

# A Nice Vacation

**Bodil Stilling Blichfeldt**



Department of Environmental and Business Economics (IME)  
University of Social Sciences  
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Assistant Professor, Ph.D. Bodil Stilling Blichfeldt  
Department of Environmental and Business Economics  
University of Southern Denmark

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Bodil Stilling Blichfeldt  
Department of Environmental and Business Economics  
University of Southern Denmark  
Niels Bohrs Vej 9-10  
DK-6700 Esbjerg  
Tel.: +45 6550 4139  
Fax: +45 6550 1091  
E-mail: [bsb@sam.sdu.dk](mailto:bsb@sam.sdu.dk)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Although much research focuses on reasons why people go on vacation, the majority of research contributions are 'destination based'. This means that most researchers focus on 'the individual vacation' and as a result, most empirical studies draw on travellers' filling out of a questionnaire that emphasises the reasons why they visit a certain destination at a certain time. However, reasons why people go on vacation may relate more to 'going away from something' than to 'going towards something'. Accordingly, it seems that research that focuses on vacations in a more holistic perspective is needed. In order to make a contribution to the compensation for the shortcomings of extant tourism research, this research report accounts for an empirical study, the purpose of which was to increase our knowledge of vacations as 'thick' and rich phenomena embedded in people's everyday lives.*

*The study consists of 20 phenomenological interviews with 30 informants, the purpose of which was to build an understanding of people's own definitions of 'a nice vacation'. Hence, apart from an opening part of interviews that consists of extensive dialogues on informants' travel careers, the interviews consist of a second part that contains informants' expressions of what exactly constitutes 'a nice vacation' in the context of their everyday lives.*

*A key finding of the study is that not only are people's travel careers very different, but even more importantly, a key reason underlying such differences in travel careers is diversity in people's every day lives. Hence, informants drew heavily on their everyday life contexts in order to explicate why different vacations were 'nice vacations' at different points in time during their lives. Furthermore, key findings of the study are the multiplicity of meanings that people ascribe to the notion of 'a nice vacation' as well the diversity of their vacations. For example, to some informants vacations are institutionalised, critical parts of their lives whereas others defined vacations as something that is not an integral part of their lives. Thus, not only do informants differ profoundly in regard to the types of vacations they take, but especially they differ in relation to the extent to which they go on vacation. Furthermore, quite explicitly informants argue that their inclinations to travel as well as the types of vacations they might take differ throughout their lives.*

*Due to the diversity of travel careers and henceforth, the multiplicity of definitions of nice vacations that the 30 informants offered, the primary goal of this report is to account for analysis of the phenomenological interviews at the ideographic level. Thus, the main body of the report (i.e. section 4) accounts for informants' reflections on, and expressions of, their conceptions of 'a nice vacation' as well as the researcher's 'first order' interpretations of these reflections and*

*expressions. As such, the key contribution of the report is the account for analysis at the ideographic level that section 4 offers.*

*Afterwards, in section 5, a brief introduction to a series of marketing based themes that emerged during comparison of separate interviews is offered. However, as it would be far too complex to account adequately for all of these themes within this report, this part of the report merely introduces these themes and offers short descriptions of the key content of these themes.*

*Finally, in section 6 the multi-faceted findings of the study are discussed in a broader sociological perspective. Especially, the key contribution of this section is that it draws on Berger and Luckmann's definition of institutions as mechanisms that set up predefined patterns of conduct. Hence, to informants for whom vacations are institutionalised patterns of conduct, vacations may act as an institution when drawing on the broad definition hereof that is offered by Berger and Luckmann. On the other hand, to the informants that do not go much on vacations and/or who do so in accordance with unpredictable, ad hoc based patterns, vacations do not seem to qualify as institutions. Finally, some informants seem to be in the midst of transforming their vacation-related behaviours to institutions in order to reduce the tension and efforts it takes to plan and have vacations that are not subject to institutionalisation. Hence, the paper is closed by the suggestion that some people institutionalise vacations whereas others do not. Thus, a central contribution of the paper to extant tourism research is the suggestion that levels of relevance and henceforth, likelihood of institutionalisation of vacations differ profoundly across people.*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In 1998, Pine and Gilmore (1998a; 1998b) welcomed us to the experience economy. However, in relation to consumer research, around 20 years ago several authors (e.g. Belk, 1984; Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982; Levy, 1981; Mick, 1986 and Thompson et al, 1989) argued that much research ignored experiences. Even today lesser articles focusing on the lived experiences of consumers than one would expect enter peer-reviewed journals. For example, a search by means of EBSCO Host suggests that what especially goes into peer-reviewed journals are articles that focus on sellers' attempts to create experiences for their customers. Hence, most of these articles align with Pine and Gilmore's (1998a, p. 98) emphasis on companies' intentional uses of "services as the stage, and goods as props" in order to facilitate consumers' construction of experiences. Henceforth, it seems that especially we emphasise experiences as something that companies facilitate whereas we do not seem to conduct much research that focuses on the consumer's actual (construction of) experiences. This argument is supported by Roberson's (2003) claim that "... the voice of the traveller is often missing". Thompson et al (1989, p. 144) argue that "for consumer researchers to understand experience, they must first employ methods and assumptions that allow for experience to exist". Along the same lines of reasoning, Hirschman (1994, p. 625) reminds us that "consumers themselves often may have a more cogent grasp of the phenomena they live with every day than the social scientists who desire to study them". Henceforth, in regard to a welter of consumer experiences it seems that more research focusing on consumers' lived experiences would be beneficial. Especially, research focusing on consumers' lived experiences seems to be a promising endeavour in so far we wish for research to deepen our understanding of the fundamental 'whys' underlying (and directing) consumer behaviour.

## 2. RESEARCH SCOPE AND AIM

Obviously, consumers may have, or construct, experiences in relation to all aspects of the diverse set of consumer activities that they engage in. Thus, regardless of whether one defines experiences as something that consumers construct (i.e. adhering to a constructivistic stance) or whether one defines experiences as 'real' phenomena (e.g. adhering to phenomenological stances), the interpretive researcher has a special interest in consumers' own descriptions of their experiences. Various pieces of interpretive research have focused on different aspects of consumer experiences. For example, Hirschman (1994) adopted a phenomenological approach in order to comprehend consumers' relationships with their companion animals and Thompson et al (1990) investigated everyday consumer experiences of contemporary married women. However, there is still a multiplicity of consumer phenomena that have not, as yet, been subject to (enough) studies, the purpose of which is to unfold the richness of consumer experiences.



One such area of inquiry might be vacations; especially so as many researchers (e.g. Boorstin, 1964; Gottlieb, 1982; Luring, 2005; O'Dell, 2005; Roberson, 2003; Urry, 1990) argue that experiencing is the primary reason why consumers go on vacation. For example, Urry (1990) argues that, especially, tourism is a departure from everyday experience. Furthermore, emphasising experiences seems to be a promising research approach in regard to tourism as "most people want to share experiences about the places they visited" (Roberson, 2003, p.141). Finally, O'Dell (2005, p. 14) argues that "... the search for new experiences is an important aspect of tourism". Hence, going away on vacation is a way in which we enhance our repertoire of lived experiences. However, not much research has focused on vacations as lived experiences in the form of consumers' cogent grasp of this phenomenon. In order to increase our understanding of consumers' experiences (and experiences relating to tourism in particular), the purpose of the empirical study upon which this paper draws was to enhance our understanding of consumers' lived vacation experiences. Furthermore, a qualitative (i.e. interpretive) research design was chosen due to the fact that qualitative research better addresses questions of understanding and meaning than quantitative research (Hollinshead, 1996; Riley, 1996; Wall, 1997). Specifically, the outset of the study was to engage informants in nondirective and non-judgmental dialogues focused on what constitutes 'a nice vacation' in their minds. Thus, the qualitative study does not merely focus on specific experiences. Instead, the research strategy is holistic (Thompson et al, 2001) in so far the purpose is to relate informants' descriptions of various vacation experiences to each other as well as to the context of informants' life-worlds. The notion of 'life-world' especially relates to the works of Jürgen Habermas. At it's core 'life-world' relates to the fact that the world is seen (or enacted) from a participant's perspective and includes culture, social world and personality (Andersen, 1996). Furthermore, it is communicated verbally. Hence, Habermas draws on Husserl's notion of life world as the underlying 'horizon' that is decisive for our experiences. Henceforth, a key tenet of the empirical study is *not* only to comprehend vacation experiences as experiences in their own right. Instead, the purpose is also to understand vacation experiences as an integral part of consumers' lives as 'on-going experiential projects'.

The primary goal of this report is to account for analysis of the 20 phenomenological interviews at the ideographic level. Thus, the main body of the report (i.e. section 4) accounts for informants' reflections on, and expressions of, their conceptions of 'a nice vacation' as well as the researcher's 'first order' interpretations of these reflections and expressions. As such, the key contribution of the report is the account for analysis at the ideographic level that section 4 offers. Afterwards, in section 5, a brief introduction to a series of global themes that emerged during comparison of separate interviews is offered. However, as it would be far too complex to

account adequately for all of these themes within the context of this report, section 5 merely introduces the global themes.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

In order to gain insight into vacation experiences as holistic, rich, and 'thick' phenomena, obviously one has to adhere to a research methodology that allows for such phenomena 'to appear'. One paradigm that seems to provide a methodologically rigorous, in-depth understanding of consumer experiences is existential-phenomenology. Especially, existential-phenomenology relies on a contextualistic world view, according to which individuals (i.e. consumers) cannot be separated from their surrounding context and hence, experience is described as "it emerges in some context(s) or, to use phenomenological terms, as it is "lived"" (Thompson et al, 1989, p. 135). Hence, according to an existential-phenomenological world-view, consumers' lived experiences of a 'nice vacation' are first-person descriptions of patterns that emerge from the overall context of consumers' life-worlds.

According to Thompson et al (1990), three central tenets characterise the existential-phenomenological approach. These three tenets are: (1) Intentionality – a methodological consequence of which is that "the researcher's conceptual categories are secondary to the participant's experiential ones" (p. 347); (2) emergent dialogue – which means that "rather than being guided by pre-specified questions, the interviewer's questions and comments are formulated in concert with participant descriptions" (p. 347); and (3) hermeneutic endeavour in the form of iterations within the research process. Although several research methods can be applied within the realm of the existential-phenomenological paradigm, the study accounted for in this paper draws on the phenomenological interview. This choice is based on the argument that the interview is often characterised as one of the most powerful methods when ones wishes to gain an in-depth understanding of others' experiences (Kvale, 1983). In opposition to the traditional conception of interviews as 'instruments' in the research process (e.g. Marshall and Rossman, 1985), in this paper the constructivists' approach to interviews is adopted. Hence, interviews are conceived as "a collaborative, meaning-making experience involving both the interviewer and the interviewee" (Hiller and DiLuzio, 2004). Consequently, the empirical study accounted for in this paper was conducted as a series of in-depth, phenomenological interviews with (groups of) informants and further, this study draws on the nondirective and non-judgmental approach that characterises phenomenological interviews (e.g. Bergedaa, 1990; Hirschman, 1994; McCracken, 1988).

Although a bit unconventional (except from Hirschman's, 1994, seminal work), a choice was made to rely on informants, all of whom were (to varying degrees) personally known by the

researcher (appendix 1). Especially this choice originated from a wish to facilitate a flow of conversation characterised by a natural and emotionally supportive atmosphere (as experienced by Hirschman, 1994). Furthermore, this choice was facilitated by some fundamental methodological and philosophical considerations (that are discussed in other publications). Lastly, the choice relates to Stebbins (1972), who argued that (1) validity is increased by pursuing subjectivity rather than objectivity and (2) that interviews should resemble interpersonal relationships. Hence, drawing on Stebbins' argument, the choosing of informants known by the researcher should insure that interviews do not only resemble interpersonal relationships, but that they are, in fact, drawing on the advantages of interpersonal relationships (e.g. trust, rapport, openness, and supportiveness). The choosing of informants already known by the researcher should also ensure that previous knowledge on informants both increases breadth of interviews and helps form more complete portraits of informants and their travel careers (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Roberson, 2003). Hence, the researcher relied on her personal network in order to facilitate longer-lasting, in-depth dialogues with informants (individuals or families) on the subject of vacations. Rather surprisingly, the choosing of 30 informants that the interviewer (to varying degrees) knew in advance did seem to matter to informants. For example, at the end of one of the interviews (i.e. the one with Ben and Mary that is accounted for in section 4.2), these two informants (who, as most informants, had never been subject to face-to-face, in-depth interviewing before) were asked about their attitudes and feelings towards the interview. When prompted as to whether they thought that the interviewer questioned them too closely, they engaged in the following dialogue [as all parts of interview transcripts that are presented in this paper, the quotation has been subject to the author's translation]:

*B: No. No, not at all. No, no I don't think so*

*M: No. But I think that it helps that we have met you before*

*B: Yes. Because I would say that, because when you talk to one of those people, who call [phone interviews – typically market research], sometimes I tell them, 'that's none of your business', when they go to deeply into something*

*M: I don't think you questioned us too deeply, but it helps that we have met you before and that we have sat down together and talked with one another previously - at least to me*

*B: Yes, I think it helps too*

*M: Because if you had been a total stranger*

*B: Yes, I think that would have been very different*

...

*M: But it makes sense, because with total strangers, then you become more formal and then you don't open up. It becomes somewhat more out of tune*

Although the interviewer's acquaintance with Ben and Mary was certainly not close, the fragment of the interview reproduced above indicates that it mattered to Ben and Mary that they had talked with the interviewer previously. An identical pattern emerged at the end of the interview with Linda:

*I: I have tried to do so that I talk with people I already know somewhat instead of talking to strangers. Do you think that has made a difference?*

*L: Yes! It gives more ... Because I know you and you know me it is less formal. So I might tell, during the interview I have told things that weren't exactly vacations, but things that matter in relation to vacations, perhaps. I wouldn't necessarily tell a total stranger those things, right? In that situation I would stick more to the topic. I mean, you could say, I think that we got further away from the topic, or, I think the adequate term is that you get a broader view on the topic when you know people than when you don't know them ...*

In addition, a similar pattern emerged at the closing of the interview with Ellen; as indicated by the following fragments of that interview:

*I: One last thing; you haven't tried something like this before?*

*E: No, but I think that it is going okay*

*I: How does it feel?*

*E: It feels good*

*I: Have I gone too deeply into something, have I asked too much?*

*E: Not at all, I don't even feel like it has been an interview. I just feel as if we have sat around talking as we usually do*

*...*

*I: And then I would like to hear, mostly we interview people we don't know in advance*

*E: I think it is more relaxing to know people beforehand. Because, when they call, you feel a bit like 'why do they nose about my life'. I think it is nicer to sit here and talk with you, because I know you*

*I: It helps a little?*

*E: it helps a lot, I think. I open up more talking to you than I would if it was someone I didn't know ...*

Also informants who are closer acquaintances of the interviewer thought that the fact that they knew the interviewer (and that the interviewer knew them) inflicted positively on quality of the interview. For example, Henry, whom the interviewer has met several times during the last 8 to 10 years, offered the following comments regarding this topic:

*H: Well, I can spend less time telling who I am and what my background is like. And I can also tell some things only halfway and then anticipate that you understand me. So in that way I think that we go deeper into me ... I think it will affect your interpretation that you know my background. But it could make the interpretation more genuine*

...

