'be the change': the idea of a synchronicity between personal change and social change, and a valorisation of a generalised 'desire and belief that you can make a difference' (Gary, Youth Worker) in both one's individual life and the global setting.

The overarching narrative of personal transformation through 'making a difference' was expressed as 'common sense' knowledge. Videos made on trips featured close up shots of young people's faces as they stated they felt the trips had 'transformed' them as they felt 'inspired' through 'helping kids'. I witnessed a young man come into the Springboard offices, greet Gary, and say 'I need to go on one of those life

²⁰ This is the publically circulated version of Liam's story. Other versions and the questions they raise will appear throughout the thesis.

changing trips, man'. My PhD was introduced by a key informant as: 'about the impact of taking kids from estates like this to the third world and how it develops them'.

This 'dominant discourse' was expressed by both adults and young people and present in widespread representational circulations. Youth workers suggest that volunteer tourism trips prompt maturation, saying 'they went out as immature little boys, and they've come back real young men' (Nigel, Trustee of Volunteer Organisation), or that the trips provide the 'opportunity to progress and develop and invest in yourself, to reflect and mature' (Adam, Youth Worker, Leatherhead). The *narratives around* the trips can be seen as emblematic of the tenacity of understanding young people as in the process of 'developing' in normative, teleological ways towards autonomous adulthood (Jeffrey, 2010) and how these visions are often linked to spatial imaginaries (Smith, 2013). Such visions have a broad reach, linking to near-universal coming-of-age rituals, and adventurous pursuits that have been historically central to attempts to shape young UK citizens²¹ (Mills, 2013).

This narrative also emerges in relation to other influences. Liam's idea that short trips to the global south will naturally and certainly 'touch people's hearts' fits with analyses of the renewed vigour of 'popular humanitarian' imaginations. Here, sentimental expressions of individual charitable compassion, particularly towards Africa, are an aspirational desire and moral good 'above' politics (Butcher and Smith, 2010; Daley, 2013; Mostafanezhad, 2013b). That such action is thought to prompt self-transformation reveals that the discourses around the trips reflect and inculcate ideologies of teleological development and improvement at the individual level (self-development) and the transnational scale (international development). For instance, in a planning meeting for the trip to Kenya, we talked about painting and refurbishing dormitories, and one youth worker excitedly declared how the site used to be 'just fields' and how 'our time there will be like Changing Rooms! [home

²¹ The historical detail to youth movements cannot be fully recounted here, but the Scouts and Guides, founded in the early 20th century, were informed by complex mixtures of Christian ideas of virtue with an emphasis on nature, and can also be understood against the backdrop of imperialism (Mills, 2013). Outward Bound and the Duke of Edinburgh trips emerged around WW2 from founders with military backgrounds.

redcoration TV show]’. Other plans for the itinerary included reflection times with questions such as ‘things you’re grateful for’ and ‘what you’ve learnt and are going to take home’. Two logics of ‘development’ interpenetrate (Gagen, 2007). The personal development of the western volunteer tourist is seen to occur through engaging in the work of the modernising ‘development’ in depersonalised needy spaces.

However, as Liam’s journey from drug-consuming teen to motivated and charitable mechanic illustrates, the particular trips this research engaged with must also be situated in regard to the fact that young working-class people are especially subject to heavily moralised inscriptions of adult hopes and fears (Kraftl, 2008; Valentine, 1996). This is illustrated in the words of one of Springboard’s business supporters, whose idea that the trips will produce ‘good citizens’ implies that young participants are currently not:

The people that they target are the people that are ready to change their life... This is kind of one of the final pieces, where hopefully... they kind of flick over into being a good citizen, so to speak.

(Hamish, Business Supporter)

Implicitly, the ‘development’ of the young volunteer is driven by gaining ‘perspective’ about comparative privilege. The idealised outcome of Liam’s story, becoming someone who ‘makes a difference’ to distant others and has ‘goals and dreams’, illustrates that the ideal is to become ‘aspirational’ and virtuous – pressures that are amplified by concerns around working-class youth as apathetic and deviant (Allen et al., 2013; Brown, 2011). This research brings starkly into view the strong resonances between imperial dynamics and the way ‘urban’ young people have been framed as in need of rescue and civilisation (Gagen, 2007). I now unpack in greater detail how both youth workers and young people adopt and express these anticipatory narratives.

4.2.2. Shifting Identities Via Mobility: Becoming Grateful and Motivated

Young people take on the idea that volunteer tourism will play a dramatic, transformative role in their lives. Young people's expectations of the brief trips are deeply shaped by the idea of 'becoming a better person' (Marvin, Hackney). Particularly pronounced are ideas around becoming grateful. Take these quotations from pre-trip interviews:

I think the trip will obviously be very emotional [...] seeing the culture, like the poverty and stuff will be really hard.... Hopefully when we get back, we will all be more grateful for what we have...

(Nadia, Hackney)

I reckon I'll go over there and come back here and sort of... appreciate stuff more. Because all the people I know have been like that when they've gone... so I reckon it'll happen to me, just... stuff along those lines.

(Matt, Kenya)

Young people anticipate that emotional encounters with poverty (at times problematically conflated with 'culture') will prompt a shift in perspective, and make them more appreciative. There is a sense of inevitability to this story. Nadia says the experience will 'obviously' be as she describes, and Matt trails off into a shorthand of the effects of the trip as 'stuff along those lines'. The idea of a 'before' version of themselves as 'ungrateful' anchors a narrative of change towards gratitude, rendering young people incomplete or problematic in the present.

This narrative is constructed and rehearsed through collective discussion between peers. Its anticipatory power is illustrated in a group interview with young participants prior to the Kenya trip: one of the group, Kofi, had been on a trip the previous year. The other young men's questions to Kofi revolve around their expectations that the trip will prompt intense, emotional responses. Kofi performs the role of experienced advisor, urging them to take their 'helping' role seriously. Engaging in self-transformation and 'transforming' the lives of others are fused:

D: Did you cry when you left?

K: Ah, I had tears in my eyes.

J: What, when you was leaving?

D: What, seeing them?

K: Sad... The day you leave - the day you leave - it's sad, yeah, because I thought I wouldn't see them for ages, yeah, and then when you see them crying -

D: Were they crying?!

K: Yes, because they are sad you're leaving... they appreciate that you're there - to help them. That's why you're there. You're not there to have fun, to mess about, you're there to help them - to try and change their life.

(Dylan, Kofi and Jay, Roehampton)

These accounts of tears, shock, pity and gratitude can be situated in a wider popular humanitarian imaginary which centres on sentimental representations of compassion and care (Lousley, 2014; Mostafanezhad, 2013b). The widespread power of ideas of volunteer tourism's encounters with 'the kids in Africa' as life-changing and leading to gratitude is illustrated by Benny talking about the shift from his initial uncertainty about joining the trip to being encouraged by a cousin and other adults to do so:

Everyone from the church was telling me that I should go – it would be life changing My cousin... went with a group to Ghana... and when he came back... saw life differently... wasn't selfish [...] Cos the kids in Africa didn't have a lot. So he said – that could change you [...] So I thought, yeah, its true. I should really go.

(Benny, Hackney)

Benny's desire to be changed shows the pronounced way young people adopted the idea of needing transformation. His account implies a 'selfishness' to his pre-changed subjectivity. The anticipated gratitude in his account - and those of Matt

and Nadia - is one for things you 'have' - a comparative gratitude for one's material possessions. Material gratitude is also the focus of Payton and Kai's discussion below. They talk about wanting to be shocked and challenged, and the slippage in Payton's language between the present and past tense (to talk about a future experience) and between referring to a generalised subject ('a lot of guys') to speaking in the first person ('I'm wealthy') illustrates narrative strongly foreshadowing experience:

R: How are you feeling about going to Kenya?

P: Excited. It's gonna be a good experience.

K: Excited, but to be honest I want it to be bad. If you know what I mean - I want it to be a bad experience, but a good one at the end.

R: ... tell me more about what you mean by that?

K: So, I do want it to change me, like, I want it to show me -

P: When you see the worse stuff in Kenya, so - it changed your view on life here, so for example... a lot of guys are like... going to Kenya [...] they'll be like - what I got back home ain't that bad. Like... compared to *them*, I'm kind of rich, like, I've got a lot of stuff. I'm wealthy.

(Payton and Kai, Roehampton)

Young people's embrace of the idea of a journey of change and gratitude is also fostered through embodied activities in preparation for the trip. For instance, the Kenya group undertook a 20-mile sponsored walk on a freezing day in January, walking until well after dark. Part way through an arduous stretch I overheard Dylan rallying Jay, who was complaining of feeling tired, to think of the 'sense of accomplishment' that they'd get at the end, and that they should think about how '*they* are walking that far to get water, it makes you feel selfish, try to put yourself in their shoes'. An image of a generalised Kenyan subject, clearly informed by charitable representations of poverty and 'traditional' livelihoods, was mobilised by the young men to engage in the labour of self-transformation into more motivated and less 'selfish' subjects even before travel.

Youth workers expressed deep faith in volunteer tourism trips as positive

interventions, which was evidently one powerful influence on young people's expectations. In asking youth workers about the power of the international setting in particular²², a story about comparative position emerged. Central to many of their beliefs in the trips' power is the idea that an embodied, shocking encounter with material poverty makes young British subjects feel better about their comparative position:

It's powerful hearing... 'shit man I never thought I'd feel rich' [...] [the trips] take[s] the edge off continually feeling the victims, we're at the bottom of society, the bottom of the world. [...] when you get there you're like – shit, there are kids living on rubbish dumps [...] you've actually got quite a lot.

(Isaac, Volunteer Youth Worker)

This narrative of gratitude, also common in volunteer tourism with middle-class participants, is problematic. It re-embeds imaginaries of destinations as defined by abject poverty, but also because when applied to young people from low-income backgrounds, the idea that they should be 'more grateful' minimises the real vulnerabilities and violences they face in British society. The idea of gratitude was closely linked to ideas of increasing aspiration. At times a problematic idea that the 'barriers' in young people's lives are self-imposed was expressed. One youth said the trips 'hit home' in making people think 'what I moan about, or what I put as barriers in my own life stop me doing stuff – I'm going to tear them down' (Matthew, Youth Worker). Other youth workers balanced understandings of the real struggles of young people in the UK with the idea that young people are limited by their 'belief that nothing will change and nothing can change...' (Adam, Youth Worker). For instance, Emma argued for the importance of gratitude in terms of providing an 'injection of positivity':

²² Some of the 'learning' they envisaged international trips prompting was similar to UK-based outdoor education trips which aim to foster 'life skills' through challenge and achievement, and play a 'therapeutic' role of building trusting, encouraging relationships; offering a space apart from family or school life.

I don't want to take away from the fact that there is a sense of poverty still for them, relative to the UK. ... but I think it is an important thing ... to almost slightly compare themselves against others who are less - even less - fortunate than them, in order for them to be grateful for what they do have. Because otherwise it's just some kind of negative cycle and... it needs an injection of positivity...

(Emma, Youth Worker)

The anticipated effectiveness of the trips is not only based on a realisation of comparative privilege but also the idea that working hard and 'having an impact on other's lives is empowering' (Kassie, Youth Worker). The idea of 'empowerment' or an 'injection of positivity' highlights that the envisaged 'transformations' of the trips are affective and dispositional rather than related to the development of particular tangible skills. This finding fits with the idea that young people are encouraged towards particular emotional responses as a marker of 'good citizenship' (Brown, 2013; Gagen, 2013). Youth workers believed that the trips would provide young people with a sense of achievement and raised aspirations - a visceral feeling of positivity, confidence and motivation - and hoped such dispositions would have a powerful impact on their futures, even as they half-acknowledged structural constraints:

That's how a lot of these kids came back. With a buzz. Quite extreme, quite strong. And that is part of the whole thing... making yourself feel strong. When you feel weak, you don't do anything, your expectations of yourself are low.

(Ade, Youth Worker)

They get this sense of worth from [the voluntary work]... which they haven't got here - they feel second class citizens, they feel useless [...] they can't get a job, that if they did get a job they wouldn't be able to do it, wouldn't be able to keep it. So its about working hard, showing they can do it for themselves, about motivation...

(Jason, Youth Worker)

This section has explored the way that both young people and youth workers envisage volunteer tourism as helping to ‘shift’ young people’s subjectivities and perceptions of their own positions in the UK. Young people usually understood as deviant, apathetic and (self-) victimised find themselves set up in the position of an active subject who is asked to engage in physical and emotional labour to ‘have an impact’ on themselves and others, in the process becoming more virtuous and aspirational. Although the quotations from the youth workers may imply that these discourses are imposed upon young people in a coherent manner, this is not the case. Youth workers’ views are fractured and embedded in webs of negotiated power. The trips are strongly foreshadowed, but in varied and complex ways, which will be explored in section 4.4.; and section 4.5. will highlight that young people contest dominant discourses.

The normalisation of the link between going abroad and transformation at home is underpinned by powerful spatial imaginaries of ‘here’ and ‘there’. The belief is often expressed that ‘taking young people out of their environment’ and ‘putting them into a different environment’ is part of the power of the trips. The two contexts central to this research - urban London, and voluntary projects in sub-Saharan Africa - are both loaded with codings, as illustrated by Dylan’s words:

...the thing that Springboard are doing makes Roehampton a better place – like, taking loads of kids from Roehampton to like, see... places like Kenya... Everyone’s going to have a different mindset when we come back. [...] I think the way they live over there is going to be so bad. Like, there’s just pure poverty over there.

(Dylan, Roehampton)

Prior to the trips, I heard many such imaginings of the destination contexts as spaces of ‘pure poverty’. Encountering this difference (primarily through the gaze, going to ‘see’) is imagined to make the home setting ‘a better place’, through prompting a ‘different mindset’ for the ‘kids’. Place-myths, ideas of virtue and deviance, and drives to improve young subjects collide in the anticipated story of the trips’ power. I now turn to explore these place-myths in further detail.

4.3. Imagined Journeys from Spaces of Vice to Spaces of Virtue

4.3.1. Home: It's Hard to be Good in the Hood: Negotiating 'Badness'

The volunteer youth groups in this research were based in low-income urban neighbourhoods, and the trips were understood against the 'backdrop' of urban social environments as full of deviance and dysfunction. It must be emphasised that overall, youth workers fiercely contest negative stereotypes about young people, undertake huge amounts of caring labour with them, and emphasise and rely on a belief in the already-existing inherent value of young people. However, due to a combination of resource-based incentives, and concern with the real, traumatic violences associated with socio-economic deprivation (for nuanced discussion, see Bourgois, 2002), the work of the groups I engaged with, *did* end up shaped by negative framings of urban environments. For instance, at Springboard, youth group sessions included: discussion around a film about reducing gun and knife crime, a talk from an ex-offender about prison, and a talk from an ex-drug dealer 'made good'. That discourses of urban dysfunction are internalised by youth workers in their understandings of the trips is illustrated by the quotations below:

Taking them out of an environment that's actually become really quite negative and it's relatively dysfunctional and oppressive...

(Emma, Youth Worker)

London... can ultimately hinder [change]...the language of violence, you know, or the language of intimidation and fear...

(Ade, Youth Worker)

The idea is that 'the environment' is exerting a negative force upon young people, in pushing them towards violent paths. Although the idea of trips as an escape from 'the environment' implies structural constraints, the vision of change is one of the individual changing rather than efforts to transform 'the environment'. This view pathologises low-income environments as inherently violent. This fits with critiques of the label 'at risk', as containing a slippage between ideas of protecting young people from external harm and ontologising young people as risky (Turnbull and

Spence, 2011). Discourses around ‘gangs’ and ‘street culture’ become complicit in disciplining of young bodies. Racialised youth face particular stigma, but intersections of classed, gendered and aged modes of comportment also play into denigrating stereotypes (Kulz, 2014). Historical urban reform efforts also mixed blame on ‘contaminating’ environments with ideas of the moral deficiencies of the urban poor (Gagen, 2000).

In this research, such problematic views of the trips were particularly expressed by Springboard’s business funders²³. They expressed visions of the trips as reforming potentially- or already-criminal youth through hard work and a sense of comparative privilege. These views, not at all representative of Springboard staff members, saw the trips as worthwhile in terms of cost-effectiveness in re-habilitating and preventing criminality without questioning either the assumption of young people in low-income areas as being defined by criminality²⁴ or the framing of criminality as an individual ‘choice’:

The more I looked into the cost to society of having someone in prison, and then the reoffending rate... the more I realised that actually getting one – sort of – potential criminal – onto a 15 grand a year salary, the net value to society is so much greater.

(Paul, Business Supporter)

People have said to me ‘I prefer to give my money to Great Ormond Street hospital... these kids that are in gangs? That’s their choice’.... my view on that is, that’s a reasonable standpoint except what happens when these kids mug your kids?

(Martin, Business Supporter)

²³ A number of extremely wealthy individuals provide a great deal of financial support for Springboard trips. These individuals often trace motivation for their support to their geographical proximity to the Alton estate and the discomfort with social inequality that this prompts. These people were enthusiastic and generous supporters of the charity’s work. Their support also sometimes involved hands-on engagement, speaking at events, accompanying trips and undertaking ‘mentoring’ relationships with young people.

²⁴ Springboard does engage with a significant number of ex-offenders and young people on the edge of trouble with the law, and sometimes playfully highlighted the dramatic nature of this, which may fuel these views. Youth workers’ personal engagements with such young people were highly open and accepting.

Stephanie, a business supporter who helped Springboard fundraise for trips talked about specifically ‘targeting’ wealthy residents nearby and playing on their anxieties, saying ‘they don’t actually care if you take them to *space* - you know, to them, its all about... their own children’. This statement vividly highlights business funders’ ideas of the trips as mechanisms for reforming deviance, and maintaining social control and the social order. These concerned and concerning visions²⁵ were accompanied by anxieties about apathy and laziness. Stephanie and Martin outlined their ideas of the trips as a sort of ‘shock therapy’ making young people realise their comparative privilege and prompting them to work hard, beginning with fundraising efforts and continuing on the trips:

They... got to see what poverty was really all about, and actually that their lives weren’t so bad... yes, they are in the lower, you know, demographic, but [...] these guys have a roof over their head, they’ve got a free education, free NHS... parents out there... 9 times out of 10 they put food on the table... Obviously they were made to fundraise in advance... although...I still feel they should be pushed a bit harder.

(Stephanie, Business Supporter)

From the outside it could be seen as a jolly.... ‘oh these kids now, you know, he’s been dealing drugs and now they’ve put him on a plane and taken him to Africa’. ... So you’ve got to be careful people see it for what it is... That they’re there to work. They’re there to rehabilitate.

(Martin, Business Supporter)

These funders clearly express ideals of the ‘deserving poor’, the poor who work hard, don’t cause problems or see themselves as victims, and are not going to become ‘dependent’ or feel entitled to the trips as leisure. Although these views were atypical in their extremity, they starkly illustrate the logical conclusions of many of the implicit assumptions around individual responsibility and reform present in

²⁵ It should be noted that the business funders imposed very few, if any, conditions on their donations which I believe is part of the reason Springboard did not seek or counter the business funders’ visions in depth, as they continued to exercise the freedom they had with these generous financial donations.

other accounts - including of youth workers and young people. In these views, volunteer tourism trips provide an escape from inherently negative environments, and thus provide a chance to gain 'perspective' and practice hard work which will help young people exert individual efforts at social mobility.

How did young people themselves see their home environments and understand them in relation to the trips? Young people were certainly hyperaware of these negative framings. For instance, in a pre-trip interview, a question about 'local belonging' prompted the response 'are you talking about the gangs and stuff?' (Benny, Hackney). Although to a great extent young people refute prejudicial understandings of their environments and their social lives (as explored in section 4.5), crime and apathy do also feature in young people's own understandings of their areas. For instance, Payton discusses the expected trajectories he sees in his area as prison or long-term unemployment:

I think a success for anyone in Roehampton is to not be in jail by that time [your early 20s]. To not get caught up in all the... gangs and [...] you don't wanna be chilling like dem men living outside bookies!

(Payton, Roehampton)

However, their understandings of 'urban badness' are not the totalising views expressed by adults. Rather, there is an ambivalent adoption of performances (in talk, 'style', and embodied action) of 'urban badness' as a forum to assert value. My research diary is filled with anecdotes of resistant performances of toughness - many somewhat tongue in cheek - which create a localised value among peers. For instance, a 12 year-old girl, cradling her adorable chubby toddler brother, explained she was 'teaching him to fight and swear' 'so he'll know what to do'. In Roehampton, memorably, a focus group was interrupted by the news that two of the group's friends had just been arrested, resulting in a long, animated discussion of encounters with 'the feds', a mix of painful anger and 'badge of honour' bravado. These agentic performances maintain self worth and respect, but are also highly ambivalent, as they also mark young people out as 'problematic' in ways that attract discipline (Archer et al. 2007b; Harvey et al., 2013).

Further ambivalence comes from the reality of the vulnerabilities of socioeconomic deprivation. There was real sense of the *proximity* of violence in young people's everyday lives which coexisted with vibrant community sociability (Bourgois, 2002). For many participants, 'street culture' felt very real, and they undertook great emotional and physical labour to negotiate the norms and risks associated with it. For instance, Diana (Hackney) detailed the nuanced spatial and temporal strategies she and her brothers use in their day-to-day lives: knowledge and choice of routes, when to walk in certain places, how to dress and 'carry yourself', who and how many people to walk with, how old or young to try to look, managing your 'rep' to be strong but 'not a threat', and the ways expectations and performances differ depending on one's skin colour, gender, and age.

Young people's contradictory understandings of their areas – their mixtures of pride and condemnation – testify to the way they find themselves in 'narrow subject positions' (Archer et al., 2007b), contending with stigmatised labels of 'urban youth', and facing the fact that resistant adoptions of 'street culture' contain 'traps' of their own. Marley, below, gives an account of his reinvention into a 'good boy' which signals his desire for a respected identity and a secure life. Like Diana's strategies, he closely monitors his local mobilities in order to stay safe and negotiate his relationship with urban 'badness':

M: Basically, round here ... it's either – you're... a good boy, and you go church. Or you're a bad boy, and you will get to know gang stuff... or there's just – the kid that stays at home.

R: And what are you?

M: Good boy! Haha! [...] I'm not going to lie. When I was younger I used to thought- think I was the bad boy. Until I saw – I saw someone get stabbed. Outside my house. And then I was the stay in boy. And then I started coming out, chilling with these lot [friendship group centred around church]...

R: ... Was it [the stabbing] a friend, or someone you just knew a bit...? [...]

M: He's a friend – but not – if he died, I wouldn't have went to his funeral [laughs] because... there would most probably be beef [conflict] there again. [...] Sometimes... it's scary... the other day... we saw boys... from round

the corner, and they have beef with the people round here. [...] I didn't know what to do. I called my friend, and I was just on the phone to him, just to see where they are. Because he lives up the road, so I asked him if it's safe, but I was scared.

(Marley, Hackney)

In this light, we can read young people's desires to 'change', as described in the previous sections, not as evidence they fully believe they are criminal or apathetic - but as a way to navigate their way beyond these narrow options. Volunteer tourism trips are an example of long-distance mobility being engaged in search of respect. To more fully understand that idea, we must explore the imaginaries of the destination contexts of volunteer tourism.

4.3.2. Away: African Myths: Lions, Disease and Happy Poor People

Youth workers and young people in this study expressed feelings that 'going to Africa has a power' (Ed, Youth Worker). In particular, several well-worn tropes structured imaginaries of a homogenised 'Africa': exotic adventure, risk, danger and disease, a space filled with material poverty and need, but also authentic community and virtuous people. And in all these, Africa is imagined as a space for the western subject to act - as illustrated in the vignette below:

Zimbabwe Pre-Trip Briefing Meeting: March 2013

Youth and parents sit in a wonky circle in a back room of the church. There's an air of anticipation as Emma, the youth worker, describes the itinerary. Ripples of excitement run around the room at the mention of the 'animal encounters' in a game reserve, and plans to paint a school and run a children's activity camp. Emma shows two videos. The first is promotional video from the company who are helping to facilitate our trip. It's pretty cheesy, with epic backing music and references to 'the African skies'. Most of the footage features white volunteers, and there are plenty of safari scenes. It ends with 'see you in Africa!'. The second is a video about a mission hospital we might visit. The video opens by saying 'There are lots of stories. This is one of redemption, hope...'. It outlines the good works and the resource needs of the hospital, peppered with rather grandiose statements about 'the people of Zimbabwe' as worthy but needy. It wraps up with the invitation to

volunteer as 'your chance to write a chapter'. The last part of the meeting is focused on practical questions. One of the parents asks 'do we need the rabies injection?', and Emma says yes. This causes a mild panic. Some young men exclaim 'WHAT?!' - and - 'there's wild dogs in Africa, fam!'. One young woman semi-wails 'but there is only one hospital!' Emma corrects her with a puzzled laugh, saying 'of course there's more than one hospital!', but it's not hard to trace this concern back to watching the hospital appeal video, which contained a dramatic line about how at one time there was only 'one doctor' there.

These stereotypes are not unexpected, however, they were incredibly pervasive in this research, and thus they deserve attention. Later, some of these ideas were fractured, but in anticipation of the trips, young people's imaginations were overwhelmingly framed by imaginaries of a singular entity of Africa as closer to 'nature' and in need of external 'care'. This confirms the salience of commentary on the idea of 'saving Africa', as having a vigorous power in contemporary culture, and structuring volunteer tourism initiatives. This imaginary is strongly racialised, with blackness linked to essentialised visions of Africa as the site of 'suffering-poverty-resilience-beauty' (Mathers, 2010; Darnell, 2007; Schwarz, 2015).

In this project, imaginaries of needy Africa were not only reflective of popular humanitarianism, but also central to the narrative of the transformation of young subjects through volunteer tourism. For instance, the care for young children was key to youth worker's ideas of the power of trips. The affective responses of children were seen to be both a motivation to work and tangible evidence of a 'sense of achievement' in the hope to foster volunteer's subjectivities.

Children follow you around everywhere, and they were so excited... [it] really inspired our young people... Right, we're only here for two weeks, lets do the best we can do ... They didn't want to let the children down.

(Rashid, Youth Worker)

Poverty is set up as an important phenomenon to be encountered. Staged - but deeply emotive - encounters with abjectly poor conditions were anticipated to prompt a visceral sense of comparative privilege, which would then fuel more hard

working and aspirational subjectivities. In the early stages of planning the Kingsfield trip, Emma was trying to decide whether to take the group to Zimbabwe or South Africa, and raised concerns that South Africa would be ‘too luxurious’, leading to a charged discussion with a South African friend over the idea that an ‘authentic African’ experience should be associated with poverty. In more explicit fashion, Springboard trips to Kenya included a visit to a community living on a rubbish dump. With uncomfortable transparency, adults expressed hopes that direct, embodied and sensory experience of poverty would play a key role in ‘moving’ young subjects away from ‘ingratitude’ and ‘selfishness’:

Instantly, they are shocked by the poverty... I think it flicks a switch where you stop thinking about ‘me me me’, and you start thinking [...] What can I do to make a difference?.... There is something... deeply profound about seeing other humans in suffering. And you can watch it on TV and ignore it... but when you are out there, and you smell it, and you touch it, and you come home covered in dirt, it’s real.

(Jason, Youth Worker)

[The Kenyan residents] all dancing and singing on the dump [...] You can’t help but have your thinking tested.... ‘So you think your life is shit. What about theirs?’ You know, you don’t even have to ask that question... It’s in your face. You’re living, breathing it. Smelling it.

(Martin, Business Supporter)

Martin’s emphasis on the life-affirming performances on the dumpsite highlights that imaginaries of Africa as poor were often expressed through a trope of the ‘happy poor’. The problematic ways this obscures structural understandings of poverty (Crossley, 2012; Simpson, 2004) will be further explored in later chapters. However, prior to the trip, the idea of encountering ‘happiness’ in poverty indicated strong imaginaries of Africa as virtuous. Young people contrasted their idea of ‘authentic’ community in Africa, characterised by kinship and respect, to the UK. These romantic visions featured strongly in young people’s pre-trip narratives, often co-existing with negative imaginaries of poverty, risk and corruption:

I'm like, fascinated and amazed by the culture and community... and how.... everyone just looks out for each other, and even if they've got so little, they are just so happy [...] despite, you know, the government, being... quite corrupt...

(Sarah, Hackney)

Coexisting with views of Africa as defined by poverty, these ideas of 'African virtue' see travel to Africa as holding an idealised moral charge which will play a part in catalysing transformation. Some emphasised the innocence of society abroad where UK young people could 'just be kids again' drawing on visions of Africa as 'traditional' and 'natural' (Mathers, 2010). Religious individuals focused on being inspired by Africa as a space of fervent Christian religiosity, and international mobility holding the potential for a deepening of religiosity. The way that transnational Christian religiosity provided a forum to negotiate the meanings of the trips will be explored in Chapter 6. For others there was an inspirational force to pan-African pride: as one second-generation Nigerian youth worker said: 'Kenya was Africa. Africa has this thing about it [...] especially for the black young guys who came. [...] they know they come from Africa' (Ade, Youth Worker). 'Positive' ideas of inspiration are often still based on homogenising views of Africa which ignore specific histories in favour of the idea of Africa as blackness, further explored in Chapter 6.

Imaginariness of Africa as exotic and risky also played into anticipated journeys of transformation. Youth workers framed 'our adventures in Africa' (Gary, Youth Worker), as epitomising challenge, achievement and responsibility. Young people expressed apprehension and fear about disease, 'the animals, and the insects [...] lizards everywhere, and snakes...' (Diana, Hackney), or had ideas of the strange, disturbing cultural habits they might encounter, such as 'eating monkeys' (Richie, Hackney) in 'uncivilised' places (Matt, Roehampton). Again, these drew on particularly strong representational links between Africa and wildlife, but imaginaries of exotic wildness were overlaid onto all 'developing country' contexts, as captured - almost farcically - by one young woman anxiously asking me, completely in earnest, 'are there crocodiles in Romania?' prior to a voluntary trip

there. This confirms the centrality of risk to volunteer tourism, engaged as a phenomenon to be consumed, controlled, marketed, and used in identity work (Ansell, 2008). In this case, the framing of risk played into an imagined journey of gaining 'responsibility' and hard work. Engaging in 'risky' volunteer tourism becomes a channel to sidestep being labelled 'risky' or 'at risk' for working-class youth. As Rashid (Youth Worker) expressed, simply 'going to Africa' was seen by many as:

... a massive achievement... their parents... were quite apprehensive in terms of like... that you could possibly get ill... things that could happen.... so to have them show... I'm old enough and responsible enough to go out there...

(Rashid, Youth Worker)

In these multifaceted imaginaries of Africa - as an object of care, as the locus of shocking poverty, inherent virtue or challenging risk - there was an almost complete lack of interest in the history, politics or simply factual knowledge of African nations. A few weeks prior to the trip to Kenya I was invited by a journalist friend to a media briefing about the (tense) upcoming elections there. I hastily scribbled notes, feeling anxious about my ignorance. Later that day I went to Springboard and was struck by the huge disjuncture between the briefing and the jokes been bandied around about lions. Depoliticisation and dehistoricisation pave the way for legitimising Africa as a space of action. Young volunteers of all different heritages (including many second-generation West African youth) to a large extent adopted such imaginaries of Africa.

Depersonalising imaginaries of Africa wrap their way even around ostensibly human interactions. For instance, one youth worker expressed his feeling of the power of the trip as linked to the fact: 'you've got zebras outside your window... And then you... become like the pied piper... there were just mounds of Zambian children....!' (Matthew, Youth Worker). This ironically sinister portrayal (given the story of the pied piper) of the colonial relation of 'care', presents of a mass of depersonalised human life side by side with images of animal exoticism. These visions cast the continent of Africa as blank slate (of nature, or needs to be met),

where volunteer tourism is ‘no harm and all good’, as uncomfortably expressed below:

I think it’s irrelevant the work we do there. I think whatever work we can do there is great. It’s a small little set up, and it needs all the help it can get. And if we can go there and do something... then let’s bloody do it!

(Tom, Business Mentor)

Having looked at the problematic spatial imaginaries of ‘home’ and ‘away’ in turn, I explain how these two imaginaries are interlinked.

4.3.3. From Home to Away: Gaining Respect and Virtue

Powerful spatial imaginaries around low-income urban spaces in the UK and ‘Africa’ underpin the way the trips are imagined to ‘cast[s] disenfranchised young people as grateful, responsible UK citizens’ (Diprose, 2012: 4). The visions of the trip are resolutely about reform rather than creating ‘cosmopolitan’ subjects or undertaking development education, as Emma (Youth Worker) expressed when she said ‘I have no aim... of creating people that want to go travel ... but I do want, you know, them to be better people for it’. The idea is that a temporary shift in position through mobility to the global south allows young people to escape a deviant past or present, and to practice performing new, ‘caring’ selves:

I think of someone like Danno, who has done some serious time for GBH [grievous bodily harm], picking up these little kids, these little Kenyan kids, and being climbed over like a human climbing frame, and how special that is, and how it didn’t matter...

(Jason, Youth Worker)

The envisaged transformation relies on both an idea of the power of the embodied performance of voluntary work - which is the focus of the next chapter - and the fact

that the ‘helping relationships’ of volunteer tourism are a recognised marker of virtue in classed circulations of cultural capital. The schemes in this research contain a complex mix of recognition of young working-class people’s virtue, but also enact a sort of classed discipline in the idea that it needs to be especially encouraged in new, charitable, expressions. The way that mobility between two heavily framed spaces is seen to push young people to escape their classed and aged positionings and gain respect is expressed by one youth worker, below:

The tribalism that exists in this country, with the postcode wars and stuff... I don’t think we could have put that group of young people into another borough in London [...] They wouldn’t have been respected... [but] when these young people went out [to Zambia], they weren’t seen as young people, they were seen as like... the British leaders are coming over [...] There was that sort of respect there straight away... Our guys just grew massively...

(Matthew, Youth Worker)

The need to travel so far to access virtue and respect is predicated on the powerful imaginaries of both spaces of urban youth violence (‘postcode wars’) and Africa as a grateful recipient of western help (‘British leaders come to help’). These imaginaries are underpinned by, and help perpetuate, the continuing effects of class inequality within the UK and neo-colonial transnational relations. Interestingly, the characterisation of UK urban youth as ‘tribal’ hints at the uncanny echoes between stigmatised readings of the two spaces and subjects within them, echoing the way Victorian slums were referred to in the same terms of ‘darkness’ as Africa (Steinbrink, 2012). Rather than accepting this, mirrored oppressions could be engaged as the basis of solidarity between young people here and there, rather than using one stereotype to leapfrog over another. Later chapters of the thesis will explore glimpses of this possibility. This section has unpacked the spatial imaginaries behind the way that volunteer tourism mobilities are hoped to prompt ‘better’ subjectivities. The next section will examine the visions of better young subjects more closely.

4.4. Volunteer Tourism as a Site of ‘Neoliberal’ Governmentality

4.4.1. Active, Passionate and Aspirational Subjects

If the narratives of personal transformation around volunteer tourism rely on particular framings of space, they also contain particular visions of ‘better’ young subjects catalysed by volunteer tourism. This section explores the multiple - yet parallel - ways in which these ideal young subjectivities are imagined. It draws primarily on quotations from adults speaking about their understandings of trips, expressions which capture the anticipatory hopes framing volunteer tourism, and shape young people’s adoption of the dominant discourses prior to travel.

Youth workers hope that volunteer tourism trips will produce aspirational, active and passionate subjects who will engage in the work of self-improvement. A strong discursive coherence cut across all the cases I encountered during research. The trips are seen as a *‘catalyst for transformation’* in young people’s lives. Young people are taken *‘out of their comfort zone’*, and are *‘challenged’* as they *‘encounter’* people living in deep material poverty, *‘engage’* with them and *‘work hard’* on a tangible project which has a *‘positive impact’* and *‘makes a difference’*. Through this, they gain a new *‘perspective’* on the wider world and their position in it, and learn skills associated with *‘teamwork, communication’* and *‘achieving positive goals’*. The experience is a moving and fun *‘adventure’*. They return with increased *‘self-esteem and confidence’*, a sense of gratitude and realisation of the *‘opportunities’* available to them, and increased likelihood to *‘dream big’* about their futures, and become *‘young leaders’*.

This discourse - with its emphasis on affective change and self-managed development - fits well with critical analysis of ‘governmentality’: power as acting to guide and shape actions, internal states, ‘capacities of the self’, and skills for continued self-government (Gagen, 2013). The normality - even banality - of hopes around volunteer tourism highlights they are not particular visions imposed by certain actors, but widely accepted norms situated in broader social trends: particularly of the ‘psychologisation of the western subject’ where self-improvement is valued. Furthermore, ideas that ‘everybody has the power’ implicit in the feel-good language of ‘transformation’ can be analysed through critiques of ‘neoliberal’

politics, where messages that a ‘positive attitude’ and hard work creates success function to conceal the anxious pressures of individual responsibility amid privatisation and shrinking social safety nets (Peck, 2010). Other research argues that empathetic self-transformations are highly valued in the neoliberal international development industry (Pedwell, 2012), and that volunteer tourism is a ‘technology of the self’ ‘through which subjects constitute themselves simultaneously as competitive, entrepreneurial, market-based, individualised actors and caring, responsible, active, global citizens’ (Sin et al., 2015: 122).

The discourses around volunteer tourism in my cases can thus be read as ‘neoliberal’, but if we are to avoid that term as an explanatory stopgap, the actually-existing forces at work deserve attention. An emphasis on developing ‘duty-bound, self-regulated’ ‘active citizens’ through a combination of strong moral discourses and adventurous activities pre-dates and exceeds ‘neoliberalism’ in terms of the recent era of rampant free-market capitalism that the term signals. (Mills, 2013: 120) This was particularly epitomised by a case beyond my main case studies, a sports volunteering trip to Zambia²⁶. The Zambia trip placed a strong emphasis on professionalism and self-discipline as an aim, and inculcated these through a rigorously structured 18-month pre-trip programme. The monitoring of bodily roles and material practices played a major role in shaping ‘young leaders’ prior to the trip abroad:

George was the chairman and he was going to run the meetings, so I brought him a diary, and said, right, ‘you’ve got a diary, now you can bring this, with an agenda...’, and he’d come along and it was blank! (laughs) [...] the next week he brought it and actually had it open on the day... So we were starting to chip away at those... irregularities in... his regular work pattern.

(Nigel, Trustee, Volunteering Organisation)

²⁶ This trip was run in partnership between two London youth charities, a youth sector umbrella organisation and a sport development charity. The trip was embedded in an 18-month programme with a package of training: in youth work, public speaking and sports coaching, some accompanied by accreditation. Abroad, young people ran sports sessions in primary schools in Zambia, culminating in a tournament, as well as engaging in some other volunteering and leisure activities.

Another youth worker on the project described the discipline and initiative they tried to foster in young people by focusing on the behavioural shift of turning up on time. The Zambia trip's model thus resonated with longer-standing efforts at inculcating disciplined responsibility and tangible professional skills – such as scheduling and running meetings - found historically in informal and formal education. To a great extent my main case studies shared this vision of producing 'young leaders' who were 'proactive' in a context where 'grades aren't enough any more' (Kassie, Youth Worker).

However, there were features of my main case studies more specifically characteristic of 'neoliberal' dynamics, especially in the valorisation of aspiration and enterprise. Where the Zambia case encouraged a disciplined professionalism, the emphasis in both my main case studies was upon fostering a passionate, active and aspirational disposition. This emphasis can be seen in the way access to trips was hazily defined, especially in the Springboard case, around the idea of 'getting involved', a phrase I heard time and time again - and in effect, seemed to amount to a performance of enthusiasm. Fostering this enthusiastic, 'positive' disposition is both attuned to 'neoliberal' contexts and a form of classed discipline. For instance, in fundraising for the trips, young people were expected to engage in the labour of self-presentation - in presentations to local council funding bodies, asking for sponsorship, or making films about their hopes. This inculcation of the ability to 'sell yourself' is both a useful skill under flexible capitalism and embedded in a transformation of their classed modes of communication, the fact that 'the estate has a particular language... but you take it into a work setting and that language isn't appropriate...' (Jason, Youth Worker).

The two main cases expressed different iterations of the overarching ideal of aspirational and self-improving subjects. Springboard trips upheld admiration of spectacular, enterprising form of aspiration, and the Kingsfield trip encouraged an active expression of young religiosity fused with self-development. The following two sections explore each of these visions in greater depth.

4.4.2. Conversion from Gangsters to Young Entrepreneurs through Adventure

The ideal that volunteer tourism might foster ‘big dreams’, and aspirational and enterprising dispositions, was strongly pronounced in the Springboard case. It is epitomised in their high-profile ‘success stories’, such as Liam, whose story opened this chapter, and the story of Naz, an ex-drug dealer and gang founder who credits a Springboard trip to Kenya as ‘changing his life’ just prior to going to prison for two years. Upon release he drew upon the business connections through Springboard to gain work experience, a business qualification at Cambridge and started two of his own moderately successful enterprises: an agency writing bespoke raps and a motivational speaking and life coaching service. These ‘star cases’ are recounted in a multitude of settings. These stories centre on the idea of ‘leadership’, enterprise and individualised success. It is a vision of volunteer trips as a way of re-routing the ‘natural’ abilities of ‘high-risk’ young people²⁷. The ‘positive’ subjectivities of Springboard’s success stories are a mirror image of the ‘negatives’:

[We] basically said... we see that there’s... natural leadership ability in you guys, and you can lead in a negative way or a positive way... they’d all been involved in some sort of negative behaviour ... in terms of – selling drugs, or robbing things... But you could also see they had good hearts as well [...] So I said... be part of this group, we’re going to go on some adventures together... we’re going to make a difference...

(Gary, Youth Worker)

Gary expounds that volunteer tourism can be a site for this change through providing exciting action - ‘adventure’ - of a wholesome sort which contains feelings of efficacy: ‘making a difference’. Another aspect of the ‘how’ is that the trips are seen to provide young people with ‘new perspectives’, including meeting business people - who sometimes attend trips - as alternative ‘role models’. Ade expresses the idea of flipping the ‘illegitimate’ leadership and wealth acquisition of the drug dealer to the ‘legitimate’ one of the businessman:

²⁷ i.e. those actively still involved in drug dealing and ‘gang’ violence, in trouble with the law, or long out of education, employment or training (NEET).

Everybody here wants to be their own boss from a young age, and money is something they understand [...] [getting to know the business people] was really good for them because... to them the role model of getting rich quick was the drug dealer.... another model was put before them. An option. To do legitimate business.

