Title

"From a Mobile to a Nearly Immobile World: Stranded Travellers amid COVID-19 pandemic"

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Abstract

This investigation sees the unveiling of the travellers' experience of strandedness in a foreign country due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Particularly, this investigation focuses on the psychological, emotional and economic impacts perceived by highly mobile travellers as the world began its sudden shift from a mobile status to a nearly immobile one. Accordingly, a theoretical framework was designed to encompass such shift; so that relevant theories from existing literature could be encompassed. Globalisation and mobilities theories have been taken into account, that have aided the researchers in disclosing the paradoxes and inequalities issues inherent to today's hypermobility of some; additionally, the appearance of a new figure into the spectrum of dangerous mobilities, namely, the traveller as vector on the move, as she/he acquires and transmit the virus, further challenges today's global regime of (im)mobilities. The Tourism and Travel industry has shown both high degrees of vulnerability to macro environmental shocks as well as high resilience. Nevertheless, the findings, gathered through online semi-structured in-depth interviews with a total of twelve stranded travellers, revealed that the psychological and emotional spheres of travellers have been the most impacted. High levels of fear, stress, anxiety and depression being the most reported; the main triggers for such emotions have been episodes of stigmatization and xenophobia experienced by the respondents while stranded, with additional economic uncertainty given by the pandemic, constant fear of falling ill, as well as the negative implications of having to highly relay on social media to access and exchange information on their mental health. Finally, with regards to the post pandemic era, the study has shown the respondents' unaltered desire to travel, regardless of the deep psychological, emotional and economic impacts endured. However, as the world is transitioning to a new normal, changes within the travellers' behaviour, industry and governments are to be expected.

Keywords: *Pandemic, Tourism, Travellers, Stranded, Covid-19, Mobility, Motility, Immobility, Psychological impact, Emotional impact, Economic Impact, Dangerous Mobilities, Hypermobility, Inequalities, Crisis Management, Anxiety, Stress, Fear.*

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CHAPTER I – INTRODUCTION

1.1 THE BACKGROUND

On December 31st 2019, China alerted the World Health Organisation (WHO) of an unknown virus believed to be responsible for causing *fever*, *cough*, *fatigue* and significant *mortality* as well as leading to several cases of an unusual *pneumonia-like* illness in the city of Wuhan, in the province of Hubei - China (Mao et al., 2020; AlJazeera, 2020). By the time the city of Wuhan was put into "lockdown" through a combination of regional and individual quarantine measures, global air transport had already carried the virus to the most disparate regions and continents of the world (Gössling et al., 2020). Accordingly, while super-spreading events around the world made it possible for the infection rate to accelerate through community transmission, undetected virus carriers travelled unnoticed, so that the novel coronavirus promptly became a worldwide threat to national security (Gössling et al., 2020; Bande, 2020). Since it was initially reported, the illness now known and referred to as *Coronavirus Disease* 2019 (COVID-19) has spread swiftly across the globe, leading the World Health Organisation (WHO) to declare it a *pandemic* on the 11th of March 2020 (IOM, 2020). Although the real total number of cases remains unknown, considering that testing is limited in most countries, as of the 20th of August, Covid-19 is reported to be affecting 213 countries and territories around the world and two international conveyances (Gössling, et al., 2020; WorldMeters, 2020). With countries around the world reporting new cases daily, the number of confirmed cases surpass 33 million, with approximately 1 million deaths reported globally since the outbreak began (IOM, 2020; WorldMeters, 2020).

Notably, with no vaccine to prevent the disease, as well as limited medical interventions available to treat it, countries all over the world, to avoid mass infection and to prevent medical systems from collapsing, actively halted the *usual* worldwide movement and gathering of people (Gössling et al., 2020; Chen, 2020; Bande, 2020). Particularly, the governments of most countries enacted various forms of behavioural methods, also referred to as non-pharmaceutical interventions, including hygienic practices, lockdowns, social distancing, closure of schools, offices, universities and all those non-essential businesses\workplaces, cancelling or postponing small to mega

events, as well as introducing bans on gatherings of people over certain numbers (Gössling et al., 2020). Simultaneously, the movement of people has been halted internationally, regionally and locally through travel restrictions that very quickly affected national economies (ibid). As a consequence, over only a matter of weeks, international and domestic tourism declined precipitously and governments were pressured to help travellers return to their home countries, which, in the case of important outbound markets, involved hundreds of thousands of citizens (Gössling et al., 2020). In other words, as the world began to close down, a key consequence of these mobility restrictions has been the *stranding* abroad of people formerly on the move (IOM, 2020). But *who* is on the move today? Or better yet, who is not? According to Sheller and Urry (2006):

"all the world seems to be on the move" (…) asylum seekers, international students, terrorists, members of diasporas, holidaymakers, business people, sport stars, refugees, backpackers, commuters, the early retired, young mobile professionals, prostitutes, armed forces (...) these and many others fill the world's airports, buses, ships and trains" (p. 207).

It appears evident that the scale of this movement is immense and yet, still growing, even so after terrorist attacks such as 9/11 and the Bali bombings, multiple suicide bombings of transport networks, epidemics and other global catastrophes (Sheller and Urry, 2006). Notably, in the year 2018, according to the UNWTO (2020), worldwide international tourists' arrivals increased by 6% to 1.4 billion compared to the previous year; in the year 2019, international tourist arrivals worldwide reached 1.5 billion. The year 2020 was forecast to also be a year of tourism growth, however, due to high degrees of uncertainty, prospects for the year have been downgraded several times since the outbreak, as the world is facing an unprecedented health, social and economic emergency (UNWTO, 2020). Although the outlook remains highly uncertain, depending on the speed of the containment, the duration of travel restrictions and shutdown of borders, it is forecast that the number of international tourist arrivals will fall by at least 60-80% in 2020, putting millions of jobs at risk (UNWTO, 2020; Hudson, 2020; WTTC, 2020). It might be interesting to note that, since the 1990s, the tourism industry has weathered three major negative demand shock, roughly one per decade, whereby the novel Covid-19 represents the fourth (Chen, 2020). Although the tourism

industry is familiar to negative demand shocks, the contraction of the tourism economy caused by the Covid-19 outbreak is simply unprecedented (Chen, 2020). It appears evident how greatly the measures to counter-act this pandemic, such as restricted mobility and social distancing, have affected tourism, which has been argued to have largely ceased since March 2020 (Gössling et al., 2020). Since June 2020, however, as daily cases in Europe and Western Pacific regions began to decline, a number of destinations have started the process of slowly re-opening their country to travellers (UNCTAD, 2020).

1.2 OUR INVESTIGATION

It is in this very unique and profoundly challenging historical context that our investigation takes form and place; from what has been encompassed throughout the background chapter, the world, even if for a limited period of time, could be argued to have went from a mobile status to a nearly immobile one. It is important, at this point, to make the reader aware that both researchers found themselves stranded in Indonesia, Bali - amid and due to Covid-19 outbreak. While stranded, both researchers could feel this shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world as their attempts to move and travel to ultimately go home kept failing as the world slowly closed down before their eyes. On these grounds, this thesis sets out to investigate, and possibly unveil, *the tourist's experience of going from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, with the result of being stranded due to Covid-19 pandemic*. Specifically, our investigation intends to focus on the *psychological*, *emotional* and *economic* impacts of being stranded.

As it has been previously argued, today *"the whole world seems to be on the move"* (Sheller and Urry, 2006; p.207). In addition to this, however, it is important to stress that while the mobility of some people might be enhanced in virtue of new places and technologies, at the same time and in virtue of that, the immobility of others might be heightened (ibid). In other words, a discourse around heighten *mobility* is implicitly a discourse around exacerbated *immobility*. Accordingly, this research intends to focus mainly, but not solely, on that specific group of travellers that until the pandemic have experienced high levels of mobility. In other words, travellers from the so-called *"fast lines"* of the world (Sheller and Urry, 2006; p. 207), also referred to as travellers from

the "Global North" (Odeh, 2010). According to Odeh (2010), politics, technology, demography, wealth and development are broad indicators that distinguish Global North economies from Global South economies; the former are characterized by greater wealth, democratic governance, technological development, peace and stability, whereas the latter by war, conflict, poverty, anarchy and tyranny (Odeh, 2010). Said North/South divide is shown in Image 1 below:
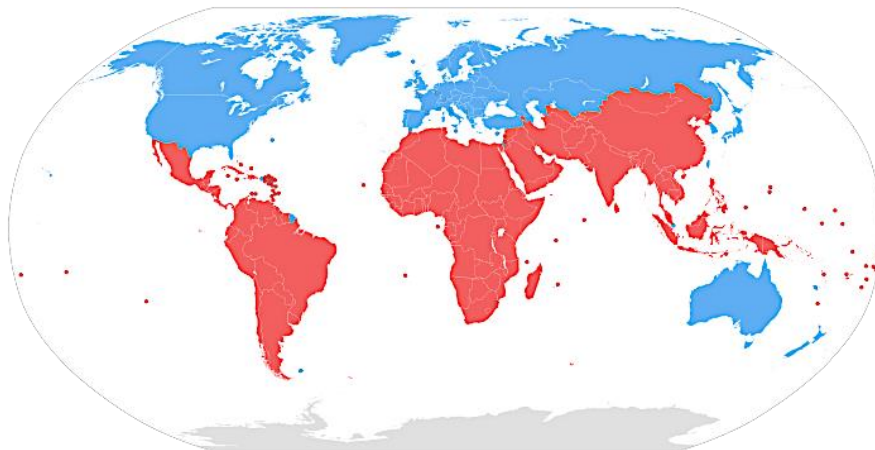
Image 1: Map of North/South Divide Countries | Blue: Global North – Red: Global South | Barileva (2019) available [online] at: https://medium.com/@vesabarileva/the-north-south-divide-of-countries-and-the-entire-world-e656ba588c8b.

It could be hence argued that travellers from the Global North have greater means of being mobile compared to those on the *"slow lines"* from Global South economies (Sheller and Urry, 2006; Odeh, 2010). In the Global North "category", there are, however, a number of individuals that are *more mobile* than average, referred to as *"hypermobile"* travellers (Adams, 1999; p. 95). Notably, increases in mobility levels begun to be critically reviewed by the literature, that focused on outlining not only hidden environmental costs, but also social challenges, such as the widening in disparity between rich and poor (Adams, 1999). It is evident that views on mobilities, and particularly on enhanced mobilities, are complex and, at times, even paradoxical. As argued by Shamir (2005) in Guittet (2017) although *some* people experience heighten mobility, the world does not seem to be a borderless place where mobility is enhanced, it rather seems an increasingly securitised place, whereby social and political exclusion are on the rise. This investigation recognizes issues of movement, of too little movement or too much, or of the wrong type or of at the wrong time; issues that are central not only to many lives and many organisations but also to this thesis.

Such issues will be encompassed and dealt with throughout Chapter II – Literature Review.

1.3 PROBLEM FORMULATION

With the above in mind, this thesis intends to further explore these current troubled times, that might have caused travellers from the *fast lines* (Sheller and Urry, 2006) to experience an unprecedented and, to some, even surprising feeling of immobility, or as Hage (2009) in Birtchnell and Büscher (2011) describe as a sense of *"stuckedness"* (p. 5); a sudden and unprecedented shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world that has left thousands of travellers stranded in different foreign countries. The following are thus the objectives that will be carried out throughout this investigation:

(1) ***To locate this research within the context of existing and relevant literature that relates to (im)mobility theories and the tourist experience of strandedness;***

(2) ***To identify and critically discuss insights of tourists that might have experienced this shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, causing them to experience strandedness;***

(3) ***To critically discuss travellers' psychological, emotional and economic spheres in dealing with such crisis.***

(4) ***To investigate from the respondents' insights the transformative affordance of Covid-19, as a way to unveil possible future travel trends and tourists' behaviours.***

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This current pandemic has already given proof of how greatly the COVID-19 outbreak and travel are inextricably linked (Hudson, 2020). As previously mentioned, the Tourism and Travel industry, characterized by a high degree of vulnerability to environmental, political, socio-economic risks, has learned throughout the years how to be resilient to such shocks, proving to be capable of bouncing back from crises and outbreaks such as terrorism attacks, plane crashes, Ebola, SARS, Zika, tsunamis and earthquakes (Sigala, 2020). Notwithstanding that, and although the industry is forecast

to recover, many within the field of tourism state: *"travel will never be the same"* (Hudson, 2020; Fallows et al., 2020; Gössling et al., 2020). Particularly, Sigala (2020), similarly to Zenker and Kock (2020), stress on how this pandemic is qualitatively and quantitatively different from previous *crises* and *disasters* the industry had to face. Particularly, the unprecedented circumstances and impacts of COVID-19 seems to be an omen that this crisis is different, and might prove to have profound long-term structural and transformational changes to tourism as an industry and as a socio-economic activity (Sigala, 2020). Particularly, with a general feeling of distrust and scare that usher (potential) travellers, it is not an easy task to predict how quickly tourism and travel will recover, whether people will fly as much, and what the travel experience will look like once new health security measures will be put into place (Fallows et al., 2020). That is because COVID-19 is not only a global economic emergency that affects the economy of tourism and the hospitality industry, it is also, most importantly, a health emergency of international concern that poses significant challenges to psychological resilience of individuals (Wang et al., 2020).

What is evident, within the industry's discussion and research about the many current and future impacts of COVID-19 on the tourism and travel, is that there seems to be a strong unanimous call to see and use this current pandemic as a transformative opportunity rather than a mere exercise to replicate existing knowledge for measuring and predicting tourism impacts (Sigala, 2020). Accordingly, the author stresses on how crises can be a change trigger, however, she also shares awareness that crises might be used as a political tool to stabilize existing structures; for instance, one of the dangers that might arise with it is the possibility that collective mobilisation might be further hindered (Masco, 2017 in Sigala, 2020). Moreover, another significant characteristic of crises-led's transformations, is that are often either optional or selective for tourism stakeholders (Sigala, 2020). In other words, the nature and degree of change depend hugely on whether and how stakeholders are affected by, respond to, recover and, most importantly, reflect on crises (ibid). On these grounds, Sigala's (2020) argument is the following: in order to better comprehend, inform and shape change, tourism research that encompasses Covid-19 ought to provide a deeper examination and understating of the tourism stakeholders' actions and reactions to their Covid-19 impacts. In order to do so, the author argues for an investigation into tourism's key stakeholders *emotional*, *psychological*, *ideological,*

behavioural and *cognitive* drivers (ibid). In other words, current tourism research ought to encompass and better understand tourism stakeholders' Covid-19-related experiences (both lived and perceived), as well as their:

"consciousness, mindfulness, capabilities and willingness to understand and act (pro-actively and re-actively) to the pandemic, as all these can equally influence their attitudes, behaviours and change potential"
(Sigala, 2020; p.313).

According to the above, this investigation could prove to be significant as it attempts to provide a deeper examination and understanding of one of the said key tourism stakeholders, namely *travellers*, and their behavioural, cognitive, emotional, psychological and ideological *actions* and *reactions* with regards to how COVID-19 has impacted them; notably, under-explored area of research in past and emerging literature has been found with regards to what Sigala (2020) describes as *"impacts and implications of COVID-19"* for needed future research (p. 315). Particularly, the author argues that the focus ought to be on three major stakeholders such as (**1**) *tourism demand* (**2**) *tourism operators* and (**3**) *destination and policy makers* under "*three stages*" and namely: (**1**) *respond* (**2**) *recovery* and (**3**) *restart stage* from the pandemic (p. 315). Accordingly, this investigation will focus mainly on (**1**) *tourism demand*, and specifically tourists affected by the outbreak of Covid-19, under the three stages outlined above.

In other words, the significance of this research could be argued to come from its novelty in attempting to investigate travellers that have experienced traumatic tourism-experiences related to the current pandemic (e.g. trip disruptions, trip cancellations, lockdowns, loss of money paid). In addition to this, this investigation encompasses the effects of travellers reading and viewing traumatic COVID-19 tourism experiences lived by others through social media communication engagement, travel restrictions and travel bands, as well as the experience of shifting from the "*routine of unhindered mobility to an involuntary exile"*, characterized by an *abrupt cessation of mobility* (Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011; p. 5; Sigala, 2020; p. *317*). On these grounds, the researchers have found another interesting and interlinked under-explored, or as Sigala (2020) argues *"totally ignored"* (p. 316) area, and specifically the growing role

and impact of social media on crisis communication and people's health and risk perception, which will be part of this research's inquiry.

As previously mentioned, the focus will be on *stranded travellers* that might have experienced a shift in their capacity and freedom of movement, namely, from a state of mobility to a state of *semi-immobility*. Moreover, as this research touches upon the inter-linked *psychological*, *emotional* and *economical* spheres, it could prove to be interesting and valid for a number of different tourism stakeholders, such as marketers, destination management organisations, and other tourism organisations and operators to better understand how this pandemic has had an effect on travellers' attitudes, behaviours and change potential (Sigala, 2020). Notably, existing psychology research has shown how greatly a pathogen threat shapes travellers' behaviour in important and often unexpected ways (Zenker and Kock, 2020). Notwithstanding that, as argued by Taylor (2019), the literature has devoted very little amount of resources for dealing with the psychological factors that influence pandemic-related emotional reactions such as *distress*, *fear* and *anxiety*, as well as interrelated behavioural problems that might arise, such as *stigmatization* and *non-adherence*. Moreover, through the investigation into travellers' personal lived experiences with the Covid-19 outbreak, interesting insights might arise regarding how the Covid-19 threat could reshape tourists' behaviour (Zenker and Kock, 2020).

Finally, the research's findings that come from the experiences, mindfulness and willingness to understand of travellers stranded abroad due to the pandemic, could also have the potential to be employed as starting point for future anthropological, psychological and sociological research and studies. With this investigation, researchers' aim to provide new knowledge into the mobilities' "turn", halted by the ongoing pandemic, and tourist experiences theories, particularly those that relates to when *"things go wrong"* (Hannigan, 1980); as well as to expand on previous and current literature into the *(im)mobilities* theories that are interlinked with *strandedness* and the disruption of travellers' *"right to mobility"* (Adey and Bissell, 2010 in Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011; p. 6).

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CHAPTER II - LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the literature review chapter is to fulfil the first objective of this thesis, namely, *to locate this research within the context of existing and relevant literature that relates to (im)mobility theories and the tourist experience of strandedness.* As previously discussed, the current Covid-19 pandemic has enacted one of the greatest global immobilisation in modern times, whereby its novelty gives the researchers the opportunity of creating a theoretical framework that will attempt to encompass the current shift from a *mobile world* to an *immobile one,* and will focus particularly on the significance of researching the *tourists experience* of dealing with such change. Specifically, theories on *tourist experience of strandedness*, *globalization*, *(im)mobilities*, and *the economic, emotional and psychological impacts of going from a mobile world to an immobile* one will be presented and explained herein; Figure 1., below represents a visualization of the literature review's key themes, showing in the middle the research's key words that will be encompassed throughout the literature review as well as the research's theoretical framework from a *mobile* to a nearly *immobile* world.
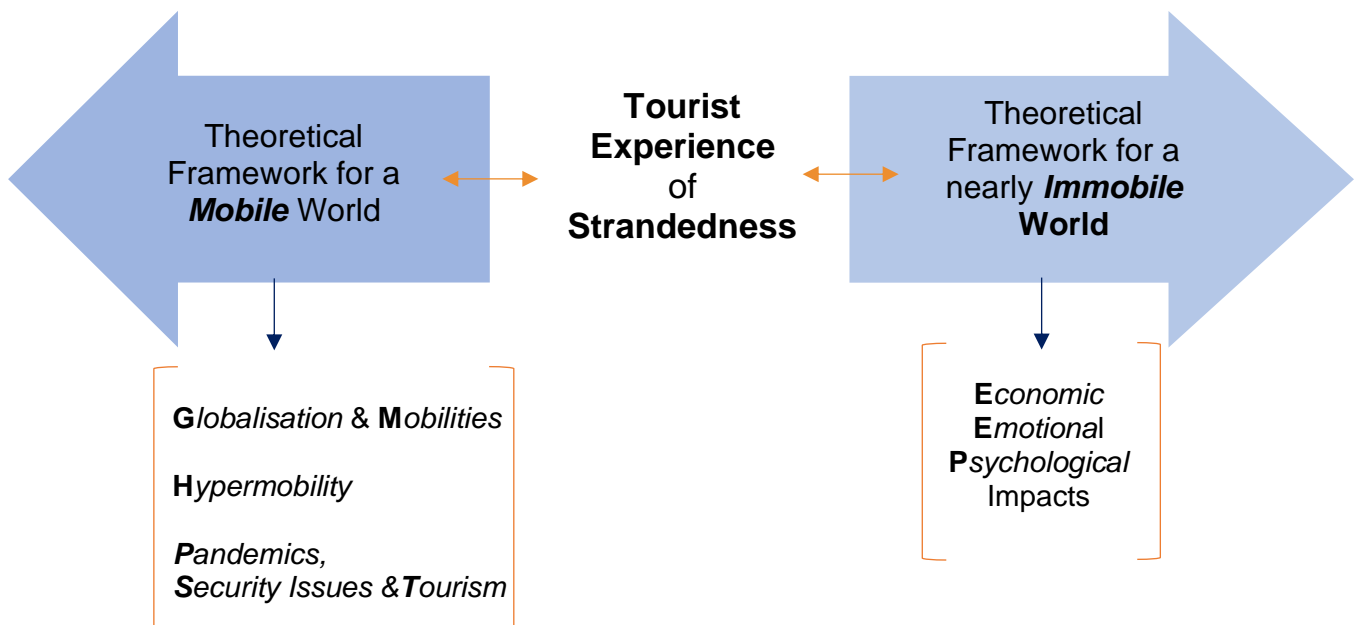

Figure 1: Key themes for literature review

3.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR A MOBILE WORLD

3.1.1 LIVING IN A MOBILE AND GLOBALIZED WORLD

In order to encompass theories on mobilities, it is foremost important to place them into the globalization context; as stressed by Held and McGrew (2007), the meaning of contemporary globalization, both as an idea and as a political project, continues to incite controversy within and beyond the academy. As argued by Dicken (2015), the *concept* of economic globalization is contained in Karl Marx's philosophical views, whose roots go back at least to the 19th century, whereby emphasised is that economic globalization is a result of the global expansion of capitalism. According to Held and McGrew (2007), the concept of globalization can be understood as a historical process characterized by the *"widening, deepening and speeding up of worldwide interconnectedness and co-dependence"* (p.2). So that, globalisation *"denotes the intensification of worldwide social relations and interactions such that distant events acquire very localized impacts and vice versa"* (Held and McGrew, 2007: p.2). Accordingly, Dicken (2015) highlights the significant transformation that has taken place over the decades in the nature and degree of interconnectedness in the world economy, particularly the *speed* at which such connectivity occurs. Moreover, the author stresses how over the last four decades, the *term* globalization has increasingly entered the popular imagination, and how:

> "(…) *hardly a day goes by without its being invoked by politicians, academics, businesses, trade unions leaders, journalists, commentators on radio and TV, by consumer and environmental groups, as well as 'ordinary' individuals*".
> (Dicken, 2015; p. 4).

Today, it has become, as the author suggests, not only one of the most used, but also one of the most misused and confused terms. Globalisation, then, can be argued to be a rather complex and indeterminate set of processes operating quite unevenly in both time and space (Dicken, 2015). Consequently, the nature and the degree of interconnection between different parts of the world are continuously in flux; in such context, old geographies of production, distribution and consumption are continuously being disrupted, whereas new ones are continuously being created (Dicken, 2015). To sum up, globalization could be conceived as a: *"(…) supercomplex series of*

multicentric, multiscalar, multitemporal, multiform and multicausal processes (Jessop, 2002 in Dicken, 2015 p. 6), which according to Held and McGrew (2007) is broadly characterized by:

(**1**) a *stretching* of economic, social and political activities across political frontiers; so that events, decisions and activities in one region of the world come to have significance for individuals and communities geographically distant;

(**2**) a *growing magnitude* of interconnectedness in quasi-every single sphere of social existence, such as for instance, the economic to the spread of harmful microbes such as SARS virus;

(**3**) the *accelerating pace* at which transborder interactions and processes take place, in virtue of the evolution of worldwide systems of transport and communication by which ideas, news, goods, information, capital and technology move around the world at an increasingly rapid pace;

(**4**) this *growing velocity* at which global interactions take place is associated with a deepening entwinement of the local and the global, so that localized events might come to have profound global consequences and global events can have serious local consequences, overall creating a growing collective awareness, or consciousness, of the world as a shared social space, referred to as *"globality"* or *"globalism".*

(p. 3)

On such matters, Dicken (2015) stresses on the fact that globalizing processes are reflected in and influenced by multiple geographies, rather than a single global geography, as the local and the global are indivisible. In other words, the author suggests that, although there are, undoubtedly globalizing forces at work, we do not have a fully globalized world. Although Held and McGrew (2007), concur with Dicken's (2015) argument which asserts that place and distance still matters, they argue that globalization is synonymous with a process of time-space compression, described as "shrinking world". Finally, Dicken (2015) challenges some of the more "egregious" globalization myths, namely: (**1**) the world is not flat; (**2**) the world is not borderless; (**3**) global corporations do not rule the world; (**4**) globalization is not always good (contra the neo-liberal hyper-globalizers); (**5**) globalization is not always bad (contra anti-globalizers) (p. 8). Furthermore, Held and McGrew (2007), as well as

Beauchamps et al., (2017), highlight how the present age, in military and geopolitical terms, is characterized by globalized insecurity. Particularly, the authors stress on the fact that military attacks, today, do not constitute the sole menace which create global insecurity, especially when considering that threats such as environmental degradation, microbes and viruses do not recognize national borders (ibid). It appears significant the argument brought up by Serafini et al., (2020), that stresses how over the past decades not only such interconnectedness has increased dramatically, also the individuals' vulnerability to existing or novel pathogens did, without, however, a corresponding enhancement in coping abilities. Perhaps, as Held and McGrew (2007) noted, a *world risk society* envisioned by Ulrich Beck in 1999 is truly in the making (p.43).

With all the above in mind, it may not come to surprise that *mobility*, particularly in the 21st century, is regarded as equally a condition of global modernity as well as a source of insecurity, that has led to an increase in surveillance, policing and governance of mobility (Beauchamps et al., 2017; Guittet, 2017). Before getting into that, however, it is necessary to define mobilities. According to Cresswell (2010), *mobilities* refer to a contemporary paradigm of social sciences that investigates not only the movement of people, ideas and things, but also, and particularly, the broader social implications of those movements. Notably, the so-called *"new mobilities paradigm"* (Sheller and Urry, 2006), began in the 1990s with a theoretical mobility "turn" in response to the growing realisation of the significance of movement and travel on individuals and the global society. Particularly, the mobility turn arose as a response to the fact that social sciences had so far ignored or trivialised the importance of the systematic movement of people either for work, leisure, pleasure or political reasons (ibid). In other words, the formulation of a "new" (at that time) *paradigm*, on which contributed anthropology studies as well as cultural, geography, science, technology and migration studies, sociology and tourism and transport studies, challenged and changed the ways in which much social science research has been *"a-mobile"* and *"sedentary"* (Sheller and Urry, 2006; p. 208).

3.1.2 HYPER-MOBILITY: WHO WINS? – WHO LOSES?

According to Adams (1999), historically, increases in mobility of goods, ideas and people have been regarded as indicators of economic, socio-cultural, political and technological progress. At the same time, however, the author emphasizes on the costs and unintended consequences that arise with the benefits of a heighted mobility such as environmental and social costs. Notably, the work of Adams (1999) suggests that even if the detrimental consequences of current and projected levels of mobility on the environment could be eliminated in the future in virtue of technological advances, social issues would nonetheless remain. Accordingly, the term *hypermobility* in Adams' (1990) essay is used to suggest that it might be possible for individuals to have "too much of a good thing"; particularly, increased mobility is, according to the author, liberating and socially progressive up to a point, once that point is surpassed, especially if accompanied by increasing disparities in levels of mobility, it becomes socially destructive. Two decades after, such scenario envisioned by Adams in the 90s has become, arguably, a reality. As reported by Hall (2015), nowadays, due to the advances in transport and communication technology, a remarkable amount of the world's population is now able to travel long distances and engage in leisure activities as part of their routine. As such, the growth of tourism-related mobility can be associated with an overall increase of the global population, urbanization as well as the diffusion of a consumer culture that values travel-related consumption (Hall, 2005 in Hall, 2015). Nonetheless, according to Hall (2015), to move and hence travel, is a commodity that is only accessible to *some*. In other words, the opportunity to travel has always depended on disposable income as well as the right to be absent from home and work, with such rights having historically been reserved for very few groups (usually male) in the population (Frändberg, 1998 in Hall, 2015), as well as those on the *"fast lines"* of the globe (Sheller and Urry, 2006; p. 207). Today, the vast majority of air travellers currently originate from Global North economies (Odeh, 2010), even though there are some recent trends, particularly in China and India, showing rapid growth in air travel (UNWTO, 2007 in Gössling et al., 2009). Similarly, air travel is not equally distributed between and within countries and nations; in the "Global North" people are experiencing highly mobile lifestyles, measured by the distance travelled in a given period of time, as well as the frequency of journeys made in a given period of time (Adams, 1999). Such highly mobile people are referred

to as hypermobile individuals, eased into travelling a lot of kilometres, frequently, especially by air.

On these grounds, it can be argued that one dominant characteristic of the western societies is that they are *highly mobile* where visible benefits have been settled; workers are flexible and mobile, people travel around the world to see distant and exotic places in virtue of a global transport system that has released an ever-increasing production and trade of all kinds of goods (Gössling et al., 2009). Accordingly, mobility has enhanced and enriched peoples' lives as well as enlightened moral values such as autonomy, freedom, and cosmopolitism. As Adams (1999) states:

"increased mobility, of both people and goods, has fostered economic growth, reduced our vulnerability to hostile forces of nature, expanded our intellectual horizons, and liberated much of humankind from claustrophobic social constraints and subservience to oppressive local rulers (…); mobility provides access to opportunities; from an individual perspective it will almost always be an advantage to be more mobile than average".

(p. 95- 96)

Moreover, throughout the years, international tourism has started to play a crucial role in global trade and national GDP, whereas states have started to remove bureaucratic constraints to cross-border travel, including restrictive visa regimes (Bianchi and Stephenson, 2013). The freedom of movement, work and residency is a central principle that triggered the process of European enlargement as well as the EU's effort to build a sense of European citizenship (Bianchi and Stephenson, 2013). Mobility has of course always been a sign of privilege and tourism belongs to a 'mobility gap' in which the 'hypermobile' or 'kinetic elite' travel ever more frequently, while many do not travel for leisure or business at all (Bianchi and Stephenson, 2013). As such, mobility depends on access to economic conditions, power, technology and networks that facilitate movement across borders and cultures (Cresswell 2010 in Cohen and Cohen, 2015). On these grounds, the growing gap between rich and poor is not only expressed in terms of capital and income but also with respect to mobility (Hall, 2015). Accordingly, as tourism is considered a vital social need and a human right, it is crucial

to question the degree to which the right to travel can be considered an integral citizenship right (Bianchi and Stephenson, 2013). According to the authors, rights and freedoms of mobility, as well as access to the rights and privileges correlated to international tourism, are not equal throughout the world; in a world increasingly crisscrossed by *"multiple and intersecting mobilities"* (Sheller, & Urry, 2006, p. 2), the right to travel and the freedom of movement are far from being universally approved, not to mention institutionalized (ibid*)*. According to McCabe et al., (2011) in Bianchi and Stephenson (2013):

"if tourism is perceived to be both a social need and a universal right, then the notion that people should be entitled to travel and to become tourists is one that goes to the heart of what it means to be a citizen in today's globalized and unequal world".

(p.10)

Globalization however, cannot simply aim at a borderless world, and in fact the rhetoric of *borderlessness* are ambiguous (Dicken, 2015). Moreover, Pirie (2009) in Hall (2015) also concludes that the *"way we act on, and the way we think, talk and write about, geographical mobility needs reconceptualizing in terms of fairness, equity, environmental justice, and human rights"* (p. 9). Notwithstanding that, one of the biggest paradoxes within the study of tourism today, is that despite the support by many of the concept of mobility, there is relatively little attention to the *less mobile* in contemporary society. Additionally, according to Higgins-Desbiolles (2007) in Bianchi and Stephenson (2013), the right to travel is far from being universally-enjoyed nor is it accorded the same degree of importance by all states (ibid); specifically, barriers - in the form of stringent visa requirement, difficult-to-obtain work permits, and obstructive immigration requirements - are being raised to contain the numbers of those who seek to take advantage of the mobility offered by technology advances (Adams, 2001). As mentioned above, *hypermobility* is the keyword of late modernity which implies an increasingly unrestrained and interconnected world of individual opportunities (Gutekunst et al., 2016). However, as privileges enable some to live in an apparently borderless world, others continue to be excluded and marginalized. That is because, borders and restrictions are created, improved and consolidated, particularly in times of hypermobility (Gutekunst et al., 2016). Although the nation-state retains its monopoly on the ability to grant, administer and enforce legal citizenship

rights, global realignments of power, wealth and mobility serve to expand and redefine existing conceptions of citizenship whether or not these have become explicit, challenging scholars to expand the meaning and application of citizenship rights (Bianchi and Stephenson, 2013).

3.1.3 IS A WORLD RISK SOCIETY IN THE MAKING? PANDEMICS, SECURITY ISSUES AND TOURISM

As previously mentioned, the notion of mobility, particularly in the 21st century, is regarded as equally a condition of global modernity as well a source of insecurity, that has led to an increase in surveillance, policing and governance of mobilities (Beauchamps et al., 2017; Guittet, 2017). Notably, increased global travel has been found to be responsible for increasing the likelihood of pandemics, as well as integration, urbanisation, changes in land use and unsustainable exploitation of nature (Madhav et al., 2017). According to Madhav et al., (2017), pandemics are defined as "*large scale outbreaks of infectious disease that can greatly increase the morbidity and mortality over a wide geographic area and cause significant economic, social and political disruption*" (p. 315). On these grounds, the paradoxical connection between progress and risk is a central theme in Beck's (1999) work and in his *world risk society*; particularly, the cultural psyche of contemporary society and the elevated fears shared across national borders about risks, such as global ecology degradation, global health pandemics – e.g. AIDS and SARS, international terrorism, to name a few - have become endemic features of late modern culture. Specifically, Jarvis (2007), as well as Guittet (2017), stress on how risk, fear and an overall increase in reservation about science and technology and its profit-driven outcomes are on the rise. That is, according to Urry (2014) in Sheller and Urry (2016), due to the fact that:

> "*(…) migrating across borders are (also) terrorists, environmental risks, military power, medical pandemics, trafficked women, drug smuggling, international crime, outsourced work, slave trading, pornography, asylum seekers, gambling, smuggled workers, movements of waste, financial risks and vast untaxed flows of money*".
>
> *(p. 12)*

Similarly, Beauchamps et al., (2017), bring to the attention the scale at which human, not-human and even viral (Iaquinto, 2020) elements, move or are being moved around the globe. With these words below, Hannam et al., (2006) in Beauchamps et al., (2017)

encompass how greatly a diverse range of concrete and abstract things have become highly global and mobile:

"from SARS and avian influenza to train crashes, from airport expansion controversies to controlling global warming, from urban congestion charging to networked global terrorism, from emergency management in the onslaught of tsunamis and hurricanes to oil wars in the Middle East".
(p.1).