*H: But you also know that when I say the things I do, you fairly know what my work situation is, where I live, what kind of relationship I have with my neighbours. I mean, actually you know a lot about my values and things like that, things that don't only emerge in this interview*

...

*H: But it might be a question on how close to your sphere I am. Like if we had known each other for 15 years and even closer, then it might be more difficult for you to relate to it*

As Henry points out, the fact that he and the interviewer knew each other before they engaged in the interview seems to affect the interview positively although, at the same time, he thinks that a closer relationship between the two of us would perhaps have hampered the interview. In the same vein, when Owen and Karen (who are closer friends of the interviewer and have been so for the last 15 and 10 years respectively) were asked whether it had affected the interview that they knew the interviewer quite well, the following conversation took place:

*O: There's personal stuff that you wouldn't discuss in the same way [if the interviewer had been a stranger]*

*K: Yes. Those issues that we disagree on and that give rise to discussions every time, I wouldn't have brought them up*

*I: You would have been more 'respectable'?*

*K: Yes*

*O: Yes, I wouldn't have gone, I mean, I would only have touched upon the extremes and then I would have smoothed over them once I had mentioned them. I wouldn't have mentioned [a person that he felt had had a negative affect on a vacation they took with relatives]. I wouldn't have pointed at [that]. I would just have referred to it as 'do you remember that vacation when ...' and then you [Karen] would know what I was talking about*

Quite interesting, Owen and Karen argue that they were far more open and honest during the interview than they would have been, had they not known the researcher. A similar pattern emerged during the interview with Ken (an informant that I knew very well before doing the interview). When, at the closing of the interview, Ken was asked about his perception of participating in an interview, the following conversation took place:

*K: I guess it's quite normal, although with a curious asking*

*I: Had the interviewer been someone you didn't know ...*

*K: Yes?*

*I: Would that be easier or more difficult?*

*K: I think it would have been easier*

*I: Why?*

*K: Because then I could make you believe that the vacations I hardly remember, that I hadn't had them. So some of them – this sounds almost awful – but some of them, I could have told you; 'no, I haven't been there', because you wouldn't know where I've been*

*I: Would it be nice to be able to deny that?*

*K: It would have been nice for me*

*I: Why?*

*K: Because you wouldn't know, you couldn't be sure ... It has to do with lying, I don't know how to explain it. But somehow, I wouldn't be accountable for what I'm saying. I mean, you would have to believe that I'm telling the truth*

*I: It would be nice if you had been able to select which vacations we talked about?*

*K: Yes. To choose*

*I: If I hadn't known about most of your vacations, would you have left some out?*

*K: Yes, I would. I didn't need to ... the ones I don't define as vacations and the ones I define as failures*

*I: And that would have been nice?*

*K: You would never have known about those vacations. I would not admit that I've had bad vacations*

*I: How comes?*

*K: Why? But, again, why should I go back to work after a shitty vacation and brag about it? I would never do that. Would anyone do that?*

*...*

*I: So you think you might be tempted to screen ...*

*K: No, I'm confident that I would*

Drawing on the different informants' comments that are reproduced above, it seems that the fact that the researcher (to varying degrees) knew informants prior to doing the interviews has had a major impact on the 'quality' of interviews and especially, it seems to have solved positivistic' stances key problem in relation to qualitative interviews; i.e. the facilitation of rapport. Rather surprisingly (at least to the researcher, the academic career of whom has been greatly influenced by neo-positivistic criteria for assessment of quality of research), informants mainly find that knowing-each-other-in-advance has affected interviews positively. Thus, only one informant (Beth, interview 13) argued that knowing-each-other-in-advance might influence interviews negatively:

*B: ... actually, it is fun to talk to strangers that you'll never meet again. I mean, you are able to talk about some other things and you can explicate feelings that you would never do with people you know. Actually, that's a rather funny experience*

*B: So, what you might experience in another form of interview might be that you could talk about some feelings that you might not talk about to people you know. But now, I don't have a problem talking to you because, well, we know each other for better and for worse, in times of crisis and in sorrow, and it's different to dare to use one another than it is with people with whom you 'keep up appearances'*

Unlike Beth, most informants argue that they were more relaxed and honest and that they opened up more than they would, had the interviewer been a stranger. Furthermore, informants that the researcher knows very well even suggested that – during the course of the interview – they would have screened out different vacations and experiences if they had not known the researcher beforehand. This finding is rather different from what traditional approaches to qualitative interviews suggest. For example, Hiller and DiLuzio (2004) argue that the interview is a researcher-driven experience and that the researcher controls the agenda. In the same vein, Oakley (1981, p. 49) argues that informants only have ‘some’ control over two dimensions of the interview: (1) When it takes place and (2) how much detail is divulged. However, drawing on the fragments of interviews reproduced above, it seems that informants have more than simply ‘some’ control over the content of the interview. Thus, apart from their control over level of detail (including whether the interview qualifies as ‘front stage’ or ‘back stage’), informants argue that they may screen out various experiences from the interview. Hence, it seems that – at least in the empirical study accounted for in this paper – informants play a much more active role in the meaning-making process than we traditionally think. For example, informants’ choosing to withhold information and/or to only disclose certain vacation experiences seems to impact quality of interviews profoundly. Secondly, whether informants choose to “allow the researcher to see the more hidden, less straight-forward, more personally intimate and perhaps less flattering aspects of the issue, i.e., the back stage” (Hiller and DiLuzio, 2004, p. 10) also seems to affect quality of interviews. Obviously, these comments on ‘quality of interviews’ offered by informants seem to be of major importance in relation to qualitative interviews in a methodological perspective. Hence, further publications will discuss this methodological quandary in greater depths. However, for present purposes, this important dimension of the empirical study is closed with the notion that it does seem that the series of interviews provides a trustworthy picture of informants’ vacation experiences in the context of their life-worlds.

Due to the critical importance of informants’ life-worlds, a deliberate choice was made to include a diverse set of informants in the empirical study. Thus, apart from variation across the interviewer’s acquaintance with informants, the primary criteria underlying the choosing of the 30 informants were diversity in terms of e.g. age, stage in the family life cycle, income, and, especially, travel experience. Hence, the hope was that diversity amongst informants should make the researcher more sensitive towards life-world contexts of informants in order for her better to grasp effects of such contexts on (1) travel careers and (2) the form of vacation experiences aspired for, and (possibly) achieved, by informants. Appendix 1 contains a list of informants; a list that also accounts for some focal characteristics of informants.

In order to create a 'psychologically safe environment', all interviews took place either in the home of the informants, at the interviewer's workplace or in the interviewer's home (as preferred by informants). Each interview was opened with broad questions such as: 'Could you tell me about a nice vacation that you once had?', 'would you tell me about your latest vacation?', or 'have you travelled much?' Most interviews (and all interviews that took place in the interviewer's home) ended up being social visits that lasted 3 to 7 hours. However, the 'actual' interviews lasted 1 to 3 hours and were initiated by simply asking informants to tell about their previous vacations. Thus, at the outset interviews focused on informants' descriptions of holiday experiences, i.e. participants' descriptions of vacation experiences and ways in which participants form coherent wholes of such experiences. However, interviews did not solely focus on the most recent vacations; nor did they only emphasise 'nice' vacations. On the contrary, interviews include all experiences that constitute the 'travel career' (Pearce's, 1988, notion). However, in this paper the notion 'travel career' does not relate to an adherence to Maslow's motivation theory (that suggests a universal hierarchy of needs) as it does in Pearce's work from 1993. Instead, the notion of travel careers is adopted in order to emphasise that motivations vary, not only across people, but also across decision-making processes and valence of a host of complementary motivations at different points in time in informants' lives. Consequently, informants talked about motivations and experiences relating to a diverse set of vacations – stretching from city breaks they took last month to long-haul vacations to far away destinations, where informants went several years ago (e.g. when they were children). Although I had not anticipated it, during the interviews, several informants pointed to the fact that, previous to the interview, they had never thought of their various vacations as elements that form a coherent whole, let alone a travel career. Thus, the interviews indicate that people may think less in terms of 'a travel career' than we, as researchers, tend to think. For example, at the end of one of the interviews, one informant (Henry) made the following comment:

*H: But now that I am thinking about it, I realise how much I have actually travelled. Because, it is not something that I think about. Personally, I don't think that I travel a lot ... But, one thing with another; damn we travel a lot*

Henry's comment nicely relates to the first response offered by a host of informants when they were asked to participate in an interview on vacations. Thus, the first response offered by many informants was something in the lines of: 'Well, you know, I don't think I have much to offer because I/we haven't travelled much'. However, as the accounts for interviews in section 4 suggest, during the interviews, most informants came to the conclusion that they have, in fact, travelled (a lot) more than they had realised before we sat down and talked about their travel experiences and holiday memories.



Informants were encouraged to relate the various vacations to the contexts of their lives at the specific point in time, when they went on that specific vacation. As such, experiences (and meanings hereof) are seen as relating to the informants' lives as 'on-going projects' as well as to the 'context of person-in-the-world' (Thompson et al, 1989). Concordant with the conception that the experience of time changes as we mature (e.g. Dapkus, 1985), interviews thus draw on the conception that the experience of a 'nice vacation' might also change during our lives. Thus, the interviewer had a special obligation to try to understand vacation experiences, not only as distinctive experiences, but also as means to the end 'a nice life' at the time when informants engaged in them.

Concordant with e.g. Jorgensen (1989) and Hirschman (1994), informants were encouraged to tell their stories in their own words and with a minimum of directions offered by the researcher. Thus, the interviews were conducted in a manner that aligns with Thompson et al's (2001) recommendations regarding how to do phenomenological interviews. Furthermore, in order to facilitate open dialogue, special care was taken to let informants know that there was no such thing as 'a right answer'. Instead, at the beginning of each interview, informants were informed of the purpose of the study, i.e. to gain an in-depth understanding of their lived vacation experiences. Furthermore, during interviews the researcher employed descriptive questions, the basis for which emerged from the course of the dialogue. Hence, the researcher engaged informants in conversations, the content and flow of which were not pre-specified by the researcher.

All interviews were tape-recorded and subsequently transcribed. In regard to the hermeneutical interpretive analysis of interviews, a key tenet of such analysis was the search for common elements of vacation experiences across informants on the basis of the meaning categories generated on the basis of the individual interviews. Concordant with recommendations for interpretation of interviews (e.g. Kvale, 1989), the cyclical interpretive process thus contained different levels of interpretation. First, each transcript was subject to interpretation at the ideographic level. Afterwards, the researcher searched for patterns of commonalities, or global themes, as separate interviews were related to one another. However, when doing phenomenological research, the researcher has a special obligation to ensure that "global themes are not rendered in abstract terms removed from respondent experiences" (Thompson et al, 1989, p. 142). Hence, the search for patterns of commonalities encompassed a continuously moving back-and-forth between individual transcripts and global themes in order to ensure that the researcher was, in fact, able to offer clear statements of global themes by means of specific passages in interview transcripts. As the study was done by *one* researcher, unfortunately, I did not have many opportunities to discuss interpretations with fellow

researchers during the interpretive process. In order to compensate for this major weakness, two strategies were employed. First, informants were confronted with the researcher's interpretations at the ideographic level. Secondly, during the research process the work-in-progress was presented to other researchers (and students) in order for them to offer critical feedback. Such presentations include peer-reviews of written documentation as well as presentations at conferences, workshops and seminars.

The next sections of the paper account for the results of the interpretive analysis. First, section 4 accounts for some key results of interpretation at the ideographic level. Afterwards, section 5 briefly introduces the global themes that were identified as interviews were related to each other (further elaborations on these themes are to be published later).

#### **4. KEY TENETS OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

O'Dell (2005, p. 16) argues that "it may be impossible to completely re-present the phenomenological essence of people's experiences". Obviously, apart from the fact that the mere attempt to re-present experiences is problematic, it would also be too tedious – and too lengthy – to try to account for all aspects of all interviews that appeared during the analysis at the ideographic level. Accordingly, this section only accounts for some central interpretations of each interview. Apart from these sediments, the accounts for separate interviews include background information on informants. Especially, background information is an integral part of these accounts because informants' descriptions of various vacation experiences are interpreted within the context of informants' life-worlds.

##### **4.1. HAVING A TRULY NEW EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR CHILDREN**

The first interview included a 33 years-old woman (Grith) and her two children (the 7 years-old son Chris and the 11 years-old daughter Julia). Together with Grith's husband (43 years-old Peter who did not participate in the interview due to other obligations), these informants comprise a traditional, nuclear family. Grith and Peter started dating when Grith was 18 years old and soon after, Grith moved in with Peter in his village house. 4 years later their daughter was born and after 4 more years, Chris was born. Today, Grith and Peter still live in Peter's village house. They both have full time jobs; Peter as an unskilled labourer and Grith takes care of elderly people in their own homes. In terms of income, Grith and Peter have an around average household income (in a Danish context). The vacation experiences and henceforth, the travel career of this family are comprised of three (very distinctive) phases, for which the remainder of this section of the paper accounts.

The first phase is comprised of Grith's and Peter's permanent relationship before they had children. During this phase, Grith and Peter did *not* go on vacation. The following sections of the interview relate to the situation that Peter and Grith did not go on vacation before they had children [as all parts of interview transcripts that are presented in this paper, the quotation has been subject to the author's translation].

*G: No, we never did that [going away on vacation]*

*I: Not even for a weekend?*

*G: Well, yes, we did spend an extended weekend in Copenhagen. But that's the closest thing to a vacation we had before we had children*

*I: So that was the first time you went away together?*

*G: Yes, but that wasn't really a vacation. It was more like a visit*

*I: So it doesn't really compare ...*

*G: No, I really don't think it does*

*G: We didn't go away on vacation before [they had children]. Weird, isn't it?*

*I: How comes?*

*G: I don't know ... I don't know. We have often talked about it, 'my god, you are stupid', 'you travel more now than before you had children' [laughing]. But that is something you can say afterwards. You can always be wise after the event*

*I: So are the children a reason why you go on vacation?*

*G: Yes, it is. I think it is because, when you have children, you would like to give them some experiences and some nice things to take along*

Thus, the transition from the first ('not going away on vacation') phase to the next phase of Grith's and Peter's travel career was initiated by the transition to being 'married with children'. Hence, to Grith and Peter, going away on vacation was not an integral part of 'nice living' before they had children. The next phase is comprised of the time period, during which the family could be characterised as a family with small children. During this phase, the family did go on vacation. Most of these vacations included the rental of a cabin at a caravan site. Furthermore, during the interview, the informants spoke of these vacations as integral parts of a holistic entity, i.e. 'holidays of the past', more than they focused on these vacations as separate entities. In fact, the first vacation that the family had was not introduced by the informants, as indicated by the following section of the interview.