(Ade, Youth Worker)

There is certainly a link between fostering enterprising subjects and the fact that private sector individuals support Springboard's trips. Business supporters, as well as sometimes attending trips as 'mentors', also take part in 'enterprise skills' workshops with the young people back in the UK. This can be understood as a form of 'neoliberal governmentality' where market-oriented logics dominate modes of governance and ideals of citizenship (Pedwell, 2012). This is evident in the language ('efficiency') used to describe the trips by one of the business supporters:

Combining different need-sets to sort of counterbalance each other... these kids need to... re-set their identity, as a solution to somebody else's problem... that feels like a fairly efficient way to spend your time.

(Paul, Business Supporter)

However, it is inaccurate to see nested scales of influence from business funders, plotting a nefarious neoliberal agenda, imposed by youth workers down onto young people. Rather, there is a resonance between Springboard's action-oriented, risk-embracing approach, the funders motivations, and wider political-economic currents around social enterprise which draws diverse actors, including young people, together. The relationship between the business funders and the charity is based on the shared energy and belief around *action*. As one said: 'As an entrepreneur, I pride myself on being a do-er, not just a thinker... And that's what I like about Gary and his approach' (Martin, Business Supporter). An enterprising ethos runs through Springboard's approach: a spontaneous trip to Kenya and feeling 'inspired' by Liam's response to it led to volunteer tourism as a regular part of their work; willingness to take risks, mixed with the spirit of curiosity and

innovation, leads to engaging ‘high risk’ young people in trips; they use these spectacular stories to embrace business partnerships because of the freedom of funding without having to ‘tick lots of boxes’.

The ethos of action and ‘big dreams’ which resonates with funders and young people, and which is central to the trips and Springboard’s youthwork more broadly, was also present in the group of charismatic Christian friends from which the charity emerged, as Caris explains:

[The trips are] an adventure... maybe its part of the whole mirroring of our own story... at the beginning – we were part of this community, there was an adventure... it was like what could you do? Just dream out anything – if there’s anything you could be? ... There was this energy around, just going for whatever is within you...

(Caris, Youth Worker)

Caris’ account signals that around the ‘neoliberal’ character of Springboard’s trips lie complex dynamics: in this case a resonance between charismatic theology’s emphasis on spiritual power, visions and dreams, and the valorisation of aspiration and enterprise which fit well with the UK political economic climate.

Springboard’s trips are imagined to catalyse aspirational subjectivities and reform through a sort of ‘affective energy’ provided through the embodied experience of the ‘adventures’ of volunteer tourism. Prior to the trips, this idea is circulated through the ‘success story’ narratives. The telling of, and listening to, these ‘inspiring’ tales of life-transforming volunteer tourism trips is a ritualised, repeated practice. Liam and Naz’s stories, and similar but less spectacular tales, cropped up so often as to seem banal. They were told by the young protagonists themselves to other young people at mentoring evenings, to business funders in meetings, to myself in interviews by youth workers and young people, mentioned frequently anecdotally, and appeared in video and print promotional materials. This did not just stem from conscious use of these stories as marketable resources, but youth workers, young people and myself also experienced an earnestly felt thrill around these tales of ‘lives turned around’.

The presence of transformational tales prior to trips can be analysed as ‘governmentality’. Firstly, these spectacular stories exert power through ‘visibility’ as a mechanism of control. Although the ‘star cases’ are not bound up with literal monitoring, we can see echoes with how ideal young subjects were ‘exhibited’ in urban reform initiatives to boost public support and help inculcate behavioural norms (Gagen, 2000). Secondly, it also epitomises power functioning through ‘confessional’ culture, influenced by the psychological sciences. Liam and Naz’s stories of reform present them as self-examining and self-stylising, encouraging others to adopt these techniques of self-regulation. The ‘feel good’ and inspirational nature of these stories testifies to the way authority and pleasure are interwoven. Powerful cultural discourses shape subjectivities. Stories ‘seduce’ us to internalise lessons of self-government (Elliot, 2013). Once again, intersections with religious practice can be seen. The transformational tales resonate with religious testimony - the genre is dramatic, recounting the extraordinary, culminating in positive self-change, and the telling of them is ritualised, and helps to build a sense of ‘cohesive collective practice’ which shapes young people’s expectations prior to their travel (Noy, 2004: 82).

4.4.3. Putting Faith into Action: Active Christians, Active Subjects

An emphasis on ‘action’, and fusions of religious and neoliberal ideals, can also be seen in the visions of hoped-for young subjects in the Kingsfield case. Not unexpectedly, religiosity provided the primary framing through which the leaders of the church group expressed their hopes about the trip to Zimbabwe. The trip was seen as an opportunity for young people to strengthen their religious identifications through the service of others and team unity. However, their desires were to help young people become simultaneously ‘stronger in their faith, stronger as people’ (Emma, Youth Worker): a vision of mature faith as encompassing elements of ‘personal development’ such as communication skills and ‘global awareness’. The inseparability of these ideas is demonstrated by Emma in her explanation of the funding proposal and the plan she created for the trip, under the title ‘Encounter’:

Personal encounters: ‘Self-awareness, self-confidence and understanding of their skills and gifts’ - ‘being challenged on their goals and dreams’

Team encounters: ‘Understanding of what it is to really work well in a team, under pressure’ - ‘their communication’

Faith encounters: ‘What we see and learn of God and about how we put our faith into action’

Global cultural encounters: ‘Having a greater understanding first hand of different ways that people live and... what it is to have a lot, and what it is to have a little’

Overall: ‘I suppose the clear priority would be about their faith... but I do think that for me... the rest really needs to happen in order for that growth to happen’

(Emma, Youth Worker)

Emma’s vision contains ideals of an active, constantly developing and improving young subject, informed by popular ideals of healthy psychology and an emphasis on ‘soft skills’ (Heath, 2006). The line was blurred between expressions of Christian religiosity and discourses of personal transformation, in line with theorisations of ‘postsecular geographies’, which emphasise the entanglement of religious ideals, practices and identifications with ‘secularity’ (Olson et al., 2013). From one angle we might see the influence of ‘neoliberal governmentality’ and therapeutic ideas of personhood upon religion, and from another, that religious ethics and ideas about personal and international development have long been interwoven (Han, 2011). Other studies highlight the blurred boundaries between religious and secular imaginaries in short-term mission trips (Baillie Smith et al., 2013) and informal educational spaces and youth work (Mills, 2012), and the entanglement of practices of charity in the construction of Christian moral identities (Rabbitts, 2012).

Prior to the trips, leaders expressed hopes of fostering ‘faith in action’, through reflection (bible studies and discussions), relationships with others (love within the team), and in outward facing expressions of faith (‘mission’ and serving others). Terrell expressed his hope that the volunteer tourism trip would give young people a sense of ‘... the practical side of faith being experienced and lived out... and it

would become a bit more tangible' (Terrell, Youth Worker). This fits analyses of 'performance Christianity' which argue that contemporary young Christians emphasise embodied and expressive practice over propositional belief systems (Vincett et al., 2012). 'Authenticity' and 'ways of being' which exceed and supersede church attendance, such as 'exuding joy' are central to religious subjectivities (Olson et al., 2013). The overseas trips epitomise an ideal of performance Christianity as an experiential 'adventure'; engaged in a wide range of spaces and times; and performed in public through relational connection with other Christians and 'practical expression' through volunteering. Ideas of Zimbabwe as risky were seen to add to this sense of putting 'faith into action' and developing religiosity:

... You're stepping out into the unknown – so that itself is a step of faith. Into an environment you're not familiar with [...] certainly we were a little bit vulnerable ... I guess – when you find yourself in this situation – at I least when I do – I tend to pay more attention to God! A bit more intimacy.

(Terrell, Youth Worker)

Once again this inculcation begins prior to the trips, not only through discourse but embodied experiences, such as the team-building day recounted below:

Zimbabwe Pre-trip Team Building Day: July 2013

Emma opens by saying the trip is going to be 'an exercise of faith' about 'serving', 'learning' and 'maximising opportunities'. After that, it's just lots of fun activities and games. We do various challenges with handicaps (e.g. blindfolded), to communicate well in teams. Lots of shouting and laughter! We do an exercise with a pile of objects, each picking one and saying what it represents that we might need in Zimbabwe. People say all sorts: a battery for energy, glue for sticking together, Batman for protection. Someone picks a bottle of hot sauce saying we'll need to be 'hot for god', and another picks up the tape measure because we might want to be 'measuring the progress' we make. The last exercise is role play in various scenarios. One is very revealing. 'You are told you have to do a talk for a group of children in 5 minutes time, all you have is a Bible - Go!' When they enact their ideas, Richie plays the 'preacher' doing a passionate talk about God's love, blessing everyone. The rest act like children, all sitting down, confused, distracted or enthralled, while Richie is standing, talking, explaining. A vivid portrait of a very power-laden encounter. During the course of

the day, I feel gradually more enveloped in the team 'vibe'. At the end there's a sort of prayer huddle, our arms together, touching, facing inwards towards each other in a circle, close enough to hear each other breathing, sharing hopes aloud.

In the pre-trip team building day, we see the hallmarks of 'neoliberal governmentality' in terms of the emphasis placed on young people taken individual responsibility for 'maximising opportunities' and 'measuring progress' through the trips as well as influences from strong precedents of (neo)colonial proselytising mission. Affective and embodied practices encourage young people's investment in narratives of developing into better subjects. Relations of care and charity – across the team and towards infantilised others - were central to imaginings of the prompts to change into more active, passionate subjects.

This section has explored the way that the social reproduction of aspirational and self-developing subjectivities through volunteer tourism trips links the two cases, and begins prior to the act of travelling abroad. This visions are not a straightforward adult imposition upon youth but a coalescence of powerful discourses which incorporate both adults and young people and have their roots in a range of social fields. Change is anticipated to occur through the affective energies of adventure and the affective labours of care. Narratives of change circulate and are absorbed prior to trips through highly visible transformational tales and embodied pre-trip activities. The idealised transformation anticipated by the trips contains an emphasis on taking individual responsibility for one's own betterment which is in sync with the 'neoliberal' political-economy, and part of disciplining young working-class subjects within this context. However, such dynamics of 'neoliberal governmentality' are never complete, and in the final section of this chapter I focus on the ways visions of the trips are contested.

4.5. Contested Reform Narratives

4.5.1. Hard Work or Holiday? Claiming Deservingness and Negotiating Responsibility

Despite the strength of the ideas outlined so far about the trips as ‘life changing’, and mobility between stereotyped spaces as fostering virtuous, aspirational subjects, this discourse is negotiated from the outset. The transformational narrative is questioned, and the idea of working-class subjects as in need of ‘reform’ is challenged, as are the spatial imaginaries underpinning the trips.

An issue constantly under negotiation in both cases was how much participants should engage in pre-trip fundraising, training and meetings. As outlined, an emphasis on ‘hard work’ is central to classed concerns around deviance and apathy. Debates between and among funders, youth workers and young people around how much effort and enthusiasm should be demonstrated by young people prior to trips expressed different positions around ideals of reform. Many adults argued for ‘barriers to entry’ to make sure trips reward young people who display a desire and willingness to engage in self-transformation. In this view, insisting on hard work meant ‘... there is not cheapening of the opportunity being given to them... they can take it as a serious investment, and then make the most of it’ (Adam, Youth Worker). However, many young people resisted these pressures through embodied acts of apathy; and negotiated the framing of preparatory activities as performances of hard work and personal development by instead emphasising their desires for adventure, fun and friendship. These points are illustrated through the vignette below:

Kenya Pre-trip Sponsored Walk: January 2013

It's 8.30am on a snowy day, and we're doing a sponsored walk from the estate to the top of Box Hill - twenty miles. Despite the enticement of a full English breakfast, only about half of the group show up to the cafe where we're meeting. So we spend 45 minutes ambling around the estate, knocking on people's doors, telling them to get up and out of bed and join us. Eventually we set off with 5 of the 7 guys who are going to Kenya. After losing time, one of the lads suggests that we cut across Richmond golf course. As we climb over the wall from the edge of the estate to trespass on the

huge snowy expanse of the golf course Payton exclaims, 'lads, this is where the adventure begins!'. The group is in high spirits, one guy slides on his belly in snow, snowballs are lobbed, and some climb a big pile of logs and jump off. Dave gets out the camera owned by Springboard and tries to film people for an 'inspirational' type video. He asks me and a youth worker 'how are you feeling?' and we play along, saying 'it's a really, really long walk!' – 'it's hardcore!'. I film him saying 'this day is about perseverance'. Others are less engaged, and one guy responds to the camera with a surly '... why should I care?'. The complaints start an hour or two in. Someone moans – 'can't we just pretend and get the money!' – but they chivvy each other along – another saying 'what would be the fun in that?'.



Figure 7: Jumping over the wall between the estate and the golf club



Figure 8: Jumping off logs on the walk

In the Kingsfield case, the funds (a significant amount, £1000-£2000 per person) had to be raised from scratch. While funding applications made by Emma covered over half of the costs, young people's fundraising labour was genuinely needed, which amplified negotiations around 'hard work'. There were tensions around deservingness, dependence and individual responsibility across classed divides within the group. In pre-trip interviews, a few of the more middle-class young people expressed frustration, feeling that Emma had extended too much leeway to group members who had been slack in their 'work ethic' – for instance in their attendance of fundraising events and the lack of enthusiasm in their performances at the events. Sarah (Hackney) said 'not everyone realises that was quite a lot of effort... it doesn't come on a plate straight away, and you do need to all work...'.

In contrast to these visions of volunteering as a route to 'conditional citizenship' (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003), various young people and certain youth workers across cases resisted moralised framings of the trips in favour of legitimising basic curiosity to see new places and desires for leisure. Many young people anticipated the trip simply as 'an experience' a 'once in a lifetime trip' an 'unforgettable memory' (Dylan, Roehampton). This dynamic has been identified in research with middle-class volunteer tourists (Sin, 2009), but takes on a particular significance in the face of classed pressures to 'reform' in the trips in this research, and the economic barriers to travel for non-elite young subjects. Several young people gave an honest account of the appeal of the trips to them as a cheap holiday. For instance, Dylan (shortly after expressing expectations of change and gratitude) discussed how his involvement in pre-trip 'work' (meetings) was driven by the appeal of an affordable 'holiday':

Kofi's like, a good friend [...] I dropped him at Springboard when he was leaving [to Kenya last year]. And it seemed good. Like he was going to Kenya – he was going on holiday – for that price, aswell! ... So it made me think, oh, I might have to go next year. ... So. Been coming to the meeting, been doing what I can to come.

(Dylan, Roehampton)

Young people's interest in the trips as leisure came through strongly in participant observation data, where they talked about the weather, food and accommodation frequently. Most youth workers stuck to the position that 'it wasn't just a free holiday...' (Rashid, Youth Worker), and expressed concerns that a lack of pre-trip work might foster dependency. However, the idea of the trips as 'holidays' was quite prominent in Springboard, influenced by their unrestricted funding and a wider valuing of pleasure in their youth work. For instance, one volunteer youth worker there acknowledged that simply equalising access to leisure and transnational mobility is in itself worthwhile:

I've had so many sweet holidays... there's so much to be said for having fun. Just doing fun stuff, being taken out of the grind – um.... I don't think it always has to look really holy and really productive, just like – take some kids who've never been to Africa, to Africa – it's seriously cool!

(Isaac, Volunteer Youth Worker)

In addition to these overt contestations of the discourse of reform, under the broad-brush terms of the overarching narrative there were multiple meanings being made. Many young people and youth workers gave versions of the overarching story of 'transformation' but emphasised relational intimacy and collective fun. These emphases exceeded and sat in parallel to strict ideals of individual self-development. For instance, Ade talks about the transformative power of the trips as a space for vulnerability and trust rather than individual achievement and 'competitiveness', saying:

In that environment we all need to trust each other [...] they kind of open up...in their normal environment its more competitive, you don't show weaknesses, more closed.

(Ade, Youth Worker)

In the Kingsfield group, which was mixed gender and more socioeconomically diverse, pre-trip interviews were full of anticipation about getting to know other members of the group across gender and class lines. Jamie (Hackney) discussed his

excited hopes that the trip would bring ‘people who don’t talk’ to become ‘close’. In the Springboard case, the group was already good friends, and while they expressed ideas of the trip as fostering transformative improvement, this was very clearly a collective, rather than individualised, vision of change. Jay (Roehampton) said ‘I’d like - want to bring all my friends with me, if I’m doing good I’d want to bring them up’. These findings are in line with studies of working-class engagements with volunteering as strongly about informal mutual aid (Smith et al., 2010) over strategic gains of cultural capital for exchange-value (Skeggs, 2004). These alternate emphases negotiate ideas of ‘responsibility’ in the trips. Where the dominant discourse upholds the individualisation of responsibility, many young people express visions of collective responsibility, virtue and aspiration enacted with their friends.

4.5.2. Will It Change Us? Asserting Respectability and Alternative Visions of Home and Away

Young people actively contested the spatial imaginaries that underpin the trips and their idealised outcomes. For instance, below, Dave (Roehampton) proclaims his sense of belonging and ownership in the estate and indignantly dismisses people’s preconceived ideas of it as a space of deviance and denigrated in class hierarchies as illegitimate judgements (‘it’s not for them to say’). He engages with the way such prejudice is aged as well as classed, using a popular cliché (‘young people are the future’) to admonish me and other adults to seek a deeper understanding of young people’s values and social lives:

I’m proud of everything, this is my area... at the end of the day I don’t care what anyone says about it [...] its not for them to say [...] it’s a trampy area or something [...] You need to grasp the atmosphere. So you need to grasp the lads, like... come to football, watch them play, and hanging with them afterwards... just everyone. [...] Because young people are the - the future, you’ve got to look, you’ve got to know... how to get along with them [...] actually come *in* here. People say its a really bad estate... dangerous... well walk down Danebury Avenue!

(Dave, Roehampton)

His affirmation of the good ‘atmosphere’ and ‘hanging out’ with ‘the lads’ highlights the fact that young people anchored their strong senses of local belonging to positive relationships, particularly friendships, and a general public sociability (Bourgois, 2002; Gunter and Watt, 2009). For instance, Payton (Roehampton) said ‘everyone kind of knows everyone’, and Kai (Roehampton) chipped in ‘everyone’s family’. The Kingsfield group linked this to positive talk about ‘multiculturalism’ and ‘diversity’, as young people’s everyday lives are situated in vibrant communities where transnational heritage has positive and valued meanings (Reynolds and Zontini, 2015):

Hackney is a diverse, like, place... there’s loads of like, different cultures... most people... greet you, and when they see you on the street they be like ‘hello’ and will smile.

(Peter, Hackney)

Young people also dispute overblown ideas of deviance around ‘street culture’. Many young people discussed ‘street culture’ humourously, or in terms of stemming from justified reasons. Others simply dismissed it - for instance, Latifah, 12 years old²⁸, told me the ‘bad guys’ living in her block of flats in Hackney ‘don’t do anything, they just sit there’, explaining ‘there’s this drug dealer who everyone says is bad, but he’s nice, I like him. He’s from my country [of Guyanan origin] too.’ Over the course of participant observation I found my own gaze challenged to similar ends. For instance, I was invited to an Easter party in Hackney at the home of Henry, involved in Class A drug dealing, and awaiting trial at the time. I had a great time with his large, multigenerational family, enjoying a huge spread of delicious Jamaican food, listening to music, and talking about holidays and children. Despite my interest in Henry’s involvement in ‘street culture’, totalising visions of urban deviance crumble in the face of such memories of rich everyday social life. In contesting the ‘badness’ of their areas, young people were implicitly undercutting the impetus for the trips as transformative, highlighting their existing ‘respectability’ (Skeggs, 2004) and thus disputing the dynamic of classed reform in the trips.

²⁸ This observation was made at a community youth club for girls aged 11-14 at Kingsfield church.

If young people's imaginaries of their home contexts were clearly more multi-layered and positive than those underpinning discourses around the trips, there were fewer challenges to powerful stereotypes about 'Africa'. However, there were some ambivalent fractures of these discourses presented. Second generation young West Africans expressed pride and excitement at engaging with Africa as a space of transnational heritage. For instance, Diana and Didi talked excitedly about packing 'traditional clothes', Didi saying 'I'm going to look like an African Princess!'. This highlights that for many of the young participants in this study, transnational mobility to Africa fits into a very different relationship with social mobility than white middle class volunteers. For instance, Desmond (Roehampton) said that among his 'street' friends, 'helping people in Africa is not cool'. A minority of young people – predominantly black young men²⁹ - expressed that voluntary contexts were 'not somewhere people want to visit', which instead were 'nice places' associated with conspicuous consumption like Dubai, Spain and USA. These young men also expressed the strongest concerns around safety and risk abroad prior to the trips. Where temporary social 'descent' has been linked to 'distinction' in analyses of slum tourism (Frenzel and Koens, 2012), we might surmise that such 'downwards' movement has less appeal for those in already precarious social positions, as expressed by these young men:

R: Because you're going to Zimbabwe – it's a joke. Because most people go for holidays to Spain and that, and Zimbabwe is seen as a lower class thing. [...]

B: Yeah. One of my friends from school, we told him yeah, we were going Zimbabwe, and basically... he was laughing... saying that Zimbabwe is one of the most -

M: - poorest countries -

²⁹ This is an observation that requires delicate analysis. Travel imaginaries were clearly shaped by the intersections of classed and gendered ways of gaining respect and value, but such views were also prevalent in those with second-generation African heritage, which suggests an intersection with the lack of cultural capital to volunteer tourism and growing up in social fields with migration histories which face towards the west. However, countries of transnational heritage are also imagined as locations of virtue through alternate imaginings of transnational mobility and reform. For instance, Payton was told me how '*my mum wanted to send me to Jamaica to straighten me out*' and Desmond had been sent to Ghana to stay with his grandparents when excluded from school.

D: - corrupted places in Africa.

[...]

M: My friends from school are all like ‘damn!’ - they’re like ‘if I was in your position I wouldn’t go.’

(Richie, Benny and Marley, Hackney)

Although prior to the trip ‘Africa’ remained imagined in predominantly homogenised, and often negative, ways, young people’s accounts highlight that travel imaginaries are deeply shaped by the social realities of their position in the UK. For many, ideas of gaining virtue and respectability are more tied to other performances (for instance, of consumption or toughness) than charity. Later parts of this thesis will explore the complex ways in which this plays out.

Young people’s anticipations of volunteer tourism trips are ambivalent. While they do express the ideas of the dominant discourse about the trips transforming them into more grateful, hardworking and aspirational subjects - scratch the surface, and they present themselves as actually quite grateful, aspirational and motivated already:

C: ... Where everything is given to us on a plate – but we complain...

R: Do you think you complain?

C: Nah, I don’t think I complain too much. I’m quite appreciative I think.

(Chris, Hackney)

I am a hardworking person - and I have ambitions. And... I like to socialise with people and I am outgoing.

(Payton, Roehampton)

Furthermore, whilst the idea of the volunteer tourism as life-changing remains at the centre of conversations and sets the terms of talk, frank debates around the transformational narrative are expressed. For instance, Payton was sceptical at the idea of a short, voyeuristic (‘see it’ not ‘live it’) experience effecting change in his life:

P: I don't think it's gonna change me straight away [...] for the past 16 years I have been in the same old habits, doing this, doing that. So me going Kenya for a week [...] it's gonna be a good experience, but it's not gonna change my whole journey - of my life.

R: ... why do you think that is the case?

P: Because - I will see it - but - I didn't actually *live* it. ... like, when we're there we're gonna get good accommodation, like, we're gonna be treated nice [...] unless you live it - unless you can say - 'ah that time I went to Kenya, and it - it was upsetting...

(Payton, Rochampton)

4.6. Conclusion: Anticipated Transformations

In conclusion, this chapter has argued that strong discourses surround volunteer tourism trips exert a force on young subjects even prior to undertaking travel. The first section of the chapter unpacked the content of these discourses, demonstrating that volunteer tourism is strongly framed by ideas of personal transformation through 'making a difference'. It argued that in the specific initiatives this project studied, international mobility is hoped to catalyse more grateful and aspirational subjectivities in ways which mesh with longer standing concerns about working-class youth. The second section of the chapter explained that the way volunteer tourism trips are imagined plays into problematic representational framings of both a homogenised and needy 'Africa' and also of UK low-income spaces as inherently fostering deviant 'urban youth'. A shift in position through mobility to the global south is anticipated as a chance for young people to engage in the work of performing the virtue and responsibility which they are thought to be in need of.

The third section of the chapter argues that the trips valorise and inculcate active, aspirational subjectivities. It outlines the distinct ways in which these efforts were framed in my two main case studies: Springboard's visions of reforming 'gangsters' into young entrepreneurs, and hopes that young people in the Kingsfield church would develop an active religiosity infused with the norms of personal development. I argue that these hopes are best analysed as governmentality - persuasive power,

rather than imposition, that encompasses both adults and young people - and are adjusted to 'neoliberal' contexts, though such contexts are always intersecting with influences from diverse social fields. The final section of the chapter presents evidence that, despite the strength of these framings, young people contest and negotiate them in various ways. The trips are strongly foreshadowed by powerful discourses, but these have fractured edges.

The chapter testifies to the strength of spatial and temporal framings in the way classed young subjects are acted upon. It furthermore contributes to understandings of the ways teleological ideas of 'improvement' at two levels are entangled in volunteer tourism: self-development and international 'development'. It supports an understanding of how discourses 'figure' the future, creating anticipatory logics which play into the governmentality of young subjects. The chapter contributes to a thorough understanding of how volunteer tourism can be critiqued as a site of 'neoliberal governmentality'. One of the points that has cropped up throughout the chapter is the idea that the imagined change, and forces of governmentality, around volunteer tourism, are strongly linked to affect. In the final quotation, Payton linked the transformational potential of the trips to being 'upset', indicating that embodied and emotive experiences are central to imaginings of how change might occur through volunteer tourism. It is this embodied and emotional experience that I turn to examine in the next two chapters.

5. During (1): Emotional Templates, Surfacing Identities

5.1. Introduction

'Wake up! Get up! Breakfast is ready!': dragged out of sleep by shouts, the cold morning air cutting through the grogginess. Arm muscles ache after painting yesterday. Snapped words of frustration while queuing for a shower. Climbing onto the bus, flutters of nerves in the stomach. Silent shock at the sight of children playing barefoot on a dump. Disgust at the smell of sewage. Shy awkward smiles to greet new faces. A surge of tenderness as a small hand takes yours. A red-faced dash to the toilet. Soaring sensations of communal bonding while singing. Discomfort at the fine orange dust sticking to throat and skin and hair. Gingerly chewing on some strangely textured food. Hearts thumping fast, peering over a huge drop at the edge of a beautiful viewpoint. Tears of anxiety about sleeping outdoors in tents. Screeches of hysterical laughter with friends round the fire. The strange sounds of insects humming which ebb into dreams as sleep gradually takes over.³⁰

Volunteer tourism is experienced intensely through bodies and emotions. The previous chapter argued that the trips are strongly framed by hopeful visions of fostering the 'development' of volunteers. It is anticipated that young people will become more virtuous, aspirational and active subjects through volunteering in destinations represented as needy and risky. But are these strong, expected 'scripts' confirmed or disrupted in the actual event of the trips abroad? This chapter and the next explore what happens *during* the trips abroad. These chapters take seriously the significance of the material, emotional and affective dimensions of volunteer tourism, and their role in producing power relations and subjectivities. The chapters are largely based on data from participant observation, a research method which convinced me that complexity is lost in analyses which rely only on interviews. In an attempt to do justice to this richness, throughout the chapter I present short vignettes which capture offhand comments, bodily gestures and emotional

³⁰ This descriptive passage is constructed from research diary sources compiled from across various trips.

intensities.³¹

This chapter explores how emotion and affect³² are not separate to the ideological and political force of these trips, but are the very stuff of it. I argue that dynamics highlighted in the critical literature – of volunteer tourism as reinforcing visions of western privilege and ‘responsibility’ and fostering ‘popular humanitarian’ subjectivities - play out in the realm of the emotional, embodied and affective. Power relations are ‘animated’ by emotion, and subjects perform certain expected emotional responses and adopt certain affective states during volunteer tourism. This chapter contributes to understandings of ‘emotional governmentality’, drawn from the work of Elizabeth Gagen (2013), who argues that the way emotions are cultivated and rewarded has become key to guiding and shaping young subjects to act upon themselves. The chapter also draws into discussion feminist explorations of emotional contact as ‘surfacing’ identity and difference (Ahmed, 2004b); and a non-dualistic conception of ‘visceral’ emotion, as both embodied and discursive (Hayes Conroy and Hayes Conroy, 2010). These understandings of emotion complicate our notions of power - rather than acting upon physical bodies or cognitive minds, the ‘gut feelings’ of the ‘minded-body’ are simultaneously authentically felt, socially mediated, and contain excessive potentialities (Hayes Conroy and Hayes Conroy, 2008).

The first section of the chapter explores the way volunteer tourism trips foster relations and subjectivities based on charity. A sense of alterity between ‘two worlds’ is created and maintained through emotional and embodied experience. This headline argument is familiar, but this section presents close analysis of the charitable ‘gaze’ and performances as viscerally constituted. The following section argues that the structures, rhythms and labour of helping work surface ‘responsible’

³¹ For more on the construction of the vignettes, see ‘Writing’ section at the end of Chapter 3. All actions, speech and atmospheres recounted are based on direct observation. All speech in quote marks are direct quotations noted at the time. Vignettes always recount occurrences on one day unless specifically noted.

³² Debates on ‘emotion’ and ‘affect’ are covered in the literature review. In this chapter I use both terms. In general, I use the term ‘emotion’ more frequently out of a concern to ensure discussion remains tied to everyday understandings, though my understanding is of emotion as fluid, performative and relational. At the same time, I also engage the term ‘affect’ to signal atmospheres with a collective transpersonal force, and drives within subjects, both of which have a ‘more-than’ quality than named emotions.

and ‘caring’ subjectivities which reinforce western privilege. However, embodied enactments of western ‘responsibility’ and ‘care’ are strongly structured by identifications *within* and beyond the nation - class, gender and religiosity in particular. The inculcation of responsibility exerted a force on young people in terms of projects of classed reform. The final section argues that an ostensibly very different set of emotional intensities – ‘good times’ during volunteer tourism - also express and reinforce western privilege, again, simultaneously reinforcing the particularistic classed and gendered identities of non-elite volunteers.

Overall, this chapter denaturalises the emotional intensities of volunteer tourism and adds nuance to discourse-based critiques. The emotional and affective dynamics in volunteer tourism constitute their problematic politics. However, emotion is not merely a tool of power, and the following chapter will show how these lessons are also exceeded, reworked and resisted through young people’s emotional and relational expressions.

5.2. Charitable ‘Compassion’: The Visceral Gaze and Performing Pity

5.2.1. Affective Intensities and Emotional Templates

During my research I was struck by the fact that across multiple trips I accompanied or discussed, which travelled to a range of different destinations and had ostensibly diverse aims, core experiences, moods and actions played out in strikingly similar ways. This commonality might be characterised as a repertoire of ‘scenes’. The metaphor of ‘scenes’ points us towards an analysis of the performative and embodied (Crouch and Desforges, 2003). My research diary notes of key ‘scenes’ in both case studies are strikingly similar and match secondary accounts of other cases from interview data. For instance, departing the UK and arriving in volunteering destinations was characterised by an air of nervous excitement, curiosity and anxiety around confronting difference. Other common scenes across trips were ‘shocking sights’ - where sensorially intense encounters with material poverty produced

visceral reactions and the performance of charitable actions and sentiments; 'helping work' which involved physical exertion at manual labour, or emotional labours in relating to those in the destination context; there are scenes of intense team bonding and adventurous leisure activities; scenes of solemn reflection where feelings about poverty and inequality are aired; and finally, the intensity of emotion at leaving is striking - tears and silence signal struggles with saying goodbye to projects and 'new friends'.

These common scenes – many of which will be further described in vignettes - highlight a certain coherence to volunteer tourist mobilities. More specifically, it is in the *emotional intensities* of the trips that coherence can be most clearly perceived. A series of significant emotional intensities occur (for instance, visceral sensations of shock), and are made sense of as *emotive* in similar ways (for instance, shock at seeing children in poverty as eliciting feelings of sadness, pity and motivation to 'help'). Volunteer tourism trips contain 'templates' of common emotions and atmospheres (Bosco, 2007) which signal a broader politics of volunteer tourism in which emotion is an 'important (embodied) circuit through which power is felt, imagined, mediated, negotiated and/or contested' (Pedwell, 2012: 176).

For instance, Chelsea, a young woman from Roehampton, on the third day of a trip to Romania (pilot research, August 2012) declared: 'I'm not feeling that sorry for anyone at the moment... but my time will come'. The way that Chelsea was anticipating and monitoring her own emotional reactions along expected lines of charitable pity suggests governmentality: power directing and encouraging subjects to act in ways that reproduce existing orderings. No one had explicitly *told* her in the immediate, direct context what she should or shouldn't feel. However, as young people encounter the 'developing country' destinations of volunteer tourism, certain emotional reactions - such as shock, pity, compassion and gratitude - are understood to be the norm, while other reactions - anger, apathy, despair - are understood as to be managed, minimised or transformed.

Chelsea's hoped for emotional response did indeed arrive: before the end of the next day she had shed tears in response to children in poverty, and by the end of the trip she had said 'I feel like a new person'. Emotion worked to produce self-

actualisation, a feeling of becoming a ‘new person’, which *feels* deeply authentic, despite the fact it was anticipated. Power operates through the ‘calibration of feelings’ (Fortier, 2010: 28; Gagen, 2013). This is not a case of coercive power, but rather norms that are animated by, and animate emotion. The persuasive power of ‘emotional governmentality’ is further evident in the fact that commonalities in the ‘emotional template’ across cases can be seen in both activities formally planned by youth workers (voluntary work, leisure activities) *and* those that appeared to be ‘spontaneous’ occurrences at unstructured moments (singing on the bus, playing with children).

Where, as has been highlighted, existing literature generally explores the experience of elite white volunteers; McGehee (2012) in a heavily normative article, argues that working class involvement in volunteer tourism has the potential to serve goals of ‘emancipation’ and ‘resistance’ to western capitalist domination. Whilst I do not disagree with this theoretical potential, this research resolutely found there was no such dynamic ‘naturally occurring’. In many ways, non-elite volunteers were swept up in familiar dynamics of gazing upon difference and need and performing pity. The next section explores *how* emotion and affect in volunteer tourism to the global south reproduces powerful and problematic global imaginaries and politics.

5.2.2. Emotional Impressions of Difference and Need

Volunteer tourism trips to the global south with a ‘development’ focus bring volunteers into contact with spaces of material poverty and people living in them. The most extreme example of this in my research was in Kenya, where there was a planned trip to a community living on a rubbish dump, facilitated through the main voluntary project we were working with. Putting a description of our arrival at the dumpsite on the Kenya trip alongside a resonant scene from Zimbabwe is revealing of ‘the gaze’:

Kenya - *We drive off the main road towards a sprawling grey expanse. As people gradually start to realise it is a huge pile of rubbish, a charged silence descends, punctuated by muttered, shocked comments. ‘Woah! Are you being serious?!’ - ‘people live here?!’. We drive on a bumpy track flanked*

by banks of rubbish, smoke and dust rising from it, dogs and birds circling around, smells of fetid waste and burning plastic seeping in through the closed windows. The bus stops in an open space and grubby barefoot children crowd around. As we nervously emerge from the bus, the rank smell hits us in a wave of intensity. There are flies everywhere. People's faces contort as they try to wrestle grimaces of disgust into friendly smiles.

Zimbabwe - *There's an air of curiosity as we drive to our first day of voluntary work: the first time we've seen our surroundings in the light. The drive takes us through a socially polarised landscape, from big houses with swimming pools to more modest settlements and past a rubbish dump. They all notice the rubbish dump, and one young woman comments sorrowfully 'Oh my gosh! Kids work there'. No children are actually visible, just a few trucks in the distance. But it seems like we all know this story so well that we don't need to see it to know it's true. We arrive at the edge of the community where we'll be volunteering, and see some small, evenly spaced brick houses. One young man comments, shaking his head, 'that house is only as big as my bedroom - that's deep!'.*

Placing these two vignettes alongside each other reveals that young people's emotional reactions of shock and pity in response to poverty are strikingly similar, despite the fact that reactions on the Zimbabwe trip occurred unprompted, and the material conditions we directly witnessed were *not* abject. The conditions on the dumpsite in Kenya were objectively extremely poor: no sanitation, flimsy shelters, children growing up in a polluted, dangerous environment. Taking young people to such a setting as an introductory representation of Kenya is highly problematic³³ in the ways that it reinforces images of 'Africa' as homogeneously and horrifically impoverished. However, feeling distress and shock at seeing such conditions makes sense. What is notable is that in Zimbabwe the young people experienced a version of the same feelings in response to an *imagined* abject poverty which was actively overlaid on the scenes they saw from afar, as they validated preconceived ideas with visual 'evidence'.

The primacy of the visual - the sights through the bus window - in fuelling ideas about poverty speaks of the 'gaze': a set of expectations the traveller brings with

³³ As indeed, perhaps, is using it as my opening vignette from the Kenya trip.

them that filter their visions (Urry and Larsen, 2011). Poverty is aestheticised as evidence of the ‘authentic’ ‘culture’ of countries in the global south – which serves to manage anxiety and sets a backdrop for a ‘helping’ role (Crossley, 2012; Desforges, 2000). The volunteer tourist gaze of shock and pity is strongly informed by popular humanitarian representations - for instance, celebrity trips abroad and aid appeals. We can combine insights into the representations which structure the gaze with attention to affect. There have been calls for supplementing analysis of ‘seeing’ with explorations of ‘being’ and ‘doing’ (Crouch and Desforges, 2003). We can go one step further and analyse the gaze *itself* as sensual and playing out through the body, and in ways that demonstrate that:

In the visceral realm, representations join and become part of old memories, new intensities, triggers, aches, tempers, commotions, tranquilities. In the visceral realm, representations affect materially.

(Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2008: 467)

The gaze is visceral. The emotional intensity felt by the British volunteers on the bus is not only structured by representation, but also particular material configurations (the tall, enclosed bus moving at a pace that allows the passengers to watch the scenes from the window as a film). Objects such as informal settlements, or bodies such as those of the poor, racialised child have become saturated with affect over time, and certain feelings (pity, desire to ‘help’) ‘stick’ to these objects (Ahmed 2004b). Feelings of pity and fascination are mediated, yet experienced as immediate, ‘internally’ felt, sensations (heart beating a little faster, a sense of compulsion to stare, a warmth in the face which precedes tears) and a transpersonal atmosphere (a distinct ‘mood’ inside the bus). We see that it is through the circulation of emotions between bodies that the boundaries of identification are made (Ahmed, 2004b). The emotional circulations that swirl around such moments crystallise a visceral sense of ‘us’, the privileged British nationals, and ‘them’, the needy Africans. The centrality of emotion in surfacing difference suffused not only the gaze to also face-to-face encounters, as the vignette below explores:

Romania - On the drive to the Roma village Gary gives an announcement - 'try to be sensitive and not act like tourists'. Somebody relays this loudly as 'we're going into the slums, if you want to get robbed get yer camera out!'. There's a flurry of anxiety. Lara, edgy and giggling, makes a comment about 'going to see the gypsies' followed by 'do you think I look like a gypsy?!'. We get off the bus and walk up the dirt track into the village. Small dwellings with thatched or corrugated iron roofs are scattered around, there's a water pump and horses and carts. And of course, groups of lively children in oversized, stained clothes greet us enthusiastically. Some throw themselves in full throttle: Dave, who's been on a trip before says 'Let's go, I love these tours!'. He is soon dancing and chanting with a group of kids, feeding off their raucous excitement with a grin, ignoring our host's talk about the village's sanitation issues. Others are more uncertain. A smiling old man reaches out to grab Chelsea's hand and she fearfully pulls away, a look of disgust on her face. Some children approach her and she waves at them uncomfortably. With the help of a Romanian guide she begins to interact, and is soon holding hands with one. Desmond and Romeo's blackness is a novelty to the children, and they react openly to the curiosity. Romeo lets some kids stroke his hair, and says 'I feel like I'm famous!'. As we leave, Chelsea starts crying, and Lara says 'oh I feel so sorry for them, I want to take them home'.

In the vignette above, we see a range of emotional responses to contact with difference. Dave reacts with an enthusiasm for being the recipient of warm welcome. Chelsea and Lara react at first with anxiety, fear and objectification - perhaps, in Lara's comment about 'looking like a gypsy', mixed with fascination and desire - but by the end, express pity. Emotions, though seemingly 'new' and 'personal', are always shaped by – and shape – embodied histories of social relations (Ahmed, 2004b). The multiple emotional reactions of the group fit with the 'sedimented colonial history that displays a great deal of inertia' in volunteer tourism (Lorimer, 2010: 316). For instance, the warm feelings around receiving hospitality in volunteer tourism echo eighteenth-century European travel writing where sentimental accounts of hospitality functioned to obscure the tensions around the deep inequalities and violences of late-stage European imperialism (Pratt, 1992). Romeo's statement that he 'felt like a celebrity' underscores that young people reference contemporary scenes of sentimental hospitality in 'celebrity humanitarianism' (Mostafanezhad, 2013b). A hint at the tensions 'beneath' such harmony is glimpsed in the anxiety produced by material inequalities (fear of being robbed) and expressions of objectification and disgust which flicker up.

One dominant emotional norm which animates, and is animated by, the trips is pity towards poor children. The seeming ‘naturalness’ of these feelings covers over the histories and power geometries that have given rise to them (Ahmed, 2004b). In particular, images of gendered compassion suffuse celebrity humanitarianism resonant with constructions of western ‘parenting’ in colonial histories (Mostafanezhad, 2013b). These aged and gendered encounters play out in the vignette above, as sentiments of pity arise quickly in response to children, and anxieties surfaced strongly in response to the bodies of adult males (the imagined robber, the old man). The young women in the group adopt these feelings most clearly, culminating in Lara’s declaration that ‘I want to take them home’, which sets forth the ideas of innocent children abroad in need of better care from generous westerners than that which they are currently receiving from adult communities around them.

Young people are not directly ‘taught’ to repeat *ideas* about poverty, difference and the western subject’s caring responsibility, but rather these relations are made real through *felt experience*. This remakes a familiar politics which reinforces the constitution of the host context and the individuals who live there are as defined by need. This erases the history and structures that have produced the needs there are, and fails to recognise or respect the assets, actuality and specificity in the lives and knowledges of others (Noxolo, 2011). It is in emotional contact that ‘impressions’ of others appear (Ahmed, 2004a). The way volunteer tourists experience sights of poverty and interactions with children as ‘pulling on their heart strings’, is mediated by contemporary popular humanitarian discourses and imperial antecedents, and remakes these emotional responses as they are re-performed.

5.2.3. Stepping into Performances of Grateful and Generous Donation

Emotion and affect is not only central to constituting how volunteer tourists ‘see’ destination contexts but also to inspiring what they ‘do’. Performances of charity flow out from a pitying gaze. Young people enjoyed stepping into a generous role which strengthened a sense of individual virtue and naturalised ideas of westerners as ‘donors’ to the needy global south. Once again, this overall point confirms the

salience of findings from critical literature but attention to how this plays out through the emotions is revealing.