Such "dangerous mobilities" (Walters, 2006 in Beauchamps et al., 2017), including migration, carry increased complexity that inevitably become entwined with conceptualisations of threat, making it so movement, too little, too much or the wrong kind, a central political concern (Sheller and Urry, 2006; Beauchamps et al., 2017). Consequently, it could be argued that a discourse around *(im)mobility* is also a discourse around international, national and regional security, and, consequently, about politics, as movement is targeted, regulated and intervened upon (ibid). It could be thus argued that security and mobility are entangled in a perpetual dynamic, conceptualized by what Beauchamps et al., (2017) refer to as *politics of movement* (p. 2). As argued by the authors, political discourses greatly focus on *security* and *mobility*, as two unrelated mobile figures have become central themes in today's political agendas, specifically, at one side of the spectrum of "dangerous movements" the figure of the *migrant*, and at the other end of the spectrum, the figure of the *terrorist.* The former's arrival, often at the cost of the migrant's own safety, has become emblematic of political discourses on security (ibid); the latter's existence represents, on the other hand, the ultimate threat for the society, a dangerous element within the flows of global movement (ibid).

Arguably, with the advent of Covid-19, a *third figure* is added to such *"spectrum of dangerous movements"* (Beauchamps et al., 2017), namely, the *tourist*, conceived as *vector* on the move*,* as he/she acquires and transmits the virus (Iaquinto, 2020). Accordingly, as previously argued, tourism has been one of the industries most impacted by the advent of Covid-19, which emerged just as yearly international tourists' arrivals reached 1.5 billion (UNWTO, 2020 in Iaquinto, 2020). At the same time, however, the author notes how the tourism industry is also one of the most

responsible for the propagation of the disease, as 21st century's tourist mobilities helped Covid-19 become a global pandemic. That is mainly due to the following reasons: firstly, according to the *mobilities turn* (Sheller and Urry, 2006*)*, tourism is recognized as being a part of everyday life, a fact which helped the disease spread swiftly around the globe (Iaquinto, 2020); secondly, as argued in the Introduction Chapter, undetected virus carries – particularly individuals with no or mild symptoms – travelled unnoticed and unaware (Bande, 2020). Finally, the virus has spread so hastily and vastly in large part due to the 21st century's magnitude of global aero-mobility (Gössling et al., 2020; Iaquinto, 2020). Moreover, Iaquinto (2020) states:

"(…) Covid-19 often spread via wealthy tourists, forcing 'low-skilled' tourism workers to become some of the world's first responders (…) as Covid-19 circulated globally, a politics of immobility then emerged as multiple countries closed or partially closed their borders to all but their own citizens" (p. 175).

On the grounds of the above, one of the greatest paradoxes of the *politics of movement* is that although tourists could be conceived as *vectors* of Covid-19, therefore falling into the spectrum of *dangerous mobilities* (Iaquinto, 2020; Beauchamps et al., 2017), depending on where and by different imaginaries of threat, their mobilities were considered "less dangerous" than those of, for instance, *refugees*. In Australia, for instance, the government, over the decades, has put in place a number of measures fundamental to the federal government's borer security policy – e.g. the mandatory immigration detention - designed to deter the arrival of asylum seekers (Philips and Karlsen, 2016). Paradoxically, thousands of passengers aboard the Ruby Princess Cruise were allowed to disembark in Sydney without being tested. According to Reuters (2020) in Iaquinto (2020), hundreds of Covid-19 infections in Australia can now be traced back to the cruise. On these grounds, encompassing mobilities means also being faced by the fact that *mobility is never innocent* (Beauchamps et al., 2017; p. 6) and that:

"forms of mobility (…) are political and implicated in the production of power and relations of domination, which means that speeds, slownesses, and immobilities are all related in ways that are thoroughly infused with power and its distribution"
(Cresswell, 2010 in Beauchamps et al., 2017; p. 6).

3.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR TOURIST EXPERIENCE OF STRANDEDNESS

3.2.1 ASSESSING THE VALENCE OF NEGATIVE TOURIST EXPERIENCES

According to Larsen et al., (2019), for as long as tourism research has existed, inquiry that aimed to understand the tourist experience has been a major task for different disciplines in social sciences from sociology to psychology, social anthropology and ethnology, as well as marketing and economics. Notwithstanding that, or perhaps in virtue of the fact that distinct disciplines focus on different aspects of experience, as well as embody different meanings and employ different methodologies, tourist experiences remain an under-researched topic which is still rudimentary understood (Larsen et al., 2019). Moreover, although a clear definition of experience still seems to be missing (Larsen, 2007), O'Dell (2007), highlight how tourists' experiences are claimed to be complex personal phenomena, described as subjective, intangible and continuous. Larsen (2007), encompass the concept of tourist experience from the angle of general psychology, highlighting (**1**) *expectations*, (**2**) *perception* and (**3**) *memory* as the three key elements that can help encompass the tourist experience in order to introduce the following definition: *"a tourist experience is a past personal travel-related event strong enough to have entered long-term memory"* (p. 15). Moreover, with regards to the first connotation, *expectation* can be defined as the individual's ability and willingness to anticipate/imagine future events (ibid). In other words, the foreseeing of possible future experiences in virtue of present expectancies, needs, moods, emotions as well as one self's self-esteem (Larsen, 2007). The subsequent connotation, relates to the actual undertaking of the trip, also referred to in German as *Erlebnis*, which express an immediate participation, psychical as well as mental, to specific events and situations (ibid). Accordingly, perceptions are understood as mental processes where through an innate but complex process, sensory inputs are simultaneously: *attended to, organized and interpreted* (Larsen, 2007; p. 11). The "final" phase of the tourist experience coincide with the German term *Erfahrung*, that tends to signify all those tourist experiences accumulated and collected in the course of a period of time; during this phase, the individual is able to recollect different elements, memories, sensations from the trip. According to Selstad (2007), the narration of memory allows experiences to change, indicating that

experiences are not closed items; they can continuously evolve within tourist discourse. This is necessary to keep in mind, as tourists are not passive recipients of destination experiences, but are involved in the production of meaning (Selstad, 2007). It is noteworthy to mention that it has been found that events that stands out, events that are distinctive, are the ones that individuals are more likely to remember (Kensinger, 2009). Some events are so emotional "*as to leave a scar upon the cerebral tissues"* (James 1990-1998 in Kensinger, 2009; p. 100), also known as *emotional memories,* correlated to the so called "flash bulb memories" (Brown and Kulik, 1977 in Kensinger, 2009). Notwithstanding that, research has shown that also outstanding events suffer the same memory decay and distortion that other events do; it is interesting to note how however, although people's account has been proved to change over time, their confidence in the accuracy of memories of such outstanding events increases (Larsen, 2007; Kensinger, 2009).

Notably, studies have shown that negative valence carry a greater benefit upon memory for detail than does positive valence, in other words, negative events are remembered not only with more accurate detail, but also with heighten vividness and visual details than positive events (Kensinger, 2009). Accordingly, that might be due to how the brain processes positive and negative information in different hemispheres; negative emotions also usually involve more cognitive processes, so that information is processed more thoroughly than positive ones (Tugend, 2012). On these grounds, if one of the aims of tourism research is to understand, explain and possibly predict tourist behaviours, more attention should be given to tourism experiences (Larsen, 2007). Particularly, due to the valence negative experiences have in the tourist's memory, more focus ought to be given on researching negative tourism experiences (Kim et al., 2020). According to Kim et al., (2020), existing literature has so far not given enough attention to the significant role of negative tourist experiences. The authors stress on how destination managers and researchers ought to better understand the factors that influence tourists' negative experiences, considering that they might result in undesirable future tourist behaviours. According to Hannigan (1980) one way to do that is by encompassing structural and psychological factors that might trigger tourism consumers' complaints. The author highlights how a tourist experience can be conceived as highly subjective, at times even contradictory, whereby a constant tension between illusion and reality, promise – as well as

"unrealistic expectations" of the tourists – and performance takes place (Hannigan, 1980; p. 373). It follows that such clash between *expectations a*nd *reality* of an industry that is highly dependent on an environment characterized by instability and uncertainty, leads to frequent instances of tourist dissatisfaction (Hannigan, 1980).

3.2.2 TOURIST EXPERIENCE OF STRANDEDNESS

In line with the above, massive flights cancellation represents one of the most significant reason for tourist dissatisfaction and tourism complaints, as it often results in millions of stranded tourists (Voltes-Dorta et al., 2017; Hannigan, 1980). Disruption of and within mobility's flows are said to be on the rise, particularly due to the increase likelihood of the occurrence of pandemics (Madhav et al., 2017). Particularly, recent years have witnessed an increasing number of weather-related, industrial actions, terrorism, as well as pandemics such as SARS, that have significantly challenged the robustness of air transport services as well as the resilience of the tourism industry, resulting in airport closures and flight cancellations that have left air travellers stranded (Voltes-Dorta et al., 2017). Clearly, these events negatively affect passengers and airlines, which have a legal responsibility to assist their disrupted passengers (Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011). On such matters, according to the authors, *strandedness* might, initially, be conceived as obvious antithesis of *mobility.* Such unexpected cessation of freedom of mobility, also referred to as *"stuckdeness"* (Hage, 2009 in Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011; p. 5) or *"stillness"*, generate feelings of distress, intolerance, and abandonment among those whose movement has been abruptly halted. Said instances are characterized by confusion and communication breakdowns that incur in virtue of multiple pathways, as well as complex entwined and extended networks, argued to be unevenly spread across *"multiple information portals, across national and regional boundaries and language divides"* (Barton, 2011 in Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011; p. 4). In such contexts tourism dissatisfaction incur and complaints are abundant, stemming from the disrupted traveller's *"right to mobility"* (Adey and Bissell, 2010 in Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011; Hannigan, 1980). Particularly, such *"a priori"* right to mobility is arguably connected to a sense of entitlement of public or paid-for commercial services and infrastructures (Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011). Nevertheless, this presumptuousness in taking mobility systems for granted is *"extremely unequal"* when comparing Global North transportations

services to the ones in the Global South as well as travellers' expectations (Graham and Marvin, 2001 in Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011). Moreover, only through a deeper evaluation one can understand that strandedness is truly intrinsic to mobility (ibid). Particularly when considering that in current highly mobile lives disruption easily arise:

*"The ash cloud * **erupted from Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano*** demonstrates that travellers' (sense of) control over their mobile lives can be compromised by the unknown and unheralded; (…) The ash cloud is thus a reminder of the raw power of nature and the base elements that underpin and that can disrupt global flows"*
(Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011; p. 6)

The above "travel crisis" meant for those directly and indirectly affected directly by the ashes significant personal, economic and emotional costs (ibid). According to Santana (2003), the term *crisis* is one of the most misused terms within the management literature; the word derives from the Greek **κρίσις,** *meaning "decision", "judgment"* as well as the turning point, that change which indicates (e.g. when dealing with a disease) recovery or death (Santana, 2003*).* Usually, crises are characterized by being highly emotional instances that exert a great amount of emotional and psychological pressure on the individual's decision-making process (Santana, 2003). Moreover, due to high emotional and psychological pressures, it follows that quality-decision making during a crisis become very challenging to peruse with rational judgment, as an excessive amount of incomplete and conflicting information hinders the process (Santana, 2003). At times, however, as Birtchnell and Büscher (2011) highlight, there are some crises in which travellers are left with very little possibilities to choose from, as the options are often reduced to a "stunning simplicity: *fight, flight, or wait*" (p. 5).

3.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR A NEARLY IMMOBILE WORLD

3.3.1 FROM MOBILITY TO IMMOBILITY: ECONOMIC IMPACTS

As it has been previously argued, the current COVID-19 pandemic has enacted one of the greatest global immobilisations in modern times, in virtue of which mobility restrictions were enacted so suddenly that the world seemed to be virtually and visually going from mobile to nearly immobile. In line with what has been so far evinced, such sudden and abrupt shift has been particularly felt by those from the "fast lines" of the globe, "hyper-mobile" travellers whose mobility has been abruptly halted (Sheller and Urry, 2006; Gössling et al, 2020). Particularly, travellers stranded due to the Covid-19 pandemic, similarly to the many people stranded in the wake of Eyjafjallajökull's eruption in 2011, might have felt the same *"strange surprise in such an abrupt cessation of mobility",* encompassing a shift from "*unhindered mobility to an involuntary exile*" (Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011). Moreover, due to the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic is still ongoing, travellers' psychological, emotional response as well as the economic toll of such crisis has not been yet investigated by current and available research. It seems that, as of now, attention has been given to travellers stranded due to the pandemic only by online news articles and online social media platforms; stories of stranded travellers have, indeed, been shared mostly through online platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Moreover, research on economic, emotional and psychological impacts on tourists, and relative coping measures, in virtue of a health crisis (e.g. pandemic) is hard to find, which might suggest the existence of a current gap in tourism literature research.

Nevertheless, existing research on risks, impacts and mitigation of pandemics by Madhav et al., (2017), shows pandemics can cause acute short-term as well as long-term fiscal shocks to economic growth. According to the authors, one of the primary causes of negative shocks to economic growth during pandemics are individual behavioural changes such as, for instance, fear-induced aversion to workplaces and public gatherings. A similar economic crisis and shock can be translated into the travellers' economy, who, once stranded (due to, for instance, cancelled flights) must deal with a number of unexpected expenses for un uncertain period of time (Voltes-Dorta et al., 2017). Notably, an aggravating instance of the current pandemic is that many of those stranded became also jobless as business and companies in their

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country of origin closed down (NBC News, 2020). Additionally, stranded travellers due to the pandemic quickly realized that their insurance did not cover them for COVID-19, as epidemics as well as pandemics are usually not included in basic insurance coverage (NBC News, 2020; EuroNews, 2020).

3.3.2 FROM MOBILITY TO IMMOBILITY: PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL IMPACTS

The current Covid-19 pandemic not only represents a global economic emergency that has plunged the global economy into a severe contraction (argued to be the worst recession since World War II) (TheWorldBank, 2020), it epitomizes also, most importantly, a health emergency of international concern that poses significant challenges to psychological resilience and emotional wellbeing (Wang et al., 2020). The research conducted by Serafini et al., (2020), on the psychological impact of Covid-19 on the mental health in the general population, highlight significant psychological issues and important consequences in terms of mental health. Notably, the escalation of new cases, as well as mass quarantines, long periods of social isolation together with inadequate, anxiety-triggering information provided by media, led to strong psychological reactions such as collective hysteria, panic behaviour, anxiety, stress, frustration, depression and uncertainty as well as feelings of hopelessness and desperation (Serafini et al., 2020). According to this, Wang et al., (2020), as well as Banerjee (2020), argue how a timely understanding of the society's mental health status should be urgently sought. As argued by Wang et al., (2020), research that has been conducted during previous outbreak of infectious disease at an individual, community and international levels, has revealed a number of profound psychosocial impacts on people. Particularly, *"those who have been exposed to the risk of infection may develop pervasive fears about their health, worries to infect others and fear of infecting family members"* (Serafini et al., 2020; p. 530). Moreover, according to Wang et al., (2020): *"on an individual level, people are likely to experience fear of falling sick or dying themselves, feelings of helplessness, and stigma"* (p. 2).

Similarly, research on social and political impacts of pandemics conducted by Person et al., (2004) in Madhav et al., (2017), shows how outbreaks of infectious disease often cause the stigmatization of already vulnerable minorities within social groups; in such

instances, ethnic minorities become verbally targeted, blamed and even physically harassed for the disease and its consequences (Viala-Gaudefroy and Lindaman, 2020; Person et al., 2004 in Madhav et al., 2017). With regards to the current pandemic, the way in which Chinese's wet markets were portrayed by numerous online discourses have been blamed for fuelling a worrisome rise in Sinophobia (Wicke and Ziosi, 2020). Notably, the novel virus started being often referred to as the "Chinese Virus" or "Wuhan Virus"; an article published by Viala-Gaudefroy and Lindaman (2020), outline how the US' President Trump kept referring to the virus, which had already been identified as belonging to the coronavirus family, henceforth named COVID-19, as the "Chinese Virus" (AlJazeera, 2020; Gittleson, 2020). With regards to such metaphorical personification of a threat, Viala-Gaudefroy and Lindaman (2020) stress on the dangers of employing the adjective "Chinese", as it associates the infection with an ethnicity. By early March, racists act and harassment all over the US against Asians had already escalated and continued throughout March and April (ibid). Similarly, in Italy, one of the early epicentres of the pandemic in Europe, the governor of Veneto region, publicly asserted to journalists that the country would prove to be better than China at handling the virus due to the *"Italians' culturally strong attention to hygiene, washing hands, taking showers (…) whereas we have all seen the Chinese eating mice alive"* (Human Rights Watch, 2020). In this context, there has been found a correlation by which increases in racist rhetoric have coincided with increases in racist attacks (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Specifically, since early February, Asians and/or people of Asian descent, have been subjected to Covid-19-related attacks, beatings, violent bullying, threats, abuse and discrimination worldwide (ibid). Siu (2015) in Madhav et al., (2017) remind us how Africans in Hong Kong reported experiencing social isolation, anxiety, and economic hardship resulting from fears of their association with Ebola. Today, history repeats itself, with China warning its citizens not to travel to Australia due to racist attacks targeting Asian people (Shine, 2020).

Furthermore, Banerjee (2020), in line with what has been discussed by Serafini et al., (2020), stresses on the psychological and mental dangers of social media's plethora of misinformation, referred to as "misinfodemics", believed to be aggravating anxieties about the illness. The so-called "fake-news" regarding Covid-19 have been so widespread and shared on the web that the WHO recommended that, at times of crisis,

people needed to limit exposure to media-related misinformation due to its contribution to panic behaviours and collective hysteria (WHO, 2020; Serafini et al., 2020). The WHO (2020) urged individuals to recognize and stay away from misinformation whilst being responsible for what is being shared on social media platforms. According to Serafini et al., (2020): *"being less resilient to social threats, such as pandemics, may enhance the risk of developing psychiatric conditions"* (p. 533). Accordingly, the authors encompass (**1**) *psychological resilience*, (**2**) *social support* and (**3**) *preventive strategies* as necessary protective factors.

(**1**) Psychological resilience may be broadly defined as the aptitude to sustain or salvage psychological well-being during or after dealing with stressful and disabling conditions (Serafini et al., 2020).

(**2**) During a pandemic, for an individual, the likelihood of developing psychological distress and psychiatric conditions might be hindered by a higher and more meaningful perception of social support (ibid).

(**3**) According to Serafini et al., (2020), in order to attenuate psychological and psychosocial impact of the Covid-19 outbreak, tailored preventive strategies at the community level ought to be put into place, such as:

→ effective communication and

→ provision of adequate psychological services.

On a final note, the detrimental psychological and emotional impacts caused by the Covid-19 outbreak on the general population above encompassed can be arguably translated into *stranded travellers* as well, due to the fact that almost all non-essential individual movements were prohibited due to lockdowns and quarantines across the world (Serafini et al., 2020). It follows that, those *on the move* had to experience such measures together with similar and amplified psychological distress in a situation of enhanced vulnerability being far from home. Birtchnell and Büscher (2011), offer yet another view on strandedness; the authors highlight how being stranded might act as a reminder that it is possible to live without mobility, so that:

"all are returned to a 'resourceless' state in the act of being stranded, a process that is simultaneously humiliating, frightening, liberating and ennobling and forces a reliance on intuition and resources at hand"

(Barton, this issue; Jensen, this issue in Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011; p.7-8).

Notwithstanding that, Birtchnell and Büscher (2011) admit that human's compulsion for mobility is hard to discourage, so that: *"there may be no way to resolve people's deeply ingrained drive for travel and movement"* (p. 7-8).

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CHAPTER III – METHODOLOGY

This chapter will justify the methodological choices as well as the methods employed by the researchers in order to meet the second objective of this research's thesis, namely (**2**) "***to identify and critically discuss insights of tourists experiencing this shift from a mobile to an immobile world, causing them to be stranded in a foreign country***".

3. PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE

The following paragraph will explain the philosophical paradigm adopted by the researchers in order to explain how this research design is shaped. According to Thomas Kuhn (1962) in Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), a *paradigm* is a philosophical way of thinking; particularly, the term derives from Greek and it means *pattern*. Hughes (2010), on the other hand, defines the paradigm as: *"a way of seeing the world that frames a research topic and influences the way that researchers think about the topic"* *(p. 35).* Similarly, Guba (1990) described a paradigm as *"sets of beliefs that guide action" (p.17)*. Additionally, a paradigm can be conceived as a basic belief system formed by four components: (**1**) **ontology**, (**2**) **epistemology**, (**3**) **methodology**, and (**4**) **methods** (Rehman and Alharthi, 2016; p. 51); as such, each component ought to be explained and the relationships between them explored. On these grounds, according to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017): *"it is important to have a firm understanding of these elements because they encompass the basic assumptions, beliefs, norms and values that each paradigm holds" (p. 27)*. Each paradigm hold opposing ontological and epistemological views; therefore, they have divergent assumptions about reality and the knowledge which supports their particular research approach which is eventually reflected in the methodology and methods chosen (Scotland, 2012). Therefore, in order to show how this research is shaped as well as the researchers' distinctiveness, the four components outlined above will be encompassed. Furthermore, in order to show why one paradigm is more suited for this research's aim over the other, the two most contradictory philosophical assumptions and namely, *constructivist* and *positivists*, will be taken into consideration.

3.1 ONTOLOGY

The term **ontology** compounds the word **ὄντος** *"being"* with **λογία** *"science", "study", "theory"*; and it represents the study of *being*, so that through ontological assumptions, that are implicit at times, researchers are concerned with what constitutes reality (Crotty, 1998, in Scotland 2012, p.9; Rehman and Alharthi, 2016). Notably, it is crucial to deliberate and subsequently explicate such ontological assumptions, as they enable the researcher(s) to examine its own belief system and philosophical assumptions about the nature of *being*, *existence* and *reality* (Kivunja and Kuyni, 2017). With regards to the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, researchers believe in the subjectivity of reality, which is also multiple and socially constructed by its participants (Tuli, 2010). Hence, truth and reality are not discovered, but rather, created (Rehman and Alharthi, 2016). Given the fact that realities are multiple and they exist in people's mind, interpretivist/constructivist researchers' often adopts *relativism* as ontological positon. Relativists see the reality as subjective, meaning that it differs from one another as each reality is mediated by one's senses; as such reality is individually constructed and there are as many realities as individuals. On the other hand, *positivists* privilege quantitative methods and they articulate assumptions in line with *realism*; in other words, they believe that there is only a fixed, measurable reality external to people and only observable facts can be the basis for science (Tuli, 2010 p. 103). On such grounds, it can be argued that this master thesis favour **interpretivism/*constructivism* as its philosophical foundation in virtue of its relativist ontology**, as what is being investigated are insights from tourists' experiences. Such experiences are encompassed as complex personal phenomena, described as subjective, intangible and continuous (O'Dell, 2007). They offer a window on different highly subjective realities, which the researchers seek to investigate and interpret. It follows that this research is not aiming to find an absolute and ultimate truth or to determine if those insights are right or wrong, rather, to interpret the reality as it is understood by stranded travellers. Although the relativism paradigm has been found to be the most suitable for this thesis research, it is significant to acknowledge that the meanings generated from the analysis are also strongly influenced by the researchers' belief systems and interpretations, as knowledge is co-created between the researchers and the interviewee (Denzin and Lincoln, 2003). In other words, researchers gained knowledge through their own experience of strandedness. It

follows that knowledge is a human construction, it is problematic and continuously changing (Guba, 1990). Therefore, knowledge about a problem domain can be co-created also by researchers' own perceptions, values and biases.

3.2 EPISTEMOLOGY

The term derives from Greek lexeme of the word **ἐπιστήμη** "knowledge", "science" with the word **λογία** *"science", "study", "theory"*, and can be described as the branch of philosophy that studies the nature, scope and origin of knowledge and belief, as well as the process by which knowledge is acquired and validated (Gall et al., 2003 in Rehman and Alharthi, 2016; Kivunja and Kuyni, 2017). In other words, it describes the way the researcher comes to know something, how he/she make assumptions of the truth or reality (Kivunja and Kuyni, 2017). As such, in considering the epistemology of a research, the following questions should to be asked: *"is knowledge something which can be acquired on the one hand, or, is it something which has to be personally experienced? What is the nature of knowledge and the relationship between the knower and the knowable? What is the relationship between me, as the inquirer, and what is known?"* (in Kivunja and Kuyni, 2017, p. 27). These questions are important because they help the researchers to position themselves in the research context so that they can discover what else is new, in view of what is known. The **constructivist epistemology** takes a **subjectivist** position, which is based on real world phenomena – so that, the world does not exist independently of our knowledge of it and meaning is not discovered; instead, it is constructed though the interaction between consciousness and the world (Grix, 2004 in Scotland, 2012). To experience the world is to participate in it, simultaneously moulding and encountering it (Heron & Reason, 1997 in Scotland, 2012). Notwithstanding that, it is important to stress that people construct meaning in different ways even if they observe the same phenomenon.

On the other hand, according to the positivists' epistemology which is line with *objectivism*, the researcher ought to be an external factor in the investigation and the world is real and functions according to natural laws (Guba, 1990; Kuada, 2012). On the grounds of the above, this master thesis supports a **subjectivist position** to define how knowledge is acquired through the researchers as well as the interviewees' personal experiences. As previously argued, researchers and those who are being

researched could be conceived, according to Denzin and Lincoln (2003), as fused into s single identity, whereby findings are generated through the interaction between the two parts, so that knowledge is co-created.

3.3 METHODOLOGY

The term is broadly used to refer to the research design, methods, approaches, procedures used in an investigation that is usually planned prior to the investigation (Keeves, 1997 in Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017); data gathering, participants, instruments used, and data analysis are all parts of the wide field of methodology. Broadly, methodology can be seen as a strategy or action plan which dictates the choice and use of particular methods (Crotty, 1998. p. 3 in Scotland, 2012, p. 10). Therefore, methodology is concerned with *why, what, from where, when* and *how* data is collected and analysed. Guba and Lincoln (1994) explain that methodology asks the question: "*how can the inquirer go about finding out whatever they believe can be known?*" (p. 108). It follows that researchers need to decide and explicate their decisions on, for instance, what data to collect, who to collect it from (knows as sampling design), how to collect data (referred to as data collection methods) and finally, how to analyse the data acquired (a process called data analysis methods) (Jansen and Warren, 2020). Moreover, methods are specific means and procedures used to collect and analyse data (Crotty, 1998 in Scotland, 2012). As outlined by Rehman and Alharthi (2016), which research's methods are chosen depend on the research's design as well as the researchers' theoretical mind-set. Qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods are different types of methodologies, distinguished by whether they focus on words, numbers or both (Jensen and Warren, 2020). As it has been previously stated, this research focuses on the collection and consequent analysis of travellers' insights on being stranded, the focus is therefore on their words. Additionally, this research aims and objectives are **exploratory** in nature. On these grounds, this research follows a qualitative approach which will be further explained below.

3.3.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

According to Creswell (2014) qualitative research can be interpreted as *"an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem"* (p. 32). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), the aims of qualitative research are to reveal the meaning of an event for people who are involved in it. In other words, when conducting a study qualitatively, researchers are concerned with identifying how people describe their own experiences: *"how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences"* (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; p. 6). Notably, Sinkovics and Alfoldi (2012) conceive qualitative research as a set of interpretive activities carried out by the researchers that seek to understand the meaning behind actions and behaviours. Accordingly, qualitative research relies heavily on the researcher(s) as unique interpreter of the data (Sinkovics and Alfoldi, 2012). Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, however, the traditional qualitative research methods have had to change, and researchers had to adjust to such changes as the measures to contain the virus have resulted in worldwide lockdowns, self-isolation and social distancing measures. To overcome such obstacles, social scientists and researchers have begun to make use of a variety of creative, innovative and unconventional strategies in order to explore *"distance approaches to collecting qualitative data"* (Taster, 2020 in Roy and Uekusa, 2020; p.3) such as, online conference interviews, nethnography and Internet content analysis (ibid). On the other hand, such unprecedented circumstances, have not only allowed researchers to find alternative methodological approaches by taking advantage of telecommunication and digital tools for remote data collection, but also provided them with a unique and unexpected opportunity to study topical social phenomena that would have not been possible to investigate under a non-crisis situation (Roy and Uekusa, 2020). In other words, according to Cornwall (2020) in Roy and Uekusa (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic could be conceived as a:

"once in a lifetime opportunity to document people's experiences and explore the social, economic, health, political, emotional and religious aspects of the current crisis if qualitative research can be somehow carried out" (p.2)

Accordingly, the qualitative methods used for this research design are highlighted below:

Qualitative Methods

Online Semi-Structured In-depth Interviews

Collaborative Autoethnography (CAE)

Netnography
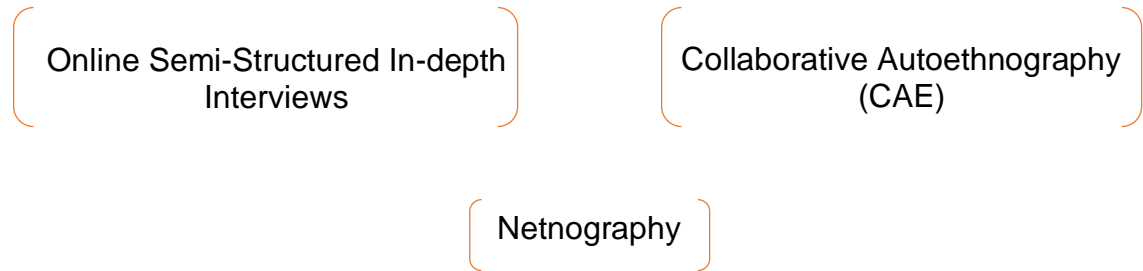
3.4 DATA COLLECTION

Empirical data for this research has been gathered in two distinct ways, firstly through in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with travellers stranded abroad in virtue of the Covid-19 outbreak. Secondly, through netnography, which focuses on the discourses generated by online communities. Particularly, through netnography, the researchers were able to observe, document and gather information that relates to a greater sample of travellers stranded abroad due to the outbreak, following the **#stranded** thread. It is believed that these two methods together with Collaborative Auto-Ethnography will aid the researchers in meeting the research's objective of gathering insights from travellers that due to the outbreak and the consequent first ever modern global immobilisation, had to experience strandedness. Researchers believe, in line with Cornwall (2020) in Roy and Uekusa (2020) has argued, that the investigation into travellers' experiences of strandedness represents once in a life time opportunity to explore the psychological, emotional and economic impacts of the current crisis.

3.4.1 ONLINE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

According to Jamshed (2014), interviewing is the most common format of data collection in qualitative research. As no research interview lacks structure most of the qualitative research interviews are either semi-structured, lightly structured or in-depth (Jamshed, 2014). With regards to this research thesis, the researchers employed semi-structured interviews to gather qualitatively valid data from the respondents, described as in-depth interviews where the interviewees are asked to answer predetermined open-ended questions. In virtue of the outbreak, physical isolation and

distancing were the best strategy to prevent the spread of the virus, as a consequence traditional online qualitative data collection method were followed. Accordingly, a total of twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted, **six** of which through **Skype**, **three** with **online surveys**, and **three** on **Facetime**. Eight of the interviewees were interviewers' acquaintances met while the researchers were stranded abroad; the remaining four were contacted through the researchers' personal connections, in other words, through snow-ball sampling, also known as chain-referral sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique that sees existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances (Overton and Diermen, 2014).

The interviews lasted between 25 to 45 minutes and were recorded and then transcribed by the researchers; all the interviews have been conducted in English with English speakers. All the interviewees gave their consent prior the recording which was informally asked; moreover, the researchers transcribed the interviews through the platform *Amberscript,* making it so the process less time-consuming. However, it is important to mention that technological mediation in the collection of qualitative data might hinder the process instead of facilitating it (Roy and Uekusa, 2020). For example, unlike face-to-face interviews, online interviews do not offer the same opportunities to develop a closer relationship which enables interviewees to feel comfortable in opening up to researchers (King and Horrocks, 2010, p. 48 in Roy and Uekusa, 2020). Accordingly, because of the ICT and digital platforms, the researchers often tend to lose their sensory engagement with subjects and their social setting (e.g. body language observation, observation by participation). For these reasons, discussing sensitive topics with unknown researchers through online platforms might result to be impersonal (Iacomo et al., 2016; Seitz, 2015 in Roy and Uekusa, 2020).

3.4.2 CAE – COLLABORATIVE AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Autoethnography (AE) can be described as a qualitative research method whereby the researchers use autoethnographic data to gain insightful and rigorous understanding of their personal socio-cultural experiences and issues (Hernandez et al., 2017 in Roy and Uekusa, 2020). AE is not merely a repeating of personal narratives; instead, it involves carefully organized research design and systematically collected and analysed data. According to Rothman (2007) and Francis and Hester (2012) in Roy and Uekusa (2020):

"in autoethnography, your life is data and as researchers, we can turn our own everyday experience, actions, routines and emotions into the data relevant to the topic of analysis" (p. 4).

This research thesis uses the so-called collaborative autoethnography (CAE), which is a branch of autoethnography in which a team of two or more researchers work together to share personal stories and interpret the pool of autoethnographic data. According to Roy and Uekusa (2020), researchers could do so by collaboratively and systematically collecting, organizing and analysing their lived experiences and activities, instead of asking others. Moreover, following Rothman (2007) in Roy and Uekusa (2020), it can be argued that, during the global pandemic, researchers had the opportunity to systematically and collaboratively gather and analyse autoethnographic and self-reflective data to ease the creation of an archive that would be available for use in extended further research. This could fill the gap created by the period when, due to the lockdowns, a number of qualitative works were unable to be carried out. As Chang et al., (2013) in Roy and Uekusa (2020) argued, "*unlike AE, collaborative autoethnographers (CAE) combine their energy and data to create a richer pool of data from multiple sources*" (p. 4). Moreover, it has been argued that the collaboration between researchers helps to strengthen autoethnography as a method of qualitative inquiry (ibid). On such grounds, it is important to emphasize that the formulation of this master thesis began from the researches' experience of being stranded in Bali for nearly a month due to the COVID-19 outbreak; as such, the researchers' first-hand experiences during the pandemic is used as a rich source of data. Moreover, on a more interpersonal level, the measures taken to contain the spread of the virus has caused feeling of stress, depression, anxiety, anger, boredom, uncertainty, loneliness and disconnection and researchers like many others are in need of help and coping mechanisms (ibid). As a consequence, researchers are now faced with many challenges associated with social distancing, such as a lack of daily interaction with peers and increased difficulty communicating with others. Having a research team to simply talk about what challenges the researchers might have faced can be an important stress-coping mechanism as well as a driver for personal empowerment and build resilience (ibid).