*I: Weren't you once in Sweden?*

*G: Yes, that's right! We were! That's true. That was when you [Julia] were little ...*

*J: I don't remember that*

*G: That was also a nice vacation. That was a nice vacation. It was also in a cabin. But a different kind of cabin; it had a toilet [smiling]. At a caravan site, but not a very demanding one ... I mean, it didn't have many things*

*I: Nature?*

*G: Yes, a lake. But Julia was very little, so she was with us the entire time. You [Julia] were a couple of years old. I think you had your second birthday there. So you did*

Apart from the one trip to Sweden, during this phase all vacations took place in Denmark. Furthermore, all vacations were at caravan sites; once the family lent a caravan and the remaining times, they rented a cabin at different Danish caravan sites. The experiences that the family had during these vacations align very much with the types of experiences traditionally aspired for when people go caravanning; e.g. relaxation and children being both with their parents and with other children (Blichfeldt, 2004, could provide more information on the exact nature of experiences of people, who spend their vacations at caravan sites close to home). Thus, for a prolonged period of time (8 years), most summers the family went away from home for one or two weeks during their summer holiday. Furthermore, although some variation characterizes choice of destination and accommodation, all of these summer vacations have much in common.

The present phase of the family's travel career is labeled 'a phase of transition' because the family, last summer, went on their first packaged holiday; going to Turkey. To go on a packaged tour was not only something that was new to the family. Instead, it was a truly new endeavour to all parties involved as neither Grith nor Peter had ever been on a packaged tour before. The following fragment of the interview relates to the transition from phase 2 to phase 3.

*G: ... but now that we are talking about it, it is curiously enough. Because when we went to Turkey, that wasn't a need we had. I mean, for other children being there, there it didn't matter. But when we are at home [on vacation in Denmark], then we want that there are ... like people ... that we can be with*

*G: ... but even when you rent a cabin at a Danish caravan site it is not, at all, the same as traveling. Because ... you have to do the cooking anyway if you are in a cabin or a caravan or whatever. You don't do that when you are on a packaged holiday*

The informants feel that there has been a major change in their travel career because they find that the trip to Turkey is fundamentally different from their previous vacations. Furthermore, following a rather lengthy conversation focusing on some of the nice experiences, the family had during the packaged holiday, 11 years-old Julia initiated the following conversation:

*J: But sometimes it is also very nice to just go to a caravan site where you can have a cosy time*

G: Yes

*J: Because, sometimes ... e.g. when we took that tour [a day tour during the packaged tour] ... then it becomes stressful, because we had to catch that bus. And ... at a caravan site, you don't have to do anything. But then ... you don't have to do anything in Turkey. Sometimes it can be nice to go far away from home*

Although Julia had difficulties expressing the exact differences between the two types of vacations, she does find that, fundamentally, they differ. Furthermore, when directly prompted as to the transition from phase 2 to 3, Grith argued as follows:

*G: Yes, but we have always talked about that we would like to do that [going on a packaged tour]. But we have always said that we would like to wait until the children were able to remember it as well, you know? Because, I'm like, to have to take 1 year-old children ... Who's needs are you fulfilling then? It's your needs, because the children would have as nice a time somewhere at home. In Denmark. So we have always said that we would wait. And now Chris will be able to remember it and Julia will definitively remember that trip. So, absolutely it plays a role.*

As indicated by Grith's comments, the transition from phase 2 to 3 was pre-planned and deliberate. Furthermore, the planning of, and preparation for, the family's first packaged holiday was a 'family project', the initiation of which happened more than 6 months in advance of the actual vacation. Also, according to both Grith's and Julia's accounts for this project, it very much resembles what we normally label extensive problem-solving and joint decision-making processes. Thus, the anticipative phase was a very important part of project 'Turkey' to this family as well as a phase, throughout the course of which all family members were engaged extensively. In relation to the choosing of a destination, Grith and Julia engaged in the following conversation:

*J: We talked a lot, because me and dad wanted to go to Portugal, but ... And Chris wanted that too. But my mom wanted to go to ...*

*G: Actually, I didn't want to go to Turkey. What was the place we talked about?*

*J: You would have liked to go to Spain or something. And then we agreed on Turkey*

*G: Yes. No, I think it was when dad called the travel agencies to hear about prices and stuff and what they would recommend to novice travelers with children. And all of them recommended Turkey. Because it was nice for children ... and an accessible country. That was why we went to Turkey*

As exemplified by this fragment of the conversation, all members of this nuclear family were highly involved in the initial phases of the decision-making process (i.e. information search, evaluation of alternatives, and choice of a specific packaged tour).

As mentioned previously, the informants elaborated extensively on the experiences the family had during their holiday in Turkey. In accordance with Apter's (1982) theory of psychological reversals, lived experiences of the vacations mentioned during the interview were both experiences relating to relaxation and experiences relating to excitement-seeking. However, especially the informants talked about excitement-seeking and/or 'new' experiences in relation to the packaged tour whereas 'past' vacations related more to relaxation and cosiness. Furthermore, especially the experience of flying seemed to be a critical part of informants' holiday memories relating to the packaged tour. Talking about vacation experiences relating to this tour, Grith made the following comments:

*G: It has to do with getting away and seeing something as a family. I also thought, we talked a lot about that before going, that it was a bloody ... an incredibly nice experience for a family that it is the first time flying for everyone. I mean, if I had tried to fly before, then I had tried it. But none of us had done it before. Try to imagine to have that experience – as a family – to go flying for the first time. That is really nice!*

...

*G: So we have talked a lot about the fact that that was quite unique, really. An experience to us as a family*

The quote relating to the experience of flying reflects the way that the informants talked about their first packaged tour very accurately. Furthermore, apart from three experiences that individual family members had on their own during the vacation (i.e. Grith's having a massage, Peter going for a walk, and Peter's being at a barber shop), the informants emphasized experiences that were (1) truly new to *all* family members and (2) shared by *all* family members. Thus, especially it seems that the family had a 'nice vacation' because it offered them the opportunity to share truly new experiences.

In conclusion, this family has recently changed their vacation pattern quite dramatically. Furthermore, the family is extremely positive towards the new type of vacation that they have now added to their travel career. However, this does not mean that they think less of the type of vacation they engaged in previously. On the contrary, as Julia's comments indicated, the family is very conscious of the fact that vacations of the past (i.e. stays at caravan sites close to home) and the 'new' vacation form (i.e. the packaged holiday) offer different opportunities for experiences. Hence, the family perceives the packaged holiday as an opportunity for them to have 'new' experiences as a family and especially, they focus on experiences in the form of thrill and excitement-seeking when they talk about this vacation form. However, in relation to the 'vacations of the past', especially the family emphasizes experiences in the form of relaxation and activities for children (including other children as playmates). Hence, on the basis of this interview the answer to the question: 'What is a nice vacation?' would be that, in the context of

Grith's, Julia's, and Chris' everyday lives, sometimes a nice vacation is (1) relaxation/doing nothing at a Danish caravan site and, at other times, it is (2) to have a truly new experience with your children.

#### 4.2. MY PAST VACATIONS, YOUR PAST VACATIONS, OUR VACATIONS, AND OUR VACATIONS TO COME

The second interview concerns 34 years old Ben and Mary, who is 33. Ben and Mary met each other one-and-a-half years ago. When they met, they lived in different cities, but soon after Mary moved in with Ben in his terrace house. In opposition to the first interview, Mary and Ben have more individual travel experiences than they have shared travel experiences and vacation memories. Furthermore, Mary and Ben have travelled quite a lot in the past as both Mary's and Ben's childhoods are characterised by both of them having parents, who gave holidays with their children away from home high priorities. Drawing on all of their vacations (from their childhood memories of vacations to the present vacations), Mary and Ben engaged in the following conversation:

*M: When we were kids [her and her sister], our family had a caravan. So back then we always went caravanning ....*

*B: Yes, I also went on vacation with my parents, when I was a kid. They [his parents] were very much into packaged tours, so I went with them, I went several times*

*I: So you've been to Gran Canaria or?*

*B: Yes, we have been to Crete and Rhodes and Koz and ...*

*M: The Archipelago*

*B: Yes, I have been there more than once*

*M: We have been to Germany and Sweden on camping, where you could drive ...*

*B: Yes, we also went camping*

*M: I didn't know your parents had a caravan?*

*B: Yes, they had, they had one for some time, my parents. And my grand parents also had a caravan, they stayed at the same caravan site, so we went there sometimes*

*M: But otherwise [apart from vacations with her parents], I have only been on vacation with woman friends*

*B: Yes, and then we have stayed in a holiday cottage ...*

*M: Yes, a holiday cottage owned by close relatives*

As suggested by the fragment of the interview reproduced above, both Ben's and Mary's lives are characterised by their going away on vacation. It is rather interesting that both Ben and Mary find that the fact that their parents took them different places when they were children has had a profound effect on their present (and future) travel motivations. For example, Mary offered the following line of reasoning:

*M: But I think it is different for our generation. Because, I mean, both of us used to travel a lot when we were kids, with our parents' generation. Because if you ask my grand dad, then he hasn't travelled a lot. Because you didn't do that back then ... When they were kids [parents] they didn't go anywhere. That is probably why that generation now, as retirement pensioners or early retirement pensioners, travels a lot. Because they have some catching up to do. It is not for certain that we will travel so much when we grow older, because, it's like, we travelled a lot when we were kids and when we were young. Because we have tried that. So at present it is not as much about 'uhh, now we need to go, because I've never seen that and I've never met those people'. Now it is more like 'well, it could be nice'. It is more about peace of mind, actually. To go where you can be at rest, because there are so many things back home, so you can't be at rest in the same way, I think.*

As suggested by this fragment of the interview, Ben and Mary feel that their travel motivations have changed during their lives. Furthermore, a large portion of the interview is comprised of explications and discussions relating to the variety of vacations that Ben and Mary had before they met as well as motivations and experiences characterising these vacations.

At present, Ben and Mary have not done much travelling together. Thus, their joint travel career is only comprised of stays at a holiday cottage at a Danish island characterised by beautiful scenery and stays with family in other parts of Denmark. When prompted as to why they haven't felt a need to go more away on vacations during their time together, they mentioned some different reasons. First, they mentioned the following reasons: (1) That you can't always afford it (especially so as it costs to move in together); (2) that they have had to spend their time and money on other matters (e.g. painting the house); (3) that they have difficulties having their holidays at the same time; and (4) that they had promised their families to spend part of the holidays with them. However, apart from these reasons they also argued that the need to go on vacation has not been dominant. For example, Mary argued that:

*M: Because we haven't been together for long, it is nice just to be together – no matter where we are ... Just being together at home is also nice*

Thus, at this point in Ben's and Mary's lives it seems that simply being together is more important than sharing new experiences. This characteristic of their joint life is also dominant in relation to the vacations that they have actually had together. Thus, when talking about the joint vacations they have had at the summer cottage they said that:

*B: Again, when it comes to the scenic aspect, it is there at [the Island], it really is. The scenery is there, you just want to take a walk down to the Ocean, it's really ... It is not as if you would take a 10 kilometre walk at home. There you just go for a walk*



*M: And then you are all by yourselves. I mean, some of the times we've been there, we have had absolute tranquillity*

*B: That is simply smashing*

...

*M: So when we are at the holiday cottage, then we are all by ourselves*

*B: Yes, that's so nice*

*M: Yes it is*

*B: It's just slowing down*

*M: It gives peace*

*B: Yes it does*

Ben and Mary seem to enjoy their stays at a holiday cottage in Denmark a lot. However, whereas they emphasise experiencing in relation to their vacations of the past, their stays at the holiday cottage are treasured because these stays offer them the opportunity to be 'all by themselves'. Although Ben and Mary treasure these stays, simultaneously, they think that they will expand the portfolio of vacations they take together sometime in the future. Thus, the following conversation focused on Ben's and Mary's aspirations as to future vacations.