Uncomfortable emotions of shock and pity are partially resolved through giving. Visceral feelings of guilt, confusion and discomfort are often experienced in response to close, sensorially intense encounters with poor living conditions. At the same time, designed encounters (such as participating in food donations) make poverty intelligible and experience-able (Steinbrink, 2012) through encouraging charitable actions, accompanied by the expression of sentiments of compassion and gratitude which partially mitigate unpleasant feelings. These emotional performances cast those in the destination context as spectacle and learning aid (Willinsky, 1998), and constitute 'us' as gratefully welcomed 'good people', as compassionate people moved to help. As Ahmed writes:

The face of the suffering child places the British subject in a position of charitable compassion. In being moved by this pain, I show myself to be full of love in the midst of violence... to be moved by the suffering of some others (the 'deserving' poor, the innocent child, the injured hero), is also to be elevated into a place that remains untouched by others.

(Ahmed, 2004b: 192)

These problematic self-constitutions are illustrated in the vignette below, which recounts how feelings of intimate human connection sat in friction with deeply discomforting emotions during a visit to the community living on the rubbish dump in Kenya:

Kenya - *When we get off the bus, the hosts direct us to women who have set up piles of jewellery and baskets woven from old plastic bags. Henry says gruffly – 'everyone spend all your money'. We buy things. Next, we get shown around. We see a foul smelling alcohol brewing area and the lads seem caught between horror and fascination. We visit a lady's house, a tiny, dark shelter of cloth and corrugated iron, interior blackened by smoke.*

Our host announces 'the ladies would like to welcome you – you can take a video if you want'. A

group of women start to sing and dance – loud, strong voices, fierce faces, determined gestures. Such a thrill – the volume, directness and timbre of the human voice, feet stomping and arms swinging in rhythm. They grab each of us, one by one, to dance in the centre of a circle. My heart beats fast and I blush as I am taken by the hand and the attention turns to me. There is a strange frisson to it: I feel simultaneously embarrassed, and full to bursting with joy and specialness. We exchange words and songs of goodwill. Afterwards people are not quite sure what to do. A couple of the guys, overwhelmed, retreat by climbing to sit on the roof of the minibus. Others play games with children.

I talk to some 10-year old girls, and they start saying to me ‘I have no shoes’, and ‘can you buy me shoes?’ – ‘can I have your watch?’ – ‘can you just give me 50 shillings?’ and even ‘what will you give the children?’. I feel deeply uncomfortable. After some time, we turn to get back on the bus, dirty streaks on our T-shirts. The girls insistently continue to ask me for things. I am torn between arguments I know well about charity and dependency and other forces: feeling desperate to do something, anything, to try to fix the neediness I see, smell, touch; Sunday school exhortations of ‘if anyone wants to take your shirt, give him your coat also’, pop into my head. Refusal feels cold and painful. I look at the girls’ feet and one pair are the same size as mine. I give her the dusty espadrilles I have on. She seems elated. I walk the last few steps to the bus barefoot, treading carefully amid the rubbish underfoot.

This vignette, based on my research diary, is full of emotional threads reminiscent of the ‘sentimental mode’ that Pratt (1992) critiques, full of human-centred interaction, and positive narrations of moments of ‘equilibrium through exchange’. Her critique argues that these accounts are ‘narratives of innocence’ which ‘underwrite’ the continuation of the wider relations of colonial-capitalist appropriation, that ‘while doing away with reciprocity as the basis for social interaction, capitalism retains it as one of the stories it tells itself about itself’ (Pratt 1992: 82). In the vignette we see multiple attempts on the part of the privileged volunteers to leave with a sense of reciprocity, whether through the purchase of goods, charitable donation, exchanges of dance, song and touch. However, the abject material setting and girls’ insistent begging continued to make vast inequality visible amid declarations that we were there to ‘visit’, to ‘share’ and ‘support their enterprise’. Where expressions of fear around relating across difference are evident in the young men’s retreat to sit on the bus roof, for others, our ‘compassionate’ charitable actions relieved feelings of discomfort. Charitable donation, in part, worked to absolve me as a western subject

from the pressure of discomfoting feelings which could have been channelled into oppositional politics.

Again we see that problematic politics of volunteer tourism are *felt* with an immediacy that gives them an authority. Giving my shoes away felt good. My sense of empathetic virtue was embodied - the burst of adrenaline at the moment I decided to take my shoes off, my proud-embarrassed blushes at the admiration this elicited from others, and in the feelings of sacrificial generosity that the physical sensations of walking barefoot were translated into³⁴. There is a disjuncture between this *felt* experience and the tone of much critical academic literature, which in its neat critiques of the ideological implications of volunteer tourism, implies a knowing author 'above' the easily-duped, sentimental masses.

However, though this sense of charitable donation is viscerally experienced, the visceral includes the minded-body, and narrative is ever present during the trips. Discursive spaces frame experience, channel emotion and help weave together bodily experiences with ideas of global charity and senses of charitable identities. For instance, the vignette below shows how collective narratives of virtue and inspiration, which adults foster, encourage charitable performances:

Kenya - *On the evening of our second day, Joseph, the Kenyan head of the voluntary project, comes to eat with us and tell us his life story. It's enthralling and incredibly dramatic. Everyone listens closely. He talks about growing up in a poor family, and living on the streets by age 9. He says that 'one afternoon' he was begging, and Albert, a British tourist, asked whether he wanted to go to school instead of giving him money, and he said yes. Albert enrolled him in school, bought him uniform, took him for a haircut, bought him shoes. He said 'for the first time in my life I felt special. And that changed me'. Eventually, he managed to complete an education, and was making a successful living as a young adult. One day he saw a young boy running away with a woman's handbag, and caught him. He returned the handbag and felt moved to take the boy in, and that's how the children's home started*³⁵.

³⁴ In describing my feelings in this way, I hope not to come across as self-indulgent or particularly proud of my act of donation. Rather it is an attempt to use my participant observation experience, through which I can claim to more accurately describe for myself than others, as an example of the visceral experience of expressing charitable compassion and giving on volunteer tourism trips.

³⁵ For a different version of this story with an alternative analysis, see the section on 'Transnational

The next day in the morning meeting a leader reminds us of the story, saying that Albert was an ‘inspiring person’, concluding with – ‘we can all be Alberts’. On the bus a little later, someone jokes that Gary is ‘King Albert’. A few days later Liam goes out to get some parts for the van he’s trying to repair. He returns to the project site having picked up a kid who says he is an orphan and he wants to go to school. Joseph looks a bit overwhelmed, but Liam promises to pay for his school fees by monthly donation. Later that night the leaders talk about Liam’s amazing ‘Albert moment’. On the final day, Gary recalls the ‘crazy thing Liam did’ in picking up the child. There’s laughter and someone says ‘Albert – old Albert!’. Liam adds ‘Yeah, he’s been living on the streets a year, his mum abandoned him [...] he just – had a lucky day, he saw me, and uh – you know, that day will probably change the rest of his life, to be honest’.

The charitable identity that volunteer tourism encourages young people to embody is vividly captured in the figure of ‘Albert’. Albert, in this recounting for the volunteer audience, is the ‘saviour figure’ in Joseph’s life, and quickly becomes shorthand for an individual who changes lives by one-off, quick acts of generosity. Joseph’s account of Albert has a mythic tone, feeling real enough feeling to inspire, but general enough to be able to step into. In this it mirrors the heroic representations of celebrity humanitarianism and their ‘uncontentious’ good works with children. Albert is an aspiration, something the young people are exhorted to become, and celebrated when they undertake Albert-like activities. It is significant, too, that Albert was a tourist, doing his good work as an ‘aside’ during his holiday. Volunteer tourism is ‘...framed in a ‘post-political’ perspective that sees no value in adversarial politics... [doing good] should be fun, cool and easy’ (Fortier, 2010: 27). It is interesting that the volunteers are not encouraged to be like Joseph, using his own experience of marginality to help others, but to be like Albert, the western donor-saviour, ‘changing lives’ of street children through acts of donation and making children ‘feel special’.

This section has described the way that poverty becomes a ‘redemptive’ force for the internal moral transformation of volunteer tourists (Crossley, 2012) through emotional and affective dynamics. At times, volunteer tourism trips engage

Connections’ in Chapter 6.

emotions in problematic ‘shock therapy’ approaches to transformation. Feelings of shock, compassion and gratitude coalesce and ‘stick’ (Ahmed 2004) to intense sensory experiences of seeing and smelling poor housing and sanitation. These affects move western volunteers into feeling grateful and wanting to perform charity. The radical potential of engagements with poverty is undermined by the way the ‘modification of the self’ is an achievable ethical response to poverty (Crossley, 2012: 243).

Volunteers’ emotional responses to poverty, in this research, could also be understood in terms of fostering subjectivities adjusted to the political economy of the UK. This works in particular ways for non-elite young people, as illustrated through taking a closer look at emotional responses of gratitude. The ‘experience’ of poverty quickly moved from being incomprehensible into a lesson to be more grateful. In a debrief in the Romania trip, Romeo (Roehampton) said ‘I kind of felt angry with myself in a way... because I’ve taken a lot of things for granted...’ Affective dynamics interact with discursive framings to form ‘ordering templates’ through which young people exhort themselves to change. Gratitude, alongside charitable feelings, is an expected emotional response. The British young subjects are indeed in a position of relative privilege, and gratitude is an emotion that may function in life-enhancing ways. However, emotions are not straightforwardly ‘good’ or ‘bad’, but rather an intersubjective medium through which we make relations (Bondi, 2005). Here, gratitude functions both to release the western subject from opposing western exploitation (Darnell, 2011), and also involves a call away from an assumed ‘ingratitude’ for British working-class and racialised youth. Gratitude encourages them to be more appreciative of their relative privilege, to either ‘stay in place’ or drive their own social mobility through aspirational, motivated dispositions (Brown, 2011).

This section has argued that the ‘gaze’ of pity and the charitable performances highlighted in critical literature on volunteer tourism play out through the body. However, embodied voluntary labour during the trips not only fosters charitable performances, but builds ‘responsible’ subjectivities. This is the subject of the next section.

5.3. Responsibility: Voluntary Labour and the Constitution of Western Privilege

5.3.1. Embodied Efforts: Surfacing Responsible Masculinities

Kenya - *We set off for an introductory visit to the project. Gary says we are going to visit 'the garage Liam set up' – and that when he first came here it 'was nothing but fields and ideas'. We sit on wooden benches in a dim room for our briefing from Joseph, the Kenyan project head. He speaks softly, saying 'we are humbled you have given up your time'. He highlights that the name of the project was suggested by someone from Roehampton. He says 'your impact is helping us realise our vision' and they are all 'excited to see what happens' when we are there. An older man called Bill from the UK who's out here for a few months speaks. He says 'without people like you, nothing would happen'. He sets out our work: painting, sanding and varnishing, digging a trench for a water pipe. He says 'we'll make your money go a long way' – and 'you'll see results'.*

Zimbabwe - *'You'll be the first British team in this place. You are really helping us to pioneer something'. says John, who is briefing us before we start our voluntary work in an informal settlement in Harare. Angela chimes in elatedly 'Hey! We're making history!' He talks about the aims of their organisation to see 'total community transformation' and that we can help by being part of 'building strong solid relationships on the ground'. There are lots of questions and discussions around how we should act: kids love fist-bumps, guys shouldn't freak out if adult men try to hold hands. They caution us to avoid getting drawn into making promises to individuals, but 'remember partnership all the time', and celebrate what we see as a reflection of God in the community – 'your joy has given me joy!' - and encourage them. Ask them to tell you a story. Play a game which brings out lessons. Speak slowly and clearly.*

Volunteer tourism is constituted by and constitutive of western privilege. The vignettes above demonstrate that 'helping work' is strongly framed through formal briefings, informal comments from leaders, and wider imaginations. Visions of helping are ones in which 'we', the western volunteers, play a crucial role. We are 'pioneers', without us 'nothing would happen', and our work is highly valued. There is great emphasis on the responsibility of the western subject - to care and to improve others. 'Responsibility' is a multi-faceted idea, and this was 'responsibility'

as a 'claim to power' for 'fixing' the global south, rather than in terms of accountability (Darnell 2011: 983). We can also see distinct iterations of what helping responsibility looks like in the two cases. Caring is strongly emphasised in the Zimbabwe case through ideas of 'building relationships' and performing loving human connections. Care is seen to fuel 'transformation' and there are 'appropriate' ways to embody care: to teach and connect through religiosity, rather than materially assist particular individuals. In the Kenya case the vision of helping responsibility is more resolutely modernising and material - fixing and improving things, water and schools. It's a vision where success looks like moving from 'fields' to an officially registered children's home, and the desire is to 'see results'. Both visions of caring responsibility are ostensibly apolitical.

However, too many accounts of volunteer tourism focus monolithically on the way it reinforces western privilege. This section argues that the embodied labour of volunteering always 'surfaces' western privilege in intersection with particularistic identifications. Mathers' (2010) study of American volunteers found that identifications of 'helping responsibility' were entwined with volunteers' construction of US national identity, 'reclaiming' it as 'doing good' in the world. In this study the enactment of helping responsibility is strongly structured by identifications *within* and beyond the nation - of class, gender and religiosity especially. These intersectional subjectivities are always surfaced through the embodied practice of volunteering. The first part of the section argues that in the Kenya case, embodied negotiations and performances of labour solidified a sense of western privilege that intersected with classed 'hard grafting' masculinities. The second part of the section argues that in the Zimbabwe case, voluntary labour inculcated caring responsibility that was both an expression of neo-colonial help and a cultivation of Christian religiosity. In both cases, for non-elite subjects, volunteer labour as fostering gratitude and motivation takes on a problematic coherence with pressures to 'reform'.

In the Kenya trip, emotional and embodied negotiations around labour were a site where western privilege and classed masculine identities were made and expressed. This is illustrated in the vignette below:

Kenya³⁶– *I visit the team digging the trench for the water pipe. It's hot, and their T-shirts are streaked with sweat and dirt. I give it a go, driving the heavy old spade into the dry, stony ground. I don't envy them. Payton quips that the work is 'building up my muscles, making me even more handsome!' One of the leaders jokes that the Kenyan guy working with them is shovelling as much as the rest of them combined.*

I'm on a painting team. We find out we have the wrong type of paint and we don't have enough rollers. Leaders express frustration at the 'communication issues'. Gary goes off in a car to buy more paint and rollers. Caris and I try to drum up some motivation to do some other minor jobs, and Dylan complains - 'but Gary's just off cruising round Kenya!'. We chat to some ladies doing washing, and end up helping them wring out and hang clothes. The lads wander over. 'Do you want to help?' Shrugs. I get too enthusiastic and say precisely the wrong thing— 'yeah! join in with the women's work!'. Jay says 'ugh, I don't want to touch someone's underwear!' and they walk off.

The next day, when we start painting, Dave looks at the cream pot and asks 'why are they doing this boring colour, we should do something bright' – I say 'it's their choice' – and he replies 'we want to do the colour we want to do'. We get going, but it's slow. They get distracted by a big insect, exclaiming 'bruv! that ting had muscles!!'. They big up the instability of the wobbly ladder. They start chasing the goats and chickens, pretending the animals are a gang from a neighbouring south London estate. Someone shouts 'empty the whole clip [of bullets] on them!'" and they throw water. In the afternoon the leaders decide the best thing to do is to get all the lads playing football with the kids, which is of course greeted with enthusiasm. We leave the Kenyan workers clearing up.



Figure 9: Embodied voluntary labour in Kenya

³⁶ This vignette condenses events across two days into one narrative.

Young people, as they undertake the literal physical labour of volunteering, are also undertaking the construction of their identifications: in the Kenya case, seemingly motivated, responsible, 'hard grafting', tough masculinities. Voluntary labour builds multiple, intersecting identities, simultaneously constituting the volunteers as responsible western 'helpers' and reinforcing classed and gendered identifications. For the young men from Roehampton undertaking the embodied labour of volunteering was felt to be satisfying in its fulfilment of both masculine and 'helping' identities. Physically demanding work was incorporated into proud performances of hegemonic masculinity (as evidence of strength and sexual attractiveness), and masculine banter projected toughness into other work (for example, in facing down a monstrous insect or climbing an unstable ladder). Painting and construction work also offered a space to perform a working-class masculinity based on manual labouring histories. Simultaneously, such work enables volunteers to reinforce the idea that they have helped, played a crucial role.

However, the fallacy of western helping 'responsibility' and the reality of western privilege is exposed when we see that our helping work is often not very helpful (we did a second-rate paint job that required correction and finishing). When embodied experience - the heat, the ache of muscles, feeling lightheaded from paint fumes - reached the level at which emotions of enthusiasm were replaced by tiredness or boredom, western privilege surfaced and Kenyans were left to finish the job. Frustration due to capacity, resources or mistakes are subtly displaced onto imagined shortcomings in the host context (euphemistically referred to as 'communication issues'). Legitimate helping work is whatever we want to do - in this case, play football. The sense is that 'doing something is better than doing nothing, and therefore, that doing anything is reasonable' (Simpson, 2004: 685). Irresponsibility exists just below the surface of performances of responsibility. The relationship between irresponsibility and western privilege is further explored in section 5.4.

The co-constitution of western privilege and 'hegemonic' masculinities can be seen in the fact that the labour that was constructed as desirable and helpful was defined both at the boundaries of western-ness, but also gender, as feminised labour was

‘second choice’. Schemes such as the garage (Liam’s idea) are nominally part of a goal to support the Kenyan project to be self-sufficient, but function as outlets for UK individuals to express enterprising identities as men of action, who make things happen. The questionable appropriateness of this ‘help’ is evident in the fact that the garage lies seemingly disused. Volunteering work functions as a channel for the *gendered* and *classed* western subject’s self-fulfilment.

These subjectivities, surfaced through banal and embodied practices of voluntary labour, are solidified with an affective stamp, that is, the ‘sense of achievement’ that is crucial to the emotional trajectory of volunteer tourism trips. Trips are often designed so that a discrete task is completed, or work framed as such. The vignette below recounts the affective moment of achievement at the end of the trip, which solidified a sense of responsible, ‘helping’ identity, which strongly intersected with constructions of masculine ‘hard graft’ and encouraged ‘drive’. The narrations of achievement rely upon and reproduced problematic imaginations of the global south as defined by poverty and helplessness and the west as the locus of helping, evident in idea that the work is ‘for the children’ and in the marking of our achievements in a disproportionate manner³⁷:

Kenya - *The guys who have been digging the trench compare their callouses. At the end of each day there’s a manly test of rubbing antiseptic gel onto their hands, and wincing, shouting and swearing at the sting. One of the leaders says, semi-joking, ‘I can’t wait to get back and Instagram it’ – another one shoots back - ‘hashtag: ‘it’s for the children!’”.*

On the final day we look round the rooms we’ve painted. Things look different, good. A sense of achievement rises in the group. Henry says ‘someone should pay the guy who painted that room!’ about the room he worked on. And yet I notice a section we didn’t do has been finished, and spots where the job has been touched up, creating our achievement for us while we were on safari.

We walk over to where the water pipe emerges from the trench they dug. It’s a dusty construction site

³⁷ This was disproportionate in that the applause and performance of the ribbon cutting ceremony was focussed on us despite having only undertaken a few days work, in the context of much harder and longer work by Kenyan workers. However, the affects around the ‘sense of achievement’ should not only be analysed as purely problematically reinforcing a sense of western importance, but have other effects of increasing the volunteer’s sense of self-worth, self-confidence and self-respect which will be further explored in later chapters.

but we have a little 'ribbon cutting' ceremony. Tom is nominated to give a little speech, and does so with gusto. He speaks and someone translates, saying that water is 'something we at home consider quite basic but here it means so much, and we're happy to have done it.' We sing a Swahili song we have learnt. Tom pulls a small child forward and gets him to cut the ribbon. We cheer and the kids rush forward.

This 'sense of achievement' can be read as part of the dynamics of governmentality. Persuasive power plays out through the volunteers' sense of actualisation of their helping and hardworking subjectivities. It produces a positive association with motivation, hard work and aspiring to meet goals and targets. This is arguably entangled in preparing young subjects for participation in an economy where individual responsibility and motivation is paramount. Thus, not only does embodied voluntary labour reinforce 'responsible', 'helping' western subjectivities which intersect with particularistic identifications within the west, but it solidifies these with an emphasis on motivation and achievement that serves a particular politics. For non-elite young subjects this, once again, meshes with projects of classed reform. Volunteer tourism weaves 'neo-colonial' relations seamlessly and inseparably into 'neoliberal' pressures.

5.3.2. Emotional Labour: Surfacing Religious Identifications

In the Zimbabwe case, we see the same dynamic of embodied voluntary labour simultaneously constituting western privilege in intersection with other identifications: most notably religious identification. Not only can faith-based volunteering strengthen depoliticised *ideas* of poverty (Baillie Smith et al., 2013), but religious and paternalistic western *dispositions* and *subjectivities* are surfaced simultaneously through emotional and embodied practice: particularly in caring voluntary labour with children. Once again these dynamics play out in particular ways for particularly positioned young subjects, as an exhortation to become more 'grateful' fused ideas of spiritual virtue with pressures on working-class subjects. The vignette below outlines the emotional intensities involved in relational voluntary work such as running sports or drama activities, informal teaching or unstructured play:

Zimbabwe³⁸ - *We get off the bus at the informal settlement and we don't know what to do with ourselves. But we start to find ways in. Emma, in her role as leader, demonstrates interaction - bending down to one kid, taking her hand, smiling, tickling her tummy. She gets people doing the Hokey Cokey. The children have soft skin, and our hearts stir as we hold hands and their stares turn into smiles. We're charged with warm energy as we run into the circle shouting 'WoOoAaaH!'. After some time wandering in the heat, people seem restless and yet exhausted. Emma tries to motivate the group to engage, asking Peter to lead singing with the kids. We raise our arms sluggishly as we sing '... many sons had Father Abraham / I am one of them, and so are you / So let's all praise the Lord / Right arm, left arm...'*

In the afternoon we continue our wanderings. At one point, Diana, Angela and I are on a quiet street. We spot a little kid looking out at us from a house and Angela crouches down and beckons him over, surprised at his reluctance. When he finally slowly toddles over Angela cuddles him, saying 'my heart is breaking'. They pray for the child. We visit an old lady, immobile, but warm smiles and enthusiastic words pour from her toothless mouth. We can't understand but nod and smile and take her hand in greeting.

We play more games. Sarah is arguing with someone that the bubbles should be 'saved for the little kids'. There's one girl who wants to hold Diana's hand all the time and someone says 'Diana's got her baby!'. Richie and Didi are standing by a blackboard in a school, relishing teaching spelling and maths in loud, slow voices, and reading some bible passages. They learn a song from the children - 'Humble yourself/before the Lord/and he will lift you up (he will lift you)...' They hold hands and sing it over and over.

Embodied interactions and emotional labour suffuse volunteering. Touching, embracing, and communicating through song, dance, gesture and facial expressions, as well as spiritual action like prayer, make up the work of 'helping responsibility'. These efforts are framed as 'compassion' in ways that both reinforce western paternalism and expressions of Christian religiosity through relating to distant others based on 'love', rescue and encouragement (Baillie Smith et al., 2013; Han, 2011; Olson, 2015). In particular, an aged relation of care is central to

³⁸ This vignette condenses events across two days into one narrative.

surfacing the way young people take on a sense of becoming both responsible ‘helpers’ *and* gaining spiritual virtue. For instance, in the vignette above, we see that Angela’s exclamation that ‘my heart is breaking’ is overlaid by an emotive ‘gaze’. The figure of the poor needy child is a lightning rod for pity, in a way informed by popular humanitarian relations and responded to via prayer. Thus, the practice of volunteering functions as a forum to express and foster religiosity.

Throughout the research, across cases, it was clear that work with young children - or the infantilised elderly - was easier and preferable for volunteers. Young children were understood as especially helpless, innocent and deserving of care and special attention (the bubbles should be saved for them). These encounters – emotionally saturated with the pain of a wrenched heart and the pleasure of ‘caring’ - are devoid of dialogue and reinforce a sense of western responsibility for helping and improving the global south (Darnell, 2007). We feel it is ‘natural’ to step into a teaching role, or to expect a small child to respond to our beckoning. It is only the toddler’s reluctance to come to Angela which momentarily allows us to glimpse how strange this is: at home we teach our own children to ignore overtures from foreign strangers. Amid the wider relation where the west has cast itself in a position of assumed benevolence in the global south, iconically in Africa (Mathers, 2010; Mostafanezhad, 2013a), looped performances of ‘care’ for children both epitomise and remake this relation and its felt authenticity. Playing this caring role is deeply desired and experienced as fulfilling by the western volunteers (‘Diana’s got her baby!’), yet ‘it is often through these more intimate, sentimental experiences that relations of power and privilege are obscured and ultimately perpetuated’ (Mostafanezhad, 2013b: 494).³⁹

³⁹ Such relations are not totalising. Chapter 6 explores how fulfilling a charitable identity interacts differentially with individuals’ embodied characteristics of gender and skin colour. Chapter 7 explores how the thrills of relational volunteering work may not only be linked to an adoption of ‘caring responsibility’ but more elemental relations, and that performances of charity are punctured by anxieties.



Figure 10: Volunteering through play in Zimbabwe

However, once again, these practices of ‘compassion’ should not be read purely through the lens of western privilege but are entwined with a sense of religious virtue, and connecting through a global community of faith. The contradictory dynamics of paternalism and care have long been entwined in transnational religious action, for instance in the child-centrism of missionary culture in the nineteenth century, and in the popularity of child sponsorship in contemporary Christian communities, which carry a mixture of salvation and solidaristic messages (Manzo, 2008; Rabbitts, 2014). The way that religious framings and the fostering of religiosity were entangled in lessons which ‘smoothed over’ global inequality is presented in the vignette below, which illustrates the way that discursive meaning is made in visceral ways. In particular, discourses of ‘the happy poor’, which are analysed as absolving western privilege in the literature on volunteer tourism (Crossley, 2012; Simpson, 2004), intersect with religious imaginaries and function to foster religious subjectivities:

Zimbabwe⁴⁰ - *We’re sitting round the campfire just after dusk, the rapidly falling darkness adding to the feeling of togetherness and warmth inside the circle. Emma says we’re going to reflect on how the trip is going. Richie talks about the ‘joy’ on faces in the boy’s home, saying ‘it brought so much strength for me... I thought – the times when I’m suffering, and I’m not feeling joy...*

⁴⁰ The quotes in this vignette are all verbatim, taken from a recording made at the time.

these lot are feeling joy like, continuously...'

Peter talks, his voice saturated with emotion, about seeing a homeless young woman and her baby, and how 'it shows us that... what we have is privileged. Like, we shouldn't take advantage of what we have, because like – some people will die for – just like, one minute in our lives [...] I think – really, that opened all of our eyes up. That's it.' There's a long silence. Phillip speaks up, which is unusual. He says 'it made me... think about times like, back at home, when sometimes our electricity would run out... but some people over here don't even have a home to live in, so I have to be – grateful...'

Jacob talks about a boy he met who had lost his parents, but still had faith, and 'how strong his faith must be now, since – having been through all of that.' Emma says with a tone of amazement, 'yeah!'. At the very end, Emma gets us to sing a song, 'set a fire / down in my heart / down in my soul...' saying 'all of us came with a different amount of faith, a different amount of certainty, a different amount of passion. [...] lets sing – and ask the Lord [...] that he would set that – flame still ablaze...' We sing. Marley and Phillip have their heads buried in their hands, others lean towards the fire, hands folded, eyes down.

In this reflection session, western privilege and religious virtue were simultaneously constructed. The trope of 'the happy poor' suffused Richie and Jacob's reflections, though coexisted with Peter's shock at poverty which he feels is utterly abject. This trope can be read, in line with the literature, as a sentimental idea neutralising the anxiety of encountering poverty and absolving the volunteer from further action (Crossley, 2012; Simpson, 2004). In this case we see that it is both doing this and more. 'Experience' of the 'happy poor' does indeed seem to put a stamp of legitimacy on depoliticised ways of understanding poverty and inequality (Simpson, 2004). However, they also fuel drives towards spiritual virtue, Richie reflecting he should be more 'joyful' and Jacob admiring the 'strong faith' of a young man alone in the world. Ideas of Christians in the global south possessing a spiritual happiness that is not dependent on material wealth both contains an admiration of potential equals in a worldwide community of faith, but this is subsumed here beneath the sense that 'we' live in a material world, 'they' don't and are the proper subjects of suffering (Olson, 2015).

Feelings of shock at poverty and readings of ‘the happy poor’ are ‘moving’ experiences which ‘move’ young subjects towards ‘productive’ emotions of gratitude and motivation. These lessons of gratitude and motivation can be analysed through the lens of western privilege, religious virtue *and* the dynamics of classed reform present in the trips I studied. Encounters prompt intersubjective emotional inspiration: *our* gratitude is inspired by (our reading of) *their* gratitude and ‘happiness’. This is problematic. Firstly, casting ‘them’ as ‘grateful’ is a presumption of western knowledge of the lives of others (Darnell, 2007). Secondly, for young people from working-class backgrounds, a call to gratitude, which is amplified through being read as religious virtue, delegitimises hardship. For example, Peter and Phillip reflect that they should be ‘more grateful’ despite both living in situations which are economically vulnerable within the UK (indicated by Phillip’s reference to his family’s electricity being cut).

Affective dynamics are entangled with the scripting of experience to foster motivated, passionate subjects, as Emma concludes the discussion with an emphasis on encouraging a faith defined by ‘passion’ and ‘fire’. Without reducing these expressions of faith as determined by a culture of aspiration, they are clearly inflected by them. There is a close resonance between charismatic-evangelical theologies that emphasise ‘passion’ and ‘vision’, and discourses of aspirational motivation as ‘a neoliberal form of social hope’ (Brown, 2013; Han, 2011). For instance, at a church meeting we attended in Zimbabwe a Pentecostal preacher interpreted the story of Jacob, who loves Rachel but is tricked into marrying Leah, and eventually wins Rachel through years of hard work, as an aspirational tale, saying ‘you are Jacob’ - Rachel is your ‘dream’. And Leah is ‘the obstacles you face’.

This section has confirmed that the insights of critical literature that a great deal of volunteer tourism is constituted by and constitutive of western privilege. However, it adds insight into how such ideas and subjectivities are ‘surfaced’. Embodied voluntary labour remakes boundaries of difference and superiority. At the same time, particularistic identifications are also always being constructed alongside and in conjunction with ‘western’ identifications and privilege. In the cases I studied, of gendered and religious identifications were also built through performances of ‘helping responsibility’. These performances were in turn entangled with pressures

on working-class youth to be productive members of an ‘aspiration nation’. This analysis fractures the idea of a singular ‘western subject’ implicit in much literature on volunteer tourism. Social position and intersecting identifications make a difference to understanding the dynamics at play.

5.4. Irresponsibility: Celebrating Western Privilege and Particularistic Identities through Fun

5.4.1. Lads on Tour: Reinforcing Classed Masculinities in Exotic Africa

Africa was a setting where British boys could become men but also where British men could behave like boys with impunity... a great testing - or teething - ground for moral growth and moral regression.

(Brantlinger, 1985: 190 in Hubbard and Mathers, 2004: 450)

If my participants were asked whether the previous sections accurately reflected their experience, they would say that it all sounds *way* too serious. Leisure activities were surrounded by a sense of newness, risk, and ‘adventure’. Relentless ‘banter’ and joyful singing prompted outbursts of laughter. The trips are pleasurable - but we must ask whose pleasures they are, and what ends they serve (Hayes Conroy and Martin, 2010). Western privilege is surfaced through ‘fun’ and irresponsibility as well as the dynamics of responsibility that the last section described. In this research, affects of adventure often played into encountering Africa as an exotic space to be consumed, or as a ‘playground’. At other moments ‘good times’ sat at odds with the power relations of the trip, an argument which will be explored further the next chapter. Once again the constitution of western dominance intersects with the constitution of other particular identities. This section outlines that the affects of fun solidify western entitlement in intersection with classed and gendered identities. Non-elite young subjects’ performances contrast to accounts of the ‘cultural capital’ desired and gained by elite volunteers which are discussed in existing literature.

Classed masculine cultures of leisure saturated the Kenya trip. The vignette below recounts a safari day in Lake Nakuru National Park saturated with the affects of humour, typifying the way that for this group playful engagements with Kenya worked to solidify a form of classed 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Young men performed 'hardness' through humorously amping up their desire to embrace danger, cracked jokes that upheld hyper heterosexuality, and framed their experience in the language of 'street culture':

Kenya - Safari! *We start early, bleary-eyed but excited. Gary announces that it's pretty difficult to see lions, but we should look out. As the wide expanse of the park opens around us, we see lots of zebras, but they only evoke mild curiosity. One lad says 'I hate zebras already, there is just loads of them!'. A herd of buffalo causes the first wave of excitement. Cameras are whipped out, and Gary says 'they're dangerous you know! Have you seen the fight between a buffalo and a lion on youtube?!'. The lads talk about the buffalo like they're facing down a rival posse: 'Woah, they think they're bad!' – 'look at those fuckers!' – 'they're bare niggas!⁴¹' – 'They are getting SHOOK!'.*

The lads beg Gary to let them sit on the roof of the bus. Dave wants to abandon the bus entirely and go 'lion trekking'. Gary jokes about them being eaten. We spot a giraffe, moving with magnificent grace. Someone says with awe, 'wow - its neck is really long!' and we all laugh at them. The guys wonder if a leafy plant is marijuana, exclaiming 'Woah! Kenyans love crow [weed]!' – and Dave quips 'I'm just gonna fill my suitcase with the stuff, and if they open it at customs I'll say 'I'm Alan Titchmarsh! [celebrity gardener]'". We see a group of impala, and the guide tells us that 30 females follow 'the dominant male'. Someone says 'that's the life!'.

The guide points out a rocky outcrop and says 'Do you know what it is? Lion cliff, which-' – He gets cut off as someone jokes 'Lionel Richie and Cliff Richard!' – and then the conversation turns to the Lion King. Suddenly, there's a loud bang on the roof – a baboon! It stays on the roof for a while and someone comments 'he's in pagan endz now [unfamiliar territory e.g. a different estate] – chance to start a whole new life!' For a while we don't see much. Gary starts trying to convince people that giraffes are born from eggs. We arrive at a luxurious safari lodge to have lunch. There is a guy in traditional Maasai dress, and some of the guys quiz him for a while about 'having to kill a lion to

⁴¹ I chose to reproduce the vernacular language that the young men used here, despite its problematic aspects. Young people racialised as black and white used this term 'nigga' to refer to other young people.

become a man'. A group of baboons causes fascination, one guy is convinced it's 'two tribes fighting each other', while Dylan cackles that they love sex - 'that's why they have red bums!'.

On the drive back out, we continue to look for lions. There's a slight air of disappointment. Dave comments 'let's just pretend we saw a lion!' and Gary riffs off this, repeating it in sing-song footie chant. Within moments the whole bus is filled with a huge chorus of: 'Let's pretend we - Let's pretEND WE - LET'S - PRETEND - WE - SAW - A - LION! Let's PreTENDDD weEEE saw a LION! followed by a deafening cacophony of laughter and shouted puns - 'Nah, you're LI-ON', mate!' - 'It was the MANE event!'. Our spirits are high as we wait for a while to exit, and people joke with cheerful sarcasm about Kenyan 'efficiency'.

This vignette captures the way that 'place myths' play out through affects, and adventurous practice make places 'intelligible', in this case 'wild Africa' (Cater and Cloke, 2007). The 'Let's pretend we saw a lion' chant captures the way that humour often bolstered an engagement with Kenya through stereotype: we desire exoticism to the point we create it (Mathers, 2010). In contrast, 'hating' the boring zebras highlight that the destination is consumed as something to be 'seen', and loses rather than gains value through familiarity. Preoccupation with experiencing the destination as an exotic backdrop reinforced a well-documented imaginary of Africa as 'close to nature', epitomised in the young men's fascination with the Maasai performer as emblematic of a 'primitive' masculinity, an interaction separated by only a fine line from their gaze upon the landscape and wildlife (Bruner, 2001; Mathers, 2010). Humour worked in this day in exclusive ways - to silence Kenyan voices (the guide whose insights were steamrolled by the relentless joking), and to build simplistic narratives about the global south (Kenya as 'inefficient') (Ridanpaa, 2014).

Humour - both in its discursive meanings and the embodied power of laughter - also worked to express and solidify classed masculinities. Banter 'fusing violence with play' (Kehily and Nayak, 1997: 72), amped up riskiness, for instance in desires to face down buffalos. Laughter about heterosexual male dominance in the animal kingdom - whether the sexual prowess of the male impala, or the fighting, randy baboons - functioned as confirmation of a heterosexual 'hardness'. The laughter (though not unkind in tone) at the person amazed at the giraffe illustrates the way

that humour marks boundaries. Laughing at earnest, child-like wonder can be analysed as relieved distancing from characteristics devalued in the group culture. Furthermore, nature was humorously engaged through a lens of urban sociality: the buffalo joked about as if a 'gang', the jokes about weed, the baboon whisked off to 'pagan endz'. Being quick enough to make, 'get' and respond to such jokes worked to mark out who was 'street' or not. Similarly, the 'Let's Pretend We Saw a Lion' chant expressed working-class masculinity in the witty medium of football fandom. The chant quickly became trip anthem, testifying to humour as solidifying the meaning of the trip as defined by mischief and laddiness in a way that stretched beyond the moment.

The affects of fun during volunteer tourism created bounded identities of several types. They both reinforced dominant gendered identifications, and played into the narrative that says Africa is a space where 'anything goes' for the self-realisation of the western subject. Of course, young people's creative, humorous performances on the trips and powerful affects of fun do not *only* work to reinforce dominance, as explored in the next chapter. However, what is a 'laugh' to some is marginalising⁴² to others (Kehily and Nayak, 1997; Rindanpaa, 2014), as illustrated below:

Kenya - *It's our final day, and we're going to attend church at the children's home. In the morning, Gary says in a strict tone to the lads 'put a tie on, you're going to church!'. They look worried, and he actually rummages around in his pocket and produces a 'spare tie', before cracking a grin and telling them he's joking. It's funny, but I have put on my best clothes, and am anxious that the guys' shorts and baseball caps might be considered disrespectful. On the bus ride over there, footie chants start as usual. They sing, gleefully 'we're going to be late for church....'. There's a barbed one directed at me and my constant note-taking- 'Anne Frank, where's the diary....'. Ade, a leader, says sharply, 'that's not funny', to which Dylan shoots back 'is this a library?'.*

⁴² It is notable that in my research accounts of classed masculine bonding, women are silent, because the lads' humour defined our voices as 'out of place', and at times contained an edge of heterosexualised aggression. Humour focussed on women as sexual objects, or demeaning homosexuality, was much more prevalent and extreme in the Springboard case. This often angered me, though other female members of the group negotiated sexualised and masculine humour also with humour, for instance by rolling their eyes, chuckling, and dismissing it as 'dumb' (Kehily and Nayak 1997). In the Zimbabwe trip there was no such explicitly problematic gendered aggression but masculine dominance was evident in other ways, such as the suggested gendered division of voluntary labour (e.g. assumptions about who would be best at working with children versus undertaking manual labour) and some double standards, where particular licence was given to the loudest group of lads.

5.4.2. Authenticity, Risk and Classed Experiences of Volunteer Tourist Leisure

That volunteer tourism trips are informed by discourses of adventurous exploration and re-inscribe exotic difference is not a particularly new point. However, the iteration of this in the Kenya case through the affective language of ‘lads on tour’ adds an understanding that the leisurely dynamics which remake the boundaries between ‘the west and the rest’ are also informed by – and play into – circulations of classed capital. Non-elite volunteers do not merely adopt ‘middle class’ ways of doing volunteer tourism, but bring their own classed and gendered performances into play. This can be further illustrated by thinking about desires for ‘authenticity’ and responses to ‘risk’.

Studies of middle-class travellers and volunteer tourists indicate that they are keen to differentiate themselves from ‘tourists’ and claim ‘authenticity’. They seek to experience the ‘real’ Kenya or Zimbabwe through ‘un-commodified’ encounters and ‘risky’ adventures (Ansell, 2008; Noy, 2004). This fixation on authenticity and risk constructs places and people as other and plays into gains of middle-class cultural capital (Desforges, 1998). Rather than emphasising desire for un-commodified experiences, young people in this research revelled in the ‘holiday’ nature of volunteer tourism and frankly expressed their enjoyment of wealth and license in destinations rather than seeking to live ‘like a local’⁴³. There was no taboo on being ‘tourists’. At one point in Kenya, the young men’s raucous high spirits led Caris to comment with a helpless laugh ‘it’s like Magaluf! [cheap ‘party island’ holiday destination]’. The vignette below captures the heady mixture of exoticism, consumer entitlement, masculinity and license expressed in Kenya:

⁴³ In making this point I do not want to imply any link between class background and cross-cultural insensitivity. There is plenty of evidence that young middle-class people act with insensitive entitlement and license abroad, though probably in more condoned ways. I had to move past such judgements myself. For instance, one day I was appalled at the lads’ demanding requests to a Kenyan waitress. However, a moment later they drew her into a chat about football, leading to several minutes’ banter with her about different teams. My classed prejudices had made me more sensitive to their cross-cultural ‘rudeness’ than their unpretentious interactions with the local context in their own ‘languages’ (football).

Kenya - *We spend our final hours before going to the airport at Carnivore, 'Africa's best restaurant', in Nairobi. We walk in through wooden archway lit with torches, and sit down at a long table, animal print everywhere. Everyone loves it. Guys with huge hunks of meat on poles come up behind you, heave the pole over your shoulder and carve the meat with long knives directly onto your plate. It feels incredibly decadent, like we are kings at a mediaeval feast, ripping into the endlessly abundant food, stuffing ourselves.*

Someone says apparently if it's your birthday they do a dance and song for you. Someone comes up with the idea to pretend it's Henry's birthday without him knowing, and calls a waiter to request the birthday song. The waiter says 'Sorry sir, all the birthday musicians have gone home', but Tom insists, somewhat forcefully. So the waiter rounds up a troupe of random staff who sing and beat the drums and clap and smile. Henry reacts amazingly, after a second of shocked confusion, he plays along perfectly, acting surprised and gives a little fake birthday speech. We toast him, and launch into a chant of 'Let's pretend it's - Let's pretend it's - Let's pretend it's Henry's birthday!' We all laugh hysterically.