3.4.3. NETNOGRAPHY

Netnography can be encompassed as an online complementary method adopted by the researchers which has proved to be significant in virtue of the circumstances already discussed; it can be conceived as a method that uses the methodological concept of ethnography, with the difference that it focuses on online communities instead (Costello et al., 2017). It follows that, rather than observing people and their "face-to-face" interactions, which is the essence of etnography, netnography observe communication of naturally occurring public conversations (ibid). Said conversations, interactions and experiences are recorded as digital, textual data by contemporary online communication networks and represents the data that generates from such interpretive research method (ibid). Notably, one of the methodological advantages of netnography highlighted by Kozinets (2002) is its unobtrusive nature. The monitoring of online communities via observational netnographic techniques could be considered a more rapid and cost-effective research method (De Valck et al., 2009 in Costello et al., 2017). Moreover, netnography has been argued to be particularly well suited method for dealing with personally or politically sensitive topics or illegal acts, discussed in online communities by individuals who prefer to conceal their off-line identities and welcome the anonymity offered online (Costello et al., 2017). On these grounds, the researchers consider netnography to be suitable complementary method, together with individual interviews.

Nevertheless, as argued by Costello et al. (2017), netnography should *"only be part of a bigger study"* (p. 8), therefore the main focus will be held on the semi-structured in-depth interviews and collaborative auto-ethnography. The main used online platform was Facebook, which has been found to be the most used online communication network employed by the researchers as well as other fellow while stranded. Accordingly, a baffling number of businesses, companies and travellers were found sharing information, experiences, as well as fears and questions while on Facebook, thus rich and useful netnographic insights are available for this research's investigation. The following are the main group pages the researchers used while stranded to gather and share information and to communicate, which are also the pages that will be taken into account throughout the research analysis:

Coronavirus Forum for Nomads & Remote Workers
Membri: 2597

We provide a forum to deliver and curate credible information on the COVID-19 p...
Iscrizione: marzo 2020

Canggu Community Bali ♥
Membri: 43.998

share your business, idea, and any thing where u think good to share. we delete ...
25 post non letti

Screenshots - Facebook Groups used by stranded travellers amid Covid-19.

As it can be noted from the images above, these two groups have together over forty-six thousand active members; so that to abate what could prove to be a very time-consuming process of going through all these "voices", one key word has been used, namely ***"stranded".*** The use of such key word has enabled the researchers to filter through all the posts from these two groups and identify content that relates to this research's investigation topic.

3.5 INTERVIEW GUIDE

In order to identify and critically discuss insights of tourists experiencing strandedness, the questions that were designed follow this research theoretical framework of going from *"mobile"* to *"immobile".* A total of 11 semi-structured open-ended questions have been formulated. They begin with general questions about the travellers' trip such as *"where were you traveling to and for what purpose?"* as a way of breaking the ice between the researchers and the respondents. It then attempts to investigate whether the respondent has experienced strandedness before, as well as her/his own idea of mobility, before getting into the most personal and heaviest questions regarding their personal experience of strandedness, and the emotional, psychological and economic impacts he/she had to endure. It continues by investigating the role that social media and online communities might have meant for those who were stranded. Finally, the interview ends with questions regarding how and if, at all, this experience of strandedness has impacted their future travel behaviours and choices. The interview guide is to be found in the Appendix Section A (p.128).

3.5.1 DATA GENERATION TECHNIQUES: SKYPE, ONLINE SURVEYS, FACETIME

As it has been previously mentioned, a total of **six** interviews have been conducted online through **Skype**, a free online communication tool that provides interactive synchronous arenas so that communication incur via audio and/or video (Janghorban et al., 2020). Due to technological improvements such as the growth of the Internet as well as geographical dispersion, physical mobilities restrictions and time and financial constraints, online interviewing has become widely used, as its efficiency and ethicality, are highly comparable to face-to-face interviews (Janghorban et al., 2020). The above is particularly true under the current circumstances that see researchers having to suspend data collection or re-design their projects in virtue of social-distancing measures amidst Covid-19 (Jowett, 2020). Although this method for qualitative data collection comes with significant benefits, it comes also with a number of limitations that the researchers had to first-hand deal with. Specifically, due to the lack of the establishment of a face-to-face relationship between the researchers and the respondent, it has been noted a high degree in absentee rate and particularly of the rescheduling of interviews (Janghorban et al., 2020). Additionally, as the researchers' university and library closed down, skype interviews had to take place at home, an environment that is not necessary suitable for interviews in terms of privacy and background noises. As argued by Janghorban et al., (2020), a non-suitable environment could hinder the interviewee's concentration and therefore compromise to some extent the data gathering process. Also, poor video and quality sound might lead to the interviewees and interviewer's exasperation, which might result in a shift in the respondent's behaviour and unwillingness to continue the interview (Sullivan, 2012). Notably, at the beginning of each interview, and particularly when talking about personal and, at times, even traumatic experiences, the researchers feared that the respondents would feel uncomfortable, deciding to withdraw from the interview *"just by clicking a button"*, considering that that is their right to do so (Janghorban et al., 2020; p. 2). This fear arose particularly with a respondent that needed to take a break from the interview; the researchers' worry was that he would not want to continue the interview in the future, which, luckily, did not happen.

Moreover, **three** interviews were conducted with **online surveys** as the respondents that were supposed to be interviewed through skype kept postponing and rescheduling. Therefore, researchers asked respondents to type their answers to

open-ended questions (see Appendix A; p. 146- 155). While the decision to employ this this method gave more flexibility and time to the respondents, it also gave the possibility to the researchers to still gather the qualitative data sought. However, one limiting aspect that is easy to notice of online surveys is that they tend to generate less rich data (Jowett, 2020). Notwithstanding that, this method nonetheless delivers a significant aspect of qualitative research, which is the generation of unanticipated findings (Jowett, 2020).

Finally, **three** interviews took place on **Facetime** through video-calling. This tool for video-calling is by nature rather informal and it was indeed employed with respondents that were also acquaintances of the researchers.

3.5.2. SAMPLING AND APPROACHING THE RESPONDENTS

In virtue of the nature of this research's investigation, purposeful sampling has been chosen as most useful technique due to its effectiveness in the identification and selection of information-rich cases (Palinkas et al., 2015). This process saw the researchers involved in an ongoing process of "*identifying and selecting individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest*" (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011 in Palinkas et al., 2015; p. 2). Moreover, the authors highlight also that, in addition to knowledge, availability, willingness to participate, as well as the ability to communicate (possibly in an expressive and articulate manner) are crucial. In order to maximise this investigation's efficiency and validity (Palinkas et al., 2015), the focus has been towards participants that fell under the category of **travellers stranded in a foreign country due to the covid-19 outbreak**. Aspects such as sex or days spent stranded were not the main focus, rather the country of origin was significant as well as their ability to fluently communicate in one of the following languages: English, Italian, Rumanian, French or Spanish, languages that the researchers are fluent in. With regards to the criteria of country of origin, as it has been previously encompassed, this research intended to focus mainly on travellers from the *"fast lines"* of the globe, or *"hyper-mobile travellers",* which were said to be the ones that might have felt to a greater extent this abrupt shift from a *mobile* to *a nearly immobile world.*

Moreover, with regards to *how* the respondents were approached, it appears necessary to once again take into consideration that the Covid-19 outbreak has meant no physical, in person, face to face contact. Accordingly, the selected respondents were approached using online networks of communication, ranging from WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram. One of the biggest limitations of this un-personal communication relates to the long period of times (hours, days, weeks) between the invitation to participate and the respondents' answer. Finally, in order to enhance the transparency of the methodological processes and choices of this research, the following table will provide the readers with basic background information of the twelve respondents such as name, age, nationality, sex, status as well as information regarding where were they stranded.

Name	Age	Nationality	Sex	Status	Stranded in
Asta	28	Danish	F	Student	Mexico
Kika	27	Slovakian	F	Student	Bali
Cerasela	28	Romanian	F	Student	Bali
Federico	26	Italian	M	Bar-tender	Mexico
Kristine	24	Danish	F	Shop Assistant	Ecuador
Lorenzo	26	Italian	M	Entrepreneur	Bali
Ludovica	26	Italian	F	Entrepreneur	Bali
Matilde	26	Italian	F	Student	Bali
Nikola	25	Slovakian	F	Student	Bali
Reed	25	American	M	I.T.	Bali
Riccardo	30	Italian	M	Waiter	Australia
Rose	32	Danish	F	Student	L.A.

Table 1 – Self-made table of the Respondents' Background information

3.5.3 DATA PROCESSING

For what it concerns the nine interviews gathered through Skype and Facetime, they were first recorded as audio files with personal phones and successively transcribed through a computer software called Amberscript, which aided the researchers providing an automatic transcription from audio to text using speech recognition. Accordingly, the interviews' transcripts reflect the conversations, with the only exception that mistakes in spoken English were corrected and repetition, non-relevant disturbances were not included. Finally, with regards to the remaining three interviews

conducted through online surveying, the documents were only modified to visually resemble the others. Interviews' transcripts can be found enclosed in the Appendix B (p.).

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD: THEMATIC ANALYSIS

The thematic analysis method has been identified by the researchers as the most appropriate lens for analysing the information gathered. According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), in qualitative research, researchers place an emphasis on insights, discovery and interpretation rather than quantifiable proof, and within qualitative research, the thematic analysis is one of the most common form of analysis (Guest, 2012). Moreover, the thematic analysis is considered a flexible approach because it provides a method of identifying and analysing themes within data using minimal organization (Braun and Clarke, 2006), not to mention that according to Boyatzis (1998) in Moriarty (2014) it offers researchers the potential to interpret a variety of research topics. According to Benner (1994) in Moriarty (2014), thematic analysis is rooted in philosophy; as such, is concerned with revealing the individual's lived experiences by analysing a text with the purpose of capturing the symbolic meaning. Being the thematic analysis a realis method, it exposes experiences and meaning (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Within this approach, attention is drawn on findings' common key-themes within and amongst the texts analysed in order to develop knowledge and understanding of previous events (Moriarty, 2014). Accordingly, in thematic analysis the development of the themes themselves involves in-depth interpretative work. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) the thematic analysis involves a constant moving across the data, the coded extracts of data the researcher is analysing, and the analysis of the data that the researcher is producing.

From the process of coding, four main themes arose; such common patterns will provide the framework for the analysis. Note that the fourth theme will encompassed separately as it answers to yet another research's objective, and namely *to investigate from the respondents' insights the transformative affordance of Covid-19, as a way to unveil possible future travel trends and tourists' behaviours.* Accordingly, the fourth theme will be taken into account in a separate chapter. The themes are presented in the table below:

Theme #1	**PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL VULNERABILITY FACTORS**
Theme #2	**SHIFT FROM A MOBILE TO A NEARLY IMMOBILE WORLD**
Theme #3	**THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**
Theme #4	**THE FUTURE OF TOURISM AND TRAVEL IN THE POST COVID-19 ERA**

Self-made table –Key Themes for Analysis

3.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH

The trustworthiness, or credibility of a research, represents one of the most significant criteria that needs to be encompassed and established in order to validate the truth of the research study's findings (Connelly, 2016). The above is particularly sough for qualitative research, as its trustworthiness is often questioned by positivists due to the fact that in social science their criteria of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way (Shenton, 2004). Accordingly, during the 1980's *"war of paradigms"*, qualitative and quantitative researchers could be seen engaging in heated debates around the alleged superiority of one approach over the other (Sinkovics and Alfoldi, 2012). According to the authors, these debates' focus was on the two different epistemologies of **objectivism**, which as previously said relates to positivism, and **subjectivism**, that relates, on the other hand, to interpretivism/constructivism, each of which came to be associated with a specific type of method. On the grounds of the above, qualitative research is often perceived as the polar opposite of quantitative research, although scholars have increasingly argued that research epistemology does not necessarily determine a specific set of methods that need to be employed (Sinkovics and Alfoldi, 2012). So that, today, said "paradigm wars" have largely abated as specific research methods have been separated from philosophical positions (Bryman, 2006 and Haase, 2010 in Sinkovics and Alfoldi, 2012). Nevertheless, due to the fact that in qualitative research the researcher is often not only who collects the

data, but also who analyse it, the potential for research bias is reasonably high (Miles and Huberman, 1994 in Birt et al., 2016); it follows that real or imagined stigmas remain for quantitative as well as qualitative researchers towards the validity of qualitative research (Sinkovics and Alfoldi, 2012). Moreover, according to Morrow (2005), in the realm of qualitative research, criteria for trustworthiness are said to be closely linked to the paradigmatic underpinnings of the particular disciplines in which a specific investigation is conducted. On these grounds, focus will be on criteria of trustworthiness that correspond with paradigms underpinning qualitative research, such as constructivist/interpretivist criteria of trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004); namely, **credibility**, **dependability**, **confirmability**, **transferability** and **authenticity** (Cope, 2014). According to Morrow (2005), the above five criteria (firstly outlined by Lincoln and Guba between 1985 and 1994), are *extrinsic*, as they have emerged outside the qualitative genre. In other words, they have been framed to be used as "parallels" that might be conceived as the "equivalent" of quantitative criteria (Morrow, 2005). Such parallels criteria are employed as an attempt to achieve the same purposes of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity in quantitative research (Morrow, 2005; Shenton, 2004). However, it is crucial to highlight that qualitative research is said to generate a very different type of knowledge compared to quantitative research, hence, it would be wrong to assume that those parallel criteria can fully accomplish the same goals as those criteria intrinsic to quantitative research (Morrow, 2005; Shenton, 2004). Notably, qualitative research is *idiographic* and *emic* as it focuses on very few individuals, categorizing meaning from those interviewed (Morrow and Smith, 2000 in Morrow, 2005). On the other hand, quantitative research is *etic* and *nomothetic*, so that it focuses on large samples of individuals, whereby knowledge is obtained through standardized methods, using categories from existing theory (ibid).

3.7.1 THE CREDIBILITY CRITERION

The first criterion of trustworthiness**, credibility** can be established with two main of techniques, namely (**1**) *triangulation* and (**2**) *member checking* (Nowell et al., 2017; Birt et al., 2016). Triangulation is the main method employed in this research to increase its robustness, richness and comprehensiveness. It involves the use of multiple methods, data sources, observers and theories in order to gain a more complete understand of the phenomena researched. With regards to this investigation, the so-called ***methods triangulation*** has been employed as three different data

collection methods have been used, namely (**1**) *online semi-structured interviews*, (**2**) *collaborative autoethnography* and (**3**) *netnography*; the above is said to be helpful in checking the consistency of the findings. Moreover, ***triangulation of sources*** has been also employed, as this research utilizes different data sources within the same method. In order words, the respondents are argued to be heterogeneous, interviewed at different point in time, with different tools and from not one but two researchers simultaneously; different cultural backgrounds, country of origin have made it so that respondents experiencing a common event and namely, "strandedness", brought different perspectives on the matter. ***Analyst triangulation*** has also been employed as this research has been conducted by two researchers which have inherently different views, aims, objectives, beliefs and interpretations. This has helped finding blind spots throughout the analysis process. Finally, the use for this research of different theoretical perspectives and sources from multiple disciplines such as Travel and Tourism, Health and Social Psychology, Virology, Epidemiology both in the analysis of data as well as the throughout the research literature, made it possible to have also ***theoretical triangulation***.

Finally, *prolonged engagement with participants* as well as *persistent observation in the field*, and *researcher reflexivity* are also ways to increase trustworthiness (Nowell et al., 2017); accordingly, the interviews conducted through Skype and FaceTime lasted over 30 minutes and netnography meant that a persistent observation in the field was conducted (Nowell et al., 2017); additionally, both researchers were themselves stranded due to the Covid-19 outbreak in Indonesia for over three weeks, therefore, persistent observation in the field assumes here another meaning. Perhaps, one could argue that the researchers, due to their personal experience of strandedness, which is also what is being researched, while stranded were in an immersion process that enables them to come to be on intimate terms with the questions, particularly "*to live it and grow in knowledge and understanding it*" (Moustakas 1990 in Brisola and Cury, 2016; p 99). It follows that, in a way, this research touches upon the so-called *heuristic investigation*, a phenomenological investigation whereby the researchers' subjectivity is not hidden or hindered, rather it becomes significant of the investigative process (Brisola and Cury, 2016). In other words:

"The researcher becomes engaged in a search for patterns and meanings starting from one's own experience with the phenomenon studied; the result is a description of the essential elements of both one's lived experience and those of the participants"

(Douglass & Moustakas, 1985 in Brisola and Cury, 2016; p. 96).

According to heuristic investigation, self-discovery, self-dialog, and self-investigation are an integral part of the research process to uncover a phenomenon (Brisola and Cury, 2016). Accordingly, the researchers chose to incorporate their own personal tourist experience of strandedness by a process of self-discovery, self-dialog and self-investigation, acknowledging one's intentionality into account (ibid). Additionally, the researchers' reflexivity can be evinced from the use of CAE. The use of all four types of triangulation methods and prolonged engagement with the participants as well as one-selves, as well as persistent observation in the field, are factors believed to positively increase the overall credibility of the research findings, notwithstanding the high degree of subjectivity as *"there is personal commitment even when dealing with impersonal topics"* (Bello, 2006 in Brisola and Cury, 2016; p 96).

3.7.2 THE CONFIRMABILITY CRITERION

The criterion of **confirmability** is concerned with demonstrating that the qualitative data generated from the *interviews* and *netnography* represent as neutrally as possible the participants' responses and insights rather than the researchers' views, biases and preferences (Cope, 2014). Nevertheless, on the objectivity of qualitative research, Morrow (2005) argues that "quantitative objectivity" is problematic to satisfy in qualitative research as a degree of researchers' biases are inevitable and ought to be expected. On these grounds, it is important to note the significance of the interview questions topics that are created by the researchers following the researcher's aim and objectives. Nonetheless, confirmability is extremely significant for the trustworthiness of the research, and with regards to this research project, the researchers have demonstrated confirmability by showing the whole process through which conclusions and interpretations were established (Shenton, 2004). Additionally, researchers have exemplified when and how findings have derived directly from the data, so that rich and direct quotes have been reported from the interviews, as well as reporting in Appendix B all the 12 interviews gathered.

3.7.3 THE DEPENDABILITY CRITERION

The dependability criteria (parallel to reliability) is said to be met *when* and *if* the process of the research is *logical, traceable and clearly documented* (Tobin & Begley, 2004 in Nowell et al., 2017; 3), so that the data is also consistent over time (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). As Shenton (2004) stresses, the above are criteria used by positivists researchers to show that if the work were to be repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained. Usually, this criterion has been criticised by those who engage in qualitative research due to the possible changing nature of the phenomena scrutinised (Shenton, 2004). Accordingly, the investigators' observations are tied to the situation of the study, making it so the *"published descriptions static and frozen in the ethnographic present"* (Florio-Ruane 1991 in Shenton, 2004; p. 71). Nevertheless, it is believed that if another study would want to investigate into the tourists' experience of strandedness in virtue of a pandemic, through similar methods, similar context, with the same participants, as well as similar questions, the results obtained from this research and the results from another similar investigation would most likely be alike. This belief come from the fact that the focus of this investigation is the emotional elements of personal experiences and personal stories, that unlike thoughts, opinions, and ideas, are not believed to change over time, unless in virtue of memory decay issues. For instance, if an interviewee states that the experience of strandedness had deep, detrimental psychological and emotional consequences, the belief is that if the same person were asked the same question after a x number of years, the answer would be similar to the one given in the past. In addition, this research offers in-depth methodological description to allow the study to be repeated (Shenton, 2004; Shannon and Hambacher, 2014).

3.7.4 THE TRANSFERABILITY CRITERION

The criterion of **transferability (**parallel to external validity) refers to the extent to which findings of a research can be transferred/applied to other situations (Shenton, 2004). In quantitative research, the concern often is in demonstrating that the result of a research can be applied to a wider population (ibid). However, as it has been previously argued, qualitative research is *idiographic* as it focuses on very few specific individuals (Morrow and Smith, 2000 in Morrow, 2005), therefore, the findings are

specific to a small number of environments and individuals (Shenton, 2004). On these grounds, it has been argued that is impossible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions are applicable to other situations and populations (ibid). Nevertheless, a way for qualitative researchers to meet the transferability criterion is to give background information by providing *the "potential appliers"* (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; p. 316) with information on, for instance, the number of participants involved in the fieldwork, which has been previously encompassed (twelve participants, including the two researchers); the data collection methods that were employed (online Semi-structured in depth interviews with Skype and FaceTime and Online Surveys); the number and length of the data collection session is included at the beginning of every interview which can be found in the Appendix section; any restriction in the type of people who contributed to the data (explained through this research's purposeful sampling so that only respondents that were stranded in a foreign country due to the Covid-19 pandemic were selected); finally, background information regarding the twelve respondents can be found in the self-made table (p. 47) (Shenton, 2004). Although attempting to meet the transferability criterion, researchers are urged to question whether the need to produce truly transferable results from a single study is a realistic aim, or whether this notion needs to be challenged as it disregards the importance of *context*, a key factor in qualitative research (Shenton, 2004).

3.7.5 THE AUTHENTICITY CRITERION

Finally, the criterion of **authenticity**, compared to the previously encompassed criteria, is an *intrinsic* criterion to constructivist inquiry, as it has no parallel in the positivistic paradigm, thus argued to be a crucial component of qualitative research (Shannon and Hambacher, 2014). According to Cope (2014), authenticity refers to the extent to which the researchers are able to report in a faithful manner the feelings and emotions that might arise from the respondents encompassing their experiences. Moreover, according to Shannon and Hambacher (2014), to establish authenticity, researches ought to engage in several processes to ensure that the findings are credible not only from the participants' experiences but also with regard to the larger implication of the research. in other words, researchers who seek to achieve authenticity in their research are encouraged to reflect on how and if their research has the potential to benefit society (James, 2008 in Shannon and Hambacher, 2014). Notably, the following criteria outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and reported in

Shannon and Hambacher (2014; p.2) are the five dimensions of authenticity when taking into account a constructivist inquiry:

- ✓ **Fairness** – Are the participants' viewpoints fairly represented?
- ✓ **Ontological authenticity** – Has the participants' awareness increased in regards to the complexity of social environment?
- ✓ **Educative authenticity** -- Has the participants' awareness increased in regards to the viewpoints of others?
- ✓ **Catalytic authenticity** – Did the inquiry process stimulated action on the part of stakeholders?
- ✓ **Tactical authenticity** – Did a redistribution of power among stakeholders occurred?

In line with the above dimensions, this research aimed to achieve **fairness**, assessed when the researchers are able to understand in depth and therefore represent fairly several different perspectives (Shannon and Hambacher, 2014). According to Sands (2004) in Shannon and Hambacher (2014), prolonged engagement, persistent observation, reflexivity are critical steps in ensuring fairness. Such steps have been followed by the researchers and previously explained throughout the credibility criterion.

3.7.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

With regard to determining the trustworthiness of autoethnography, some autoethnographic researchers challenge the use of traditional criteria to assess the rigour of their research, arguing that it is futile to debate whether autoethnography is a valid research process or product in the first place (Bochner, 2000; Ellis, 2009 in Le Roux, 2016). According to Le Roux (2016):

> "*it is difficult to propose a specific set of rules or criteria for the evaluation of the rigour of autoethnography, since each autoethnographic research can be approached using diverse orientations which each has a specific goal for the research in mind and evaluation criteria should be aligned with the specific research objectives*" (p. 200).

Notwithstanding that, autoethnographers do address the issue of rigour in their research and Ellis and Bochner (2000) in Le Roux (2016), explain that *"validity means that our work seeks verisimilitude; it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible" (*p. 200). Given the various viewpoints, if the rigour of autoethnographic research is to be established, it would seem that the evaluation criteria for such appraisal might need to be specifically tailored, taking into account the particular genre and consequently the unique goals of each research. However, having available a concise list of criteria that apply in general would be useful (Le Roux, 2016). On such grounds, Le Roux (2016) suggest a number of criteria through which the rigour of autoethnographic research can be evaluated, and namely:

- ***Subjectivity***: the self is primarily visible in the research. The researcher re-enacts or re-tells a noteworthy personal experience – generally in search of self-understanding and he is self-consciously involved in the construction of the narrative which constitutes the research; the above is in the note of *heuristic investigation* that has been previously encompassed. Moreover, by interviewing each other, the researchers re-enacted their personal experience of strandedness in the construction of the narrative that can be evinced from their interviews in the Appendix section.

- ***Self-reflexivity***: there is evidence of the researcher's intense awareness of his or her role in and relationship to the research which is situated within a historical and cultural context. Reflexivity points to self-awareness, self-exposure and self-conscious introspection. The above can be evinced from the methodological chapter and from the interviews' questions and the researchers' interviews.

Notwithstanding that, when it comes to the limitations that related to CAE, despite the strength of collaboration, CAE has been criticized for its *non-accountability, non-generalizability* and *non-representativeness* (Roy and Uekusa, 2020). Accordingly, AE research is often produced by scholars who are generally in a privileged situation, meaning that they are not always representative of the mass of the population (Philaretou and Allen, 2006 in Roy and Uekusa, 2020).

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Fouka and Mantzorou (2011) ethics is rooted in the ancient Greek philosophical investigation of moral life and it can be described as a system of ideologies which can critically change previous considerations about choices and actions. When qualitative research is conducted, a range of different ethical concerns can raise such as i*nformed consent, respect for anonymity and confidentiality* and *respect for privacy*. According to Arminger (1997) in Fouka and Mantzorou (2011), informed consent means that the participant *"knowingly, voluntarily, intelligently and in a clear way give his consent" (p.4).*

Moreover, informed consent represents the integral part of ethics in research carried out in different fields and for qualitative researchers, it is of the utmost importance to specify in advance which data will be collected and how it will be used (Lapadat, 2017). When it comes to *respect for anonymity and confidentiality*, the participant anonymity is respected when his identity cannot be linked with personal responses (Fouka and Mantzorou, 2011). Moreover, if the researcher cannot guarantee anonymity, he then has to address confidentiality, which is *"the management of private information by the researcher in order to protect the subject's identity"* (Fouka and Mantzorou 2011; p 7); Ford and Reutter (1990) in Fouka and Mantzorou (2011) suggest using pseudonyms and distorting identifying details of interviews when transcribing the tapes used. In addition to that, maintaining confidentiality in qualitative research is not an easy task, because usually conduct is personal, the sample is smaller and the reports display quotations of interviews. On the other hand, respect for privacy means that**,** according to Levine (1976) in Fouka and Mantzorou (2011): *"privacy is the freedom an individual has to determine the time, extent, and general circumstances under which private information will be shared with or withheld from others"* (p. 6). As such, a researcher cannot decide on behalf of other individuals to disclose delicate information, and whenever the participant refuse to report personal information because they believe it may invade their privacy, the researcher ought to respect their views. Regarding the netnography, permission is usually not necessary when research is done on platforms such as Facebook or Twitter; however, in this case, the individuals posting on such platforms were part of some closed/protected groups, therefore consent is required. Moreover, the individuals' comments on Facebook must remain anonymous, hence

researchers did not include any photographs or posts containing full name or face of the online community members.

Furthermore, during the COVID-19 crisis, careful research design and practice should minimize the potential ethical issues and researchers needs to accept full ethical responsibility for what and how they engage in research. Notably, as stressed by Jowett (2020), researchers, particularly when conducting research during a global pandemic, need to acknowledge that a number of complex ethical issues might come into play. Accordingly, the author urges researchers to make the health and wellbeing of participants their prime concern, which ought to be prioritised over research timelines and thesis' deadlines. As it has been previously stated, this investigation seeks to investigate tourists' psychological, emotional and economic impacts that strandedness might have caused. On these grounds, some of the interviewees might have experienced a great deal of stress or trauma, therefore, researchers need to be careful in not putting respondents in any additional and unnecessary stress (Jowett, 2020). It surely helped with the respondents sharing the researchers' experience prior to the interview as that increased trust between the researchers and the respondents. Finally, taking responsibility and following ethical standards are always critical because CAE research does not generally require institutional review boards. Qualitative researchers, therefore, may be on their own to make ethical and respectful decisions when conducting CAE research. As such, strategies like frequent and open communication among the members, collaborative interpretation and scrutiny of data can help minimizing the issues of subjectivity, ethics and biases.

3.9 LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH

It is safe to say and important to acknowledge that this investigation has a number of limitations; the first limitation relates to the sample size. In other words, as it has been previously outlined, qualitative research is idiographic and emic, as it focuses on very few individuals and meaning is categorized from those interviewed (Morrow and Smith, 2000 in Morrow, 2005). According to this, as stressed by Atieno (2009), findings generated from qualitative approaches cannot be extended to a wider population with the same degree of certainty given by quantitative findings. That is mainly due to the fact that findings from qualitative research are not investigated nor tested to discover whether they are statistically significant or a product of chance (Atieno, 2009).

Accordingly, our research's findings are not meant to be representative of all stranded travellers due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Moreover, another significant limitation of this study has been the circumstances in which it took place, namely, a pandemic. The researchers not only had to change their research design, they had to change groups as well as the subject of the research investigation. In such climate, researchers were worried that asking people to participate in their research at this time of uncertainty, fear and psychological distress would put the possible respondent under additionally unnecessary overexertion. Accordingly, the initial pool of people the researchers investigated were acquaintances or fellow travellers met while stranded, with whom the researchers felt more at ease with. This helped the researchers in building confidence and enabled them to successively interview people not imminent to their network. Another significant limitation was given by the fact that qualitative research is already a very time consuming process, and in this context of uncertainty, a significant amount of time respondents that previously agreed to take part in the research stopped answering and were impossible to reach, so that finding people to interview has been an ongoing process throughout the writing of the thesis.

Additionally, with regards to the limitations of the scope of this research, it is important to highlight that this research focused on specific impacts of being stranded, namely, the psychological, emotional and economic impacts. The respondents could be argued to represent a specific population sample, stranded travellers from the "Global North", ranging from 24 to 31 years old, which are more likely to have experienced high levels of mobility before the pandemic. It follows that this research is less likely to be generalized and less representative of the broad population. Moreover, note that emotional and psychological terms have been used somewhat interchangeably: according to the work by Hockenbury and Hockenbury (2007) in Cherry (2019), an emotion is described as a complex *psychological* state in which three distinct components take place: (1) a *subjective experience* (2) a *psychological response*, (3) a *behavioural or expressive response*.

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CHAPTER IV –

COVID-19 IMPACTS ON STRANDED TRAVELLERS

From the process of coding, the following are the three themes presented and discussed throughout this chapter, and namely:

THEME **#1** - PSYCHOLOGICAL **AND EMOTIONAL VULNERABILITY FACTORS**

1.1 Xenophobia

1.2 Hypochondria

1.3 Economic Uncertainty

1.4 Psychological and Emotional Resilience

THEME **#2** – **SHIFT FROM A MOBILE TO A NEARLY IMMOBILE WORLD**

2.1 Loss of Freedom

2.2. The Privileges of Unprecedented Immobility

THEME **#3** – **SOCIAL MEDIA: A TWO-EDGED SWORD**

3.1 Information

3.2 Misinformation

1. PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL VULNERABILITY FACTORS

According to Taylor (2019), during a pandemic, the population's psychological reactions play an essential role in equally (**1**) the spreading and containment of the disease, and (**2**) influence the extent to which widespread emotional distress and social disorder occur. As outlined by the author, peoples' reactions, particularly if threated with the possibility of infection vary widely. On these grounds, the author stresses that in order to understand the psychology of pandemics, the complexities of peoples' reactions ought to be taken into account.

1.1 XENOPHOBIA

The word derives from the Greek lexeme of the words **ξένος** that stands for "*stranger*" or "*foreigner*", and the word **φόβος**, which means **"*fear*" *or "hearted"*. Notably,

according to Mertens et al., (2020) and Taylor (2019), if levels of fear are excessive, fear can become maladaptive particularly when detrimental effects are to be found on the society, for instance with increases in Xenophobia and Stigmatization. On these grounds, as it has been previously mentioned, research on social and political impacts of pandemics shows how past outbreaks of infectious diseases have often caused the stigmatization of already vulnerable minorities within social groups (Person et al., 2004, in Madhav et al., 2017). Particularly, it has been reported how such ethnic minorities might be verbally targeted, blamed and even physically harassed for the disease and its consequences (Viala-Gaudefroy and Lindaman, 2020; Person et al., 2004 in Madhav et al., 2017). Similarly, Wang et al., (2020), with regards to the current pandemic, highlight how, on an individual level, one of the first psychosocial impact is the experience of being *stigmatized*. Accordingly, when respondents were asked whether during their stay they experienced a change in behaviours of locals towards them or any fellow travellers, from the experiences of majority of the respondents, high degrees of negative emotions were expressed and shared in regards to that thematic:

"(..)The local people's behaviours, or at least some of them, changed during our stay in Bali and kept evolving throughout the pandemic. The virus made them very afraid of tourists, however, they couldn't deny the need for money that tourism brings to their country. This made me feel very unwelcomed and uncomfortable. This change in behaviour has showed me that a country mainly known to be a tourist destination and an exotic paradise can turn into hell, as soon as the tourists themselves became the enemy, seen as covid-19 carriers" (Lorenzo, Appendix B; p. 137)

Similarly, another respondent highlights this shift in locals' behaviour compared to the beginning of her travels:

"(…) Well, things got really awkward. After the news started to spread in the Mexican television that the virus has moved from Asia to Europe with Italy being the epicentre, people started to look at us in a different way. For example, when we were taking the bus, everyone would move their place just to be far from us"
(Asta, Appendix B; p.160)

Changes in behaviours from locals, as well as the Police officers, have been also reported by Federico, another Italian respondent living in Mexico at the time of the outbreak:

"Mexicans are loving people. I speak Spanish, so for me it was really easy to move around, get to know people, make friends. (…) Now, after the media started to talk about the virus and everything, they did nothing but avoiding westerners. (…) some shops were not selling anything to me, and I was stopped at least 2-3 times a day by the police and asked questions regarding my arrival. (…) So, going out and spend half of the time being avoided by locals or constantly being stopped by the authorities gave me the idea that I was not welcome there anymore"
(Federico, Appendix B; p. 156)

Such juxtaposition of the disease with the tourists' role as well as ethnicity, has been studied by Iaquinto (2020) in his exploration of the role of tourism in viral transmission at the time of the outbreak. Particularly, as it has been already outlined, theoretically it could be argued that with the advent of Covid-19, the figure of the tourist has become emblematic as it could be added into the *"spectrum of dangerous mobilities",* now placed somewhere between the figure of the migrant and of the terrorist (Beauchamps et al., 2017; Iaquinto, 2020). As stressed by Wald (2008) in Taylor (2019), human networks are known to be the major means of pandemic disease transmissions; Accordingly, tourists are perceived as vectors *on the move*, as they acquire and transmit the virus (Iaquinto, 2020). According to one of the interviewees, it is the pace at which, before the pandemic, people used to travel, the reason why the disease has been able to spread so swiftly across the globe; similarly, Iaquinto (2020), argues how greatly the 21st century's tourist mobilities helped the Covid-19 outbreak degenerate from an epidemic into a pandemic. Moreover, another respondent shares how, although she has not witnessed any change in behaviours towards her personally, due to the fact that she *"disguised herself pretty well as a local"* (p.), so she did not experience anybody telling her *"to go home or stay away"* (p.). However, while stranded in L.A, she notes:

"(…) because in the US everyone would blame the Chinese for the virus, the president even called it the Chinese sickness. So, everybody was talking about the

Chinese bringing down the disease to America, which is not even true. It could be anybody"

(Rose, Appendix B; p.176)

In line with the above, according to Sorokowski et al., (2020), it could be evinced, even from preliminary reports, an increase in negative attitudes to nationals from countries most heavily affected by the Covid-19. Accordingly, as it has been previously mentioned, with regards to such metaphorical personification of a threat, significant are the dangers of employing the adjective "Chinese", as it associates the infection with an ethnicity (Viala-Gaudefroy and Lindaman, 2020). Particularly, the dangers of increases of racist rhetoric is that they often coincide with increases in racist attacks (Human Rights Watch, 2020). It does not come to surprise that increases of racist rhetoric throughout the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in an alarming rise in Racism and Xenophobia (Human Rights Watch, 2020). In such instances, vulnerable minorities of ethnic groups are likely to experience social isolation, fear and anxiety (Siu, 2015, in Madhav et al., 2017). With regards to the interviews with stranded travellers, such feelings were shared by most of the interviewees and were found to be, together with the feeling of **uncertainty**, one of the most significant reason for increases in psychological and emotional distress in their experiences of strandedness. Notably, it can be evidenced from the twelve interviews that respondents that did perceive a shift in behaviour towards them in negative terms, provided much more detailed reports of emotions, events and feelings. It could be argued that this negative valence seems to be in line with research that has shown how negative events are remembered not only with more accurate detail, but also with heightened vividness and visual details compared to positive events (Kensinger, 2009). Although none of the respondents reported physical injury or physical assault, verbal aggression is considered a form of psychological harm, as well as aggressive behaviour, which is typically unprovoked and repeated (Hamilton, 2012). One of the researchers share her own experience:

"it was awkward walking around with people often whispering stuff or screaming at you: Italiano! COVID, COVID! (…) I didn't feel confident walking alone, I hated being starred at, I just wanted to leave and the fact that I couldn't really messed me up"

(Matilde, Appendix B; p.184).