*I: The vacations the two of you have had in the past, they are rather different?*

*M: Yes*

*B: Yes, but they are*

*I: So what if you are to take a vacation together?*

*M: I would like to go to the Archipelago, because I have never been there*

*B: I would also like to go there again, because it is getting a long time since I were there last*

*M: Well, all the vacations I have had – apart from the ones in my childhood – they were school trips or with woman friends, and then it has been in cities. We've been to Berlin, to Paris, to Prague, I've been to London (and I have done a bit of travelling in England, but not much)*

*I: So you have never had a romantic vacation?*

*M: No, I haven't. I have never been on vacation with a boyfriend. Actually, I never have. And I have never – apart from the one packaged tour [a sun & sand tour she took with a woman friend when she was 19], I have never been on a vacation at the countryside. I have only been on vacations in cities, so I would very much like that [...] I would very much like that. So if he would like to go the Archipelago, then I would like that too*

In conclusion, the interview with Ben and Mary generates an interesting picture of how vacations of the past influence present (and future) vacations. Firstly, the interview suggests that going away on vacation during childhood affects travel careers, i.e. Ben and Mary find that they are less motivated to 'go new places' and 'meet new people' because they have traveled a lot previously (and especially during childhood). Secondly, Mary argues that the type of vacations

that she has had during her adult life (i.e. in cities and with woman friends) does not fit her present life (i.e. being in a permanent relationship). Thus, she would much rather 'tap into' the types of vacations that Ben has had in the past than she would have vacations resembling the ones she has had in the past. Finally, Ben and Mary agree that prevalence of different travel motivations changes during life. Thus, whereas 'going places' and 'seeing things' mattered a great deal to them previously, at present they emphasize vacations that provide 'peace of mind', or, to adopt the words of Ben and Mary:

*B: Yes, but I think it does [the concept of a nice vacation changing over the course of one's life].*

*Definitively, it does. It does. I think it does*

*M: It is also, one's haste of mind changes. And then, of course, vacation is when ...*

*B: Absolutely, when you are young ...*

*M: Vacation, that is the time you spend doing all the things that you don't get around to doing during the rest of the year. And when you are young, you party on as you didn't get around to the remaining part of the year. And when you are our age, then it is relaxation [...] I would say that to me it is about peace of mind*

*B: Yes ... Yes, total relaxation **and** seeing something new*

*M: Experiencing, but not like wild action*

Hence, to Ben and Mary, at present, a nice vacation relates both to having experiences and achieving peace of mind, or, to close this section in their own words:

*I: So what is a nice vacation?*

*M: Well, at this point in my life, previously it was all about experiences, but I think, today it is as much about peace of mind*

*B: Yes*

*M: So that is why, now, I would much rather have nature experiences than people. Because if you go out where there are lots of people around you all the time and you have to relate to people all the time, then I prefer to stay at the holiday cottage and look at the ocean*

*B: That is back to it; the younger you are, I mean, then it is more you want*

#### 4.3. KEEPING IT SIMPLE, FLEXIBLE, AND CHEAP

This interview was done with 54 years-old June and 57 years-old Pete, who are empty nesters. Several years have passed since their daughter (27) and their son (30) moved out. In response to the opening question of this interview (i.e. 'have you traveled much?'), with a laugh, June said:

*J: Well, we've been married for 30 years. So we've been on vacation 30 times*

For 30 years, every summer Pete and June have gone different places for one or two weeks during their three weeks of summer holiday. When asked why it is important to leave home during the summer holiday, June and Pete explained as follows:

*J: If you stay at home, then your routines are the same as when you work. It's the same thing. You don't experience anything? [...] I think we would find it boring to stay at home for three weeks, during which we didn't have to do anything*

*P: Yes, but it is the experience*

Despite the importance Pete and June ascribe to 'getting away from home', they have not done much travelling off season, nor have they had vacations that lasted longer than 16 days (and most vacations lasted a week or two). Thus, although Pete and June value the opportunity to leave home during the summer holidays, simultaneously they feel a need to get back home again when a week or two have gone by. In relation to this duality of needs, June and Pete said the following:

*J: You become full [saturated] of all the experiences you have. You need to get home and relax and become your old self and ... I mean, lots of the times we have been on vacation, we have had lots of impressions, lots of experiences, and then there is a point in time, when you think; 'no, I don't want to do this any more'. Now you just want to get back home again*

*P: I mean, it is also, it is if, how shall I put this, if you have too many experiences, too many impressions, then it is like you are full*

One reason why Pete and June relate vacations to 'fullness' (saturation), experiences, and a longing to go home, could be that variety characterises their travel career. In fact, deliberately June and Pete never go on vacations that are 'similar' for two years in a row. Sometimes, they go to other regions of Denmark during the holidays, but apart from that they have also been to England a couple of times, and to Wales, Sweden, Poland, Slovenia, Germany, Norway, and Cypress. Furthermore, they have tried a host of different types of accommodations, e.g. hotels, bed and breakfasts, holiday houses, cabins, tents, caravans, hostels, and resorts. The fact that Pete and June have no 'favourite' type of vacation is highlighted by the following fragment of the interview:

*J: We take off from home, and then we say, 'we want to have a nice vacation' and we build a positive attitude towards it. We are the only ones, who can make it a nice vacation*

*P: It is not as if we say, 'we want to go there'. So it doesn't matter, if you are well prepared it can never go utterly wrong*

*J: Well, we are well prepared when we take off. I mean, often we have thermo boxes in the car and boxes to keep meat and so cool. We don't starve. We are, not at all, afraid to make a stop at a lay-by/picnic area, where there is nothing and put up the tent. Especially Pete is like that. There doesn't even need to be a restroom [toilet] [laughs]*

Although Pete and June have had many different types of vacations, 'keeping it simple' seems to be a common denominator. Apart from the wish to 'keep it simple', flexibility also characterises Pete's and June's vacations. One reason why flexibility is an issue for Pete and June is that they do not plan their vacations in detail, nor do they start planning the upcoming vacation months in advance. The following fragments of the interview focuses on this issue:

*J: We are not very good at planning vacations ... It is, like impulsive, most of the time*

*I: Ought one to plan?*

*J: Sometimes, around now [month of March], we start talking, around the kitchen table, about 'what are we going to do during the summer vacation?' At that time we start talking about it. But when the summer vacation starts, then we haven't gotten around to planning anything. Then we look out the window, what's the weather like?', 'should we stay in Denmark or not?'*

[telling about a packaged tour they took to Slovenia]

*J: On Thursday, we looked into whether we could go on vacation. And that was possible if we could take off on Saturday morning, 'yes, but that's ok, we could do that'. It was only the two of us, so we could easily do that*

[talking about a vacation they had in Denmark]

*J: In fact, the destination was xxx [a specific destination in another region of Denmark]. We had actually planned to go to xxx, but we wouldn't do it non-stop. We would take it slowly and laid-back on our way there, and put up our small tent. But then one of my colleagues, his wife died. We figured that out, when we drove out the carport, then we could see that the flag was flown at half mast. Then we couldn't get to xxx. Then we went away for a couple of days instead [after the funeral]*

[talking about a packaged tour to Cypress]

*J: As a morning gift for our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding day, we gave Pete a trip to Cypress. A specified trip, it could not be changed. And it had to be used before a year had passed. We couldn't get that planned at all. So we had to go to xxx [the travel agency], and then we had it changed to last for three years. Then, I think, when three years had passed, then we went*

...

*J: I don't think we've ever ... If we take a packaged tour one year, then we are not going to do that next year. Then we've tried that, then we want to try something else. I mean, last year when we went away just with the small tent, we didn't want to do anything special. Because, next time, we are going to China for*

*two weeks [to stay with relatives working and living there]. We should probably have gone there last year, but we didn't get around to planning it properly. But now we are planning to go there in the fall*

*...*

*P: We went on one of these, what's it called – ... – the ferry and bed & breakfast accommodation. We bought a package*

*I: Staying one night at each place?*

*J: No, you decide that yourselves. I think we bought 4 nights and then you could buy more nights if you wanted to*

*P: You pick a date where you think you would like to go home. You get a package, right? Then you can choose between a variety of places ... But if you want to stay longer, then you just pay for that. We have usually extended our stay*

*I: How did you decide where to go next?*

*P: Well, we looked at the map. Looked at the different areas. Then we asked at the bed & breakfast, then we asked the hosts: 'What kind of attractions can we see there?' What would they recommend? What did they think could be nice? And what we would like to do, perhaps drive there and in that way we found out what we wanted to do next*

As indicated by the fragments reproduced above, Pete and June have a long (30 years long) history of rather impulsive vacations. For example, they have a history of 'not getting around' to planning their vacations in advance. Furthermore, they keep the vacations flexible, not only till the last moment before going, but also during the vacation.

In opposition to the interviews accounted for in the previous sections, Pete's and June's travel career does not seem to be comprised of distinctive phases. However, Pete and June did acknowledge that their travel motivations were somewhat different during the years, when they had small children:

*I: Did you have different vacations when you had small children?*

*P: Yes, yes, it was more about beaches. Caravan sites, where there were other kids to play with. When the kids have a nice time, then the parents have a nice time*

*I: So sometimes it was more about the kids?*

*J: Yes*

*P: Yes, it was on the children's terms. It doesn't work with two screaming children, then you don't get much out of it*

Apart from the characteristics of Pete's and June's vacations accounted for above, two additional, and focal, characteristics emerged during the interview. The first concerns other people. With great joy, Pete and June talked about different experiences they have had during 30 years of shared vacations. Most of their dearest vacation memories relate to other people –

both guides, others tourists, and encounters with locals. For example, some of their dearest memories relate to the times, when they were invited into the homes of locals. Although it would be far to lengthy to tap into all of these memories, June offered the following comment that seems to cover all of these memories nicely:

*J: I think, when we are on vacation, then we enjoy meeting other people*

The last, but certainly not least, characteristic of Pete's and June's vacations relates to the costs of these vacations. Thus, numerous times during the interview Pete and June mentioned cheapness as something positive about their vacations, or, to lent the words that June said, when she was asked whether she thought that the interview covered their travel career sufficiently:

*J: Throughout 30 years, yes. I think we started going on vacation together in the seventies. But mostly it has been about 'rough' vacations, i.e. going camping, going caravanning, cycling tours. We don't want to spend our money on things like that [going on vacation]. We like to go on vacation, but we don't want to spend a lot of money doing it*

In conclusion, to Pete and June, especially the concept of a nice vacation seems to relate to simplicity, cheapness, flexibility, and lack of preplanning. Thus, to Pete and June, the recipe for a nice vacation could be summarised as 'keeping it simple, flexible, and cheap'.

#### 4.4. FEELING BETTER, GETTING CLOSER

The interview accounted for in this section was done with 40 years old Henry. Together with his 41 years old wife Ann and their two sons (5 years-old Will and 7 years-old Tom), these four people comprise a nuclear family. Henry has a rather demanding job and works long hours. In opposition to Grith, who argued that visiting friends or family in other parts of Denmark does not qualify as vacation, Henry defines vacation very broadly (as indicated by the following fragment of the interview):

*H: But it is also, to me, vacations is a broad topic, because it covers everything from traveling around the world on a motorcycle [something Henry has actually done], but it is also vacation to say, 'let's go and experience something together, that we haven't tried before'*

*H: At one point in time [after he met his wife, but before they had children] we had a book, 'tours in Denmark'. At that point, my wife and I, every weekend we wanted to experience something. I mean, unless we had to go to a party or something, we wanted to experience something new. So we took these tours in Denmark, 'which one haven't we done before', 'that one', then we go there. That was mostly about*

*experiencing nature, to see something, to experience something. That's also a kind of vacation, although you wouldn't label it vacation. I think it is somehow the same need that is fulfilled.*

*I: And that need would be?*

*H: But, to get away from everyday life. To, somewhere, do the opposite of you would normally do. I mean, all the things, that if you didn't have to do this and that and this, the things you would feel like doing then...*

As indicated by Henry's comments reproduced above, to him the concept of vacation covers a wide variety of activities and it also covers day trips to different attractions or scenic landscapes. Especially, Henry draws on the broad definition of vacations in relation to activities, daytrips, and holidays that he and/or his wife do/take with the children. For example, when talking about vacations with children, apart from 'traditional' holidays, Henry drew on the following example:

*H: But apart from that, one could say that, because there are things that are not holidays, but where you take off anyway. It's a trip like if you say 'let's go to [a specific amusement park], 'let's go to [a specific zoo], then we do that. I think it has mostly to do with the weekends, during which you feel a need to do something for the kids ... to do something with them on their terms*

Henry's wish to spend quality time with his children during weekends and holidays resembles his own childhood memories of weekends and holidays with his parents a lot. Thus, in relation to his childhood, Henry and I engaged in the following dialogue:

*H: I think we need to go all the way back to my childhood; that had much to do with holiday houses. We mostly went to a holiday house during the holidays. Then, when we got a bit older – I think from around we were 10-12 years old till we were 16-17 years old, then it was about packing the car and heading off south, to Italy and Spain and ...*

*I: But taking the car?*

*H: Yes, and with a tent and stuff like that. And then spiced up with some packaged tours. I was in Tunis when I was 6 years old, and well, let's see, I've been on 3 or 4 packaged tours with my parents before I moved out from home*

*I: Was it important for them to take you on vacation?*

*H: Yes*

*I: So that was something they just did?*

*H: Yes, but I think it had to do with them working a lot. So, like the holiday house, if there was a weekend 'then we go there, then we don't work'*

One key characteristic that emerged during this interview was that, relating both to the past and the present, Henry's travel career is comprised of a broad portfolio of different types of holidays. Thus, apart from the traveling he did with his parents during his childhood, his travel career also encompasses: (1) individual traveling during his single life (e.g. spending a month at a Greek

island – on and off with a friend who worked at a hotel on the island, some skiing holidays, and a motorcycle tour starting in New Delphi and ending in Australia, including some trekking in Nepal), (2) traveling with his wife before they had kids (e.g. trips to Gambia and Thailand together with his parents and sibling, a motorcycling tour in Wales, and a bed and breakfast trip in Denmark), (3) spending the holidays or extended weekends with the children (and sometimes other relatives) – both him and his wife or only one of them (e.g. taking the kids to visit a close relative in Norway, to his family-in-laws' holiday house at [a specific island], taking the kids to children's attractions in Sweden, going to an amusement park in Germany without his wife, and canoing in Denmark without his wife) and (4) trips with his wife without the children (e.g. going Christmas shopping in London and driving around in Greece). Apart from the broad range of holidays included in his travel career, especially his travel career is interesting due to the fact that the present travel career is not solely comprised of vacations taken with the entire nuclear family. Thus, to Henry it is a fairly natural thing to split up during the holidays and to go on holidays that not all members of the family take part in. For example, in relation to the trips he has taken with his wife without bringing the children along, Henry said that:

*H: Well, we do that that, sometimes, we travel plainly ego, without the kids. And the first time was something of a challenge, because Tom was only one year old. We went to London to do some Christmas shopping... But it turned out that we could do that. So we went to Greece a couple of times too, not on a packaged tour, but places that are not really 'tourist'.*

Furthermore, discussing the reasons why Henry treasures the holidays he and his wife have had without the children, the following conversation took place:

*H: Yes, but you ... it is all about rediscovering each other, as a couple, you might say. And to have the freedom to be yourselves*

*I: And to avoid everyday routines?*

*H: Yes, and to enjoy the freedom of having no obligations and that you don't need to nurture and ...*

The vacations that Henry and his wife have had without the children are different from the ones that they have had with the children. Primarily, Henry ascribes these differences to the fact that the children have been too young to take on some of the vacations that he and his wife appreciate. However, it seems that in future there might be a stronger overlap between the kinds of vacations that suit the different members of the family (as indicated by the following fragment of the interview, which relates to the next vacation the family is taking):

*I: Do you think it is going to change in future?*



*H: Yes it will. Because we've talked about it that now we think the kids are old enough for us to travel, how shall I put it, without spending all nights in the same place. I mean, we can go with the drift. And I know from back when I did the tour on the motorcycle, you can always find a place to spend the night. And it gives you tons of freedom if you think that way and allow for that ... And now we are planning to travel with the kids in that manner. So that is something entirely different ...*

As indicated by the fragments of the interview reproduced above, Henry relates different types of motivations and needs to the different types of vacations that constitute his travel career. For example, mostly he relates holidays with the children to a wish to do things with the children, on their terms, and a desire to spend quality time with them. Furthermore, the vacations incorporating his (or his wife's) families relate to a need to be with your family and thus, these vacations offer him (and/or his wife) the opportunity to spend time with their parents and/or siblings. As for the individual traveling he did in the past, motivations relate mostly to self-realization. Finally, the vacations he and his wife have had (without the children) relate mostly to a longing to 'rediscover each other as a couple'. Thus, the reason why Henry's travel career is comprised of a rather diversified set of holidays could be Henry's awareness of different types of holidays' ability to fulfill different needs. However, across the entire spectrum of vacations, Henry explicates an aversion to mass tourism and 'the tourist trap'. The following fragments of the interview highlight Henry's attitude towards these issues.