Young volunteer tourists openly expressed enjoyment at stepping into a privileged position abroad. This is not to say that discourses of 'authenticity as underdevelopment' did not figure in participants' visions: preceding material has testified to these. However, where the existing literature argues that middle-class travellers to cloak their privilege and 'consumption' of destinations behind idealised 'un-commodified' exchanges, non-elite young people did not reject the western cultural objects and commercialism we encountered abroad as 'inauthentic'. In both trips, the group was ecstatic when we had the chance for the 'home comforts' of chicken and chips, and pizza, and jumped at the chance to visit large supermarkets to buy brands of snack food they knew and loved. Similarly, desire for a connection with 'the locals' was balanced with concerns to keep a 'respectable' distance from seeming poor oneself, and young people vocally expressed desires to keep up their regimes of personal hygiene, and especially at the start of the trip wore 'nice clothes', in contrast with middle-class volunteers embracing 'slumming it'.

These findings around non-elite young people's engagements with volunteer tourism may compare to mass tourists' desires for escape of 'reality' into fantasy (Mowforth and Munt, 2008) rather than middle-class travellers' desires for 'reality'

and ‘authenticity’. At many instances during both trips young people made demands for the trip to be a ‘holiday’. On the one hand this demand can be understood as negotiating reform pressures. However, embracing the trips as spaces of leisure can also be read through classed practices of consumption in the UK. Conspicuous consumption is a contradictory practice adopted by many working-class young people, part of wider classed habitus’ which carry value for young people among peers, but also help ‘fix’ young people in place in wider social hierarchies (Archer et al. 2007a; Allen et al., 2013). Young non-elite volunteers enjoy the gains of situated classed capital associated with having luxurious and leisurely experiences. An embrace of luxurious consumption could also be read as informed by the ideals of celebrity humanitarianism, where ‘helping’ and glamour are not contradictory but entwined (Daley, 2013).

The cultural capital around risk interacted in complex ways with young volunteers classed backgrounds. Though riskiness was often playfully embraced to solidify classed masculinities, as explored in the last section, these performances of bravado coexisted with affects of great anxiety around risk, in a way inflected by class. The vignette below shows that risk is perceived in deeply relative ways. On a camping stay in Hwange National Park, riskiness that seemed minor and even funny to some could be a source of genuine fear and anxiety for others:

Zimbabwe - *The campsite is a clearing amid the scrubby bush, with a standpipe shower and loo walled by some matting. Jamie and Chris, two of the more middle-class volunteers, are really excited about being ‘in the wild’, but most of the rest of the group seem stressed. Richie shouts- ‘I can’t stay here!’. People are anxious about flies, mosquitoes, scorpions, elephants, lions. Anxiety comes across as demanding and our guide gets annoyed. After safari we return to the campsite and it’s getting dark. Diana is almost crying at the thought of sleeping here - she talks about the hyena and lions we just saw, and says she can’t believe ‘there’s no gates, no guns, nothing!’. She wails ‘- and elephants are attracted to noise and Terrell and Angela snore! I want to go home!’. I begin to giggle at this image, but see how real her fear is. At dinner people hardly eat, and look miserable.*

Where the emotions of excitement that myself and other middle-class members of the group experienced at our Hwange campsite were, in part, structured by discourses of ‘the wild’ as an authentic experience of Africa, others reacted with

great anxiety and desired tangible protection. These heightened senses of risk were not simply about accumulated travel experience. Rather, place-myths about Africa coalesce with place-based social experiences in the UK to give rise to a sense of risk. Young men most embedded in 'street culture' expressed greatest anxiety abroad. This suggests that their affective experience of volunteer tourism was inflected by the reality of facing unexpected violence and early mortality in everyday contexts of insecurity in the UK. For instance, Benny told me he 'mapped out' a mental escape route from the informal settlement as soon as we arrived, reflecting the way that young people who face territorial youth rivalries manage their everyday mobilities with extreme caution (Harvey et al., 2013). Or at certain points armed guards on the road would pass unnoticed by middle class youth, but draw tense comments characterised by a mix of fear and awe from others - 'they've got an AK!?' - 'Don't open your mouth...!' - 'we're finished!'. This suggests that the same context which gives dealing with danger greater currency - leading young men to playfully affirm their 'street' hardness abroad - also gives danger a greater sense of reality for young people who face (but are not determined by) the embodied and systemic violence of prejudiced policing and peer conflicts.

This section has explored how the visceral affects of both enjoyment and anxiety around risk on volunteer tourism trips intersect deeply with classed and gendered experiences and identifications. The affects of fun during the trips I studied simultaneously constructed western privilege and classed masculinities. Non-elite volunteers did not express the obsession with 'authenticity' that middle-class travellers supposedly do, given the value associated with leisurely consumption in their peer contexts. On the other hand, their anxieties about risk were also refracted through both imaginaries about Africa and experiences of risk in everyday classed and gendered social fields. The *results* in regard to the overarching relation between the west and the global south are the same as those critiqued in the existing literature: the consumption and fear of exoticised difference. However, the way these play out in relation to volunteers identifications, and are driven by dynamics around volunteers' social positions in the UK, are distinct to existing studies.

5.5. Conclusion: Emotion as the Medium and Outcome of 'Making a Difference'

In this chapter we have seen the emotional intensity of volunteer tourism trips functioning as a form of power-knowledge through which young subjects are engaged both *in* and *by* 'development' (Ballie Smith and Laurie, 2011). Drawing on feminist theorisations of how emotions are both constituted by and constitutive of social relations (Ahmed, 2004; Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010), I have argued that a certain 'template' of common atmospheres, emotional 'cues' and affective forces is present in volunteer tourism. I have demonstrated how these expected emotions and affects are implicated in an ongoing process of re-inscribing relations of charitable pity and 'helping' which echo colonial histories. However, a focus on emotion and affect has also revealed two other significant points. Firstly, these dynamics always intersect with volunteers' particular gendered, classed and religious identifications. Privileged western positions are co-constituted alongside particular volunteer identifications through embodied practice. This contributes to fracturing the view of the archetypal, monolithically 'western' volunteer of literature. Secondly, class has particular relevance, as the dynamic of adopting responsible, grateful, and motivated subjectivities does not only serve neo-colonial ends but is adjusted to disciplining classed young subjects towards neoliberal dynamics of individual betterment.

Emotion and affect are both the medium and outcome of the 'change' volunteer tourism trips make - both in their action upon the world, and in their action upon the young subjects who participate in them. The analysis of this chapter has been informed by ideas of 'emotional governmentality' (Gagen, 2013): emotion as a medium through which young subjects are acted upon and also govern themselves. Arguably, in contemporary society we see 'the performance of emotion as being an index of credibility' (Thrift, 2004: 66). This sentiment was echoed by a youth worker who explained his belief in the power of the trips as such:

Action is vital for them. [...] We're in a generation of people who must

feel... [...] ‘I don’t feel you’ – that is the kind of language they talk, you know... no matter what you are saying, like, they want to *feel* you...

(Ade, Youth Worker)

This is illustrated in a talk to the Kenya group given by Erin, a woman who helped establish the original link to the Kenya project. She passionately reflected on her own experiences of feeling ‘broken hearted’ on her first trip to the global south and said ‘let it [your heart] break’ – but then ‘don’t just cry about it – do something’, encouraging them that ‘little steps can lead to huge things’, citing Liam’s garage as an example and saying ‘Liam is one of my heroes’. This talk, which felt stirring despite its clichés, neatly encapsulates the idea that an emotional reaction of pity should be channelled into being charitable in ways where motivated, determined ‘steps’ lead towards individual fulfilment - being a ‘hero’.

Emotional governmentality does not simply encourage or discourage certain emotions but also helps produce authentically felt emotions and the emotionally self-disciplining subject. In volunteer tourism trips we see young people responding to affective cues with intense feeling. Subject formation occurs through affective dynamics. This chapter has added an attention to emotion which illuminates the processes behind the ‘expected’ story of volunteer tourism criticised in literature. ‘Neo-colonial’ visions of the global south are given persistent force through the ‘authority [that] lies in the authenticity of somebody’s felt experience’ (Pratt 1992: 74). The body and felt experiences are central to animating dynamics of charitable pity and western responsibility, although narrative, such as in times of reflection, is constantly present to solidify emergent identifications and politics. The way that compassion and gratitude are ‘expected’ emotions is additionally problematic in these particular trips as they also powerfully inculcate aspirational subjectivities. ‘Good’ emotions such as gratitude, feeling inspired, and motivation, can reinforce problematic pressure for young people to take individual responsibility for their social positions. Affects which resonate at the intimate levels of inner conviction can connect to ideologies which neutralise the affective potential to challenge inequality in both the ‘global’ and UK contexts:

... good feelings that drive out and even censure “alternative forms of public discourses that combine anger, sadness, apathy, ambivalence and confusion” (Cvetkovich 2007 p464) that could be the basis of political solidarity and action.... [and] end[s] up privatising and individualising negative feelings and isolating them from the historical and structural contexts that shape them.

(Fortier, 2010: 28)

However, this chapter has also highlighted that these dynamics always intersect with volunteers’ particular identifications and their social positions. The ‘responsible and motivated’ helping subjectivities fostered in the Kenya trip were surfaced intersectionally with classed expressions of masculinity. Both western paternalism and religious subjectivities were fostered through caring responsibilities and hybrid religious and secular imaginaries of ‘the happy poor’ in the Zimbabwe trip. Furthermore, the pleasures of ‘irresponsible’ western privilege in times of leisure played out through classed and gendered identifications, which also shaped young people’s distinct engagements with consumption and risk during volunteer tourism trips. Though the ‘conclusion’ of these dynamics, in terms of volunteer tourism’s imaginaries and politics of global (in)justice, echoes that which is highlighted in literature with middle-class volunteers, the drives and results in relation to volunteer subjectivities are quite distinct.

However, the reproduction of existing relations of domination through volunteer tourism trips is not inevitable. ‘Emotional governmentality’ is not totalising. Some young people did display the most unexpected (and denigrated) response to a volunteer tourism trip - a ‘lack of feeling’, being apathetically unmoved.⁴⁴ Furthermore, affective and embodied experience is ‘unruly’ and exceeds relations of domination in multiple, messy ways (Griffiths, 2013). Young people’s voluntary

⁴⁴ Countless small moments of this pepper my research diary in terms of young people displaying boredom or distraction at various ‘emotive’ moments. However, most young people adopted a narration of these moments in the dominant manner of being ‘moving’ after the fact, which testifies to the ongoing power of discourse. On an overarching level, I knew of young people who appeared to not adopt - or narrate - the trips in terms of the narrative of dramatically ‘life changing’ (one in each of my case studies, and Gary told me of various ‘unsuccessful’ stories over the years at Springboard), but I was unable to access these individuals’ views, as they distanced themselves from the youth charities and the research process.

efforts may contain less objectifying politics based on a recognition of shared humanity. Their sense of becoming ‘responsible’ and ‘motivated’ may link to a sense of self-worth and agency that is deeply valuable for these particularly positioned subjects. Alternative meanings about the affective experience of the trips are also made by young people outside of the strong urges to gratitude and motivation, again in ways which always intersect with their existing, particular identifications. It is to explore these ‘excessive’ dynamics around emotion on the trips that the next chapter turns.

6. During (2): Excessive Feelings and Ambivalent Resistance

6.1. Introduction

Emotions and affect exceed scripted lessons. They are ‘mediated by histories *and* dynamic and emergent’ (Askins, 2009:10, emphasis in original). The last chapter argued that the emotional and embodied experiences of trips ‘animate’ and are animated by ‘neo-colonial’ and ‘neoliberal’ power dynamics, albeit intersecting with particular identifications. This chapter provides a counterpoint. Emotion and affect are never wholly determined by dominant ideologies or simply evidence of governmentality. Recognising the embodied and emotional intensities of volunteer tourism that demonstrate this is a representational choice with significance. It can reveal transpersonal capacities for solidarity against a sense of the inevitability of neo-colonialism and neoliberalism (Askins, 2009; Griffiths, 2014). However, it is important to not over-romanticise this argument - emotions can be excessive not only in ways we would construe as politically progressive ‘resistance’, but rather, refusals, negotiations and reworkings have ambivalent effects.

Embodiment and emotion are entangled in webs of ‘ambivalent and dynamic’ power which emerge through action (Gallagher, 2008). For instance, during the Kenya trip, British and Kenyan teenagers gathered to play a football match on a wide, dusty field. The set-up clearly reinforced difference: ‘England v Kenya’, ‘volunteers’ versus ‘locals’. However, closer attention to embodied dynamics reveals multivalence. Enthusiastic play, handshakes and hugs work to create a sense of cosmopolitanism through sports. Degrees of interest and sporting prowess define gendered boundaries and masculine hierarchies. Global privilege is made visible through who has shoes and who doesn’t. Racialised differences are constructed in comments about ‘natural’ athleticism. Post game laughs are based on sparks of personality-based connection. The layers of complexity continue: at one point, Henry, a young person of Jamaican heritage from Hackney, as opposed to the majority of the group, white or mixed race from Roehampton, suddenly turned

around and scored for 'Kenya'. Some people laughed, whilst others muttered that he'd 'betrayed England'. Henry shrugged nonchalantly with a smile and said Kenya 'seemed like they needed a bit of help'. Was Henry performing boundary-crossing solidarity or charitable pity? Clearly, powerful histories and identity categories do play a significant role in the football game, but there is also a 'violence of interpretation' in narrating the event as driven by any single pathway of power (Lim, 2008).

This chapter is about the dynamics that undercut, or simply don't 'add up with' the story told in the previous chapter of volunteer tourism fostering relations of western dominance and shaping young people's subjectivities to better fit 'neoliberal' economies. The first section looks at the way young people negotiate the idealised transformations of volunteer tourism. Through 'having a laugh', young people refuse lessons of 'reform' and assert their already-existing identifications and pleasures. Where they do engage with notions of transformation, they rework the lessons of the trips as about collective change and mutual support through intense investment in team relations. At other times, disruptions to performing charity stem from embodied and social identifications, as racialised, gendered and classed 'minded-bodies' prompt unruly affects. The second part of the chapter explores how young people relate to, and in, the destination contexts in ways that exceed charitable pity. 'African pride', transnational religion, classed and gendered affective vocabularies and nascent bonds of friendship partially challenge power relations between the 'west and the rest'. The chapter adds to understandings of youth agency and 'resistance' as contradictory, emerging in multiple ways at various moments across time and as often collective and mischievous (Jeffrey, 2010).

6.2. Refusing Reform and Reworking Moral Lessons

6.2.1. Teenage Kicks: Flirtation, Friendship and 'Having a Laugh'

The 'fun times' had during volunteer tourism cannot be understood purely as part of the problematic pleasures of western entitlement to be 'irresponsible'. Rather,

through ‘having a laugh’ young people negotiated the moralising lessons of the trips through affirming their pride in existing collective identities, thus implicitly refusing the work of self-transformation. This was not an explicitly oppositional dynamic, but irreverent fun - in particular around popular youth culture and classed expressions of hegemonic masculinity - existed in friction with the lessons of virtue that were emphasised at other times. For instance, the vignette⁴⁵ below recounts the affective intensities of young people’s interactions with the opposite sex, and around popular culture. Humorous blends of the sacred and profane were enjoyed by young people as a thrilling (mild) transgression of adult norms given the official faith-based nature of the trip.

Zimbabwe: *The sun has just set. We sit around the blazing fire. Marley says with a raised eyebrow and a cheeky smile ‘who’s going to tuck me in?...’. Peter is batting away insects and screaming ‘Get away! Evil ting! Dat is not my portion!’ in a style parodying a Nigerian Pentecostal preacher. Others are teasing Nathaniel about when we all accidentally saw him starkers. A group is talking about music, shouting competing suggestions, and suddenly, a song takes off three of the lads jump onto a bench and belt it out, hamming it up with their hands on their chests and their eyes closed: ‘... Baby you’re a STAR / I just want to SHOW you / You should let me LOVE YOU...!’ Everyone descends into screeches of laughter.*

We get asked to quieten down, and with a few grumbles it winds down into a more mellow vibe. They sing an Alicia Keys ballad, there are people leaning against each other, giving each other shoulder rubs, the air thick with teenage hormones, everyone clearly wants to stay up, not to miss anything. There is chat about who has been drunk before. Giggles and touching. Some of them are singing the hip-hop song ‘Amen’, with its explicit language.⁴⁶ I don’t think they realise I recognise it. Some have pushed two of the benches together to make a sort of bed. From the bench-bed I hear exclamations of ‘who’s touching me!’ - ‘paedophile!’ - ‘Its a three way!’ - ‘look at the moon, it’s like Twilight [popular teen romance film]!’.

⁴⁵ This vignette amalgamates research diary material from two consecutive nights in the same location.

⁴⁶ Meek Mill feat Drake, ‘Amen’ - ‘I just wanna thank God / For all the pretty women he let into my life... Now it’s a lot of bad bitches in the building (Ooh, Amen) / A couple real niggas in the building (Amen) / I’m finna kill niggas in the building (Amen)... And I say church (Preach) / We make it light up like a church (Preach) / She wanna fuck and I say church (Preach)...’

I clock Didi and Nathaniel talking about whether Nathaniel was high one time at church, and Nathaniel offering people some cigarettes he must've snuck along. Someone unsubtly warns 'the adults!'. I say goodnight. In the chilly morning air the next day the embers are still smouldering. A few of them slept outside on the bench-bed, and are still squished up in their sleeping bags, their faces lit up with excitement.

The dynamics described above are, on one level, unsurprising given that friendship, flirtation and interests in popular culture are typical of 'being a teenager'. However, the intense investment by young people in these 'teenage kicks' - though broadly sanctioned - existed in friction with norms of 'betterment'. 'Messing about' and collective enjoyment of popular culture claim an age-specific space in which young people prioritise the pleasures of the trip over the lessons of becoming charitable, grateful and motivated. Investments in the 'presentism' of leisure and play challenge a disciplinary dynamic whereby young people are being made into the 'right type' of responsible subjects (Katz, 2008; 2011). In Kenya, my research diary testifies to my frustration as the lads got distracted from painting: a clash between my instinct to enforce lessons of hard work, and their actions claiming time to play.⁴⁷

We also see small subversions of the lessons of the trips. For instance, in the vignette, dabblings with sexuality and 'transgressive' behaviour (drinking, smoking and drug consumption) conflict with the strong emphasis on religious virtue in the Kingfield trip's discourses of personal transformation. We see this most explicitly in the subversive blend of the sacred and profane in the hiphop song 'Amen', which 'thanks God' for 'bad bitches'. These lyrics highlight the ambivalent nature of youth resistance and agency - what might be liberatory in one dimension (against adult religious discipline) can uphold oppressive hierarchies in others (of gender and sexuality) (Jeffrey, 2010). Pleasure is expressed in the modalities of existing identities. For instance, at Victoria Falls, feeling awed by the sun glinting on the cascading water, singing seemed a natural crystallisation of excessive affect. Emma led the group in singing 'Our God is an awesome God', channelling affect towards religious celebration of a divine creator. However, a few minutes later, a few of the young men spontaneously and joyfully started rapping the lyrics of a favourite song '... I

⁴⁷ Other affects than fun distraction undercut the valorisation of responsible work. For instance, my notes include accounts of moaning, bickering, frustration and boredom.

walk like a boss / I talk like a boss / I play my position of course I'm a boss...' (Skepta - B - O - Double S), an expression of thrill in the vein of their existing classed and gendered identifications.



Figure 11: Fun times and sleeping outside in Zimbabwe

There was a sense of the normalcy of young people's mixings of the sacred, secular and profane. For instance, singalongs on long bus journeys mixed pop songs with sexual lyrics, Christian worship songs and hip-hop songs with aggressive lyrics. At one point, Peter changed the lyrics of an earnest worship song to wish his friends violent injury in a jokey battle. Or, during a playful spat, Richie went to ask Emma a quiet question, then pointedly read a Bible verse about 'the reward of the insulted' and laughingly exclaimed 'I've been protected by The Lord - and Emma!'. Such gentle parodies of religiosity undercut the seriousness adult visions of virtue (Rindanpaa, 2014) and signalled young people prioritising their own playful engagements in friendships. Similar play around virtue and profanity was also seen

in the Kenya trip. In the last chapter a vignette recounted dancing with the women living on the dumpsite community. In my editing I omitted a telling moment, re-inserted below:

Kenya - *A group of women start to sing and dance – loud, strong voices, fierce faces, determined gestures. Such a thrill - the volume, directness and timbre of the human voice, feet stomping and arms swinging in rhythm. They grab each of us, one by one, to dance in the centre of a circle...*

... As the women dance and sing around each person they extended their arms and shout towards us something like 'Chua!'. Simon explains 'it means fire of blessing!'. Someone giggles that it sounds like 'Twat!'. We all start laughing and shouting 'Twat!' in time with the women's shouts of 'Chua!' at each person as they are drawn into the circle.

In this strange moment the laddy humour of insult-trading seemed to be working to undermine the intensity of the serious atmosphere of the visit to the dumpsite and its ascribed meanings as a chance to feel pity, gratitude and motivation. As young people 'played with the script' they asserted anti-pretentious humour, a hallmark of working-class identity (Skeggs, 2004: 88), reaffirming existing identifications rather than pious performances of charitable virtue. Beyond this, it may have also functioned as a strategy for the young men to distance themselves from connecting with the community.



Figure 12: *The affective intensity of fun on long bus journey sing-alongs*

The way that young people's leisurely, playful times on the trips often re-asserted particularistic identities is important in that young people are refusing to engage in altering their 'habitus' but digging their heels in and reproducing identities that 'work for them' in their social fields. For example, in Zimbabwe the spectacular experience of walking with (captive bred) lions drew huge excitement:

Zimbabwe - *At the briefing about 'walking with lions' we're all listening with breath drawn. Peter wails 'What if it jumps on us?!' – and Matt, the guide, says with a smile 'You die!'. The whole group lets out huge shrieks. He has us wrapped around his little finger. He says it's all about 'stand tall, chest out, be brave'. If the lion starts to stalk you, stand your ground - 'If you run, you're in trouble!'. Marley says, nodding seriously, 'so basically - just threaten it'.*

He tells us a bit about lion behaviour. Young males get kicked out of the pride when they are two and a half - they have to survive on their own until they take over their own pride. There's a particular sort of listening this provokes in the group. Matt says - 'life for a male lion is tough: if he gets killed he gets killed', and Richie shakes his head and says 'that's deep.' - 'But if he survives he's good, he deserves to have his genes passed on'. Benny says, matter of factly, 'yep'. Males can breed with any female in the pride as a way of asserting their dominance. The guys chortle. We hear about other activities, a couple of people want to do elephant encounters, but Benny says 'they're scared of mice... big softies!'

Young men reacted to the briefing about lions through identifying with the idea of projecting a 'tough' body language and pre-emptive aggression to manage risk, and the description of masculine struggles for dominance and sexual prowess⁴⁸.

Obviously, this analysis strays close to a dangerous representational line that should not be crossed - young classed and racialised men are *not* wild or animalistic.

Rather, its significance is that nature was read through the norms of 'street culture' and engaged with as a chance to bolster masculinities that had currency in this setting. In fact, it could be read as drawn into the 'naturalisation' of gendered domination. This embrace of tough masculinity contrasts with the imagined

⁴⁸ Once again it should be noted that these expressions of resistance to forces of reform through classed masculinities played a 'silencing' role for young women, who were often at the sidelines of such 'banter', distanced from the desire and ability to get in sync with the lads' banter.

virtuous, charitable subjectivities supposedly emerging from the trips. It represents young men's refusal to engage in transformations that defined current identifications as lacking or deviant in relation to middle class values, rather investing in their existing classed and gendered habitus'.



Figure 13: Gearing up for lion walking in Zimbabwe



Figure 14: Being brave and tough

In a few instances young people seemed not only to be refusing reform but exchanging alternative lessons that could be considered deviant: learning ‘badness’. The most stark example of this was on the Kenya trip in the relationships between Henry and Hasan - successful drug dealers⁴⁹ of weed and Class A drugs in Hackney, and in their early 20s, with the young men from Roehampton. Henry and Hasan quickly stepped into the role of ‘olders’ to the Roehampton ‘youngers’, in line with street culture’s aged hierarchical relationships characterised by protection and apprenticeship. At moments I caught revealing fragments of conversations about ‘that life’ (slang for ‘street culture’). I noted Hasan was saying ‘you want to save your P[money] and invest – you can turn £1500 into £4500 no problem’, and giving advice about how to ‘keep it on the down low’ and finding out which areas were good for sales. Such explicit counter-learning on the trips was unusual⁵⁰, but across both cases young people engaged in subtle reworking of the lessons of the trips.

6.2.2. Fights, Fun, Forgiveness and Collective Betterment

If the prior section explored that young people’s investments in fun preserved space away from adult-led lessons, this section explores the way that the ideals of aspiration, reform and virtue did not become meaningless, but rather young people formed their own articulations of them (Krafft, 2008; Brown, 2011). Young people reworked the individualised slant on reform that the trips contained through expressing desires for collective ‘betterment’. Young people placed a strong emphasis on becoming a ‘real team’ or ‘family’. Through spaces of relational openness during the trips they asserted desires for cross-class equality, and for transformation as carried out through collective support and emotional vulnerability, rather than through the self-development of responsibility and aspiration.

⁴⁹ Hasan was hoping to shortly to ‘go legit’ by going to uni, and Henry had similar desires, but expressed that he felt ‘in too deep’ and had several other people’s economic security dependent on him continuing the ‘business’.

⁵⁰ Clearly, facilitating young people’s consumption and dealing of illegal substances would not be the desired aim of most adults’ visions of voluntary work in Africa, and I don’t think these conversations were observed directly by other adults on the trip.

Positive affects of ‘team togetherness’ highlighted young people’s desires for equality and connection across boundaries of class, race and gender. In the Springboard trip, Tom, who came along as a ‘business mentor’ and representative of the trip funder at the bank, connected well with Henry and Hasan. There was evidently a huge thrill to the ‘gangsters and bankers’ boundary crossing relationship on both sides. Although in the abstract their bonding could be analysed as part of the way the trips encourage ideals of aspiration based on capitalist accumulation, their interactions seemed rooted in curiosity and pleasure at getting to know people across social divisions, underlined by the fact that all three lived in Hackney⁵¹ - physically close but in divided worlds. Tom’s performed personality was subversively witty, and full of confident, macho energy. His relationship with his new ‘gangster’ buddies was based on both a commonality of spirit and his desire to escape being ‘boxed in’ as a conformist corporate employee. On Henry and Hasan’s part, they seemed to enjoy the warmth in their connection with Tom as a ‘normal guy’, which provided a platform to express cross-class curiosity. Their cross-class gaze contained strong claims for equality across the social divides, as demonstrated in my own interactions with them:

Kenya - *On the bus, I’m sitting by Henry and Hasan, and we chat about living in Hackney. I say I love it, while Henry says he dislikes ‘how people are in Hackney’, complaining, pointedly, ‘some people wouldn’t talk to you in Hackney because they thought you were too different’. They ask whether I ‘found Hackney bad’ – I say no, and talk about feeling part of a close-knit local community. Henry said ‘see, if we do that they call it a gang!’. The talk turns back to the children’s home. Henry says: ‘...I’m not saying they have it easy but Hackney is hard, man – I’m not saying harder but... at least as hard.’*

Later in the trip, one night we stay at the children’s home to eat dinner. Henry has a bit of a moan and says he wants to go back to the hotel. I say it’s good to get to know our Kenyan hosts a bit better. He replies, nodding his head in the direction of myself and other leaders, ‘I want to get to know people who would pass you in the street in London’.

⁵¹ This mix of locations across the cases may seem confusing - included in the ‘Roehampton - Kenya’ trip were a youth worker and two young people from Hackney who were in Springboard’s networks and were invited along as a way to build links with this youth worker.

Henry sees 'getting to know people who would pass you in the street in London' as a priority over the charitable or cross-cultural interactions in the trip. His comparison of our different experiences of Hackney explicitly called attention to racialised and classed prejudices and his desire to transcend his position, not by engaging in reform, but by enjoying the openness across the lines of privilege available during the space-time on the trip. His comments that 'Hackney is at least as hard' as the street children's lives represents a marked rupture in the dynamic of 'becoming grateful'. Instead of seeing material poverty prompting a reflection on relative privilege, he claims the hardships of life in poor Britain as equal but different to those faced in the developing world.

Similarly, in the Zimbabwe trip, affects of 'fun' created a sense of an equal, unified team across the 'super diverse' group. Prior to the trip, despite affirmations of 'team togetherness', substantive engagements seemed contained by lines of difference formed around intersections of class, racialised identities, gender and church involvement. During the trip, a sense of growing team togetherness was built through pleasure and silliness. Young people undertook constant intentional playful contact across the lines of difference. Many instances seem banal - cheeky pranks, competitive games, earnest sing-alongs - but represent significant bridging interactions. The unifying power of laughter was particularly notable. Hysterical, embodied laughter heightened a feeling of togetherness, spreading through contained spaces such as the team bus and energising transpersonal communication beyond language (Ridanpaa, 2014; Routledge, 2012).⁵² A game of impressions led Diana to express fascination with 'white people accents' and ask Sarah to say 'Cor blimey!' - leading to much laughter. Humorous play allowed whiteness to be gazed on with curiosity and interracial friendships to be strengthened. It performed an equalising disruption of hierarchies of difference, whilst preserving good feeling and uniting people in the affective act of laughter.

The desires for egalitarianism young people expressed were accompanied by an emphasis on collective betterment and mutual support. This did not only emerge

⁵² Noting this is not to claim any universally 'positive' function for laughter - at other moments laughter drew boundaries with an exclusionary edge (as touched upon in the last chapter).

through affects of pleasure but those of conflict and resolution. For instance, in the first few days of the Zimbabwe trip, Marvin and Phillip got into a serious physical fight. The fight was resolved behind closed doors with Terrell and Emma, who told me they emphasised Christian forgiveness. A week later, in Victoria Falls, after walking for hours, the group was exhausted and Phillip was limping from bad blisters. Marvin, Richie, Marley, Benny and Peter started carrying Phillip, saying ‘that’s why we came, to be a team’. The young men were expressing their own take on virtue and reform, literally embodying mutual support and solidarity as Marvin combined his physical strength with others to carry their friend. This display of reconciliation and brotherly love was not in contrast to adult norms, but also exceeded simply submitting to disciplinary dynamic, as young people enacted these lessons in their own way, unprompted by adults (Wood, 2012).



Figure 15: Embodying an understanding of the trips as about mutual support

There was a therapeutic vulnerability to team unity. Moments of sharing pain around illnesses, bereavements and difficult family relationships took place between young people and adult leaders. In the Kenya trip, when hegemonic masculine ‘fun’ spilt over into more negative affects⁵³ one evening when the young men got drunk

⁵³ The link between the fight and hegemonic masculinity is evident in the fact that one dimension of the fight started because Dylan had called Jay a ‘poof’ for not drinking enough.

and started fighting, Gary, Tom and Isaac held several hours of conversation with the young men, an interaction I was not privy to, but the intensity of which was evident in sobbing and shouting. In the Zimbabwe trip, kin-like relations developed between Terrell and Angela and young people. Angela had long, deep talks with Danielle about her feelings since her mother had passed away. Many of the young men explicitly mentioned seeing Terrell as a ‘father figure’, and expressed this in natural ways, such as one evening when Terrell was cooking, and Marley shouted ‘Dad, when’s dinner ready?!’. This sort of intimacy cuts against the grain of a blunt analysis of young people as subjects being ‘worked upon’ in didactic ways.

Explicit structures and mediating ideologies also contributed to the sense of ‘family’, in the Zimbabwe trip. For instance, Emma designated a pair of ‘leaders’ among the young people each day who had responsibility for practical help and leading a short devotion, and explicitly chose these pairs to cut across the major divisions within the group. Religiosity was central to this group’s sense of team togetherness.

Discursively, the idea of ‘Christian family’ was a framework that existed prior to the trip and extended beyond it, in the multicultural church. Affectively, intense embodied experiences such as the ritualised singing of religious songs⁵⁴ brought the team together. These dynamics can be read as governmentality - of adult leaders encouraging active performances of religiosity through team togetherness.

However, the meaningfulness and emotional intensity of young people’s own investments in team unity, mutual support and reform, expressed through their religiosity, exceeded lessons of individual, pious reform. This is illustrated in young people’s choice of devotion topics. One pair decided to do one about ‘unity in the Christian family’ - ‘because we’ve all built relationships across the group’. Another chose a passage on forgiveness⁵⁵ and challenged each member of the group to ‘go

⁵⁴ The one which became most of an ‘anthem’ was ‘Cast your burdens’. The song is itself an interesting boundary-crossing cultural object, being a simple gospel chorus sung both in charismatic Christian circles in the UK and Africa. Lending itself to being sung loudly and with rhythmic intent, hip swaying and actions, it was a visceral expression and fuel for a shared sense of teamhood centring around Christian religiosity. ‘Cast your burdens / Onto Jesus / For He cares for you / Higher higher / Higher, higher, higher... / Lift Jesus higher!’

⁵⁵ Ephesians 4:25-31: ‘... put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body. “In your anger do not sin”: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry [...] Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ forgave you.’

up to someone who you've been angry or irritated with on the trip, and say sorry and make it right'. This created a space of radical vulnerability which I personally found one of the most affectively intense moments of the trip. It mobilised visceral emotion: in making the hugely exposing feeling steps across the room towards one another, in touch, embraces and words of apology, an embodied intensity of connection and healing between bodies was enacted (Hayes-Conroy and Saenz Montoya, 2015; Megoran, 2010). Importantly, these acts of forgiveness and being forgiven were predominantly across the divides of class, 'race' and gender. This youth-led act worked against the fault-lines of social identity along which irritation had surfaced during the trip.

One young woman, Diana, used her devotion slot to emphasise collective care. The previous chapter mentioned that religiosity was a forum for individualised aspirational messages, giving the example of a sermon where the story of Jacob, Rachel and Leah, was presented as: 'you are Jacob - Rachel is your dream - Leah is the obstacles you face'. Diana offered an alternative interpretation which explicitly contested the aspirational message. She focused on the 'unloved' and 'rejected' Leah, who bore Jacob children, saying 'God... decided to do something in her life... The love she didn't have from others around her she got from her children - the message is that God will always give you what you need...' and then kicked off the group discussion with the question 'have you ever felt rejected?'. Her interpretation emphasised God's care for those in all positions, particularly the denigrated, and everyone's inherent worth and right to be cared and provided for.

This section has argued that in both cases, within teams, feelings of togetherness (at times) transcended difference, and intimacy developed across lines of class, gender, age, and race. This could be read as an example of 'communitas', a concept from studies of pilgrimage, where social distinctions temporarily lose importance and the shared experience of the journey leads to intense feelings of commonality and egalitarianism (Zwissler, 2011). While evidently there are important distinctions between volunteer tourism and pilgrimage, the emphasis on an 'inner journey' of transformation through spatial mobility (Maddrell, 2009) gives the concept applicability. Young people's investments in boundary-crossing 'communitas' within the team constructed alternative meaning around the volunteer tourism trips:

desires to be treated in more equal ways, and a re-casting of the moral visions of the trips to emphasise mutual support and collective vulnerability over pressure towards individualised self-discipline and aspiration.

6.2.3. Ambivalent Disruptions to Charitable Performances

The last two sections have argued that young people refuse and rework the forces of reform during the trips. Performances of charitable virtue were less easily destabilised, given the strength of popular humanitarian imaginations and desires. There were, however, some disruptions to this dynamic. These disruptions did not always stem from the choice of young people, rather, their embodied characteristics and social histories differentially inflected the volunteer tourist encounter. This section explores the ‘dissonance’ that volunteers who were not the archetypal white middle-class (and female) subject experienced in relation to charitable imaginaries. The following sections explore intentional positive connections between volunteers and those in the destination context which exceed a charitable relation.

Young people’s hopes for sentimental voluntary encounters were often fulfilled with welcoming smiles and warm embraces, but at moments young subjects’ bodies disrupted equal access to inhabiting and performing charitable virtue. In particular, young black volunteers had to contend in painful ways with ‘mis-fitting’ with the ‘consistent images’ of volunteer tourism and celebrity humanitarianism - ‘a white woman surrounded by numerous darker skinned children’ (Mostafanezhad 2013: 492). A significant proportion of the Zimbabwe group were racialised as ‘black’⁵⁶. Where helping relationships are imagined via a profoundly racialised colonial legacy, these young people found themselves facing uneasy moments:

Zimbabwe - *We amble along the dusty roads, greeting people and visiting different parts of the community, led by hosts from the voluntary project. We visit a preschool, and I notice the children run out towards us, all hugs and smiles. We gather together to sing a song, but I see a few of the young people - Didi, Benny and Marley - sitting off to the side looking glum and muttering to one*

⁵⁶ Six were of West African heritage, two of Caribbean heritage - and a further two had mixed Afro-Caribbean and ‘white’ parentage.

another. When I go over to encourage them to participate and ask what's up, and they say 'all the kids ran to the white people, not us'.

The vignette captures a moment where the phenotypical feature of the British volunteers' blackness elicited an indifferent response from the Zimbabwean children, whose facial expressions, bodily excitement and vocal interest were directed at white bodies. The children's non-recognition of the black volunteers viscerally surfaced a sense of differentiated positioning in racialised hierarchies (for more, see Cheung Judge, 2016). 'The encounter' did not dissolve difference but reinforced it (Valentine, 2008). This emotional (non-)contact was constitutive of, and constituted by, the relations that establish the objects of charity as black African bodies and the resource-bearing donors as white Western bodies.

However, such disruptions also denaturalised the problematic pleasures of volunteer tourism. Cremin writes, based on the archetypal young volunteer tourist:

... on [a typical gap year company's] brochure we have a picture of a white (gap year) student surrounded by black teenagers (*black on black would render the gap year subject 'invisible'*)

(Cremin 2007: 536, emphasis mine)

In this research, young black volunteers were not a hypothetical counterpoint to the archetype, nor silently accepting their 'invisibility'. Given the fetishisation of the charitable performance, to unexpectedly feel excluded from an experience set up as 'natural' was confusing and painful, as Marley (Hackney) expressed: 'It hurt me'. Visceral feelings of anger and sadness opened some space for questioning the imaginaries of volunteer tourism⁵⁷. The incident made white privilege visible, as brought to the attention of those occupying privileged positions by young black people. As Chris, (a white volunteer) explained:

⁵⁷ The racialised nature of volunteer tourism also extended to the 'tourist' part of the experiences. For instance, arriving in a small game park, we excitedly ran around exploring the luxurious surroundings. I was with a group of mostly black young men and felt the stares of a smartly dressed white family sitting at a picnic table. Micro-scale gestures create powerful feelings of 'not belonging' in the leisurely spaces of exotic tourism.

It's not something that crossed my mind at all... I was like 'yeah, they love me!' and [Diana] was like 'yeah, it's cos you're white' and I was like, '- Oh, OK!' [...] I sort of thought for everyone else [his black friends] – it's not really fair.

(Chris, Hackney)

Such incidents were downplayed as unfortunate isolated occurrences rather than a chance to discuss histories of racialised injustice and contemporary global inequalities. For instance, in a 'debrief' Benny raised the issue. John, a white Zimbabwean at the voluntary project, responded: 'It's not right – but... we all have assumptions'. He reassured young people it was not 'personal', surmising that perhaps children had thought they were part of the community, or that they were 'salala'⁵⁸ - urban Zimbabweans. These (well meaning) responses were somewhat reassuring for young people, but critical pedagogic efforts could have been built around questions of why whiteness, and not blackness, was associated with subject positions of generosity and virtue.

The ambivalent answers young people came to when left to reflect alone are glimpsed in post-trip interviews. Benny, below, linked the uneven response of the children to racialised economic relations, but did not escape the feeling that this interaction naturalised extremely negative links between colour and virtue (blackness as 'abusive'). The lack of space for young people to explore critical questions individualises the pain of racialised inequality as he 'just had to deal with it':

It didn't really add up to me... they think – that hugging up to white people, they will get more. Because white tourism and white tourist people normally come and give them things. And the black people are more like – the strong – and abusive ones. So it made sense in a way... it hurt me, but – just had to deal with it.

(Benny, Hackney)

⁵⁸ Also known as 'musalad' or just 'salad' - a popular term denoting an snobby, urban, western-culture imitating Zimbabwean.

To a lesser extent gendered identities led to some ambivalent relationships to 'being charitable'. Despite manual labour providing a forum for asserting masculinity, the feminised nature of sentimental charitable representations and the ubiquity of work with young children during the trips meant that the young men were asked to step into feminised roles at points. Some embraced this, enjoying picking up and affectionately cradling young children, whereas others seemed embarrassed and awkward, preferring to interact with young men their own age. At the end of the trips, I was surprised by the intense emotionality young men displayed in response to caring roles.

Kenya - *Getting everyone onto the bus at our final goodbye took ages. Hasan was the last on and sat gazing out the open window. Shaking his head, he says 'I'm going to start crying', tutting to himself 'I've gotta run, all the man in me is gone'. As we drove off it was very quiet, a strange contrast to the raucous noise that had otherwise characterised our bus journeys. There are snuffles from the back –and embarrassed voices, choked with tears, saying 'shut up, man!'.*

These raw and vulnerable emotions must be treated with analytic care. We could say that young men's affective responses merely testify to the power of sentimentalised narratives of volunteer tourism. This is certainly one part of the story. However, the intensity of these emotions deserve fuller regard. Young men's conflicted emotions perhaps indicate a sense of connection and vulnerability which exceeded becoming 'charitable', and that the affects of care are more than a tool of governmentality or 'colonial' dynamics. The sense of embarrassment that Hasan expressed suggests a friction between his classed and gendered social fields in London and those of volunteer tourism. Where one is suffused by pressures to uphold a 'hard' masculinity, the other encourages performances of effusive care, which had limited limited currency in his everyday norms.

This section has explored how young people's embodied characteristics - whether phenotypical features, gendered and classed habitus and norms - placed them in precarious positions in relation to the expected and fetishised story of charitable virtue. These characteristics did *not* determine experience in any fundamentally distinct way. But the ways they disrupted the smooth functioning of the trips highlights that the narratives around volunteer tourism have been built from the

experience of subjects with particular identities. These dissonances partially served to denaturalise the seeming ‘naturalness’ of the charitable relation. Young people also forged ways of connecting with the destination context on their own terms, which I explore next.

6.3. Relating to Africa: Transnational Connections

6.3.1. Claiming African Connection: ‘Blending in’ ... but not too much?

Young people initiated connections that defied and exceeded a dynamic of charitable pity. This sub-section outlines that young people with second-generation African heritage expressed their heritage and phenotypical blackness as an alternative basis for meaningful encounters through a sense of ‘African pride’. The following sub-sections explore how in several ways, young people built friendly bonds emphasising sameness not difference. Volunteer tourism is saturated by imaginaries of the extraordinary, the unfamiliar and the different. However, at times, relating to ‘Africa’ and individuals in destinations occurred with sense of normality. For example, young people connected through friendly masculine bonding, religious identification, and resonant interests in global ‘urban’ youth culture, leading to glimpses of solidarity. More egalitarian connections were partial, often emerging from the ‘cosmopolitan’ knowledge and claims of individuals in the destination context, and volunteers expressed complex mixes of empathy and objectification.