Finally, although this research has limited its focus on unveiling and reporting one side of the story, namely, the travellers' experience of stigmatization and xenophobia while stranded, it should not be overlooked how the Covid-19 pandemic might also reshape not only the residents' behaviours, but also the tourists' attitudes (Zenker and Kock, 2020). Accordingly, as argued by Kock et al., (2019) in Zenker and Kock (2020), tourists could also show more significant instances of "tourism xenophobia" (p.3). Such behaviours could result in decreases in foreign travel, as well as solo travels and avoidance of foreign food (ibid).

1.2 HYPOCHONDRIA

According to Taylor (2019), a sense of urgency, confusion and uncertainty are common feeling and emotions that commonly arise in a pandemic; particularly in early stages of a pandemic, there is a sense of widespread uncertainty relating to the odds and seriousness of become infected (ibid). When the respondents were asked how the experience of being stranded in a foreign country during a pandemic impacted them emotionally and psychologically, a great deal of them mentioned **the constant fear of falling ill** as significant emotional and psychological burden. Particularly, as it can be seen from the quote below, the fear of falling ill while stranded was so intense for one of the respondents that she began to physically experience symptoms that were said to be related to the novel coronavirus:

> *"We literally started as well to feel sick, all you could hear was talking about the coronavirus so at one point I started to feel like we are also having the symptoms, but it wasn't (…) we had seen the hospitals in Mexico, so we needed to go home, didn't feel safe at all"*
> (Asta, Appendix B, p.161)

According to Schimmenti et al., (2020), fear is a basic emotion that is triggered when a potential threat is perceived. Moreover, fear is a subjective conscious experience which involves peculiar concerns and instabilities over time (Mertens et al., 2020). Notably, Mertens et al., (2020) describe fear as *"an adaptive response in the presence of danger"* (p. 1). However, within the uncertain circumstances of the coronavirus disease pandemic, as well as uncertainty regarding how long the respondents were going to be stranded for, fear becomes prolonged and oppressive, generating within

some individuals *"fear of falling sick or dying themselves, feelings of helplessness"* (Wang et al., 2020; p. 2). On an individual level, some people, as in the case of Asta, might develop the so-called *health anxiety,* better known as *hypochondria*, which can be described as an excessive concern about one's health, whereby the belief is that any physical or psychological symptoms detected will result in a serious illness. According to Cook (2020), the above happened to be one of the people's first reaction to the stress associated with the Covid-19. Notably, as reported by Taylor and Asmundson (2017) in Taylor (2019), people who are excessively worried about their health might be found to be engaging in (medically unnecessary) checking and continuous reassurance seeking. The above can be perceived from one of the researchers' interview:

"At the beginning of my travel in Bali I wasn't that afraid of falling ill (…) however I would still ask my friend to check my temperature everyday as I began to feel a bit unwell and uneasy. (…) my friend whom I was travelling with started developing symptoms like dry cough and stomach-ache so he began to obsess that he in fact had the virus and he was so extremely sure of it that he kept having this cough for over a week. (…) Once we got back and we got tested both with a tampon and with the antibodies test we realized that we never had it. It was clear for me how easy impressionable we are under fear and stress"

(Matilde, Appendix B; p. 184)

Moreover, according to Cook (2020), although several studies have shown that between 10% - 20% of the population worries frequently about having a physical illness, during a pandemic this anxiety might prove to be beneficial as it triggers "safety behaviours" (e.g., hand washing, use of hand sanitizer, use of masks etc.,). However, the so called *health anxiety* is believed to be different: *"health anxiety refers to the tendency to misinterpret normal or benign physical symptoms and believe that one has or is acquiring a serious illness, in the absence of any actual illness"* (Abramowitz et al., 2007; Salkovskis et al., 2002 in Mertens et al., 2020; p. 2). This translates into an over-diligent monitoring of the symptoms and an unhealthy rumination with the belief that one has Covid-19 or is in dire danger of developing it (Cook, 2020). In addition to that, those experiencing health anxiety strongly believe in the likelihood and awfulness of the illness; this translates into people's fear of not being able to fight

the disease as well as believe that the medical services would be inadequate if they were to become ill (Cook, 2020). This was also believed by three of the respondents, as it can be seen from the quotes below:

"I was also quite worried because I honestly didn't want to get sick in a country without a good health system"
(Lorenzo, Appendix B; p.136)

"I don't live in Italy, I live in Denmark, but at least I would have been in Europe, which in my mind, especially at that time, gave me a sense of enhanced safety, especially when it comes to getting sick"
(Cerasela, Appendix B; p.154)

"I was stuck in a developing country with a high level of criminal rates and poor healthcare conditions. That was a bad feeling"
(Federico, Appendix B; p. 178)

In light of the above, it appears evident how the respondents were concerned also in regard to the efficiency of the destination's healthcare systems; particularly, an overall negative perception towards healthcare systems in developing countries has been shown. It can be argued that such fear may have been inflicted within the respondents due to the fact that a great deal of media attention has been devoted to the critical question of whether the healthcare systems throughout the world were ready to deal with the influx of cases of coronavirus infection (Asmundson and Taylor, 2020). Notably, the above respondents (Federico, Cerasela and Lorenzo) are all from Italy, and the time they were stranded, their home country was dealing with an exponential growth of infections; in virtue of that, the Italian healthcare system collapsed, not only because many of the healthcare workers were becoming ill and therefore unable to take care of the sick, but also because the number of infected individuals exceed the capacity of the hospitals. Additionally, that could also have been caused due to the unfamiliarity with such community's support systems. Additionally, stranded travellers, due to language barriers, might have perceived as more difficult to access the destination's health services. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note how although the respondents' own country healthcare systems collapsed in Europe soon after the beginning of the outbreak, prejudice towards healthcare systems in developing

countries was found. On these grounds, one of the respondents believed that if she was to fall ill, priority to get medical treatment would be given to the locals first, as it can be seen from Asta's quote:

"In Oaxaca there are like 5 hospitals and health is quite cheap and affordable to everyone, but the capacity of each hospital is really small, so you see people in line and waiting outside for days before they manage to get in. The literally camp for 2-3 day in front of the hospital with small kids, some bring even their dog. It's also public hospital so of course you have the same treatment like others (…) So, seeing this change of the locals towards us, see how uncertain they health care system was, we knew that if something were to happen, we would be the last ones in line, so we just wanted to go home"
(Asta, Appendix B, p. 161)

Moreover, the fear of falling ill of many respondents was also towards their families that were distant; notably, during the initial spread of the Covid-19 disease, the WHO reported that the virus may be particularly dangerous for specific risk groups, such as elderly and people with chronic diseases (Mertens et al., 2020). During a virus outbreak it is common behaviour to make an excessive use of the internet leading to an increase of the media consumption, which often use emotional language and address emotional content that catches people's attention (Jungmann and Witthöft, 2020). Similarly, for previous disease outbreaks, more media exposure was found to be related in increases in fear (Van den Bulck and Custers, 2009 in Mertens et al., 2020). Additionally, when a threat is personally relevant either to oneself or to loved ones, an overall increase in worry and fear is expected to be experienced (Stussi et al., 2015 in Mertens et al., 2020); as shown below:

"I was worried; not so much for me, but more for my family: the situation in Italy was out of control and not knowing that they were completely safe was driving me crazy"
(Cerasela, Appendix B, p. 178)

"You could literally see that the numbers were dramatically increasing, and a lot of people were dying. We were really scared for our family as we have members that could be more vulnerable to the virus" (Asta, Appendix B, p. 161)

1.3 ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

According to McEvoy and Mahoney (2013) in Taylor (2019), uncertainty, and specifically intolerance of uncertainty caused by a pandemic, has been found to contribute to an increased likeliness of experiencing anxiety and fear. As noted by Godinic et al., (2020), the ongoing Covid-19 epidemiological and economic crisis have been found to be seriously challenging people's socio-economic determinants of mental health. As it has been previously reported, research on impacts and mitigation of pandemics shows pandemics can cause acute short-term as well as long-term fiscal shocks to economic growth (Madhav et al., 2017). Accordingly, a similar economic crisis and shock can be translated into the travellers' economy, who, once stranded (due to, for instance, cancelled flights) must deal with a number of unexpected expenses for un uncertain period of time (Voltes-Dorta et al., 2017). One of the respondents highlight how being stranded impacted him economically:

"As I am a self-employed massage therapist, I don't receive a fix salary every month.
So being stuck in Bali for an extra 21 days prevented me from working.
On top of this loss of income, I had to go through other unexpected expenses such
as two more commercial flights that I had to purchase last minute, which were
extremely expensive; accommodation for an extra 21 days; 2 health certificates;
scooter rental and taxis and 2 different insurances."
(Lorenzo, Appendix B; p. 137)

Moreover, an aggravating instance of the current pandemic is that many of those stranded became also jobless as business and companies in their country of origin closed down (NBC News, 2020):

"(..) eventually I started to struggle with the money once I was back from Mexico as I
lost my job and the business closed. I didn't have an income until June"
(Asta, Appendix B; p 161).

As stressed by Wright et al., (2016) in Godinic et al., (2020), especially if prolonged, the combination of unemployment, job uncertainty, coupled with uncertainty regarding the future, is believed to cause serious mental damages, resulting in the occurrence of intolerance of uncertainty induced depressive-anxiety disorders. Moreover, it is

important to highlight that not all members of society are economically equally affected by the crisis (Godinic et al., 2020). The above emerges when encompassing the different economic impacts and coping mechanisms of the 12 respondents, whereby the majority economically managed to cope quite well either because of the help of relatives (e.g. Ludovica; Federico), the embassies (e.g. Kika; Nikola), the weak currency of the country where they were stranded (e.g. Lorenzo; Matilde), personal savings (e.g. Cerasela; Reed; Riccardo; Krisitne). Notwithstanding that, in the context of evaluating psychological and emotional vulnerability impacts on travellers, economic uncertainty and job uncertainty, while being stranded and soon afterwards, have meant for some of the interviewees reduced psychological well-being, concurring in negatively impacting their experience of strandedness (Godinic et al., 2020).

1.4 PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE

According to Schimmenti et al., (2020) the current pandemic poses a huge challenge to the society because it tests its ability to cope with a diverse threat under the restrictions of the situation. As such, the resilience of a society facing such a catastrophic event also depends on how its individual members cope with their anxiety and fears because effective coping can also help the society to better manage the pandemic. Coping resources refers to available resources to mitigate potential threat and each individual differ from one another in terms of dealing with psychosocial distress (Taylor and Stanton, 2007 in Mertens et al., 2020). According to Killgore et al., (2020), the ability to resist obstacle, adapt and recover from an adversity is called *resilience*, and some individuals are more psychologically resilient than others. Moreover, psychological resilience is vital for the ability to cope effectively with hardship, uncertainty, and change. Most people are resilient to stress, and many survivors of highly stressful events will likely emerge psychologically intact (Shultz et al., 2008; Taylor, 2017 in Taylor, 2019). Two of our respondents had such attitude towards the Covid-19 disease outbreak:

"As I mentioned before, I was quite happy to figure out I will be stuck there; I was with good friends, I had a villa with pool, the weather was incredible and it's cheaper than any other European city so I couldn't really see what could go wrong. While Europe was drastically closing down everything, Bali was still open and the cases where not really raising, you could go to the beach and still enjoy a beer at a local

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bar. So, at that time we didn't really feel that the corona virus was having an impact on Bali although we had to wear a mask and restaurants were only operating takeaways" (Kika, Appendix B; p 165)

"My situation was a little bit different because my plan was to be there until July, and at the beginning I even considered staying there until that time. Another good friend of mine would have followed me and we had a villa with swimming pool and I thought "why not?" (Nikola, Appendix B; p 145)

Travellers are said to exhibit different attitudes and behaviours when faced with a travel-related crisis, showing uneven and highly subjective adaptability's attitudes; the above could be argued to be particularly true when comparing the so-called privileged wealthy tourists' resilience with travellers in strained economic circumstances. It appears evident how wealthy travellers are more likely to show higher degrees of receptivity and flexibility in a crisis, particularly if stranded in a poverty-stricken destination whereby the weak currency allows them to enjoy luxurious choices that make their strandedness more bearable and even enjoyable. In line with the above, Birtchnell and Büscher, (2011), highlight how through the above "luxurious" affordances (such as the possibility to enjoy a private villa with swimming pool), strandedness can be mitigated and easier tolerated. Notably, said affordances help stranded travellers endure more easily unfamiliar surroundings by giving them the perception of feeling as if "at home" (Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011). On these grounds, the wealthy stranded traveller is believed to be more willing in accepting his/her condition of strandedness, in virtue of which levels of anxiety and stress are reduced. On these grounds, feelings of acceptance and rationalisation on the unnecessity of stressing is clearly expressed by Kika in her interview as follows:

"I also think I kind of had to accept it, I never stress over something that I don't have the slightest control over anyways" (Kika, Appendix B; p. 165)

Notwithstanding that, reactions between travellers coming from the "fast lines" of the Globe can vary; insights have shown respondents with high degrees of anxiety given by the endurance of economic challenges and economic uncertainty had remarkably higher levels of distress, diminished resilience and decreased willingness of acceptance of the situation. One respondent in particular, self-employed, economically

drained by the purchasing of different extremely expensive plane tickets, has been found to have been impacted with long-lasting psychological effects enacted by high levels of stress and anxiety, namely PTSD. Such enduring impacts were shared by Lorenzo (Appendix B):

"Once I finally managed to get home in the UK, I've kept having several panic attacks and depression" (p. 133)

Moreover, an important factor that contributed to the psychological resilience of the respondents while stranded was the sharing of such experience either with close friends or people who met along their travels. At the same time, being in constant touch with their family aided the respondents cope with the situation:

"The only thing that kept me going while I was stranded were my friends and other fellow travellers we met" (Lorenzo, Appendix B, p. 134)

"Our psychological support has been our Italian friends that have been living in Bali for 20 years, they knew the place very well and also the language (…) it felt very comforting having them to rely on, talk to, also if things went worse for us we knew we had them and definitely felt more safe (…)"
(Ludovica, Appendix B, p.142).

"My family and boyfriend were a great support (…). My boyfriend, in particular, was very calm and rational, which calmed me a lot" (Kristine, Appendix B, p. 170)

As Aristotle said in his *Politics,* human beings are by nature "social animals" (Lord, 2003 in Schimmenti et al., 2020); as such, as stated by (Bowlby, 1988) in Schimmenti et al., (2020):

"interpersonal relationships are at the core of human identity, especially those involving attachment figures such as parents, offspring and people with whom we have romantic relationships. These individuals provide us with a safe haven and a secure base from which we feel comfortable to explore our internal experience and the external world". (p.42)

According to the quote above, such interpersonal relationships have been also sough virtually by respondents such as Rose and Federico:

"I have some really wonderful friends. We've been having game nights and we would dress up and sit in front of the computer. Like we used to this once every two weeks and we play games and we would talk and have wine; it felt like we were in the same room even though we were not and I felt less alone and I've got a lot of support from them" (Rose, Appendix B, p. 175)

"The best part of the weekends was the cheers we had through Zoom, Skype etc, happening every Sunday at lunch, just sitting in front of a laptop with a fresh glass of Sancerre, different time-zones, but honestly it felt like we were all together in that moment. It was beautiful" (Federico, Appendix B, p. 156)

2. SHIFT FROM A MOBILE TO A NEARLY IMMOBILE WORLD

2.1 LOSS OF FREEDOM

One of the key objectives of this investigation into travellers' experiences was to discover whether, and to what extent, this shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world has been perceived by travellers, other than the two researchers. Insights from the interviews have shown that all of the respondents experienced it to great extent. Notably, for some, this shift has been described as *"unexpected"* (Riccardo), *"unprecedented"* (Lorenzo), *"confining"* (Rose), as well as *"shocking"* (Ludovica; Kika) and *"disturbing"* (Matilde). Particularly, the overall perception of the world closing down was given by a number of factors such as the closing down of countries, boarders, mobility restrictions, impossibility of finding plane tickets, sudden changes to the transit policies, that have all concurred in hindering or constraining the respondents' *"hypermobility"*. Accordingly, respondents were asked to assess how mobile they usually are, and each one of them showed high degrees of mobility, which, compared to average, make them fall under the category of *hyper-mobile* travellers. As it has been discussed in the Literature Review Chapter, Adams (1999) argue that hypermobile lifestyles are measured by the distance travelled in a given period of time, as well as the frequency of journeys made in a given period of time. On these grounds, the researchers would like to add in the meaning of hypermobility, or mobility in

general, the concept of *motility*. According to Freudendal-Pedersen (2016), if mobility refers to actual movement, *motility* refers to the ability or potential the individual has to be mobile; more specifically, motility is what enables the maintaining of the idea of endless potential and possibilities as a part of everyday life to be, or have the possibility to be elsewhere (ibid). Notably, the author stresses how the concepts of motility as well as enhanced mobility, are strictly connected to the concept of *freedom*; in other words, the more a person can potentially or actually travel, the more freedom he/she believes is acquired. Consequently, it is interesting to note how, from the motility concept, it arises the utopian notion, embedded within highly mobile travellers from the *"fast lines"* of the globe, that one can do what he/she wants to do, when she/he wants to do it (Freudendal-Pedersen, 2016). So that *"mobility plays an important role as the facilitator for freedom and the concept of motility is what frames the utopia"* (Freudendal-Pedersen, 2016; p. 63). What is interesting to see is that this notion of "motility + mobility = enhanced freedom" is shared by all participants, as they similarly describe mobility as "freedom to move wherever they want, whenever they want" reported below:

"Well, the first thing that came up in my mind when you mentioned ¨mobility¨ is obviously the freedom of moving around without thinking at the consequences".
(Federico, Appendix B; p. 154)

"Mobility to me is being free to choose where and when to move, without having any restrictions". (Riccardo, Appendix B; p. 148)

"So for me, mobility means to being able to move around the globe freely and easily, with not so much bureaucracy to worry about"
(Nikola, Appendix B; p. 144)

"Well, I guess the mobility means that you can move around easily within places and we in Europe are very used to travel from one place to another without even question wheatear we can go there or not"
(Kika, Appendix B; p. 163)

Considering the above, when travellers, accustomed to high levels of mobility and embedded since birth with the notion of "motility + mobility = enhanced freedom", it does not come to surprise that when faced with constrained mobility, the concept of motility began to be jeopardized and their utopia compromised. So that, such shift from a justified motility in virtue of their highly mobile lives, to potential and actual immobility, has been perceived by almost all the respondents as "*loss of freedom*":

"Well, on a personal level, it's very confining. I really feel the loss of freedom"
(Rose, Appendix B; p. 172)

"(…) we were suddenly not able to find flights as the borders were started to close right away and this is where I perceived such shift. Suddenly I couldn't move around as easy as I was used to and also, I realized that that feeling of freedom that has so far encouraged me to travel was gone, I lost that feeling of freedom"
(Nikola, Appendix B; p. 144)

"So, the shift was shocking, you go from having so many options to move around to almost none at all" (Kika, Appendix B; p. 164)

In line with the above, it appears evident the dichotomy described by Freudendal-Pedersen (2016) between mobility/motility = freedom versus immobility = unfreedom. According to the author, *"freedoms"* can easily turn into *"unfreedoms"* when unintended consequences, such as strandedness, take place. On these grounds, discourses around mobility and immobility comes together with arguments around freedom and unfreedom. So that it appears evident how mobility can be equally an asset and a burden (Fotel, 2006) in Freudendal-Pedersen (2016) as well as possibility-creating just as it can be action-limiting. The above is particularly true for the individual, the stranded traveller, faced now with the following riddle: *"when – and why- does my freedom create unfreedom for myself?"* (Freudendal-Pedersen, 2016; p. 6). In line with the above, as suggested by Birtchnell and Büscher (2011), although not being self-evident, strandedness is truly intrinsic to mobility:

"That's when I realized that my freedom of being on the move was compromised and what I thought was then a right all of the sudden became a privilege. The world was literally stopping, and I was stuck" (Cerasela, Appendix B; p. 177)

2.2 THE PRIVILEGES OF UNPRECEDENTED IMMOBILITY

During the outbreak of the Covid-19 disease, and in virtue of the related mobility's restrictions measures, a great number of travellers found themselves *stuck* in something comparable to a limbo, unable to fly back home or separated from their family and friends (McDonnell, 2020). It has been argued that travel bans, global lockdowns and subsequent closure of the borders, resulted in the immobility of millions of travellers, a discussion that has enacted a reconsideration of the so-called "global immobility regime", whereby a more significant amount of individual and groups are routinely excluded from the mobility regime (McDonnell, 2020). That is to say that the relatively privileged native-born citizens of the Global North, whose passports permitted them to roam the world without any major restrictions, are now confined within their closed geographical borders – or stuck in a foreign country – "similarly" to what many individuals from low-income and/or refugee-producing states experience as part of their everyday lives (Lazreg and Garnaoui, 2020). Accordingly, as highlighted by Spijkerboer (2018) in McDonnell (2020), the so-called global mobility infrastructure has been argued to stratify individuals into two groups:

(**1**) the privileged that can access safe, quick and cheap travel and
(**2**) the excluded, who are subject to stringent visa checks and longer queues, with travel being costly and, at times, perilous.

Notably, privileged travellers who are able to access safe, quick and cheap travel usually come from high-income, Western, democratic states that are usually part of the intergovernmental economic organisation founded to stimulate economic progress and world trade (known as OECD) (Czaika et al., 2017 in McDonnell, 2020). Said privileged travellers have full protected access to the global mobility regime, instead of being labelled as "migrants" they are recognized as "tourists" or "expacts" or "businessperson" (Spijkerboer, 2017 in McDonnell, 2020). However, according to Lazreg and Garnaoui (2020), said unprecedented circumstances have *"restructured the privileges"* of the travel and tourism sector. In other words, the coronavirus pandemic has further complicated and even overturn ever-existing travel privileges and hierarchies, even so for a limited period of time. So that, paradoxically, tourists from the fast lines of the Global North switched from being highly welcomed by locals and destinations' governments to "undesirable" under the coronavirus times,

perceived as the ones responsible for being carriers of the virus (Lazreg and Garnaoui, 2020). This can be seen from the experience of Federico (Appendix B):

"Mexicans are loving people. I speak Spanish, so for me it was really easy to move around, get to know people, make friends. They are very curious and friendly; they are really interested in getting to know you. Now, after the media started to talk about the virus and everything, they did nothing but avoiding westerners. I would say that the main differences were that you could not immerse in the local culture anymore, since you were not welcome there; all the eyes are on you, like you did something bad" (p.155)

Moreover, such unprecedented immobility experienced by the respondents has been found to have significant psychological and emotional implications; particularly, one of the interviewees description of such shift from mobility to immobility and thus strandedness as follows:

"(..)what really got me was my immobility, feeling so powerless if it makes sense, the inability to fly internationally, to get on a plane and go home"
(Lorenzo, Appendix B, p. 133)

Needless to say, in the context of such unprecedented settings, being labelled as *"privileged traveler"* translates into belonging to one of those countries most affected by the virus outbreak. Notably, the study conducted by Sorokowski et., al (2020), has shown that aggravating anxiety levels were found concurrently with rises in media coverage regarding Covid-19. Particularly, increases in negative attitudes and prejudice towards foreign nationalities was observed. Particularly towards those nationalities whose nations were struggling the most in coping with the outbreak, (e.g. Italy, China). Accordingly, on a psychological level, a threat such as a pathogen, often translates into a willingness to distance oneself from others (Sorokowski et., al 2020). As argued by the authors, behavioural-immunology theories clearly emphasize on how human behaviours are prone to be shaped by pathogen stress. On such grounds, there is no such thing as **prestigious passports** anymore, or what was previously seen as prestigious, due to the covid-19 outbreak, became a burden and highly

limiting, as it as it can be evinced from the following photo taken by one of the researchers' acquaintances:
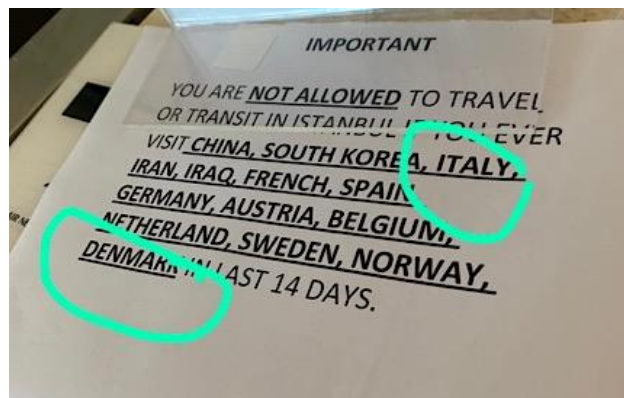
As well as from one of the respondents' experience:

"Once the day arrived when I, together with my friend, were supposed to fly back home, I was denied to board because of my Italian passport, notwithstanding the fact that I was in Bali already for over 3 weeks and that I did not come from Italy, nor I live or was going to travel to Italy. Apparently the main problem was that Italians, with many other nationalities, weren't allowed to transit in most Asian countries during the Covid-19 worldwide spread. What I experienced was that the high numbers of Covid-19 cases in Italy generated fear and discrimination towards Italians as it happened for Chinese people at the early stages of the pandemic"
(Lorenzo, Appendix B; p.133)

"I have both Romanian and Italian passports, so the Italian one it's stronger than the Romanian, and considering that Italy belongs to the Schengen area to travel in those countries I don't even need to show my passport, I can easily travel with my Italian ID. However, as the coronavirus cases were growing around the world, and at that time particularly in China, Italy, France and Spain, a number of airline companies were denying Italian passport holders to fly with them, funny enough having the Romanian passport helped me for once"
(Cerasela, Appendix B; p. 178)

Such unexpected experience of forced immobility has also been eye-opening for some of the respondents that share:

"I understand now how I almost took for granted my freedom of movement, I understand now how vulnerable we all are when things like this happen. Also, it made me realise how privileged I am thinking about my freedom of movement and the possibility of rely on support from family and friends, also economically speaking"
(Ludovica, Appendix B; p. 143)

Finally, one of the researchers reports how being forced into immobility made her feel *"unjustly trapped"* (Matilde, Appendix B; p.182). If this feeling of injustice can be surely understood on a human and personal level, in broader terms, Lazreg and Garnaoui (2020) look at this immobility caused by the advent of the coronavirus as a form of "immobility justice". As stressed by Beckman (2001) in Freudendal-Pedersen (2016): *"mobility moves as much as it freezes: mobility for some will create immobility for others"* (p. 20). On the grounds of the above, Lazreg and Garnaoui (2020) stress the need for a sincerer and fairer understanding of the politics of movement, which demand to reconsider the deep flows of inequality and uneven accessibility in today's global regimes of mobilities. It seems fitting the argument made by Cresswell (2010) in Beauchamps et al., (2017), previously encompassed in the literature review chapter, that reminds us of how greatly:

"forms of mobility (…) are political and implicated in the production of power and relations of domination, which means that speeds, slownesses, and immobilities are all related in ways that are thoroughly infused with power and its distribution".
(p.6)

3. SOCIAL MEDIA: A TWO-EDGED SWORD

3.1 INFORMATION

Today, the global use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram accounts for approximately 3.6 billion users (Clement, 2020); in virtue of the fact that social media penetration is in constant growth, this number is projected to increase to 4.41 billion within the next five years (Clement, 2020). Moreover, according to Taylor (2019), social media involve web, mobile-based technologies and platforms that facilitate the content creation, collaboration and sharing of information by members of the public. As the novel coronavirus outbreak has been argued to be a matter of global concern, said extended use of social media has proved to be

beneficial as major source of health information, as well as a critical component in crisis communication (Hudson, 2020). Moreover, in order to provide reassurance and accurate information during an outbreak such as the COVID-19, it is paramount for officials, governments and health experts to be present on social media channels as the flow of information between "online" individuals is more rapid, unlike traditional mass media (Li and Rao, 2010 in Rao et al., 2020). In situations such as the ongoing pandemic, social media comes with the benefit of offering governments and response officials direct access to individuals, allowing them to publicize messages of assurance and comfort to the victims of the disease, as well those who might be living in fear (Rao et al., 2020). A similar strategy was adopted by most of the airlines, so that, due to the closure of the boarders which disrupted the travel plans of millions of people, airlines used their official Facebook page to communicate with their customers. Pivotal information concerning for instance the latest health documentations requirements for boarding where shared online as a way of saving time compared to the usual time-consuming email communication exchange. Through netnography research, the following post was shared by Thai Airways as a way of informing passengers of the latest changes:

Image – Facebook post from Thai Airways – Screenshot made by Researchers. Available [online] at:
https://www.facebook.com/ThaiAirways/posts/10159665996722293.

Moreover, as reported by Karasneh et al., (2020), such online platforms have been argued to facilitate the communication between researchers, scientists, public health experts and funding agencies, overall enabling a more effective and prompt global response to global health emergencies. Accordingly, the emergence of the outbreak grabbed the attention of media news, press, and social media pages with the latter

being the main source for coronavirus-related information sharing (Karasneh et al., 2020). During the outbreak, the use of social media was paramount also for the respondents particularly during their experience of strandedness. Specifically, Lorenzo, Matilde and Cerasela emphasized how Facebook played a vital role as communication channel between them and other organizations:

"They have been simply fundamental. These online platforms gave us live updates about our main concerns (…) many of these new updates were written and shared of course in local languages so we couldn't understand anything, luckily some local people in these groups translated these documents so all foreigners could understand them; (…) Also gave us info about local lockdown rules, local embassy and consulate response to the emergency and so on"
(Lorenzo, Appendix B, p. 137)

"Social media, particularly Facebook, played a fundamental role while I was stranded. It was in fact the only mean through which it was possible to have access to updated news on what was going on with regards, for instance, to new airlines health requirements, immigration updates, closing of the airports and so on. Particularly, one of our airlines, Thai Airways shared crucial news and info only on Facebook, so that any changes or updates where communicated on their Facebook page"
(Matilde, Appendix B, p. 185)

"(..)on the one hand, it was easier to be updated with the flight information about the airlines and having updates about the Covid-19 and about the borders with the embassies" (Cerasela, Appendix B, p. 179)

Analogous to the above, other travellers trying to go home were in touch with different organization and businesses through their official Facebook page. From the use of netnography, screenshots of conversations between Thai Airways and their customers are reported below:
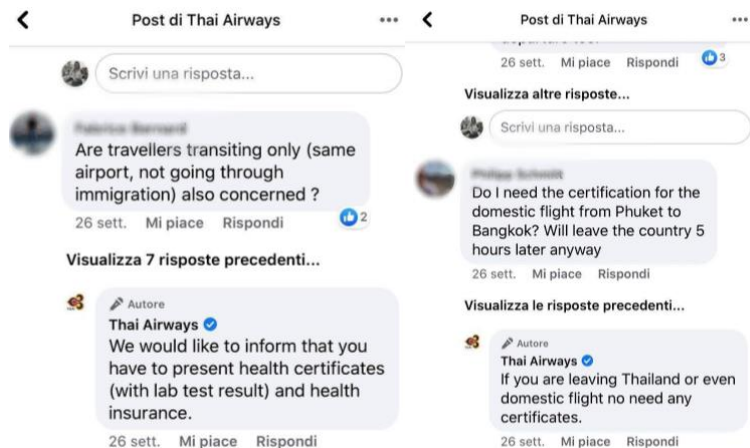
"Screenshots from Thai Airways posts shared on Social Media"

It appears evident how under threatening circumstances, information sharing among response teams, officials, and the public are critical in speeding up the process of finding a solution (Rao et al., 2020). As such, the official departments seek to improve the public's awareness about preventions and intervention strategies by providing daily updates about surveillance and active cases on websites as well as on social media. According to Hudson (2020), also businesses and companies' websites necessitate constant updating as they can be a useful resource in increasing consumer's awareness and becoming a trusted source of information during a crisis. Accordingly, a number of organizations updated their homepages with the most relevant news and information concerning Covid-19 using a temporary page banner or a news section (Hudson, 2020). Qatar Airline, for example, as showed in the Image below, announced their "WE WILL GET YOU HOME" (QatarAirways, 2020) promotion for passengers in need of immediate travel through their official webpage:
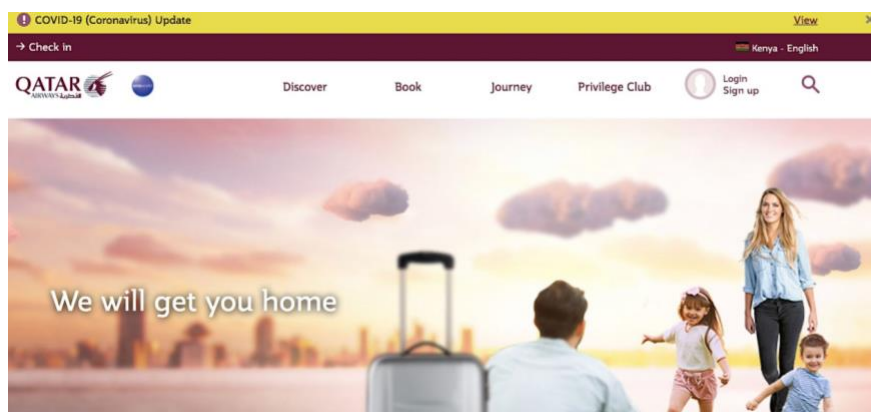
Image – Screenshot from Qatar Airways Website. "We will get you home" promotion. Available [online] at: https://www.qatarairways.com/en-ke/we-will-get-you-home.html

Moreover, it is important to highlight that, unlike previous pandemics and epidemics, COVID-19 is spreading across a highly connected world, in which virtually all individuals are linked to each other through their mobile phone. Because of strict physical distancing measures imposed by the governments in order to contain the virus spread, people are heavily reliant on maintaining connectivity using global digital social networks, such as Facebook or Twitter, to facilitate human interaction as well as information sharing about the virus; Ludovica, Asta and many others stranded travellers illustrated in the following pictures mainly used such platforms for this purpose:

"At the beginning, when we weren't sure if we were allowed to go back home, nor if we really wanted to, social media played a major role for us because all of the sudden there were just so many people in the same situation as we were, so we could read about it, send texts, message and discuss about the situation in order make the best possible decision. There were so many groups for instance on Facebook that were created to connect stranded people, or already existing one like "Expats in Bali" that then were used for the purpose of sharing information of what was going on or experiences of other people, many were just asking for advice and so on. Everyone was relying on each other; it was really nice thinking about it now to see people helping others or locals in difficulty (…)"
(Ludovica, Appendix B, p. 142)

"Eventually Facebook was helpful in a way because we joined some groups of other people who was trying to go home so we could chat with them and ask them to keep us updated about the flights situation and inform us about everything. We used Instagram and searched some specific airport location in order to follow "live" what is going on, and see what people are posting"
(Asta, Appendix B, p. 161)
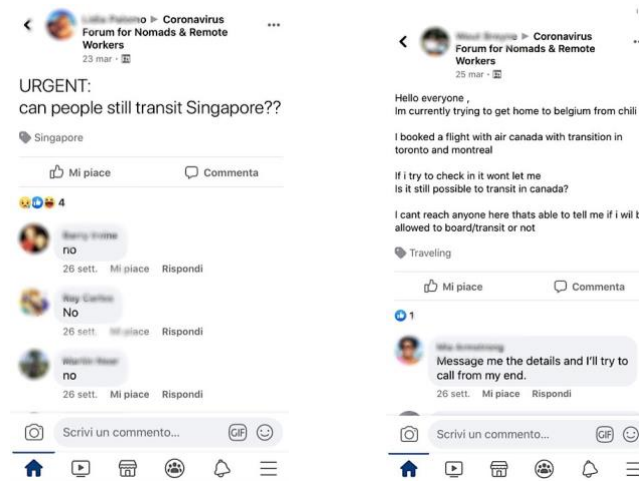
Screenshots taken from Facebook Webpage "Coronavirus Forum for Nomads and Remote Workers".

