“Surf-Voluntourism”

Ethical Considerations, Motives and Barriers for Students to volunteer in the Organisation “Waves for Development”.

A pragmatic multi-method Case Study

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# Abstract

While Data about the Phenomenon of “Surfvoluntourism” is rare, it will become interesting to investigate its meaning within the controversial discussion about the costs and benefits of voluntourism.

While usually been related to with positive connotations, an increasing number of negative effects caused by voluntourism in terms of its contribution to local communities has been discussed within younger academic literature.

Usually undertaken within developing nations, besides voluntourism, also the impact of surf-tourism in terms of the costs and the benefits for the host communities in developing nations is given an increasing amount of academic consideration.

The purpose of this thesis therefore is to show how surf-tourism can be integrated into the voluntourism approach in a developing nation and how a mutual beneficial experience between the volunteers and the host communities can be compromised. Based on the ethical discussion about the costs and benefits of voluntourism, its reflection within the Case of the Surfvoluntourism Organisation “Waves for Development” in Lobitos Peru is analyzed based on expert interviews with students of cross-cultural studies and the investigation of virtual documents provided by the Organization.

In order to gain a better understanding about the potential motives and barriers for students to take part in a voluntourism approach at the Organisation “WavesforDevelopment”, the interviews address former travel experiences of the students as well as their opinion towards the ethical discussion.

The phenomenon of “Surfvoluntourism” within this thesis will be elaborated through investigating its approach in terms of the costs and benefits of voluntourism on the one hand, the specific role of surfing within this discussion and potential motives and barriers for students participation in a gap-year. This is done through defining the concept of voluntourism shortly, generating an overview about the challenges within voluntourism as well as surf-tourism towards local communities and providing an overview about its implication within the concept of “Survoluntourism”. Additionally, travel motivations for students to take part in voluntourism and general adventure travel based motivations to take part in surf-tourism provide a link between the phenomenon of Surfvoluntourism and travel motivation.

Analysis shows that the voluntourism approach of “WavesforDevelopment” aims to address several issues related to a sustainable tourism development. Surfing gains importance towards its potential of linking altruistic and self-interest motives of voluntourists through providing an activity that can contribute to foster-cultural understanding.

Additionally the outcome of the five interviews confirmed a coherence between former travel and work experiences towards a potential participation in one of the Waves Programs, while the surf-component is rather seen as a barrier for students without experience in this sport.

# Introduction

*“Those* ***tourists*** *who, for various reasons,* ***volunteer*** *in an* ***organized*** *way to undertake holidays that* ***might involve*** *aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment” [Wearings, 2001, p.1]*

*“****Surf tourism*** *involves* ***people*** *travelling to either domestic locations for a period of time not exceeding 6 months, or international locations for a period of time not exceeding 12 months, who stay at least one night, and where the active participation in the sport of surfing, where the surfer relies on the power of the wave for forward momentum, is the* ***primary motivation*** *for destination selection” [Fluker, 2003, p.7 in Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003]*

With this widely spread definitions of the characterizations of the typical tourists participating in *voluntourism* (Wearings, 2001, p.1) and those participating in *surf-tourism* (Fluker, 2003, p.7 in Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003, p. 187), the statements by Wearings and Fluker have been selected to introduce a new phenomenon which is emerging around the globe, the concept of *“surf-voluntourism”.*

*“Surf-Voluntourism*”, what is that? The niche travel site “wavecation” (wavecation.com website) provides an overview of organisations that have established programs that relate to the term, even though there appear to be differences within the approaches. While for instance the organizations “sustainablesurf” and “surfingforchange” (sustainablesurf.org website; surfingforchange.com website) aim to take on environmental conservation as their main goal, other organizations are focusing on issues related to health (surfersmedicalassociation.org website; thewavesofhealth.org website ; surfingdoctors.org website) or community development through intercultural exchange (wavesfordevelopment.org website ; wavesofhope.com website).

The approaches towards surf-voluntourism therefore appear to include several different aims as it is the case in voluntourism in general (Atlas, 2008). But while a considerable amount of research has been done in the last years in order to investigate the concept of voluntourism (Woosnan and Lee, 2011 ; Wearings, 2001 ; Raymond, 2007 ; Rando, 2004 and especially the executive summary of Atlas (2008)), detailed academic consideration about the specific type of “surf-voluntourism” is lacking, because it is a rather new concept and can still be perceived as a niche market within the according to Atlas (2008, p.5) “rapidly growing volunteer tourism market”. Nevertheless journals have investigated on the approach of the Organization “WavesforDevelopment” (voluntourism.org website). As defined by Aabo and Ponting (2011, voluntourism.org website), within this paper the term surf-voluntourism will accordingly be understood as

*“A* ***niche market*** *within the broader* ***voluntourism*** *movement where travelers give back to the destination through* ***volunteering*** *and sharing their passion for and interest in* ***surfing****. As with voluntourism more generally,* ***a whole spectrum of surf-voluntourism opportunities****, from soft to hard, exist. What remains constant is, that both, Surf and Voluntourism aspects are present and complement each other.” [Aabo and Ponting in http://www.voluntourism.org/news-feature172.htm]*

Even though volunteering used to be related with positive connotations in terms of its contributions to common goods, intercultural exchange and new approaches to solve problems reflected by altruistic motives (Atlas, 2008) or what the above statement by Aabo and Ponting describes as a “give back”, an increasing number of negative effects have been part of the recent academic investigations (Andreasen & Gudmundsen, 2013). Sin (2009) for example outlines the danger of voluntourists that might be more interested in fulfilling their personal goals than contributing to the local population. While statements like “the chance to make a difference” (Horton, 2011, p.97) might be perceived as a positive signal to participate in voluntourism activities by a large number of potential volunteers, the concept should be analyzed controversially, if contribution might rather hinder the work process within the local communities (Guttentag, 2009). According to him and several other authors (Andreasen & Gudmundsen, 2013, p.30) it is therefore questionable to what extent volunteers are able to contribute to local communities if the self-interest motives for participating in voluntourism are the main motive in terms of “the desire to meet new people and have something to do”, “the hope of gaining skills or contacts that will be useful in one’s own career” or the “desire to assume power and leadership” (Atlas, 2008, p.33).

Apart from that, participating in voluntourism often becomes interesting for students for example in a gap-year (Atlas, 2008, p.44), attracting students during their semester breaks or after having finished their education or parts of it.

Not only voluntourism, but also surf-tourism is getting more popular and is a growing phenomenon that has been given increasing academic attention (Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003 ; Barbieri & Sotomayor, 2013) justified by its significant economic, social and environmental impact (Buckley, 2002 a in O´Brien & Ponting, 2013).

## 1.2 Problem formulation

Within the study of Atlas (2008), who elaborated on a detailed global analysis of the concept of voluntourism, an important aspect in terms of the involvement of the local people within the endeavors of voluntourism is missing (Atlas, 2008, p.12).

As Jones (2007 in Atlas, 2008) mentions the need to extent the examination and controversial discussion about the ethical implications of volunteering, this thesis sets out to explore the role of the rising phenomenon “surf-voluntourism” within the conflicting discussion about the costs and benefits in the field of “voluntourism” and aims to identify the motives of students to take part in surf-voluntourism in the Organisation WavesforDevelopment. The following research questions will therefore guide the thesis:

* How is the controversial ethical discussion about the costs and benefits of voluntourism in terms of altruistic and self-interests reflected within in the specific type of “surf-voluntourism” in the Organisation “WavesforDevelopment” and what is the role of surfing?
* What could be possible motives and barriers for students to take part in surf-voluntourism?

## 1.3 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis consists of 6 main parts. While addressing the most relevant investigation shortly within the introduction, section 2 provides an overview upon the choices of methodological consideration, followed by a theoretical framework in section 3. Based on the Analysis in section 4, section 5 summarizes the main findings in the Conclusion, followed by elaborations on the credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the results in chapter 6, dealing with the research quality.

## 1.4 Case Description

The organization “WavesforDevelopment” (wavesfordevelopment.org website) will be the case going to be analyzed within this thesis. Waves is a non-governmental-organisation (WIP) located in Peru and Switzerland, with the aim of bringing

*“Educational Surf and Surf Voluntourism programing to communities throughout Peru”* [wavesfordevelopment.org website]

After having launched a pilot Project in Lobitos, a “remote fishing community…being famous for its classic surfspots” (WIP) in Peru in order to investigate

*“what could work in terms of education programming for local youth and surf voluntourism programming for visiting travelers” [WIP, p.4]*

the Organisation extended their offer and implemented a range of voluntourism opportunities within the next couple of years due to the success of the first approach.

The organization has been perceived to be relevant for the underlying research question because it offers different approaches of voluntourism and Waves perceives themselves to be the founder of the term surf-voluntourism (according to the mail-contact with one of the founders) through implying surfing-activities into their concept. Based on the grounded theory approach, different Organizations which are advertising with the term “surf-voluntourim” have been investigated and Waves has been selected as appropriate due to their scale of their offered programs.

# Methodological Considerations

According to Wahyuni (2012) Methodological Considerations refer to the best possible way of conducting the research in order to improve the validity and credibility of the findings. The research questions that were presented in the previous introduction set the starting point in order to decide upon the research design.

# Research Design

The research design is the organizational backbone of the thesis covering all the necessary decisions for the framework in order to conduct a representative research. According to Wahyuni (2012), decisions for a specific research design relies on the purpose and the questions that are going to be answered within a research project like this thesis. As the research questions set the selection for the cases to be studied, the focus on the case-organisation “WavesforDevelopment” has been made due to their implementation of different voluntourism programs on the one side, and because of them to be the initiator of the term “surf-voluntourism” which at least has been claimed within the mail contact between the researcher and one of the founders of the Organization “WavesforDevelopment”. In order to find out as much as possible about the meaning of the phenomenon “surf-voluntourism” within the ethical discussion about voluntourism, a **pragmatic approach** within this thesis enables to enlighten the phenomenon from different angles using **multiple methods**. While **unstructured expert interviews** with students reflect the qualitative perspective, the **analysis of virtual documents in terms of the Waves for Development Info Pack 2014 (WIP)** aims to contribute to the controversial ethical discussion about the costs and benefits of voluntourism and the potential role of surfing. Accordingly this research is based on a **qualitative, multi-method case-study design**, consisting of **unstructured expert interviews** as well as the **analysis of the virtual document.**

# Case Study

The surf-voluntourism organization WavesforDevelopment has been chosen as the central case in this thesis. According to the mail-contact with Dave Aabo, one of the founders, the Organization Waves for Development invented the term “surf-voluntourism”. In order to investigate the controversial discussion about the costs and benefits of voluntourism, this organization receives a particular role due to their implication of surfing within the concept of voluntourism towards what Stake (1995 in Bryman, 2008, p.52) describes as the “complexity and particular nature of the case in question”. In regards to the fact that the researcher has not been actively involved within the case in terms of field work, the analysis relies on the way the Organization takes on the discussion according to their content available on their webpage.

# Knowledge Gap Research

While an article within the “voluntourist newsletter” (http://www.voluntourism.org/news-feature172.htm) introduced the surf-voluntourism approach within the Organization WavesforDevelopment, further academic attention is limited. Accordingly this thesis aims to elaborate on a “phenomenon, which has not previously been investigated” ( Stray Jørgensen & Rienecker 2011, p. 83 in Andreasen, Gudmundson 2013, p.14) as part of the knowledge gap research.