In contrast to the way that blackness led to painful disruptions to fulfilling charitable performances, young people of second-generation African heritage in the Zimbabwe case expressed a connection to the destination context by claiming proximity to ‘Africanness’, epitomised in the idea of ‘blending in’:

Zimbabwe - *As the bus pulls up into the informal settlement on our first day of voluntary work, everyone is a bit edgy. A large fly has got inside the bus and people are jumping round and screaming, trying to avoid it. Diana is trying her hardest not to freak out, remaining seated and*

brushing it away with fierce little gestures. She says, sounding stressed, 'I don't want to be scared of insects because I don't want it to be like I'm black but they think I'm like not like them!' As we descend the steps of the bus, she says 'I'm going to act so African I'm going to blend in.'

Later, I walk around with Didi, and we meet Grace, a young woman who lives in the settlement. She says she's happy we're here because she misses another group, from the USA, recently here. When we visit a friendly old lady, I notice Didi is sitting back in the group a little, while Sarah presses in close. As we stroll onwards, Didi says she felt upset that the old lady seemed 'more excited about the white people'. But in the next breath she declares 'the advantage is that I can blend in'. We talk about her feelings about Nigeria, where her parents are from. She says she wants to go spend time there but is 'scared of JuJu! [witchcraft]'.

Asserting 'African connection' contains a desire to bridge boundaries and counteract the power relation of charitable donation. Young people performed an African connection through embodied efforts such as adjusting comportment, and direct claims of knowledge. For instance, when driving through a wealthy suburb of Harare, Diana commented 'this is what I like about Africans! They build their own houses not just buy them... in my country my mum's family has a big house!' Africa is constructed not as a poor object of charity but as a place of wealth and resourcefulness, based on a mix of generalisation and real transnational reference points.

Eating was a central site for expressing African pride. Visceral responses of delight appear 'natural' but the tastes of our 'minded-bodies' link to performances around identity (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Enjoyment of the food was mediated by cultural and racialised identities in ways that were distinct from the consumption of the exotic which literature on middle-class travellers highlights (Snee, 2013). Young people claimed 'authentic' African knowledge and embodiment through eating with their hands. Again, identities emerge intersectionally, as young men's expressions of pleasure asserted a physically strong 'African' masculinity through eating Zimbabwean food:

Zimbabwe - *We go for local food at the place adjoining the campsite. In the semi-darkness, we queue up outside an outdoor stovetop, and a series of ladies dollop sadza, greens and meat on our*

plates. Many of the white young people poke gingerly at the food. The group of black lads are most vocal in their enjoyment, saying 'mm, this is good!' - 'I want to eat more African food to build myself up!'. Didi says to Diana 'you have to eat with your hands!' - turning to me and Jamie, she says, 'I'll let you off because you're western, but Diana - c'mon!'. Later, Phillip quizzes me - 'did you eat with your hands?'. When I reply 'a bit!' he fires back 'both or one?', and tells me the way you're supposed to do it is with one, the right.

Whilst direct assertion of 'Africanness' was mostly made by young people with second generation migrant backgrounds, it was not solely their preserve⁵⁹. Caribbean-heritage and mixed-race young people at times claimed to their phenotypical blackness as also making them 'closer' to Africa. For instance, in the Kenya group, Henry, of Jamaican heritage, joked that he, 'an African', didn't need to take antimalarials. Black young women of African, Caribbean and mixed-race heritage enjoyed purchasing, testing and vocally discussing beauty products that were agreed to be 'amazing'.⁶⁰

Young people's embraces of African pride run counter to the racialised hierarchies of volunteer tourism. In Ahmed's terms, they break the 'looped' affective performances of charity which re-embed white privilege and establish an admiring, affective relation to Africa and blackness (Ahmed, 2004a). They thus have a resistant edge. However, these performances were also fragile and had contradictory effects. For instance, in the vignette which opened this section, Didi claimed her phenotypical blackness and Nigerian heritage allow her to 'blend in', but Grace, the Zimbabwean we were talking to, clearly perceived us as in the same category to Americans. Didi's idea of 'blending in' homogenises Nigeria and Zimbabwe, and her fear of African witchcraft is inflected with exoticising gaze. Young people's concrete knowledge of African histories or cultures was vague and thin. For instance, Diana thought that Zimbabweans would speak French as in west Africa. Black British young people's claims to proximity were therefore, at times,

⁵⁹ An anomalous but interesting example of this is in the Zimbabwe group, where Sarah, a white young woman, had spent most of her childhood in Tanzania as the daughter of missionaries doctors and frequently asserted knowledge of 'Africa' through comments and confident embodied performances.

⁶⁰ Caribbean-heritage young people did not always attempt to assert this 'proximity' as they clearly also had a strong sense of their own cultural pride and several elaborated on a strong sense of differentiation between pan-Caribbean and pan-African identifications in London.

problematically coherent with erasure of the actuality and specificity of other black lives in the destination contexts.

Further ambivalence came from the fact that trying to embody ‘Africanness’ as a point of pride existed in an uneasy relationship with the anxieties produced by the ‘stickiness’ of negative affects to blackness (Ahmed, 2004b). Charitable representations were prominent in young people’s minds and their desires to positively ‘blend in’ existed in ambivalent tension with wanting to distance themselves from these images. In the vignette below, affects of anxiety about flies are wrapped around with the fear of stepping into abject images of the fly-covered black body in Africa:

Zimbabwe - *We are sitting by the pool in the late afternoon, and people are stressed about the flies. Ricky is grumpy and has his hood up round his face. Didi and Diana are trying to stay positive but are getting wound up. Didi says ‘in England flies are just after your food, here they’ll just go for you - like you know in those adverts you just see kids with flies all over their faces!’.* Diana glumly agrees, very anxious that as her hair is same colour as the flies they might be in her hair but she can’t see them.

This painful sense of proximity to being objects of charity also contained potential for solidarity, as young people reflected on their migration histories. For instance, Diana (Hackney) said: ‘it was hurtful, obviously, seeing kids like that, because... my mum’s family probably went through that [...] I coulda been in that position. It’s quite close to home’. However, more often than not, young black volunteers understandably worked to distance themselves from negative framings of blackness and poverty. For instance, many of the young black men wore their crispest t-shirts and newest flat-caps for our first day of voluntary work. This could be read as a distancing from devalued images of blackness in multiple dimensions: firstly, not to be mistaken for the other black bodies we were going to ‘help’; and secondly in line with their performances of style back in London, which emerge against the intersecting prejudices of race and class, and militate against looking ‘trampy’ (Archer et al, 2007b; Gunter and Watts, 2009).

Young black volunteers’ responses to ‘Africa’ displayed a ‘dynamic interconnection

between identification and distantiation - between desire and repudiation - which are complexly at play in the production of the cosmopolitan imagination' (Nava, 2002: 88). Young racialised volunteers in this research faced moving between two contexts in which blackness and poverty were framed in distinct but predominantly unfavourable ways. However, they performed blackness in ways that claimed value and invoked a positive affective connection with Africa. These are performances of agency which align in some dimensions with established power structures (Jeffrey, 2012; Page, 2015), as in making claims to 'blend in' often homogenised Africa. Black volunteers' affective experiences of pain and pride fractured (not overturned) the dominant dynamics of volunteer tourism in ways which allow us to glimpse alternative possibilities. Young people also attempted connections across difference in actual social interactions, the focus of the remainder of the chapter.

6.3.2. Globalised Pop Culture Connections

Zimbabwe - *In Hwange National Park, after dinner we watch a performance by a dance troupe dressed in 'tribal' outfits. Reactions to this vary from excitement to awkward bemusement. At the end, they get us to participate in dancing and drumming, and without question we hand the drum to Peter, an amazing drummer. As his hands beat out a fierce, hypnotic rhythm, crescendoing with power and speed, the guys from the troupe laugh and applaud, exclaiming 'this guy is from Africa!' - 'Are you from Senegal?' - 'Are you related to Akon?' [a Senegalese-American RnB/rap star]. We all laugh.*



Figure 16: Dancing in Kenya (Volunteer and boys' home residents)

In this moment of fun, the consumption of ‘primitive Africa’ was disrupted by connections around diasporic African cool, brought into being by the pleasurable affects of rhythm and musical skill. In the super-diverse (Vertovec, 2007) London context, migration histories and flows make everyday life intensely transnational, and many young people’s consumption and identifications are shaped by ‘transnational social fields’ (Reynolds and Zontini 2015; Waite and Cook, 2011). ‘Normal’ engagements with and through transnational cultural objects provided a straightforward way for young volunteers to connect with those in the destination context. In particular, circulations of global youth culture which have an association with ‘the urban’ and ‘black atlantic’ drew British and African bodies together with positive affects. For instance, young people encountered many familiar pop songs abroad. Transnational cultural forms were a ‘comfort zone’ of normality for volunteers (Germann Molz, 2008) and underpinned interactions that were outside of relations of pity, illustrated below:

Zimbabwe - *One night, after volunteering we go to eat dinner with a family from the church in Hackney who are coincidentally spending their summer near where we are. Nomvula, the mum, is Zimbabwean, and her parents live here. Some of the group know her oldest son, Kingsley, who also grew up in Hackney, but was sent to live and attend school in Zimbabwe after getting into trouble in his early teens. People are talking about what it will be like to see him again, reminiscing about being in Sunday school together, and a dance competition he won.*

As we enter their compound, the father of the family is roasting a huge leg of goat for us out in the yard. Nomvula gives everyone big hugs. People greet Kingsley a bit awkwardly. Inside, the table is piled high: rice and peas, coleslaw, chicken, stew. Everyone is really excited to see such familiar food. One young woman exclaims ‘this is a bit like London, but in Africa!’ to which Emma jokes back, ‘which is pretty much what church is like anyway!’. Nomvula says grace in Ndebele, and everyone tucks in enthusiastically.

After dinner they say we should make ourselves at home. Kingsley starts off some music, people dance for short bursts and then sit back down, singing along and suggesting songs. Then someone makes a request ‘Azonto!’ and a little ripple of excitement passes round the room, someone shouts ‘come on Africa!’... the song starts - ‘... See I just came back from Ghana / And I wanna show

you dis dance that everybody was doin’... Azonto, Azonto...’ - three of the lads who are second generation West African jump up and lead the dancing with crisp, punchy moves, stepping to the left, right, twisting their hips and flicking their hands. After this, Kingsley puts on the song ‘Oliver Twist’ by Nigerian artist D’Banj and does a dance to it, we all cheer him on. After that the party atmosphere gets going, they get really loud, singing and shouting and laughing and dancing. When it’s time to go, no-one wants to leave. We’re hot and sweaty and grinning from ear to ear.

This relaxing evening was suffused by an astounding number of transnational flows and hybrid cultural forms. The connection to the British-Zimbabwean family demonstrated the embeddedness of the Hackney group in diasporic networks that link Africa to the UK, which speak of multiple meanings of Africa. For instance, Kingsley’s story⁶¹ highlights that his parents clearly see Zimbabwe as a more valuable site for the development of their son’s productive virtuous subjectivity than London. The affective and vital power of transnational youth culture and food drew bodies together and surfaced a celebratory sense of transnational connection within the diverse group of young volunteers and with their Zimbabwean peer Kingsley.

Fuse ODG’s ‘Azonto’ and D’Banj’s ‘Oliver Twist’ - contemporary west-African influenced pop - were richly syncretic examples of globalised popular music⁶² to which young people reacted with a visceral excitement and a bodily spontaneity, jumping up and dancing. The Azonto speaks to a British-Africaness which situates the young people’s imaginings of globality in both Hackney and Zimbabwe, a ‘resonant’ object through which ‘global’ connections play out (Marcus, 2005). Similar resonance was found in the food, which functioned to ‘home’ (Germann Molz, 2008) the young people in the familiar tastes of food inspired by African, Caribbean and western traditions, reminding them of meals with families and in the church community, grounding their sense of belonging to multicultural settings.

⁶¹ This form of imagined and real reverse migration - of parents sending their second-generation children back to their countries of origin is a fascinating phenomenon worthy of another project, as highlighted in the conclusion of the thesis.

⁶² These songs connect the UK, West Africa and beyond. Fuse ODG is a British musician of Ghanaian descent who has lived in Ghana and Croydon, South London. His 2013 hit ‘Azonto’ references a contemporary Ghanaian dance and style. The song peaked at number 30 on the UK Singles Chart, and inspired a dance craze. D’Banj is a best-selling Nigerian artist whose hit ‘Oliver Twist’ topped the African charts, and also charted in the UK in 2012. Interestingly, D’Banj is himself invested in celebrity humanitarianism, as the founder of Koko Foundation for Youth and Peace Development, a UN Youth Ambassador for Peace, and having released the song ‘Cocoa Na Chocolate’ in support of ONE’s campaign to boost investments in African agriculture in 2014.

During trips young people made offhand comments drawing parallels to multicultural London, comparing sadza to pounded yam (drawing on their west African heritage), and saying about markets ‘it’s like Dalston!’. In the Kenya trip, Hasan and Henry declared they wanted to purchase ‘African shirts, like Joseph [the Kenyan head of the voluntary project]’, so they could ‘walk around De Beauvoir [an estate in Hackney] like the boss’. They were referring to, and did indeed purchase, Dashiki style shirts, associated with West Africa and popularised globally through adoption by African Americans during the civil rights era. This globalised history is furthered by being worn by a Kenyan and perceived as ‘cool’ by the British young men in circulations of cultural capital in Hackney where African fabrics are in fashion across racial boundaries.



Figure 17: Wearing Dashiki style shirts in Kenya

Certain members of the group were more able to mobilise these connections than others. The young men of second-generation African heritage displayed the most prowess in dancing the Azonto. Or, a few young men were befriended by a young Zimbabwean, Charles, in the informal settlement. Also in his late teens, his style: baseball caps, bling jewellery and casual but crisp looking clothing, was a point of connection. As a token of friendship, Nathaniel swapped baseball caps with him. Phillip told me about a long conversation they had about Charles’ ambition to be a

dancer in South Africa. These transnational connections were enabled by gendered and classed habitus' associated with 'street culture'.

Whether in buying shirts which are 'cool' both at home and abroad, drumming like Akon, dancing to the Azonto, or exchanging baseball caps, connecting through affective enjoyments of transnational culture felt normal, embedded in young people's minded-bodies. The blurring of boundaries in these ways does not indicate the overturning of problematic discourses. The young people who compared the market to Dalston also returned shocked at beggars, the memory of which became repeated, whilst the likeness to Dalston didn't 'stick'. But the recognition of such small moments is important if we wish to take seriously the potential of embodied practice in volunteer tourism which contain alternative emotional orientations to Africa than that of charitable pity (Griffiths, 2014a). The fun of dancing to the Azonto has the potential to stretch beyond momentary pleasure and influence new spatial meanings: its artist, Fuse ODG, turned down an offer to sing on the Band Aid 30 project out of objection to its representations of Africa.

6.3.3. Religiosity as a Forum for Dialogue

The dinner in Zimbabwe with the church family highlights the role of Christian religiosity as a conduit for transnational connection. Earlier sections have touched on how Christian religiosity was both part of reinforcing dominant messages of responsibility and aspiration, and a forum to assert mutually supportive visions of reform. Further to this, Christian religiosity - as a set of discourses and in the 'affective vocabularies' of charismatic style - was shared (not in identical ways) by most of those we encountered in Zimbabwe and Kenya, making it a space for transnational interactions which - at times - had a more mutual character.

For instance, in the Zimbabwe trip, where voluntary work included the aim of 'sharing faith' through conversation, Terrell and a group of young men got chatting to a man in the informal settlement who told them he was a former alcoholic, now 'born again'. They listened earnestly and asked whether they could pray with him, did that, and left clearly moved. The volunteers to a certain extent understood this

moment as part of a 'mission', which links to violent colonial histories, and implicitly assumes that 'we' hold a means for edifying 'them'. But on the other hand the man volunteered a story: whether heartfelt sharing, conscious performance, or a mixture, it left a deep impression on the volunteers, who referred back to it later in reflections on their inner lives. Both parties spoke in the process of praying, both voices were heard, and it is likely that both parties understood it from a faith-based perspective of reciprocity. Prayer - this time from Zimbabweans and directed at our group - is also the focal point of the vignette below:

Zimbabwe - *The rural site where we are volunteering fits an imaginary of Africa very strongly: scrubby vegetation, still air, orange earth, the landscape dotted by small huts with thatched roofs. We're briefed by an NGO worker, who explains that this is a village with a high instance of HIV. We will help in the community gardens that enhance nutrition and health. We get to work weeding, watering and pumping. It's pretty hard work and soon several of our group look lacklustre. Phillip and Nadia go lie down on a mat under the tree, Nadia has sunstroke and Phillip has a dodgy stomach. A few get talking to some kids. In particular a sparky little girl in a black dress, around 8 or 9, is curious and chatty and has good English. She is called Thembeke and takes some time to instruct us how to say it correctly. She proudly tells us memory verses she's learned, sings us Christian songs and tells us about going to church with her grandparents.*

We finish our work. The NGO worker asks whether any of us would like to say something. Emma urges Richie forward and he gives a passionate little speech saying that he found their 'hard work inspiring'. Then a lady from the community speaks, and the NGO worker translates. She is saying 'we met as one' - 'because we have the same God, we meet under the same roof...' Thembeke leads the kids in singing a Christian song for us. Some of the community members ask what's wrong with Nadia and Phillip who are still asleep - we say they're ill. They ask whether they can pray for them, and we agree. The huddle over the teenagers in a circle, hands outstretched, heads bowed, speaking out loud, fervently. Phillip and Nadia awake rather confused, and the rest of group seems struck by the intensity of the moment.

In a setting likely to have been determined by very powerful representations (rural setting, HIV as the focus of voluntary work, engaging with children likely to be orphans), a 'charitable' encounter was undercut by the shared religiosity which allowed Zimbabwean individuals to claim equality - 'we met as one' - and speak as

the givers of blessing. Religious exchanges opened up space for interactions not straightforwardly 'dominated' by western volunteers. In particular, religiosity was a focal point for 'being inspired' by those in the destination context. In Bulawayo, the group worked alongside Zimbabwean teenagers from a church to deliver a children's activity camp. In a meeting, leaders urged the group to 'be mutually encouraging', and a young Zimbabwean called Daniel gave a sermon-like, articulate, passionate, speech about 'standing firm' in faith. The British teenagers listened, a little surprised, and nodded along responsively. This exchange was prompted by adult efforts to foster religiosity and equality of voice was not reflected in the rest of the activity. 'Inspiration' could be incorporated in dynamics of objectification - as will be outlined later, Thembeke became a nameless and semi-allegorical figure of inspiration, 'the girl in the black dress'. However, religiosity provided space for individuals like Daniel and Thembeke to assert authority and disrupted British young people's presumptions that they would 'teach'. Young people sometimes sought out religious help in the destination contexts. In Kenya, we attended a church service and Hasan got up in front of the whole church to ask for prayer for a friend whose baby was ill.

In other cases, shared religiosity opened up enough relational space to expose young people to unexpected encounters with real people, which destabilised stereotyped place-myths:

Zimbabwe - *In the informal settlement, a group get talking to a guy called Victory. They talk about his work (petrol pump attendant and odd job man) and family (his wife was about to have a baby). Jacob, perhaps feeling the pressure of the 'mission' role, asks 'do you know Jesus?'. Victory says with a laugh 'Yes! - The Almighty! He's alright!'. They take this cue to ask if they can pray with him, and he looks to me like he'd rather carry on the light conversation, but concedes. As one or two of them say a few words of prayer, Victory stretches out his hands. At 'Amen', we look up. He declares, nodding slowly, with a serious-ish expression that he 'felt the Spirit'. Everyone smiles, relieved. He then livens up his tone again and says he likes living here: 'this is my hood!', and goes on to ask us about which famous people we like, saying he likes Britany Spears and Tom Cruise. We all laugh.*

As much as the destinations of volunteer tourism are set up as a 'backdrop' to the

playing out of young people's self-transformations, people within these 'backdrops' respond in ways that disrupt this dynamic. Victory (and others we met) were fluent in the vocabularies of religiosity, and he graciously played his expected role in the performance of it as part of the connection with the young people - although he was more interested in connecting around global celebrity culture and everyday life.

6.3.4. Bonding with 'New Mates' and 'Friendship Politics'

Many young people mentioned Victory in post trip interviews, but none recalled the 'spiritual' aspects of their encounter, but rather remembered his home-brewed alcohol, the fact 'his wife was due in two weeks' (Chris, Hackney) or how he'd 'been digging the well that day' (Jacob, Hackney). Nathaniel declared he was 'a significant person' simply for 'who he was', saying:

He was a really happy man. [...] they showed us the handshakes and stuff, and that was kinda cool [...] he just told us funny stories and funny things and that – and just made us laugh...

(Nathaniel, Hackney)

Nathaniel's mention of handshakes and laughter show that young people engaged in plenty of bodily and affective exchanges which were not understood primarily through the lens of charity but rather the affinities of gender, age and personality; and enacted through 'ordinary' ways of relating. For instance, Dave (Roehampton), a gregarious joker, fondly recalled being taken out for 'a bike ride with the lads' in Kenya, and being laughed at by them when he admitted defeat at a hill. Diana, playing skipping rope with some children, admired and traded rhythms with them. A few of the young men in the Zimbabwe case mentioned a boy called Johnson, with whom a shared language of teasing became a source of identification:

Johnson... I saw him as... just like myself! [...] yeah, he was a cool boy, he was funny! [...] He was calling my name! And I was pretending to ignore him! And then like, he picked up a stone, he was gonna dash it at me! [...] I really bonded with him ... cos... that's something that I would do

[chuckling].

(Marley, Hackney)

Young people engaged particular affective vocabularies in these connections, and for the young men in Kenya, unsurprisingly, football, affectionate insult-trading, and gendered humour were key. This again highlights the multivalent effects of similar affective and dynamics: where masculine banter at times played into the dynamic of ‘consuming’ Africa - at other moments it was mobilised to build friendly bonds across difference. Simon, a Kenyan in his 20s who worked at the voluntary project, became drawn into the young men’s laddy interactions, as they complimented him, saying ‘your hairstyle looks good, the girls will like that!’ and joked about how if he came to the UK ‘you’ll pull yourself a white ting!’.

Inflected by the importance of relationships of authority and protection for some young people in everyday London life⁶³, certain adult men in the destination contexts became figures of admiration. For instance, Joseph, the head of the project in Kenya would often be referred to as ‘the boss’ and complemented with comments such as, ‘woah, Joseph you can eat a lot!’ - a trope of masculine prowess that transcends boundaries. In Zimbabwe trip, our driver Soko, who remained with the group for the entire 18-day trip, became seen as a protector figure drawing exclamations such as ‘Soko is the guy!’ - ‘Soko, you’re the man!’ - at moments such as lighting fires, tackling thieving monkeys, or negotiating tricky roads. In Kenya, driver Clifford’s somewhat-risky moves on the road thrilled the group and young people enthusiastically said ‘you should come over and drive our bus [Springboard’s mobile youth club]!’. In characteristically playful style, they expressed their affection by making him the focus of football-style chants. These were intensely affective experiences: it is hard to capture in words the sheer crackling intensity of the fervent chanting:

Chants of Admiration for Clifford

‘Clifford! Give us a wave! Clifford, Clifford give us a wave!’

‘He drives where he wants! He drives where he wants! Oh Big Clifford, he drives where he

⁶³ For instance, relationships between ‘olders’ and ‘youngers’ in ‘street culture’.

wants...!’

‘Move out of his way! Move out of his way! Oh Big Clifford, move out of his way!’

‘There’s only one big Cliff-o! One big Cliff-o!’

‘Big Cliff-o’s Barmy Army! We hate Tottenham! Big Cliff-o’s Barmy Army! We hate Tottenham!’

‘We love you Clifford, yes we do....’

‘Oh when Big Cliff! Goes marching in! Lord I wanna be in that number! When Big Cliff goes marching in!’

These chants were not a deeply mutual exchange (Clifford seemed amused by the chants at points and exhausted by them at others), but were unpretentious admiring attempts to make connections in the affective vocabularies of classed masculinity. Ambivalence can be seen in the way such expressions still constructed Kenya as a comfortable backdrop for the western subject, and the irony of celebrating Clifford via a modified chant built around British patriotism (the ‘Barmy Army’) and the hatred of another London team (‘We hate Tottenham’). Although the friendly connections recounted here are not ‘meaningful contacts’ (Valentine, 2008), young people’s ‘friendship politics’⁶⁴ highlight agentic intentions or attempts to connect across difference (Bunnell et al., 2012; Wood, 2012).

A glimpse of radical potential of these ‘ordinary’ interactions can be seen in young people’s statements about global mobility in relation to their new ‘mates’. On the final day in Kenya Payton, Kofi and Dylan said to some of the young people they’d met: ‘Come visit! And you can play Call of Duty [video game] with us all night!’. There is a certain poignancy to these earnest expressions of welcome in their frames of references (video games) and their low awareness of the barriers for their peers in Kenya to ‘visit’. Dylan and Payton enthusiastically told Gary that when they got back to the UK they wanted to do sponsored cycle ride to raise money ‘bring Simon over’ [the young man the group particularly befriended]: a reworking of what ‘charitable’ action might look like. I overheard Hasan saying to Simon that if he came to visit, ‘the ghetto is the most welcoming place’ and ‘my house isn’t big but you could always stay’. These were implicit critiques of the lack of genuine

⁶⁴ Attractions that exceeded platonic desires were present in small flirtations and attractions visible on most trips, for instance between Henry and some Kenyan young women, though in my case studies no significant dramas of transnational romance emerged.

exchange that underpins volunteer tourist flows, and expressions of respect for people's aspirations to global mobility (Bakewell, 2008).

6.4.5. Resonances of Urban Vulnerability

Young people's connections with those in the destination contexts at times centred on resonances of economic insecurity and intersectional prejudice (particularly of class and race), and a spirit of resistance and resilience in the face of this. For instance, in Romania (pilot research, August 2012) as a youth worker was talking about the discrimination faced by Roma communities, young men listened intently, with sympathy, interjecting 'woah... that's rough' and identifying with the idea that Roma children often played truant, saying 'they are like a London kid then!'. Such resonances represent a profound potential for thinking the trips differently: they contain the idea that economic inequality and suffering is not the natural preserve of some regions of the world and not others, and suggest 'helping' could be reimagined as based on solidarity and struggles for dignity around the relational impacts of inequality.

In reality such connections are ambivalent. For instance, Anthony (Roehampton), whose experience of the educational system had been deeply exclusionary, spoke of 'identifying' with a child, saying 'I took him as my little brother, he was the bad kid of the school'. He said 'we made an instant connection' and that it 'felt special'. His account places him as an older, wiser relative, and contains a projection of his own story, but also a sense of genuine, respectful connection and a resistance to young people in both the UK and Kenya being labelled as 'problematic'. The blurred lines between mutual connection, consuming suffering and reinforcing pity are illustrated in the vignette below:

Kenya - *Dylan, Jay, Dave and Kofi, are leaning on a wall in the shade with Thomas, a young man at the home the same age as them. Dave launches into conversation with a question: 'were you on the streets and that?' and Dylan adds 'tell us your story!'. There's an awkward silence, and Dylan backtracks 'you don't have to if you don't want to'. Thomas replies softly 'I will later'. The talk continues in a more relaxed way, with the inevitable 'do you like football?'. Someone asks 'what*

do you want to do when you're older?' – Thomas replies in a wooden tone 'an engineer'.

They start to ask him about street life – 'have you ever been chased by the police?' – he says 'yes', and they say 'us too!'. Thomas livens up at this exchange, exclaiming 'they will kill you' – and someone says 'same as in Roe!'. Someone asks 'have you ever stolen?' and Thomas shrugs and says, 'yes, before I came here'. The guys make explanations among themselves, Dylan commenting 'you have to steal to survive', Jay agrees 'it's like a gang'. They push further – 'have you ever been beaten by police' – 'have you ever seen anyone killed?' – when he says yes, they are clearly curious, but there is a tension in the air between their hunger to know, and Thomas' silence. They move on as someone asks 'who found you?'. Thomas replies 'Joseph' – and one of the guys jumps in to finish the sentence with – '...and he brought you here'.

Here the young men have moments of bonding over 'street life' amid a consumption of Thomas' past, onto which they project a defined narrative of salvation and progress ('tell us your story' – 'who found you' – 'what will you do when you're older'). On the one hand, relatable experiences of police aggression, illegal ways of making a living and strong ties of loyalty were shared: a transnational resonance around urban poverty. However, they approach it as a drama on demand, and lack recognition of the gravity and particularity of his troubles, and stray into voyeurism, illustrated in their fascination with violence and mortality in his life. Thomas' silence speaks of the fact that desires to create bonds across difference may neglect the links between the bond itself and injustice – forgetting that 'the other' has a right *not* to desire contact (Ahmed 2004b).

Into this mix of genuine transnational resonance and voyeurism, we can add another dynamic: claims to authority made by those in the destination context through telling life stories of suffering and redemption, poverty and aspiration. Joseph's story of having been a 'street kid' and now running a children's home (another version of which was recounted in Chapter 5) illustrates this complexity well:

Kenya – *Joseph tells us his story to us after dinner one night, starting with 'I grew up on a Kenyan council estate'. By age 9 he was mostly on the streets, hanging out with a 'gang' of mates, 'doing drugs', coming in and out of home, giving his mother some money sometimes, which would*

please her. 'One afternoon' he was begging, and Albert, a British tourist, asked whether he wanted to go to school, and although he said yes, in his heart he 'didn't really want it'. But Albert enrolled him in school, bought him uniform and shoes. He said looking at the shoes kept him going to school most of the time. But he was still doing some drugs. That changed when become incorporated into a local church. He managed to complete an education, then went to Nairobi, eventually returning to Nakuru making a good living and thinking 'I've made it'. But one day he saw a young boy running away with a woman's handbag, and caught him, saying 'if you want to die young, carry on'. The boy told him he had nothing to eat, he felt moved to take him in, and that's how [the children's home] started. He said 'I saw myself in the boy and I saw myself in Albert'.

Young people reacted to hearing such 'life stories' with deep feeling. In storytelling practices – emotion moves from narrator to listeners, who are affected 'consciously and subconsciously, through embodied histories and reverberating emotions' (Askins, 2009: 10). Such stories hold potential for solidarity, in creating an identification around suffering and resilience. Joseph actively fosters this connection through his conscious adoption of language to link to the UK-context from which the UK group came: 'council estate', 'gangs', and 'doing drugs', as well as emphasising the tropes of charitable stories, such being given shoes and valorising 'Albert'. Joseph was making a deliberate performance of cosmopolitan understanding and exerting authority: actively participating in the 'reform' of the young UK subjects. His story echoes the individualised conceptualisations of selfhood, transformation and aspiration that the trips contain, and whether this is part of Joseph's agentic performance, or evidence of 'neoliberal' self-transformation tales on a global scale (Peck, 2010), is not clear.

Furthermore, alongside the mythic 'life changing' encounter with Albert, Joseph also included more complex detail: life as 'street child' existing in fluid relation with a family life, his attachment to some aspects of street life, or his first choice not being to start the charity, but to 'make it'. His narrative of dramatic suffering both displays cosmopolitan know-how in mobilising vocabularies in street 'realness' and charitable norms, but also makes a claim to difference. While drawing parallels he also emphasises aspects of his story that the UK youth would not have shared: sleeping outside, stealing to get food. This exerted a sort of authority of difference (via shock): that suffering and marginalisation bring a right to speak and command

attention. Therefore, connections via stories of suffering and redemption contained glimpses of nascent solidarity, and contain performative claims to agency by those in destinations, but could slip ambivalently towards objectification. But this series of sections have shown how, in multiple ways, young people did build connections across transnational boundaries. Particular identities - whether religious, gendered, aged, or stemming from particular 'urban' contexts – were resources in feelings of being moved by connection to global 'others' (Calhoun, 2002).

3.6. Conclusion: Excessive Feelings

This chapter has explored that there are many excesses to the story of becoming charitable, grateful and motivated; and that once again, these play out through the body and emotions. The first half of the chapter argued that young people refuse and rework the dynamic of self-development and reform that is strongly present in the trips. Firstly, it outlined how young people's affective investments in 'fun' claim a youth-specific space where they prioritise friendship, flirtation and pleasure over the lessons of reform. Secondly, it argued that young people do not, however, reject the idea of reform and betterment entirely, but also express their own takes on it. They assert desires for cross-class equality, in particular through humour, and express ideas of deeply supportive and collective ideas of virtue and betterment in their earnest investments in team intimacy. The chapter argued that the dynamic of charity was less obviously disrupted, but was subverted in various involuntary and voluntary ways. Some volunteers found their racialised bodies and gendered habitus' prompting a painful dissonance in relation to the expected performance of charitable virtue. This remained mostly unresolved.

The second half of the chapter explored young people's expressions of positive connection with destinations and people within them which ran counter to relations of charitable pity. These were multifarious. Young people with second-generation African heritage expressed claims of special connection to Africa and performed 'African pride'. These asserted positive affective relations to the destination context, but did not translate into significantly resisting the homogenisation of Africa. Young people also connected with people they met through familiar channels and 'normal'

ways of relating. Transnational cultural objects often through pleasurable affective intensities around song and dance. Christian religiosity opened up relational space with those in the destination context which surprised and inspired young volunteers. Young people expressed friendliness through ordinary classed and gendered affective vocabularies. Finally, resonances around 'street culture' and experiences of urban vulnerability provided points of connection where it was hard to disentangle expressions of solidarity from voyeurism. Affect exceeds governmentality, but in messy, ambivalent ways.

This chapter has contributed a focus on the way agency and resistance is expressed through affective vocabularies and plays out in visceral ways. In this, it has demonstrated that young people's agency is not opposing a singular form of oppressive power but multiple refusals, reworkings, and resistances are enacted in relation to plural, intersecting webs of power at different 'moments' (Gallagher, 2008; Jeffrey, 2010). For instance, in refusing reform through emphasising pleasure and leisure in the trips, or reworking the moral lessons of the trips through intense investments in team relationships, young people's agency plays out at intimate scales of bodily action - through embraces, eating with one's hands, or singing. It is social in nature - often focussed on friendship - and often humorous. Young people's expressions of agency and resistance also often contain contradictory and ambivalent effects which may be both liberatory and oppressive (Jeffrey, 2010) – for instance, claims to 'blend in' subvert charity but deny difference, and desire to connect via stories can slip towards consumption of others' lives.

This chapter and the last have engaged in an extremely close ethnographic reading of the dynamics of volunteer tourism trips as they occur. As young people return to the UK they confront the task of how to 'take the trip' home with them:

Kenya - *On the last morning, Ade leads a reflection, urging the group to 'plan for London', saying 'if you don't take initiative you slip back in old ways of living, old ways of thinking' and encourages everyone to 'carry the vibe you have here back'. Dave says he wants to stay. Dylan says he can't wait for his mum's food. Payton says he's going to be 'totally different when back' – quipping, 'unless something happens and I end up punching someone!'.*

At the airport, Isaac makes a jokey, but prescient, comment: 'Turn up to an orphanage, you feel like a rock star...' and 'go back to normal relationships where not everyone thinks you're great!'.

Disembarking at Heathrow feels grey. We see a group of policeman and Henry says 'I hate this place – police everywhere'. Someone suggests singing the 'Let's Pretend...' chant and Payton says 'we're back in London now, I have a rep to uphold'.

Ade talks about bringing the supposed transformational, virtuous gains and the affective sense of possibility back to the UK, which is both imagined, and felt, as a place of constraints (policing, 'reputation') as well as familiarity. These dynamics point us back from the embodied event of the trips to the ways young people make sense of their experiences.

7. After: Projects and Politics of the Self

7.1. Introduction

I feel like a buzz. Like I feel really buzzing, and I wanna – everywhere – I wanna sit on the bus and... make an announcement... like, ‘EVERYONE! I’ve just come back from Africa!!’

(Lisa, Roehampton)

After return to the UK, overwhelmingly, young people describe volunteer tourism trips as powerfully positive experiences, leaving an affective ‘high’. This chapter engages with why this is the case, and what sort of politics their enjoyment speaks to. Young people’s self-presentations and negotiations of their subjectivities following trips can be understood as navigations of the UK’s contemporary political economic context. However, we must also begin with a reminder of what young people’s accounts are: attempts to represent, at a particular moment in time, a past experience. Young people frequently resisted presenting memories as neat lessons. For instance, when asked ‘what stood out’, Kai (Roehampton) said with great emotion ‘I don’t know – everything. [...] that’s how *real* it was’. Young people talked about carrying this irreducible ‘realness’ home in material mementoes and sensory traces: constantly wearing jewellery purchased abroad, not wanting to clean paint spots off skin, and stains prompting affective memories:

...the sand on our shoes... I just look at it ... I haven’t washed my white shoes, yet, I just leave them there, on my drawer, and I just look at it, and it just brings back so much.

(Marvin, Hackney)

And yet we are driven to narrate the irreducible. Jordan, below, emphasises both that his experience in Kenya was ineffable, and also summarises the power of volunteer tourism in the simplest terms, as an experience of virtue and leisure:

J: I robbed a pillow - from the hotel. Just to- I dunno why [...] And, um, I come back and I asked my mum to smell it. Like, I could smell, like - the Kenya smell, but my mum couldn't smell nothing [...] no-one else could smell it apart from those of us that been there.

R: ... So... how did you feel when you smelled it?

J: Just... felt like, I've been there. Helping kids. Getting a tan.

(Jordan, Leatherhead - Kenya)

This chapter explores how young participants narrate the trips, the type of selves their narratives construct, and how these narrations play out against the backdrop of imagined futures.

Young people adopt the narrative of the trips as having led to personal transformation through 'making a difference'. This is not simply a parroting of powerful discourses, but affective memories breathe life into discourses (Hayes Conroy and Hayes Conroy, 2008). The 'plot-lines' of young people's narratives, the images they contain and their styles of expression were strongly synchronous across different cases. For instance, the phrase 'seeing their faces' was a common shorthand to describe feeling moved by people whose smiles were understood as expressions of happiness amid poverty. Particular stories on each trip became emblematic for the participants.

For instance, 'the girl in the black dress' (Thembeke) became a focal point for the Zimbabwe group. Despite most not seeming especially interested in her when we met her volunteer at the community garden, the memory of her singing took on prominence. This was solidified in the feedback service at the church after our return where Terrell showed a photograph of her and recounted 'we saw a people who were welcoming, hospitable, joyful', saying she was '...almost angelic... in brokenness but joy'.⁶⁵ In interviews, following this, many mentioned her. The

⁶⁵ Here the idea of gratitude and contentment in poverty which build a 'smoothed over' understanding of global relations in volunteer tourism are mediated by and mediate Christian ideals (Baillie Smith et al., 2013)

memory was not of her in her own specificity, but through retelling, she became a key part of the collective ‘mythic imaginary’ (Kehily and Nayak, 1997). Similarly, take these fragments from interviews with older Springboard youth referring to a trip to South Africa, where they helped a woman construct a house in an informal settlement:

She said, ‘ah, I’m a queen, and I have my palace now’ ... that really, like – moved each and every one of us.

(Lisa, Roehampton)

... the lady... after we built it, she said – ‘I’m a princess now, in my palace’...

(Desmond, Roehampton)

I overheard her say like... ‘I’m now a queen, this is my palace’ [...] that’s what touched me.

(Ryan, Roehampton)

On the last day she broke down in tears, and she said it’s her palace. ... we’re all big lads and everything – but we all had tears in our eyes, every single one of us.

(Lee, Roehampton)

This coherence reveals that collective meanings around volunteer tourism ‘converge in the performative tellings... where identity and self-change are accomplished’ (Noy, 2004: 95). The remainder of this chapter unpacks more specifically the subjectivities that are built from such narrations. The next section argues that young people tell stories of new, charitable and aspirational selves. Their self-presentations reveal the deep enmeshment of charity and aspiration against the backdrop of contemporary politics in the UK. The following section highlights that young people also express frustrations at life in the UK in comparison to their time abroad, underscoring the enduring prejudices and blockages they face to meeting these aspirational horizons. The final section of the chapter presents understandings of young people’s narrations of volunteer tourism trips as ‘transformational’, not

simply as adoptions of a ‘dominant discourse’, but as agentive mobilisations of ‘capital’ amid classed hierarchies, or ways of labelling the way that the trips foster a sense of value and worth beyond the acquisition of ‘capital’.

7.2. Charitable Aspirations

7.2.1. Becoming Charitable: Grateful Helpers of the Grateful Poor

Moving memories of volunteer tourism reinforce charitable ideals, as the goodness of the volunteers’ work is seemingly incontrovertibly proven by responses of gratitude: the girl is delighted by our visit, the woman feels like a queen, the shelter we built feels like a palace. Collective narratives also exert a pressure towards the norm of a ‘grateful and charitable’ subjectivity. Dave (Roehampton) said with derision about another volunteer that ‘he didn’t really care about the kids, he was out there for a tan, and a tan only’. His own account illustrates the ‘ideal’ response of *becoming* grateful through witnessing the *gratitude of others*:

D: ... it touched something in there – that’s never been touched before in my heart – as soon as I got there fell in love with the kids [...]

R: Why do you think it touched you...?

D: Cos I’ve never... most[ly] in my life, I’ve never been grateful for anything that I have... and straight away, like, they taught me [...] they showed me a new light, that... hang on Dave, this ain’t on. You need to be more grateful [...] in Kenya if you gave them a pair of shoes that you had, they will go absolutely crazy, they will be so thankful, in England if you gave them a pair of shoes they’d be like ‘ugh, why are you giving me these dirty shoes’...

(Dave, Roehampton)

This deeply sentimental narrative of gratitude, help and motivation is felt as authentic and yet is problematic in two dimensions: it fixes those in the destination context as romantically ‘un-modern’, whilst condemning disenfranchised young

people in the UK for being ‘spoilt’, and fuels self-regulation, as indicated by Dave’s confessional account and exhortation to himself that ‘this ain’t on’. Dave’s reference to shoes highlights that these narratives rely on a shared representational set of tropes. Shoe tropes peppered post-trip interviews, with references to barefoot African children, playing and laughing in the dust, contrasted to judgements of ‘spoilt’ British youth⁶⁶, constantly desperate to for the latest pair of trainers. These tropes signify understandings of ‘the happy poor’ (in Africa) and the ungrateful, materialistic ‘undeserving poor’ (in the UK). Thus, the normative meanings made around the trips reinforce both the popular humanitarian imagination, and fears around young working-class British subjects.