Social media was also found fundamental in facilitating the attaining of updated available information in order to enhance knowledge, create awareness and share practices of both healthcare workers and general public; one of the respondent share how You-Tube has been useful in enhancing her overall knowledge:

"Well I used to watch a lot of YouTube videos to see how is the covid19 situation worldwide. So, from the videos I learned how to wash my hands properly and the importance of using masks and hand sanitizer" (Rose, Appendix B, p. 175)

Moreover, because of the language barriers, being part of specific Facebook groups aided respondents to acquire fundamental information related specifically to the destination's local governmental decisions in terms of Covid-19, in order to know how to act correctly in respect of the local community:

"I think Facebook and the Facebook groups in Canggu area where we stayed was really very important for us because we could find relevant information there. Also, you couldn't really get some information without having Facebook, so it was really important" (Kika, Appendix B, p. 166)

"On the one hand it was really helpful because we could be updated about what is going on in Bali thanks to those people who were translating the articles for us because we were not able to understand anything on the news"
(Nikola, Appendix B; p. 146)

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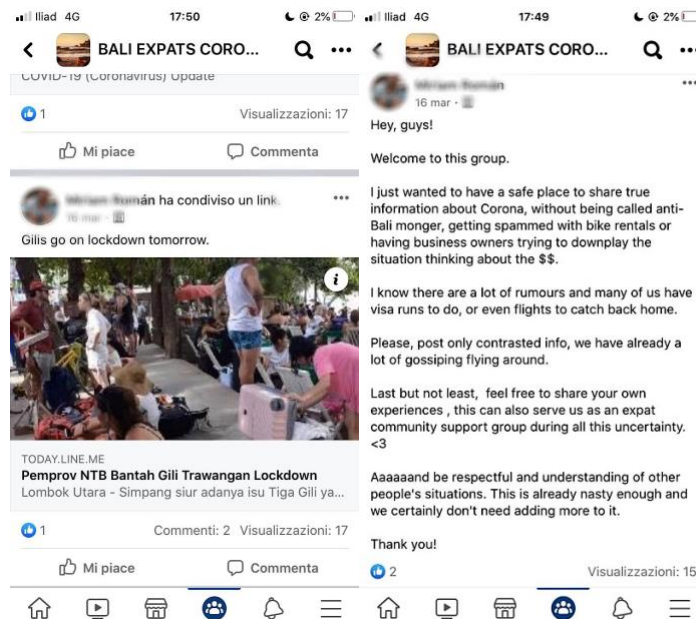
"Screenshots of Facebook Group created by a user as a way to share experiences of travellers in Bali"

Finally, form the respondents' insights, it came to the researchers' attention the use of another remarkable technological solution tailored to mitigate the Covid-19 crisis such as mobile apps, which during this unforeseen health pandemic are believed to bridging the distance between citizens and organizations (Azevedo Silva, 2020). As social distancing and confinement strategies implemented worldwide demand for new ways of communication, both public authorities and private initiatives are increasingly making use of apps to reach the population; particularly, thanks to the geo-locating technologies that mobile apps have incorporated, it has allowed governments in the tracking and aid of the stranded travellers (Azevedo Silva, 2020). Notably, Matilde emphasized how abandoned she felt by the embassies, however the use of the apps turned out to be quite effective in information sharing and solution-finding, such as the Danish app "Rejseklar" and the Italian app "Unità di Crisi":

"I think many in those groups, including me, felt pretty much abandoned by their own embassies (the Italian consulate in Bali closed down) so Facebook was the only place where they could find answers to their questions or follow other people discussions and so on. I must say that the Italian government as well as the Danish government encouraged stranded travellers to downloads their apps to also give us latest updates on where we could travel, basically helping us finding ways to get out as soon as possible as the boarders were closing down pretty fast. Basically,

through geolocations they would be able to track tour position and give you updates depending on where you were stranded. Also, when you needed to register, you'd have to share all your information" (Matilde, Appendix B, p. 185)

3.2 MISINFORMATION

The previous sub-chapter has shown how significant the role of social media, governments' online apps and online communities have proved to be in supporting and facilitating stranded travellers' information exchange during the Covid-19 outbreak. Such accelerated use and heavy reliance on said technologies has, however, stimulated the emergence of a significant number of issues and paradoxes (Sigala, 2020). Accordingly, in virtue of the outbreak, travellers, in order to gain information about travel restrictions as well as online crisis communication, have highly relayed on technologies to access diverse content on social media (ibid). In virtue of the above, a number of significant paradoxes have remerged with regards to such use of technology, which are currently at the centre of a wider discussion that question whether online means of communication ought to be conceived as the *"cure"* or rather the *"diffuser"* of the pandemic (Sigala, 2020). As noted by Taylor (2019): *"beliefs and fears about diseases, just like diseases themselves, spread through social networks"* (p.69). Notably, majority of the respondents showed how, due to, for instance, language barriers, information and news were found mostly, if not solely, on social media. Particularly, changes to aviation policies regarding transits restrictions, as well as information regarding the latest health documentation needed to travel, were shared only on social media, resulting in a great number of elderly people, families and other "offline" travellers stopped at the airports' check-in zones, unable to board, forced into strandedness. The following can be clearly evinced from the following insight:

"it was very stressful to see that other passengers did not even know about this new needed documents to travel as the airline did not inform anyone about it. We knew it only thanks to other fellow travellers that shared their experience the evening before. Just us and few more passengers knew about this changes and actually had the documentation required. (…) There was much rage, anger also on all other passengers. Many were families or very elderly people and majority was crying or

recording because it was just absolutely unbelievable. It didn't feel legal nor human,
especially considering the circumstances"
(Lorenzo, Appendix B; p.134)

In line with the above, Sigala (2020) stresses on today's inequalities of accessibility, as not everybody has access to such technologies and those that they do might not have the capabilities and knowledge to effectively use it. In such uncertainty-full context, Taylor (2019), highlight how rumours and fake news are very likely to thrive and spread; rumours are described as "improvised news" (Shiubutani, 1966 in Taylor, 2019; p. 69) characterized to be either true, false, or somewhere in between. That is, when dealing with uncertainty, individuals are more likely to believe in rumours and fake-news that confirm their pre-existing beliefs and anxieties (Greenhill and Oppemheim, 2017 in Madhav et al., 2017). Notably, according to Byford (2020), what makes individuals latching their beliefs onto rumours and conspiracy theories, does not come from the argumentative power behind such claims, rather what keeps them highly engaged are the intensity of passions that such claims stir, triggering the emotional compound that reduce the world into a fight between good and evil. The above suggest that risk communication needs to be equally factual and empathetic, as facts alone will not suffice in countering rumours, fake news and conspiracy theories (Madhav et al., 2017).

The above is particularly common during the first stages of an outbreak of a novel infectious disease, as demand for information exceed the supply (Taylor, 2019). So that people, driven by the need to make up for such shortage of information, share, and re-share content on social media as well as on mass media (Taylor, 2019). On such matters, Sigala (2020), reiterate on how this current pandemic is as much as a *"infodemic".* On these grounds, the WHO (2020), in regards to the unprecedented spread of fake news online imminent to the Covid-19 outbreak, states: *"We are not just fighting an epidemic, we are fighting and infodemic".* As it can be easily evinced, the term refers to a rapid and far-reaching spread of both accurate and inaccurate information about a disease, whereby the substantial spreading and sharing of rumours and conspiracy theories overall hinder the otherwise easy process for people to access trustworthy sources and reliable guidance when needed (WHO, 2020; Broniatowski et al., 2020). Rumours, fake news as well as contrasting news, are

believed to concur in jeopardizing measures to control the pandemic as well as undermining the overall global response (WHO, 2020):

"Also, at the begging they said it's like a cold, then they say no it's more than that"
(Asta, Appendix B; p. 160)

"it was a little bit disturbing because some information was also quite contradicting and you simply didn't know what to believe anymore"
(Nikola, Appendix B; p. 146)

"There were a lot of weird rumours going on and a lot of fake news and fake information was shared on Facebook and a lot of people would believe it. I once met a guy and he told me that a lot of people were dying in Italy because they are committing suicide not because of the virus"
(Asta, Appendix B; p. 161)

"It was so confusing and messy to find relevant information from all the posts that were shared, also while looking for the information you had to scroll down conversations and arguments that were not relevant for you but still you had to scan through them and that was very stressful. People were sharing horrible experiences of being attacked and robbed, articles about how numbers of covid-19 cases where dramatically increasing in Asia etc. it was just chaos. Oh and of course (…) you could find conspiracy theories, rumours remedies anti Covid, the list just keeps growing"
(Matilde, Appendix B; p. 186)

On these grounds, it might not be surprising to acknowledge a proportionally inverted relationship between misinformation (as well as fake news) and mental health. So that, the augmentation of misinformation and fake news correspond to a decline in mental health wellbeing (Sigala, 2020). Particularly, a global depression has incurred in virtue of said emotional contagion (ibid). The author argues how digital inequalities in tourists potentiated their psychological and emotional vulnerability to Covid-19. The above can be evinced from stranded travellers, in a position of enhanced uncertainty and intrinsic vulnerability:

"The social media stressed us even more because everyone was only talking about the Covid-19"
(Asta, Appendix B; p. 161)

"Well the role the social media played was a little bit as a double sword (…), being part of some Facebook groups managed by travellers where everyone can write about what they experienced can be really stressful. A lot of things were contradictory and you just didn't know which "side" to take – everything was misleading and personally, not having control over things and not knowing what is the next move provokes a condition of anxiety in me"
(Cerasela, Appendix B; p. 179)

"the price to pay to get information (…) was just too much, it felt like being bombarded with bad news and negative stories all the time and we all had to endure it and pay a price with our mental health and stress level that at that point were just out of the roof"
(Matilde, Appendix B; p. 186)

Moreover, as evinced from the following passage of one of the respondents, enhanced distress on a stranded traveller might arise also from his/her family, who in turn, are experiencing elevated levels of fear, anxiety and distress in virtue of the *volume/ tone and content* of media coverage (Taylor, 2019):

"(…) I was not the worried one but my family. They were getting all this bad news from the media, about people dying and families falling apart on a daily basis, so you can imagine how bad they felt when they found out I was not able to find any available flight to Italy and I had to stay in a country with the minimum sanitary conditions"
(Federico, Appendix B; p. 155)

As Neria and Sullivan (2011) in Taylor (2019) argue, indirect exposure to trauma, such as graphic media depictions of fatalities, can also contribute to enhancing distress. Finally, with regards to the discussion on whether such online means of communication ought to be conceived as a "cure" or rather a "diffuser" of the pandemic (Sigala, 2020), it appears evident that, nowadays, notwithstanding the two-edged sword role of social media (Taylor, 2019):

"Social Media are absolutely fundamental. Don't get me wrong, in a good and bad way (…), that were medias and companies making some bad marketing through people, scaring them with wrong news and panicking the whole world even more. In both ways the truth is that the online industry is playing an important role in our society and we can't live without it anymore"

(Federico, Appendix B; p. 156)

In a study conducted by Pennycook et al., (2020), that aimed to increase the quality of information users share online, the reason behind the phenomenon of people sharing false or inaccurate information related to the Covid-19 was investigated. The investigation brought to light that people share false claims party because they simply fail to think sufficiently about the accuracy of the content before pressing the share button (Pennycook et al., 2020). In the study it is highlighted how significant are the daily-basis actions of individual citizens as the impact of the pandemic depends on their actions, behaviours and decisions, in real life and on social media alike. According to Taylor (2019), rumours, fear and misinformation can easily spread through social networks, particularly on social media. The above has been found to further heighten fear, anxiety and depression. Notably, researchers have made a number of suggestions on how social media might be more effective in restraining and limiting the spread of inaccurate information (Taylor, 2019). The study conducted by Pennycook et al., (2020) showed how nudging people to think about accuracy of what they are about to share before being able to post the content, has nearly tripled the level of truth discernment in participants. On these grounds, nudging people to think about accuracy of content could prove to be a simple and effective way in improving choices about what to share on social media as, ultimately, the responsibility is on the individual to critically examine the sources of information they intend to share (Pennycook et al., 2020; Taylor, 2019).

4. CHAPER IV – FINDINGS' SUMMARY

The aim of this chapter was to investigate and critically discuss insights shared by the twelve respondents stranded in different foreign countries due to the advent of Covid-19. The focus has been on discovering how and to what extent respondents have

been impacted *psychologically*, *emotionally* and *economically* by such *"unexpected"* and *"abrupt"* cessation of mobility. Insights have shown that being forced into strandedness in virtue of a global health pandemic has had significant implications on their travel experience; and, as it will be argued in the following chapter, also on their future travel choices and behaviours.

Notably, the shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world experienced and argued by the researchers, has been similarly perceived by all the interviewees. Interestingly, this strandedness given by such shift, has been described by the respondents as *"loss of freedom"*, as their *motility* as well as *mobility* has been compromised and restrained. Such "*unprecedented immobility"* experienced with distress and anxiety by the respondents, has revealed their congenital privileged positions of hypermobile, wealthy travellers and re-enforced the debate that ask for sincerer and fairer understanding of the inequalities and uneven accessibility in today's global regime of *(im)mobilities.*

With regards to the *psychological* and *emotional* spheres, high degrees of fear, distress, anxiety and depression were reported by respondents that have experienced *stigmatization* and *xenophobia*, triggered by an overall change in locals' attitudes and behaviours towards them. Particularly, the perception of *not being wanted*, along with the feeling *of uncertainty*, have been found to play a significant role in aggravating the respondents' mental and psychological well-being. Notably, due to impacts of the current pandemic, residents and tourists' behaviours are changing, so that tourism destinations' residents may become less welcoming towards foreign travellers, as well as less supportive of tourism development. Similarly, might be found to be less inclined to travel to foreign countries. On top of this, the *constant fear of falling ill* in a developing country as well as the *economic uncertainty*, have further challenged the majority of the respondents' *resilience*, overall making, to some, the experience of strandedness almost unbearable.

Finally, in virtue of the fact that posts shared on social media can influence peoples' emotions and behaviours, the role that it played in the respondents' experience of strandedness as has been investigated. Findings have shown how although social media has been reportedly praised for its significant and crucial role in informing and

keeping up-to-date the respondents, its role has been compared to a *two-edged sword*. Particularly, insights have shown the negative implications of having to highly relay on social media to access and exchange information, a global platform in which anybody can disseminate their opinions about anything. Notably, contrasting news together with a continuous direct and indirect exposure to fake news and rumours, have made it harder and more stressful for stranded travellers to find and access trustworthy sources and reliable guidance in the times of need. Such *"infodemic"* has been found to further heighten *fear*, *anxiety*, *depression* and *emotional distress* in the respondents. Finally, rumours, fake and contrasting news, conspiracy theories, as well as issues of accessibility inequalities, are believed to concur in jeopardizing measures to control the pandemic as well as undermining the overall global response. It follows that the role of social media during the Covid-19 outbreak has been argued to be a *"diffuser"* rather than a *"cure"* of the pandemic, mainly due to its rapid and far-reaching *"global contagion"* and dissemination of misinformation.

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CHAPTER V –

THE FUTURE OF TOURISM IN THE POST COVID-19 ERA

As previously outlined in the introduction chapter, the fourth objective of this master thesis is ***to investigate from the respondents' insights the transformative affordance of Covid-19, as a way to unveil possible future travel trends and tourists' behaviours***. It is expected, indeed, that due to the unprecedented global impacts of the pandemic, companies, businesses, institutions as well as travellers, will be faced with the opportunity to foster industry change; whether this possibility will be seized remains to be seen. As for now, it is important to ascertain the transformative potential behind the pandemic as the world is transitioning to a new *"normal".* The following are the three key sub-themes that have risen from the respondents' interviews that will be discussed throughout this chapter, and namely: (**1**) compulsion for mobility; (**2**) safety first; (**3**) transformative affordance of COVID-19.

5.1 COMPULSION FOR MOBILITY

In virtue of their profound tourist experience of strandedness due to the Covid-19 outbreak, respondents were asked whether they believed that this experience would have an impact on their future travel plans and overall willingness to travel again. It has been noticeable how, although being impacted by this experience, almost all of the respondents have shown high degrees in willingness to travel again, showing high levels of resilience and compulsion to travel (Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011):

"I'm really eager to go into the world again"
(Rose, Appendix B; p. 176)

"I think I am going to travel even more now"
(Riccardo, Appendix B; p. 153)

"I will continue to travel and see new places no matter what"
(Reed, Appendix B; p. 150)

"After this experience, which for me was quite traumatic (…) I will keep travelling as I think being afraid of travelling now would be silly and counterproductive However, I understand that when a pandemic like this happens, you can have all the documentations and cards you need a still not be able to travel. Its unpredictable, you still can do everything right and things can still go wrong (…)"
(Lorenzo, Appendix B; p. 137)

The *unpredictability* described by Lorenzo given by the coronavirus outbreak, similarly to the ashes generated by the volcanic eruption of Eyjafjallajökull in Iceland, has demonstrated how travellers' sense of control over their mobile lives can be *"compromised by the unknown and unheralded"* (Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011; p. 8). Moreover, one of the respondents, highlight how the social distancing measures as well as other behavioural measures implemented to contain the spread of Covid-19, might have also altered the sensuous of the post-COVID-19 era's tourist experiences, overall hindering his excitement to travel if these circumstances persists:

"I'm super interactive guy, always open to meet people, that's the main reason why I call myself a traveller (…) Now, it's a totally different situation here. Starting from when you leaving the house, what's the first thing you need to travel? A Mask. Can't touch anything, sanitizing your hand 150 times a day, no interactions with people, few flights with way too many restrictions. Is this traveling? All the good things I experienced on my travels were coming from things we are not allowed to do anymore, for now. So, of course my wonder to travel it's a bit gone"
(Federico, Appendix B; p. 156)

As it has been previously argued in the Literature Review Chapter, although this experience could act as a general reminder that people could live and manage a life without mobility as well as the risks associated with travelling, it appears evident from the attitudes of respondents that is indeed true that human's compulsion for mobility is hard to discourage (Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011). Mobility is, indeed, an essential part of late modernity everyday life. The motility as well as mobility to travel play an important role in an individual's identity (Freudendal-Pedersen, 2009). The above is particularly true when considering that today's highly social and spatial mobile lives

further exacerbate this compulsion to move (Urry, 2007 in Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011). According to Kesselring (2008) the ongoing compulsive necessity for individuals to define their social boundaries and relationships is translated into constant change, motion and transit, believed to be key components of modern lives. It follows that: *"there may be no way to resolve people's deeply ingrained drive for travel and movement"* (Birtchnell and Büscher, 2011; p. 7-8).

5.2 SAFETY FIRST

Notwithstanding the fact that the respondents have shown a deep ingrained drive for movement, and therefore willingness to travel again as soon as allowed/possible, insights from the interviews have also shown a shared consensus on the need of *"being safe"*, *"feeling safe"* and travelling to *"safe destinations"*. According to Lahood (2020), such cautiousness in travellers is expected and justified by the impact a global health crisis has had/ is having on the travellers' psyche:

"(…) I don't desire to go somewhere for a week to be a tourist because there are so many risks (…) So, I would rather wait until it feels safer again. (…). I will definitely try to keep a little distance from people, I got used to it so this is the new normal for me now, like I'm surprised when somebody touches me, because I am not used to that anymore"
(Rose, Appendix B; p. 176)

"In the future I will be more precautious, wear mask and be more careful with my personal hygiene (…) I am still going to travel the way I did before but just a little bit more careful and pay more attention to the hygiene"
(Asta, Appendix B; p. 162)

"I will be much more careful choosing my travel destinations, making sure that the airline company, accommodation, insurance, health and immigration system of the foreign country are secure and reliable"
(Lorenzo, Appendix B; p. 138)

As it can be evinced from the above interviews' excerpts, travellers reasoning about the future implications of the current pandemic on their future travels choices and attitudes, appear to be not only more cautious, also higher destinations' security and reliability levels are sought. As well as more conscious about physical distance and bacteria, so that outdoors activities and nature are preferred compared to indoors activities and environments, seeking less psychical interaction with others. The above can be seen form the following insight:

"I would probably choose destinations that will allow me to be more in contact with the nature and do outdoors activities and sports rather than choose cities where you mainly go at bars, go shopping and visit museums and other indoor structures"
(Kika, Appendix B; p. 167)

On these grounds, the argument made by Sigala (2020) that with the advent of Covid-19, travel and tourism related servicescapes are required to be re-designed, seems veracious. Particularly, servicescape design, due to the hedonistic and sensuous nature of tourism, plays a crucial role in tourism experiences as it influences customers' emotions, attitudes, behaviours, as well as service evaluations (ibid). accordingly, in virtue of the current Covid-19 operating standards, a number of sensorial elements will be eliminated, thus altering previous tourism experiences. For instance, the smell of cleanliness might be preferred over fragrances, events management will have to deal with new standards of psychological comfort as acceptable levels of perceived crowdedness have changed (Sigala, 2020). Accordingly, such changes could translate into a shift of tourists' travel behaviour, likely to result in the avoidance of tourism destination known for being exceptionally overcrowded, in favour of more remote and less popular destinations (Zenker and Kock, 2020). Finally, destinations that will allow future travellers to be more in contact with nature and will offer a wider range of outdoors and sport activities, seem to be the ones that will have mora chances to maintain attractiveness and perhaps increase their competitiveness in the *"post-Covid-19 era"*. Accordingly, tourism-related businesses have been competing in ensuring safety of their customers, brand image and employees (Sigala, 2020). In order to comply with travellers' expectations on social distancing, gathering restrictions, and new hygiene's standards, tourism

experiences are being re-designed featuring smaller groups of tourists, whereby the management and attention towards peoples' health is an imperative (ibid).

Finally, the feeling of being safe will be paramount, so that travellers of the post COVID-19 era are more likely to purchase travel insurances (Zenker and Kock, 2020). This can be evinced from the following quote:

"Before being stranded I was mainly focused (…) finding the cheapest deals. I later realised that nothing is more important than flying with reliable companies and have a full cover insurance in case something goes wrong (…) I will be much more careful choosing my travel destinations, making sure that the airline company, accommodation, insurance, health and immigration system of the foreign country are secure and reliable"
*(*Lorenzo, Appendix B; p. 135)

5.3 TRANSORMATIVE AFFORDANCE OF COVID-19

In virtue of its renowned ability to recover from past and recent critical economic crises and outbreaks of infectious diseases, the travel and tourism industry is recognized as being highly resilient (Sigala, 2020; Lew et al., 2020; Zenker and Kock, 2020). However, it has been argued how, due to the distinctive level of complexity brought by the current pandemic, the industry has been challenged in unprecedented ways (Sigala, 2020; Lew et al., 2020). As such, according to Mair (2020) in Sigala (2020), there is a common belief among some exponents of the academy that this pandemic could be the starting point of a transformative opportunity. On these grounds, Lew et al., (2020) claims: *"the global tourism industry has been given a unique chance for a re-boot, and there are unlimited path-shaping opportunities"* (p. 462). As previously argued, crises can be a change trigger within an industry and the Covid-19 pandemic could prove to be a long-term positive transformative opportunity (Sigala, 2020). However, to predict, inform and shape change is not an easy task (ibid). Accordingly, the economic system and mind-set contributing to the Covid-19 spread has also been argued to be the one guiding and shaping the Covid-19 response and recovery strategies of governments, institutions, businesses and people alike (ibid); it follows that, so far, there has been attention to treat only to the symptoms of the crisis instead of taking into account their root causes. (ibid). According to the author, this superficial

and approximate *modus operandi* needs to change, otherwise *"we will experience one crisis after the other"* (Lew, 2020 in Sigala, 2020; p. 313). According to this, while a great deal of attention in the *"post-pandemic new normal"* is spent on reforming the industry and policy making, much less attention is given to the role that tourists themselves should and could play (Lew et al., 2020).

On these grounds, the researchers asked the respondents to answer whether the "forced immobility" and subsequent "strandedness" that they experienced impacted their "old" views on mobilities or travelling in general. While all of the respondents highlighted that while their willingness to travel is still high, the way they intend to travel in the future seems to have changed. Particularly, respondents have been found inclined to privilege domestic travels or travel within geographical proximity, not only to aid their relative country to recover economically from the pandemic, but also to reduce their environmental footprint and to feel more "safe":

"I don't feel like travelling too far from home unless is 100% safe"
(Kika, Appendix B; p. 167)

"What I believe is that we should support more our own countries and economies in periods like the one we are living it now, especially hospitality and tourism industry they got a massive fall since the beginning of the pandemic, so let's get back on a plane, go out eating and support the small businesses, we can raise all together from this"
(Federico, Appendix B; p. 157)

"Now that everything is on hold, I just want to travel my own home country and that's it. (…) Because of the COVID Italy's touristic sector got impacted really bad, so the DMOs started to finally promote as much as possible domestic tourism (…)
(Cerasela, Appendix B; p. 180)

Notably, before the advent of Covid-19, and despite the tourism industry being highly criticized for its environmental impacts, the transportation industry has nonetheless never stopped to grow. Tourism is saturated with imaginaries of escaping the mundanity of everyday life and engaging with the *otherness* (Salazar, 2012 in Jeuring and Haartsen, 2017). Moreover, it is believed that the major trigger for tourism travel

is meeting and experiencing the *other* (Edensor, 2013 in Jeuring and Haartsen, 2017). Additionally, according to Larsen and Guiver (2013) in Jeuring and Haartsen (2017), travellers develop a need for distance as the journey itself becomes important in order to experience something different and "get away from it all", in spite of the negative effects in terms of transport costs and carbon footprints. On such grounds, places near home may seem too familiar and commonplace to meet the needs associated with being on vacation (Jeuring and Haartsen, 2017); the above refers to the so-called proximity paradox (ibid). However, in virtue of the pandemic outbreak, the respondents are now less enthusiast about long-haul travel, showing that the current pandemic has somewhat meant an overturn of the proximity paradox. As shown from the following quote:

"(…) I haven't even visited my own country that well yet, which is absolutely ridiculous if I think about it (…) once and if it will be possible I will focus my travels to countries and cities that are geographically closer to where I am settled"
(Matilde, Appendix B, p. 186)

It has been found that spending money and time within their home province would bring economic benefits, increase knowledge about one's cultural heritage as well as adopt a responsible behaviour for both local and global environments. The above insights seem to reinforce the research conducted by Cashdan and Steele (2013) in Zenker and Kock (2020), that shows how individuals, when exposed to a pathogen threat, become more collectivistic. In such instances, travellers might favourite domestic destinations over foreign ones, in an attempt to support their own country's economy (Zenker and Kock, 2020). The above assumptions find their validation with this research's respondents change in tourism behaviour, that existing research has named as *tourism ethnocentrism* (Kock et al., 2019 in Zenker and Kock, 2020; p. 3).

Moreover, one of the researchers, (Cerasela, Appendix B; p. 180) stresses on the importance of the DMOs' role in promoting domestic tourism in order positively enhance the attractiveness of geographically proximal destinations. From the first quote reported below, the respondent points out how this experience has taught her how not all travels are necessary and since the lockdowns and subsequent travel bans, early indications have shown that the planet is healing; the pandemic has shown that people are willing to change their behaviours when global public health is under

threat as well as willing to make sacrifices and change their lifestyle. This experience has made Nikola begin to feel more conscious about her travels and recognized that travelling too often and for short-hauls play a detrimental effect in global warming, thus she intends to travel less but for longer periods:

"(…) people started to rethink mobility; what I mean with this is that with this pandemic going on it has been proved that you can avoid unnecessary travelling. Many conferences take place online and a lot of people worked from home"
(Asta, Appendix B; p. 158)

"(…) I think that this will change the way we all travel and personally the impact it had on me now is that I will rethink the way I travel indeed. I will travel less and try to eliminate the unnecessary travelling; what I mean is that instead of going to Portugal for example from Slovakia for a weekend getaway, I would choose to visit somewhere in Slovakia or choose a closer destination such as the neighbouring countries. In such way I will also be more sustainable for the environment" (Nikola, Appendix B; p. 147)

On these grounds, according to Lew et al., (2020) in virtue of the debate around climate change, the Covid-19 outbreak has been argued to be a blessing in disguise. Accordingly, the post-pandemic tourism industry could benefit from more conscious travellers, aware of their unconscious behaviours that often result in the creation of unintended consequences, purchasing patterns and increased ability to be resilient in critical times (Lew et al., 2020). Finally, Lew and Perez (2020) in Lew et al., (2020) highlight the importance of the individual's daily basis actions and behaviours as: *"true sustainability will only occur when it is valued as a part of the take-for-granted daily life of individuals and cultures across the globe"* (p. 464).

5.4 CHAPTER V – FINDINGS' SUMMARY

The aim of this chapter was to uncover from the respondents' insights the transformative affordance of Covid-19, ultimately to unveil possible future travel trends and tourists' behaviours that will be considered autochthonous of the post pandemic era. As the world is transitioning to a new normal, findings have shown respondents' unaltered desire to travel, notwithstanding of the deep psychological, emotional and

economic impacts endured. Such deeply ingrained compulsion for mobility and overall resilience of travellers subsequent to travel-related crisis mirror the same resilience of the wider travel and tourism industry in weathering negative demand shocks. Nevertheless, after being forced into immobility, travellers seem to be more aware of how greatly their mobile lives can be compromised by the unknown and unheralded. Their experience of strandedness and abrupt immobility has turned them into more cautions customers, more likely than before to purchase travel insurances; travellers of the post Covid-19 era expect and demand from the industry undivided attention towards their health and safety. Consequently, the industry has now to comply with travellers' new expectations on social distancing, gathering restrictions, and new hygiene's standards, so that tourism experiences are being re-designed.

Furthermore, the "post covid-19 era's" traveller appear to be more likely to travel to destinations that are geographically closer to them, a trend which has been said to have challenged the proximity paradox. Moreover, with a shift in travellers' behaviours, referred to as tourism ethnocentrism, the focus appears to be in travelling to actively support their home countries' wounded economies, favouring them over foreign destinations. The transformative affordance of Covid-19 can be particularly evinced from the above changes that seems to be directed to a more sustainable way of travelling. Particularly, lockdowns and mobility restrictions have put the basis for new considerations on the environmental benefits of telecommuting and remote work as a way to decrease unnecessary travels. Finally, due to said transformative affordance of Covid-19, the outbreak has been argued to be, particularly in virtue of the debate around climate change, a blessing in disguise.

This chapter's summary concludes the analysis and discussion of this investigation's findings. In the following chapter, conclusive remarks will be given, as well as practical recommendations for the *industry* but also for *governments*, in virtue of the fact that, as argued by Sigala (2020), due to the advent of Covid-19, governments have enacted mobility restrictions and businesses' closure; in other words, the outbreak has resulted in a greater involvement of governments in the managing and operations of the tourism industry to an extent that has argued to be unprecedented (Sigala, 2020). Notably, governments have also been found to have become much bigger actors in the tourism economy with specific and tailored decisions that have had significant policy impacts,

see, for instance, the re-nationalisation of airlines as well as other tourism firms and infrastructures (ibid). More specifically, it has been argued how destinations and governments' reactions and responses to the outbreak seem to have acted individually and nationalistically, notwithstanding that systems theory and crisis management literature argue that crises ought to be addressed collectively (Sigala, 2020). On these grounds, Higgins-Desbiolles (2020) in Sigala (2020) with regards to such governments' interventions highlights how:

"debates have already started questioning the effectiveness of such interventions, their fairness and equal distribution amongst tourism stakeholders, their long-term impacts in terms of austerity and cuts of public expenditures" (p. 319).