While the article outlined the challenges and chances of surf-voluntourism towards a sustainable tourism development, it also shows that the success will depend on its long-term accomplishment. Aabo and Ponting (2011) accordingly state that:

***“T****he staying power and ultimate impact of Surf Voluntourism will depend on how well it holds up over time. Surf Voluntourism is and can be sustainable. Following are some questions related to sustainability factors, when answered, that can help explain why:*

* *Economic – money comes from volunteers (and elsewhere)*
* *Social – woven into design is intercultural exchange.*
* *Environment  - reduce waist, conserve*
* *Political- political acceptability.” [Aabo and Ponting, 2011]*

Within this thesis and based upon the statements by Aabo and Ponting (2011), the focus and aim will therefore be to investigate the ethical discussion within voluntourism that could affect the sustainability within the surf-voluntourism approach of WavesforDevelopment from the perspective of the students. This will be done in order to contribute to a better understanding of the challenges, especially related to the social sustainability. Furthermore potential motives and barriers for students to take part in surf-voluntourism, resulting of the aforementioned investigation, as well as the role of surfing aims to enlighten the phenomenon of surf-voluntourism.

# 2.4 Philosophical Dimensions

## 2.4.1 Paradigm: Pragmatism

The thesis uses the pragmatic approach which coheres with the possibility of investigating on all kind of relevant data in order to answer the research question (Saunders et.al 2009, p.119 , Guba and Lincoln 2005 and Hallebone and Priest, 2009 in Wahyuni, 2012). This is been done due to the fact that academic investigation about the phenomenon of surf-voluntourism, as outlined within the chapter about the knowledge gap, is limited and the thesis aims to provide an initial analysis of the phenomenon from different angles – the web-presentation of the organization “WavesforDevelopment”, especially the “Waves for Development Info Pack” (WIP) and those of the students being interviewed. This is been done according to Wahyuni (2012) who states that the determination of the research framework starts off with the research question.

## 2.4.2 Ontology:

Ontological Considerations deal with the nature of reality (Saunders et.al 2009, p.119 , Guba and Lincoln 2005 and Hallebone and Priest, 2009 in Wahyuni, 2012, p.70) and within the field of social sciences with the nature of social entities (Bryman 2008, p.18). The pragmatic approach accordingly has been chosen as it enables to fuse into the **multiple perspectives** of the involved entities, in this thesis the interviewed students, while simultaneously the knowledge is view chosen (Saunders et.al 2009, p.119 , Guba and Lincoln 2005 and Hallebone and Priest, 2009 in Wahyuni, 2012, p.70) depending on the findings towards the so far academically underexplored phenomenon of “surf-voluntourism”. In this thesis this is understood as that the reality which influences the outcomes of the research is on the one hand influenced by the experiences of the researcher himself and on the other hand by the interviewed students and their worldview. While the participants of the interviews will be introduced shortly in an upcoming section, it becomes important to state that the researcher’s experiences within volunteering in Germany and Denmark, an activity that can be perceived as voluntourism in the Philippines as well as experiences in surfing influenced the findings.

## 2.4.3 Epistemology:

There are different **perspectives** on how to interpret the data that will be perceived as valuable knowledge in order to answer the research questions within the pragmatic paradigm (Saunders et.al 2009, p.119 , Guba and Lincoln, 2005 and Hallebone and Priest, 2009 in Wahyuni, 2012, p.70). While

*“either or both observable phenomena and subjective meanings can provide acceptable knowledge, dependent upon the research question…[through] integrating different perspectives to help interpret the data”, [Saunders et.al 2009, p.119 , Guba and Lincoln 2005 and Hallebone and Priest, 2009 in Wahyuni, 2012, p.70]*

acceptable knowledge can be the findings within the **unstructured** **expert interviews with students** as well as the **analysis of the Webpage** WavesforDevelopment, especially the WIP. Based on the interviews with the students, while the interpretations of their motivations (second research question) rather depend on the researcher investigation, the analysis towards the first research question also implies the perspectives of the interviewed students towards the phenomenon of “surf-voluntourism” and their point of view on the program and implementation of Waves.

## 2.4.4 Axiology

While Axiology deals with the role of the researcher towards the researched phenomena, this abstract aims to introduce the role that the researcher’s values play within this thesis. This will become important in order to give the reader an idea of the motivations that stand behind the research and the underlying research questions. According to axiological stances, **values plays an important role in interpreting the data**, from subjective and objective viewpoints within the pragmatic approach (Wahyuni, 2012. While volunteering/voluntourism as well as surfing are characterized through specific values, which will be given further investigation in the theoretical framework, the researchers belief in the health benefits of surfing and the believe that volunteering might enable one to take free decisions, can justify the choice of the interviewees that were very supportive and willing to help within this thesis.

# 2.5 Methodology and Methods for Data Collection

**Methodology** in general deals with the underlying beliefs that guide through the research (Wahyuni, 2012), which have been part of the discussion above. Wahyuni (2012, page 72) describes Methodology as the “theoretical and ideological foundations” that influences the decision towards what kind of research methods are being used to answer the research question. Therefore, **unstructured expert interviews** **with students** are chosen to gain an insight into the student’s perception of the controversial discussion about the benefits and costs of voluntourism and its reflection according to the webcontent of “WavesforDevelopment” (wavesfordevelopment.org website) on the one hand, while simultaneously providing an insight into their motives. As this statement might already imply, the second method that has been chosen to be appropriate for answering the research question is **E-Research.** The following sections will introduce shortly the way the methods are applied within this thesis, introduces the structure behind the analysis and aims to provide the reader with a clue of how the interviewees were selected.

## 2.5.1 Unstructured Face-to Face Student Interviews:

Four **unstructured face to face interviews** with students from Aalborg University and one unstructured **skype interview** with a German student and surfer from Passau aim to reflect the perception of the controversial discussion and their motives to take part in “surf-voluntourism” in Lobitos Peru.

While the interviews started with a more general conversation in order to gain a better insight into the values of the participants towards volunteering and travelling, the first parts more or less relate to the general motivation for volunteering, while during the interview the focus aimed to direct into the direction of voluntourism, especially related to the case Organization “WavesforDevelopment”. The role of surfing is shortly addressed within the first four interviews that have been conducted, but do not play a major role. To investigate the role of surfing more detailed, the fifth interview addressed, while still in relation towards voluntourism and the Organisation “Waves for Development”, the role of surfing more thoroughly through interviewing a student with experiences in surfing.

The decision to do **unstructured interviews** has been made to ensure the character of a normal conversation (Burgess, 1984 in Bryman, 2008, p.438). Therefore the idea to do unstructured interviews with students aimed to identify the motives and barriers mutually without the pressure that might arise within structured interviews and through reflecting the character of a discussion, which is part of the first research questions, also directly within the interviews. Furthermore this approach has been perceived to allow a broader investigation towards the phenomenon of surf-voluntourism cohering with the pragmatic paradigm in order to limit the risk of what Webb (1966, p.19 in Bryman, 2008, p.210) describes as a “response set”, caused by answering questions in a consisting way within structured interviews.

## 2.5.2 Expert-Interviews

The interviewees have been selected based on the specific knowledge according to their professions to be students in relation to the investigation by Sprondel (1979), who differentiates between experts and laymen.

Accordingly, the decision to interview students in an unstructured way has been made in order to investigate upon a potential interest into the participation from the point of view of in order to identify possible motives and barriers for participating in surf-voluntourism in Lobitos, Peru. While the possibility of a potential cooperation between Waves in terms of promoting the concept in Denmark in order to enable an exchange is a core of possible future investigation, interviewing students aimed to gain different perspectives towards the controversial discussion about voluntourism on the one hand, and identifying motives and barriers to go abroad as a pre-step. While none of the interviewed students from Aalborg had experiences with or a background in surfing, an additional interview with a student (background within international culture relations and Business studies) and surfer has been conducted. He has been perceived as an expert in order to investigate upon the potential role and meaning of surfing within the voluntourism approach.

## 2.5.3 Triangulation of Methods:

The method used in this thesis in order to generate knowledge towards the phenomenon of “surf-voluntourism” from a pragmatic paradigm requires multiple sources in order to ensure the quality of the findings (Wahyuni, 2012). While there are several interpretations of accepted knowledge from positivist and interpretivist viewpoints (Saunders et.al 2009, p.119 , Guba and Lincoln 2005 and Hallebone and Priest, 2009 in Wahyuni, 2012, p.70), the researcher aims to avoid the “paradigm war” (Wahyuni, 2012, 71) through settling the research questions and purpose first. This pragmatic approach as been discussed in section (Pragmatism Section) enables the **triangulation of data,** as a method of collecting data from multiple sources, in this case the interviews and the Waves Info Pack (WIP).

## 2.5.4 Grounded Theory:

This thesis uses the approach of grounded theory as the concept for qualitative data analysis, meaning that there is a close relationship between the collection and analysis of the data as well as the underlying theories (Strauss and Corbin, 1998 in Bryman, 2008, p. 541). While the aim of the thesis is to investigate the new phenomenon of “surf-voluntourism” where further academic attention is rar and a theoretical concepts towards the motives of students to take part in surf-voluntourism needs to be developed, **online research** has been conducted to identify how the term surf-voluntourism is used and presented within the specific case of the Organization Waves for Development on their Webpage and related available material in term of the WIP. After having investigated that the term surf-voluntourism consists of components related to surfing, volunteering and voluntourism, a general research question as the first step of grounded theory (Bryman, 2008, p.545) has been formulated as a starting point in order to search for relevant literature. With having had preconceptions and theoretical considerations about the motivations for surfing, volunteering and the controversial discussions about voluntourism before collecting the data, the specific motivations for students to take part in surfing, volunteering and voluntourism have been an outcome of the analysis. According to Bryman (2008, p.541), this approach called Grounded Theory allows the generation of theory or concepts out of data and contributes towards an investigation of students motives to take part in “surf-voluntourism”. While you can argue that this approach not necessarily differs from the idea of undertaking inductive research (Bryman, 2008), the following subsections will further explain and illuminate the way, the data has been processed.

## 2.5.5 Coding:

The transcribed interviews were analyzed and accordingly coded in order to what Bryman (2008, p.542) describes as component parts that have “potential theoretical significance and/or that appear to be particularly salient within the social worlds of those being studied”. Accordingly, the transcripts are coded towards the four different components in order to answer the research question, consisting of the following:

* the ethical discussion about the costs and benefits of voluntourism (red)
* the role of surfing (blue)
* motives to take part in surfvoluntourism (green)
* barriers to take part in surfvoluntourism (yellow)

While the ethical discussion about voluntourism already had an influence before having conducted the interviews as a background knowledge of the researcher, coding is said to be an “important first step in the generation of theory” within the grounded theory approach (Bryman, 2008, p.542). Therefore the findings within the interviews especially influenced the choice of theories in terms of the role of surfing, as well as the motives and barriers (inductively), while the ethical discussion had to a larger extent the character of a deductive research (Bryman, 2008, p.9).

## 2.5.6 Theoretical saturation:

While the above distinction between to what extent the research has an deductive and inductive character aimed to reflect upon the relation between theory and data, the theoretical saturation deals with the process of having received a sufficient amount of data for each category (Bryman, 2008, p.416). The sequence of the interviews was based according to what kind of new angles arise during the process of conducting interviews. While the fifth interview not only addressed the ethical discussion, motives and barriers for voluntourism more generally, but also outlined an interesting perspective into the role of surfing towards a better understanding of the concept “surf-voluntourism”, the amount of data after five interviews has been perceived to be sufficient. Nevertheless it needs to be stated that the thesis did not aim to come up with a finished investigation of all aspects towards the complex phenomenon - in this thesis understood as the “core category” (Orona 1997 in Bryman, 2008, p.544)) of “surf-voluntourism” -, but rather aimed to provide the reader with a better understanding through the establishment of relationships between relevant related categories (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.212 in Bryman, 2008, p.416).