The discourse of those in the destination context as ‘poor but happy’, emerged extremely strongly in post-trip interviews. This both essentialises an association between poverty and the global south - for instance in narratives of children who have ‘nothing’ but ‘*are*’ grateful - and absolves the western volunteer from addressing poverty that is trivialised (Crossley, 2012). For instance, Richie’s (Hackney) spiritualised version of the ‘poor but happy’ discourse releases him from responsibility for addressing the ‘misery’ that paradoxically appears in his account at the same time as people’s strength is emphasised: ‘They was – like, so strong in their faith, that – I knew that could get them through this misery alone. They didn’t need me...’. An emphasis on their ‘happiness’ and ‘gratitude’ also legitimises the idea that ‘anything goes’ in helping, as Dave’s idea of Kenya children as deeply grateful for ‘dirty old shoes’, above, shows (Simpson, 2004; 2005).

The understandings of ‘helping’ that were solidified through volunteer tourism were those in which the value, volume or appropriateness of what is given is less important than emotional investment in the act of giving (Lousley, 2014). Accounts of what exactly you should *do* to ‘give’ varied, in contrast to a coherent emphasis on performing a sentimentally-felt, embodied, charitable disposition, that ‘...it’s not necessarily just about giving, it’s about your heart and your attitude as well’ (Jacob, Hackney). This clearly confirms analyses of volunteer tourism as embedded in popular humanitarianism rather than technical or political visions of development

⁶⁶ British youth were condemned as ‘spoilt’ in both general and directly self-referential ways.

(Butcher and Smith, 2010). For instance, young people placed a strong emphasis on unmediated, embodied voluntary work and were disparaging and distrustful of the established international development sector:

...those adverts, but it's like – pfff ... you give £2 to them, but you don't know where your money's going [...] we used our hands to help people.

(Peter, Hackney)

I wouldn't be giving £2 a month to them thingies [...] we get out there, and we're putting our tears – our sweat, blood and everything else into the work.

(Ryan, Roehampton)

These accounts of 'simply helping' were 'imagined through the terms of intimate love and familial gift exchange' untainted by commercialism (Lousley, 2014: 7). The Kingsfield group strongly articulated non-material visions of helping in ways that intersected with religious discourses. They recalled performing affective exchanges of 'love' and enthusiasm, often framed in religious actions such as prayer, or religious language such as 'serving', as giving them a sense of 'positive impact'. Embodied and emotional efforts were both the meaning of giving and the affective 'gift'. Sarah (Hackney), recounted her earnest efforts to display '100% positive energy', despite heat and tiredness to meet the aim of 'giving the kids... good memories and good times'. She frames the help we enacted as helping Zimbabweans 'feel special', concluding '... you feel like you have – shown love to someone that doesn't usually – feel that way'. Sarah's account is contradictory. In emphasis on relationship there is a desire for mutuality, yet the idea of helping via making people 'feel special' is paternalistic and presumes a lack of 'love' in Zimbabwe.

The desire to 'become Albert' - the western donor who sweeps in and creates change simply by simple acts of donation - captured the fantasy of 'helping' on the Kenya trip:

Albert came, paid for him to go to school, paid for his school uniform, never spoke to him again – but - from that moment, seems like Joseph's life completely changed [...] And it makes you think that we are actually (pause) helping.

(Frank, Leatherhead - Kenya)

On the surface, breezy acts of material donation may seem to contrast with giving via affective labour, but young people discussed their material donations as acts of love and pity (Lousley, 2014); not an economic exchange but a benevolent breach of economic inequalities. Young people framed their gifts as solidifying bonds of affection with those they met. The resonance between celebrity humanitarianism and volunteer tourism is evident in Lee's account, below, part of an extremely long anecdote that was clearly very meaningful to him. He recounted getting friendly with two young men working with them in South Africa, and talked with glee about how they thought he was a professional football player. The climax of the story was his spontaneous purchase of football boots for them:

Their faces just lit up – they were absolutely ecstatic. They loved it. ... they just kept thanking me the whole way home, just kept saying 'thank you, are you sure... I said 'look – I bought them now, please just keep 'em. On Sunday, score a goal for me, that's all I want you to do'. [...] and I took a picture of them, and its on my wall now, at the moment.

(Lee, Roehampton)

Lee relishes feeling like a magnanimous celebrity footballer lavishing gifts (of his choosing) on people, as an outflow of intimacy with those he met. Gifts are always entangled in relationships of reciprocity (Mauss, 1954 [2001]), and for his gift, Lee gains a sense of virtue, captured through the photographic image which extends the life of the trip and functions as a 'prop[s]' in a narrative construction of self' (Cater and Cloke, 2007: 15). These fantasies are not simply shaped by media representations but the 'audiences' around young people whose responses play a constitutive role. Young people talked of the admiration of peers and adults who were fixated on ideas of helping children and narratives of self transformation (Mathers, 2010; Pedwell, 2012):

... my teachers were interested in how I felt being there, and how I grew [...] people would be like ‘ah, what did you do with the kids?’ and – ‘how were they?’... and – ‘oh... did they run to you?’

(Diana, Hackney)

Thus, this research supports critiques of volunteer tourism as circulating vague, depoliticised and dehistoricised ideas of global helping which become an ‘alibi’ for the exploitative relations which create inequality (Daley, 2013; Pratt, 1992); upholding performances of patronising care rather than accountability and redistribution as ‘solutions’ to poverty (Mostafanezhad, 2013a). Dave talks of being inspired by happiness without material goods, but seems quickly compelled to list his consumer possessions: shoring up the boundaries of ‘having something’. Witnessing poverty is a route to further ‘appreciation’ and veneration of material possessions (Crossley, 2012), and helping is understood as donating more money to charity, so that others might enjoy the benefits of a consumer capitalist life:

They show you how happy you can be with nothing – like its amazing! They don’t have my Xbox360 [...] my racer bike, they don’t have my 32-inch TV on my wall, they don’t have... my boots... my phone. But they’re more happy [...] I’m now trying to sponsor a little girl... in Kenya to make sure her life can be as good as mine...

(Dave, Roehampton)

Occasionally, words punctuate young people’s sentimental accounts which signal uncertainty. Diana (Hackney) said, of the ‘happy poor’ ‘I think they’re just used to it and they’re content. Well – *most* of them, *maybe, but.*’ and Nathaniel (Hackney) spoke about how people’s ‘happiness’ ‘*almost* gave me a peace of mind...’ (emphasis added in both). Overall, however, these anxieties remained subsumed, and young people asserted returning with a charitable subjectivity which revolved around the ‘good feeling’ of giving. A sense of increased sympathy for the poor is combined with a sense of virtue and relief:

Now, like – when I see a homeless person, I like, ask ‘are you OK’ – ‘how you doing today’ – or just smile or something. Cos it just makes them feel

better, makes me feel better.

(Diana, Hackney)

When ‘good feelings’ are shaped by sentimental charitable imaginaries, certain encounters become upheld as more powerful, ‘authentic’ and desirable volunteer tourism experiences. Denise compared her experience of the Zambia trip to participating in a trip to South Africa which had involved mutually-run workshops on experiences of urban insecurity and violence. However, the fact that in South Africa ‘the girls were just like us’ seemed to her less transformative than experiences in Zambia, ‘teaching kids’ and ‘seeing their faces’ when donating goods. Poverty and power differentials become essential to the affective ‘hit’ of the trips:

With them being younger than myself, that helped [...] I think – if they had been more well to do... I don’t think it would have hit – because the hit was the way they lived, and essentially the poverty.

(Denise, Hackney - Zambia)

The volunteer tourism trips in this study reinforced ideas of those in the global south as living in a ‘non-material’ world, functioning as ‘narratives of innocence’ (Pratt, 1992) and steeling young people to put up with inequality (Olson, 2015). Gains of ‘gratitude’ were seen as the ethical end of volunteer tourism (Crossley, 2012).

The idea of gaining gratitude through helping the grateful poor is further problematic in that, for the young subjects in this study, it de-legitimises their personal struggles. Through a narrative of comparative wealth, trips encouraged young people to take on the labour of self-regulation, based on understandings of working-class young people as ungrateful and irresponsible. These dynamics of reform mirror religious narratives of conversion and repentance, as evident in Lisa’s account of wrestling between her ‘old ways’ of conspicuous consumption and ‘new ways’ after volunteer tourism:

... Sometimes you go back to your old ways, worrying... ‘oh I can’t go out this week, not enough money...’ – but people out there, they are worried about how they are going to be able to get their next meal [...] and I’m

complaining about... a night out, or buying the latest pair of shoes!

(Lisa, Roehampton)

Lisa's struggle to become grateful can be analysed as evidence of power operating through self-disciplining subjects. Young people actively engaged in the work of internalising such lessons of having no right to 'feel bad', based on crude material comparison. Lisa (Roehampton) continued to berate herself away from 'moaning', saying 'I've got it easy – SO easy!' despite the fact she shares a room with her two sisters, and Diana (Hackney) says the trip made her think 'I'm not going through anything!' even as she discussed her family's financial struggles.

The wider political implications of this are evident in Jacob's reaction to peers discussing UK poverty shortly after his return. His visceral reaction ('a bad taste in the mouth') is an example of how affect and discourse intertwine. The idea of only absolute, not relative, poverty mattering is animated by the 'bodily resonance' of his personal, embodied encounters in Zimbabwe (Hayes-Conroy and Martin, 2010), and a feeling of an unsettling 'reverse gaze' following him home (Mathers, 2010), which translate into giving these views the 'stamp of experience' (Diprose, 2012):

... they were talking about... overcrowded houses in this country and... honestly, I had a bad taste in my mouth because it was just like 'how can you still be complaining?' [...] I remember... we went to this guy Charles' house [...] he was sharing a shack with like four people [...] I just kept thinking to myself 'if he was here, what on earth would he think...?'

(Jacob, Hackney)

However, despite these criticisms, we must note that taking on gratitude was experienced subjectively by many young people in positive terms. Firstly, charitable discourses helped young people negotiate hierarchies of status based on conspicuous consumption (Archer et al., 2007). Young people expressed a sense of liberation connected to the idea that status can be 'just about what's inside your heart' (Richie, Hackney). Secondly, gratitude provided young people with affective sustenance to cope with their own lives. This ambivalent benefit of gratitude is illustrated in an

anecdote about Marvin, a talented basketball player, who prior to going to Zimbabwe had been offered a significant stipend to complete sixth-form college whilst undertaking basketball training. In our post-trip interview he told me they had completely axed the stipend. He narrated this as ‘kind of a blessing’ because it solidified the lessons of the trip to ‘treasure what I have already’ and to be ‘willing to go the extra mile to become better’, though he admitted, ‘the money, it would ... make my mum’s life a lot easier’. From one angle this looks like a gaining of resilience, and psychological resources to face economic hardship, from another angle it looks like self-disciplining into passive acceptance of injustice.

7.2.2. Becoming Self-Made

My mindset is different – not a quitter anymore, very ‘go, go, go’ – ‘you can do it’ [...] I always tell myself, you did it for two weeks in Zambia, you can do it now... Like, mind over matter, it really does work.

(Denise, Hackney - Zambia)

As well as becoming charitable and grateful, young people’s self-conscious personal transformations also involved claims of becoming more motivated, hard-working, responsible and aspirational. Denise’s account of becoming ‘not a quitter’ reveals, again, a dynamic of self-regulation. She looks back to the trip as a touchstone in ‘telling herself’ to exert discipline and rationality over her own body: ‘mind over matter’. These motivational narratives were interwoven with, and constituted through, those of charity. For instance, Richie (Hackney) talked about returning with a ‘new vibe, a new motivation’ after ‘seeing people with no shoes’. Unravelling this vague link more specifically, Lisa (Roehampton) talked about young children’s happy, energetic performances as not only inspiring charitable feelings, but also functioning as incentive and reward to motivation:

I just wanted to throw my paintbrush and just say ‘I don’t want to do it anymore!’ [...] but you look at the girls faces [...] that is your motivation, those children [...] singing, and clapping and dancing! And you’re like –

have to do it, have to do it, have to do it!

(Lisa, Roehampton)

There was a clear normative consensus around the lessons of motivation. On return, young people expressed shame about not working hard enough at points. Nadia (Hackney) said ‘I didn’t really put that much effort in and I wish I had, cos... it was... a once in a lifetime chance...’. Conversely, young people expressed pride at having engaged in physical exertion, narrating it as fostering determination (Han, 2011). Jamie described his attitude to the trip as part of a wider desire to actively participate in shaping his personhood, one adapted to a life of hard work:

... part of me wanted to struggle as much as possible in the physical... ‘cos I wanted to get as much as possible out of it. [...] it’s almost, like, how life works - you learn more... when it’s harder... I wanted it to impact me.

(Jamie, Hackney)

These were accounts of gaining ‘responsibility’, not merely the responsibility for helping others, but responsibility for self-management and one’s own successes and failures. In parallel to the push towards gratitude, the invocation to self-discipline and motivation de-legitimises young people’s struggles by slotting in neatly with a politics of ‘responsibilisation of poverty’: the idea that working-class individuals should taking responsibility for their own betterment amid the dismantling of the welfare state (Allen et al., 2013). Becoming a good economic subject is enacted through self-management (Gagen, 2013). Jacob, below, talks about the trip helping push him further on the path of taking individual responsibility to ‘step up’. The work of self-discipline is thus both a means and an end to the ‘change’ achieved by volunteer tourism:

It kind of helped me realise – I need to step up a bit [...] No-one’s going to make you... get up and do stuff. You’ve got to get up and make yourself do stuff.

(Jacob, Hackney)

Adopting responsibility and motivation was not primarily driven by affects of guilty gratitude but affects of inspiration. People in the destination context did not only feature as objects of charity in volunteers' reports of self-transformation into motivated subjects, but were also admired as examples of hard work, aspiration and enterprise. For instance, young people talked about Joseph, the head of the Kenyan project, as a huge inspiration for 'coming from nothing', or being moved to tears at street children's expressions of aspirations to 'be President'. We can read these feelings of being moved as speaking of a 'politics of aspiration' in the UK context and beyond. The way that the volunteer tourism trips encourage young people towards an aspirational disposition can be seen in Richie's account, below, of feeling he engaged with the trip in the best possible way. Successful volunteering is measured in affective terms, as performing passion, emotional engagement and a spirit of 'making the most of it', rather than particular achievements:

I took this trip on board, I took opportunities [...] I wanted to take it extremely big...to make sure I get everything out of the trip – from laughter, to sadness... different emotions – from crying, to laughing – I wanted to experience a lot. ... I just went for it.

(Richie, Hackney)

Such emphases are symptomatic of a politics which encourages young people to take on an orientation towards the future which centres on individualised dreams of 'making it big' and working to alter one's expected lot⁶⁷ (Brown, 2013). Volunteer tourism is implicated in spreading fantasies of 'we can do anything we put our minds to,' which help reproduce subjectivities acquiescent to a harshly competitive neoliberal political economy (Peck, 2010).

Young people's sense of being inspired by those they met contained earnest admiration and potential solidarity, ambivalently mixed with neo-colonial appropriation through finding a story about the 'self' in the particular and specific

⁶⁷ These ideals are drummed into young people through forums such as education and sports, as one young man recalled how in his school 'one of the worst in Britain', his basketball teacher emphasised 'it's not the school that makes the student... it's the student that makes the school'. (Sam, Roehampton).

reality of others (Mathers, 2010).⁶⁸ Below, Lisa talks about the determination of a young woman her own age who she met in South Africa who returned to education amid caring for her younger siblings in poverty. She recognises the young woman's resilience, but focuses on it inspiring her towards her aspiration to become a paramedic. There is an irony to Lisa reading a story of being supported through charity as a tale of individual achievement:

... no matter how bad your life gets, once you hit rock bottom, all you can do is go up [...] there's always something good that comes out of something so bad. [...] if she can do something so hard like that, I can... be a paramedic [...] two completely different things, but... if she can do something like that, I can do something as well.

(Lisa, Roehampton)

Thus, a strong emphasis on being 'self-made' is reproduced through the trips. International volunteering works as a counterpart to welfare reform and service cuts, even as it has meanings which exceed that (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003). These volunteer tourism trips solidified a wider politics that condemns 'wasting' oneself, a pressure that particularly faces young people who are structurally situated as 'excess' populations to capital accumulation (Katz, 2011).⁶⁹ This is evident in Jacob's (Hackney) reflections after the trip where he condemns those who 'choose unemployment', drawing in both domestic discourses around benefit cheats, and popular global inspirational tales:

We've got to *do* things with our life. [...] here [in the UK] people choose to do nothing, and there [in Zimbabwe] it isn't necessarily a choice. [...] people who sit on benefits who don't need to [...] like – you're taking the piss out of the other person who can't do that... cos you have that choice, and you're wasting it. It reminds me a bit of like – that little girl who got shot [Malala]⁷⁰... she come on and say the English girls don't really respect their

⁶⁸ This thesis is evidently limited in its ability to only analyse this ambivalence from 'one side'.

⁶⁹ Evident in the youth slang term for a young man who doesn't do anything - a 'waste man'.

⁷⁰ Malala - shot by the Taliban for speaking up for girls' education, and heroised internationally. This narrative was undercut at other points by Jacob's qualifications that he didn't enjoy education, and that in some circumstances 'not everyone has a choice'.

education.

(Jacob, Hackney)

Analysing young people's adoption of these 'self-made' politics and subjectivities as 'brainwashing' is inadequate. Denise's self-disciplining account, below, comes to a conclusion that there are 'no excuses and you have to 'just do it' in the logics of 'a competitive world'. At the same time, she expresses that this is driven by a desire not to accept prejudice or end up with a 'crappy life'. The sense of inevitability she expresses speaks to the lack of 'thinkable spaces' for creating a valued self and future amid classed and racialised hierarchies. She adopts 'an evangelical belief in social mobility fuelled by a meritocracy promoting the enterprising, acquisitive self' (Kulz, 2014: 687) as the available option. Denise's account displays admirable determination to make the best of her life, but is an expression of agency which 'replenish[es] established power structures' (Jeffrey, 2012: 249). It illustrates Katz's (2001) point that individuals and communities are pushed to make drastic efforts to achieve the work of surviving and thriving amid the withdrawal social safety nets:

My mum was a single parent, and she... [couldn't] manage [...] you can't use that as excuse because... at the end of the day, when you grow up and you're living a crappy lifestyle, no-one cares [...] Like, you only get one opportunity, and I think... living in such a competitive world... you just kind of have to go for it really. Life is too short, um... to be distracted or to lose focus. You just have to - just do it.

(Denise, Hackney - Zambia)



Figure 18: Participants' words echo the logics of a competitive world

Young subjectivities are fostered in volunteer tourism through the amplification of certain emotional states (Gagen, 2013). This is captured well in Payton's account, where his new subjectivity centres around a greater sense of passion, determination, and enterprising, flexible thinking:

Feel vibrant. I feel more vibrant, in a way. I feel more passionate as well...
[...] I feel like... many ideas pop into my head on how to [...] adapt... To make (pause) to make [the children's home] basically *worldwide*. Soon [the children's home] will be everywhere. I think with the right... initiative...
[the children's home] could be global.

(Payton, Roehampton)

Notably, Payton's account of his motivated, initiative-taking disposition is applied to a vision of charity that sounds like the expansion of a global corporate brand. It is to explore the entanglements of charity, enterprise and aspiration that I turn now.

7.2.3. Aspirational Charity Dreams

As should be clear, becoming a charitable subject and a motivated subject were not separate. Young people's aspirational horizons focussed on fused visions of charity and entrepreneurship: dreams where capitalist accumulation is not morally compromising but a prerequisite to being moral, where being a 'world changer' is a key source of cultural and economic capital, and charity work abroad as an 'opportunity', duty and inspiring 'dream':

R: ... what's your picture – mental picture of Kenya now?

Ds: A place of... opportunities, um, and a place...

Dv:... of a lot of joy, and happiness, in the kids.

Ds: Um, a place that ... I would personally – I want to be working in, doing work in [...]

Dv: A place that I want to go back.

Ds: I'm definitely going back.

Dv: We'll have to plan that one out. When we're 18, yeah?

(Desmond and Dave, Roehampton)

I need to go back. [...] Although... we got our *initial* job done, I still think *my job*, helping out those kids, ain't done yet. It's just the beginning for me.

(Payton, Roehampton)

'Africa' was a particular locus of dreams, in line with others' findings on a hierarchy of imaginings of global intervention (Mostafanezhad, 2013a). Strikingly, Danny, below, explains that his volunteer tourism trip to Africa became a marker of pride and achievement on a par to higher education:

I'm the first person to go Africa in my family so to me that's - everyone says like 'oh who's the first one to go uni'. I don't care [...] I'll take Africa all day again.

(Danny, Camden - Zambia)

Young people's aspirations were not about getting into the 'charity industry', but linked to ideals where the boundaries between work and pleasure are blurred, and work is about 'following your passion' rather than a traditional occupational career trajectory. Didi (Hackney) talked about the volunteering trip as confirming her desire to 'go where your passion leads'.

Hybrid charitable-aspirational subjectivities were epitomised in 'the worldchangers': which a group of older young people dubbed themselves after a Springboard trip to South Africa. 'Worldchangers' was used as a hashtag on social media and to make t-shirts. The label draws on the hyperbolic aesthetics of popular humanitarianism, the western subject as able to 'change the world' (Mostafanezhad 2013a), and brands a set of experiences and oneself in a catchy, highly visible way, which can be converted into cultural capital and PR 'buzz' for Springboard. Lee's words, below, capture the way that the irresistible affective pull of inspiration and excitement amplifies a consuming gaze and becomes the very substance of work abroad:

In South Africa we was getting all the kids to say 'worldchangers'... instead

of saying 'cheese' [...] I videoed it, and they're like doing the 'W' with their hands and saying 'worldchangers' [...] Everyone's going to have the T-shirts.

(Lee, Roehampton)

The 'good work' of the worldchangers is conceived in elusively vague, broad terms. Naz (Roehampton), at various points in his interview explained the idea as doing 'stuff to change the world', 'trying to end poverty', changing 'from selfish to being selfless', 'valuing human life' and 'passion for doing the good work'. Many young people (in the 'worldchangers' and beyond) engaged in fundraising activities following volunteer tourism. This was a general charitable effort, rather than specifically linked to expressions of solidarity for those they had met. For instance, Dave (Roehampton), on return, planned a sponsored cycle for Springboard (not the partner project in Kenya) and another UK charity (addressing health issues). Others talked about continuing the 'impact' of the trips by 'inspiring' peers, family and wider audiences. For instance, Denise (Hackney-Zambia) was 'keeping the flame kindled' by speaking at events for the sports charity which facilitated her trip, highlighting that good works following volunteer tourism are as much about promoting the 'brand' of particular charities as anything else. Performing in this visible, public way both inculcates the power-knowledges of charitable aspiration in young people and disseminates these messages to others (Gagen, 2007).



Figure 19: Worldchangers (anonymised)

Where there was a more explicit articulation of what good works overseas involve, it was a ‘win-win’ vision influenced by celebrity humanitarian imaginings. For instance, Jamie voices dreams of being charitable meshed with dreams of sporting success, where poverty alleviation is achieved through the generous giving of resources from the massive personal wealth of some individuals to other, poor individuals, rather than in strengthening social safety nets, or systems of redistribution:

My dream would be to be a footballer⁷¹.... partly because the amount of money I’d have... like I could go to Zimbabwe and literally – like, literally just like that – they’d have all the money they need...

(Jamie, Hackney)

Furthermore, ‘good works’ were conceived of as development through enterprise, not ‘wasting’ potential economic success for oneself or others (Katz, 2008). For instance, several young men across the trips noted the footballing talents and stamina of the young people they met, expressing that ‘it’s – quite upsetting – to see talent just go to waste. Cos they’re most probably just going to grow up to just be like, a farmer – or something...instead of a professional footballer’. (Marley, Hackney). Dave (Roehampton) took this idea further, and for some time after the trip was fixated on the idea of building a football academy at the children’s home we worked at, modelled on the ‘success story’ of Liam’s garage. Building a football academy was assumed to be good based on the universalising discourses around sport, and football in particular, as transcending difference (Darnell, 2007). Although dreams of becoming footballers may well be shared by young people in Kenya (Esson, 2013), clearly, the focus for Dave was that this would be *his* project, an opportunity to create opportunity, a dream of discovering a well of talent to direct towards the globalised commercial football industry. Work on popular humanitarianism situates it as making space for the commoditised action of western

⁷¹ The unlikely nature of this scenario also highlights that charitable-aspirational dreams are just that - dreams - relentlessly future oriented, and never quite grasped, Young people’s accounts contain small anxieties that the good works they enacted were not, in fact, ideal. Marley (Hackney) said ‘in the future I’d like to like – go back there. And actually help them’.

actors and ‘accumulation by dispossession’ (Daley, 2013). Although the grassroots groups I studied should not be portrayed as directly engaged in economic exploitation, we can see links to such dynamics in Dave’s idea, and the benefits of ‘corporate social responsibility’ that accrue to the bank where Springboard’s major business funder works.

The way that the global ‘passions’ fostered through volunteer tourism fuse global charity and capitalist expansion is epitomised by Naz. He cites a trip to Kenya as ‘changing his life’, but central to this was meeting the ‘global business players’ who accompanied the group, and a realisation he could fulfil his dreams of making money not through drug dealing legitimately. After, indeed, ‘turning his life around’⁷², Naz expressed to me his current aspirational horizons: a grand dream of globetrotting, orphanage-building charity underpinned by personal wealth and success. He is focused on the passing down of philanthropic values to his son, values of first ‘making it’ individually to help others:

I wanna go all over the world. ... every year I wanna go build somewhere else an orphanage. [...] I wanna go next year in Mexico – next year Botswana – next year Afghanistan. Next year Sri Lanka – next year, Peru – that’s my big dream in life... But I wanna do it with my own money.[...] I want my son to know what Daddy’s about [...] you’re here to do what you need to do for yourself and get your overheads covered, but you need to help people that are less fortunate [...] So that’s my big dream. Wholly. But in order to do that I need to be very successful financially...

(Naz, Roehampton)

The aspirational horizons that the trips play a part in setting are thus ones which strengthen, rather than question, a vision of individual capitalist success with a philanthropic edge. The aspirational-charitable subjectivities that young people

⁷² Following the trip, he served a two-year prison sentence (which the reference from Springboard citing his charitable reform overseas had helped reduce), and went on, through the networks he made via Springboard, to shadow a business person, take a diploma in Sustainable Business at Cambridge University, and start several enterprises - including a bespoke rap-writing company and a life-coaching and inspirational speaking business based on his own life story - which at the time of the research were sufficient to support him.

claimed following the trips are well-suited to the ‘celebrity-corporate-charity complex’ (Brockington, 2014) and fit in with pressures to build a ‘personality package’ beyond formal academic qualifications to gain social mobility (Heath, 2006). Young people were happy to mobilise volunteer tourism in instrumental ways, as Frank (Leatherhead – Romania) explained: ‘well I’ll put it on my CV. And I think if you’ve got ‘helped 103 orphans... for a week’ ... that’s going to help massively.’ However, volunteer tourism was also linked to more intimate attempts to gain cultural capital. I was confused when Richie (Hackney) followed a declaration that the trip had made him ‘less materialistic’ with saying it had also made him want to ‘dress to impress’. I realised that he was describing distancing himself from conspicuous consumption, volunteer tourism having been part of prompting him to try to communicate an aspirational identity through dress:

Before the trip... I’d think ‘ah I really NEED a new pair of trainers [...] but I realise that that’s not really doing me anything [...] Cos I don’t wanna seem as – uh... ‘gangster’... I’ve never dressed like a gangster, but I’m just saying like – I wanna have a new look to me, I wanna look more smart, I wanna look more motivated...

(Richie, Hackney)

Richie’s need to ‘adjust himself’ to contend with the denigrating label of ‘gangster’ as a young black man highlights that on return, young people are still faced with intersecting stigma (Archer et al., 2007a; James, 2014; Kulz, 2014). For many young people, mobilising the cultural capital around volunteer tourism trips was partial and challenging. This is the focus of the next section.

7.3. Dissonances, Fractures and Frustrations

7.3.1. Incomprehensible Poverty and Ambivalent Charity

Young people’s embrace of charitable-aspirational subjectivities is not the whole story. Young people’s feelings puncture narratives of gratitude and motivation.

They had visceral reactions to inequality both at home and abroad. Young people expressed anger and incomprehension at witnessing severe material poverty first hand. These feelings escaped easy narration. Young people's feelings of being overwhelmed are evident in broken speech and repeated puzzlement:

On one side of the street you've got wealthy people, and... the other side it's just - complete and utter shanty town. That - I still can't figure it out... I can't. [...] - it was very, very - like - upsetting - like - how?... how?... like, HOW can this happen? All I can still think now is 'how?' [...] it's so crazy out there.

(Ryan, Roehampton)

Through such 'incomprehension', of course sense is still being made. 'Crazy' inequality is perceived as located 'there' in contrast to the UK. Yet, although these moments were partially understood through discourses of alterity, charity and gratitude, young people's strong emotions broke past comfortable pity. Peter, shocked at seeing a young girl and her baby living on the streets, first disciplines himself towards gratitude, but ends at anger at poverty and injustice. An empathetic imagining of hardship is mixed with uncertainty about what or who to direct his anger towards, other than at a generalised 'world' and causeless suffering that 'happens':

[It] made me feel that - I have too much, to be asking for more. Cos like, they have - nearly nothing [...] Mixed emotions... like, I was angry, at the same time I was sad. But I didn't know - what - who I was angry at. It's like, was angry at the world for what's happening... thoughts in my head saying 'there's lots of greed in the world' - while lots of people are suffering... and it's not... fair. ... If I was in their shoes, it would really affect me. ... it just made me feel - very angry, with the world, and at what was happening.

(Peter, Hackney)

Many others emphasised visceral feelings in response to poverty. Benny, recalling holding a small baby in the informal settlement, said: 'the baby was pretty and

beautiful. And just – knowing how it was going to live – actually – hurt me’. Such feelings disrupted a neat vision of ‘the happy poor’, which as outlined, was one of the strongest ‘sense-making’ discourses following the trips.

Young people expressed ambivalence around ‘helping’. In my interview with Didi, I asked, in as neutral a tone as possible, whether she thought we had been helpful. This provoked a discomforting series of pauses, broken sentences and ‘I dunnos’, a glimpse of the idea that ‘we went, we saw, we left’, and then a closure of the space of questioning. Her words reveal the confusing disjuncture between the strong positive feelings around the trips, and an anxious, half-buried knowledge of the problematic elements of the ‘helping’ work we had engaged in:

R: And do you think we were helpful in the work we did?

D: Um... yes, and... slightly, no? [...] on the farm, I think yes. [...] Umm [long pause] – I guess... I dunno – maybe we were helpful? I think we were helpful, but not entirely. It depends what you define as helpful. [...] Like, we brought fun to the kids – but – I dunno. [pause] I dunno. It was just like – we went, we saw, we left. I dunno. I think if we were there – more... longer [...] I dunno... I dunno. Next question please.

(Didi, Hackney)

Young people’s ambivalent feelings didn’t overturn - but they did *fracture* - the dominant story of poverty which could be easily solved by ‘us’ enacting charity. Many young people’s accounts contain unease caused by voyeurism. Anthony (Roehampton), reflected back with deep discomfort on his first trip abroad with Springboard which included visiting an AIDS hospice and orphanage. He described it as ‘an emotional rollercoaster’, ‘hard to get your head around’ and oscillated between thinking that the experience was ‘important’ and that volunteers ‘shouldn’t see things like that’. In the end, he concluded, ‘I didn’t enjoy it’.

A sense of frustration at the limits of the short term, one-off nature of volunteer tourism trips was strongly implicit in the young people’s accounts leaving the voluntary projects. For instance, Denise broke down into tears in our interview remembering her goodbye with a young Zambian girl. Amid a sentimental account,

she expresses desire for there to be ‘more in her power’:

She said ‘I love you!’ and I said ‘I love you too!’ and it hurt [...] It’s wanting to give more than I could. And... (long pause) just, I wish I could stay longer. (pause) [...] I just wish there was more in my power – there was more I could have done, to... I don’t know what.

(Denise, Hackney – Zambia)

At times the ‘reverse gaze’ was part of destabilising assumptions of charitable goodness. Zayn’s account of a man’s anger, below, show ‘the confusions and richness of travel encounters no matter how brief’ (Mathers, 2010: 71). His long pauses speak of the ‘stickiness’ of affect contained in the incident. The ‘reverse gaze’ should not be understood as the actual perspective of those in the destination context, but also containing the traveller’s ‘own gaze turned on itself’, a surfacing of repressed questions (Gillespie, 2006: 358), in this case discomfort at the mismatch between good intentions and the inadequacy of helping actions:

A man came up to us very, very angry, and said – ‘why aren’t you helping me’ – and we didn’t know how to answer. And that’s literally... stuck with me for a while. [long pause] And I think – I wasn’t expecting that. I wasn’t expecting anyone to be bitter... But I guess that will happen. Because like – I dunno.... jealousy, or – or just... rage. [...]but – [long pause] – I feel like obviously, you want to help the world, but you can’t help everyone.

(Zayn, Roehampton)

At moments young people also gave unsentimental accounts of relating to those in the destination context. Jamie (Hackney) talked about feeling ‘paranoid’ that young children were trying to get something out of him, whilst also feeling ‘guilty’ about this. Jordan (Leatherhead – Kenya) admitted feeling ‘scared’ of Kenyans singing and dancing. Maria (Hackney) recalled feeling ‘bored’, exhausted and ‘dazed’ during voluntary work with children, and Nadia talked about feeling ‘creeped out’ by Charles, a Zimbabwean teenager who became friendly with our group. These accounts hint at very different stories than those of cosy charity, stories where

transnational power relations, cultural differences and stark resource imbalances invade and distort human relationships.

Young people also expressed frustration with the model of charitable virtue which the trips inculcate, which requires financial resources. Frustration slips in at the edges of Payton's (Roehampton) commitment to fundraising, when he said: 'I think the only thing I *can* do is (pause) raise money'. Older young people (18-25) at Springboard highlight that attending to their own economic survival gets in the way of being 'charitable'. Ryan concluded that he would need to literally win the lottery to fulfil the feeling of 'helping' that his volunteer tourism trip gave him the appetite for:

If I had the money, I'd make the changes. But I... just haven't got the money. Obviously I've got to live and survive myself... I've got 3 kids and everything [...] there was a rollover on the Euro, I said to Gary, you know if we win we're going back South Africa next month! ... [...] There's only so much I can do. ... like I said – if I did win the lottery [...] That's what I want. I wanna say – I helped do that.

(Ryan, Roehampton)

7.3.2. Visceral Feelings of Disenfranchisement, De-motivation and Discontent

... [In the UK] with the whole negativity and hostility that everyone gives you, instead of hospitality... treated like I'm someone that... doesn't apparently deserve to be there or something like that, I dunno. Um, just as a stranger in my own home. ... whereas I'm more welcomed in Africa.

(Sam, Roehampton)

Young people expressed fervently a sense of the 'positive vibe', warm welcome, and even 'belonging' abroad. At first I paid this familiar trope little note. However, it became clear that young people were contrasting this to their experiences in the

UK, expressing a sense, as Sam says above, that they are ‘more welcomed in Africa’. Clearly, these feelings are underpinned by an asymmetry in who receives welcome in other nations, and can also often reproduce romanticised visions of ‘others’. However, they also highlight that the trips felt to many non-elite young people a space of *exceptional* access to respect and value, in marked contrast to blockages to social mobility and prejudice in the UK.

Young people’s nostalgic recollection of the affects of social interactions abroad present a damning indictment of the visceral experiences of everyday prejudice in the UK. Richie contrasts being greeted in public by strangers in Zimbabwe with being ignored in classed spaces in London. Nathaniel talks about feeling free from surveillance, and Marvin gives a stark account of the micro-politics of bodily coldness towards him as a young black man (Ahmed, 2004a; Day, 2006):

You wouldn’t see people here on the street just – dancing, smiles... saying ‘makadi!’ [good day] [...] West End London, you probably would not get a ‘Hi’.

(Richie, Hackney)

The whole atmosphere... it was so much more – free, and open... back in London you feel so enclosed, and under wraps... almost like you’re always being watched. [...] like, they didn’t really pass judgement on anyone...

(Nathaniel, Hackney)

In Zimbabwe people are so open, like they will all come and speak to you... but in this country people won’t even sit next to me on the bus.

(Marvin, Hackney)

On return to the UK, young people felt the disjunctures between the aspirational dreams encouraged in the trips and in the actual opportunities available to them. Being self-made, it turns out, is not easy. Even Naz, held up in the last section as the epitome of the enterprising subject, recounted struggling with the sheer hard work

of having to run his - relatively successful - projects⁷³ alone, and feeling conflicted that he is not ‘practicing what he preaches’:

How am I gonna go tell people ‘go and chase your dream’ – go and be who you wanna be in life – go and develop yourself ... but then... I can’t even go and pursue my dream – I feel like I’m contradicting my whole ethos...

(Naz, Roehampton)

Even in the most fervent believer’s accounts, the fiction of being a self-sufficient ‘young entrepreneur’ begins crumbling against the fact of the exclusive nature of such lifestyles⁷⁴. Young people are left to cling to the optimism of the affective charge of individualised aspiration without a clear idea of realistic routes to social mobility. If the volunteer tourism trips feed into a ‘lotto logic’ understanding of global poverty (Simpson, 2004), then so too are they embedded in a ‘lotto logic’ of overcoming classed inequality within British society. Diana (Hackney) expressed an embrace an aspirational subjectivity where a sense of possibility is paradoxically contained within a feeling that such an attitude is the only gamble available for her to attempt social mobility, saying: ‘Now I feel like I can – actually attempt to do things that I didn’t think that I could, cos... I don’t really have much to lose, kinda?’.

Young people expressed a visceral sense of ‘blocked futures’ in regard to the labour market in particular. As charitable aspirational horizons fostered by the trips ‘confront broken promises of future social mobility’ they prompt painful emotions (Brown, 2013: 420). Young people contrasted feelings of being purposeful and productive on the volunteering trips with a sense themselves of being ‘made to waste’ in the UK (Katz, 2011). Although young people returned from trips with a ‘buzz’, they also described a sort of ‘comedown’, or a deep longing to return to the trip:

⁷³ At the time of the interview, Wandsworth council were keen to pay him to continue delivering a course he had developed which drew heavily on his own story to help young people deeply embedded in ‘street culture’ get into education, employment or enterprise.

⁷⁴ Surprisingly, despite his constant pride in and praise of be a ‘self-made’ entrepreneur, he told me that he would really like a steady job with Springboard, which he envisaged providing the support for him to deliver his courses, saying ‘that’s why I’m talking to Gary... saying – listen... you need to give me a job, man! Let me work for you full time, so I’ve got my stability covered...

I was just depressed for about a month, like. [...] all I was thinking was 'Take me back to Zambia. Take me back to Zambia. Let me go do more work'.... And it got to the point I can't look at the pictures any more cos ... it gets me angry, because I want to go help...

(Danny, Camden - Zambia)

Rather than looking back on pictures of the trip with a sentimental nostalgia, Danny feels depression and anger, crystallised in a plea of 'let me go do more work'. In these accounts of demotivation – rather than motivation - we see a desire for fulfilling labour - an experience tasted on the trips but bounded to that space. This finding mirrors studies of UK-based volunteering which highlight that efficacy, a sense of 'getting things done'; and volunteering as a 'job', are of great significance to volunteers (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003; Smith et al., 2010). In this research, this significance is greater given limited employment prospects. This was particularly evident in interviews with older youth who were no longer in education. A sense of frustration emerged very strongly in these young people's accounts:

I work in WH Smith, three mornings a week, and I hate it. Its just the worst thing. [...] the people... they are all posh, arrogant [...] just rude, they don't have respect for me, and it just really bugs me. But in Kenya... all the kids wave at you, the parents wave at you [...] I'll say hello in WH Smith, and I'll get nothing back [...] in Kenya you could have a conversation with anyone.

(Frank, Leatherhead - Kenya)

Frank contrasts the friendliness in Kenya with a job where his denigrated classed position is reinforced with each transaction at the till. Similarly, Zayn (Roehampton) said he 'hated' his supermarket job, and discusses the trips as 'an escape' and a source of 'moral satisfaction'. Young people contrasted the fulfilling sense responsibility they accessed through voluntary work, with pressures to 'be responsible' in terms of supporting themselves through low paid, flexible and menial service sector labour. Anthony (Roehampton) explained how he prized his few hours' sessional youth work job with Springboard in comparison to his other

precarious and flexible employment experiences in construction, as a security guard, in a care home, and doing odd jobs.

A particularly sharp sense of the frustration of participating in a labour market which reproduces classed inequality was expressed by Ryan. Though Ryan was generally happy to have relatively varied and challenging work as an electrical technician, he described his de-motivation upon return from South Africa, where he had used his electrical skills towards building a house in an informal settlement. The satisfaction of doing work with a social conscience throws into contrast his dissatisfaction with work in the UK which only serves to 'better the lives' of the extremely privileged, accompanied by an affective sense of classed invisibility:

When I come back, I didn't wanna work.... in South Africa I felt 'I'm working for someone that has less than me'. [...] [Back here] some of the customers don't even say hello [...] I was working this celebrity's house actually, the first day I come back. And I was like – I don't even wanna work for these snotty nose cunts! [...] they've got 18 spotlights... [...] I've gotta work. But ... working for these people, that I'm just – helping them better their lives, and – they're not giving a shit about it... it really, really grinds my gears.

(Ryan, Roehampton)

Ryan's emotional response 'come[s] from a social position of future-blocked' (Skeggs, 2004: 90). For non-elite subjects, their experience of volunteer tourism had a role in exposing and deepening cracks in the facade of the UK as a space of 'opportunity'. Although aspirational discourses prevailed overall, they are 'incomplete' and a firm belief in individualised responsibility was often mixed with anger at unequal opportunities (Bourgois, 2002; Brown, 2013).

Many felt that motivated, virtuous subjectivities germinated on the trips could not return with them. Caris told me of several young people over the years who recalcitrantly dismissed the efficacy of the trips, saying 'it's a load of rubbish, I felt like that'. Indeed, Liam, perhaps Springboard's most emblematic 'success story' had oscillations into deep 'negative' feelings about life which Gary explained as likely to

be behind his unresponsiveness to my many repeated attempts to interview him. Payton, below, explains that he misses the enjoyable sense of productivity he had in Kenya. There, he was able to be a ‘hardworking team guy’, but the opportunity structures of life in the UK seem to determine his sense of his own subjectivity as apathetic and individualistic:

Dull, everything was dull. It was just grey. Just thinking that I was *there*, I was in the sun, helping out kids, doing something that was fun and productive, to come back here [...] I went from being a hardworking team guy getting a job done for others... and feeling happy, to being that selfish individual, goes to school, comes back, gets dressed, goes to the youth clubs, and... it was like, can’t be bothered.