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CHAPTER VI – CONCLUSION

6. CONCLUSION

With the advent of COVID-19, declared by the WHO a pandemic on the 11th of March 2020, the usual worldwide movement of people and goods has been halted locally, regionally and internationally, through a number of travel restrictions and travel bans that quickly affected the Tourism and Travel industry as well as national economies. It is in such unique, topic and profoundly challenging historical context that this investigation takes form and place. This research specifically focuses on a key consequence given by the abovementioned mobility restrictions and namely, the world, even so for a limited period of time, encompassed a soundless yet impactful shift from a mobile status to a nearly immobile one. On these grounds, one of the key impacts of the world's countries closing down their borders, has been the stranding abroad of people formerly on the move. Although it has been argued how today all the world seems to be on the move, this investigation has set out to focus particularly on travellers from the fast lines of the globe. In other words, hyper-mobile travellers, likely to be travelling from the so-called Global-North economies, whose sudden and unheralded immobility offered the researchers an unprecedented opportunity to further explore into the touristic experience of strandedness.

The **exploratory**, **constructivist/interpretivist nature** of this investigation with its inherent **subjectivist** epistemology, called for a flexible and open approach, so that the qualitative method has been chosen. Moreover, as one of the key objectives of this research was to investigate the travellers' *psychological*, *emotional* and *economic impacts* of being **stranded**, twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted over one-month period of time. Notably, in virtue of the fact that this investigation took place during a global health crisis, researchers adhered and followed the health's advisories on social distancing measures amidst COVID-19. Accordingly, online research's data generation techniques, such as Skype, Online Surveys and Facetime have been employed. Although a number of challenges arose conducting research virtually and remotely, rich qualitative data has been nonetheless gathered. In virtue of the external circumstances in which interviews were carried, as well as the highly personal nature of the interviews' inquiries, researchers were

expected to show **high levels of empathy and ethicality**. Accordingly, the prime concern has been the respondents' mental health and well-being; so that, throughout the processes of sampling and approaching the respondents, and subsequent data collection, researchers were careful in not putting the interviewees in any additional and unnecessary stress.

In order to meet this investigation's aim, the respondents' psychological and emotional vulnerability factors were investigated. Findings have revealed how a key impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic can be seen mirrored in **the behavioural changes** encompassed equally by tourists and by the destinations' residents; particularly, from the experiences of majority of the respondents, with the advent of the virus, there can be found an exponential change in terms of attitudes and behaviours of locals towards them. Almost all of the respondents shared experiences of *xenophobia*, *stigmatization* and a more general feeling of *not being welcomed*. Such changes have been found to be responsible for increases in anxiety, isolation, fear and stress levels of the respondents, overall increasing their vulnerability in an already uncertainty-full context. Notably, in the literature review chapter, researchers have argued how, since the advent of the pandemic, the tourist could be conceived as a vector on the move, culpable of acquiring and transmitting (knowingly and unknowingly) the virus. It follows that, within the spectrum of dangerous movements, with the figure of the migrant at one extreme of the spectrum and the figure of the terrorist at the other end, a third figure of the **tourist as vector** is added, found to be threatening as well as further complicating current debates around power and global security issues. Notwithstanding that, a clear limitation of this research is that it has focused solely on investigating the travellers' experiences related to the above-mentioned subject, as such, this research has been only able to notice and report changes in behaviours of the destinations' locals. Nonetheless, recent research highlights how this pandemic has the potential to reshape residents' behaviour as much as tourists' behaviour; so that, **residents** might be found to be **less supporting of tourism development**, whereas tourists might begin to show more instances of **tourism xenophobia**, that could result in significant **decreases in foreign travel**.

Moreover, another significant psychological and emotional constraint reported by the respondents, has been the *constant fear of falling ill,* also known as *hypochondria*,

that has become for some, more than just a comprehensible fear, as it has turned into an unhealthy tendency to misinterpret normal or benign symptoms, increasing stress, fear and anxiety. Overall common perceptions among respondents showed **prejudice** towards developing countries' health-care systems, as their reliability and adequateness has been questioned. Furthermore, **economic uncertainty** and job uncertainty have meant for some of the respondents reduced psychological well-being, which could result in the occurrence of intolerance of uncertainty induced depressive-anxiety disorders.

In line with the above, it has been argued how, during a pandemic, the population's psychological reactions play a significant role in the spreading and the containment of the disease, as well as influence the extent to which high levels of emotional distress occur; so that, in order to understand the psychology of pandemics, the complexities of people's reactions (in this case travellers), needed to be encompassed. By examining the **coping mechanism** of individuals in dealing with abovementioned threat, it provides an overview of the resilience of a society, as effective coping is believed to aid the society in better managing the pandemic impacts. On these grounds, **the respondents' psychological and emotional resilience** has been investigated. From the interviews, two were the most significant findings; the first was that travellers, when facing travel-related crisis, demonstrate uneven and highly subjective adaptability attitudes. Particularly, wealthy travellers have shown higher degrees of receptivity, acceptance and flexibility in a crisis; particularly if stranded in a poverty-stricken destination whereby the weak currency allows them to enjoy luxurious choices that make their strandedness more bearable and even enjoyable. Such affordances have shown a positive relationship in the acceptance of one's condition of strandedness. However, **reactions** between travellers coming from the *fast lines* are **heterogeneous**; insights have shown how respondents with high degrees of anxiety given by the endurance of economic challenges and economic uncertainty had remarkably higher levels of distress, diminished resilience and decreased willingness of acceptance of the situation. So that, if some of the respondents were not really affected by the crisis, others have shown to have been impacted with long-lasting psychological effects enacted by high levels of stress and anxiety, such as PTSD. Notwithstanding that, the possibility of sharing this experience with friends and other

fellow travellers, even virtually, has proved to be a significant coping mechanism that has positively enhanced the resilience of all the respondents.

Moreover, **the shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world** experienced by the two researchers, has been perceived by all the respondents. Interestingly, the strandedness resulting from such shift, has been described by the respondents as an "unexpected", "unprecedented", "disturbing", "shocking" **loss of freedom**, as their *motility* as well as *mobility* has been compromised and restrained. It is evident the strong connection between the concepts of **motility**, **mobility** and **freedom**. Particularly interesting is to note how from the concept of motility it arises the utopian notion, highly embedded with hyper-mobile travellers from the fast lines of the world, that one can do whatever she/he wants, whenever she/he wants to do it. Accordingly, it appears evident how and why such "*unprecedented immobility*" has been experienced as a loss of freedom. The unprecedentedness of above-mentioned immobility has also revealed the respondents' **congenital position of privilege** as **hypermobile**, **wealthy traveller**, overall re-enforcing the debate that ask for sincerer and fairer understanding of the inequalities and uneven accessibility in today's global regime of *(im)mobilities*.

Finally, it has been argued how, when dealing with uncertainty-full contexts, individuals are more likely to believe in **rumours** and **fake-news** that confirm their pre-existing beliefs and anxieties. This behaviour is particularly amplified on social media and within online communities, whereby, rumours and fake news are very likely to thrive and spread. That is evident during the first stages of an outbreak of a novel infectious disease (such as the COVID-19), as demand for information often exceed the supply, and where health authorities' messages are contrasting, unclear and although maybe factual, they **lack in empathic contents**. Accordingly, the current pandemic has been argued to be an **infodemic**, whereby a rapid and far-reaching spread of both accurate and inaccurate information about a disease on social media, made it harder and more stressful for stranded travellers to find and access trustworthy sources and reliable guidance in the times of need, particularly due to the fact that in order to access crucial information, they could only relay on such online networks. Such **two-edged sword function** of social media has been found to further heighten *fear*, *anxiety*, *depression* and *emotional distress* among the respondents. Particularly,

rumours, fake and contrasting news, conspiracy theories, as well as **issues of accessibility inequalities**, have concurred in jeopardizing measures to control the pandemic, thus, undermining the overall global response. It follows that the role of social media during the Covid-19 outbreak has been argued to be a "diffuser" rather than a "cure" of the pandemic, in virtue of its rapid and far-reaching "global contagion".

In line with the above, phase (**1**) **"respond"** of (**1**) **tourism demand** (see chapter I – Introduction; p. 12), has been encompassed. What has been found are significant and challenging paradoxes, as well as changes in predispositions and behaviours of the abovementioned key stakeholders in the Tourism and Travel Industry. Important psychological, economical and emotional impacts of The COVID-19 have been also outlined, with the belief that are a number of significant micro and macro changes that need to be taken into consideration if a more effective long-term recovery is sought by the Industry as well as Governments. In the following sub-chapter, insights from the last chapter's findings (The Future of Tourism and Travel in the post COVID-19 Era) will be discussed together with the recommendations.

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

The unaltered **compulsion for mobility** and travel showed by all of the respondents is indicative of humans' deeply ingrained drive for travel and movement, that has showed once more, the exceptionally high levels of resilience of travellers to pathogen threats, as well as high levels of adaptability to changes in the macro environment. Notwithstanding that, the **travellers' psyche** has been impacted in profound ways, whereby a clear consequence has been a growing collective awareness, or consciousness, of the world's interconnectedness of quasi-every single sphere of social existence. In addition to this, notwithstanding the accelerating pace and the seemingly easiness through which people, goods, ideas, capital and technology move around the world, the vulnerability of people to the unpredictability of the world, has been a remainder of the unrealistic sense of control over the traveller's mobile life as well as indicative of utopian notions that urge individuals to seek enhanced levels of mobility as a way to achieve freedom. Notably, this investigation of the psyche of stranded travellers has shown the degree in which the abovementioned **unrealistic sense of control** on one's mobile life has been lost when compromised by the unknown and unheralded, such as the outbreak of a pathogen; similarly, the promise of **"freedom"** quickly morphed into **"unfreedom"** as soon as strandedness incurred. Accordingly, it has been showed how the concept of mobility is intrinsic to immobility as much as the concept of freedom is intrinsic to the unfreedom concept.

In line with the above, individuals, and therefore travellers of the post pandemic era, have been found to be more **cautious** and **aware,** as the world in which we live in has arguably become similar to the **world risk society** theorised by Ulrich Beck two decades ago, whereby, due to an increasingly globalized world, the state retreats from its traditional responsibilities and downloads them on its citizens. A world in which, although technological advancements have increased the capacity to intensively and extensively act upon the environment and the world, the **unintended consequences** of all of those decisions, have escaped the capacity to predict them. Accordingly, in terms of the social management, the involuntary devolution of control over these risks constitute a crucial threat to the 21st century social order. On these grounds, not only the travellers of the post-pandemic era are more aware of the **risks** that comes with their freedom of movement, but also seem to be more cautious in selecting

destinations to travel to in the future; particularly, higher destinations' **security** and **reliability** relatives to the airlines, accommodations, insurance companies, health and immigration systems are sough. Findings have shown how post pandemic era travel customers are likely to be more selective and spend more money on travel insurances that are now expected to cover for the unexpected, even in the instance of a new pandemic; particularly, future travellers expect and demand from the industry undivided attention towards their **health** and **safety**. Consequently, the industry has now to comply with travellers' new expectations on social distancing, gathering restrictions, and new hygiene's standards, so experiences are being re-designed. DMOs that will spend capitals in advertising their destinations, making them attractive without first complying with such changes that call for **innovative solutions** and **creative re-thinking** of spaces, places, things and designs, will soon realise just how short-sighted they have been.

Moreover, travellers of the post-pandemic era might prove to be not only more likely to travel to destinations that are perceived as "safer" and more "reliable" than others, they have also shown a trend by which places geographically closer to them will be preferred. Most significantly, post COVID-19 travellers are likely to be seen travelling to actively support their home countries' wounded economies, favouring them over foreign destinations. Such shift in travellers' behaviours, has been referred to as **tourism ethnocentrism**, and is believed to have a number of managerial implications for the industry and governments. Moreover, lockdowns and mobility restrictions have put the basis for new considerations on the **environmental benefits** of telecommuting and remote work as a way to **decrease unnecessary travels**. Accordingly, the **transformative affordance of Covid-19** can be particularly evinced from the above changes that seems to be directed to a more **sustainable** way of travelling, sought also by the increasingly conscious and aware post-pandemic traveller.

Taking into considerations all of the aforementioned changes, the following are only but few recommendations for the industry and the governments for the stages of (**2**) *recovery* and (**3**) *restart* (see Introduction Chapter; p. 12):

(**1**) The industry ought to acknowledge what has changed with the advent of the current pandemic and understand how post pandemic era travellers' motivations,

behaviours, decision-making process, priorities have morphed. As previously argued, the industry has new expectations to meet, such as new hygiene standards and new cleaning protocols to follow, as well as social distancing measures to respect. So that the tourism's servicescape need flexibility to innovate by re-designing and re-thinking of ways to adjust the industry to meet the new needs, and the "new normal". An example could be the re-imagine and re-design accordingly of the consumer's journey to make it as contactless as possible.

(2) Governments of countries that have been found to be over-dependent on tourism, particularly those in developing countries, ought to take this pandemic as an omen of the risks and challenges in not attempting to create a more diversified economy. This pandemic has been the proof that a country economy cannot be based solely on one industry; and if that is the case, then it should not be the tourism and travel industry, which, not only is built entirely a discretionary good, it keeps proving its vulnerability to internal and external changes.

(3) Post pandemic era travellers, and particularly those generating from the fast lines of the globe, have demonstrated the likeliness of maintaining highly-mobile lifestyle, with the only exception that they will feel safer travelling to countries that are geographically closer to them, and that meaningful travel might come from travelling within/to their own countries in order to actively participate in the restoration of their country's wounded economy. If that will be the case, significant increases in domestic travel are to be expected. So that, DMOs need be ready in promoting a number of places and activities that are in line with the expectancies of the post-COVID-19 era's traveller.

(4) Finally, Governments and the Industry ought to strengthen their cooperation by establishing a continuous two-way dialogue in their responses and reactions to the COVID-19. More benefits will be achieved in risk communication and crisis management if the current and future crises will be addressed collectively.

The End

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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8. APPENDIX A – INTERVIEW GUIDE

Intro → Hello, how are you? Thank you very much for your time and for taking part in this interview. I am extremely interested in knowing more about not only your experience of being stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also on your experience on this global shift from - let's say - a mobile world to a nearly immobile one. So, before getting into that, let's maybe start from the beginning…

Q1 - Where were you traveling to and for what purpose? (follow up questions if needed about the trip);

Q2 - In the context of travelling, what does the term **mobility** means to you?
Q2 *follow up question →* how mobile are you?

Q3 - At the beginning of the interview, I mentioned this global shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, to what extent did you perceive this shift?

Q4 - Before being stranded, have you ever had issue with being **immobile** before?
Q4 *follow up question →* Does your passport allows you to travel freely or?

Q5- Why did you end up being stranded in (….)? for how long? How would you describe your first reaction as soon as you realized you were stranded?

Q6 - How would you compare your experience as a tourist before and after you were stranded? What are the most significant differences for you?

Q7 - From what you recollect, have you noticed a difference in attitudes and behaviours of locals towards you/fellow travellers/ tourists in general?

Q8 - How did this experience impact you **emotionally** and **psychologically**? How did you manage to cope? Any support?

Q9 - How has this experience impacted you **economically**? How did you manage? Any support?

Q10 - What role social media such as Facebook, Instagram/ online networks and platforms played while you were stranded?

Q11 - Finally, now that the world has begun to move and open up again, has this "forced immobility", this "strandedness" that you experienced impacted your "old" views on mobilities or travelling?
Q11 - *follow up question →* Do you believe that this experience will have an impact on your future travel plans?

So, that was the end of this interview. Thank you again for your help and time. Do you have anything you would like to add?

INTERVIEW #1 LORENZO - FACETIME

I: Interviewer
L: interviewee

Stranded in: Bali

I: Hello, how are you? Thank you very much for your time and for taking part in this interview. I am extremely interested in knowing more about not only your experience of being stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also on your experience on this global shift from - let's say - a mobile world to a nearly immobile one. So, before getting into that, let's maybe start from the beginning…

I: Where were you traveling to and for what purpose?

L: *I was traveling to Bali from London to celebrate my birthday with a friend of mine, and I was supposed to stay in Bali for approximately 3 weeks.*

I: What does the term mobility means to you?

L: *Mobility to me means the possibility of being able to freely move, have easy access to good quality services that will enable me to travel at a good price.*

I: how mobile are you?

L: *I would consider myself a very mobile person as I don't just travel quite a lot, but I also like to deeply explore my travel destinations. Living in London I have the luxury to get access to a very large number of flights and connections at a very affordable price.*

I: Great! At the very beginning of the interview, I mentioned this global shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, to what extent did you perceive this shift?

L: *As I've never experienced anything like this before, I could barely even imagine such a thing as an immobile world. Just the thought of it reminds me of science fiction books or those apocalyptic movies. Also, because living in one of the most fast-paced city in the world makes you kind of used to being always on the move, rushing to places, travelling a lot. But then, because of to social media we quickly got a vague*

perception of what the world would have looked like as a few countries already enacted drastic lockdowns and of course the media was full of these images.

I: What images are you referring to?

L: well, images like desolation in public transports and roads and panic stockpiling. Luckily none of this really happened in Bali although you just had this feeling that it was slowly closing down as there were less and less tourists around.

I: I see, has this had an effect on you?

L: The thing that affected me the most was not much the immobility in the island per se, which was to some extent even pleasant as there were less tourists, less traffic, less pollution etc., what really got me was my immobility, feeling so powerless if it makes sense, the inability to fly internationally, to get on a plane and go home. Once I managed to get back to the UK, which is not where I am originally from, is where I work and currently live at the moment, I have struggled during the early stages of the lockdown, as I have started experiencing deep depression and panic attacks.

I: That's very sad to hear. I understand as I was also stranded and once I managed to come back I also had to deal with anxiety attacks. Have you ever had issue with being immobile before, I mean, before being stranded?

L: I've missed a few flights/coaches in the past and it happened I had to stay somewhere overnight. Anyways, I've always found a solution the next day. Nothing major or even close to this level of strandedness and immobility that I had to endure.

I: I see, so your passport allows you to travel freely right or?

L: Yes, I'm an Italian passport holder which allows me to travel freely in most countries without having to apply for visas.

I: Why did you end up being stranded in Bali and for how long? How would you describe your first reaction as soon as you realized you were stranded?

L: My being stranded in Bali has been caused by different situations at different times. In a way, you could say that I was left stranded multiple times. So, the first time I've realised something was a bit off was when my return flight got postponed for two days by the airline company. Once the day arrived when I, together with my friend, were supposed to fly back home, I was denied to board because of my Italian passport, notwithstanding the fact that I was in Bali already for over 3 weeks and that I did not come from Italy, nor I live or was going to travel to Italy. Apparently, the main problem was that Italians, with many other nationalities, weren't allowed to transit in most Asian countries during the Covid-19 worldwide spread. What I experienced was that the high

numbers of Covid-19 cases in Italy generated fear and discrimination towards Italians as it happened for Chinese people at the early stages of the pandemic. This was the first time I've felt trapped in Indonesia.

With most airline companies cancelling international flights and with immigration/transit law/policies changing around the world basically overnight together they made the discrimination based on your nationality legal, me and my friend started losing hope of going home. After I've been denied several times to fly with my original return ticket with Malaysia Airline, me and my friend decided to attempt to book yet another ticket with Thai Airways. We booked this flight as we've been assured that this would surely let us get home safely, both from the airline staff and other people that we met through social media that managed to catch it and leave the country. This ticket was already postponing our original departure date by 11 days. This situation already affected me and the person I was traveling with both financially and emotionally.

Then the day before the flight we found out through social media that both the airline and the Thai government changed the travel documents and transit policies: to travel you had to possess a health certificate and an insurance that clearly stated that it would cover for Covid-19. Although we've struggled, we nonetheless managed to get both (which included having to queue at the public hospital with people that were actually showing covid-19 symptoms in order to get the health certificate). We made our way to the airport, confident that this time we had all the required documents to fly. While we were already in line at the check in desk, the Thai Airways staff started checking all the passengers' documents, especially the insurance and the health certificate, it was very stressful to see that other passengers did not even know about this new needed documents to travel as the airline did not inform anyone about it. We knew it only thanks to other fellow travellers that shared their experience the evening before.

Just us and few more passengers knew about these changes and actually had the documentation required. This didn't stop the airline staff to deny us to check in as they came out with another request. This time they were asking not only for a general health certificate, now they were asking for a health certificate with negative laboratory blood test results for covid-19. Everyone around us, including ourselves were completely shocked, of the over 300 passengers queuing next to us NONE of them left Bali. We were in shock when the same airline staff admitted that this type of test didn't even exists at the time, particularly in Bali, as blood test results were dealt with in Jakarta. Our understating, together with other very upset fellow travellers was that the Thai government was using it as an excuse to not let people travel or transit in Thailand.

I: I can imagine it was a very hard moment as you realised that you were stranded, once again.

L: it was a terrible moment; I was full of rage as I felt cheated from the airline company, from the government. There was much rage, hanger also on all other passengers. Many were families or very elderly people and majority was crying or recording because it was just absolutely unbelievable. It didn't feel legal nor human, especially considering the circumstances. At this point me and my friend gave up finding our way out with commercial flights and instead we kept seeking help from the Italian Embassy and Consulate to possibly get on an emergency state flight. This choice we made resulted in having to find accommodation for several weeks. After receiving barely any help by the Italian Government we decided to buy our third flight with Qatar airline which was the only company still operating in the whole Asia. This option was extremely expensive and forced us to book a flight which was another two weeks away.

Again, this last option almost vanished when our flight has been cancelled, we tried to go to Qatar quarters but everything was closed and the phone line was disconnected. After we called all numbers of the Qatar airline, we luckily managed to rebook this flight for later that evening, anticipating our return.
Our trip which was meant to last only 21 days ended up lasting 42 very stressful days.

After this question, the interviewee needed a break, and decided to continue with the interview 3 days after*

I: So, thank you for wanting to continue this interview, I understand that is hard to revive all these feelings so I really appreciate you taking the time and energy to go through this again. The next question is about the differences that you might have incurred during your tourist experience in Bali before and after you were stranded.

L: Good question, before being stranded I was mainly focused on having fun and explore an exotic destination finding the cheapest deals. I later realised that nothing is more important than flying with reliable companies and have a full cover insurance in case something goes wrong. Unfortunately, my experience suddenly became much more about surviving, compromising and quickly adapting. Something I've never been trained for or wanted to experience.
Especially in a country like Indonesia, a country in development, both language and local authorities weren't on my side. The scariest thing was the unpredictable changes to immigration/transit policies in all Asian countries. The local people's behaviours, or at least some of them, changed during our stay in Bali and kept evolving throughout the pandemic. The virus made them very afraid of tourists, however, they couldn't deny the need for money that tourism brings to their country. This change in behaviour made me feel very unwelcomed and uncomfortable. This has showed me that a

country mainly known to be a tourist destination and an exotic paradise can turn into hell, as soon as the tourists themselves became the enemy, seen as covid-19 carriers"

I: How did this experience impact you emotionally and psychologically? How did you manage to cope? Any support?

L: My main concern at the begging was about my family in Italy as it became the epicentre of the pandemic after China. On top of that worry, the option of being stranded in Bali because of the coronavirus didn't even cross my mind. Later on, however, I started worrying much more about my safety as I was stranded in a place that I wasn't familiar with, it was also my first time in Bali and suddenly I felt the heaviness of all those kilometres separating me from my home. I was also quite worried because I honestly didn't want to get sick in a country without a good health system.

Being rejected by most airlines generated in me a level of stress and panic that I've never experienced before. Because it made me realise that I would have to survive in Bali till the end of this new, unknown and dangerous pandemic. I've started losing weight very quickly and the extremely hot and humid weather didn't help. I had a knot in my stomach, cause by my anxiety, that didn't allow me to eat properly.
The lack of sleep at night made me feel even weaker. The stress and anxiety that somehow gave me adrenaline to survive at the beginning of this experience gradually muted in depression. This one wouldn't allow me to react and find new solutions to manage to get home. Being stranded affected me economically a lot, which made even more depressed and worried.
Once I finally managed to get home in the UK I've kept having several panic attacks and depression. The only thing that kept me going while I was stranded were my friends and other fellow travellers we met and got a place with. Once back, my support came from family and friends, I tried to contact the NHS once back, but sadly I didn't get any help whatsoever.

I'm currently still waiting to start working again, once my finances will hopefully get better, I will also seek professional help.

I: So, as you already told me, you had a range of emotional and psychological issues that you are still battling with. Also, economically as you just said. How has this experience impacted you economically? How did you manage? Any support?

L: Being stranded in Bali affected me economically quite a lot. As I am a self-employed massage therapist, I don't receive a fix salary every month. So being stuck in Bali for an extra 21 days prevented me from working.

On top of this loss of income, I had to go through other unexpected expenses such as two more commercial flights that I had to purchase last minute, which were extremely expensive; accommodation for an extra 21 days; 2 health certificates; scooter rental and taxis; 2 different insurances.

The only positive note was that Indonesia has a very weak currency and it's an extremely cheap country. So, it was on and all affordable. The economic damage inflicted me can be esteemed around £2000. Economically I survived this situation using credit cards, savings and getting some help from family and friends, and budgeting of course.

I: While you were stranded, what role social media such as Facebook, Instagram/ online networks and platforms played in your experience?

L: They have been simply fundamental. These online platforms gave us live updates about our main concerns which were for instance the number of covid-19 cases in Bali, and also in Italy and the UK; last minute changes to airline policies, or countries' policies; countries still open for transit; changes to local immigration law; many of these new updates were written and shared of course in local languages so we couldn't understand anything, luckily some local people in these groups translated these documents so all foreigners could understand them; these groups also shared information of accommodations, shops and pharmacies that were open or that still had some masks and sanitisers available. Also gave us info about local lockdown rules, local embassy and consulate response to the emergency and so on.

It also gave us the opportunity to stay in touch with other people stranded in Bali or elsewhere, we were constantly communicating with other travellers at all times to share small pieces of information we knew. My story got the attention of the press in my country and they even contacted me to write a small story with the aim to get heard in the hope to get some help.

I: Finally, now that the world has begun to move and open up again, has this "forced immobility", this "strandedness" that you experienced impacted your views on mobilities or travelling?

L: Well I have always taken my mobility for granted for sure, I never had to really question it before. After this experience, which for me was quite traumatic, I have reconsidered many things. Firstly, I understood that travelling isn't just for leisure or relaxation, wanting it or not, it becomes also about personal growth and development. I will keep travelling as I think being afraid of travelling now would be silly and counterproductive, however, I understand that when a pandemic like this happens, you can have all the documentations and cards you need a still not be able to travel. Its unpredictable, you still can do everything right and things can still go wrong. This is just what I have realized with my experience.

I: Do you believe that this experience will have an impact on your future travel plans?

L: Absolutely yes. I will be much more careful choosing my travel destinations, making sure that the airline company, accommodation, insurance, health and immigration system of the foreign country are secure and reliable.

So, that was the end of this interview. Thank you again for your help and time.

INTERVIEW #2 LUDOVICA - FACETIME

I: Interviewer
L: Interviewee

Stranded in: Bali, then Switzerland

I: Hello, how are you? Thank you very much for your time and for taking part in this interview. I am extremely interested in knowing more about not only your experience of being stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also on your experience on this global shift from - let's say - a mobile world to a nearly immobile one. So, before getting into that, let's maybe start from the beginning…

I: Where were you traveling to and for what purpose?

L: *When the coronavirus began to spread I was in Bali with my boyfriend and son. We were there both for leisure, to enjoy this beautiful island, and also for business related reasons.*

I: In the context of travelling, what does the term mobility means to you?

L: *To me mobility means that I can freely and easily plan my trips, it means that if I wanted to go somewhere, I could move from a place to the other even last minute.*

I: how mobile are you?

L: *I usually travel around the world, especially throughout Asia, for a period of 4 months a year, both for leisure and also for business purposes, so yeah, the possibility of moving and being very mobile is very important to me.*

I: At the beginning of the interview, I mentioned this global shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, to what extent did you perceive this shift?

L: *Honestly, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, I didn't perceive this change, this shift from a mobile world to an immobile one; in Bali everything was still open and working as usual. It was still allowed to travel and there were many tourists from Australia and so on. One thing that we noticed straight away, especially compared to last year, as we were in Bali also last year for couple of months,* was that there were almost zero Chinese tourists. Then, once we finally made our way back to Italy, that's when I really could see the world before me becoming still. It was shocking to see airports completely empty, all shops closed down. Really felt like something wasn't right. Also, in order to arrive to Cagliari, in Sardegna, it took us 5 days, we were blocked in a city in Switzerland waiting and hoping for government permission to enter

the island. The general feeling was that if we wanted to get home we needed to rush before everything really closed down.

I: Before being stranded, have you ever had issue with being immobile before?

L: *No, luckily I never had issue with being immobile before, if I didn't travel was because I decided not to, it was never because of something external that impeded me to move.*

I: Does your passport allows you to travel freely or?

L: Yes, *as I have an Italian passport I can pretty much travel wherever I want to in the world, I remember I read somewhere that it allows me to travel visa-free in something like 130 countries. However, I still remember the day when me and my family managed to leave Bali that at the airport of Istanbul I read at the check-in this message on a board that stated that you were not allowed to travel or transit even in Istanbul if you ever visited countries like China, Germany, Iran, Denmark and even Italy in the last 14 days. So we were a bit worried because although we had been in Indonesia for months at that point, we still had Italian passports so we were a bit scared that they would not let us board or something like that.*

I: But you did manage to board right?

L: *Yes, Luckily yes. We had a stamp on our passports that stated our date of entry in Indonesia and that seemed to be enough proof. We literally managed to leave the day before everything got more complicated, it was the 13th of March, the day after, if we tried to travel with the same company, the same route, they wouldn't have allowed us on the plane because of our Italian passports. That's absolutely crazy.*

I: It is indeed, why did you end up being stranded in Bali and then Switzerland? for how long? How would you describe your first reaction as soon as you realized you were stranded?

L: *We end up being stranded in Bali because our flight back to Italy was cancelled. We started to receive emails where they were delaying our flight and in the end they actually cancelled our flight from Istanbul to Milan. They told us that we could have rearranged our travel going first through Zürich and then to Milan. So we ended up being stuck in Switzerland for 3 days paying the hotel with our money and finally we took our flight back home. We firstly decided to go back to Milan, where I am from, however, at that time Milan was one of the epicentre of the pandemic in Italy, and quarantines were already in place. So we decided to go to Sardinia instead, where my boyfriend comes from as we felt it would have been safer for us and our baby. We were very anxious because at first we have been told that only those with the residence in Sardinia could come, we aren't even married so we were afraid we'd have*

to be divided. Luckily, after we submit our request to the Sardinia government it was accepted and we made our way to Sardinia safely.

When I received the first email where they said we would have problems going back to Italy we start thinking whether it would have been better to try to come back home or to stay in Bali, also because we had one-year-old baby with us and we didn't want to stress him traveling too much. We were completely confused about what to do as we felt left completely alone in this decision.

I: How would you compare your experience as a tourist before and after you were stranded? What are the most significant differences for you?

L: *Before everything escalated while we were in Bali it was all about relaxation, exploring and doing business trips around the island, but then, as soon as we realized we were stranded everything became chaotic and quite stressful, now the focus was to get away as fast as possible. So it was all about checking the news, checking email, making calls, checking with the airlines and so on. Very stressful. Also, while we were there, Italy became the first place in Europe with an incredible number of infected and deaths, so I can definitely say that I really felt this change in the response or reaction of people when we were asked where we were form. As soon as we said we were Italians they would either be a bit worried to have us in the car for instance, or simply curious and wanted to know more about the situation in Italy or would just try to avoid us. Although we have been away from Italy for over 4 months, on the roads we still didn't feel comfortable speaking Italian between us etc. it is hard to describe but as there were less and less tourists we really felt all the eyes on us, and often the expression was either of fear, anger or concern.*

I: oh interesting, so you did feel a difference in attitudes and behaviours of locals towards you/fellow travellers/ tourists in general?

L: *Well, to be honest, I noticed that the few tourists left on the island were very empathic with us because they were after all in the same confusing situation as us, some of the locals, on the other hand, and I would say the majority that we met, started acting a bit nervous with us. I don't believe it was because of the virus per se, rather because of economic issues. They basically work only because of tourism and tourists, so they would look at us like the poison and the cure it that makes sense, they were very pushy in trying to sell us what they had and if said no thanks they would just snap at us or talk among them with a very upset voice. Which of course is understandable considering what was going on, but we couldn't economically help everyone of them who were in need. It was very sad.*

I: How did this experience impact you emotionally and psychologically? How did you manage to cope? Any support?

L: *As I mentioned before, the worst moment for us was when we discovered our flight has been cancelled, but once we understood how to go back home we were much more relieved. Also, we were not stranded for a long period of time, so it wasn't so bad on us. I was happy to be with my partner in this experience who is usually very rational and calm. Also, we weren't very worried about the virus and that helped us making rational decisions. Emotionally we were of course exhausted and worried for our families in Italy where the situation seemed to aggravate more and more every day, and for our friends with whom we were travelling with who tried to leave a day after us and weren't allowed on the plane only because they had Italian passports. Also, we have loads of local friends in Bali so we were very worried for them too, especially when it was all over the news that the government of Bali had purposely hid the fact that there have been cases since early January but decided to omit this detail to protect the tourism business. No tourists really mean no money there.*

Our psychological support has been in a way our Italian friends that have been living in Bali for 20 years now, they knew the place very well and also the language of course, they have a small Italian restaurant inside a sort of bed and breakfast, so it felt very comforting having them to rely on, talk to, also if thing went worse for us we knew we had them and definitely felt more safe. They would also inform us of the latest news with regards to airport closing, coronavirus cases in Bali and so on, so we felt always updated and in good hands.

I: How has this experience impacted you economically? How did you manage? Any support?

L: *Economically we had some problems, because, as I said before, we stayed bit longer in Bali than we expected, also we had to buy some new plane tickets and ended up also stranded for almost a week in Switzerland where we had to pay for everything. We were lucky enough that our families could help us! Usually, as we travel for 4 months, when we travel we have with us the money that we think we need for that period of time; of course, we always have something more with us in case of emergency but we definitely had not enough this time! As what happened was completely unexpected.*

I: What role social media such as Facebook, Instagram/ online networks and platforms played while you were stranded?

L: *At the beginning, when we weren't sure if we were allowed to go back home, nor if we really wanted to, social media played a major role for us because all of the sudden there were just so many people in the same situation as we were, so we could read about it, send texts, message and discuss about the situation in order make the best possible decision. There were so many groups for instance on Facebook that were created to connect stranded people, or already existing one like "Expats in Bali" that then were used for the purpose of sharing information of what was going on or*

experiences of other people, many were just asking for advice and so on. Everyone was relying on each other; it was really nice thinking about it now to see people helping others or locals in difficulty. After we made our way home, we were actually contacted by a lot of other tourists that were still stuck in Indonesia and we tried to help them with what we knew from our experience and through the network of people we knew.

I: Finally, now that the world has begun to move and open up again, has this "forced immobility", this "strandedness" that you experienced impacted your "old" views on mobilities or travelling?