## 2.5.7 Generation of Theory:

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998, p.22 in Bryman, 2008, p.544), a Theory is a ”set of well-developed categories…that are systematically related through statements of relationship to form a theoretical framework that explains some relevant social…or other phenomena”. In this thesis, the explanation by Strauss and Corbin will be understood as the phenomenon of ”surf-voluntourism” is perceived as a **”core category**” (Orona 1997 in Bryman, 2008, p.544) that’s been giving investigation upon through related **sub-categories** (“ethical discussion about the costs and benefits of voluntourism” ; “the role of surfing within the specific concept of “surf-voluntourism”” , “the motives for students to take part in surf-voluntourism” ; “the barriers for students to take part in surf-voluntourism”). The sub-categories are divided into **concepts** based on the outcomes of the data analysis and are the “building blocks of theory” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p.101 in Bryman, 2008, p.544). Related concepts for the sub-categories are for instance the academic travel career to identify student’s motivation or the motivation for surfing, all aiming to be combined in order to generate a theoretical framework for the category “surf-voluntourism”.

## 2.5.8 E-Research: The role of the Webpage “wavesfordevelopment.org”

While the Webpage Waves for Development has been investigated upon in the beginning according to what Bryman (2008, p. 628) describes as a “means of searching material on topics”, the page inspired to write about surfvoluntourism as well as to generate a first draft of the research question as the first step in Grounded Theory (section 2.5.5).

While Bryman (2008, p.629) adjures the “need to find the websites relating to your research question”, it needs to be stated that in this thesis the awareness of the Concept of “Surfvoluntourim” and the Organisation WavesforDevelopment before having started the process of thesis writing more or less made the researcher search for a suitable research question based on the investigation of the Webpage and the discussion within the **expert student interviews** in relation to the grounded theory approach.

## 2.5.9 Virtual Documents (the Waves for Development Info Pack (WIP))

Towards the idea of analyzing the Webpage WavesforDeveloment, Bryman (2008, p.525) doubts the representativeness of websites on a specific topic towards authenticity as well as credibility. In this thesis, the fact that the research is based on a controversial discussion influencing students’ motivation to consider participating in surf-voluntourism programs, this potential barrier might be limited as the critical investigation of the voluntourism approaches is part of the research itself. Therefore the WIP reflects the acquaintance of the Organisation with the challenges in their surfvoluntourism approaches and how they cope with the issues, while being critically investigated towards the first research question.

# 2.6 The Interviewees

## 2.6.1 Interview 1 with Lara Tilke:

Lara is a German student of Aalborg University, studying Culture, Communication and Globalization in the 8th. Semester and has been perceived to contribute towards the discussion of voluntourism due to her educational background in social-psychology and experiences within voluntourism in a local community in Thailand.

## 2.6.2 Interview 2 with Anastasia Hjorth:

Anastasia, like Lara, studies Culture, Communication and Globalisation at Aalborg University and has experiences with volunteering in Aalborg as well as a tendency to prefer holidays for the purpose of getting in touch with the local society.

## 2.6.3 Interview 3 with Mirella Manyi and Kenny Olsen:

Mirella and Kenny have been picked in order to reflect upon the motives as well as the barriers to volunteer abroad from the point of view of a couple and their specific requirements. Additionally Mirella has a five year experience in coordinating volunteers in the Organisation volunteering.dk.

## 2.6.4 Interview 4 with Evelina Sluka:

Evelina also studies Culture, Communication and Globalization in her 8th. Semester at Aalborg University and has experiences with volunteering in the UK and a background in linguistic qualifying her to engage into one of the English Teaching Programs within the Organisation WavesforDevelopment.

## 2.6.5 Interview 5 with Fabian Scherer:

Fabian has been perceived to contribute to this research due to his international orientation of his study course in terms of international Culture and Business Studies and his experiences in surfing not only in general, but also in communities in developing nations like Indonesia and Muizenberg/Cape Town.

# 2.7 The Analysis

### 2.7.1 Content Analysis:

The transcribed interviews have been analyzed based on the content. Analytically, different colors are used in order to mark the passages within the transcribed interviews that relate to the different parts that aim to answer the research question from the perspective of the students as experts. These different themes are the ethical discussion (red), the role of surfing (blue) as well as the motives (green) and barriers (yellow) to take part in the specific location in Lobitos, Peru. The content analysis approach is characterized by its flexibility and the possibility to be used within a variety of unstructured information (Bryman, 2008, p.289) and is used within the analysis of the interviews as well as the investigations of the WIP.

### 2.7.2 Structure of the Analysis

The way the analysis is structured aims to reflect upon the developmental and learning outcome within this thesis. Therefore the headings in the analysis mirror the main issues like “the ethical discussion of benefits and costs in voluntourism”, “the role of surfing in surfvoluntourism” and “the motives and barriers of students to take part in surf-voluntourism in Lobitos Peru”, which is to some extent based on the sub analysis above. Within these headlines, the findings and statements of the students are linked chronological according to the date of conducting the interviews enabling to show what new angles or questions arises after having finished each interview.

# Theoretical Framework:

## Introduction:

As specific academic literature about the concept of “surf-voluntourism” and how the concept can be defined is rar – an article within the voluntourist newsletter (Aabo and Ponting, 2011) has been detected - this section aims to reflect the works that have been done in order to investigate a potential contribution to explore the concept of surf-voluntourism within the controversial discussion about the costs and benefits of voluntourism and towards the potential role of surfing.

The theoretical framework therefore consists of an overview upon the definitions of voluntourism and aims to provide the reader with an idea about how the controversial discussion about the costs and benefits of voluntourism is reflected within the prevailing academic literature. Furthermore, the section about the role of surf-tourism for local communities addresses the surfing component and its impact towards the host culture. While not being reconciled with the concept of voluntourism, Section 3.4 aims to provide the reader with an adapted theoretical framework in order to investigate the concept of “surf-voluntourism”.

To include the component of travel motivations and in order to answer the second research question about what could motivate students to take part in surf-voluntourism in the Organisation WavesforDevelopment, existing theories about the motivations to take part in voluntourism and surf-tourism as part of adventure travel are combined in order to contribute with suggestions about potential motivational factors that could be relevant for considering participation in surf-voluntourism.

# 3.2 Voluntourism

## 3.2.1 Defining Voluntourism?

Regarding the aim of the thesis to elaborate on the ethical discussions, which will be part of the next sections, Rando (2004, p.7) refers to voluntourism not only in the way of generating a “travel experience” for the tourists, but also outlines that it implies a contribution to the local host region. As the term and Rando´s definition implies, “voluntourism” composes of a travel and a volunteer component. According to the Association of the Voluntary Service Organisation (AVSO) (in Atlas, 2008, p.9), **Volunteering** consists of the following components:

* Working for the common good
* Intercultural learning process
* Create new approaches to recognized problems
* Unpaid activity lasting for 6-18 months
* Work for the purpose of social, cultural, developmental, environmental or educational issues.
* Learning by doing in an ongoing process of social change
* Self-engagement on the basis of a personal decision, while committing to the personal development.

Fusing more thoroughly into the specifics of **voluntourism**, the following list provides an overview upon this specific concepts and different perspectives which are not necessarily interrelated and should not be considered as facts. The list rather shows how different or incoherent the perceptions or understandings of the term are (Atlas, 2008, pp.10):

* Combination of Volunteering and travelling
* The specific benefits for the voluntourists remain rather unclear (AVSO in Atlas, 2008, p.10)
* Projects sometimes rather demand tourists to give donations than to be related to the tasks in volunteering.
* Voluntourists don’t see themselves as tourists
* Shallow, intermediate and deep voluntourist project categories are influenced by the duration of the project, while the voluntourist skills as well as the benefits for the local community improve the deeper the category of the project is and the longer the project lasts. Additionally altruistic motives gain a more intense importance, the longer the duration of the project. (Callanan and Thomas, 2005 in Atlas 2008)
* In contrast to volunteering, voluntourism is **unique** as it implies the travel component and the taking place in another region on the one hand, as well as the fact that there is usually a fee to pay for participating in voluntourism. On the other hand, what makes voluntourism special compared to other kinds of tourism is the seeking for **mutual beneficial experiences.** (Raymond, 2007 in Atlas, 2008)
* Voluntourism involves a wide spectrum related to tourism (Atlas, 2008, p.13)

## 3.2.3 Voluntourism: The ethical discussion

Some authors claim that voluntourism does more harm the local communities as a form of **“neo-colonialism”** (Raymond, 2007; Alleyne, 2006 in Atlas, 2008), while other authors outline the importance of **ethical issues** within the careful selection of the volunteers as well as the organizations (Simpson, 2003 ; Wearing, 2003 ; Drummond, 2007 in Atlas, 2008, p.36). Additionally, according to Raymond (2007) it is problematic if organizations depict the local community members as helpless and advertise with the need for volunteers to come there and play the experts. He argues that especially in short term programs, this perception would decrease the aim of **mutually benefitting** the volunteers as well as the communities.

The loss of cultural indigenous plays an important role for Wearing (2003 in Atlas, 2008, p.36). He sees a danger in the commodification of local cultures through western influences and especially criticizes the “perpetration” of English courses as destructive for existing cultures. Even though nowadays the amount of volunteer projects all over the world is increasing, volunteering used to be an approach undertaken in “developing nations” (Zahra and McIntosh 2006, p.3 in Atlas, 2008). Due to the fact that the case Organisation in this thesis is located in Lobitos Peru, and Peru is defined as a developing nation (The international Statistical Institute Website), the suggestions by Wearing (2003 in Atlas, 2008) who states that the jobs undertaken by potential voluntourists should rather be done by local members of the communities gains importance towards WavesforDevelopment and their program of “community outreach”.

The choice of ethical organizations is perceived to be another important angle to identify to what extent organizations are trying to sell the volunteer an experience as a sort of “guilt-free-holiday” (Atlas, 2008), and to what extent the focus is on developmental benefits. Jones (2004 in Atlas, 2008) additionally argues that besides the ethical considerations the quality of the organization plays an important role. The choice within this thesis to focus on the Organisation WavesforDevelopment is therefore made due to their implementation of different programs that relate to the ambition of sustainability and the possibility to engage as a student.

But not only the benefits for the host community, also the promised benefits for the volunteers regarding their possibilities and constraints to support the local community are questioned and require further investigation (Jones, 2007).

As a last part of the ethical discussion the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (Atlas, 2008) investigated the impact of volunteering on local people and outline the problem that the local community often lack the awareness upon the tasks and mission of the volunteers that are involved in the local community development. This lack of awareness appears to be also reflected within the findings of Sampson (2005 in Atlas, 2008), who controversial to Wearing perceived a positive standpoint from the side of the locals according to “learning English” and the “westernization”.

## 3.2.4 Voluntourism: The benefits of Voluntourism

While the section above outlines a rather critical point of departure towards the meaning of voluntourism, the last statement by Sampson (2005 in Atlas, 2008) refers to the potential and the benefits. According to Raymond (2007 in Atlas, 2008), voluntourism contributes to cross-cultural understanding and it faces environmental, as well as social issues, while the general perception of voluntourism is characterized through being mutual beneficial for volunteers as well as the destination (Raymond, 2007). While the above discussion therefore rather aimed to identify potential risks and dangers towards the concept of voluntourism in general, the investigation within the Organisation WavesforDevelopment aims on the one hand to reflect upon this criticism, while rather showing the huge potential of their surf-voluntourism approach, based on what Raymond (2007 in Atlas, 2008, p.7) defines as:

“Potentially, volunteer tourism can help bring funding and enthusiastic labor as well **as new ideas and skills** to important projects around the world. It can also lead to improved **cross-cultural understanding**, **mutual learning** and increased awareness of social and environmental issues. At the same time, volunteer tourists are often given the opportunity to gain **valuable skills**, **develop their sense of self** and even boost their cultural and corporate capital.”