(Payton, Roehampton)

7.3.3. Glimpses of Alternative Narratives of Volunteer Tourism

Young people’s anger, sadness and frustration fractures the dominant story of aspirational and charitable self-transformations around the trip with an affective intensity that may open up new possibilities (Griffiths, 2014; Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Although the overall picture was not one of critical consciousness being created from the implicit critiques contained in disaffected feelings, a few young people presented explicitly alternative reflections around volunteer tourism. Young people problematised the politics of gratitude for their comparative position, and responsibility for their own betterment. Several acknowledged poverty in the UK and legitimising the hardships faced by the economically marginalised. Chris, one of the more middle class young people from the Kingsfield group, opposed a ‘no excuses’ trivialisation of hardship by reflecting his unemployed friend has a ‘right to complain’:

He finds it really hard. [...] I was sort of comparing it to the people in Zimbabwe.... sort of thinking – their lives are so much worse... but then... that doesn’t mean you don’t have a right to complain, as well. [...] there is a very good reason to complain.

(Chris, Hackney)

Others reflected from their own positionality. For instance, Peter - who in his pre-trip interview had told me of the financial precarity of his household, of extended family members from Nigeria staying in their flat, and his migrant parents' thwarted ambitions for work as a nurse and an accountant – expressed reflections on the situation for those 'not exactly rich' in the UK that present a stark contrast to the idea of everyone 'having it easy':

This country's very rich. [...] but it's not benefitting the homeless people, and the people that – are not exactly rich... [...] the council won't give them a house [...] like – people from Africa, they go to England to get work – 'cos England's like, the way out – for a better life... – but it's really like, *not*... pfff...

(Peter, Hackney)

Reflections against the narratives of transnational difference and development were more partial. When young people articulated ideas around global poverty that moved it from the realm of the 'natural' to the political, most of them presented ideas of the corruption of African states. Some young people racialised as black reflected critically on the correlation between colour and global inequality (as recounted in Chapter 6). The few explicitly critically politicised accounts young people gave in my research were self-developed. Anthony presented an exceptionally articulate critique of the idea of the west as 'the saviour of the world', instead linking global poverty and inequality to histories of imperialism, as actively perpetuated by the wealthy and powerful, and situating responsibility for change clearly in governmental and corporate power:

That really angered me and upset me... that this [poverty] is allowed to continue by a lot of people – who are – a) intelligent and educated enough to know this is happening, and b) wealthy enough and powerful enough to make an impact [...] people have actively taken steps to put people in that position... and that... really, really bugged me [...] The British government, and British businesses who've been doing business in these places for a long time... they know exactly the situation over there, and they'd rather focus

on [...] making a healthy profit [...] than investing in Africa – when... it made and supported their empire, it was the lifeblood of their business. Now they're not getting so much, reaping so much out of it, they're not so interested in Africa.

(Anthony, Roehampton)

Anthony mentioned socially-conscious hip-hop, his independent online research (youtube videos), conversations with friends from diverse backgrounds, and formal lessons at school as influences on these views, providing small insights 'that you don't process very well', which he felt trips have helped catalyse into a larger political conscience. Although at the moment though the trips 'succeed in keeping apart places with common problems and shared interests' (Katz, 2001b: 722), rather than building solidaristic oppositional politics, Anthony's reflections highlight the potential for volunteer tourism to be conducted differently. He asserts that working-class young people 'crave' understanding about injustice:

People who don't come from such a wealthy background aren't expected... to know anything about politics and stuff. But a lot of them do – they crave that information, they want to know why things are a bit unjust.

(Anthony, Roehampton)

This section has highlighted there are many fractures to the dominant 'lessons' of the trips. Young people express visceral pain at witnessing material poverty, and at moments allow themselves anxious ambivalence about whether they have 'helped'. There is a strong dissonance between the individualised social mobility that volunteer tourism supposedly supports and the reality of actually enacting this (Brown, 2013). Instead, non-elite young subject's volunteer tourism experiences fed a hunger for meaningful work, and highlighted classed prejudice and feeling 'trapped' on the bottom rungs of a capitalist labour market. Only a few explicit political reflections sprung up into the fractures. The final section of this chapter turns to explain why the transformational narratives around the trips prevail.

7.4. Alternative Readings of ‘Success’

7.4.1. The Trip as ‘Proof’ of Worth and Agency

It was... like – [pause] – proof of that there’s things I can do, that I wouldn’t normally do. Proof of – that there’s more out there in the world, and – as I saw out there... proof that I’m not the only one that suffers. So it definitely – gave me realisation that... [one,] I’m not alone, two, my life does have meaning.

(Sam, Roehampton)

There is more to be explored in the value young people overwhelmingly associated with volunteer tourism. For many young people, trips were part of a story of ‘positive change’, but in more complex ways than spectacular narratives of reform, gratitude and motivation suggest. Rather, young people gain a sense of self worth through participating in trips, the encounters they have abroad profoundly touch them, and narrating their experiences provide opportunities to mobilise ‘cultural capital’ beyond pure ‘adjustment’ to dominant classed hierarchies of capital.

Going on the trips gave young people a sense of worth, in their own eyes and those of others. Sam’s words, above, illustrate the affective depth of young people’s feelings that the trips were ‘proof’ of their value, agency and of the possible futures and selves available to them. Simply having the chance to engage in global travel held for many young people an emotional stamp of possibility ‘...that things can be done’ (Anthony, Roehampton). The sense of possibility was also linked to being valued by wider society as subjects who have something to contribute. Rather than the young people expressing that trips transformed them from ‘bad’ to ‘good’ subjects, they celebrated the trips as ‘proof’ of their pre-existing worth, virtue and abilities in the face of classed and racialised (as intersecting with gendered) prejudice:

I’ve always have kind of thought I am quite responsible, and have like, initiative [...] it’s like – proof of it.

(Jamie, Hackney)

As mixed race growing up in Roehampton [...] I'll go for a job and stuff, and people will soon change their demeanour towards you when you start talking about things like this...

(Anthony, Roehampton)

People are very judgemental towards young men... like we're all hood rats, and we're all gang bangers [...] The way I look at it, we proved loads of people wrong. [...] we're not hood rats. We're not on the streets... We're doing positive things in the community. We're getting kids into activities, we're going Africa, raising money.

(Danny, Camden – Zambia)

As well as gaining external markers of 'cultural capital', young people also spoke of an affective sense of exceeding expectations of themselves they had internalised, as Didi (Hackney) put it, 'I was a bit – amazed by myself...'. The politics of classed prejudice or social mobility do not play out on discursive levels, but are viscerally experienced (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Young people's memories of the trips contained an affective sense of expanded confidence and worth that altered young people's feelings about their very subjectivities. Diana's words, below, are an affirmative exhortation to herself, an inner reassurance to herself of her strength and agency. This could be read as governmentality, the subject working upon herself towards becoming aspirational, but is also clearly a deeply felt sustaining confidence in everyday life. Lisa (Roehampton) talks about the trip as giving her a tangible feeling of counteracting denigrating visions of herself as defined by classed 'lack'. Memories become material towards 'seeing herself' as virtuous against the internalised judgements of worth based on capital accumulation:

It's just like – 'you can do it'. [...] because I always thought 'oh I could never do that'... and then I done it... it's like, 'ah, OK'.

(Diana, Hackney)

It makes you look at yourself in a different light, like I'm – not a bad person... I've done good as well. Yeah – makes you feel better in yourself

[...] older people especially, like, upper class people – can look down on you
[...] yeah, I don't earn a lot of money, but I've been to Africa, and I've
helped people...

(Lisa, Roehampton)

Collective pleasures and efforts were core to gains of confidence. Young people overwhelmingly gave long, warm accounts of camaraderie, 'becoming family' and 'teamwork' - intimacy as the stuff from which the 'boost' of the trips emerged. The sense of agency young people gain is 'deeply social' (Jeffrey, 2012), as Danny (Camden – Zambia) summarised: 'the positive is just *We* did this. *We* achieved this' (emphasis added).

These are not 'delusions' of aspirational agency but feelings of inherent worth. Sam (Roehampton) talked about a 'spiritual' moment as he sat outdoors in South Africa and reflected on the very real struggles he had faced - time in prison, depression, and broken family and romantic relationships. He recounted feeling deep gratitude 'to still be able to be alive, to not be – in a dark place' and a hope, as he said 'I was crying but smiling – and [...] I just kept saying 'thank you' ... thank you for the future...'. Accounts like these - of the trips as giving young people a therapeutic sense of hope for existence, and a feeling of taking hold of the future as a hopeful object - makes an analysis of young people's positive feelings around the trips as entirely the outflow of forces of governmentality feel cynical, even violent.

Central to young people's feelings of self-actualisation and achievement is the idea of 'being charitable'. Though this thesis has presented a strong critique of this dynamic, in the encounters of charity volunteers are profoundly 'touched', in part, by feeling valued against a backdrop of disenfranchisement and prejudice. Danny (Camden - Zambia) explained being moved to tears by children as feeling 'appreciated', saying: 'I started crying. [I felt] Just can't deal with this, they appreciate you so much.' Nathaniel (Hackney) talked fondly about being called 'Baboon' by children we met in the informal settlement. When I asked him to elaborate, the earnestness of his answer surprised me, as he said it made him feel:

... like I meant something to them. [...] they still KNEW me... like, even if I

was just something to laugh at, that's still a significant... thing [...] If they do think back, like – that I was a 'baboon' – they'd be like, ah, they're the people that came to help us, and we played, had fun with them.

(Nathaniel, Hackney)

Nathaniel was moved by the children's joking relationships as a source of recognition - and even though he does mention 'helping', the overarching picture is more one of simply recognition of his existential significance, and of leaving a memory through 'playing' and 'having fun' (Katz, 2011). These non-instrumental connections with those in the destination context are explored in more depth in the next section.

7.4.2. Beyond Pity: Affective Excess and Relationships of Mutuality

'The smiles...the laughter... [...] I dunno, it was - *something different*, you know.' (Richie, Hackney, emphasis added). There is something ineffably powerful about the relationships made in voluntary work. Young people talked of the power of connecting to people through facial gestures, physical touch, and in particular the 'expressive bodily excess' (Jones, 2013) of small children. They mused repeatedly in interviews on 'the good vibe', the 'energy', they felt from children 'jumping on me', 'chasing me', 'hugging me'. Accounts of elemental relational connection were entangled with sentimentalised representations of charitable care. For instance, compare youth worker Isaac's words with those of Dave, below. They both highlight affective, embodied encounters with children as powerful. Isaac conceives of these encounters as a central piece in the 'equation' of volunteer tourism. Dave's words are on the surface clichéd, yet he signals that his hyperbole stems from the sense of an excessive affect to his memories, and the inability to translate this fully into language:

That phrase... 'instilling self worth in people' ... I just didn't really know what it looked like. ... It's this really simple equation of – taking... guys from Roehampton... painting an African orphan's room ... suddenly they've got

10 African orphans in their arms, kissing them, saying they love them, and like, these guys [...] go – holy shit... these kids are really happy... I did something...

(Isaac, Volunteer Youth Worker)

... they grab you, and they pull you in... and you feel like, you- you just love them, like. [...] The kids up there are amazing, like. They're all special, in a different way. Like, they all grab you, and embrace you, and you feel one of them... [...] you show your soft side on the last day when you have to leave – cos – I don't even know what to say [sigh]...

(Dave, Roehampton)

That authentically felt connections were mixed in with problematic discourses can be further illustrated in Dave's account of his relationship with a particular girl, Ann. He talked about how much 'her story' had moved him, and sentimentally recounted giving her tokens of affection, saying 'I gave her a Jesus cross neck chain thing [...] in Kenya somewhere, she'll be wearing it, hopefully, to remind her of myself'. This can be read as a realisation of his own significance through his caring, charitable role for a child he perceives as needy. However, the strength of Dave's feelings for Ann cannot be fully reduced to the argument that 'poor African children' are just a 'backdrop' to his self-actualisation. His appreciation for her highlights that sentimental visions of global aid, although politically problematic, also contain utopian imaginings of collectivity based on intimate, non-economic relations (Rabbitts, 2012; Lousley, 2014). He said:

One day, fingers crossed, I would actually like to meet her mum. And I'd like to say – tell her mum what an amazing child she's had there, in the welcome she gave myself... just looking at her... she'll smile, and you'll smile - like, no matter what all your problems - all your problems seem to go away...

(Dave, Roehampton)

Dave's words that 'she'll smile, and you'll smile' highlight an intersubjective transference of affect. By this I mean that young people talked about the laughter,

smiles and singing of others' as making them happy, and about feeling 'uplifted' by the 'energy' of those they encountered. These accounts exceed visions of the 'poor but happy'. Sam (Roehampton), spoke of South African children's smiles as giving him hope, without seeing this as evidence of their 'natural' happiness, or claiming understanding of their lives, saying 'I don't know what they've been through – yet – they'll still be able to smile'. In the words of his which opened section 7.4., he spoke of his trip as making him see 'I'm not the only one who suffers'. His feeling of being moved by children's smiles can thus be understood as giving him a sense of the possibility of happiness amid painful struggles. The 'rich intersubjectivities' of affective connections between volunteers and those they meet thus contain a potential solidarity. Though these connections are momentary, they leave an - often intense - trace in the body: 'sticky' affects remain with volunteers long after they return home (Griffiths, 2014; 2015).

Young people also presented explicit emphases on mutuality rather than charity. The Kingsfield group used ideals of religious unity to express ideals of mutuality: 'we wanted to serve them, but they wanted to serve us as well' (Sarah, Hackney). Payton (Roehampton) talked in mutual terms about the partnerships of voluntary labour, saying 'after school they used to come and give us a helping hand [...] everyone was kinda working as one big family, one big team'. Furthermore, volunteers often narrated the 'bonds' they formed in the destination contexts using the label 'friendship'. I am cautious of straightforwardly accepting the idea of 'friendship' given the brevity of the relationships, and an understanding that this may be a one-sided volunteer projection. Yet, narrations of these connections as 'friendship' can be read as a boundary-crossing intention, investments in a 'politics of caring' which resisted pity (Bunnell et al., 2012; Wood, 2012). Nathaniel described the relationship he formed with Charles, a Zimbabwean teenager, keeping a respectful distance from the claim of deep 'friendship', but emphasising an ordinary 'getting on':

We spoke and – just got on – he was a nice kinda guy, the kinda guy who you feel like... ah, he doesn't deserve that. [...] I just got on with him. He was like, an alright guy... I couldn't call him my friend, because I didn't know him... it wouldn't be right to call him my friend. But yeah. If he was

anything he would've been a friend.

(Nathaniel, Hackney)

Young people particularly often described bonds based on humour and dialogue with those who were age peers. Their mentions of their 'rivals' in games, or having 'banter', evoked a banal sense of playful, ordinary equality to these relationships. Both Didi and Diana recounted 'hanging out' with a group of young men at a drop-in centre for homeless youth. Despite the language barrier, the similarity of the boys to their own male friends undermined their preconceptions and underpinned feelings of commonality, as evident in the 'oh!' moments their accounts share:

You just kind of – put a label on them [...] but... there was nothing wrong with them [...] it was quite funny seeing them [...] say little jokes to each other... cos the boys do that as well... I was like – oh!

(Diana, Hackney)

They were joking amongst themselves [...] they all broke out in song. [...] It was like – 'oh my gosh, they're just like the boys!' ... they're just like us – homeless or with homes. Zimbabwean or – English.

(Didi, Hackney)

Ideas of commonality were in some cases applied to places as well as individuals. The likening of 'here and there' was more pronounced in the Kingsfield group, perhaps because African diasporic links were familiar. For instance, Richie recounted feeling transported 'straight back to Zimbabwe' when hearing Christian songs he'd learned there sung back in Hackney. Marvin, below, likens the Zimbabwean informal settlement we volunteered in to the Kingsfield estate, on the basis of a positive sense of community, the visibility of children, and informal use of public space. His emphasis on familiarity and commonality is a quietly radical undermining of the representations which suffuse the trips, both of Africa as utterly different, and of low-income spaces in the UK as alienating and dangerous:

Hatcliffe... reminds me of Kingsfield a bit... there's so much little kids there. They are always running around, and they are always playing football,

like... anywhere there's space... in the park, or on the road [...] Just the, like, the hospitality of everyone, cos like... most people in Kingsfield – they are like, very welcoming, and humble, and like, happy, in general. And like – that's how they kind of were in Zimbabwe.

(Marvin, Hackney)

In summary, there is something that is genuinely powerful in the relational encounters of volunteer tourism, which are only partially driven by and incorporated into narratives of charitable pity. Affective excess testifies to elemental human connections and feelings of mutuality. For instance, Payton's explanation of his desire to return to volunteer again contains a desire to fulfil himself as someone who 'does good', taking on a charitable subjectivity, but his conclusion 'I'm willing to help' hints at openness to a less defined, less western-led agenda. Furthermore, he is concerned for the feelings of those in the destination context, to live up to the welcome he received, the 'good time' they showed him and a desire to recognise and remember them:

I have to carry on [...] going back out there, and letting them see – 'ah yeah, *he* came last time, ah, *he remembers us*, he wants to do this for us, to do good for us' [...] they could be thinking- 'ah, maybe we didn't welcome them enough' [...] I want to go back to show to them, 'what you showed me was a good time and I'm willing to help'.

(Payton, Roehampton)

7.4.3. Changed Lives: Self-Made Facades and Supportive Foundations

Why do the hyperbolic claims of volunteer tourism as 'life changing' persist? This conundrum can be illustrated through the example of Naz, one of Springboard's 'success stories'. Naz ostensibly believes that a trip to Kenya was the turning point in catalysing his change from drug dealer to 'self-made' young entrepreneur. The story is actually one of collective, long-term achievement. Springboard's inclusive ethos gave him access to the trip, and on the trip, he recounted central to his desire to 'change' were reflections on caring relationships - his parents' migration histories

from Pakistan and considering his own legacy as a father. After return from Kenya, he was convicted, but in court, letters from Springboard got his sentence reduced, and in prison his girlfriend and mother of his son stayed dedicated to him. In open prison, through Springboard he ended up being ‘mentored’ by a businessman, who encouraged him to pursue higher education, helped him apply and gave him financial support to do so. The networks he made on the course have helped him build a livelihood as a ‘life coach’ and writing bespoke raps for private and commercial clients. The trip was clearly a moment that prompted reflection, but the story of it as the primary catalyst for his transformation is clearly a fallacy when we look at the extraordinary levels of trust and support he received over many years. Why does he continue to narrate it that way?

Naz’s rehearsal of the ‘transformative script’ is arguably a performative ‘materialisation of narrative capital’ (Noy, 2004) across different classed spheres. His story draws power from *both* seeming to adopt ‘reform’ towards middle-class norms of charitable virtue, *and* being presented in a way that retains value in non-elite circles. For instance, at a mentoring evening, Naz came to give a talk to younger teenagers about the trip he’d recently been on to South Africa, where the group had returned dubbing themselves ‘worldchangers’. Talking quickly, working up his passion until it almost felt like a sermon, he declared:

Everyone needs to be down with this – there are big things happening.

Everyone’s heard of this [local gang] but fuck them, you get me?

Worldchangers is the new gang, you get me?

(Naz, Roehampton)

In section 7.2 I underlined the ‘neo-colonial’ and ‘neoliberal’ logics to the idea of the ‘worldchangers’, but here we also see that Naz uses the idea in ways that are grounded in local specificities and systems of value. He uses the idea of becoming a charitable-aspirational subject as a ‘strategic resource: as a set of imaginaries and practices that can be used to extend opportunities or consolidate power’ (Jeffrey and McFarlane, 2008: 420; Nava, 2002). In promoting worldchangers as ‘the new gang’, Naz continues to draw on the repertoire and resources associated with his prior life in ‘illicit’ cultures as he fashions a self that also garners respect in middle-class

circles. He claims markers of 'goodness' while emphasising he can still engage in cultural capital around 'badness'. He attempts to 'rebrand' young people's strong sense of collective loyalty, honour and passion in sociality on the estate, and position himself as a tough leader. Furthermore, in narrating becoming a 'world changer' as a story of dramatic reform through a spectacular event, Naz makes his 'street life' past part of his inspirational speaking business, where, as he says, 'my own history is a resource for me'.

The narratives of self-transformation around volunteer tourism allow young people to present subjectivities 'changed' but still 'cool'. This provides 'space' to construct subject positions which combine elements of working-class pride and aspiration for social mobility. Literature on class and formal education argues that young working-class people are faced with the choice of being 'fixed in place' or rejecting their backgrounds to take on 'middle class' norms of virtue (Archer et al., 2007a). In this research, young people plugged the trips into a 'balancing act' of gaining value across spheres. For instance, Diana says she gained 'respect' from her peers for going on the trip, as it has value amid norms of toughness and authenticity (Allen and Mendick, 2013) but her experience also allows tellings of the self as redeemable and respectable which carry weight in middle-class society (Skeggs, 2004). Hybrid mobilisations of the capital of both 'badness' and 'goodness' through narrating volunteer tourism as 'life changing' are not resistance, but can be seen as a form of resourceful and resilient agency (Jeffrey, 2010).

The strategic and performative nature of young people's engagement with transformational narratives can be seen in the use of irony and humour. For instance, many joke about the trope of Springboard, trips and Gary as being 'life changing'. Dave (Roehampton) talked about 'just getting up there and milk it' when talking at an event and that everyone should wear t-shirts that should say 'if it wasn't for Gary we'd all be in prison or dead!'. Becoming a worldchanger can be read as 'working the spaces of neoliberalism', positioning oneself as the right type of subject in 'aspiration nation' where '... charisma might be the only thing that secures your future' (Lorimer, 2010: 319). The fetishisation of aspiration re-inscribes hierarchies based on having to 'pull yourself up by your bootstraps', and the

transformational narrative requires exaggerating ‘badness’ to highlight change⁷⁵, but for those who can embrace these narratives, ‘making the ‘right’ type of change within enterprise culture is itself enterprising’ (Page, 2015: 6) and feels ‘empowering’.

And yet, the potency of the trips is not *purely* strategic. A compelling way to analyse narratives of personal transformation is to understand them as a way to ‘label’ stories of gradual, well-supported ‘positive change’ that young people experience around inclusive youth work. For instance, Antony (Roehampton) talks about his first trip with Springboard as a pivot point where he started ‘thinking about what I want to represent’, amid a lot of ‘small things... less glamorous things [that were] the building blocks’. The foundational ‘small things’ in young people’s journeys became particularly clear in my interviews with the older youth (18-25) at Springboard. They all highlighted the significance of the ordinary work of the youth charity over time: the inclusivity of a space to ‘be’ and build friendships; long-term, committed supportive relationships with particular adults; and practical help into employment, training or education.

For instance, Zayn (Roehampton) spoke about how, in his teenage years, the youth charity ‘distracted’ him and his peers from petty crime and that Gary gave him paid work at an important juncture when he was facing a crisis in formal education. Similarly, Lisa (Roehampton) emphasised the communal, supportive space of a girls mentoring group and being supported after school into a lifeguard course which led to a secure job. As Kraftl (2006) found, material practices such cups of tea, learning skills, and laughter were important to young people’s sense of youth work as a space of care and hope. In the Kingsfield case many emphasised that they could talk to Emma, Angela and Terrell about ‘anything’. Anthony talked about the mix of persistent emotional support and practical help a former Springboard youth worker’s help gave him, saying:

⁷⁵ Mobilisation of ‘badness’ is also a very precarious thing to enact. Sam, whose ‘street culture’ background has led him to opportunities, for instance, in acting in an anti-gun crime film, still feels highly uneasy being associated with crime, saying ‘I don’t go telling to people that I been to prison. [...] a criminal’s a criminal...’

I'd call her depressed and say 'forget this Jane... I've had enough...' ... she'd call me back in a few hours and say like, 'I've found you 4 jobs you can apply for' ... she'd keep me positive...

(Anthony, Roehampton)

Amid these accounts of gradual and supported movements towards fulfilling lives⁷⁶, the role of the trips was one of a catalytic 'moment' which solidified and heightened a sense of a being in supportive relationships and being given opportunities. Simply being asked to participate was powerful. Dave explained that there was a volunteer tourism trip run by his school, but when he showed interest, they informally excluded him on the basis of attainment: 'they said... they don't think I was gonna get into the sixth form so it was better off that I basically, um.. didn't apply', whereas Gary encouraged him to come to Kenya.

Many expressed feelings about the trips as a 'therapeutic' space of safety, pleasure and intimacy: reminiscing about trips deepening friendships, and being away from 'a reputation to maintain' or 'too much stress' (Zayn, Roehampton). Caris emphasised the restorative aspects of mobility to new environments as 'a break from the norm'. The way that these understandings exist 'beneath' or around the dominant discourse is evident in her explanation of 'raising aspirations' of giving young people happy memories and a greater sense of self-esteem:

I say 'raising aspirations' but that's quite cliché really... I don't know whether it's that, or more.... creating memories that will – or *feelings* around those memories, that make them feel good about themselves.

(Caris, Youth Worker)

The trips' power were therefore as 'good times' embedded in long-term caring relationships. For instance, Lee talked of trips as an intensified space of vulnerable connection with Gary, a trusted adult, who listens to his 'troubles' in an egalitarian way, more like a 'mate' than an authority figure:

⁷⁶ Evidently, not just youth workers but other intimate relations and events help young people. Young people frequently mentioned parental relationships – or becoming parents themselves – as key to agentic decisions that have affected their life courses.

I'm traveling the world with [Gary], having a beer and things [...] its like he just been my mate all this time and there's no age barrier... he's not this scary figure [...] he's helped me with... numerous troubles that I've had in my life. And he didn't need to sit down and talk to me but he did. And he made situations a whole lot better and a whole lot brighter.

(Lee, Rochampton)

The trips as the outflow of caring relationships is epitomised in an anecdote told by another youth worker about Gary framing the young people he takes on trips as 'his kids'. This was not a paternalistic label, but an understanding enacted with integrity, for instance, Liam, one of the 'star cases' of a 'life transformed' by a trip, lived for several *years* with Gary and Caris due to a difficult family situation. Gary's spirited response to the funder highlights his view of the young people he takes away as inherently deserving of non-instrumental fun and play, a framing that 'refuses and reworks' 'capitalist disciplining' which sees some as deserving of idleness and others not (Katz, 2011):

[One of the business funders] was saying to Gary before the trip - why are you taking *that* bunch of kids to Africa again... a bunch who have been before? ... Gary thought about it... and on the spot just said... 'have *you* ever taken *your* kids on holiday more than once?'

(Isaac, Volunteer Youth Worker)

7.5 Conclusion: Projects and Politics of the Self

This chapter has argued that non-elite young people's accounts of the 'impact' of volunteer tourism upon them are highly revealing about their navigations of the UK's contemporary political economic context through negotiations of their subjectivities. The first section of the chapter laid out that overall, young people adopt narratives of self-transformation into charitable, aspirational subjects - a sense that the trips 'change everything'. Young people recount becoming more grateful and motivated through witnessing the material poverty of others, and engaging in

voluntary work. Their narratives of gratitude rely heavily on visions of ‘the happy poor’ in Africa. The sense of motivation they gain is enacted through the dynamics of self-discipline, and is fuelled by an interpretation of those they encounter as ideal motivated subjects. Young people’s enjoyment of the trips also speaks to hopes for future work based around fused visions of charity and enterprise, ‘capitalism with a conscience’. The dominant ways in which trips are made sense of upon return to the UK can therefore be criticised as narratives which help prepare young people to be amenable to an insecure and flexible labour market (Cremin, 2007) and sidestep a potential emphasis on the ‘shared and structural factors that produce and sustain inequality everywhere’ (Diprose 2012: 5).

The second section of the chapter explored that, despite these ebullient declarations of becoming charitable and aspirational, young people also experience the pain of facing inequalities both at home and abroad. They express feelings of incomprehension at global poverty and ambivalence about the short-term ‘helping’ work they engaged in. Their experience abroad contrasts to feelings of prejudice and blocked social mobility in the UK. These feelings can make it seem that the trips ‘change nothing’, though dissonant emotions rarely crystallise into explicit critiques. The final section of the chapter explored a more ambivalent reading of the ‘dominant discourse’. Young people mobilise cultural capital across different classed spheres as they present narratives of self-transformation. The narrative of self-transformation contains a little more space for social mobility which doesn’t involve simply ‘becoming middle class’. These embraces of narratives of change are agentive but both liberatory and conformist - a resourceful and strategic form of self-fashioning within boundaries (Jeffrey, 2010; Page, 2015). The radically inclusive nature of much youth work underpins longitudinal accounts of ‘positive change’ in young people’s lives, and we can read the trips as a ‘label’ for young people’s gains of opportunity and confidence through long-term, supportive relationships.

Across the findings of this chapter, we can see there *is* existing value and potential in the volunteer tourism trips this project researched. The affects of encounters in the global south could be reimagined towards a politics of solidarity around how young people in the UK and the destination contexts are both ‘losing out to broader systems of capitalism, neoliberalism and class privilege’ (Askins, 2009: 5). Though

the aspirational narrative problematically puts the pressure on young people to take individual responsibility for their own betterment, it is powerful because it also tells young people they are *not* determined by their backgrounds and social mobility *is* possible. This prompts us to think about the emancipatory potential of de-coupling hopes for social mobility from the burdens of individual responsibility (Brown, 2013).

8. Conclusion

P: When I'm old and have kids, I'd love to tell them the story of the first time I went to Kenya and how it *felt*. I'll *never* forget how it felt. [...] I start telling stories but then I stop... I could tell them so much detail, yeah, but they will never feel in the same way how I felt when I was there [...]

R: So what have you been telling people...?

P: I tell them - that it was hard work, and you'll be proud of yourself at the end of it. And that - you'd get attached to the kids there, and you'd want to [go] back, you'd feel at home. You'd feel like the little kids are your brothers and sisters... [...] That - they all have that *respect*. [...] over there, they don't take nuthin' for granted....

R: And is that the same thing you imagine telling your kid....?

P: I'll write a book about it. I'll read it to them to go to bed. And I'll let them keep the book, and they can read it their children.

(Payton, Roehampton)

This thesis has told a story about stories. The tales by which we feel ourselves to be certain types of people, the mythic props to our identities and aspirations, the narratives that give rise to our feelings of joy, achievement or frustration. It has been a story of characters acting out their lives in a drama – playing along to the plot lines of ‘aspiration nation’ whilst striving to inhabit a happy ending - whether celebrity-humanitarian dreams, or more modest conclusions of finding secure, fulfilling work and social respect. Stories link the personal and particular with the social and ideological. Stories are ‘both singular, ‘true’, and felt, and crafted, disciplined, and generic’ (Cameron, 2012: 574). This is evident in Payton’s account, above. His desire to ‘tell the story’ of his volunteer tourism trip to his children signals the deep personal significance of the experience for him. And yet the

multifaceted morals of his story are familiar from others' accounts across this thesis: pride at hard work, an exhortation to gratitude, an affective sense of attachment, a feeling of belonging, conviviality, and respect. The thesis has also given an account of what lies beyond narrative. Payton emphasises that his trip to Kenya was unforgettable, and the story can only ever partially capture and convey his lived and emotional experience. Affect exceeds the morals of the tale. At the same time, narrative is the best vehicle he has for carrying meaning from the experience into the future.

This thesis has approached volunteer tourism as an important site of subject formation for young people in the UK. Through the study of non-elite young people's experiences it has pushed beyond a simplistic view of volunteers simply as all-powerful, dominant elite subjects. It contributes an understanding of volunteer tourism as a practice which acts upon – with significant force - the volunteers as well as the destinations and people they visit. It also takes non-elite young people's reflections on their experience of volunteer tourism as a lens through which to examine the political-economic challenges they face, and the ways that their self-presentations attempt to negotiate these in enabling ways. Within that, it has taken a particular focus on emotion and affect as modalities of power and as means through which social identifications are fostered, solidified, or negotiated.

--- Summary of Findings ---

I briefly recount the main findings of each chapter before drawing out wider arguments that cut across the whole project. Chapter Two, as well as identifying the gaps the study fills, drew out several key points from existing literature. Particularly significant was the idea of a resonance between the dynamics of 'improvement' that are present in both volunteer tourism's overseas actions, in neoliberal ideals of volunteer self-development, and finally in efforts of 'civilising' working-class youth. The chapter argued for the importance of trying to move past dualistic understandings of both volunteer tourism – as either purely 'good' or 'bad' – and of young people – as either subject to (global scale) 'structures' or in control of their (local level) individual 'agency'. Current work on emotion and affect were seen to

offer one such way to move beyond these dualisms, and explore nuanced understandings of power and identity as fluid, yet often sedimented. The chapter provided a theoretical framework for my research, outlining my approach to studying volunteer tourism as a site at which to explore the geographies of young people's dynamic, emotional subject formations.

Chapter Three gave a reflexive account of conducting research with young volunteer tourists. This testified to the benefits of ethnographic methods and the challenges of conducting them across class boundaries, and that both of these things provide rich data on lived experience. Through conducting research with the Springboard and Kingsfield youth groups over the course of 14 months, using multiple methods at various moments in time, I generated data which met the aims of this research in multiple dimensions. Interviews with youth workers revealed how adult visions frame the trips, and pre-trip interviews with young people highlighted that young people adopt an anticipatory narrative about volunteer tourism. Post-trip interviews and participant observation with young people revealed how they contested and reworked these visions, and made their own meanings both verbally and in embodied and relational acts. These multiple sources of data allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of the emotional and embodied practice of volunteer tourism, explore questions of how discourse and affect interact, and discuss identification in a way that weaves together intersectional threads. Of course, there were limitations to what I was able to access. For instance, ethnographic research produced rich findings about masculinity, but despite the fact that young women's voices were accessed well through interviews, the dominance of young men in my cases studies and in the dynamics during trips made it more challenging to collect data and assert rigorous findings on young women's particularly gendered experiences.

Chapter Four argued that extremely strong discourses of personal transformation and self-improvement surround volunteer tourism trips even prior to the experience. In the aims and visions of trips this research engaged with, the idea of self-improvement through popular humanitarian ideals of 'saving the world' is amplified by the drives towards classed reform which are directed towards non-elite young volunteers. Confirming the insight of youth geographies that spatial

constructions are central to adult actions towards young people, the chapter found that the trips are underpinned by strong spatial imaginaries, which problematically imagine volunteer tourism as providing an escape from deviant ‘inner city’ environments, and catalysing the development of virtuous, hardworking subjectivities through engaging in helping work in spaces imagined as abjectly poor. Young people and adults adopt these visions, highlighting that they are not a coercive imposition but part of diffuse and persuasive ‘neoliberal governmentality’. Nevertheless, these prior visions do not wholly dominate young people’s anticipations of trips, and they express some contestations of the ‘dominant discourse’ and counteract deterministic visions of young subjects.

Chapter Five drew on participant observation data during volunteer tourism trips to argue that the forces of ‘emotional governmentality’ (Gagen, 2013) work through volunteer tourism. Affective intensities and emotional expressions are the stuff through which the problematic politics of volunteer tourism emerge. The chapter adds to the geographies of volunteer tourism by making a close reading of the ways in which western privilege – both in terms of relations of charitable ‘helping responsibility’ and entitled irresponsibility – can be seen to be created and maintained through embodied practice and emotional dynamics. However, a focus on emotion and embodiment also shows that these dynamics intersect with particular identifications – western privilege is simultaneously strengthened alongside relations of gendered and religiosity. For example, embodied manual labour voluntary work helps surface ‘responsible helping’ identities that reinforce both western privilege and classed masculinities. The affects of gratitude and motivation, fostered by the embodied acts of volunteering, not only encourage charitable subjectivities but also fit in with the pressures of a ‘politics of aspiration’ (Brown, 2011) that face the volunteers given their classed position. The findings of this chapter developed a reading of ‘visceral’ politics as playing out through emotion and affect.

Chapter Six continued the ethnographic account of the emotional and affective dynamics of the trips but highlighted those that cut *against* the grain of the ‘expected story’ that previous chapters had established - of volunteer tourism wholly fuelling western privilege and the reform of working-class young people. Young people

resisted lessons of reform on the trips through investments in friendships within the volunteering team, and emphasised desires for fun, equality and mutual support rather than individual self-transformation. Some of them struggled with stepping into idealised charitable roles given their precarious positions in regard to the racialised imaginaries of volunteer tourism. Young people also agentively resisted charitable pity through enacting and narrating different relationships with the destination context. They asserted ‘African pride’ and connected through transnational religion and classed and gendered affective vocabularies. This chapter argued that affect exceeds governmentality (Griffith, 2014), and presents findings of young people’s agency and resistance as ambivalent, temporally situated and deeply social (Jeffrey, 2010).

Chapter Seven explained how young people’s post-trip narrations of volunteer tourism – and its impact on them and on their identities – reveal much about their social navigations. It argues that young people strongly adopt a discourse of volunteer tourism as having transformed them into more charitable and aspirational subjects. In part, therefore, young people adopt the anticipated lessons of the trips which strengthen sentimental paternalistic imaginaries of the global south and uphold the pressures on young people to take individual responsibility for their social mobility. On the other hand, young people also expressed frustrations as they compared their experiences of respected welcome and meaningful work abroad with everyday disenfranchisement in the UK. This is an implicit, rather than explicit critique of the politics of aspiration. The chapter argued that young people adopt the transformational narrative as a way to label what *is* meaningful to them about volunteer tourism as an experience of self-worth and relational intimacy, and as a way to claim respect across classed spheres. The chapter reveals that young people’s identity work is a powerful, conflicted forum for negotiations of the politic-economic context.

--- *Theoretical Contributions* ---

Through these findings this thesis has made both empirical and theoretical contributions. Empirically, the findings outlined above contribute knowledge on the

experiences of a more diverse group of young people to the study of volunteer tourism, and the thesis gives an ethnographic, affective and emotional account of volunteer tourism. Examining volunteer tourism in practice shatters the idea of an archetypal, wholly dominant elite volunteer. It also does not support idealised imaginings of the natural emancipatory power of working-class volunteer tourism (McGehee, 2012), but instead highlights the messy, contradictory nature of volunteer tourism in practice (Baillie Smith et. al, 2013). The volunteer tourism trips in this study had particular framings, and were experienced, embraced and resisted in particular ways by non-elite young subjects in ways profoundly shaped by their social position. There are several theoretical implications to these findings.

Firstly, the research brings ideas of 'neoliberal governmentality' into conversation with feminist theorisations of emotion as medium of (both oppressive and liberatory) power (Ahmed, 2004b). Close readings of volunteer tourism both support and complicate Foucauldian concepts of governmentality. Volunteer tourism clearly encourages self-government via self-actualisation. However, we see that young subjects are prompted to adjust themselves towards being grateful, charitable, responsible and aspirational subjects through emotion and affect. It is not merely discourse or cognitive dynamics which enact governmentality, but the framing of somatic responses and the management of emotional expressions. This extends and broadens Elizabeth Gagen's (2013) analysis of 'emotional governmentality' in British educational settings. The analysis supports feminist accounts of the intimate and the sentimental as closely implicated in constituting dominant ideologies (Mostafanezhad, 2013b). It extends theorisations such as Hayes-Conroy and Hayes Conroy's (2008) conceptualisation of 'the visceral' to new empirical settings to demonstrate that emotion and embodiment are both animated by representations and exceed these as they constitute identity.

Secondly, this research adds to theorisations of the way teleological imaginaries of development work in young lives. The resonances between the dynamics of 'improvement' both overseas and in youth non-elite people's lives raised fascinating questions. My analysis of this resonance develops historical analyses of the 'interpenetration' between logics of development in colonial settings and urban reform initiatives (Gagen, 2007; Stoler, 2001) in contemporary settings.

Furthermore, it shows that the dynamics of ‘developing’ young lives in both the global south and global north do not merely exist in *parallel*, but interact, as engaging in the work of improving the lives of young children in the global south can be a mechanism by which young people in the global north are, *themselves* subject to (self-)improvement. While there is no significant novelty to a study of Africa as a space for western subjects to redeem a sense of ‘being good’, there is novelty to a contemporary study which links these ‘neo-colonial’ international dynamics to the enactment of ‘civilising’ dynamics across the boundaries of class within the national context.

Thirdly, it contributes to theorisations of non-elite young people in a manner that pushes beyond spatially bounded understandings of their lives, and contributes to more nuanced reading of the interplay between structure and agency in their lives, as called for by Ansell (2009). The project has offered a concrete example of the way young working-class lives are not bounded to the spaces of the neighbourhood or estate. In demonstrating that participants were clearly embedded in popular humanitarian imaginations, it serves to remind youth scholars that they are engaged with ‘the global’ in myriad ways, even if they do not have the opportunity for transnational mobility (supporting the findings of Nayak, 2003). One way in which these politics play out is through work on the self. Furthermore, young subjects in this research simultaneously exercised great power (in the privileges which accompanied British nationality) and were subjected to powerful efforts to ‘better’ their subjectivities in ways which drew heavily on classed and racialised prejudice around working-class youth. This paradox puts at the centre of the analysis the shifting, intersectional and relational nature of power and subjectivity, rather than analyses which implicitly solidify a view of young people as either ‘victims’ of adult oppression or exercisers of unbounded agency to ‘colonise’.

Fourthly, this thesis supports the richness gained from the challenging attempts to research emotion and affect. Methodologically, it argues that emotion should be recognised as significant in shaping research methods, in relationships in the field, and in writing (Askins, 2009). This thesis has been written against the grain of ‘anaemic knowledge’ laid out and analysed by a ‘cool interpreter’ (Anderson and Smith, 2001: 9, in Baillie Smith and Jenkins, 2012: 75). This is not totally novel, but

reinforces the case for the rich potential of taking the time, attention and care to engage ethnographically, and - in writing about intersectionality and the entanglements of the emotional and material - trying to weave together what academia too often separates. Throughout the chapters, analysis highlighted that emotion and affect exist in a 'both/and' relationship to discourse in volunteers minded-bodies: ambivalent and multifarious emotions were constantly being made sense of. This suggests that future study of emotion and affect could focus more closely on how bodily actions can destabilise binding representational categories 'not just haphazardly and fluidly but instead through a much more viscous (and potentially conscious) process of slogging-through, breaking down, and reconstructing the sense-making boxes of the world' (Hayes-Conroy and Hayes-Conroy, 2010: 1280).