L: *In a way yes it did change the way I understand now how I took for granted almost my freedom of movement, I understand now how vulnerable we all are when things like this happen. Also, it made me realise how privileged I am thinking about my freedom of movement and the possibility of rely on support from family and friends, also economically speaking. I also think that in general the way of travelling we are all used to is changing, has changed. It will be harder for sure to make last minute arrangement to travel when there is so much to fill in and bureaucracy now to move. Also many countries are still closed or closing up again like Spain.*

I: Do you believe that this experience will have an impact on your future travel plans?

L: Not really, I can't wait to be able to move again freely and travel again to Bali and travel in general.

I: So, that was the end of this interview. Thank you again for your help and time. Do you have anything you would like to add?

L*: not really. Thank you.*

INTERVIEW #3 NIKOLA - FACETIME

I: Interviewer
N: Interviewee

Stranded in: Bali

I: Hello, how are you? Thank you very much for your time and for taking part in this interview. I am extremely interested in knowing more about not only your experience of being stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also on your experience on this global shift from - let's say - a mobile world to a nearly immobile one. So, before getting into that, let's maybe start from the beginning…

I: Where were you traveling to and for what purpose?

N: I was traveling to Indonesia together with my friend, there were two of us, and we were traveling for doing our research master thesis as we are in our final year of university.

I: In the context of travelling, what does the term mobility means to you?

N: So, for me, mobility means to being able to move around the globe freely and easily, with not so much bureaucracy to worry about.

I: How mobile are you? How mobile do you think you are?

N: The Slovakian passport is strong, and I am able to travel to more than 180 countries worldwide by obtaining within' few minutes a visa where requested. My country also belongs to the Schengen area so I can travel only with my ID. This actually encourages me to travel almost every month, so I can say I am a very mobile type of person in terms of tourism.

I: I see, so at the beginning of the interview, I mentioned this global shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, to what extent did you perceive this shift?

N: Well, when we were in Indonesia and realized that we had to come back, we were suddenly not able to find flights as the borders were started to close right away and this is where I perceived such shift. Suddenly I couldn't move around as easy as I was used to and also, I realized that that feeling of freedom that has so far encouraged me to travel was gone, I lost that feeling of freedom.

I: Before being stranded, have you ever had issue with being immobile before, or as you said this feeling of lost freedom?

N: Actually no, I don't recall experiencing anything similar, as I mentioned before my passport is very strong and I am allowed to travel almost everywhere easily.

I: Why did you end up being stranded in Bali? for how long? How would you describe your first reaction as soon as you realized you were stranded?

N: My situation was a little bit different because my plan was to be there until July, and at the beginning I even considered staying there until that time. Another good friend of mine would have followed me and we had a villa with swimming pool, and I thought "why not?". But then I saw the rest of the group, who were properly stranded, trying their best to go home and see that they couldn't because the flights were either cancelled or crazy expensive and made me realize how serious the situation was. Then I started to look for flights myself and get in touch with the embassy in order to be helped.

Well, even though I was forced to come back, I was very shocked to find out that from one day to another is hard if not impossible to travel. That was so new for me, I have always been able to go wherever I wanted. So, I started to be worried because I didn't know when I will be able to be home again, and I was literally on the other side of the world. It wasn't just one or two flights away; I could feel at that point the distance between where I was and home growing bigger and bigger. I would have been less concerned if I were somewhere in Europe, because I could feel closer to my family and safer in case, I get the virus because the healthcare system is better organized compared to the one provided in Bali.

I: How would you compare your experience as a tourist in Bali before and after you were stranded? What are the most significant differences for you?

N: I would say that the overall vibe was different; you could feel that people were worried and more importantly living in the island it suddenly felt like a ghost town. Another thing was that most of the tourist's attractions were slowly closing down as well as the shops, bar and restaurants. In other words, everything that we came for were not accessible anymore. We had some negative experiences but not from locals, but from other expats; what I mean is that the access at the beaches was denied but you could see foreigners still going to surf or just chill at the beach and that was really disturbing me in a way. But on the other hand, when the situation started to be more serious I saw that the expats who decided to stay in Bali started to help out the locals by buying food for them, leave tips to the food delivery guy, to the taxi drivers, to the housekeepers and a lot of initiatives to support the local people started at that time.

I: From what you recollect, have you noticed a difference in attitudes and behaviours of locals towards you/fellow travellers/ tourists in general?

N: Not really. I must admit that Balinese people are really great and friendly; they mostly make a living from tourism, so the pandemic hit their economic situation really hard. As such, I wanted to give my contribution, and try to live tips whenever I could. They kept being true to themselves and still treat me well, I guess it was also as a way to keep their job. Most of them, such as taxi drivers would suggest you call them personally instead of booking through the app so they could still work considering the situation. The housekeepers of our villa would ask us if he could come more often so he could earn more money and we agreed on that even if was not necessary, he would still find things to do around the house. With my friends we also agreed to live them tips, in Bali is not mandatory, but it's pleasing, and in a situation like that could only be beneficial.

I: How did this experience impact you emotionally and psychologically? How did you manage to cope? Any support?

N: Well I was lucky enough to be there with a group of friends, so I wasn't alone which it helped a lot to cope with the stress caused by the whole situation. I mean my family was supporting me and I was always in touch with them, so I managed to stay calm. In terms of support I would say that the Slovakian embassy helped me a lot; a WhatsApp group was formed, and all the relevant information was exchanged; there we were updates and instructions were given on what to do on a daily basis. Also, I was a member of several Facebook groups and in the one with regards to the COVID19 situation in Bali, some local people would translate the articles for foreigners so with the Slovakian embassy instructions and the information regarding Bali I could be able to decide how to proceed. Given the support of the embassy I was positive that a solution will be found soon, so knowing that I can trust the authorities made me be positive and calm about it.

I: How has this experience impacted you economically? How did you manage? Any support?

N: I didn't book any flights until I wasn't told so by my embassy. They actually arrange a flight for us in collaboration with the Check embassy and it was for free, so I didn't lose any money luckily.

I: What role social media such as Facebook, Instagram/ online networks and platforms played while you were stranded?

N: On the one hand it was really helpful because we could be updated about what is going on in Bali thanks to those people who were translating the articles for us because we were not able to understand anything on the news; on the other hand, it was a little

bit disturbing because some information was also quite contradicting and you simply didn't know what to believe anymore. Plus, thanks to the embassy using WhatsApp was really easy to be in touch and get an answer to whatever question you had right away. Also, as there were a too many people in the same situation, all the embassies and airlines were communicating through their official Facebook page, was really easy to follow their updates.

I: Finally, now that the world has begun to move and open up again, has this "forced immobility", this "strandedness" that you experienced impacted your "old" views on mobilities or travelling? Do you believe that this experience will have an impact on your future travel plans?

N: Yes, definitely. I was never a fan of places crowded with tourists, and I think that this will change the way we all travel and personally the impact it had on me now is that I will rethink the way I travel indeed. I will travel less and try to eliminate the unnecessary travelling; what I mean is that instead of going to Portugal for example from Slovakia for a weekend getaway, I would choose to visit somewhere in Slovakia or choose a closer destination such as the neighboring countries.

I: So, that was the end of this interview. Thank you again for your help and time.

INTERVIEW #4 REED – ONLINE SURVEY

I: Interviewer
R: Interviewee

Stranded in Bali

I: Hello, how are you? Thank you very much for your time and for taking part in this interview. I am extremely interested in knowing more about not only your experience of being stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also on your experience on this global shift from - let's say - a mobile world to a nearly immobile one. So, before getting into that, let's maybe start from the beginning…

I: Where were you traveling to/from and for what purpose?

R: *I was traveling from California to the Philippines and Indonesia.*

I: In the context of travelling, what does the term mobility means to you?

R: *It means being able to travel freely with ease. Not having to deal with any restrictions.*

I: How mobile are you?

R: *Pretty mobile I would say.*

I: At the beginning of this survey, I mentioned this global shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, to what extent did you perceive this shift?

R: *I was about 2 weeks in on my travels in the Philippines when I got the news that my original flight home was pushed back a full month. At that point I decided I would wait the situation out and hope for things to get better.*

I: Before being stranded, have you ever had issue with being immobile before?

R: *Not internationally. I've definitely been stuck at home for a day or two before due to a big snowstorm, but that's about the most immobile I've been.*

I: Does your passport allows you to travel freely or?

R: *Yes, to most countries.*

I: Why did you end up being stranded in Bali? for how long?

R: *I wasn't able to fly back to the Philippines where my original flight home was from. I was stuck for at least 3 weeks to a month.*

I: How would you compare your experience as a tourist in Bali before and after you were stranded? What are the most significant differences for you?

R: *When I first showed up the streets were full of life and people everywhere. Life was normal and there was no shortage of tourists. Then everyone got notified by their local governments to come home as soon as possible. That's when I noticed a huge change. The streets started to become more and more empty. Restaurants and bars were starting to close, and everything seemed to become a bit eerie.*

I: From what you recollect, have you noticed a difference in attitudes and behaviours of locals towards you/fellow travellers/ tourists in general?

R: *I definitely noticed some locals acting different towards tourists after most of us had left to go home. Some acting more hostile and some acting more thankful for us still being there and supporting their businesses. So, it went both ways!*

I: How did this experience impact you emotionally and psychologically? How did you manage to cope? Any support?

R: *It was definitely hard not knowing how the situation would play out. I was traveling alone so that added more stress not having someone to talk with about everything. Luckily, I met some amazing people that made the situation way better. In particular I met a girl that made me feel way better about everything that was happening and feel more comfortable with everything. Having two very supportive parents as well helped out a lot!*

I: How has this experience impacted you economically? How did you manage? Any support?

R: *I had saved a good amount for this trip, but I did have to take more money out of my savings then I had intended.*

I: What role social media such as Facebook, Instagram/ online networks and platforms played while you were stranded?

R: They helped me keep in touch with friends back home and also to see what things were looking like in the United States.*

I: Finally, now that the world has begun to move and open up again, has this "forced immobility", this "strandedness" that you experienced impacted your "old" views on mobilities or travelling?

R: *My views have definitely changed somewhat. Now that's I have experienced something like this I think if it was to ever happen again, I will know how to cope with the situation a lot better!*

I: Do you believe that this experience will have an impact on your future travel plans?

R: *I will continue to travel and see new places no matter what. I think I will be more cautious when planning to go somewhere but I wouldn't have traded that experience for anything. Even though the stress was high I met some amazing people throughout the time there.*

I: So, that was the end of this interview. Thank you again for your help and time.

INTERVIEW #5 RICCARDO – ONLINE SURVEY

I: Interviewer
R: Interviewee

Stranded in: Australia

I: Hello, how are you? Thank you very much for your time and for taking part in this interview. I am extremely interested in knowing more about not only your experience of being stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also on your experience on this global shift from - let's say - a mobile world to a nearly immobile one. So, before getting into that, let's maybe start from the beginning…

I: Where were you traveling to/from and for what purpose?

R: When the quarantine started, I was living with Silvia - my girlfriend, in Brisbane (Australia), using my second working holiday visa, so I was supposed to be there for one year.

I: In the context of travelling, what does the term mobility means to you?

R: Mobility to me is being free to choose where and when to move, without having any restrictions.

I: How mobile are you?

R: I consider myself to be more than mobile as I love to move around as much as I can whenever I have spare time; in the last 7 years I have visited around 15 different countries not to mention all the cities.

I: At the beginning of the interview, I mentioned this global shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, to what extent did you perceive this shift?

R: I think it's been a pretty big shift that no one expected, and I felt it heavily.

I: Before being stranded, have you ever had issue with being immobile before?

R: No, never.

I: Does your passport allows you to travel freely or?

R: Yes, my passport allows me to travel freely to so many countries, I can count actually the ones where you need the visa, like Australia for example.

I: Why did you end up being stranded in Australia? for how long?

R: I moved from Melbourne to Brisbane on March the 22nd and on the 24th the lockdown started. My original plan was to leave the country in July, but I ended up leaving on the 24th of May.

I: How would you compare your experience as a tourist in Australia before and after you were stranded? What are the most significant differences for you?

R: The only thing I can say about this is that there was no tourism at all, so after the lockdown and everything I didn't feel as a tourist at all, as the circumstances did not allow me to do anything touristic.

I: From what you recollect, have you noticed a difference in attitudes and behaviours of locals towards you/fellow travellers/ tourists in general?

R: To be honest, I didn't notice any difference, you can't tell I'm a foreigner in Australia, so I never encountered any awkward situation. However, I can definitely recall a few jokes about my country (Italy), but I don`t blame them. What impressed me the most was how judgmental and almost disgusted Australians were towards people wearing masks, instead of being the opposite.

I: How did this experience impact you emotionally and psychologically? How did you manage to cope? Any support?

R: For the first-time anger and concern were mixed together; The quarantine wasn't so bad for me, sharing a big house is having each other back. We tried to live our lives in the best way we could so I can`t tell about differences before and after. I kept it strong but for sure I had my up and down more frequently than usual. I kept it strong but for sure I had my ups and downs more frequently than usual.

I: How has this experience impacted you economically? How did you manage? Any support?

R: Financially I managed thanks to the savings me and my girlfriend saved in the previous months, but I saw people around me struggle quiet a lot. The government didn't really help us with job keeper money or anything similar, we just had access to the pension found taxed at a lower percentage.

I: What role social media such as Facebook, Instagram/ online networks and platforms played while you were stranded?

R: Social media had a marginal role in my life during the lockdown, but the main role goes to the streaming services with no doubt.

I: Finally, now that the world has begun to move and open up again, has this "forced immobility", this "strandedness" that you experienced impacted your "old" views on mobilities or travelling?

R: This strandedness increased my view of mobility, right now travel is on top of my list, it doesn't really matter if to visit a near town or a new country that I've never been before.

I: Do you believe that this experience will have an impact on your future travel plans?

R: yeah, I think I am going to travel even more now.

I: So, that was the end of this interview. Thank you again for your help and time.

INTERVIEW #6 FEDERICO – ONLINE SURVEY

I: Interviewer
F: Interviewee

Stranded in: Mexico

I: Hello, how are you? Thank you very much for your time and for taking part in this interview. I am extremely interested in knowing more about not only your experience of being stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also on your experience on this global shift from - let's say - a mobile world to a nearly immobile one. So, before getting into that, let's maybe start from the beginning… Where were you traveling to and for what purpose?

F: I was in Mexico; I was actually living there for a couple of months already when the Corona Virus was declared a pandemic. At the time I was a bartender and I was based in Tulum; I was working for a few music festivals during that period and also as Real Estate.

I: In the context of travelling, what does the term mobility means to you?
F: Well, the first thing that came up in my mind when you mentioned ¨mobility¨ is obviously the freedom of moving around without thinking at the consequences.

I: How mobile are you?

F: I consider myself a traveller and I've been around the world in the past 8 years, so my life is on "mobile-mode" ever since. Just the idea of being able to go anywhere whenever I feel like, I think it's a unique feeling.

I: At the beginning of the interview, I mentioned this global shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, to what extent did you perceive this shift?

F: I greatly perceived this shift. Being in Mexico or anywhere that wasn't Europe at that time I must say it was a privilege. At the beginning of March, when I was mostly spending my time at the beach feeling the Caribbean vibes, the cases in Italy were raising up to 500 a day. I soon realized it was only a matter of time until the virus would come to Mexico as well, still not as bad as Italy. So, I was in touch with my family recommending me to fly home as soon as possible and within days there were no more flights available to Italy. All of a sudden, I was stuck in a developing country with a high level of criminal rates and poor healthcare conditions. That was a bad feeling.

I: Before being stranded, have you ever had issue with being immobile before? Does your passport allow you to travel freely or?

F: No, never felt that kind of immobile before. I have always been able to travel everywhere with my Italian passport as it allows me to travel freely all around the world, sometimes using VISA´s for certain countries like Australia, but I have always felt secure when moving around.

I: Why did you end up being stranded in Mexico? for how long?

F: Well, I was living back in Mexico at that time, so my life was there. I had a job that provided me salary and an apartment, so honestly, I was quite relaxed at the very beginning. But I must say that when you realized such thing of being stranded, I guess your mind starts thinking all the negative stuff first, and I was not the worried one but my family. They were getting all this bad news from the media, about people dying and families falling apart on a daily basis, so you can imagine how bad they felt when they found out I was not able to find any available flight to Italy and I had to stay in a country with the minimum sanitary conditions.

I: How would you compare your experience as a tourist in Mexico before and after you were stranded? What are the most significant differences for you?

F: Mexicans are loving people. I speak Spanish, so for me it was really easy to move around, get to know people, make friends. They are very curious and friendly; they are really interested in getting to know you. Now, after the media started to talk about the virus and everything, they did nothing but avoiding westerners. I would say that the main differences were that you could not immerse in the local culture anymore, since you were not welcome there; all the eyes are on you, like you did something bad.

I: From what you recollect, have you noticed a difference in attitudes and behaviours of locals towards you/fellow travellers/ tourists in general?

F: Mmm, yes well, I got some different behaviour from some of the locals and of course Police officers. You have to know that being a guy from Italy during the Pandemic was not nice at all. Everybody was just bombed with all this bad news coming from Europe, especially Italy at that time, I'm talking about April now, which has been the toughest month for me. I was in a country with 0 cases and you could tell that I am not a local but a gringo, as they call westerners. So, people would look at me with scepticism, for them I could be the infected guy who brings the virus in their country even if I was there since December. There were some shops who were not selling anything to me, and I was stopped at least 2-3 times a day by the police and asked questions regarding my arrival in the city and so on. So, going out and spend half of the time being avoided by locals or constantly being stopped by the authorities gave me the idea that I was not welcome there anymore.

I: How did this experience impact you emotionally and psychologically? How did you manage to cope? Any support?

F: Regarding the emotionally impact I must say I felt weird for the first period. Other than that, I must say I really got the chance to work on myself during the lockdown; I took advantage of the time home and I started to work out, I got some business-oriented, but also relaxed and enjoy my time with my family. I think in a way helped me learn some new things myself and my life because I had the time to just stop everything and visualize what was going on around me. My biggest support was my family and my friends, I was always in touch with them.

I: How has this experience impacted you economically? How did you manage? Any support?

F: I had to use all of my saving during the last 3 months and after the lockdown starting over again has been a real struggle; my family helped me out in that, not really on when I was stranded but after, when our lives got back to normal and I can't wait to pay them back.

I: What role social media such as Facebook, Instagram/ online networks and platforms played while you were stranded?

F: If there's one thing I realized with all this being stranded and lockdown is that Social Media are absolutely fundamental nowadays. Don't get me wrong, in a good and bad way. For example, I have friends everywhere in the world, traveling the same way I do, so at some point we were all stuck in different countries, far away from home and with a global pandemic going on. The best part of the weekends was the cheers we had through Zoom, Skype etc, happening every Sunday at lunch, just sitting in front of a laptop with a fresh glass of Sancerre, different time-zones, but honestly it felt like we were all together in that moment. It was beautiful.

On the other hand, that were medias and companies making some bad marketing through people, scaring them with wrong news and panicking the whole world even more. In both ways the truth is that the online industry is playing an important role in our society and we can't live without it anymore.

I: Finally, now that the world has begun to move and open up again, has this "forced immobility", this "strandedness" that you experienced impacted your "old" views on mobilities?

F: I'm super interactive guy, always open to meet people, that's the main reason why I call myself a traveller. So, my main focus before was just having great time anywhere, I was going with the only fear to not lose my belongings like passport and mobile phone, my only worry when travelling for the past years. Now, it's a totally different situation here. Starting from when you leaving the house, what's the first thing you need to travel? A Mask. Can't touch anything, sanitizing your hand 150 times a day, no interactions with people, few flights with way too many restrictions. Is this traveling?

All the good things I experienced on my travels were coming from things we are not allowed to do anymore, for now. So, of course my wonder to travel it's a bit gone.

I: Do you believe that this experience will have an impact on your future travel plans?

F: I reckon I won't be much affected about this period in my future. I have a firm consideration now that we are just a part of a bigger puzzle and we don't decide our moves. I am just happy I sorted everything out in the best way, and I consider that now I have an extra story to tell my kids one day, that's my philosophy. What I believe is that we should support more our own countries and economies in periods like the one we are living it now, especially hospitality and tourism industry they got a massive fall since the beginning of the pandemic, so let's get back on a plane, go out eating and support the small businesses, we can raise all together from this.

I: So, that was the end of this interview. Thank you again for your help and time.

INTERVIEW #7 ASTA – SKYPE

I: Interviewer
A: Interviewee

Stranded in Mexico

I: Hello, how are you? Thank you very much for your time and for taking part in this interview. I am extremely interested in knowing more about not only your experience of being stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also on your experience on this global shift from - let's say - a mobile world to a nearly immobile one. So, before getting into that, let's maybe start from the beginning…

I: Where were you traveling to and for what purpose?

A: So, I was traveling to Oaxaca in Mexico with my thesis partner to collect data for master thesis. We left Denmark on the 2nd of March and were supposed to be there until the 2nd of April, but we came back a few days before.

I: What does the term mobility means to you?

A: Um, well, it means that you're able to move around from country to country or even domestically, you have that freedom to move easily with trains and other means of transportation; so, to me it means freedom to move and the ability to move.

I: How mobile are you?

A: I am very mobile. I travel a lot and therefore I move around a lot. I am also half American and I always find an excuse to travel there when time allows.

I: At the beginning of the interview, I mentioned this global shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, to what extent did you perceive this shift?

A: Before the pandemic, millions of people used to travel every day, and that's what caused the pandemic and one of the reasons it spread at such a fast pace; it's impossible to stop a pandemic in today's context if you compare it to the Spanish flu for example. We have so many options today if we want to travel somewhere; within Europe is really cheap and sometimes taking a flight can be cheaper than going by train. As for now, moving around became unsafe and people started to rethink mobility; what I mean with this is that with this pandemic going on it has been proved that you can avoid unnecessary travelling. Many conferences take place online and a lot of people worked from home to give some examples. I personally don't feel safe to travel, not even in Denmark as the cases are increasing, and going I never really even

slightly consider going somewhere for holidays his year. I am not even taking the public transportation; I only go where I can bike. So, I can say that I perceived this shift a lot. I went from travelling a lot to basically none at all, at least until the end of the year.

I: Before being stranded, have you ever had issue with being immobile before?

A: No, never. As I mentioned before we have too many options available an even if sometimes it happened to get a flight cancelled or something visa related, there's always a way to find a solution, so I have never experienced this thing of being trapped somewhere where you have no way out.

I: Does your passport allows you to travel freely or?

Yeah, I have both Danish and American passport. They are both considered strong passports, so they allow me to go in many countries, especially the Danish one.

I: Why did you end up being stranded in Mexico? for how long? How would you describe your first reaction as soon as you realized you were stranded?

A: Well, our flight was not cancelled actually, as the Mexican borders never really closed, the flights were only reduced. But we decided to get home earlier because we were getting phone calls from the Danish prime minister who was telling us to go back to Denmark. We got the first phone call on the 11th of march, literally one week after we arrived in Mexico. We decided to stay because we needed to gather more data, so we had like 3 weeks of uncertainty and try to be in contact with our insurance company or the airline and see if there will still be flights available within that time frame. So, this situation of uncertainty it made it really difficult for us to relax because we didn't know if we will eventually be able to go home. Slowly the flights to Europe started to be suspended so we started to be really stressed and even started to have panic attacks because of that. It was a roller coaster of emotions – we wake up one day and wanted to stay and 2 hours later we pack our suitcases because we just wanted to leave. Eventually the Danish embassy contacted us, and we ended up taking a charter plane on the way home and that was such a relief.

I: How would you compare your experience as a tourist before and after you were stranded? What are the most significant differences for you?

A: Well, things got really awkward. After the news started to spread in the Mexican television that the virus has moved from Asia to Europe with Italy being the epicentre, people started to look at us in a different way. For example, when we were taking the bus, everyone would move their place just to be far from us. Once we wanted to get our nails done and 5 beauty salons literally rejected us saying that they are busy, even if they were all clearly just standing outside with no customers. So, it became really

difficult. Also taking internal flights became hard for us. I had a flight from Oaxaca to Merida and I almost didn't make it because my passport was European. Thankfully I had the stamp from the day I arrived so they saw that I was there before the virus critically spread to Europe so they allowed me to board, but I saw people being denied to board just because they arrived in Mexico a week later after me.

Before this outbreak thing my friend and I would always go to this small cafe run by a family in Oaxaca, almost every day. So, they knew us, there were not many people going there usually. We went in another town for fieldwork reasons we for 2 days we didn't go the café. So, when we came back to Oaxaca we went for a coffee and they were surprised to see us, they thought we were back in Europe. So you could see that they got a little bit nervous; the next day we went back because that was the place where we always had coffee and we were surprised to see that they were all wearing "protections": they were wearing gloves, facemasks and they were even wearing big garbage plastic bags as some sort of protection and they started to sanitize everything and after that they served us. It was quite uncomfortable.

I: From what you recollect, have you noticed a difference in attitudes and behaviours of locals towards you/fellow travellers/ tourists in general?

A: Yeah, well I just think there was this focus on the Europeans. Like if you look different, you are automatically from Europe. In Mexico people tend to privilege the gringos, so they always look at you with respect and think about you as a very highly educated person and they try to be friends with you. After this, they all started to avoid us and keep the distance. Even on the internal flight I had, I was sitting next to a Mexican lady, the seat in the middle was empty so there was a certain distance and she asked to be moved because she simply didn't feel safe next to me.

I: How did this experience impact you emotionally and psychologically? How did you manage to cope? Any support?

A: It was very, very, very hard. We both started to have panic attacks and feel anxious about everything. It's just impacts you more than you think when you are stuck in a country away from your family also because in Europe the situation was getting crazy. You could literally see that the numbers were dramatically increasing, and a lot of people were dying. We were really scared for our family as we have members that could be more vulnerable to the virus. Also, at the begging they said it's like a cold, then they say no it's more than that. We literally started as well to feel sick, all you could hear was talking about the coronavirus so at one point I started to feel like we are also having the symptoms, but it wasn't. We also didn't sleep well at night; we would wake up all the time.

I: What was your biggest fear when you were there?

A: We had seen the hospitals in Mexico, so we needed to go home, didn't feel safe at all. In Oaxaca there are like 5 hospitals and health is quite cheap and affordable to everyone, but the capacity of each hospital is really small, so you see people in line and waiting outside for days before they manage to get in. The literally camp for 2-3 day in front of the hospital with small kids, some bring even their dog. It's also public hospital so of course you have the same treatment as others. There is one private one, but it costs around 2 million pesos to be hospitalized which is very expensive. So, seeing this change of the locals towards us, see how uncertain they health care system is we knew that if something were to happen, we would be the last ones in line and we just wanted to go home.

I: How has this experience impacted you economically? How did you manage? Any support?

A: Well, my Student Grant ended in December so from then I could only rely on my part-time job salary. My mom offered to buy me the tickets to Mexico and luckily, I didn't have to pay for my flight back because the embassy payed for it but eventually I started to struggle with the money once I was back from Mexico as I lost my job and the business closed. I didn't have an income until June.

I: What role social media such as Facebook, Instagram/ online networks and platforms played while you were stranded?

A: There was a lot of weird rumours going on and a lot of fake news and fake information was shared on Facebook and a lot of people would believe it. I once met a guy and he told me that a lot of people were dying in Italy because they are committing suicide not because of the virus. We learned from the TV how to protect ourselves with hand sanitizer and masks, stay distant from others and also how to properly wash our hands; even if there was no outbreak, we started to act in Mexico like they were doing in Europe in order to protect ourselves and others. However, we kind of became obsessed with following the local news as we could understand the language, and that didn't help us at all. The only reason why we were watching it was because we wanted to know more about the border's situation. The social media stressed us even more because everyone was only talking about the COVID. Eventually Facebook was helpful in a way because we joined some groups of other people who was trying to go home so we could chat with them and ask them to keep us updated about the flights situation and inform us about everything. We used Instagram and searched some specific airport location in order to follow "live" what is going on, and see what people are posting.

I: Finally, now that the world has begun to move and open up again, has this "forced immobility", this "strandedness" that you experienced impacted your "old" views on mobilities or travelling?

A: *I think we were so lucky before the way we used to travel, no care in the world – we were really spoilt. But this situation it also made me realize how unnecessary some travelling is. In the future I will be more precautious, wear mask and be more careful with my personal hygiene. I never carry a hand sanitizer before because I didn't believe it can make a difference, I touch so many surfaces before without consider how much bacteria I am in contact with.*

I: Do you believe that this experience will have an impact on your future travel plans?

A: *I don't think so. I am still going to travel the way I did before but just a little bit more careful and pay more attention to the hygiene.*

I: So, that was the end of this interview. Thank you again for your help and time.

INTERVIEW #8 KIKA – SKYPE

I: Interviewer
K: Interviewee

Stranded in: Bali

I: Hello, how are you? Thank you very much for your time and for taking part in this interview. I am extremely interested in knowing more about not only your experience of being stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also on your experience on this global shift from - let's say - a mobile world to a nearly immobile one. So, before getting into that, let's maybe start from the beginning…

I: Where were you traveling to and for what purpose?

K: OK, so I was first traveling to Singapore when we actually experienced the corona kind of vibe where people were using mask and they were less tourists in the area as well. And then we went to Bali, which was a little bit more touristy in the sense, but they were not so many tourists as they were supposed to be, according to some local people. And the reason why I was in Bali was for pleasure mostly, you know, to visit new places, immerse in the Balinese culture and meet new people.

I: In the context of travelling, what does the term mobility means to you?

K: Well, I guess the mobility means that you can move around easily within places and we in Europe are very used to travel from one place to another without even question wheatear we can go there or not.

I: How mobile are you? How often do you usually travel?

K: I personally am a very mobile type of person; I don't only use the plane to travel around but also the car, train or buses, because the infrastructures allows you to feel safe and comfortable with whatever means of transportation you are using while travelling; so I guess Europe's ease of moving around kind of pushes you to travel all the time as well. I am mobile because the circumstances allow me to be. Well, I try to travel at least one or if lucky two times a year long distance and for a longer period, and sometimes in between I have quick getaways in Europe because as I mentioned before is really easy to do so.

I: At the beginning of the interview, I mentioned this global shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, to what extent did you perceive this shift?

K: Well, I first experienced this when I was in Bali and the Napyi Day happened; it's like their New Year celebration, where literally everything is closed. It's called Silent Day, so they celebrate it at home, they don't even use electronic devices during that day. Anyways, Napyi Day lasts 24hours, so the day after we were expecting things to go back to normal but the government all of a sudden decided to extend such celebration. So, it was really strange in a way and quite difficult as well for us not to be able to move around; that day we even needed to change the place where we were staying so we had to walk all the way with our backpacks and 40 degrees outside. There were also police around who closed some paths of the Canggu area, and they were making sure you don't go there with your scooter. It was really weird, and it didn't really make sense, no one was ready for another day like that. Anyways, eventually I started to feel such shift in a bigger sense when I saw that my Italian friends were trying to go home but their flights got cancelled. They were flying also in 2 different days so that made me realize that it would be harder and harder to fly to Europe. At the beginning I thought that how lucky I was to be stranded in such tropical paradise, but then after hearing and reading about some negative experiences that some tourists had not necessarily in Bali but Indonesia in general, I started to question whether it is safe for us to be there. I also perceived such shift even in Europe; I got a flight cancelled to Denmark in July, and after Bali I stayed in Slovakia for three months where planes, busses or trains were not circulating at all. So, the shift was shocking, you go from having so many options to move around to almost none at all.

I: Before being stranded, have you ever had issue with being immobile before?

K: Hmm, not at all. Actually, I believe that throughout the years things improved drastically; now you have so many options and thanks to the technology you have the apps that are making our daily lives easier; in a click you have a taxi at your door within minutes; with a click your plane, train, bus ticket is booked. So no, I have never experienced immobility before.

I: Does your passport allows you to travel freely or?

K: Luckily for me it actually does. Slovakia is in the Schengen area so I can travel within Europe only with my ID, not to mention that I am allowed to travel visa-free to more than 150 countries world-wide.

I: Why did you end up being stranded in (….)? for how long? How would you describe your first reaction as soon as you realized you were stranded?

K: Well because we were supposed to fly to the Philippines, then we ended up having our flight cancelled. We were in Lombok when the flight got cancelled and were hearing stories that the ports were going to close soon as well, but luckily, we managed to take an internal flight and make it to Bali. I ended up being stranded there for more than 2 weeks because I couldn't go to the Philippines as planned so I had no

alternative. As I mentioned before, I was quite happy to figure out I will be stuck there; I was with good friends, I have a villa with pool, the weather was incredible and it's cheaper than any other European city so I couldn't really see what could go wrong. While Europe was drastically closing down everything, Bali was still open and the cases where not really raising, you could go to the beach and still enjoy a beer at a local bar. So, at that time we didn't really feel that the corona virus was having an impact on Bali although we had to wear a mask and restaurants were only operating takeaways.

I: How would you compare your experience as a tourist before and after you were stranded? What are the most significant differences for you?

K: I was in Bali since February, so it has been sometime since we were travelling around; at the time the corona was already spreading in Europe but in Bali there were not so many restrictions, I would say there were only less tourists. I visited Bali a lot so at that point I just wanted to settle down at my own place and focus on the thesis; I didn't really notice that much the closing down of the island, you could still move around with the scooter and even though the beaches started to close people would not respect such restrictions. Some shops were still open, but we had to wear mask and use hand sanitizer all the time, which I was ok with it.

I: From what you recollect, have you noticed a difference in attitudes and behaviours of locals towards you/fellow travellers/ tourists in general?

K: I don't think so. I actually think they were super nice and they kind of really appreciated that we stayed because there were not many tourists left and therefore, they were missing some income for their families. To give you an example, we had the housekeeper of our villa and he asked us to clean more often because he also wanted to get some more tips from it and in order to help him we said yes, because we wanted to support him and his family; so I think they also appreciate that there were some people left in Bali that could spend money there and give some jobs to some of the locals.

I: How did this experience impact you emotionally and psychologically? How did you manage to cope? Any support?

K: Well, I think I was pretty ok actually. We booked a flight and it got cancelled 4 days after, but the Slovakian embassy was really helpful in such situation, so I didn't really stress much about it to be honest. I also think I kind of had to accept it, I never stress over something that I don't have the slightest control over anyways. So, the same day my flight was cancelled, the Slovakian embassy informed me about a flight available to Prague and I decided to go to the airport and see if I can get on the plane. Only then I stressed out a bit because there were too many people and I thought I won't be able to make it. But luckily, we manage to get on board, so I was happy about that.

What worried me the most was the mandatory state quarantine that the Slovakian government demanded all the travellers to do once we comeback. My friend and I had to stay in this facility, and we couldn't go out of our room but a week after we got tested and resulted negative so we could go back to our families. So, I guess such support from the government was really good and efficient.

I: How has this experience impacted you economically? How did you manage? Any support?