Based on the previous discussion, the biggest challenge within voluntourism can be summarized in terms of its need to be **mutual beneficial** for the tourists as well as the communities. Similarities within **surf-tourism** towards its role for the communities and related problems are investigated within the following section.

# 3.3 Surf-Tourism in local communities

While O´Brien and Ponting (2013, p.158) describe surf tourism as a “niche sport tourism sector”, Dolnicar & Fluker (2003, p.234 in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013, p.158) refers to surf-tourism in terms of the involvement of “people traveling to either domestic…or international locations…who stay at least one night, and where active participation in the sport of surfing is the primary motivation for destination selection”.

A few articles have investigated the influence of surfing as well as the benefits and costs towards local communities. Even though not related to voluntourism, O`Brien and Pointing (2013) investigated within their research about a sustainable, community centered approach in Papua New Guinea towards how to achieve “sustainable host community benefits in the context of a developing country”, which could gain importance towards its implication in the case of Lobitos, Peru.

Referred to as “sustainable surf-tourism” , the research by Ponting & O´Brien (2013) resulted out of the challenges caused by the negative impacts of surf-tourism on local communities, as investigated by (Buckley, 2002 a, b; Pointing, 2000, 2009; Ponting, McDonald & Wearing, 2005 in Ponting & O´Brien, 2013, p.158).

In the following the main findings within the research of O´Brien and Pointing (2013) that might enlighten the role of surfing towards the controversial discussion about the costs and benefits of voluntourism (in local communities) are summarized:

* There is a potential of sport tourism in terms of levering development in host communities ( Chalip, 2004 in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013), while one of the pillars and aims of Waves is related to the role of surfing in terms of “community outreach” (<http://www.wavesfordevelopment.org/programs/community-outreach/>).
* The increases in accessibility implies a danger of surf-tourism destinations to become overcrowded (Dolnicar & Fluker, 2003 ; Buckley, 2002a in O´Brien and Pointing, 2013)
* The willingness to pay for unique surfing experiences is increasing (Buckley 2002a in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013)
* Surf-Tourism needs to be well-planned in developing countries in terms of its contribution towards social and environmental issues (Buckley, 2002a in O´Brien, 2013) and in order to guarantee a beneficial economical contribution to the local communities (Barilotti, 2002; Buckley, 2002a,b; Hulet, 2006; Ponting et. Al. 2005 in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013)
* Sustainable surf-tourism requires a “movement away from economically neoliberal approaches to development” and fostering of “cross-cultural-understanding where host communities are central in defining their own standards” (Ponting et al. 2005 in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013). While one of the Wave pillars is related to sustainability, especially the link in terms of cross-cultural understanding outlines a potential chance through the engagement of volunteers.
* Optimizing the role of sport tourism for community development requires to integrate and leverage the assets of the community (Costa and Chalip, 2005 in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013)
* Unregulated approaches towards development benefits local communities to a less extent and requires a strategic approach towards surf tourism planning and development that saves the tradition and resources of the communities from a commercialization (Ponting et al. 2005, Buckley, 2002 a in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013).

# 3.4 Surf-Voluntourism

Building up upon the statements above and the introductory Definition of Aabo and Ponting, the term surf-voluntourism appears to imply some aspects of voluntourism as well as surfing. In relation to the case Organisation WavesforDevelopment (wavesfordevelopment.org website), there are different programs that do not directly refer to surfing, like “community outreach”, “environmental health” and “entrepreneurship empowerment” (wavesfordevelopment website).

Based on the Definition of Aabo and Pointing, defining surfvoluntourism as

*“a* niche market *within the broader* ***voluntourism*** *movement where travelers give back to the destination through* ***volunteering*** *and share their passion for and interest in* ***surfing****. As with voluntourism more generally,* ***a whole spectrum of surf-voluntourism opportunities****, from soft to hard****,*** exist. *What remains constant is, that both, Surf and Voluntourism aspects are present and complement each other.”[Aabo and Ponting, 2011].*

The theoretical concept in adaption to the aim of this thesis implies to a first instance, that the term “surf-voluntourism” gives space for interpretation, but it implies the following components that can be relevant for this thesis:

* Volunteering
* Voluntourism
* Passion
* Surftourism and Voluntourism
* Hard and soft forms of surfvoluntourism

A similarity between voluntourism and surfing is that both activities to a large extent take place in developing nations and are addressing social, environmental, but also economic benefits (Atlas, 2008 ; O´Brien & Ponting, 2013).

# 3.5 Travel Motivation:

The tourists travel motivation is a complex topic and can often be of irrational nature. While the desire to seek **an experience** at a destination that you cannot get at home, while trying to get away from something is part of the push and pull theory to describe tourists behavior (Graburn, 2001), this section aims to investigate the motivations for students to take part in surfvoluntourism in order to answer the second research question through elaborating upon a theoretical framework based on the recent literature upon the motives to take part in voluntourism with a focus on students as well as adventure based travel motivations to take part in surf-tourism.

## 3.5.1 Travel Motivations to take part in Voluntourism

In order to investigate the motivations to take part in voluntourism, Raymond (2007, p. 28) distinguishes between altruistic and self-interest motivations. While **altruistic motivations** are more related to the needs of the local communities (Atlas, 2008, p.33), **self-interest motivations** include the “desire to meet new people and have something to do”, “the hope of gaining skills or contacts that will be useful in one’s own career” or the “desire to assume power and leadership” (afs.org website in Atlas, p.33). While all these arguments somehow appear to give the impression that the motives need to be seen separately, it arises the question why the altruistic motivations might not be interrelated with those of self-interest. In order to possibly reconcile these motivations, AFS (in Atlas, 2008, p.33) refers to “fulfill one´s own obligations and duties, the “desire to participate in the community” and an “interest in learning and personal growth” to be motives of **altruistic** as well as **self-interest** nature.

As this research aims to investigate upon the motives of students to do volunteer work abroad, the above mentioned motives reflect upon the general volunteer motivations. Therefore the following list about the motivations for a gap year based on the executive summary about gap-year provision by Jones (2004 in Atlas, 2008), summarizes the possible **specific motivations related to students** who want to take a year out, which might include voluntary work (Atlas, 2008). While Jones applied the definition of a gap-years student in his work in the following way:

*“any period of time which an individual takes out of formal education, training or the workplace, and where the time out sits in the context of a longer career trajectory” [Jones, 2004, p.8]*

this definition can be applied to the case of students, elaborated within the following list:

* The desire to take a break from formal education and work
* Gaining a broader horizon in life
* To experience different people, culture and places
* To gain personal life skills
* Enhancing CV to gain Access to University or Employment
* Earning money
* Contributing to society
* Helping people
* Meeting a challenge
* Having fun
* religious motivations

While the previous list identifies more general hints for activities within a gap-year, the investigation of Atlas (2008) further reflects upon the importance of involving several additional factors in order to identify the specific motives for voluntourists, influenced by **the volunteers background**, **previous travel experiences**, **experiences within the specific type of destination** as well as with the **characteristics of the project.**

## 3.5.2 Adventure Travel Based Motivations to take part in surf-tourism

While Farmer (1992) refers to the surf-scene as individuals with values that might differ from the mainstream society, Buckley (2002 a) characterizes surfers for their risk seeking behavior. The organization Waves for Development outlines on their webpage the relation between surfing and adventure travel, which will be introduced within the upcoming section. Therefore this section aims to introduce the motivations for tourists to take part in surf-tourism from the perspective of “surfing as an adventure travel” (Reynolds and Hritz, 2012). Reynolds and Hritz investigated within their approach the motives and lifestyles of surf tourists and potential links in order to answer the research question will be elaborated within this section. While links to the motivations for taking part in voluntourism can be drawn, adventure travelers are commonly characterized to be interested in engaging in **authentic, unique, interesting, educational and exciting pursuits** (Adventure Tourism Trade Association, 2010; Loverseed, 1997 in Reynolds and Hritz, 2012). Additionally, in order to elaborate further on the discussion about the competences and skills that voluntourists need to bring, it is outlined that adventure travelers seek risks within their holidays in order for their **competences to be tested mentally as well as physically** by **the activity** as well as the **environment** they are travelling to (Reynolds and Hritz, 2012). The following list provides a few more characteristics that have been identified towards the motivations of adventure travelers (Walle, 1987; Adventure Tourism Trade Association, 2010; Weber, 2001; Millington, Locke & Locke, 2001 in Reynolds and Hritz, 2012):

* seeking knowledge and meaning
* physical activity
* interaction with nature
* learning about different cultures
* interacting with different kind of individuals
* discovery of the “hidden and the unknown” (Weber, 2001, p.363 in Reynolds and Hritz, 2012, p.3)
* striving to learn something about themselves or the places they visit

Interesting and challenging in order to investigate the first research question towards the role of surfing and a potential mutual contribution towards the community, Reynolds and Hritz (2012) state that while **adventure travel** is often misleadingly equalized with **ecological tourism**, there are different perceptions within the two approaches towards the benefits for the local community. While Reynolds and Hritz (2012) point out that ecological tourism focusses on the **quality of life for the local communities**, adventure travel implies rather an **educational component**. Therefore interesting within this thesis will be the interrelation between how the educational component of teaching the local communities members to surf and its simultaneous contribution towards the quality of life.

As the above list already implies, there might be other motivations to take part in adventure tourism that are not related to the activity itself. While academic investigation upon these motivations have been lacking so far, Reynolds and Hritz (2012) use the example of surfing to identify these motives, which contribute to the research question in terms of investigating the role of surfing as well as getting an inside into the potential meaning within the concept of surf-voluntourism as part of the upcoming section. Theses motives are outlined in the following:

Interesting in order to investigate a potential participation of students and based on the before mentioned gap-year approach, the findings by Dolnicar and Fluker (2003 in Reynolds and Hritz, 2012) appears to outline hints that the target group for participants in surf-voluntourism consists of individuals, who are considered to be surfers as well as students, as Dolnicar and Fluker found out that the general growth within surf-tourism is to a large extent caused by the increasing interest within younger individuals. The findings by Reynolds and Hritz (2012) therefore summarizes the non-activity based motivations for surf-travel to be consisting of:

* Maintaining relationships
* Using their skills and talents
* Feeling excitement
* Enjoy activities with like-minded people

## 3.5.3 Travel Motivations to take part in surf-voluntourism

“**Adventure –** *Waves believes adventure is more than just an adrenaline rush. By strapping on leashes and* ***surfing****, participants* ***build confidence,******stay healthy*** *and* ***foster meaningful relationships*** *while enjoying the* ***natural environment****. Adventure sports typically have high entry costs. Waves offers disadvantaged youth access to these sports, making adventure part of their* ***personal and social development”*** *[http://www.wavesfordevelopment.org/who-is-waves/]*

While the section above investigated the motivations to take part in voluntourism as well as surfing, it has been shown that there appear to be similarities within the characteristics.

Based on a reconciliation of the motivations for students to take part in voluntourism and adventure travel related surf tourism, it appears that the motivations to take part in “surf-voluntourism” have an altruistic as well as self-interested angle, characterized through the desire to experience and learn from people with different cultural backgrounds in order to gain a broader horizon in life and learning about yourself while enjoying the physical activity of surfing to foster and maintain meaningful relationships in proximity to the nature… contributing to gaining personal life skills, knowledge and meaning, through sharing personal skills and talents in order to improve the life for the local communities, including educational components as well as surfing.