[talking about a tour to resort in Gambia with his parents, siblings, and wife]

*H: But it was like, that you were caught in a trap, a tourist trap. Inside the trap it was actually okay, it was like paradise-like, but as soon as you went outside the gates, then they stood there; 'can I help you?', 'do you need ...', 'do you want ...'. And then there was nothing to see, apart from poor villages ... nothing to experience. But it is, I mean, if you can't have a fairly normal relation to the people, who live in the country, then it becomes strained ... it was a real packaged tour, a tourist trap, at that point I decided; 'never a packaged tour again'. That's for sure*

[talking more in general terms]

*H: But to me and Ann, the worst thing would be ... to all pour out the same tourist bus and to all get back into the bus and move on. We saw that, and I saw that numerous times when biking in Australia. Especially in Australia we saw those busses with Japanese tourists. It is totally stupid to make a stop with a bus and then go outside and take a picture and then everyone is getting into the bus again and so forth*

*H: But we have always been very conscious about our wanting to go out and have experiences. And then there is lots of freedom in getting away from the tourist buzz, the season. The most horrible thing is Legoland when it is crowded with people, there is nothing worse than that*

Due to this aversion to mass tourism and 'the tourist trap', Henry and his wife do what they can to avoid mass-tourism destinations and crowded places during their vacations. At the same time, they are extremely aware of the fact that one has to be flexible and self-going if one wishes to avoid these things. Hence, being flexible and self-going during one's vacation are competencies held, and valued, by Henry. Henry argued that these competencies are necessary in order to have a 'nice' vacation because:

*H: [The nice thing] is that you are in for surprises. I think that is the thrill of it. It is like driving down a path you have never taken before ...*

*I: And away from the tourist traps?*

*H: Yes. Yes, because in the tourist traps, you'll have no surprises. Not even on a day-tour there will be anything that's not in the script*

Henry and Ann thus seem to appreciate individual traveling because it offers more opportunities for them to have experiences. However, when asked whether it is important for them to experience authenticity and to meet the locals, Henry responded that:

*H: No, it's not because we mingle and so, not in that manner. I think it's more that it is not a tourist trap. Like in the evenings, when you go out for dinner, well, you might sit amongst the locals. Or at least, the place [restaurant etc] you're at hasn't marketed itself as directed at tourists*

In the context of Henry's life, many different types of vacations coexist. Furthermore, to Henry the different types of vacations are all part of his life because they fulfill different needs. However, across all of them, the concept of a 'nice vacation' is quite similar as Henry explicates the substance of a nice vacation as follows:

*H: We want to feel good when we get back home. We have to have come closer to one another. You have to feel better about yourself than before you left. Yes!*

To close this section of the paper, to Henry the concept of a nice vacation does not relate to the specific kind of holiday that he takes. On the contrary, it seems that a host of different types of vacations may qualify as 'a nice vacation' to Henry. Thus, to Henry, foremost, the concept of a nice vacation has to do with whether his holidays, in retrospective, made a difference in the context of his everyday life, i.e. feeling better with one self and getting closer with your family.

#### 4.5. THE ART OF REACHING COMPROMISES

This interview was done with Owen and Karen (both 34 years old). Together with their 5 years old daughter Beth and their 3 years old son John, they comprise a nuclear family. Owen is a

skilled worker whereas Karen has a Master of Science degree and works with IT in a large corporation. Apart from their day-time jobs, they have a small farm and grow organic crops. The work with the organic crops takes a lot of time, especially during the summer holiday season. The work with the crops and the ways in which this work affects the family's opportunities to go on vacation was a topic that came up numerous times during the interview. For example, a couple of months ago the family had a chance to go on a skiing holiday with some relatives (all paid for). However, they decided not to go on that trip on the basis of the following arguments:

*I: So you had the chance to go and chose not to go?*

*O: Yes, but not only because of [children being too young to appreciate it]. It had as much to do with the fact that now we have decided to [grow these crops], and then you have to save up holidays, you know?*

Thus, at one level, the fact that they grow organic foods reduces the time that the family can set aside for going on holiday. However, at another level the work with the organic crops affects travel motivations in the way that is accounted for in the section of the interview reproduced below:

*O: Well, when we went away on holiday last year, when we went away, although we were done with the crops there were tons of things that I could have done. Things that come when the season is over. But then you had to say, 'well, that can wait', because now you feel a need to get away and to be free, right? Not to be woken by someone, who stood outside the door and couldn't figure out why they couldn't buy [the organic crop]. I mean, to get away and be yourself and be with the children ... [...] To get away from it all. Karen usually says that she gets the 'countryside tantrums'... Usually it doesn't bother me, I like to stay at home and that, but last summer I could feel that I needed to get away from home as well*

In so far Karen's and Owen's holiday memories dating back to their childhoods are concerned, they engaged in the following dialogue:

*I: Did your parents do much traveling with you when you were kids?*

*K: No*

*O: No*

*K: But I think we went on vacation for one week once every second year or something like that. In Denmark. No, in Scandinavia. A couple of times we went to Norway and Sweden and when we got older, we went on a cruise to Poland. But as a kid, I mostly remember it as holidays in Denmark and holidays in Scandinavia. With the car and caravanning*

*O: You also went to the North Cape?*

*K: Yes, yes, but that was also caravanning*

*O: Yes, but wasn't that for a longer duration? Two or three weeks?*

*K: Yes, that's right. That's the longest vacation we ever took*

*O: Well, with my parents it's always been a caravan site in Denmark, if we went away. I have never traveled with my parents to other countries. Perhaps we drove to Germany. [His sister] once worked in Germany and we went down there and visited her ...*

Apart from childhood holidays, Karen had some additional holidays away from home before she met Owen. The first time she traveled without her parents, she went to Switzerland and worked there for a month. Apart from that, she had two different types of vacations. First, she has been to larger cities (e.g. London and Paris) with female friends while she was a student. Secondly, she said that:

*K: I didn't do much traveling while I was a student. But I still got invited to go on vacation with my parents during the summer holidays - also after I moved out from home - and I made good use of that offer*

As a result, to Karen holidays away from home have been much about being with her family (especially her parents and her siblings). Owen, on the other hand, has a travel career that primarily includes individual traveling during the years before he met Karen. For example, he had a couple of trips that lasted a month and one that lasted a year. Furthermore, during these trips he was not 'only' a tourist, but instead, he also worked for, and lived with, the locals. Drawing on the experiences that he had during these trips, Owen commented that:

*O: Well, you know, somehow I think that I have sowed my wild oats in regard to traveling, you know? Obviously, back then when I came back from Australia, after a while, the world really stood still compared to that year when I traipsed around the world. And at that point in time, I was eager to leave again. But after a month, or after two months, then I was like settling down again and started, somehow, to reestablish again – in a new way [...] I don't have that eagerness to go away anymore*

Drawing on the parts of their travel career, that characterize the time before Karen and Owen became an item, it seems reasonable to argue that they had very different travel patterns before they met. Thus, to Owen traveling had much to do with individual traveling (alone or with male friends), sometimes to far away destinations. On the other hand, to Karen traveling mostly had to do with stays at 'less exotic' places with her relatives. After they met, they have had three different kinds of vacations. First, they have been to Spain for a couple of times (visiting Owen's sister, who lives there). Secondly, they have had a series of extended weekends with friends (e.g. going fishing). Finally, they have spent some vacations with Karen's family (i.e. vacations resembling the vacations Karen had with her family before she met Owen).

In the parts of the interview that relate to Karen's and Owen's shared vacations – and especially the trips to Spain - authenticity seems to matter a great deal. Furthermore, authenticity was also a key topic in the parts of the interview that relate to Owen's individual traveling in the past.

Thus, across these different holidays, authenticity and 'not being a tourist' seemed very important to these two informants. As the following fragments of the interview indicate, 'getting behind the scene' thus seems to characterize these trips.

[speaking about the trips to Spain]

*O: It was like a combination, because then we got to visit her [his sister] ... and when you are visiting, then obviously, then you also go out as a tourist and go to the attractions that are within a day's journey.*

*I: Did you go on your own or did your sister go with you?*

*K: She was with us ...*

*I: Was it cool to have her with you?*

*O: Yes. Yes*

*K: Yes it was. We went to [listing of a series of attractions that they visited] and we went to visit her in-laws and ... that was great fun to visit a Spanish home*

[speaking about the year Owen spent in Australia]

*O: Well, I had the same experience when we were in Australia, because we worked on a farm, worked for board and lodging, more or less, so we saw some other things. You know? Because you saw, you went to the pub with the locals, went kangaroo hunting with them, and on some casual pleasure flight, because someone had a cousin and uncle, who had a plane. You don't experience stuff like that when you are a tourist, do you? Well, you might, if you pay 200 dollars, then you can get a pleasure flight or go and see whales or something. But it [the individual traveling] is much more spontaneous, it's another way to experience a country. And it's the same when we go to Spain. It's different when you are with a local*

As indicated above, authenticity seems to matter a great deal in relation to the traveling that Owen and Karen did before they had children. However, in so far holidays with Karen's relatives are concerned authenticity was not a topic that emerged during the interview. On the contrary, when speaking about holidays with family (and especially with their children), Karen and Owen drew on similarities between these holidays and Friday evenings. Thus, to them the key similarity between these vacations and Friday evenings is as follows:

[this fragment followed after a talk that Karen and Owen initiated about Friday evenings]

*I: But Friday evenings – do they resemble holidays?*

*K: Yes*

*O: Yes, but it's sort of the same. Because you have made this effort, so now you need to put your feet up. Nothing you need to do; the old grind with getting dinner done, make the lunch packs, get the kids in their pyjamas and with much ado get them to bed at 8 o'clock. Somehow you're freed from that ... So it's like you have those Fridays and Saturdays to make the kids feel that you have no obligations*

Hence, as Henry, Karen and Owen argue that there exist no clear-cut boundaries that set vacations aside from other types of recreational time. Across all of the interviews accounted for previously, a common denominator is that it is important to leave home and go on vacation for two main reasons. First, it is important to leave home in order to have new experiences and to avoid boredom. Secondly, it is important to go away on vacation in order to escape routines, rites, and things that need to be done. However, at the end of the interview, when Owen and Karen were asked the question 'so, what is a nice vacation?', a somewhat different pattern emerged:

*K: A nice vacation? There are two types of nice vacations. The first one is when you leave home and are in a new situation. You are not in a holiday house that you know well. You are not in a place that is well known. You are in a new place with new impressions. You can be with your close family or friends or acquaintances and so forth, it really doesn't matter. But you are in a place where the impressions you get are new and fresh. And you experience something. A new place anyway. Because you can be at a holiday house in xxx and have a barbeque and you could have done that at home, but the fact that you are at a new place, that's what makes it a holiday [break inserted by the researcher]*

*K: And then there is, a nice vacation, that's also to be at home without having planned anything. It is to get up in the morning and have your breakfast and have a cosy time and say, 'what do I want to do today', and then take it from there. You might have some sort of rough idea about what you would like to achieve during these 14 days. But it is not as if you have made a deal with yourself, it's more like 'if I feel like it, then I might paint those windows'. If I don't get around to it then I can do it on the weekends after I have had my vacation. And well, then you just slouch about and relax and you might end up clearing up some old stuff from high school. All quiet and easy and after those 14 days you spend one day feeling guilty because you have done nothing. I think that is a nice vacation as well. I like that, I like to ... I really don't like that thing about having to hurry during the holidays, I can get fed up with that. And if you go on vacation, then you have to have experiences, because once you have paid for it and ... [...] So that's one type of vacation that I like; to get new experiences, but I also really like to slouch about at home*

As the section above indicates, Karen is very conscious about the fact that the concept of a nice vacation has two different meanings to her. Thus, in opposition to some of the other informants, Karen argues that, sometimes, she enjoys having no obligations – while staying at home - during her vacation. However, as the following fragment shows, her husband does not, entirely, share the enjoyment of 'slouching about'. Thus, in response to Karen's comments reproduced above, Owen made the following comments:

*O: But I think that is probably when the sparks flow. Because at home, let's say we spend 14 days of holiday at home, then I want a list of this and that and this, that I want to do. And somehow I become a slave to that list [...] It can drive me nuts if the kids 'climb the curtains' while she is sitting in the sofa reading a book and messing about with a snack. And nothing has been done, perhaps she is still in her*

*pyjamas. Somehow – I am not saying that you shouldn't do that – but when it is the third or fourth day in a row, then it really starts to ... Or if I feel like, but why can't she see that it could be so cool to get this thing done. And then she is just reading a book. What a trashy book, I who don't like to read much, I can't see why that's so cool [smiling]*

Drawing on the fragments reproduced above – as well as on differences in Karen's and Owen's past travel careers – Karen and Owen do not fully agree on what constitutes a nice vacation. Furthermore, they seem to differ in the importance they ascribe to going away from home during the holidays. During the interview, several times Karen and Owen referred to these differences and especially, they related to them by means of talking about 'the art of compromises'. The following fragment relates to this topic.

*K: I think it has to do with the fact that we don't go on vacation that we don't entirely agree on how to have a vacation*

Thus, to Karen and Owen, a major reason why they do not go on vacation much at present is that they have different opinions about what exactly a 'nice vacation' is. Acknowledging and addressing this difference in opinions, Karen and Owen talked a lot about the 'art of compromises'. Thus, when directly prompted as to what constitutes a nice vacation, Owen argued as follows:

*O: I mean, there has to be, you have to have something for the kids, right? And there has to be something for me and there has to be something for Karen. I mean, you have to reach a compromise.*

In conclusion, to Karen and Owen it is not a straight-forward matter to go on vacation. Apart from the fact that vacations have to compete for their scarce spare time with the work with the organic crops, they also struggle with the fact that they do not agree on exactly what a 'nice vacation' is. Thus, to them especially 'having a nice vacation' relates to the fact that they are at a point in their lives where they are trying to find a way to spend their leisure time that fulfils the needs of the entire family (Owen, Karen, and their children). Thus, to Karen and Owen 'a nice vacation' is problematic in the contexts of their contemporary lives. Hence, although they have had 'nice vacations' in the past it seems that none of the different types of vacations they have had before fit their lives at present and, as a result hereof, they spend time and resources trying to figure out how they will spend their leisure time in future (and there is no guarantee that this will include 'nice vacations').