K: Not really. Bali is a very cheap destination and living in one of the most expensive cities in Europe like Denmark kind of makes me feel "rich" wherever I go. Plus, we as students in Denmark have like a monthly student grant so I have a monthly income; on top of that I also have the student loan so when the corona happened, they actually gave us more money so that also was a big support as well.

I: What role social media such as Facebook, Instagram/ online networks and platforms played while you were stranded?

K: I think Facebook and the Facebook groups in Canggu area where we stayed was really very important for us because we could find relevant information there, although some of the information were hoax, we didn't really know exactly what to trust as well. Also, you couldn't really get some information without having Facebook, so it was really important. Also, WhatsApp played a crucial role for me, that's how I communicate with the Slovakian embassy as well as other people stranded in Bali.

I: Finally, now that the world has begun to move and open up again, has this "forced immobility", this "strandedness" that you experienced impacted your "old" views on mobilities or travelling?

K: Um, not really; I mean, I had a hard time because I got some flights cancelled, like one in July and then a bus to Budapest, but you could experience this also before the virus either because there's a strike or a technical problem. Of course, the alternatives are less but sometimes the alternatives could be really expensive as well. It took some time to arrange new options, but I managed anyways, so I guess you just have to be a little bit more patients these days. As far as I'm concerned, I think we just have to live with it and the borders are going to open again and the world is going to be mobile again, at least Europe for sure.

I: Do you believe that this experience will have an impact on your future travel plans?

K: Um, yes, I think definitely I'll be looking at the situation of the country before I book my flight and see if they have any restrictions that I am not aware of and also respect their rules regarding the coronavirus. I will also definitely choose a destination over

other based on the number of cases. Definitely I am going to focus more on travelling within Europe, I worry less about it compered to countries from Latin America, North America or Asia, I don't feel like travelling too far from home unless is 100% safe. Also, I would probably choose destinations that will allow me to be more in contact with the nature and do outdoors activities and sports rather than choose cities where you mainly go at bars, go shopping and visit museums and other indoor structures.

I: So, that was the end of this interview. Thank you again for your help and time.

INTERVIEW #9 KRISTINE – SKYPE

I: Interviewer
K: Interviewee

Stranded in: Ecuador

I: Hello, how are you? Thank you very much for your time and for taking part in this interview. I am extremely interested in knowing more about not only your experience of being stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also on your experience on this global shift from - let's say - a mobile world to a nearly immobile one. So, before getting into that, let's maybe start from the beginning…

I: Where were you traveling to and for what purpose?

K: *I was supposed to travel around in South America for three months just to enjoy and explore. I started my travel in Cartagena, Colombia and went to Ecuador afterwards. My plan was to travel further south to Peru, but I never got there due to the COVID. In total I ended up travelling for 1 and a half month instead of three.*

I: In the context of travelling, what does the term mobility means to you?

K: *To me mobility means to be able to move around freely, both regarding to be physically and mentally healthy enough to move around and also be able to book a flight, bus, car etc. which can transport you wherever, you want to go.*

I: how mobile are you?

K: *I consider myself to be quite mobile as these times allows you to do so.*

I: At the beginning of the interview, I mentioned this global shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, to what extent did you perceive this shift?

K: *I greatly perceived this shift. Several of my flights got cancelled and the government shut down the entrances to the Guayaquil province, where I was, so that you couldn´t enter the province or leave. In case you wanted to transport yourself to another part of the country, as a tourist you had to have a specific license from the government, which you could only get by contacting your own country.*

I: Before being stranded, have you ever had issue with being immobile before?

K: *No, not from what I remember.*
I: Does your passport allows you to travel freely or?

K: I never really felt necessary to find out more about it, but from yes what I know and from my past experiences I have always managed to travel freely to whatever place I have visited.

I: Why did you end up being stranded in Ecuador? for how long?

K: I ended up being stranded in Guayaquil in Ecuador for nearly one weak.

I: How would you compare your experience as a tourist in Ecuador before and after you were stranded? What are the most significant differences for you?

K: In the city where I was stranded (Guayaquil) it was not allowed to walk on the streets after 2 pm. After this time, all shops, restaurants etc. were closed. That was a very strange experience – not to be able to walk around, go out for dinner and so on, which I usually do on vacations. Also, there was more police in the streets and supermarkets, and everyone wore masks. Since I spent the most of my time in a hotel room that week, I was stranded, I did not experience much during that time, which was also a great contrast to how I usually have my vacation – I usually only spent time in a hotel room to sleep.

I: From what you recollect, have you noticed a difference in attitudes and behaviours of locals towards you/fellow travellers/ tourists in general?

K: I spent the most of my time in a hotel room alone waiting for the first possible flight home to Denmark during the time after the corona outbreak. The employees of the hotel were extremely friendly and helpful and may a great effort to help me find a flight. My first booked flight got cancelled in the airport, which they announced 30 min before the take off, and we were a lot of Europeans who were just left outside the airport, since we were not allowed to enter. All other Europeans who were supposed to go with this flight were very caring and everyone and it was like we were in this together and everyone understood how each other felt in this frustrating situation. People teamed up in groups and helped each other find hotels nearby.

I: How did this experience impact you emotionally and psychologically? How did you manage to cope? Any support?

K: When I heard about the lockdown in Denmark and that they recommended everyone to come home at first, I didn´t want to go home, since everything felt normal in the beach town in Ecuador where I was. After a few days some things such as shops and restaurants started to shut down and rumours said that public transport and flights were being cancelled as well. That was when I realized that I had to go back home, and I was very sad that I had to disrupt the travel I had planned for so long. I then went to Guayaquil, where there was a great airport. I lived in a not very nice neighbourhood

and the first day I was there, I went to a mall (which was still open at that time) and a guy followed me and tried to touch me. Of course, that had nothing to do with the COVID, but it made me feel very insecure and alone in a city I didn´t know and where I did not speak the language and many people didn´t speak English either. The first night in Guayaquil I booked an extremely odd "hotel", which was cheap but actually just a man who rented out one of his rooms. This was when I felt the worse – I was very frustrated and cried a couple of times because I just didn´t know what to do. This owner was extremely friendly, and although we didn´t speak the same language I could tell, that he felt sorry for me. This gave me some comfort. I also spoke a lot with my parents, my boyfriend and my insurance, which were all trying to help me find a flight back home. My family and boyfriend were a great support but since my parents were even more frustrated/scared than I was, I am not sure how much comfort I found in speaking with them. My boyfriend, however, was very calm and rational, which calmed me a lot. The next day I moved to a more proper hotel, which my insurance said they would pay for and where other people stayed as well. That was a great comfort for me – to be in a proper place where one of the employees spoke English and I got in contact with other travellers who were in the same situation as I was.

I: How has this experience impacted you economically? How did you manage? Any support?

K: the saved money for the travel for a long time, so I had enough money to get around and back home. My travel agency told me; they would refund money for a trek I already paid for as well as my original flight back home to Denmark. However, I haven´t got the money yet. My insurance has also promised to cover the extra expenses for the time I was stranded and my flight home to Denmark, which was extremely expensive.

I: What role social media such as Facebook, Instagram/ online networks and platforms played while you were stranded?

K: Not much more than usual. I usually use Facebook and Instagram to communicate with my friends, which I also did at this time where I was stranded.

I: Finally, now that the world has begun to move and open up again, has this "forced immobility", this "strandedness" that you experienced impacted your "old" views on mobilities?

K: not really, no.

I: Do you believe that this experience will have an impact on your future travel plans?

K: *I don´t think so, no. I have always loved to travel and appreciate the possibility we have to do so. I would love to go back to South America and continue my travel someday if possible.*

I: So, that was the end of this interview. Thank you again for your help and time.

INTERVIEW #10 ROSE – SKYPE

I: Interviewer
R: Interviewee

Stranded in L.A

I: Hello, how are you? Thank you very much for your time and for taking part in this interview. I am extremely interested in knowing more about not only your experience of being stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also on your experience on this global shift from - let's say - a mobile world to a nearly immobile one. So, before getting into that, let's maybe start from the beginning…

I: Where were you traveling to and for what purpose? (follow up questions if needed about the trip);

R: I was traveling to the United States because I was doing an internship in Los Angeles; I was supposed to be there for 10 months but the visa did not allow me to be there for the whole period and because of that I was supposed to go somewhere else in between.

I: What does the term mobility means to you?

R: I guess it means freedom, it means being able to move around in the world and go in different places to explore and being a free person.

I: How mobile are you?

R: I am very mobile. Actually, I have a list goals: to visit 50 countries before I turn 50, but since I have already visited 38, I decided to do 100 countries before I turn 50 instead. So, I usually tend to go to 2-3 new counties every year and then eventually I want to visit South America next year for a year or so. Two years ago, I have lived in Asia so I was able to visit around 10 new countries so I guess you can say that I am very mobile and being able to be this mobile is really important to me.

I: At the beginning of the interview, I mentioned this global shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, to what extent did you perceive this shift?

R: Well, on a personal level, it's very confining. I really feel the loss of freedom even in my everyday life; if I have to visit my parents who live four hours away, I'm thinking whether I should go or not. I always think if the train is packed or who is going to sit next to me, those types of questions that you start asking since the Corona and because of that I always chose to stay home. When they opened up the world, at least Europe, I felt that some of my freedom was given back but clearly, I wasn't going to jump on the first plane to just go somewhere because I have family members whose

immune system is compromised. I think, as a society, everybody has to contribute and use their heads. So, for now I can I can wait, at least until the vaccine they figure out the vaccine.

I: Before being stranded, have you ever had issue with being immobile before?

R: I only had a visa problem twice. I studied in China in 2014 and my visa was for six months. And when I was done with my studies, I still had a couple of days left and wanted to go to Hong Kong with one of my classmates. So, we needed to change our initial visa to multiple entry instead of a single one. But we were told that we were too late and that had to be done three months before entering China. But we already bought the tickets at booked the hotel and we were really devastated, because we had everything planned and really wanted to go. And but luckily, the immigration office suggested that if our university could write an official letter where it states that we have to re-enter China for some specific reason they may give us a special visa. But then the university refused to do so because such visa does not exist, and we ended up being back and forth between the police station and the university. In the end it all added up and we managed to go.

The second time it happened last year when I was applying for my American visa before going to LA. Unfortunately, I misunderstood what kind of visa I need to apply for my internship, so I was denied first-hand. If you are denied a visa then you can't ever even have an ESTA again, so I was devastated, I felt really trapped and confined as a piece of my freedom was taken away. Before getting the visa, I travelled to the US 3 times with my ESTA and when I finally made it and got the visa, they took me for an interview and it was really uncomfortable as they didn't believe anything I said and it was just really brutal. They told me I should have stayed home to work and just was trying to say a lot of things to make me confess that I wasn't really there for what I was saying. And that was that was very, very uncomfortable. So, at one point I was like, is it even worth it? I stressed out for two weeks because they told me they were going to call me and check on me wherever I was going to travel, and that was scary.

I: Does your passport allow you to travel freely or?

R: I think so. I mean, there are some countries that I really wanted to visit like China and US where you need the visa, but in general the Danish passport is number five on the list of the strongest passports where you can visit 187 countries without a visa. But honestly, from my personal experience sometimes you can have some issues with the visa based on who's at the immigration counter; if the immigration guy is having a bad day you will have a bad day as well.

I: Why did you end up being stranded in LA? for how long? How would you describe your first reaction as soon as you realized you were stranded?

R: Well, I wasn't really stranded. I don't think it's the right word to use in my case because I could have stayed there but the situation just changed very rapidly. The supermarkets started running out of items; the last 10 days I was there it was impossible to get toilet paper anywhere. People just started hoarding because they were afraid, and everything started to close down. You could only get take away food, you were not allowed to go anywhere, and the city also had a curfew. You were not allowed to be out after 7 P.M unless you had work or had to go to the hospital. So, it was very restricting, and it was a strange time because how can you predict how long this situation is going to last? So, I was thinking if it's only going to be for one moth as the media said then I will stay, as I had been there only for a month and a half, and I got in contact with the Danish embassy and they advise me to leave, especially because the airline traffic might close soon and the tickets eventually will be too expensive. My main concern was overstaying my visa with subsequent interdiction to enter the US forever. So that's why I decided that it's better for me to go home.

I: What was your first reaction when all this started to happen? The curfew and everything? Like how did you feel about it?

R: To be honest I got a little bit angry, because I had to many plans for this place. I didn't go anywhere at the beginning because I thought I had a lot of time, especially because a friend was supposed to visit me in April, and we had so many trips planned. So, I was more upset about me not being able to travel rather than concerned about the virus.

I: How would you compare your experience as a tourist before and after you were stranded? What are the most significant differences for you?

R: Well, traveling home in the beginning of the lockdown was just very stressful. I was afraid of doing something wrong. I was afraid of upsetting people. But I was also upset myself when I saw that the airplane is full of people and there were no rules about wearing masks. It was just it was very stressful. Before the corona, getting from a place to another, the whole travelling by plane experience was nice, I would always pick a window seat, I would snuggle up and I would watch movies the whole time; it was a way to relax before getting adventurous. After this flight I wasn't eager to go flying again anytime soon. It was like every time I touched my face, I felt like somebody was looking at me and there was this I was afraid to touch the person next to me, not because I was afraid of my own health, but I was afraid of upsetting them. So, I was like, I've never, ever tried being in a room with that much attention. Everybody was very upset. Everybody just wanted to go get out of there.

I: From what you recollect, have you noticed a difference in attitudes and behaviours of locals towards you/fellow travellers/ tourists in general?

R: Not at all. I could say that I disguised pretty well as a local, it's not obvious that I was a tourist, so I didn't experience anybody telling me to go home or stay away. Everybody that I knew was really nice and they were all sad when I said I had to leave. Also, because in the US everyone would blame the Chinese for the virus, the president even called it the Chinese sickness. So, everybody was talking about the Chinese bringing down the disease to America, which is not even true. It could be anybody.

I: How did this experience impact you emotionally and psychologically? How did you manage to cope? Any support?

R: Oh, I was crying for days because I really didn't want to leave. I felt like I was being punished unnecessarily, because when you do an internship you have a limited amount of time and not always you have the guarantee that is going to happen again if it gets cancelled. So, I felt like I was being punished a little bit, like somebody else did something stupid and then it ended up not benefiting me. So, it took some time to accept this, it was a hard pill to swallow. I really wasn't happy about going home either. I was very angry, and I was very sad and I think that reflected my whole trip home as well. The fact that going to leave back with my parents because I had my room in Copenhagen rented and go in quarantine didn't help at all. I felt trapped, I couldn't see my friends and I watched the news all the times because there isn't really anything else to do.

But I have some really wonderful friends. We've been having games night and we would dress up and sit in front of the computer. Like we used to this once every two weeks and we play games and we would talk and have wine; it felt like we were in the same room even though we were not and I felt less alone and I've got a lot of support from them. I think it would have been much worse if I didn't have the friends that I had that were supporting me because I love my parents, but I am just too old to live with them and my mom was working from home, so there was basically somebody there 24/7.

I: How has this experience impacted you economically? How did you manage? Any support?

R: Well, it's actually been really good for my economy because it's been so expensive in L.A. so, I'm taking that as an unexpected gift. I managed to save money also because for 2 months I have lived with my parents so when the world opens up again, I will be ready to travel right away, of course if it's safe.

I: What role social media such as Facebook, Instagram/ online networks and platforms played while you were stranded?

R: Well I used to watch a lot of YouTube videos to see how is the covid19 situation worldwide. So, from the videos I learned how to wash my hands properly and the

importance of using masks and hand sanitizer. Either than that, I used Instagram to see other people's journeys abroad in times of corona and see what they decided to weather go home or stay, so I also personally had some friends abroad, so we were in contact and ask constantly advices to each other.

I: Finally, now that the world has begun to move and open up again, has this "forced immobility", this "strandedness" that you experienced impacted your "old" views on mobilities or travelling?

R: Yes, and no. Um, I'm really eager to go into the world again, but I'm trying to be smart and trying to make sense of the countries where I want to go to which are the United States and the Gambia in Africa, where there's the organization that I interned for they are they closed down so there's no possibility and no reason to go there. I don't desire to go somewhere for a week to be a tourist because there are so many risks. So, I guess for now it's up in the air because you don't know what's going to happen. So, I would rather wait until it feels safer again.

I: Do you believe that this experience will have an impact on your future travel plans?

R: Short term, yes, but not long term. I joined a webinar a couple of months ago where there was a professor from Aalborg University in Aalborg where he talked about this whole Corona thing and the tourism industry as a parenthesis and not like a new reality, but more like something that will go away so we can go back to normal. So, I thought it was really interesting because is similar to my point of view of this whole situation. Changes like wearing a face mask when you are travelling in the future it could be the new reality. I will definitely try to keep a little distance from people, I got used to it, so this is the new normal for me now, like I'm surprised when somebody touches me, because I am not used to that anymore.

I: So, that was the end of this interview. Thank you again for your help and time.

COLLABORATIVE AUTOETNOGRAPHY

INTERVIEW #11 CERASELA - SKYPE

I: Interviewer
C: Interviewee

Stranded in: Bali

I: Hello, how are you? Thank you very much for your time and for taking part in this interview. I am extremely interested in knowing more about not only your experience of being stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also on your experience on this global shift from - let's say - a mobile world to a nearly immobile one. So, before getting into that, let's maybe start from the beginning…

I: Where were you traveling to and for what purpose?

C: I was travelling to Bali to do my research thesis and then the plan was to go to the Philippines for leisure. I was supposed to spend around a month and a half in Asia.

I: In the context of travelling, what does the term mobility means to you?
how mobile are you?

C: As soon as I hear the word mobility, I automatically link it to "being on the move"; been able to travel with whatever means of transportation whenever I want without much to worry about. I consider myself to be very mobile, as before this happened, I used to travel more or less once a month; sometimes to go to my hometown but mostly for touristic reasons.

I: At the beginning of the interview, I mentioned this global shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, to what extent did you perceive this shift?

C: I started to realize such change when my flight to the Philippines got cancelled; only two days after that, all the ports to Gili Islands were closing, and when I was in the island pf Lombok I could hear on a daily basis people talking about the closure of Lombok's ports as well. Then next was that Bali airport will slowly close its borders. I bought a couple of flights, but they got cancelled again; and the flights with the companies that would make sure to take you home where crazy expensive. That's when I realized that my freedom of being on the move was compromised and what I thought was then a right all of the sudden became a privilege. The world was literally stopping, and I was stuck in a foreign country without knowing whether I could actually get out of there.

I: Before being stranded, have you ever had issue with being immobile before? Does your passport allow you to travel freely or?

C: No, never happened anything similar. I have both Romanian and Italian passports, so the Italian one it's stronger than the Romanian, and considering that Italy belongs to the Schengen area to travel in those countries I don't even need to show my passport, I can easily travel with my Italian ID. However, as the coronavirus cases were growing around the world, and at that time particularly in China, Italy, France and Spain, a number of airline companies were denying Italian passport holders to fly with them, funny enough having the Romanian passport helped me for once.

I: Why did you end up being stranded in Bali? for how long? How would you describe your first reaction as soon as you realized you were stranded?

C: Well, I end up being stranded because the flights on the way home were cancelled continuously and I think I was stranded for like more or less 2 weeks; I consider my holiday in Bali over on the 23rd of March, which was the day I was supposed to fly to the Philippines and I had a ticket to go home that day but it got cancelled and I realize that I might not be able to go home for a long time. I was worried; not so much for me, but more for my family: the situation in Italy was out of control and not knowing that they were completely safe was driving me crazy. I was lucky I was with very close friends, so I kind of accepted my destiny and waited until the situation calmed down a little bit. Yet, I never stopped checking the flights, my thought was still finding a way to get home as soon as possible. I don't live in Italy, I live in Denmark, but at least I was in Europe, which in my mind, especially at that time, gave me a sense of enhanced safety, especially when it comes to getting sick.

I: How would you compare your experience as a tourist before and after you were stranded? What are the most significant differences for you?

C: Well I would say that it felt weird to see less and less people around, and not to be able to go to the beach or anywhere because the main attractions were closed. I didn't feel like a tourist anymore, as I need to find a place with my friends and stay there until we could not find a flight home.

I: From what you recollect, have you noticed a difference in attitudes and behaviours of locals towards you/fellow travellers/ tourists in general?

C: Well, there were 2 episodes that made me think that maybe being a westerner in a developing country during a pandemic wasn't the best. I went with my friend to buy some beers and 3 shops told us they don't have any; and the 4th happened the same but the owner changed his mind and give us a couple. I was shocked to see that they were actually packed with beers. So back in my mind I said "well, ok, now its beers but what if next time they will say no if I want to buy some food?" Of course, that was the only episode where I experienced that, and I was maybe also biased a little bit by

the fact that I was a little bit stressed and worried with all the situation going on so I guess I misunderstood the whole situation. However, I must admit that Balinese people were still nice to us, as they kind of rely on the few numbers of tourists left on the island as the majority of them make a living with tourism. We respected each other by wearing masks all the time and use hand-sanitizer; the taxi drivers would always give us hand-sanitizer for example.

I: How did this experience impact you emotionally and psychologically? How did you manage to cope? Any support?

C: I was a lot worried because I didn't know when I could see my family and stressed about the fact that the flights kept being cancelled. Either than that, not being alone but with my close friends helped a lot; we cheer each other up all the time, cook together, did activities like working out together and try to have a routine in the house we rented. We believed that trying to have like a normal life will help us get through easier.

I: How has this experience impacted you economically? How did you manage? Any support?

C: I had my savings so thank god I didn't have to ask my family. Of course, I have lost a lot of money because of the flights cancelled and still waiting for the refund, but nothing to worry too much about.

I: What role social media such as Facebook, Instagram/ online networks and platforms played while you were stranded?

C: Well the role the social media played was a little bit as a double sword: on the one hand, it was easier to be updated with the flight information about the airlines and having updates about the Covid-19 and about the borders with the embassies; however, being part of some Facebook groups managed by travellers where everyone can write about what they experienced can be really stressful. A lot of things were contradictory, and you just didn't know which "side" to take – everything was misleading and personally, not having control over things and not knowing what the next move is provokes a condition of anxiety in me.

I: Finally, now that the world has begun to move and open up again, has this "forced immobility", this "strandedness" that you experienced impacted your "old" views on mobilities or travelling? Do you believe that this experience will have an impact on your future travel plans?

C: Indeed. As I said when I travel, I like to be careless, I am doing it to escape my routine, for me is a way to free my mind. I like to have the situation under control, I like to make a plan and stick with it. Now that everything is on hold, I just want to travel my

own home country and that's it. I am lucky to come from a country that has so much touristic heritage, so I am pretty sure that whenever I go it's a win. Because of the COVID Italy's touristic sector got impacted really bad, so the media started to finally promote as much as possible the domestic tourism. So that's what I am going to do; in this way I help our economy to recover and learn more about the country's history and heritage. It's also a really big country with a lot to see, so for the next couple of years my travel plans will be linked to Italy.

COLLABORATIVE AUTOETNOGRAPHY

INTERVIEW #12 MATILDE - SKYPE

I: Interviewer
M: Interviewee

Stranded in: Bali

I: Hello, how are you? Thank you very much for your time and for taking part in this interview. I am extremely interested in knowing more about not only your experience of being stranded due to the coronavirus pandemic, but also on your experience on this global shift from - let's say - a mobile world to a nearly immobile one. So, before getting into that, let's maybe start from the beginning…

I: Where were you traveling to and for what purpose?

M: *I was travelling to Bali from Copenhagen via London at the end of February. The purpose of my travel was twofold, the first week was meant to be only about exploring Bali, relaxing and spending some quality time with the friend I was travelling with but also with friends that were already in Bali with whom we planned this trip. The 2 other weeks were meant to be a time for me to collect primary data, to conduct already planned interviews and so on. This is because I am writing my master thesis and needed to collect data in Bali.*

I: In the context of travelling, what does the term mobility means to you?

M: *The term mobility resonates with me with the idea of movement; it can for instance be the movement of people and all those things that help people in this movement such as cars, planes, busses, boats, bikes and so on. In the context of travelling, being mobile for me is having that possibility of feeling free and at ease in deciding to move, visit, travel places that are both either at the other hand of the world, geographically speaking, or the village/neighbour next to my house. Personally speaking for me being mobile also refers to the fact that being European I had almost no issue in first living, studying and working in London for as much and as long as I wanted, and successively, with the same easiness, to move to Denmark and work and study there with very little bureaucracy to deal with. I honestly never realized how "lucky" and "privileged" I was until I met people from Argentiny o Brazil for instance, on a working-visa. People that had a very limited time to stay in a place and had to pay for their studies or go through much more scrutiny, bureaucracy and spend much more money in order to stay for a little while in a European country.*

I: how mobile are you?

M: *I consider myself quite mobile as I find myself often at airports. As I previously mentioned, I am originally from Sardinia, but I lived in London and now I am living in Denmark, however I am again in Sardinia at the moment. Already all these movements would make me quite mobile. In addition to this, I also travel places for leisure, I wouldn't say quite often as living and studying in London was economically dreadful, so I did not have the time and the finances to travel that much, still, I did travel internationally, went to Bali, New York, Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and visited few countries in Italy. I definitely move a lot around Denmark and I always find time to take the train or the bus to explore the countryside even for a couple of days.*

I: At the beginning of the interview, I mentioned this global shift from a mobile to a nearly immobile world, to what extent did you perceive this shift?

M: *yeah, so I began to notice this shift while I was in Bali and I could clearly see that there were lesser and lesser tourists walking around the streets. At the same time, rumours were spreading that, due to the upsurge in Covid-19 cases, the airport of Bali was going to close. As we were supposed to take our flight back in two days at that point, we were yes worried but also confident that we would make it home. I could see from the app flightradar24 that there was still a lot of movement in the sky. But then, very quickly we were informed that Europe was going to close its borders, so we began to really worry. It was disturbing to see and experience that things were changing so fast. Many places in Bali began to close down, in some it was possible to buy take-outs. Ports and harbour also closed down and there was news of travellers stranded in desperate Indonesian islands. All flights began being cancelled or postponed so It felt like the world had closed down before me and the feeling that I was unjustly trapped against my will did not help accepting the situation. It was so hard to accept that my freedom of movement was taken away just like that, so I could do was to fight to get on a flight and that's what we kept doing.*

Q4 - Before being stranded, have you ever had issue with being immobile before?

M: *not at this scale for sure! The only time I can remember that somehow my mobility was impeded was when one of my flights was cancelled, but then I could just take another one the following day free of charge.*

Q4 Does your passport allows you to travel freely or?

M: *pretty much! I have never had any issues so when I wasn't allowed to board the first time that I was stranded just because I was Italian and had an Italian passport I was in disbelief and shock. I never thought that something like that could happen.*

Q5- Why did you end up being stranded in Bali? for how long? How would you describe your first reaction as soon as you realized you were stranded?

M: *The moment I realized was stranded I was simply left without any words; I was shocked and felt physically ill. I had to wait before telling my family in Italy, where the situation was already very bad because of the coronavirus. The worst thing was knowing that at that point there were still flights and planes going in and out of the country and that the reason why I was stuck there was because I had an Italian passport and therefore I wasn't allowed to transit in an increasing number of countries nor to board majority of the planes. At that point I already had been in Bali for over 2 weeks and I did not come from Italy nor I was going there so it did not make any sense whatsoever. It felt like just because Italy was the second epicentre in Europe then all Italians in the world were carrying the virus?? It still baffles me.*

Then, it happened again. Me and the friend I was travelling with bought tickets with another airline company to attempt once again to go back home, unfortunately nobody was allowed on the plane because the airline and the government of the bridging country we were supposed to transit in and from needed blood tests certifying we were not ill with covid-19. However, at that time, the only place in Indonesia that had those types of testing was Jakarta. So yeah it was horrible. We felt hopeless and kind of cheated.

Q6 - How would you compare your experience as a tourist before and after you were stranded? What are the most significant differences for you?

M: *it went from a study holiday to a surviving experience. Places closed down, we were confined to our house and we had to go to places we never expected and were not prepared for such as hospitals, immigration and so on.*

Q7 - From what you recollect, have you noticed a difference in attitudes and behaviours of locals towards you/fellow travellers/ tourists in general?

M: *As a matter of fact, yes, unfortunately I have. As boarders quickly closed down and there were less and less tourists around, all of the sudden being a tourist, and particularly an Italian tourist, almost felt wrong. At the beginning, when we were stranded for the first time due to our Italian passports, we decided to stay in Kuta, which is a small city that logistically was good for us as it was close to the airport, the Italian embassy and also immigration. However, we quickly realized that that was one of the most touristic places, therefore locals living there were until then used to very high fluxes of tourists. As there were basically a handful of tourists now left, their focus was all on you, it was awkward walking around with people often whispering stuff in their language or screaming at you: Italiano! COVID, COVID! I completely understand where they were coming from, I could see and perceive how without any tourism left they were going to be unable to feed themselves and their families. However,*

especially in Kuta, majority of locals that we met were extremely aggressive and that really had a psychological impact on me. I didn't feel confident walking alone, I hated being starred at, I just wanted to leave and the fact that I couldn't really messed me up. I felt so lucky that I wasn't travelling alone because I kept reading in different Facebook posts how female travelling solo began to be assaulted and how people broke into their hotel room, or followed them with scooters in order to steal their bags, so my stress and anxiety levels were just over the top at that point. I was worried for me and my friend safety, as well as my health and of course, worried also for my family that was devastated that I was stranded.

Things got slightly better when, once we tried to leave again and were left stranded one more time, we moved to another small city called Canggu with four more stranded travellers, as in that community there are an incredible mixture of locals and expats living there, so that took off a bit the pressure from our shoulders. Nonetheless, the fear that somebody could break in in our house during the night kept sticking with me, and I wasn't able to sleep properly, and I became even a bit paranoid. One thing that was clear to me seeing through media how people in the world were behaving to this pandemic, for instance in Europe with stockpiling buying or in the US with images of people queuing to get guns, made me very afraid of what could happen where I was where they really struggle for food and goods of primary necessity. Also, news from Denmark, Italy, UK and Spain if I'm not mistaken were showing hospitals having to deal with robberies of masks and other coronavirus related equipment, so instinctively I reasoned, if this is going on there what is going to happen here in Indonesia?
Also, the Italian and Danish embassies kept sending messages that were very alarming, rushing people to leave asap. The fear was social unrests and political upheaval. Additionally, there were times in which as a foreigner it was almost impossible to get masks or gloves or hand sanitizers. They would just look at us and say: no sorry. We had to constantly tell them we have been in Bali for over a month at that point as a way of justifying us and making them feel more at ease, the same with taxi drivers and whatnot.

Q8 - How did this experience impact you emotionally and psychologically? How did you manage to cope? Any support?

M: *While I was stranded, emotions went from anger, to fear, to disbelief, to shock, to sudden positivity, to panic attacks. It had significant impacts on my mental and psychological health. Once I managed to get back to Europe, I still had issues realizing where I was, issues falling asleep and issues in concentrating and talking to people. As I already said, not being alone in this experience* really helped me deal with it; being with friends, talking to my family and my boyfriend at home helped me go through it.

Q9 - How has this experience impacted you economically? How did you manage? Any support?

M: *Luckily, I could rely on a bit of savings, however the weak currency in Indonesia has played an important factor. If I were stranded in a more expensive country, I wouldn't have been able to last and live as long and as well as I did in Bali.*

Q10 - What role social media such as Facebook, Instagram/ online networks and platforms played while you were stranded?

M: *Social media, particularly Facebook, played a fundamental role while I was stranded. It was in fact the only mean through which it was possible to have access to updated news on what was going on with regards, for instance, to new airlines health requirements, immigration updates, closing of the airports and so on. Particularly, one of our airlines, Thai Airways shared crucial news and info only on Facebook, so that any changes or updates where communicated on their Facebook page. At that time, there were just so many stranded travellers in Asia that it was impossible to communicate with the airline's office by phone or email or to go to their office as everything was closed down to Covid-19. The only way as to either send them a private message on Facebook or by commenting under posts shared on Facebook that were in evidence. I remember that there was just so many people asking info and asking for help also, so the waiting times to get an answer back were very long. Also, if one of your flights got cancelled you would not get any email, you could only check through the airline's app.*

There were also many Facebook groups where people would just share their experiences trying to find a way to go home, share newest travel updates and in many groups there were also Balinese and Indonesian travellers or locals that would share a translation in English regarding the latest updates for instance about the closing down of migration offices and so on. I think many in those groups, including me, felt pretty much abandoned by their own embassies (the Italian consulate in Bali closed down) so Facebook was the only place where they could find answers to their questions or follow other people discussions and so on. I must say that the Italian government as well as the Danish government encouraged stranded travellers to downloads their apps to also give us latest updates on where we could travel, basically helping us finding ways to get out as soon as possible as the boarders were closing down pretty fast.

I: do you remember the name of these apps used by the government to be in touch with stranded travellers?

M: *yeah let me just check my phone. So, the Italian app is called Unità di Crisi – Farnesina, and the Danish app used by the government is called Rejseklar. Basically, through geolocations they would be able to track tour position and give you updates depending on where you were stranded. Also, when you needed to register, you'd have to share all your information.*

I: any negative, downsides in having to rely on apps and Facebook?

M: *oh yeah for sure! It was so confusing and messy to find relevant information from all the posts that were shared, also while looking for the information you had to scroll down conversations and arguments that were not relevant for you but still you had to scan through them and that was very stressful. People were sharing horrible experiences of being attacked and robbed, articles about how numbers of covid-19 cases where dramatically increasing in Asia etc. it was just chaos. Oh and of course, everywhere you looked you could find conspiracy theories, rumours remedies anti Covid, the list just keeps growing.*

I: how has this affected you psychologically and emotionally?

M: *the price to pay to get information as I said was to go through all that, wasn't worth it at all. It was just too much, it felt like being bombed with bad news and negative stories all the time and we all had to endure it and pay a price with our mental health and stress level that at that point were just out of the roof.*

Q11 - Finally, now that the world has begun to move and open up again, has this "forced immobility", this "strandedness" that you experienced impacted your "old" views on mobilities or travelling?

M: *oh absolutely! I will never, ever take for granted my personal mobility again. I want to travel in a more meaningful way. I believe People need to travel less but better. They need to be more aware of their positive and negative impacts as travellers, as much as their impacts on the environment and on the destination's locals.*

Q11 - *follow up question* → Do you believe that this experience will have an impact on your future travel plans?

M: *yes, I believe it did. I mean, I still intend to travel, however, as of now, I would feel more comfortable in travelling to and between European countries that are closer to me than for instance Australia or Indonesia. I understood that I don't need to go that far when I have never been to Venice or Greece. I haven't even visited my own country that well, yet which is absolutely ridiculous if I think about it. Why do I need to go that far? So, to answer your questions, once and if it will be possible, I will focus my travels to countries and cities that are geographically closer to where I am settled. I will also try to avoid "weekends gateways" and focus more on actually spending some time to enjoy the places I intend visit. After taking a 6 hours' flight and then another 16 hours flight I have it enough and I would rather to find ways to travel by train for instance.*