# Analysis

## 4.1 Voluntourism: The Ethical Discussion – Cost and Benefits

The theoretical framework outlined several issues that reflect upon the ethical, controversial discussion about the benefits and costs of voluntourism.

As one of her primary statements, Lara argued for the importance of, but also the challenges in, receiving enough information about the host culture before having made her decision to travel abroad in order to volunteer in Thailand:

*“I did get some information by myself, I read a lot about the culture and the background and the country itself, but obviously that is always very limited and subjective and yeah, you get a very limited amount of information.” [Lara, 24]*

One can argue that the statement by Lara outlines the importance for and responsibility of organizations to inform participants about the cultural specifics of the country. While Waves advertises with intercultural exchange programs, the volunteers are also placed in separate homes (WIP). This outlines a potential barrier, for example towards the freedom of participants in terms of interacting with the locals on the one hand and “Westerners” to be grouped in the community. Lara experienced a similar scenario during her stay in Thailand:

*“Yeah, it’s interesting because the community was partly Thai and partly international people, so I had some Thai people I have talked to, but it was mostly Western people I talked to that volunteered there and participated, so I was kind of expecting to have more contact with the local people, turned out that wasn’t exactly the case, but I could talk to some of them, if possible, because there was a language barrier, which was a bit difficult at times.” [Lara, 24]*

On the other hand Waves refers to the issue of a potential lack of intercultural exchange and contact with the local communities through a “win-win-situation”, while it rather reflects upon the monetary benefits for the locals, and a convenient possibility for the volunteers to stay during their volunteering work:

*“Waves has built a strong relationship with a local family…who provide lodging in front of their house. It has affectionately become known as the Waves House because of their strong support of the programs (their grandchildren and nephew are actively involved).The relationship is a win-win-situation, with the family receiving the financial benefit of housing volunteers and Waves having a great set-up in a prime location.” (WIP, p. 9)*

Involving the local community members actively into the volunteering program is partly reflected by the Waves Programs through providing accommodation, while the extent of exchange might be limited in terms of intellectual discussions, as it might rather consist of the volunteering experience (Rando, 2004).

The language barrier on the one hand might have hindered the interaction in terms of verbal language, but also shows how exchange and social interaction improves your ability to broaden your horizon (Jones, 2004) and getting new perspectives of the world. This aspect can also be seen in Lara’s statement as she refers to the relevance of social interaction as a mean to gain new perspectives on life.

Waves addresses this issue on the one hand through offering programs that support the idea of teaching the local community members English but simultaneously approaches Spanish learning lessons in order to improve the lack of common language in order to enable cross-cultural understanding (Raymond, 2007 in Atlas, 2008):

*“Learning to communicate in the local language is an ideal way to increase your interaction with the local community. Group and Individual Spanish lessons are occasionally available with a qualified teacher.” [WIP, p.11]*

Rather than referring to Westerners playing the “experts” (Raymond, 2007), the approach by Waves rather aims to address a mutual learning, through locals sharing their own culture and language.

This raises the discussion towards the qualifications you need to bring to volunteer abroad. The following statement by Lara shows the importance to adapt to and understand the needs of the local communities. Based on her volunteering experiences in Thailand, she outlines how the tasks could be adapted to the skills the different volunteers are contributing with:

“*So, yeah, the whole program was, for one part it was made for people who had in the past problems with depression and burnouts and for people who wanted to get a completely new start of their life, that was one part, and the other part was about normal people, not normal, but people who don´t have any problems with depression or whatever, and those people including myself, they contributed to the community with other things, like helping cooking, helping cleaning, planting trees in the garden, just to keep the community working.” [Lara, 24]*

In this context, the choice of volunteers and how they are included becomes apparent. As in Lara’s case, where the discussion about the duration of the stay (Callanan and Thomas, 2005 in Atlas 2008) and the qualifications does not appear to have played a major role within the Organization she volunteered with in Thailand:

*“No, they took everyone who wanted to join and people stayed, some people stayed for one week, some people stayed for three months, some people stayed longer, but that was really depending on…” [Lara, 24]*

…the Organization Waves for Development seems to follow a similar approach, enabling the duration of the stay and the tasks to adapt to the interests of the voluntourists:

*“Volunteers contribute to the Waves Programs in a variety of ways depending on your skills and interests. There are also opportunities to assist in community projects, and program administration tasks.” [WIP]*

The statements by Lara might to some extent reflect the idea of the tourist’s unawareness about the needs of the local communities while she is critically questioning the contribution towards the local community (Raymond 2007 ; Alleyne 2006):

*“Yes I agree, I have my criticism” [Lara, 24, being asked about the awareness towards the controversial discussion about the costs and the benefits in voluntourism]*

*“Well in my case it was not as critical maybe, but with teaching these local communities I sometimes have the feeling that, I don’t know, that its more for the purpose of people being social and being engaged in those local communities, so maybe they exploit them in a sense to make it really drastically, so I don’t really know if that contributes to the local community or if its more for the purpose of the individual who wants to feel good about it…” [Lara, 24]*

Here, Lara sees a problem that might appear within voluntourim if voluntourists use the concept in order to “stroke their ego” (Wearing, 2003, p.36 in Atlas, 2008).

Anastasia furthermore argues that it becomes important to involve the local communities equally to ensure a mutual benefit (Raymond 2007):

*“you have to listen to them (referring to the local community), what are their needs, or are they even prepared for this, because I think were the programs actually fail is where the project leaders have just forced something, you know down to the community saying that we think this will work…and because it fails is because the people were not even informed about the aim or didn’t have the resources to keep the project going or maybe because it was a totally different and wrong time and place to do this program” [Anastasia, 32].*

While this statement might lead to the argument that an awareness of the community requires restrictions in terms of what qualifies a person to volunteer abroad, Anastasias following propositions arise the discussion if students are more qualified to volunteer than people with another educational background:

*“For me I think volunteering should be for everybody because if you have a personal interest in helping and being a volunteer meaning that you want to give something back to the community that you are actually operating in, that should be without restrictions about where you come from and what your educational background is because you can actually have people without any educational background who still wants to volunteer, should they be excluded from these programs?” [Anastasia, 32]*

*“I don’t think so, that’s my personal view, because maybe that particular person has a history of a bad grow up or raise or whatever and didn’t have the possibilities to have an education because maybe the mum and dad where poor or whatever, should that person be excluded from gaining an experience while at the same time giving back to the community? I don’t think so” [Anastasia, 32]*

While the first statement of Anastasia portrays a link between **self-interests and altruistic reasons** for volunteering (Raymond 2007; AFS in Atlas 2008), she also states that the educational background might play a less important role compared to the experiences and personal backgrounds that volunteers bring to the local communities (Atlas 2008). In relation to one of the ambitions of Waves to “empower the local communities” within the “community outreach” program (http://www.wavesfordevelopment.org/programs/), Anastasia sees a potential connection between the length of stay of the volunteers (Callanan and Thomas, 2005 in Atlas, 2008) in programs aiming to help the local community members to become self-dependent. This could support the suggestions of Wearing (2003 in shows Atlas, 2008) regarding the jobs to be undertaken by local members:

*“Well in case that, when you are there, you have this program that you want to implement in this local community, so and they cannot do this by themselves, maybe because they money or they don’t have an organized way of persuading to that kind of themselves, there you go you have these kind of instrumental programs, but you should only be there until the community gets the point and can take over from there, you give some people of the community the responsibility to…” [Anastasia, 32]*

The issue of self-interest in contrary to altruistic reasons (Raymond 2007) also plays a role for Kenny, who refers to a desire to break out of the study routine (Jones 2004):

*“I believe that sometimes when people do voluntourism and so on, it’s at least a good thing if there is also something in for them - either they feel good about it, or they have to start out somewhere, getting to know people, and that they can contribute, maybe they have been studying for a long time and they just want to get started, you know.” [Kenny, 26]*

While Kenny’s statement reflects upon the idea of voluntourism enabling to gain a new perspective for oneself (Jones 2004)), it also implies the contribution to the local community where you can argue that altruistic and self-interests do not need to be seen as separate from each other (AFS in Atlas, 2008).

Building upon the issue of sustainability, Mirella is concerned about the monetary aspects and how this really contributes to the local communities:

*“No, like, how voluntourism harms cause sometimes it’s like a business opportunity, well, and then and in the end it loses its noble goals, you know, then it’s going to be about money, but that is always the fear I guess, money within NGOs and so on.” [Mirella, 23]*

Mirella outlines a potential inconsistency with the organizational goals and a potential risk of focusing more on the monetary aspects and benefits and refers to a risk within NGOs to become more addicted towards monetary issues (Atlas, 2008, pp.10)

Evelina contributes to the monetary discussion, but simultaneously outlines the shared benefits on the side of the organization and sees a mutual benefit in volunteering and voluntourism (Raymond 2007):

*“Well, it was nice, because, as you know, now it’s kind of difficult to...to find a job or an internship or something, because the world is very competitive, so volunteering is a very nice opportunity actually to develop your skills and to learn something new, because companies...well not all of them, but some companies are very open, like towards voluntourism, because they don’t have to pay and at the same time they can give something, so for me the main idea was to go to the British council as they would allow me to be inside the organization and organizational settings, and they I would be able to experience that kind of being part of the conferences, so that it was...the main goal was to gain some new experience and knowledge.” [Evelina, 23]*

For Evelina, developing new skills and gaining new experiences and new knowledge (Jones 2004) played an important role for her to volunteer while it enabled her to gain a better inside into the organizational settings at the same time. Concerning the discussion about altruistic and self-interests (Atlas 2008), Evelina sees them rather cohering than contradicting each other:

*“And I think voluntourism is a very nice thing, especially when you are young, that might help you to realize what you want to do in your life…* *it’s nice for you and it’s also you are helping other people, so that is like - I don’t know, I can show the advantages here.” [Evelina, 23]*

While Evelina’s statement might initially reflect upon her own interests, it gives the impression that helping other people might have more of a positive side-effect. Being asked about the necessary qualifications that you should bring to volunteer, Evelina argues that a passionate attitude might not be not enough if volunteers do not have the necessary experiences:

“*Or it really depends on the place you are going, so where you are going to volunteer, if you are going to volunteer for example somewhere at the hospital, and its ok if I have a very strong passion to be a volunteer for example somewhere, and provide medical, like support, but it doesn’t mean that I actually have the right, I don’t know, experience, or skills to do it.” [Evelina, 23].*

While Evelina uses the example of a hospital, one could argue that volunteering in the local community of Lobitos Peru might not require higher qualifications from her point of view. As the organization WavesforDevelopment requires potential volunteers to apply within an online-form and stating their educational background (http://www.wavesfordevelopment.org/surf-voluntourism/volunteer/), the organization appears to select their volunteers more or less thoroughly. Evelina therefore considers the Waves programs to be an internship, rather than a volunteering program:

*“ it makes you feel bad, because you want to be a volunteer, you want to do something good, but then somebody just simply do not, does not appreciate it, like...for me it is a bit difficult to understand that, maybe than it should be called something different, maybe not voluntourism, because if you are a volunteer, you like...you want to do something good, but then it feels a bit bad if somebody doesn’t want you, then you start to think what is wrong with this world, I want to help them, but they don’t want me.” [Evelina, 23]*