Finally, the research makes an applied reading of Cindi Katz's (2004, 2008, 2011) theorisations of the contradictory nature of practices of social reproduction. The trips are material time-spaces which inculcate subjectivities adjusted to reproducing the political-economic order. They encourage aspirational, self-disciplining subjects who take responsibility for their futures, and charitable subjects who do not enact oppositional politics. But at the same time they are initiatives 'suffused with other sorts of relations like love, which both supplement and exceed the social relations of production and reproduction and can rework them' (Katz, 2008: 7). For instance, connections young people make across cultural boundaries, and the long-term caring labour of the youth workers for young people cut against the grain of charity and classed discipline. Similarly, multiple and contradictory ideas of responsibility are present in volunteer tourism (Sin et al. 2015). There are problematic ideas of responsibility for global 'good work' in the lives of others. These are interwoven with the fostering of individualised responsibility, volunteering as driven by 'conditional citizenship' (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003). These ideas contribute to the erasure of inequality - through depoliticisation and dehistoricisation in the case of responsibility for others - and in acquiescing to 'neoliberal' flexible capitalism in terms of individual responsibility. However, there is also a sense of agency and respectability attached to responsibility that can have powerful effects on volunteers – and voluntary caring responsibilities also speak of desires to extend care-giving despite marginality (Fyfe and Milligan, 2003; Smith et al. 2010).

This last point about the excessive political potential of care links to wider reflections from this study. At times I have felt that my critique of the initiatives and those who facilitate them has been too forceful. The last chapter outlined that the inclusive care of youth workers was extremely powerful for young people, and I wish to underscore this point. Katharyne Mitchell (2007) argues that there remains radical currency in the idea of ‘cosmopolitan education’, even if this hope is ambivalent. Given the many structures of violence in society – education can ‘be revolutionary if conceptualized as a lived process of ongoing political and ethical action and education - one based in a feminist reimagining of an intimate, non-violent and caring social world’ (Mitchell 2007: 717). Whilst encouraging a politics of transnational solidarity is sorely lacking in the cases I studied, youth workers *are* putting deep, daily emotional and practical labour into cross-class care for excluded young people. In critiquing the trips’ politics, I also recognise that their drives to ‘help’ are bound up in a real, and admirably intense, concern about young people’s wellbeing and futures (Katz, 2008). Given young people’s highly constrained possibilities for social mobility and paths to accessing respect, the volunteer tourism trips are spaces of valued relational connection and self-worth. The challenge is how this affect could be harnessed towards more progressive results.

Although not my primary focus, the thesis does raise implications for youth work practice (see also Cheung Judge, 2015a). I ask youth workers to think about how, despite the ‘feel good’ factor and dramatic stories of transformation, the way the trips run currently often reinforces highly stereotypical ideas of ‘developing countries’, and can work in tandem with pressures on young people to try to become exceptional, aspirational individuals. However, I also celebrate the fact that young people often emphasised the significance of the long-term, committed relations of care that youth workers undertook with them. They expressed a hunger for greater understanding of global inequality and for ‘meaningful contact’ across difference, both in the UK and global settings (Valentine, 2008). Ahmed’s (2004b) idea of an ethics of emotional encounter is the metaphor of a visible scar - an acknowledgement of how past injuries have shaped, and continue to produce – the emotions in encounters across difference. A business funder articulately expresses

that the 'feel good' emotions, and sense of identity-related significance of the trips are in large part connected with the contrast to young people's lived experience in the UK:

They are treated and trusted in a completely different way than how UK society treats and trusts them. So – for – I think it gives them a good deal of hope that they are not necessarily just the person that they think they are – they could be someone else. Where I think that feeling could be – too distant to believe... in the UK.

(Paul, Business Supporter)

We might think about whether, rather than volunteer tourism as simply a chance for non-elite youth to enjoy being 'treated and trusted' well overseas, trips could be designed to engage with both the injuries – such as racism, or poor labour market opportunities - that make this experience a contrast to life in the UK, and the injuries that produce the power difference that underpin this enjoyment. They could invest efforts in the time-spaces which contain an embodied, affective politics of solidarity, and build a politics of recognition of the collective experiences of inequality and violence that traverse the global and local.

This study, like any, has limitations. In my view, the most serious of these is that, from a postcolonial perspective, this account reproduces a 'one-sided' vision of the encounter of volunteer tourism, and thus is complicit with a silence on - and silencing of - the perspectives of those in the destination context. This thesis was written from the perspective of the western volunteer tourists, and could not do justice to the autonomous perspectives of actors in the destinations, who merit their own voice on the encounters of volunteer tourism. The fact that analysis cuts across case studies which travel to Kenya and Zimbabwe risks amplifying the generalisation of destination contexts, and the homogenisation of Africa in particular. However, Mathers (2010) writes that we should not ignore 'Africa' as an ethnographic object - we must balance consistent reminders that it is not a homogenous cultural or geopolitical unit but also engage with – and deconstruct – the present and pervasive ideas of 'Africa' in the western imagination. Participant observation revealed glimpses of other stories to be told. For instance, Liam's

garage, the icon of ‘successful’ volunteering, at the time of the research was a building which appeared largely disused, for lack of business, equipment or skills: a ‘white elephant’ of a project, that was built in Nakuru, after the idea was raised by young people in a youth camp in Nairobi. The ‘girl in the black dress’ who became incorporated as a symbol of smiling, poor African childhood into the Zimbabwe group’s sentimental memories, insisted that we learn and remember her name – *Thembeke* – a demand of recognition of personal specificity. Future work needs to tell such stories.

There are subtle representational limitations. Postcolonial theorist David Scott (2004) insists that the way we tell stories about the world is part of how we can intervene in the postcolonial present. He highlights that writing in a ‘romantic’ vein of ‘an assured momentum from a wounded past to a future of salvation’ (Scott, 2004: 210) does not open up new pathways and is evidence of the way that we remain ‘conscripts’ of colonial ‘enlightenment’ and ‘modernity’. He argues that to grapple better with the continuing violences of colonial histories we must try to write of the relationship between the past, present and future as ‘a broken series of paradoxes and reversals in which human action is ever open to unaccountable contingencies’ (Scott 2004: 13). Although this thesis has attempted to highlight paradoxes and contingencies, and counteract dualisms, it remains challenging to work against too-coherent narratives, and to escape dualisms. The very structure of the thesis – before, during, after – reproduces thinking through a linear and temporal narrative, even as within the chapters I question the future-oriented teleology, the relentless push forward, in the way that volunteer tourism is engaged in shaping young people as ‘becomings’. My account also focusses on the spectacular events, and I write of structures, of individual subjects, and of ‘them’ and ‘us’ in normative ways. Whether this reifies some of the issues I seek to disrupt remains open to the readers’ judgement.

Methodologically, I have wondered at various points whether the research could have been more participatory. I cannot claim that this project was really driven by young people’s own questions, nor was my analysis checked and co-produced by dialogue with my participants. However, as discussed in Chapter Three, actualising ‘deep’ participatory methods was limited both by the PhD itself, where time

constraints and a push to create a ‘critical text’ squeeze out space to invest in producing oppositional knowledge through activist research (Ansell, 2001), but *also* the interest of my particular research participants themselves in investing that deeply in the research process. This supports findings that participatory methods can be understood by young people as a burden unless engaged with care, investment and time (Gallagher, 2008; Holland et al., 2010), and also pertains to questions facing the academy around the intensification of pressure to prioritise writing publications for within the academy. On the other hand, young people’s experiences are at the centre of the thesis, and a core methodological contribution is to show that engaging with research participants at several points through time can provide rich findings which contextualise an ‘extraordinary’ experience in its constitutive discourses, and make visible the fractures in powerful discourses.

The study opens up questions for future study. The most intriguing of these, to my mind, is to expand work on the geographies of other non-elite youth transnationalisms which are less embedded in neo-colonial relations. For instance, a phenomenon I was made aware of during this research was that of second-generation migrant youth being sent ‘home’ to their parents’ countries of origin for disciplinary purposes. This had happened to Desmond, sent temporarily to Ghana to reform from ‘gang’ involvement, and Kingsley, the Zimbabwean young man who we met, who had been permanently returned to Zimbabwe for his education after getting in trouble with the police in London in his early teens. In Zimbabwe, awaiting his GCSE results, Peter wailed at one point ‘Agh, if I fail Maths I’ll get deported to boarding school in Nigeria!’. In the Roehampton group, similar stories were familiar. One day, Dylan from a white working-class family background, commented that he wanted to go to the Ivory Coast, because ‘our friend just got shipped’ there by his mum.

As these anecdotes indicate, as both an imagined and real practice, second-generation ‘disciplinary return’ offers a vivid site at which to examine non-elite youth transnationalism. There is some work on transnational parenting (Bledsoe and Sow, 2011; Carling et al., 2012; Kufakurinani et al., 2014), and second-generation return (Potter, 2005) but none that examines this specific phenomenon from a youth-centric perspective. A post-doctoral project on this could take a more

explicitly intergenerational perspective, which has been called for in youth geographies (Hopkins and Pain, 2007). This practice contains resonant – but very different - versions of the imaginings between transnational mobility and reform for ‘urban youth’. The global south is a space to gain virtue, but not through being a needy backdrop, but rather as a diasporic homeland. It raises questions about choice, constraint and multiple identifications. Such a project would offer the chance to further develop the rich explorations of this thesis into transnational mobility, young people’s social identifications, and the hierarchies of class.

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Appendix 1 – Participants – ‘Cast of Characters’

Here I list and give brief description of each participant. I list them by sub-group by in alphabetical order within those groups for ease of reference. Age given is at time of first research contact. All descriptions based on knowledge gathered at the time of research.

Springboard – Roehampton to Kenya Feb 2013 Trip

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Description	Participation
Dave	Male	16	Involved with Springboard through a football club. Gregarious, white working-class lad. ‘Born and bred football’, not keen on school. Very enthusiastic participant. Had been on a trip to Kenya the year before.	Participant observation, Kenya trip; Pre-trip and Post-trip interviews; Pre-trip focus group; Pilot research interview paired with Desmond (see below, ‘older youth’); Guided ‘tour’ of estate.
Dylan	Male	16	Involved with Springboard through a football club. White working-class with Irish and Scottish origins. Suspended from school many times.	Participant observation, Kenya trip; Pre-trip interview; Pre-trip focus group.
Jay	Male	16	Involved with Springboard through a football club. Mixed race Indian and white parentage. Quiet member of the friendship group.	Participant observation, Kenya trip; Pre-trip interview; Pre-trip focus group.
Kai	Male	16	Involved with Springboard through a football club. Mixed race Caribbean and white parentage. Also quieter.	Participant observation, Kenya trip; Pre-trip and Post-trip interviews.
Kofi	Male	16	Involved with Springboard through a football club. Caribbean parentage. An excellent footballer. Very quiet around adults but a ‘leader’ among peers. Had been on a trip to Kenya the year before.	Participant observation, Kenya trip; Pre-trip interview; Pre-trip focus group.
Matt	Male	16	Involved with Springboard through a football club. A friend of Dave’s. White. Distanced himself from the rest of the group.	Participant observation, Kenya trip; Pre-trip interview.
Payton	Male	16	Involved with Springboard through a football club. Chatty, fiery and jokey. Jamaican parentage, from a large and well-known family on the estate.	Participant observation, Kenya trip; Pre-trip and Post-trip interviews; Pre-trip focus group.
Henry	Male	21	Came on the trip with Ade, a youth worker from Hackney that Springboard were building a relationship with. Jamaican parentage. Involved in the illegal economy. Had been on a trip several years ago.	Participant observation, Kenya trip.
Hasan	Male	20	Came on the trip with Ade, a youth worker from Hackney that Springboard were building a	Participant observation, Kenya trip.

			relationship with. Jamaican parentage. Involved in the illegal economy.	
Frank	Male	20	Came on the trip with Adam, a youth worker from Leatherhead in Springboard's networks. White, quiet and mature.	Participant observation, Kenya trip; Post-trip interview.
Jordan	Male	18	Came on the trip with Adam, a youth worker from Leatherhead in Springboard's networks. White, apprentice mechanic.	Participant observation, Kenya trip; Post-trip interview.

Other young people also on the Kenya trip were B and R, two Romanian girls, the daughters of Springboard's partner project in Romania who Gary had invited as a gesture of thanks to the family and in a characteristic spirit of experimentation. And Liam, who went on almost every Springboard trip, following the first one where his response had catalysed them as a regular part of the charity's work.

Kingsfield – Hackney to Zimbabwe August 2013 Trip

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Description	Participation
Benny	Male	16	Involved with Kingsfield church since childhood. Second generation Ghanaian. Quiet but a leader among masculine peer group within wider group.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Paired pre-trip interview; Paired post-trip interview.
Chris	Male	17	Involved with Kingsfield church since childhood. From a prominent middle-class family in the church, lived off the estate but very locally.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Pre-trip interview; Post-trip interview.
Danielle	Female	16	Involved with Kingsfield church since childhood. Mixed race Nigerian and white working class parentage.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Post-trip interview.
Diana	Female	14	Recently involved with Kingsfield church. Of Nigerian and Guinean parentage. Feisty and intelligent.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Pre-trip interview; Post-trip interview.
Didi	Female	17	Involved with Kingsfield since childhood. Of Nigerian and parentage. Sweet and kooky.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Pre-trip interview; Post-trip interview.
Jacob	Male	16	Involved with Kingsfield since childhood. White. Lived off the estate but locally. Diligent.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Pre-trip interview; Post-trip interview.
Jamie	Male	15	Involved with Kingsfield church since childhood. Chris' younger brother. From a prominent middle-class family in the church, lived off the estate but very locally.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Pre-trip interview; Post-trip interview.
Maria	Female	16	Involved with Kingsfield since childhood. Of Ecuadorean parentage. Quiet and sweet.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Pre-trip interview; Post-trip interview.

Marley	Male	16	Recently involved with Kingsfield church. Of Caribbean parentage. Joker of the group.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Paired pre-trip interview; Paired post-trip interview.
Marvin	Male	16	Recently involved with Kingsfield church. Of Nigerian parentage. Quiet and reserved, a talented basketball player.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Pre-trip interview; Post-trip interview.
Nadia	Female	17	Involved with Kingsfield church since childhood. From a prominent family in the church – Terrell’s daughter. Of white and Caribbean parentage. Shy and sweet.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Paired pre-trip interview; Post-trip interview.
Nathaniel	Male	15	Recently involved with Kingsfield church. Jacob’s friend. Of Pakistani and white parentage. Affable stoner.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Pre-trip interview; Post-trip interview.
Peter	Male	15	Involved with Kingsfield church for several years. Of Nigerian parentage. Passionate about his faith and a talented drummer.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Pre-trip interview; Post-trip interview.
Phillip	Male	16	Recently involved with Kingsfield church. Diana’s older brother. Of Nigerian and Guinean parentage. Quiet and had been excluded from school for fights.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip.
Richie	Male	16	Recently involved with Kingsfield church. Of Jamaican parentage. Enthusiastic, gregarious, extremely talkative charmer.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Pre-trip interview; Post-trip interview.
Sarah	Female	17	Involved with Kingsfield church though had lived in Tanzania for a stint. From a white middle class family.	Participant observation, Zimbabwe trip; Paired pre-trip interview; Post-trip interview.

Zambia Trip – 2012

I interviewed two young people who had been part of a trip to Zambia in late 2012 – run in a collaboration between several groups: participants were a group of young men from a Camden youth charity, and group of young women from a Hackney youth charity, overseas work was facilitated by a sports development charity, and a London-wide youth umbrella organisation provided supported for the wider programme of training and preparation around the trip.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Description	Participation
Danny	Male	19	Involved with the Camden youth charity for several years. Of white British and Portuguese heritage. Expressive and friendly.	Post-trip interview
Denise	Female	17	Involved with the Hackney youth charity for several years, and had been on a prior trip with them to South Africa. Of Nigerian heritage. Academically high achiever, articulate, expressive and sensitive.	Post-trip interview

‘Older Youth’ at Springboard

Many of this group of interviewees had been involved with Springboard since their childhoods or early teens when the charity was new, part of the ‘first generation’ of young people living on the estate who have ‘grown up’ with Springboard. Most of them have been involved in many groups – such as football or dance clubs and mentoring groups, and have gone on several trips over the years, including both UK-based outdoor residential trips and long haul trips to Romania, Kenya, Zambia and South Africa. I indicate in details of each persons’ involvement in ‘description’ below.

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Description	Participation
Anthony	Male	Early 20s	Involved with Springboard since his early teens, part of the ‘first generation’. Lives on the estate but moved out of family home to a flat with housemates from Roehampton university. Gone on several trips over the years, including to Kenya, Zambia and Romania. Of white and Jamaican parentage. Works a few sessions of youth work with Springboard as well as other jobs. Kind, serious, at times with a slightly defensive reserve, steady with young people, intelligent, enjoys talking about social issues.	Interview (split over two dates)
Desmond	Male	17	Involved in Springboard as volunteer youth worker / young mentor as part of his youth work training course in college. From Croyden. Of Ghanaian parentage. Enthusiastic former ‘gang member’ turned born-again Christian after a stint in Ghana, with ambitions to be a Christian rapper and global evangelist. Has been on trips to Kenya, Romania, and the South African trip that occurred during my research.	Interview; Pilot research paired interview with Dave (see above)
Lee	Male	Early 20s	Involved with Springboard since his early teens, part of the ‘first generation’. Lives on estate with family still. Gone on several trips over the years, including to Kenya, Romania and the South African trip that occurred during my research. Of white and white/Jamaican parentage. Friendly, chatty, with a groomed masculine personal appearance. Works in a gym and loves sport. Volunteer ‘young mentor’ with Springboard.	Interview
Lisa	Female	20	Involved with Springboard since her late childhood, part of the ‘first generation’. Lives on estate with family still. Gone on several trips over the years including two to Kenya and the South African trip that occurred during my research. White British. Chatty, friendly, funny and expressive. From a tight-knit family. Works as a lifeguard. Likes a good time, but has a sensible head is focussed on keeping above and out of estate ‘trouble’.	Interview

Naz	Male	Early 20s	Been involved with Springboard for several years, through being friends with some of the 'first generation'. Grew up on adjacent estate and by late teens had become one of area's leading drug dealers (Class A). Initial involvement motivated by desire for better character reference in court case. Gone on several trips over the years: two to Kenya, to Romania, and the South African trip that occurred during the course of my research. Of Pakistani parentage. Now lives off estate with partner and child. Confident bordering on brash, extremely talkative, friendly, enterprising and sharp.	Interview
Ryan	Male	Early 20s	On the outer edge of the 'first generation' group. Lives on estate. Went on the South African trip that occurred during my research, his first international one with Springboard. Of white and Caribbean parentage. Works as an electrician (still part way to gaining full qualifications). Serious, somewhat reserved, but open and frank with his opinions when he gets talking.	Interview
Sam	Male	Early 20s	Involved with Springboard for a few years – first through being mentored by a previous youth worker, and then when Gary visited him in prison where he served a year for participation in the August 2011 riots, and encouraged him and gave him support since release. Went on the South African trip that occurred during my research, his first international one with Springboard. White with a Spanish mother. Talkative, sensitive and expressive, a tough life history which he shares freely with some rawness.	Interview
Sinead	Female	18	Involved with Springboard since her late childhood, part of the 'first generation'. Lives on estate with family still. Gone on several trips over the years including to Kenya and the South African trip that occurred during my research. White with Irish heritage, from a tight-knit family. Sweet, expressive and with ambitions to achieve good results in college and to go to university in Ireland.	Interview
Zayn	Male	Early 20s	Involved with Springboard since his early teens, part of the 'first generation'. Lives on estate with family still. Gone on several trips over the years, including to Kenya and the South African trip that occurred during my research. Of Turkish, Kurdish, Lebanese and Palestinian heritage. Quiet, gentle, reflective and highly creative.	Interview

Adult Interviewees

Here I list adult interviewees divided by case, and/or research stage.

Name	Gender	Role and Organisation	Description	Participation
Angela	Female	Volunteer Youth Worker, Kingsfield Church	A congregant of Kingsfield asked to be involved in trip due to her relational skills with young people. Professional experience with young offenders. Of Nigerian and Jamaican parentage. Warm, gregarious, expressive and maternal.	Post-trip interview
Emma	Female	Youth Worker, Kingsfield Church	Employed as the youth worker at Kingfield church for 2 years prior to the trip. Professionally trained as youth worker. White, middle-class. Warm, extremely dedicated and well-loved as a youth worker.	Pre-trip interview
Terrell	Male	Volunteer Youth Worker, Kingsfield Church	A congregant and leader of Kingsfield asked to be involved in trip due to relational skills with the young men in the group in particular. Of white and Jamaican parentage. Tall and deep-voiced, with a natural authority as well as friendly, funny and caring.	Post-trip interview
Ade	Male	Youth Worker, independent and Springboard	Had done youth work for several years with faith-based charity in Springboard's networks until they went bankrupt. After this, continued informal independent youth work in Hackney alone before coming to work for Springboard for a year. Came on the Kenya trip with Henry and Hasan just prior to beginning to work for Springboard. '1.5 generation' Nigerian, straight-talking, passionate Christian, skilled at connecting with 'high risk' Afro-Caribbean young men.	Interview (prior to working at Springboard – when detached youth worker)
Caris	Female	Development Director and Youth Worker, Springboard	One of the original group who founded Springboard. Has done a lot of youth work – especially with girls – but now works mostly in Springboard offices on organisational matters such as recruitment, fundraising and strategic direction. Gary's wife and provides a wonderfully thoughtful, gentle, kind, and reflective counterpoint to his 'big dreams' enthusiasms and laddy high-jinks.	Interview
Ed	Male	Sessional Youth Worker, Springboard	Had worked with Springboard for several years, both voluntarily and in paid sessional work – running drumming workshops and driving and working on the mobile youth	Interview

			club (double-decker bus). Day job - a musician and music teacher. Had been on several trips. Thoughtful, reflective and somewhat cynical.	
Gary	Male	CEO, Founder and Youth Worker, Springboard	Leader of the original group who founded Springboard. The heart and soul of Springboard. Married to Caris. See Chapter 3 for more.	Interview (split over three dates)
Isaac	Male	Sessional Youth Worker, Springboard	Had worked with Springboard for several years both voluntarily and in paid sessional work driving and working on the mobile youth club (double-decker bus). Day job - a carpenter and model. Charming, articulate and enthusiastic. Had been on many trips: Gary embraces his energetic personality as an asset to group dynamics on trips. Came on Kenya trip in this research.	Interview
Hamish	Male	Business Supporter, Springboard	A financial advisor. Originally heard about Springboard trips through faith-based networks. Provided generous support and accompanied a few trips in past years, especially focussed on supporting Liam and his garage.	Interview
Martin	Male	Business Supporter, Springboard	Founder and CEO of global recruitment consultancy. Originally heard about Springboard via the Evening Standard. Has provided enthusiastic support, accompanied a trip, and spoken at Springboard's 'enterprise group' meetings.	Interview
Paul	Male	Business Supporter, Springboard	Founder and CEO of two successful start-up companies. Linked to Springboard via personal networks – a friend of Adam. Has provided financial support, and accompanied several trips a few years ago, where he particularly bonded with Naz.	Interview (telephone)
Stephanie	Female	Business Supporter and Volunteer, Springboard	Very active local volunteer who provides enthusiastic support, in terms of her family's finances but more significantly, in linking Springboard into networks of wealthy local residents and organising them to fundraise and volunteer in varied ways. Has accompanied a trip.	Interview
Tom	Male	Business Supporter (liaison) and Volunteer, Springboard	Young graduate working for large bank, where he was selected by the high-ranking bank staff-member (who is currently the major funder of Springboard trips) to act as his liaison with Springboard. Adores Gary's un-pious approach, and connecting with the young people. And enthusiastic contributor to Springboard's growing emphasis on	Interview

			'enterprise. Came on the trip to Kenya in this research.	
Adam	Male	Youth Worker, Leatherhead	Youth worker with faith-based youth organisation in Leatherhead that is a close member of Springboard's networks. Came on the Kenya trip with two of his youth, Frank and Jordan. Calm, reflective and kind.	Interview (split over two dates)
Matthew	Male	Sports Development Officer, Youth Organisation	Works for a London-wide youth-sector umbrella organisation focused on sports development. Key supporter of the sports volunteering trip to Zambia, especially in terms of pre-trip training. Enthusiastic.	Interview; Paired interview with Matthew
Nigel	Male	Trustee, Sports Development Organisation	Trustee and de facto head of Sports Development Organisation which facilitates sports development volunteering in 'developing countries', mostly working with school groups and gap year volunteers. Pioneer of the sports volunteering trip to Zambia, the first which explicitly aimed to recruit less privileged young volunteers. Enthusiastic, dedicated and active.	Paired interview with Nigel
Rashid	Male	Youth Worker, Camden	Youth worker with large youth charity in Camden with a focus on sports and boys mentoring. One of the leaders for the Camden group in the sports volunteering trip to Zambia.	Interview
Jenny (not quoted)	Female	Youth Worker, Oxford	Salary funded by a church to work on an estate in Oxford. Ran projects such as: a girls group and gardening project. A leader on a trip to Kenya that I went on prior to starting PhD. Kind, calm and firm.	Interview (Pilot research)
Jason	Male	Youth Worker, Oxford	Salary funded by a church to work on an estate in Oxford. Ran projects such as a sports group, drop in youth clubs and mentoring. A leader on a trip to Kenya that I went on prior to starting PhD, and had run several prior trips from the estate to Kenya. Gregarious, fun, and caring.	Interview (Pilot research)
Alan (not quoted)	Male	CEO, youth exchange /volunteering organisation, Bethnal Green	Founder and CEO of a long-standing grassroots international youth exchange /volunteering organisation which places young people from diverse backgrounds abroad for 6 weeks - 1 year. Also talked to two former volunteers present at time of interview. Interview helpful for scoping stage.	Interview (Pilot research)

Sophie (not quoted)	Female	Youth Worker, Camden	Youth worker with Camden arm of large London-wide youth charity (different to charity of Rashid, above) who had taken trips with young people from estates abroad. Interview helpful for scoping stage.	Interview (telephone) (Pilot research)
Kassie	Female	Youth Worker, Hackney	Youth worker with well-regarded small youth charity in Hackney. One of the leaders for the Hackney group in the sports volunteering trip to Zambia. Had also run a past trip to South Africa.	Interview (Pilot research)
Holly (not quoted)	Female	Former Platform2 Programme Manager	Former Programme Manager for Platform 2, a national scheme for widening participation in international volunteering. Interview helpful for scoping stage.	Interview (Pilot research)
Gavin (not quoted)	Male	Youth Involvement Coordinator, V volunteering	Specialist in youth participation and had found international voluntary exchange formative himself. Interview helpful for scoping stage.	Interview (Pilot research)

Appendix 2 – Semi-Structured Interview Themes

GENERAL OPEN ENDED INVITATIONS TO START

Tell me about the trip?

What were the best parts for you?

Which parts did you find most challenging?

What were the most memorable moments for you?

THEMES TO ENSURE WERE COVERED

Place

- Where did they go?
- What were their impressions?

People

- Who did they meet / interact with?
- What was the nature of interactions?

Team Relationships

- How were the relationships?
- Did they change / develop?

Work

- What did they undertake?
- What did they struggle with / enjoy?
- What were their understandings of what it achieved?

Leisure

- What was fun?
- Why was it significant?

Feelings

- What were the emotionally intense times?
- Understandings of the trips and spirituality?

Poverty

- What were their expectations?
- How did the trip shape their views / understandings?

Appendix 3 – Consent Form



Ruth Judge PhD Project

Interview Consent Form

Contact: If you have any questions please contact **Ruth Judge**, MPhil/PhD Candidate, Department of Geography, University College London, Gower Street, London.

+44 (0)7765 671697, r.judge.11@ucl.ac.uk or ruthjudge@gmail.com

Purpose: My study seeks to collect information about international volunteering trips which take young people from less privileged backgrounds in the UK overseas to developing countries. The study as a whole will involve interviews with key informants and young people, participant observation, focus groups and creative participatory methods (e.g. photo projects) with young people. I am happy to give you further information, and if you are interested, you can receive copies of research outputs and reports.

Procedures: Today we are conducting an interview which will last for about one hour. In the interview I'd be asking about your involvement with international volunteering trips which take young people from less privileged backgrounds in the UK overseas to developing countries - and your opinions on your experiences of these types of trips. **With your permission, I will record your interview.**

Confidentiality: I ask for your consent to use your name and organisational affiliation in our study, but you may chose to remain anonymous. Any other identifying information that is obtained during this study will be kept strictly confidential. Data from your interview will be kept in a locked filing cabinet or be computer password protected in electronic format.

Consent: Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the study at any time. **During the interview you may decline to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable.** You also have received a copy of this form for your own records. Your signature indicates that you consent to participate in this study.

Signature

Printed Name

Appendix 4 – ‘Diary Room’ Video Diaries

THE DIARY ROOM

The Diary Room is a safe space for you to talk to the camera and share your thoughts and feelings.

You can use these questions to get started.

Press record and get going!

What have you been doing today?

Which moments stood out to you?

How do you feel?

How private and confidential is the Diary Room?

The Diary Room is not totally private – Ruth will watch the videos later as part of her research.

Other than Ruth’s research, the videos are confidential – they will be transferred into a locked folder on the iPad after you’ve recorded an entry – so that other diary room participants can’t play back your video.

What you say will **NEVER** be uploaded onto youtube or put in the public sphere without your permission.

If you say anything you regret later, you can talk to Ruth and request that it be deleted from the diary room, and it will be deleted.

After the trip, we might ask your permission to use particular clips from your diary room entries (e.g. for group discussion) but this would always be shown to you first, and you would get to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

Appendix 5 – Feedback Presentation to Springboard

I gave facilitated a reflective feedback discussion with Springboard in January 2014 at the end of my fieldwork period with them. I gave a 5 minute presentation covering sections one, ‘What’s it all about again?’. and two, ‘Stuff I did’, which gave a quick overview of the research aims and the data I collected.

I then facilitated an interactive discussion around section three, ‘Things you may find interesting’, which lasted for around an hour and a half. In this, I collected quotations and thoughts on several themes which I believed would provoke valuable reflections for the charity. I introduced these as ‘holding up a mirror’ to the charity based on the words of their own staff, funders and young participants, and tried to present things in an open way, raising questions rather than stating judgements. I let the group chose the order of discussion.



The Overview Slide for the Feedback / Reflection Session (Presented with Prezi)

I felt the session went very well. Although at times I found it uncomfortable, for instance, in particular in airing my criticism on the ‘Global Justice’ theme, the staff were extremely engaged and open, asking many questions and discussing things. They were evidently interested and surprised at several points, in particular in some of their funders’ prejudicial views, in some of the questions I raised around sensationalism. Two of my ‘youth’ participants – older young people who now do some sessional work for Springboard – were also involved in the session and I found it particularly gratifying that one of them expressed vocal recognition and agreement around some of the questions I raised about the ‘comedown’ from the trips. Below, I list the themes of section 3 and paste copies of the slides. Although the points may not always be self-evident from the slides, and they do not capture the discussion, they give a flavour of some of the ways I tried to engage with implications for practice in the Springboard case.

- a) **‘Facts about past trips’:** This collated factual evidence about the history of Springboard’s overseas trips, the locations, participants, funding and activities, as well as the issue of young people going on multiple trips, which

was the subject of discussion.

16 overseas trips with young people (2005-2013)

To Kenya (9), Romania (4), Zambia and Kenya (1), Zambia (1), South Africa (1)
as well as Norway, LA, lots of UK trips....

57 young people gone on trips (excl. Romania roadtrip, other youth groups & repeats)
38 Boys, 19 Girls

Number of people going on 2 trips - 11
Number of young people going 3 trips - 7
Luke C gone on 7x trips!

Funding model has changed over time from YOF and more personal fundraising (at least £200) to business sponsors model

Key activities remained similar: construction, painting, children's camps.

- b) **'Identity shifts':** Here, I shared the overarching 'finding' from the fieldwork that the trips were understood by young people as transformative, and a forum for reinventing themselves. I shared some of the 'positive' gains of becoming more motivated and charitable and raised some caution about the wider politics of gratitude and responsibility.

a catalyst for reinvention

That- assumption, that they're a good person, kind of - transforms them. [...] they saw a glimmer of themselves in a different light. (BP)

Do I want him to know 'my daddy was a bad man on the endz'; and having that type of mentality? [...] Do I want to be that guy? ... or do I want to be the guy, where my son is like, I want to be like my dad, because my dad's awesome... he's changing the world type of thing, helping people and doing - what side of the fence do I want to be on?

You feel a bit more, like you have a purpose. Like, you see some people say - 'why am I even here?' - like - I don't really do much. But it really makes you feel like someone.... And a lot of people look at you like a somebody as well... Makes you feel really wanted. Makes you feel like a someone.

I feel more vibrant, in a way. I feel more passionate as well.

... it touched something in there – that's never been touched before in my heart...

They had joy and pride in everything they had, and I just felt – just the way they were – towards me, just the whole vibe – ah! I just loved it.

I feel like a buzz. Like I feel really buzzing, and I wanna – everywhere – I wanna sit on the bus and that and make an announcement on the bus, like 'EVERYONE! I've just come back from Africa!'

when you're there, and everyone's like, 'let's pray'... it does, something – for me, something does come over you... and gives you goosebumps... I think that's why I can't describe how these trips affect me, in such a way, because it's something so – overpowering... there's something else there. So yeah, I think there is something kinda spiritual there, whether it is God... or it is... I dunno, I guess it could be like, a spiritual love thing...

A note of caution?

Gratitude... good and bad sides?

'cast[s] disenfranchised young people as grateful, responsible UK citizens'? (Diprose 2012)

Whose responsibility?

[Here, as opposed to in Kenya...] I think that you feel pushed out, ignored, not really taken any notice of – and it is a reflection of how we live in our society, you know.

I really wanted to get out of [my current job] – but – because they give me so much free time to do this stuff for Regenerate and travel – it's... I can't... I can't leave it for another job because then I'll be confined to that job. And to be honest... I, maybe I see the trips that Regenerate gives us, as well as helping people... as a bit of an escape from my actual life. Not my whole life, because that sounds depressed, but – I mean, like – just mainly my work.

- c) **‘The Journey’:** This theme engaged with the idea of a ‘journey of transformation’ and the influences on the ‘positive change’ that youth workers care deeply about and often ascribe to the trips. It raised issues of the ‘comedown’ from trips and underscored the extremely valuable long-term, day-to-day work youthworkers do with young people.

The journey... what is transformation made of?

Before

Ownership, skills, long term relationships (TRT, FPBC)

Those small things, those less glamorous things are the building blocks, they are the foundations. And once you've got a solid base you're going to be in the right position to accept it immediately. Which is why my friendship circle... we'd been involved in Regenerate one way or another for – a good 5,6 years... We'd been on a few fundraisers before, we had a few problems with the first, initial try to get to Zambia... so we'd been through a lot of stuff to get there, and those things really help.

After...

...when you're back home you have – a reputation to maintain... or - you've got too much stress... or - you've got other things on your mind....

So I think that's important, that there's actual stuff for them to get involved in once they get back. Otherwise if you have BIG ideas and big chats about stuff, you come back, and there isn't anything to do, you get a bit disillusioned, and almost a bit embarrassed about the chats you had, because you're like, ah – that's really unrealistic. It's hard isn't it – it just needs so many man-hours of getting alongside people. (YW)

The journey... what is transformation made of?

During

PRODUCTIVITY and ACHIEVEMENT

FUN and BONDING

An intensified, accelerated relationship space
Due to long exposure, laughter, reliance on one another

And we bonded, like a massive family – everyone. And it was great – everyone was like my brother [...] I think it's just like – completely being thrown out of your comfort zone. And it's that homely kind of thing – you kind of become a family. You need each other's support when you're out there...

You stop in some horrible place on the way there and you get a horrible sandwich and everyone's laughing because it's all so new and the rest of it and that's where you start to build a bit of rapport....

I just wanted to throw my paintbrush and just say 'I don't want to do it anymore!' just say – I'm tired, I'm hungry, and I can't be bothered anymore... but you look at the girls faces and they are peeping through the windows, and they are all chatting, and like, giggling, and wanting to help – and that – that is your motivation And you're like – have to do it, have to do it, have to do it!

The day we got to Sure 24... there was no ditch - and by two days later there was a big ditch, and then three days later there was a pipes in the ditch, and four days later the pipes was covered and there was water in the school. you really feel like you've done something big.

Beyond Trips

Family... education... wake-up calls... jobs... maturing...

You don't have to be – do big and clever things, you can just invest well in one or two people, over the long haul... it's like a 5 year journey, not a 1 year journey... (BP)

I was very very enclosed in myself... until I was older. And it gradually got better. And I think Regenerate did help with that, because they include everyone...

I think for me, growing up, meeting Andy and people who didn't even know me, and yet were so genuinely interested in helping me [...] him and Clare done that – and I thank them dearly for that, because they changed a lot of people's lives.

I feel that I can tell them anything... I know they'd be like 'yeah, just come round!' ... I feel at home. [...] I guess it's like a family ... it's not a like, a bond you'd have with a teacher at school or something, it's so relaxed, and chilled out, it's a great vibe.

- d) **‘What does the \$\$ think?’:** This section fed back findings from my interviews from business funders. For obvious reasons staff were interested in this section, and seemed somewhat surprised at some of the stereotyped or self-interested perspectives funders expressed, and the issues of some of funders concerns, and how they might clash with some of Springboard's beliefs about the best way to run trips clearly provoked thought.

Motivations

Relational 'buzz'

Out of the ordinary stories

[when Ali told me his story] -I love that honesty. [...] there's something raw about that, that really appeals to me [...] it's that connectivity I think is really important.

I found it awkward. I was out of my comfort zone, definitely and I felt good about that...

You can't underestimate the fact Andy's a good laugh, he's good at selling an idea... If you go and see him you can always be sure he's going to tell you a funny story, an interesting story.

Luke's story... really kind of floated my boat ... it sounded like a blast to go and do it. It was something I'd never done before, exposing me...exposing me to, frankly put, to people I've never really mixed with.

Idea of 'double impact'

It did feel like there was multiple layers of potential value...

... one kid that might go back to prison, that that is actually worth ... the cost of having them in prison, the negative impact to society, and the income they won't be generating – like - that excites me...

Self-interest

It's like way more interesting than saying 'I help down the dog shelter' ... it makes YOU interesting at the dinner table.

... a self-interested reason I do it for the kiddies is that I am worried that one day my children might be mugged by somebody who's on crack. And that could be the person that I helped take off crack.

Concerns

More structure?

... On the downside it wasn't as well prepared as it could be, we weren't as well briefed as we could have been ... I wish we'd done more of the building ... in a way I'd idealised us working kind of eight hours a day, really pushing on and being exhausted at the end of it...

A higher 'success rate'?

...many end up falling off the radar, but one or two... end up coming all the way through... become the shining star case study which then sells on ... that's a natural course of action ... but in some ways it's very sad...

Who are we spending the money on?

Because there's multiple stakeholders, and multiple beneficiaries, it's not a very clear product, in terms of what donors are 'buying' [...]. imagine everybody's morale is low, and [Andy] wants to spend 300 quid – on [...] a slap up dinner and drinks, and like – a touch of luxury. So, if you believe that the subject of the project is in the estates – then that seems like a fairly valid thing to do, to keep the morale of the trip up, and help everybody enjoy it and build better bonds. But if you believe that the product is using the kids from the estates as a tool to enhance the international development work – then [...] it would be abhorrent to spend that money on like, beer and dinner, when it should be going to the Kenyans or the Romanians.

Multiple trips

The danger to guard against is being cliquely and the same people going all the time. And so that would be my word of caution, would be 'make sure that new people go all the time'.

- e) **‘Sensational!’:** Here I raised the issue of the fact Springboard has some extremely dramatic ‘success stories’ and that they are frequently discussed and promoted. I raised the fact this has both powerful points in terms of engaging young people other youth charities see as ‘beyond help’, inspiring young people and having marketing value, but also has dangers in incentivising ‘badness’, and fetishising trips as an isolated source of change.

Sensational Stories... powerful... and dangerous?

I talked about the work... because it's quite, um... sexy. ...you know, I've been working with this social enterprise who works with gangs ... it's just quite sensational, it's newsworthy, isn't it? [...]

But I wonder – I wonder what the cost is of focussing on the sexy stories? The cost that I'm interested in is those other kids that have less exceptional stories, and what – in reflection – not necessarily at the time, but when it's all said and done 5 years later, I wonder whether these international communities feel any sense of cost...

Powerful!

Marketing value

Inspiration for transformation

Reaching those that others find it hard to reach - no-one is 'beyond help'

Dangerous?

Could create false incentives to have a dramatic badass story?

Can distract focus and resources from less glamorous stuff that changes people...

'Over there' as the space of hope, possibility and positive identities rather than helping foster those here....

R: ... what was it like when you got back, on Monday, what did you notice?

X: It was dull. Dull, everything was dull. It was just grey. Just thinking that I was THERE, I was in the sun, helping out kids, doing something that was fun and productive, to come back here [...] I went from being a - a hardworking team guy, getting a job done for others, that- AND feeling happy, to being that selfish individual, goes to school, comes back, gets dressed, goes to youth club, and... it was like, can't be bothered.

(Young Man, 17)

- f) **'Global Justice?'**: Here I raised some challenging questions about the transnational relations Springboard's trips currently support. I drew on my background in the international development sector to raise issues around dependency, ownership, justice, and the importance of representational issues, and asks staff to consider whether their partnerships are supporting such work. I highlighted that young participants often return with stereotyped views but a hunger to understand injustice better.

'Good development' - based on justice and solidarity



International Development Good Practice

- Build capacity and don't create resource dependency (more about skills than money)
- Promotes power-sharing not 'big man' leadership
- Takes understanding needs and appropriate interventions seriously as opposed to 'anything is better than nothing' and it being a space for us to experiment
- Tries to tackle structural issues around inequality and justice – root causes of poverty not symptoms (thinking about the relational and political as well as the material)
- Doesn't reinforce understandings of 'us' as powerful helpers and 'them' as needy victims, or generalised images of Africa underpin this relationship (as tribal, poor, corrupt, 'a country', beautifully 'untouched', lacking it's own history and politics which is as complex as ours)

Questions to consider:

Is the partnership with Sure24 one that is serving 'good development'?

Are the trips helping educate young people about global justice?

Just making them feel 'lucky' or is there potential for solidarity around

the 'shared and structural factors that produce and sustain inequality everywhere' (Diprose 2007)?

'They have nothing'

'Africa is a beautiful country'

'I don't understand why'

- g) **'S.W.O.T. Ideas'**: Finally, I used the common organisational assessment tool of a 'S.W.O.T. Analysis' to present my overarching thoughts and recommendations on Springboard's trips as they then stood.

Strengths

Stepping into a helping identity is immensely powerful

Huge positive donor support networks

A core of 'first generation' success stories (mentoring investment)

Weaknesses

More embedding in long-term local work for upcoming 'new generation'?

More thinking needed on global justice, inequality and solidarity? And thus work over there?

Dependence on Regenerate as avenue for more trips?

Opportunities

Clarify selection criteria - age, stage, multiple?

Increase gender diversity

Invest in mentoring, and creating synergies between trips and long-term local work to increase the base of people most likely to respond positively to trips

Threats

Mismatches between donor expectations and reality?

The trip as 'exceptional' spaces which don't translate back into opportunity here?