#### 4.6. VANISHED VACATIONS

Two things puzzled me after completing the first five interviews. The first thing was that, during the interviews, informants, whom I knew rather well (appendix 1), did not mention some of the vacations that I – beforehand – knew that they had had in the past. Furthermore, if I introduced these vacations during the interviews, most of the times the response was something like: ‘Oh, yes. I forgot about that one. But that was a nice vacation’. In comparison with our traditional conception that vacations are so important that they constitute a key element of people’s lives, I was rather surprised that, somehow, some vacations seem to vanish from informants’ memory – although they do reappear when informants are subject to ‘aided recall’. The second puzzling thing was that, when asked about the issue of being interviewed, more informants argued that the fact that they knew the interviewer had a profound effect on the course of the interview. Some informants even argued that they would not have mentioned several issues if they had been interviewed by a stranger (section 3).

In order to try to get a better grasp at these two issues, the sixth interview was done with a person that I knew very well. Thus, prior to the interview I had a fairly detailed knowledge on 36 years old Ken’s travel career as well as on the experiences he had during the different vacations that he has had in the past. As a result, a key reason for doing this interview was to see how many vacations Ken would introduce himself and how many he would recall when prompted for them.

As suggested by the opening part of the interview that is reproduced below, holidays away from home do not seem to be a focal part of Ken’s life:

*I: So, have you done much ‘holidaying’ in your life?*

*K: No*

*I: How comes?*

*K: I don’t know ... I haven’t had the time, I think I have had many things to do. It’s been difficult, I think. It takes time to go on holiday and you have to feel for it*

*I: Is it the time or the feeling for it?*

*K: I think it is the feeling for it*

Although Ken did not go much on holiday as a child (he recalls one trip with his parents and then he spent part of the summer holidays at relatives), he has had different vacations afterwards. Thus, prior to the interview I knew about the following trips: (1) School trips (in Denmark, Holland, and London); (2) Holidays with friends when he was a single (late teens to early twenties); (3) Holidays with his friends *and* his girlfriend (e.g. going fishing, staying at holiday



houses, staying at friends' houses – both in Denmark and in other countries, and going to music festivals); and (4) Holidays with his wife (e.g. house-sitting for friends, a trip to Southern Europe, an off-season stay in a holiday house, and city-breaks). However, Ken only mentioned around half of these trips himself. The following pieces of the interview account for Ken's spontaneous responses when he was directly prompted for some of the other vacations:

*I: Were there other holidays back then?*

*K: ... well ... I am not quite sure there were ... holidays ... well*

*I: Around your mid-twenties, where there other holidays?*

*K: Around the mid-twenties? ... I hope so, otherwise I have had a boring life, but I can't remember them ...*

*I: But no other vacations around that time?*

*K: I can't think of any at the moment?*

At the outset, Ken only mentioned around half of the vacations he has had. However, when subjected to 'aided recall' (e.g. when asked questions such as 'weren't you once in Sweden?', 'weren't you once to [a specific music festival]?', 'didn't you go fishing in Norway?', or 'have you ever stayed in a holiday house?'), Ken recalled these different vacations and also, he offered rather detailed information on some of them. Furthermore, when talking about these different holidays, Ken seemed to have a clear picture of (1) reasons why he went and (2) needs fulfilled by these different trips at the specific time in his life when he had them. For example, the following dialogue took place after Ken had told about 4 school trips:

*I: Those school trips, what's your strongest memories?*

*K: I suppose, to have a stamp in your passport, when you crossed the borders, because then you could show it to the others, that you had been there*

*I: So going to other countries?*

*K: Yes, to get away from home. To go where your parents hadn't been, to get back home and brag about it*

*I: Because it was something new?*

*K: New, exciting, beyond what you dared*

*I: So a bit dangerous as well?*

*K: Yes? Yes. In so far you got [understood] it at that age. When it comes to it, I don't think you got much of it*

*I: I don't know, but it doesn't sound like they were 'great' trips?*

*K: That's hard to tell. Well, back then they were; it was the coolest thing. But new things come along, you become more experiences and try other things*

It seems that although Ken, at present, has a rather distanced and ironic recollection of these school trips, simultaneously, he recalls that they were extremely important to him at the point in time when they took place. Furthermore, although several (especially male) informants in their 30ties or 40ties mentioned the 'booze holidays' they had in their youth, Ken is the informant that offers the most comprehensive description of this type of vacation:

*I: After finishing school, but before you met your wife; did you go on holiday then?*

*K: Yes, but that was only ... Yes, but that was booze holidays with friends; [an untranslatable rhyme indicating the destination and sex] and stuff like that*

*I: And that was about ...*

*K: To get away, together, somewhere, a huge caravan site, usually at xxx [the destination]. I don't know why it was at xxx; but to go there, put up a tent, sneaking some in so they didn't have to pay for it, and to drink, to drink*

*I: Did you met a lot of young people or?*

*K: Yes. Well, usually we started by putting up the tent and getting our hands on a box of beer, and then I think we went downtown and went back and slept it off. And then I think we drove home. No, it's probably been a couple of days before that. But, I mean, when you got back home you had lost one of your shoes or something – so it's probably been a lot about alcohol*

*I: Did you go and see things or did you mostly party?*

*K: We didn't see a damn thing. Nothing!*

*I: Why were those holidays important back then?*

*K: ... I think it was just that alcohol was fascinating and because there you could do things that you couldn't do at home*

To Ken, different holidays thus seem to have fulfilled different needs during his life. For example, he relates school trips to 'expanding one's world' (and to telling about it afterwards) and he relates 'booze holidays' to behaviour that was unacceptable at home. Furthermore, he speaks of holidays with his wife as 'cosy' and romantic whilst he relates holidays with friends to issues such as socialising and 'catching up'. However, quite ironically, Ken did not define some holidays with (some) friends and acquaintances as holidays:

[I have just asked about stays in holiday houses with friends and/or acquaintances]:

*K: But are those vacations?*

*I: I don't know, if you spend the nights there it probably is?*

*K: Yes, well, alright, then yes. If that's how you define it [vacations], then I have probably had some, but, I mean, vacation, then I think about relaxation and loosening up. Sometimes, I've been with people that you address politely, but you know that, eventually, they'll make a tart comment, so it's nice to be prepared for that*

*I: So it wasn't relaxation?*

*K: I don't think so. I think it's been exhausting, some of them. Why don't you just say 'no thanks' and, instead, take off on your own, where you can put your feet up and relax and don't have to think about what's going to happen next?*

*I: Is it because you feel bound to go?*

*K: Yes, it is. You feel like you owe something and that you're not free to say no*

Quite interestingly, Ken does not think of some of the stays in holiday houses (or other places) with friends and acquaintances as holidays. Especially he relates this to the fact that relaxation was not an integral part of these vacations. This further relates to Ken's definition of a 'nice' vacation. Thus, following a talk about a trip Ken and his wife took to Southern Europe, Ken was asked whether that specific trip was 'a nice vacation'; a question addressed by Ken as follows:

*K: Well, what's a nice vacation? If a nice vacation is to see a lot, see a lot and see a lot of historical sites and stuff like that, then no; it wasn't a nice vacation. But if a nice vacation is to get away and have some experiences, not many experiences, but some, then it was a nice vacation. Where you have some experiences that you can't put into words; 'what they are and why', then ... yes, I think it was a nice vacation*

Further Ken defines vacations as follows:

*K: Vacation, that's when, that's when ... that's when you take off and you know that there are opportunities to see things, to have experiences. But also to put your feet up and to have all the time in the world; so 'what we didn't get around to doing today, we can do tomorrow' [...] To get away. Yes, to get around to doing nothing and to relax. To take some experiences home with you, I think it's mostly about that. I don't know why you need to go to another part of the world to get that? But I mean, I think it's the experiences. Not that you actually experience a lot ...*

Although Ken's definition of a nice vacation aligns with the definitions offered by the other informants (i.e. relaxation *and* experiencing), a peculiarity is that Ken also engaged in the following line of reasoning:

*K: But, regarding tourism, what's had the strongest impact on me in regard to holidays, actually, that was a summer when two French guys came by, bicycling, from Germany. They had taken the train to Germany and had biked from there, and they wanted to ride their bikes across Denmark; the West Coast, Skagen, and then Copenhagen, on bicycles. That sounds like a challenge to me? But they needed a place to sleep and to have dinner and use the bathroom and have a shower. And we let them put up their tent in the backyard ... I almost feel sorry, that I couldn't do more for them, in some strange way ...*

*I: But you did something for them?*

*K: Well, I think I did. I hope that they got an impression from here*

To Ken, his most important memory regarding vacations does *not* relate to one of his own vacations. On the contrary, it relates to him as a 'local', who – spontaneously – took on the role as a host. This is rather interesting compared to the ways, in which we, traditionally, define and investigate the concept of 'a nice vacation'. Although we do acknowledge that 'hospitality', 'feeling welcomed', and 'meeting the locals' are important to our definitions of a nice vacation, traditionally, we do not define meetings between tourists and locals as encounters that generate happy memories for the locals. Thus, in regard to extant tourism research, Ken's account for his most important experience relating to tourism indicates that it might be beneficial to also do research that focuses on local's motivations (and fulfilment of their needs) in relation to encounters with tourists.

As mentioned previously, Ken has not had a lot of vacations. In relation to this topic, the following conversation took place:

*I: Of the different people, I've talked with, perhaps you're one of those who have had the fewest vacations?*

*K: Well, okay, I'm happy about that [ironically]*

*I: Really?*

*K: I don't know. I don't know, sometimes it seems that you have to have travelled around the world in order to be someone. You have to have backpacked in India and to have spent 14 days in Goa, although you can't really remember that*

Thus, it seems that Ken feels that going away on vacation, somehow, is important in order to be a person that aligns with 'social norms'. Ken's comments reproduced above align with the notion that "travelling for pleasure has become an accepted and even necessary part of life" (Gibson & Yiannakis, 2002, p. 358). However, Ken goes one step further in so far he argues that travelling for pleasure has become accepted as an integral part of life to such an extent that it would be unacceptable, or at least highly suspicious, if one does *not* go on vacation. Thus, in opposition to most informants, Ken directly links the notion of vacations to prestige and compliance with social norms. Furthermore, apart from the fact that Ken has not travelled a lot, many of the vacations that he has actually had were not introduced by Ken during the interview. In relation to these 'vanished vacations', the conversation reproduced below followed the interviewer's comment that Ken had difficulties recalling many vacations:

*K: Yes, I noticed that*

*I: Yes, I did introduce a lot of your vacations for you?*

*K: Yes*

*I: How come they weren't 'top of mind'?*

*K: ... oops, I was just about to say something terrible*

*I: Let's hear?*

*K: Do you go on vacations out of duty? Do you go because others go? Then you have to go as well, although you don't feel like it? And actually, you had things to do back home. It's not as if you have the time to do it. And the money to do it. Because, to go on vacation both takes your money and your time. So just because everyone else is going – and talk about it – and brag about it – then I have to go on vacation, because I can't stand out. So I go on vacation*

*I: Would it be embarrassing to never have been on vacation?*

*K: Yes. Absolutely, no doubt about it*

*I: Why would it be embarrassing?*

*K: Well, but, it's because you would be different. And you go on vacation to indicate surplus; 'I'm in surplus, so I go on vacation'. That's damn terrifying*

In conclusion, Ken seems to differ substantially from the first five informants. Especially, although Ken recognises that different vacations have fulfilled different needs at different times during his life, vacations away from home do not seem to be a critical element of his definition of 'nice living'. Thus, vacations of the past simply do not seem to have had a strong impact on Ken; nor does he express that they relate to his fundamental motives, needs, and values. Hence, the interview does not suggest strong ties between 'nice vacations' and 'nice living'. On the contrary, Ken introduces the notion that vacations also relate to a set of more suspicious motives, i.e. to 'show off'; to 'brag'; to feeling obligated to go; and to not stand out from the crowd. There are (at least) two valid interpretations of Ken's introduction of these more suspicious motives. First, it could be that Ken is simply a 'special' case and/or that the introduction of these alternate motives is a way for Ken to 'defend' the fact that he has not done much travelling. Secondly, it could be that because the interviewer knows Ken very well, the alternate travel motives that emerged during this interview resemble a set of motives that exist across more people; albeit they are too sensitive to emerge during most interviews?

#### 4.7. TOO MUCH TROUBLE

Eileen is a 67 years old widow. In the past, Eileen has not done much traveling. Thus, when asked as to vacations of the past, Eileen mentioned only two types of vacations. First, she mentioned a series of trips that she and her husband took when they were young (i.e. before they had children). The following fragments of the interview relate to these vacations:

*E: But it wasn't much else than, back then, we drove places, us young people, and spent weekends different places*

*I: So the car and a tent or?*

*E: No, mostly in hotels, usually it was hotels*

*I: Why hotels?*

*E: But it was like, we just took off. Back then, a long time ago, we had a club where we played cards, and we took off. We were just the sort of people to have staying at the hotels [back then, many Danish hotels were run by Evangelicals], [laughing].*

Apart from these weekends with other young people, in the past, Eileen and her husband went to Copenhagen once a year for a series of years. During this period of time, Eileen's daughter was a child and every summer, they had a couple of children from Copenhagen coming and spending time with them during the summer holidays. At the end of these children's stays at Eileen's house, Eileen and her family went and stayed with these children and their parents in Copenhagen for 4 or 5 days in a row. During these visits, Eileen and her family both visited other relatives in the Copenhagen area and went to different attractions in the area (e.g. Tivoli).

Apart from the two types of vacations mentioned above, Eileen did not go on vacation in the past. When asked why she has not done much not traveling in the past, Eileen related this fact to her and her husband being self-employed persons (Eileen and her husband had a small firm). During some periods they had some employees, but most of the times, he was self-employed while she kept accounts and took care of the paperwork relating to the firm. According to Eileen, the fact that they were self-employed is a key reason why they did not travel much. Thus, when directly asked why they did not go on summer holidays in the past, Eileen replied as follows:

*E: But we couldn't. It was always that time of year when we had most work to do.*

Around 8 years ago, Eileen and her husband reduced their workload and, as a result hereof, they started to travel a bit. Thus, after being tied up by work for most of their lives, Eileen and her husband reduced their workload in order to have more time for recreational purposes (including holidays away from home with friends or family). One of these trips – and the vacation that Eileen cherishes the most – was a coach tour to the North Cap. Especially, Eileen cherishes this vacation because it was the one destination, that her husband had a lifelong wish to go to and because they went there just before he got ill with cancer. During his illness, for obvious reasons, they did not go on vacation. After her husband passed away, Eileen has taken a few trips, including packaged tours (e.g. going by bus to Austria). In relation to the vacations Eileen has had after her husband passed away, the following conversation took place:

*I: To some people it is very important to go away on vacation?*

*E: But it isn't [important] to me. Not at all! It's not because ... I mean, I have enjoyed the vacations I have had in the last years. But I think that's because I have been lonesome and that way I had people that I could be with, you know?*

...