*“But I think this is the most important thing in voluntourism because I think that, well it depends on the organization, if they are selfish, and if they want only to benefit from you, so then of course passion is not enough, but if the organization itself is I don’t know interested in bringing, I don’t know good into the world, so then you should take people who are really passionate about it.” [Evelina, 23]*

Evelina indirectly criticizes the organizations for selective processes where a potential qualification might contradict with passion in terms of self-interests (Raymond 2007; Atlas 2008, p.33). Furthermore she argues for the importance of a contribution to the local community (Raymond 2007) as this influences her decision to volunteer abroad:

*“So for me the most important thing I guess is just to see the potential benefit, how the local community, you know, could benefit from this project.”[Evelina, 23]*

The Webpage WavesforDevelopment only gives a potential idea to what extent this might be the case, which is outlined by Evelina:

*“Oh well for me it’s not enough just to see it on their webpage or somewhere, I would really like, well it´s always nice to establish some kind of personal, like connections, so it would be nice actually to speak with a person in charge who is going to have, …to conduct this projects.” [Evelina, 23]*

*“But actually I have no idea, I …well actually I never did that kind of voluntourism before, so it would be really difficult, but yeah, I have no idea actually, because I don’t really understand, what do you want to do with local people or what is their kind of, you know…”.[Evelina, 23]*

Evelina requires more interpersonal connections and contact with the responsible persons in charge of Waves in order to gain a better understanding of the role or aim of the program or to what extent the programs contribute to being mutual beneficial (Raymond 2007). The potential of surfing towards this contribution and the role of surf-voluntourism will be part of section 4.2. However, in the following, the suggestions and ideas of Fabian already aim to provide ideas of how to reconcile potential conflicts outlined within the statements of Evelina in terms of interactions with the local community members:

*“Well I become a bit skeptical if I consider all the different programs that they are offering, they do so many things, so I can hardly imagine them to do any of these effectively. They do community outreach to help the people with their education and career aims, safe the environment and additionally they want to educate Entrepreneurs, well I think this to be quite ambitious.”[Fabian, 24]*

While Fabian sees a potential conflict between the different approaches and doubts its effectiveness due to the variation of these programs necessary for a sustainable development (Aabo and Ponting, 2011), he suggests to support the local community members to build a surfschool, that rather mirrors the angle of “entrepreneurship empowerment” (http://www.wavesfordevelopment.org/programs/) and requires the necessary skills encapsulated by the local community members:

*“What would be actually very cool, if there is the chance to try to teach the locals to open a surfschool. What does this imply? Well the people need to be able to surf, they need to speak English, so this could be a long-term project that could generate a lot of workspaces. But this could not be organized by one single person being there for 6 months, that would be long-term project, and this would probably be an approach where the link between Surfing and Community Development becomes rather tight, but like I said, it doesn’t necessarily be there.”[Fabian, 24]*

Fabian sees an opportunity for long-term approaches in order to implement the ideas sustainably in the community in Lobitis, Peru; a notion that coincides with the findings of Callanan and Thomas (2005 in Atlas 2008), who consider long-term approaches as more effective with regards to the benefits for the local communities. Additionally, Fabian ascribes relevance to synergy effects through implementing the natural potential for surfing into the lives of the local communities that could affect further developments:

*“It sounds like if there is someone owning a surf-school, then another one might be willing to open a restaurant for example, so the potential is definitely there.”[Fabian, 24]*

While Fabians statements on the one hand seem to refer to a potential, it does not become clear to what extent each community member could profit mutually. The role of surfing becomes interesting, based on the potential within the area of Lobitos (WIP, p.11) and the statements of Fabian:

*“So of course when there are 2-3 Surfspots then there is apparently the natural potential to make use of those.” [Fabian, 24]*

This section outlined aspects of the controversial perception regarding the costs and benefits of voluntourism. The following section reflects upon the role of surfing within the voluntourism approach of Waves.

## 4.2 Surf-Voluntourism: The role of surfing for the concept of voluntourism

While four out of five interviewees do not have experience with surfing, this sections also aims to reflect upon a possible lack of awareness about the possibilities within communities and the potential of surfing. Lara for example elaborates that from her first point of view after having examined the website she got the impression of a strong relation to surfing, which decreased her interest into Waves:

*“[…] the first impression, it is related to surfing, which is a topic I am not familiar with, I have never tried surfing, so for me it wouldn’t be the first choice probably, because I am more attracted to other volunteer programs I guess, for example teaching in a local school for example.”[Lara, 24]*

Furthermore this statement might outline a potential gap between the perceptions of students regarding the role of surfing and the actual implementation within the Programs of Waves.

While the statement of Lara reflects upon the impression of surfing being the main approach of the Organization Waves, the description of the programs rather outlines an integration as part of several voluntourism related programs (WIP, p.3).

Fabian suggests to integrate surfing into the lives of the local population:

*“That you try to make surfing part of their lives and not just kind of like a superficial thing, but I am not quite sure to what extent this is the case in Peru and if you can implement it there at all, or…” [Fabian, 24]*

Fabian questions the influence of surfing within the local communities and the possible extent of contribution which needs to be well-planned (Buckley, 2002 in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013).

Regarding the discussion in section 4.1, Fabian refers to **self-interest motives** regarding the sport of surfing and describes reasons for volunteering maybe more to strengthen the volunteers’ ego (Wearing 2003 in Atlas 2008), while surfing might be the main reason for the volunteer participants:

*“Ok people are coming there for surfing, but they also try to settle their social consciousness I would say a bit provocatively, so than of course it is a good thing to combine that, let’s say go surfing during the afternoon and during the morning maybe telling the people why they shouldn’t throw the garbage on the beach, well you cannot really find anything bad about it, but it is actually for, I don’t really know whom those programs are made for, so I am not quite sure if this really would attract me”. [Fabian, 24]*

While self-interest reasons in terms of stating a social volunteering participation in the CV (Jones, 2004) could be a significant motive to join surf-voluntourism, the statement by Fabian rather appears to outline that volunteers aim to combine their interests in surfing with the possibility of contributing to the local community, while surfing might be the main purpose of travel (Dolnicar & Fluker 2013 in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013). Waves seems to confirm this impression within their webstatement:

*“Go to surf, stay to serve; benefit people and communities with surf-travel” [http://www.wavesfordevelopment.org/]*

In addition to this statement, Fabian sees a chance that teaching the local community to surf could be a link in terms of fostering cross-cultural understanding (Ponting et. Al., 2005 in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013):

*“To teach the people how to surf, as the connector between them and us.” [Fabian, 24]*

In order to explain Fabians desire to potentially teach the local community members the sport of surfing, he furthermore explains his passion to participate in surfing:

*“It is just a sport that I am really enjoying and one I cannot participate on a regular basis when I am studying in Germany. That is why I would plan all my stays abroad according to the possibility of being able to surf, I can get philosophical now, why it is so much fun to surf, so if you want, I can do that….well within Surfing compared to other sports, why I think why I am enjoying it to such an extent it’s that within other sports you are most of the time on the land and with surfing, you are on the ocean, and you yourself are the fixed point and everything around you is moving and while surfing I don’t think about anything else than a beautiful wave… very meditative, exactly, so when I am sitting outside on the water and even if there are no Waves, that is already very beneficial.”* [Fabian, 24]

While he refers to meditative mental health benefits (Reynolds and Hritz, 2012), Fabians statements might reflect upon the importance of surfing towards the motives for surfers to take part in one of the diverse programs related to voluntourism (WIP). On the other hand, one can then argue to what extent the organization is attracting “voluntourists” due to the possibility to surf or to what extent the benefits of the local community are prioritized. Investigating upon the content of the Webpage, in the following the role of surfing combined with the controversial discussion towards the costs and benefits of voluntourism are analysed based on the “Waves for Development Info Pack” (WIP), available on the website of “WavesforDevelopment”:

Initially it is therefore important to state that Waves distinguishes between education and surf-voluntourism programs, while in the mission statement it remains rather unclear to what extent the five different programs are related to surf-voluntourism programs or educational programs:

*“Waves for Development creates life-enriching experiences in coastal communities through education programs that develop youth into healthy and empowered adults and surf voluntourism programs that engage travelers and transform their views of the world and themselves. Our community based programs promote:*

* *Cultural Exchange and Understanding*
* *Environmental Conservation*
* *Life Skills and Healthy Living*
* *Social Entrepreneurship*
* *Sustainable Tourism“ [WIP]*

Within the statement of Waves it remains unclear if the life-enriching experiences (r) relate to the members of the community or to the volunteers coming there and to what extent the educational programs are mutually beneficial (Raymond, 2007).

In the description of the Waves History (WIP), while on the first stance you might rather get the impression that the approach of surf-voluntourism mainly dedicates to the visiting travelers through statements like..:

*“The pilot project´s aim was to learn more about what could work in terms of education programming for local youth and surf voluntourism programming for visiting travelers.,” [WIP, p. 4]*

…further considerations outline a positive feedback from the side of the local community, resulting into further surf-voluntourism approaches, which appear to imply an involvement of local community members (Ponting et al., 2005 in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013):

*“The success of the pilot project and positive response from the community led to ongoing programming organized by local leaders and a second group of surf-voluntourists.” [WIP, p.4]*

The idea of involving surfing into the life of the local community members in Lobitos as formulated by Fabian (24) resulted out of a less significance towards education (WIP, p.5) and on the one hand appear to relate to the chances of sport tourism for community development (Chalip, 2004 in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013), while the following investigation additionally might imply that education into sports and helping the local communities to make use of their own resources implies a rather important role of surfing. While 90 % of the Population in Lobitos depend on the outcomes of the fishing industry (WIP, p.5), the potential of surfing for this region has been investigated within the Lobitos Tourism Development Plan in 2006 (WIP, p.5). In order to elaborate on the establishment of surf-voluntourism and the role of surfing, within the WIP it is furthermore stated, that:

*“National statistics (www.inei.gob.pe) report that less than half of the youth graduate high school. As surfers, we believe we can make a difference in the lives of youth through education.” [WIP, p.5]*

Related to the problem of overcrowding within surf-tourism (Dolnicar and Fluker, 2003 ; Buckley, 2002 in O´Brien and Ponting 2013), the mutual beneficial outcomes (Raymond 2007) in local communities in Peru have failed in the past due to benefitting individuals rather than the whole community (WIP, p.5). While the following investigations by Waves see a potential reason in a lack of education, Waves believes surfing to be a tool for guaranteeing a sustainable “surf” tourism development through empowering the local community members making use of their potential and natural resources through a “movement away from economically neoliberal approaches to development” and fostering of “cross-cultural-understanding where host communities are central in defining their own standards” (Ponting et al., 2005 in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013):

*“Surfers, by nature, wish to reside and eat meals in close proximity to the ocean as to reduce travel to and from the surf-breaks. This concentration of tourism has resulted in a small number of individuals benefitting from tourist spending in Lobitos, but it has had little impact on improving employment opportunities or living standards of the majority of the local Lobitos population…The plan for Development…mentions the issues, but unfortunately fails to outline any plan for how to achieve a more equal distribution of tourist spending. By offering opportunities to youth in the surf tourism space, we believe surfing can be a tool or means for a holistic sustainable surf tourism solution” [WIP, p.5].*

While the above statement already outlines a relation between surfing, education and the environment in terms of a proximity to the ocean, the term “surf-voluntourism” rather appears to imply the surfing component as being integrated into a larger concept involving English educational classes, environmental education (WIP) as well as empowering the local community in terms of social entrepreneurship activities, following the suggestions of Fabian in the previous chapter:

“*…Waves stuff and volunteers offer Swimming, Surfing and environmental education classes and activities such as beach clean-ups with a strategic focus on education…On occasion, Waves makes English and Social Entrepreneurship Instruction available to interested community members and organizations such as the fisherman´s Union.”[WIP]*