*I: So you have traveled more during the last years than you have ever done before?*

*E: Yes, I have. I started going with them [friends], after [her husband] passed away, I have gone with them 3 or 4 times*

*I: Do you think you'll continue to do that?*

*E: No!!! This year I'll stay at home, I suppose*

*I: How comes?*

*E: Well, it's because the two ladies I have traveled with ... we were three single ladies ... they don't want to travel anymore. Last year, I went with a neighbour. She has asked me, if we shouldn't go again, but ... I don't feel like it*

*I: At your age, some people think that now is the time to go on all the vacations they didn't get around to in the past. That doesn't sound like you?*

*E: Well, I don't know. I might. I have for traveled 3 or 4 years in a row. And it was the plan, the lady I traveled with last year has asked me ... But this year, it's like I think ... And it's also because of my dog. To get someone to take care of her and to make it fit in with their vacation ...*

*I: But you don't sound like you have the strongest urge to go on vacation?*

*E: No. I don't have that*

Drawing on the fragments of the interview reproduced above, although Eileen has gone on vacation since her husband passed away, going away on vacations is not essential to the future for Eileen. Hence, although Eileen does acknowledge that she has seen a lot and has had many nice experiences during her vacations, simultaneously, these vacations do not seem to be a key ingredient of 'nice living' for Eileen. Thus, as with Ken, vacations away from home do not seem to be focal to Eileen's self-conception.

A key characteristic across the different vacations that Eileen has had is comfort. Thus, Eileen has never taken a vacation characterised by lower degrees of comfort. For example, she has never been to a caravan site. Furthermore, apart from stays in holiday houses (that provide the same level of comfort as one has in one's own house), all of Eileen's vacations are characterised by stays at hotels. Even the vacations that include long-distance transportation by bus were vacations where the bus trip included a lot of breaks where they visited attractions along the route as well as stays at hotels every night. Apart from comfort, to Eileen it is also important that she travels with people who know her well and whom she trusts. Especially, Eileen ascribes this need to her medical condition (i.e. Eileen has diabetes and, sometimes, she has rather intense attacks):

*I: When you have been travelling with other single ladies ...*

*E: Yes, that's been nice*

*I: Do you spend all day together?*

*E: Yes, we have. But it's been nice, very nice*

*I: So is it important to have travel companions that one gets along with?*

*E: Yes. And it is especially important for me, who might have an attack. Right? There has to be someone that I can rely on will tell me that I better ... And that's worked fine*

*I: Yes, because diabetes and travelling ... ?*

*E: Yes, I'm always scared that I'll have an attack. So I always eat lots of sugar in order to be sure that I won't collapse and go into shock*

In conclusion, although Eileen talks about different nice experiences that she has had during her vacations, she thinks that going away on vacation is troublesome (e.g. getting someone to take care of her dog, avoiding diabetes attacks). Thus, although Eileen has had nice vacations in the past (and especially during the last 8 years), 'nice vacations' are not crucial to Eileen. On the contrary, Eileen thinks that going away on vacation, most of the times, is 'too much trouble'.

#### **4.8. EVERYDAY IS A HOLIDAY**

This interview was done with 40 years old Ellen. Until her parents passed away (her father died several years ago and her mother died last year), Ellen lived with them. Ellen is a single and lives with her dog in a small country house. The primary reason why Ellen was asked if she would participate in the project was that Ellen has done very little traveling. Thus, apart from (1) going to stay with her older siblings during the summer holidays when she was a child and (2) one school trip when she was around 15 years old, Ellen has not been on vacation. Hence, an interview with Ellen should increase the researcher's understanding of reasons why (some) people do *not* go on vacation.

The first reason Ellen offered when asked about the fact that vacations are not an integral part of her life relates to her parents' lifestyle. Ellen's parents were farmers and thus, going away on vacation was not something they did. Some of the other informants, the parents of which were farmers also mentioned this occupation as a reason why their parents did not go away on vacation with them (as much as other parents) when they were children. Thus, it seems that going away on vacation is simply more complicated when people own and work their own farm and, due to these complications, when Ellen and some of the other informants were children, going away on vacation was simply not an integral part of farmers' lives. Thus, one reason why Ellen does not go away on vacation is that during Ellen's life (and especially during her childhood) no boundaries separated recreational time from work time. Furthermore, it seems that going away on vacation is not something that will become an integral part of Ellen's life in the future, as indicated by the two fragments of the interview that are reproduced below:

*I: Now that you live by yourself, do you think that you'll travel more?*



*E: No, I don't think so. I really don't think so. It [going away on vacation] is not something that I'm dying to do, not at all*

*I: So, how comes, you haven't travelled much?*

*E: Well, it hasn't been, I mean, we had the farm, so we didn't have the time, or the money. I think that's mainly it. And then I'm, like, much of a stay-at-home person. I feel the best when I'm at home, in my house, when I know everything is okay, that my animals are okay.*

Hence, to Ellen 'nice vacations' are not integral parts of 'nice living'. However, a major part of the interview consists of Ellen's elaborations as to differences between her attitude towards vacations and those of other people. Thus, to a great extent Ellen draws on the fact that some of her close relatives go on vacations at least once every year and further, she elaborates on the fact that, with good reason, nice vacations are integral parts of nice living for these relatives. In relation to this subject matter, inspired by the interview with Ken, I asked Ellen whether she, sometimes, feels that it is embarrassing to tell people that she does not go on vacation. Ellen's response to this question was as follows:

*E: It doesn't affect me. It doesn't bother me. I don't have a problem with that, I mean, my attitude is that I'm not keen on that [vacations]. I mean, I wouldn't do something just because others think it's the right thing to do. I have to admit to that. I do what I like to do and others are very welcome to do what they like. I think it's great that others go on vacation; I just don't feel like it*

Although Ellen recognises the situation described by Ken (i.e. that one 'ought to' go on vacation), Ellen does not feel a 'social pressure' to the same extent as Ken does. However, along with Karen, Ellen argues that she does not have to go away on vacation in order to relax:

*E: I think that has got a lot to do with it [being able to relax at home]. That they [people who do not feel a need to go away on vacation] are, perhaps, more self-contained, they don't need to go out and have those outer experiences, I mean, that you feel the way you would like to feel, at home.*

Throughout the interview, Ellen elaborated extensively on this subject. Thus, it seems that a focal reason why Ellen does not feel a need to go on vacation is that Ellen finds that both her needs for experiences and her need to relax are well fulfilled during her everyday life. One of the (many) fragments of the interview relating to this topic is reproduced below.

*E: It's like, I can come home from work with a splitting headache, and then I can go and chop wood and 5 minutes later, my headache is gone. And it's simply stress and tension and the likes, and as soon as I start chopping wood then it is gone. I felt the same way when we had the farm: As soon as I went out to the animals, then, for sure, my headache was gone. And, I mean, I usually say that 'it's actually great to have a*

*holiday everyday'. To go out and say, now I go and do this, now I call it a day, now I relax, now I de-stress: Instead of doing it only once a year.*

To Ellen it seems that there are no clear-cut boundaries between vacations, other recreational time, and time spent doing things at home. Accordingly, it seems that especially Ellen does not go on vacation because she defines everyday as a holiday. Thus, to close this section in Ellen's words, the following three fragments relate to the (untraditional) definition of a 'nice vacation' that was offered by Ellen:

*I: So, if a holiday is to relax ...*

*E: Then I have a holiday everyday*

*E: I think it [not going on vacation] has a lot to do with the fact that I relax everyday. I mean, I feel that everyday when I get home from work, I have a vacation. And actually, it's a luxury to have that everyday*

*E: It's because I have a holiday everyday, I can honestly say that*

#### 4.9. DOING THINGS

This interview was done with 31 years old Keith. Together with his wife (29) and their two daughters (7 and 5), these four people comprise a nuclear family. When talking about childhood holidays, Keith only recalled going away on vacation once during his childhood. Thus, in opposition to some of the other informants, who went on many vacations when they were children, going away on vacation does not seem to be a critical part of Keith's childhood memories. However, after he moved out from home – and before he met his wife – Keith did some travelling. Thus, apart from being posted in other countries while he was a soldier, Keith also had some vacations with male friends. Mostly, these vacations had to do with 'doing things' and being active. Apart from one vacation, during which they went parachute jumping, this part of Keith's travel career is mostly comprised of skiing holidays (i.e. Keith went skiing with his friends for 10 to 14 days once a year for 6 years in a row). After Keith met his wife, he stopped going on vacation and Keith argued as follows in relation to this transition:

[talking about the fact that he stopped going on skiing holidays after he met his wife]:

*K: And then, but, I don't know, you didn't want to do that anymore. Or 'wanted to'; you kind of lost interest in that [laughing]*

*I: What about before you had children. Did you and your wife go on vacation then?*

*K: No, we didn't*

*I: How come?*

*K: I don't know, but I come from, I mean, I have gone skiing a lot, and she didn't want to do that, she wasn't in to that, well, but what were we going to do then?*

It seems that a primary reason why 'nice vacations' was not an integral part of Keith's and his wife's life together, before they had children, is that Keith's and his wife's past travel careers were so different that it was not a clear-cut matter to find a form of vacation that both of them would appreciate. Furthermore, Keith argued that the fact that they had children soon after they met is also a primary reason why they did not go away on vacation together. Thus, during the first couple of years after they had children, Keith and his wife did not go on vacation for the reason reproduced below:

*K: When we had children, you kind of shrug it off; they don't want to. Or they can't do that yet*

However, after the first couple of years, Keith and his wife started to go away on vacation with their children. In relation to the first vacation they took with their children, Keith said that:

*K: During the first couple of years [after they had children], well, we didn't go anywhere back then, we stayed at home and had a cosy time. And then we rented a holiday house at one point in time, I think that was when xxx [the oldest daughter] was around 2 years old, and that was when we agreed never to do that again [...] You just sit around and sit, I think. I mean, we did do a lot of things, oh yes, it wasn't that. But it's like, you have to entertain the children the whole time, something has to happen all the time. And I don't think that's vacation.*

Hence, the first vacation that the family took together was not a major success. Furthermore, mostly Keith and his wife do not have summer holiday at the same time. As indicated below Keith and his wife thus have a pattern of summer holidays that complicates the matter of vacations a lot:

*K: We don't have our summer holiday at the same time, me and [his wife], so I have the children by my own for three weeks and then she has them for herself*

*I: So would it be strange to do something with the kids on your own?*

*K: No, because you could say, I mean, the three week, when I am at home with them, you got to do something. Like, a bicycle ride, going to the forest or to the beach*

At present, Keith and his wife try to make activities for the children – during the summer – that make the children have experiences, although these activities do not correspond with traditional definitions of vacation. For example, Keith mentioned the following activities:

*K: ... I also think it is all about giving them small experiences at this point in time. Where you make them feel safe about the things that are going on. I mean, like to go swimming, there's something about confidence that they are learning*

*K: But like, [during the summer holidays], we sleep in a tent in the garden, right? And we've talked about this year, in the summer, to go to [a forest district] and put up the tent and sleep in the forest. To, like, try to live a bit in the nature, I like it, I'm crazy about that. And the oldest of the girls, too, so we've talked about doing that this summer*

*K: I also think that, sometimes, you should listen to what the children would like, instead of just what we would like to do. Because it doesn't have to be that big a thing for them to have a nice time*

During the last five years, Keith and his wife have started to go away on vacation with their children off season. Apart from the fact that Keith and his wife do not have summer vacation at the same time, Keith also finds that there are additional advantages in going away on vacation off season:

*I: Your three weeks of summer holiday, that's during the general industrial holiday?*

*K: Yes. That's also why we like to do things off season. Off season, we prefer that, because there's more time to do things and it doesn't become so hectic, I think*

Hence, at Whitsuntide (in the month of June), Keith and his wife try to get away from home with their children. Apart from one trip (which is discussed afterwards), normally Keith and his wife take the children to a holiday resort. Primarily, the family enjoys this kind of accommodation because you pay for a full packaged (including both accommodation and activities) and because this kind of vacation incorporates a wide range of activities that you can engage in together with the children. Thus, these vacations offer Ken the opportunity to 'do things' with his children. Furthermore, they take these vacations together with members of their 'extended family' (e.g. with Keith's siblings, his father and his father's wife as well as with his parents-in-law).

Last year, instead of throwing a party for their silver anniversary, Keith's dad and his dad's wife invited the extended family (Keith's nuclear family and his siblings) to Gran Canaria on holiday. To Keith and his wife, going on a packaged tour was not an integral part of their travel careers at that point in time; nor did they think that it was a kind of vacation they would appreciate:

*K: A packaged tour – that's not me, that's never been me – or so I thought*

*I: So it doesn't sound like something you would have done on your own? Would you have done it [going on a packaged tour] if you hadn't been invited?*

*K: No. Because it's our attitude that that isn't us, or, it isn't me. I mean, my wife would like to*

*I: Because packaged tours ...*

*K: No, it's more because I am active, I want to do things. But, like I told [his wife] while we were there, it was actually nice. Yes, because you both relax and do things with the children, and the children, they love water. So I would say that we could try that again*

Contradictive to his initial assumptions, Keith actually had a very nice vacation at Gran Canaria. One reason why it was a nice vacation was that they took some days off, simply relaxing and spending time with the children in the swimming pool, while, the remaining days they rented a car and went and enjoyed the scenic landscape at the island. Another reason why Keith had a very nice vacation is that vacations with the extended family offer ample opportunities for him both to do sports and to do things with his children (as indicated by the following accounts):

*I: So, what's a nice vacation?*

*K: Well ... [laughing] ... but, to me it's active, no matter what or where I am, then it's active. It has to be*

*I: So something like biking or hiking?*

*K: No, not really, something just has to happen. Like, at Gran Canaria, there was a tennis court, and I don't think it comes as a surprise that I'm a sports freak, so are my dad and my brother. We played football, although we were only the three of us. We simply had to play tennis. Golf. There just has to be something happening when I'm at places like that. And the same way when we went to [a specific holiday resort] there they had squash and badminton and stuff like that, there has to be something for me to do*

*I: Does that fit with having small children?*

*K: Yes. Because then it is like, then my wife has the children for a couple of hours while we go and do things. Then we get back, then I take them to the playground or something. Then she can do something else. That's what we try to do. That's what we do when we go places anyway. Or we go together*

*I: Like, something for me, something for you, something for the children?*

*K: That's the way we do it anyway. Or perhaps my father's wife takes the children, she's more into relaxation, and then we go and do things. But not for an entire day*

*I: So like going away for three hours and then coming back?*

*K: Yes. Yes. And then you do something. I also want to do things with my kids when I am on vacation. I mean, it's not just for me*

To Keith it seems that going away on vacation with the extended family has some important advantages. First, it allows for him to 'do things' (with relatives who also enjoy 'doing things') without taking the children along all the time. Thus, although Keith finds that going on vacation with the extended family both incorporates advantages and drawbacks, in relation to children he emphasised the following advantage relating to this type of vacation:

*K: You could say that on our behalves, it is actually a relief. Because there are more of us to take care of the children*

However, this does not mean that the extended family acts as a baby-sitter that allows for Keith to spend the vacation doing things for himself. On the contrary, to Keith it is – at least – as important to do things with his children during the vacation as it is to do things on his own. Hence, when Keith was prompted once more as to what constitutes a ‘nice vacation’, the following dialogue took place:

*I: So, a nice vacation, that has to do with getting out and doing things. And to see things, but landscapes more than ruins?*

*K: Yes, and to be with my family, to be with my children and my wife*

Thus, apart from Keith’s need to ‘do things’ while on vacation, a primary criterion is that his children have a nice time. In relation to the trip to Gran Canaria, Keith argued that – before going – a major consideration had been what that would mean to the children:

*K: We had lots of doubts about the vacation at Gran Canaria, we had. Could you take them on the plane?, could they stand it?, and 5 hours on a plane, that’s a long time. Actually you worry too much. Sometimes you ought, perhaps, to be a bit more impulsive and just do it*

Hence, prior to going on this vacation with the children, Keith and his wife were not sure that it would turn out right. However, at present Keith is very happy that they went because it turned out that the children had a very nice time. Thus, in regard to the experiences that the children had during the packaged tour, Keith said the following:

*K: They were crazy about it, there wasn’t anything to it. None of them were afraid or anything, they did not bat an eyelid. And it was an experience for them. Like, in February, my dad and his wife went there again, and then the youngest of our kids said that they couldn’t do that without taking her. Because she would like to do that again*

*I: So they do remember something of it?*

*K: Yes, I really feel so, I mean, I feel that it was really okay – for them as well. They got something out of it and they experienced something*

In sum, to Keith there are (at least) two dimensions of a ‘nice vacation’: That he gets to ‘do things’ and that his children have nice experiences.