Surfing appears to be a tool to strengthen cultural exchange between the community in Lobitos and the volunteers towards what Fabian (24) described as a “link between them and us” and what Ponting et.al (2005 in O´Brien and Ponting, 2013, p.159) defined as a “systematic attempt to foster cross-cultural understanding”. While the programs offered for voluntourists who are interested in participating in Waves on the one hand seems to have the character of a surfing school, it also implies a cultural understanding through a potential participation in Spanish lessons as well as implemented the local culture into a voluntourism approach (Wearing 2003):

*“Other cool things to do: ….surfing lessons….Spanish lessons…Local tourism” [WIP, p.11]*

While being included into different voluntourism approaches, surfing receives an increasing role according to “a typical day” [WIP, p.10] within the organization and based on the following statement:

*“With such perfect Waves in Lobito’s, we recognize the importance of providing plenty of free surfing time to enjoy the surf and the surrounding area. As a result, we ensure every morning is free surfing time, and most afternoons. The program is designed to provide an effective balance between work and play”.* [WIP]

## 4.3 What are potential motives and barriers for students to take part in surf-voluntourism in Lobitos Peru?

*“Ok, I am travelling mainly since I am 17 by myself, I went to Australia a couple of months, to visit a highschool, and I went to America to study abroad for one semester, and, what else did I do? Well, I came here, if that counts, I studied in Holland for my bachelor, and last year I went to Thailand, which is maybe the most interesting thing, because I did some volunteering, for 2,5 weeks, and then I travelled around for a couple of weeks.”* [Lara, 24]

*“It gave me a very good first insight into the...workings, and country, and people, so in that perspective it was really helpful, so it really helped me to get an approach to the country and it was really easy for me to travel afterwards”* [Lara, 24]

*“Ok, it was very beneficial, I thought about this before my studying and since I....I wanted to, yeah I had this different approach and different access and I, so for me it was really helpful to get a start and I would absolutely do it again, especially with those kind of non-western-countries, cause I think it’s really difficult to get access to those countries, because it’s very different from our perceptions and values and everything, so especially in those countries it would be very useful to volunteer, and maybe the next time even more local stays and involving more local people.”* [Lara, 24]

Laras statements outline a process of learning through interacting with people from different cultures and backgrounds (AVSO) while her second statement reflects upon the motives to volunteer again due to her **former travel experiences** and experiences within a “non-western” destination (Atlas, 2008) within her volunteering work in Thailand. While Atlas (2008) referred to the **characteristics of the projects** to influence the decision about participation for voluntourists, in relation to the Organization WavesforDevelopment Lara reflects upon the programs after having researched the webpage in the following way:

*“Yeah, the first impression, it is related to surfing, which is a topic I am not familiar with, I have never tried surfing, so for me it wouldn’t be the first choice probably, because I am more attracted to other volunteer programs I guess, for example teaching in a local school for example.”* [Lara, 24.]

*“Ok, but my first impression is that I only see surfing, so that’s the problem, no it’s not a problem, but its limiting my perspective, but yeah you can also do teaching, ok, that’s*” [Lara, 24.]

*“If I click on the program, they are now more appealing to me, because there are headlines like ”community outreach" or "environmental", so that could be very interesting for me, more interesting than the surf-component maybe”* [Lara, 24.]

Lara reflects upon surfing to be a rather less relevant factor within a potential choice to volunteer within the organization WavesforDevelopment based on her unfamiliarity with the sport, which outlines a potential barrier due to not feeling the necessary **skills and talents (**Reynoldts and Hritz, 2012). Rather Lara would be interested in one of the Waves programs being related to educational or environmental purposes (WIP). While further statements of Lara outline that she perceives the programs to be of rather broad nature…

*“Yeah, it’s not bad the program, it sounds like very broad headlines, and it can be pretty much everything”.* [Lara, 24.]

…the interaction with the **local community members (Jones 2004)** and their involvement appear to be the most important component for Lara based on her previous travel experiences (Atlas 2008).

Related to the perspective of **students and the potential of volunteering in a gap-year** (Jones 2004 in Atlas, 2008), Lara perceived a development in terms of the desire to break out of travelling to be mainly for the purpose of education:

*“Absolutely, absolutely, it was always for educational purposes, which is really good, because it also gave me a really interesting approach and active to the country I was interacting with... for example in Australia I interacted with the high school students, so I could see how they live and how they act on everyday life, and in America I had university students, so it was always the contact that gave me an interesting perspective. But at some point I wanted to go in a different way and wanted to a bit move away from the educational backgrounds”* [Lara, 24.]

While the section 4.2 reflected upon the role of surfing in terms of an educational component, Anastasia, similar to Lara, would rather be attracted by one of the Community Based Programs of Waves (WIP, p.3) than through the surf-component:

*“Not surfing, but other programs would be suitable for me, but I think that creating some fun while doing something less fun like cleaning the beach”.* [Anastasia, 32.]

While Anastasia herself wouldn’t rely her personal travel motivation on the surf-component, her statement outlines the potential of combining the **physical “fun” activity** (references, Jones 2004 in Atlas 2008) of surfing with the motivation to “**help people”** and **contributing to the community** (Jones 2004 in Atlas 2008), characterized by a fun-activity like surfing in order to fulfill self-interests while simultaneously fulfilling the obligations and duties (AFS in Atlas 2008, p.33) in terms of a beach clean-up. You can argue that Anastasias statement accordingly rather reflects upon how **altruistic as well as self-interest motives** could motivate students to get involved in surf-voluntourism.

Furthermore the following statements by Anastasia appears to reflect upon the chances of surfing in fostering cross-cultural understanding (Ponting et. al 2005 in O´Brien and Ponting 2013), while challenges within volunteering are perceived to be within the social interaction, while her reflections assume her main motivation for taking part in surf-voluntourism relates to the interaction with the local community members (Jones 2004):

*“You could always surf together, even if there is another person coming from another culture...but when you are volunteering, that means that you have to coordinate, you have to talk to each other, you have to learn about this person, and you are actually doing something good, at the same time, you will get some experience with that.”* [Anastasia, 32.]

*“Because that gives me an idea about the culture...to investigate actually, how are these people actually living, how are they treating each other, how is the relationship to each other, what kind of local food”. [Anastasia, 32.]*

Kenny reflects about his experiences within an exchange in Ireland and shows how the unawareness about the possibilities while being abroad could be a barrier towards the motivations and the convincing of students to volunteer in the Organisations Waves:

*“So I have these two friends and they were born in Denmark like me, born in this town, they always lived here, they are all 26 years old now, and I’ve been feeling the urge for many years to go and live somewhere else, but they don’t, they don’t understand, they don’t have any wish to go anywhere for longer than a week.”* [Kenny, 26.]

Furthermore, the conduction of the interview with Mirella and Kenny reflect upon the motivations from a perspective of a couple, stating that:

*“But I don’t think it’s unrealistic, because if we want to go to a country where none of us would know anybody, why not I mean this seems like […].and really good way to benefit other people and ourselves.” [Kenny, 26]*

According to Kenny, motives to take part in Waves appear to imply that both will find an opportunity to contribute within the program and outline a mutual benefit in terms of altruistic and self-interest motives (Raymond, 2007 ; AFS (in Atlas 2008)).

Referring to surfing, Kenny is skeptical towards bringing the necessary qualifications (Motivational Components for Surf-Voluntourism), while his statement rather implies the willingness to learn this skill (Jones 2004) while contributing to the communities with other skills that he is bringing:

*“This has nothing to do with the sports, I only swim that well, but yeah, if I could learn it, I mean, but they, they also write here that. That it’s about the qualities, the qualification that you bring, and I don’t bring the surf qualifications, but I am sure that I might be able to bring something else”.* [Kenny, 26.]

The following statement by Mirella contributes to the discussion about if “passion” and the “willingness to help” should be considered to be a valuable motive and qualification to bring to the community. Related to a potential contribution in the social entrepreneurship program (WIP, p.3), she states on the one hand that she is willing to engage as a motivator, while simultaneously being unaware about the ability to keep the spirit:

*“Mentor community members…that is basically one of the things, I love to be a motivator and sometimes I have this power in me, that when somebody is in need, that, you know, I give everything I have and I really did a change, you know, I don’t know if I can keep that up but I really would like to see the opportunities if I could be for example a motivator or some kind of, you know…and I think that would be a great start for me for example to try that for, I don’t know, three months, for example…combine that with a summer vacation let’s say, but still engaging with the kids, you know, and feel like contribute, so that would be nice”..* [Mirella, 23.]

While you could argue that this statement by Mirella reflects upon altruistic motivations (Raymond 2007), it also contributes to the discussion if self-interests can be interrelated with altruistic ones (AFS in Atlas 2008). Based on the explanation of Mirella, her self-interest results out of the desire to support people in need, as an altruistic motive. On the other hand, the awareness about the needs of the community members might require further qualifications. In regards to passion, Kenny sees a chance in the collaboration between the volunteers, believing into the spirit of working with likeminded people (Reynolds and Hritz 2012) that might strengthen the teamwork:

*“I think that this sort of people not liking each other and people not being able to work together, you would see that much less and much more rarely in voluntourism, because people are coming together for a higher reason like in a way they have a common attitude that they have to get something done, and they are not interested in it for a personal outcome, they are not competing for better grades”.* [Kenny, 26.]

Evelina also mentions the competition to play a minor role within volunteering and relates her motivation to develop her skills (Raymond 2007), seek something new and gaining new experiences and knowledge as well as broadening your horizon and gaining a new perspective (Jones 2004):

*“Well it was nice because, as you know, now it’s kind of difficult to find a job or an internship or something, because the world is very competitive, so volunteering is a very nice opportunity actually to develop your skills and learn something new…so the main goal was to gain some new experiences and knowledge…and I think voluntourism is a very nice thing, especially when you are young, that might help you realize what you want to do in your life.”* [Kenny, 26.]

Focusing on the advantages, Evelina appears to be a bit concerned about the exact motivations for a potential engagement in one of the Programs of WavesforDevelopment:

*“Well it´s actually very difficult to answer, what would motivate me”.* [Evelina, 23.]

She furthermore elaborates:

*“Well of course, it’s a nice destination, it’s very attractive, I guess everybody would like to go to such a place and well to this place for a longer time but at the same time to do something good, but for sure as, let’s say from my perspective and taking my situation I had to consider like many factors in terms of, I don’t know, money, and the place of living, and what would I do, and the description of my tasks and I guess the main motivation would be to know what I am going to do there.”* [Evelina, 23.]

While Waves states within their program-description that tasks are going to be found for everyone being interested in participating (WIP, p.7), Evelina focuses on the importance of getting an exact idea about her tasks beforehand, appearing to influence her decision to consider participating in the Organisation Waves. Further barriers are related to monetary aspects and the living conditions.

The extent of benefitting other people in the community (Jones 2007) as well as the freedom within her tasks gain further importance:

*“How much, I don’t know, let’s say I would like to do something on my own, come up with something new if it’s about development, so how much freedom do they give me, but mainly it’s about the tasks I guess, how much I could learn here, and of course how much the people could benefit from me, because its volunteering, it’s about bringing good thing to the community”.* [Evelina, 23.]

Based on Evelinas personal background in linguistics (Atlas 2008), she mentions an interest in teaching the locals in English based on her own skills she could contribute with.

Regarding potential barriers to participate in one of the programs in the Organisation WavesforDevelopment, Evelina sees a problem within the rather complicated application Process (<http://www.wavesfordevelopment.org/surf-voluntourism/volunteer/>). For her, the programs are perceived rather as an internship than as volunteering:

*“Because as we are now moving forward it seems that it’s a bit complicated to get into this program”.* [Evelina, 23.]

*“Yeah I mean it can discourage people only just through filling out this form”.* [Evelina, 23.]

*“It would discourage me a bit, because I am a bit like more person who is […] but it’s difficult to explain what […] I think people who are volunteers they don’t like this official thing or filling in forms…it’s just too complicated and they might just get stocked in the middle of the process”* [Evelina, 23.]

*“Well for me it does look more like an internship”* [Evelina, 23.]

The statement by Evelina shows a potential lack of motivation to volunteer, if the passion alone doesn’t qualify due to reflecting upon the self-interest angle, but volunteers are encouraged to fill out application forms in order to reflect upon their motivation to volunteer.

*“So maybe in the middle you feel like you are not good enough. So maybe if I would start filling it in, at some point I would realize, ok maybe this is not for me, and maybe, I don’t know, but it depends on how many people they have”* [Evelina, 23.]

The elaboration of Evelina shows a potential for volunteers of being discouraged by the Waves application form that might hinder volunteers to apply for this organization. Especially as participating in volunteering appears to be linked to the possibilities of learning new tasks and gaining new perspectives (Jones 2004 in Atlas 2008). Building up on the term about the aspect of learning, Evelina reflects upon passion to volunteer as an important motivational factor that simultaneously ensures the learning curve during participating in volunteering:

*“Ok[…]imagine you have good qualifications, but you are not that passionate, and imagine that I have the really passion, so that I am more than sure that I will learn, and that I will bring much better things to the place, because if I were passionate it means that I will be passionate to learn.”* [Evelina, 23.]

Rather than reflecting upon the component about passion as well as the qualifications, Fabian sees the aspect of paying in order to act as a voluntourist in Waves (Atlas 2008, pp.10 ; WIP, p.8) as limiting towards his motivation to join the Waves Program:

*“Well, I just had a brief view over the webpage, but first of all I must say that the high costs were pretty demotivating. For 400-600 Dollars per week you can go surfing pretty well already in Indonesia, well of course without helping people though, but all in all this would probably be the reason for me not to participate in these programs.”* [Fabian, 24.]

The statement by Fabian might suggest that surfers who want to volunteer could be more attracted by the sport itself than the contribution towards the community (Rando 2004). Motivating to join Waves for Fabian therefore appears to be the role of surfing within the voluntourism approach, which according to him should be a rather elementary one:

*“What I wouldn’t find interesting, or it might won’t catch the point with surfing, would be if it was like normal Community Development Projects, where you, for example would go into a school to teach English for example and go surfing in the afternoon, while it is of course definitely better than not to go surfing at all and only to teach English, but for me the link between Community Development and surfing should be rather tight.”* [Fabian, 24].

Related to the Programs of Waves (WIP), Fabian views the connection of the programs towards the role of surfing as important in order for him to consider participating into surf-voluntourism (references). Furthermore, he argues about the potential of surf-voluntourism from a participant perspective to combine altruistic with self-interests (Raymond 2007):

*“Yeah, and I think this fits relatively in Surf-Communities, where you can combine these two things, you are a surfer, but you are also living in Germany and cannot go to surf that often and you want to do something social and then you exactly have what you just mentioned, you are doing something altruistic, but you are also fulfilling your own interests, so in this case its quite an interesting approach”* [Fabian, 24.]

# Conclusion

## 5.1 The controversial discussion about the benefits and costs of voluntourism, its reflection within the Organisation WavesforDevelopment and the role of surfing

The importance of receiving enough information about the local communities has been perceived a major challenge within the Analysis. Some aspects about the programs of Waves rather reflect upon a lack of the desired cross-cultural understanding due to volunteers being placed in separate homes. Others show the potential towards a mutual cross-cultural learning through approaches that aim to teach the local community members in English while Spanish lessons are offered for the volunteers.

The approach of WavesforDevelopment shows an increasing interest in helping the local community members to become self-dependent through their empowerment rather than the tasks to be undertaken by voluntourists. The balance between altruistic and self-interest reasons appears to be reflected through mutually benefitting voluntourists and local community members. An implementation of an application process therefore aims to identify the motives of the voluntourists and to reflect upon their qualification.

The biggest challenge for the future of Waves will be to ensure a sustainable tourism Development due the scope of the different programs and their interrelation, while long-term participation in the programs appear to gain extended significance. In this regards it becomes furthermore challenging to guarantee a mutual benefit through surf-tourism for the local communities.

Therefore surfing is integrated within the different programs of Waves, aiming to act as a link to foster cross-cultural understanding. Accordingly surfing has the potential to contribute to the controversial discussion in terms of providing an activity that fulfills altruistic and self-interests for the voluntourist through embedding it into the concept of voluntourism, defined through the phenomenon of “surf-voluntourism”. The sport of surfing is therefore integrated into a larger purpose of educating the local community to make use of their own resources, linking the educational programs towards the potential within the local communities.

## 5.2 Possible motives and barriers for students to take part in surf-voluntourism

## 5.2.1 Motives:

Reflecting the motives for voluntourism in general, the interaction and extent of contact with local people has been one of the main motives according to the analysis, potentially influenced by interviewees background within cross-cultural-studies and international relation. The analysis has furthermore shown that former travel experiences as well as those within former projects affect the motives for participating into one of the programs of WavesforDevelopment.

A balance between altruistic and self-interest motives through the physical activity of surfing and the contribution towards the community while engaging in one of the programs could increase the attractiveness of the Organization.

The interaction with the community members, fostered through the activity of surfing, could on the one hand be motivating through sharing the enjoyment of an adventure sport, while contributing to the voluntourists desire to learn new skills and seek knowledge.

Analysis furthermore gives hints towards a self-motivated attitude on the side of the voluntourists to engage into the programs from an altruistic standpoint. Therefore the contribution towards the different programs rather than the extent of being attracted by the programs content shows the willingness to help on the sides of the participants.

In relation to teamwork, one interviewee outlined a common attitude towards the goals as a motivational factor in itself.

While a self-motivation has been emerged within all the interviewees, the ability of adapting the tasks due to the backgrounds and skills of the volunteers is seen as motivating towards the chance of contributing with the specific skills. A potential barrier accordingly is perceived through the need to be aware about these tasks in advance.

From the perspective of surfing, the links between the adventure sport and the extent of contribution to the local community could gain a rather important angle in order to motivate surfers to participate into the programs.

## 5.2.2 Barriers:

The lack of experience in surfing has been mentioned as a potential barrier due to a lack of the necessary skills and unawareness about a possible contribution. Furthermore the interviewees were skeptical about the programs in terms of its effectiveness which requires the tasks to become clearer before considering a participation into Waves. One of the interviewees felt discouraged by the requirement of filling out an application form in order to participate in volunteering, which could arouse a misconception with an internship and have a negative effect on the volunteers “willingness to help”.

The donation in terms of paying for the volunteering experience has been mentioned by a surfer and could potentially influence the travel decision if surfing is the main purpose of travelling and might be seen as a potential challenge for further research.

# 5.3 Recommendations for further research

While the research discussed potential motives for students to take part in surf-voluntourism in Lobitos Peru and investigated on the ethical discussion of voluntourism in terms of being mutual beneficial for the volunteers as well as the host community members, further research could investigate more intensively on the issue of sustainability and a reconciliation of the different programs that relate to the phenomenon of surfvoluntourism.

Furthermore, the role of the Waves Corps Chapter, where students and volunteers can contribute through own project ideas appears to be an interesting approach for upcoming researchers due to their orientation on sustainable surf tourism and the possibility of engaging more independently. The outcomes within this thesis could therefore be used on the one hand for the organization WavesforDevelopment to identify the perception of the interviewed students and their motives and barriers, on the other hand as a starting point for students to come up with own project ideas in collaboration with the Organization WavesforDevelopment. While this thesis outlined the importance of the knowledge about the tasks for the volunteers to be undertaken, accordingly an investigation towards one specific program of the Organization could be investigated towards the motives and barriers for students to take part in.

# Research Quality

There are different criteria in order to assess the qualitative angle of this research, namely Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Confirmability. This section aims to critically discuss these quality measures in order to explain the reader how the above analysis as well as the upcoming conclusion can be understood.

## 6.1 Credibility

The controversial discussion about the costs and the benefits within voluntourism has mainly been part within the theoretical discussion in this thesis in order to elaborate further on the role of surfing in the surfvoluntourism Organisation “WavesforDevelopment”. In order to investigate the phenomenon of surf-voluntourism and due to the qualitative angle in this research, the critical discussion about the costs and benefits of voluntourism, mainly towards the local community but also for the voluntourists, has been chosen in order to identify relevant issues within the Organisation WavesforDevelopment. Additionally due to several problems within surf-tourism and its influence towards local communities, the decision to concentrate on the Organisation WavesforDevelopment as a first step to ensure credibility in the findings (Wahyuni, 2012) has been made due to them combining the surfing component with the voluntourism component and linking the characteristics into a new phenomenon called “surf-voluntourism”. Furthermore they involve the Organisation “Waves for Development” according to their detailed description of several development programs from multi-perspectives in order to help the local community of Lobitos to develop. According to Hansen´s (2004) approach to project assessment, who argues that the learning competencies during a thesis can gain more importance than decisions upon the use of existing sets of knowledge, in this thesis interpreted as theories, the researcher sees the discussion within this thesis as more important than the choice of theories. On the one hand, this is done due to the first research question consisting of a controversial discussion in itself while the theoretical framework partly consists of discussions regarding voluntourism. Hansen (2004) additionally mentions that such a perspective views the set of theoretical knowledge rather as a “tool serving the learning and the exercise of a competence rather than as an end in itself” (Hansen, 2004, p.212).

## 6.2 Transferability

While the findings within this qualitative research are based on the reflection of the controversial discussion about the costs and benefits within voluntourism within the Organization WavesforDevelopment, due to investigating the role of surfing, the findings might be related to similar cases and organizations where a combination of surfing and voluntourism plays a role. Due to the research that already has been done about the concept of voluntourism, surf-tourism and the motivations to take part in, the considerations within this thesis about the phenomenon of surf-voluntourism could be used in other Case-Organizations to identify the potential as well as the motives and barriers for students to take part in based on the work of Flyvbjerg (2006), who rejected the widespread assumption that you cannot generalize from a single case. Accordingly different case Organizations relating to the term of surf-voluntourism could be evaluated through the findings within this thesis.

## 6.3 Dependability

Dependability deals with the possibility of conducting a similar research framework within upcoming research projects (Wahyuni 2012). Unstructured interviews with students as well as the investigation of the detailed WavesforDevelopmentInfoPack therefore aimed to highlight the perception of the students towards the discussion about benefits and costs in voluntourism and identify their motives, while the InfoPack was used to project these issues as well as reflect about its implementation within the case Organization WavesforDevelopment. In addition to this, similar cases could be studied according to the information they provide on their webpages as well as a critical investigation towards to what extent the Organization might be aware about the costs and benefits within voluntourism.

## 6.4 Confirmability

Conformability deals with reducing the individual bias in this research. While the section about axiological considerations deals with the researcher personal values and beliefs, Bryman additionally argues that “complete objectivity is no possible in social research” (Bryman 2012, p. 392) is not possible. Therefore the initial idea within this research of conducting a self-study has been rejected within the interaction and according to the supervisions feedback through conducting qualitative interviews instead.

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# Appendices

The transcribed interviews as well as the Waves for Development Info Pack (WIP) are available on the attached USB stick.