#### 4.10. THE NICEST THINGS LAST ONLY A DAY

This interview concerns Steven and Tanya, who are empty nesters in their late 50ties. Unlike most other informants, Steven and Tanya had a clear recollection of their entire travel career. Thus, this interview is comprised of an informant-driven, chronologically-ordered account for all

the vacations that these two people have had since they met in the late 1960ties. As indicated by the chronologically-ordered account these informants offered, they have had vacations away from home roughly every second year during their time together. Thus, the interview relates to 16 vacations away from home during 30 years of shared holidays. In the years when Steven and Tanya did not go away on vacation, they took lots of one day tours to nearby attractions or other parts of Denmark. Furthermore, while their children still lived at home, Steven and Tanya also did other things with them when they did not go away on vacation during the summer holidays. The following two quotations refer to these 'other activities':

*S: So for some years, our vacations were one-day trips*

*I: Where you drove places and saw things?*

*S: Yes, and then drove back home in the evenings and slept at home. We would do that 3 or 4 times during a summer holiday, 3 to 4 days, right? One day at xxx [one region of Denmark] and one day at xxx [another part of Denmark]*

*S: But in the years in between, in between going away on vacation, then something else has happened, like for example going with the boys to sports events and stuff like that. In 1985, Tanya went to Baden-Baden with the boys ... In 1987, I went to Kiel with them to this football thing*

In the following sections, the 16 vacations that Tanya and Steven have had are discussed in the context of the notion of a 'nice vacation'. The first group of vacations that Steven and Tanya had consists of 4 vacations they took before they got married. All of these vacations were shorter and consisted of their driving to another part of Denmark where they put up a tent and stayed a few nights. Furthermore, all of these vacations were spent in the company of siblings (his or hers) and sometimes, the siblings' partners.

During the next five years, Steven and Tanya got married and their two sons were born. During these years, Steven and Tanya had 'their hands full' and thus, they did not go away on vacation. However, when their sons turned 2 and 4 they went on their first vacation with their children (and a nephew). However, this vacation only lasted two days (one night). In relation to this vacation, the following dialogue emerged:

*I: So, that was a major change; from going as a couple to going on vacation with small children?*

*S: Yes, exactly*

*I: More troublesome?*

*S: Yes, that too. And at the same time, everything had to be pre-planned, all the time you needed to be ready with clean diapers and ...*

*T: And food and ...*

*S: And food and stuff, it just wasn't the same. And you couldn't just go for a walk, because then you needed to take the trolley and so on and so on*

As indicated by the dialogue reproduced above, in the early 1970ties it was not a clear-cut matter to go away on vacation with small children. Furthermore, in relation to this part of their life, Steven made the following comment:

*S: To us it wasn't a solution to go on vacation without bringing our children. I wouldn't dream of doing that. I mean, a lot of people got their parents to take care of the children for a week while they went away on vacation themselves; I would never do that*

As a result of these queries, for a series of years Steven and Tanya spent their summer holiday at home with their children. However, as mentioned previously most of these summer holidays included 3 or 4 one-day trips to other parts of Denmark or nearby attractions. In 1980, when their sons were 8 and 10 years old, the family took their first trip abroad. Thus together with Tanya's sister and brother-in-law (and their children), they rented a cottage in Norway. Especially, Tanya and Steven recall some of the good will and hard work it took to 'go native' in a cottage 'in the middle of nowhere', with no running water and an one kilometre long walk from the car to the cottage. The following fragment of the interview relates to Steven's and Tanya's overall evaluation of this trip.

*S: But apart from that [the work and good will that it took], it was a great trip, a really nice trip. But it was also demanding to be like two families together*

*I: And the kids?*

*S: They had a great time, they had a cosy time. Because there was like an old tree and an ants' nest and a wasps' nest and stuff like that, that they played with, they had loads of fun. And then we went to see something everyday*

During the next three years, Tanya and Steven did not go away on vacation. However, In 1984 Tanya's sister and brother-in-law asked whether Tanya and Steven would be interested in borrowing their caravan for a week. After deciding on a region of Denmark to stay at, the family drove to the caravan site, at which the brother-in-law had placed the caravan. At that point in time, their sons were 10 and 12 years old. This vacation had a rocky start as the sons were not, altogether, positive towards the idea of spending time at a caravan site. However, as Steven tells in the fragment of the interview that is reproduced below, things soon got better:

*S: So there they sat, sulking, after having been in the car on our way there for hours. But then, at some point in time, I gave them some money and suggested that they go buy an ice cream and go have a look at*



*the other boys, who played football, because I had had it up to here with them. And then, like 15 minutes or so later, they came running back because they had to change their shoes because they got invited to play football. And basically, that was what we saw of them apart from meals and bedtime. Because they had hooked up with a couple of boys from [another part of Denmark] and another couple of boys, so we didn't see much of them. So by and large, Tanya and I were free to see whatever we would like to see at that destination/area*

*I: What would have happened if the boys hadn't stopped sulking?*

*S: Well, then we would have left the caravan at the site and we would have driven back home within a day or two, because that would have been horrible*

Due to the successfulness of this trip, two years later the family went on a trip that resembles the one introduced above a lot; i.e. staying at Danish caravan sites that had different activities that the sons appreciated (e.g. a swimming pool). Following the stays at caravan sites, a new type of vacation was added to the family's travel career as they were invited to spend part of the summer holiday with relatives in a holiday house. The subsequent summer, Steven and Tanya rented a holiday house themselves and invited relatives to come and stay with them. The following part of the interview accounts for some of the informants' 'nice' recollections of this vacation.

*S: Then at some time during the week, we had spoken with my mom and dad (they were both alive back then and they could get around in their own car) and I said that they could come by. And my mom really wanted to do that – but only for an afternoon visit. And I said okay and then I drove out to meet them and guide them the last step of the way to the holiday house. So they came by and had a coup of coffee and dinner and then they were to have a final coup of coffee and then I was to direct them the first part of their way back home. But then I said, 'well, you might as well stay the night and then have breakfast with us in the morning'. Well, they weren't sure, but it sounded appealing, so they did spend the night. And I have to say that that was a life-time experience to my mom.*

*I: They hadn't travelled much in the past?*

*S: Not at all. They had had one trip that lasted two days and that was it. But they thought that it was great to spend time with us in a holiday house. And, well, the boys where 13 and 15 years old, so they had their bikes ad drove around on their own*

*I: So they were pretty much self-activating?*

*S: Yes*

*T: Yes, and then one shouldn't interfere*

The next year that Steven and Tanya went away on vacation, Steven worked a lot overtime and, at the start of the summer holidays, spontaneously the family decided that they wanted to spend some of the money Steven had made by working a lot of extra hours on something that was truly 'nice'. Thus, they contacted a travel agency and the agency suggested that they go to the Garda

Lake. Steven's and Tanya's recollections of this vacation are those of a very nice vacation. According to Steven and Tanya, one very important reason why it was a very nice vacation relates to the other people, who took this packaged tour:

*T: It was very nice*

*S: Yes, it was very nice*

*T: There were lots of parents with kids the same age as our boys*

*S: Yes, people our age and their teenagers*

*T: So, in that way ...*

*S: In that way, it was a very nice vacation. We arrived at a very nice hotel and all of us were put in the same hotel ... And there were kids the same age as our boys. And there we had a very, very, very nice vacation*

When the family took this tour, the sons were 15 and 17 years olds. Apart from the tour being an utter success in itself, this vacation was also important as it relates to Steven's and Tanya's conceptions of 'good parenting' (as indicated by the following fragment of the interview):

*S: Lots of people, like for example the boys' friends from school, all through primary school they went to Spain with their parents. They went there in car and with tents or caravans and spent two weeks there. And I have often asked my sons, because I had the feeling that I had let them down. It wasn't because of that that we took off at that point in time, but throughout primary school I had the feeling that we might be bad parents because we didn't take them on vacations abroad. Afterwards I have asked them if they felt as if they had suffered privations and they both said no. They didn't miss it. They said that they do realise that we had lots of other experiences and that they would rather have it, I mean, that there was almost always someone at home, ..., whereas some of the others parents worked their butts off for 9 or 10 months a year in order to be able to go away on vacation. They wouldn't trade in for that. On the other hand, they thought it was great to go away on vacation when we did that*

In retrospective, Tanya and Steven appreciate the tour to the Garda Lake very much. In fact, at the end of the interview when Steven and Tanya were asked about the essence of a 'nice vacation', in relation to vacations abroad they engaged in the following line of reasoning:

*S: The best vacation we have had abroad is the tour to the Garda Lake. But that was mostly about the experience of our boys turning into adults. It was another way of experiencing them, although we didn't spend all 24 hours of the day with them*

*I: To see them be independent?*

*S: Yes, to see that they were fine on their own; that was a wonderful vacation*

After their children moved out, Tanya and Steven have had different vacations. For example, they have taken two packaged bus tours (one to Spain and one to Poland); a car trip in Denmark

where they spent the nights at different hotels; rental of holiday houses (and mostly relatives have spent some time with them in those holiday houses); and shorter stays with relatives in these relatives' holiday houses. When one tries to generalise across the various vacations that Tanya and Steven have had after their children left home, a somewhat mixed picture emerges. Although Tanya and Steven have had some nice vacations they also spoke of vacations that could more accurately be described as 'bad'. In relation to this diversity of vacations in regard to 'niceness', the following conversation took place:

*I: I don't know, but it doesn't sound as if you have had the greatest luck with your vacations?*

*S: No. No, we don't*

*I: So, do you think that you'll take off again sometime?*

*S: Yes, at some point in time we will take off again. It's not like we're intimidated by it, but on the other hand, it's not something that we simply need to do*

Trying to get a better grasp of Tanya's and Steven's ambivalence in relations to vacations, at the end of the interview I initiated the following conversation:

*I: So, what is a nice vacation then?*

*S: The best vacations we've had, let's start with them, that's been the one day trips that we have had when we have spent the holidays at home*

*I: Yes, how comes they are the nicest ones?*

*T: Well, because you look forward to having them ...*

*S: Yes, and ...*

*T: To do the lunch boxes and so*

*S: Yes, and it's spontaneous*

*I: So the 'real' vacations have to be planned more?*

*S: Yes, that's how I feel when we go away on vacation*

Thus, Steven and Tanya actually argue that the nicest vacations are those that we would not, traditionally, define as vacations. Following the 'non-vacations' (that Steven and Tanya point at as the 'nicest vacations'), stays at holiday houses in Denmark are the 'second nicest vacations' to Steven and Tanya:

*S: And then, when we have stayed in holiday houses in Denmark, that's also been great. Nice vacations. It's been that*

*I: How comes that those vacations are especially nice?*

*S: But it's the relaxation of it*

*I: That it's not ... ?*

*S: That there is nothing you have to do, right? It doesn't matter when we get back to the holiday house in the evenings, when we have dinner and so on ...*

Although Tanya and Steven speak highly of their tour to the Garda Lake, they find that, in general, vacations abroad are more demanding and offer less opportunities for relaxation than the other ways one might spend the summer holidays:

*I: What's the difference between going on vacation in Denmark and going abroad?*

*S: To me, vacations in Denmark qualify as total relaxation*

*I: Yes?*

*S: And it isn't that when you go abroad. When we go abroad I demand more of myself ... I have to see things and I have to be more on guard*

Although Steven and Tanya have had different types of vacations, in sharp contrast to those informants who argue that one needs to get away from home in order to relax and/or have experiences, to Steven and Tanya the nicest thing has actually been to spend the main part of the holidays at home and to 'spice it up' with some (but not many) day trips. In conclusion it thus seems that, to these two informants, a nice vacation has far less to do with 'being a tourist' than one would expect. Instead, it seems that to these two informants, the 'nicest vacations' are actually those that only last a day.

#### 4.II. RECONSTRUCTING THE FAMILY

This interview was done with Peter, who is part of the nuclear family discussed in section 4.1. The primary reason for doing this interview was to gain insight in the perspectives of the last member of that family. Furthermore, due to the fact that I was able to draw extensively on the first interview during this one, this interview goes further into depths with some of the themes that emerged during the first interview.

Although Peter was in his 30ties when he met Grith, he had no former experiences with vacations away from home (apart from vacations with his parents when he was a child). When prompted as to reasons why he did not go on vacation before he met Grith, the following conversation took place:

*I: How comes that vacations away from home became an issue after you had children?*

*P: It was the mother [Grith], [laughing]. If it wasn't for the fact that Grith kicked my behind, I hadn't gone away on vacation yet*

*I: But, in retrospective, do you regret that you went?*

*P: No. No. Not at all, it is damn good as it is now. But I still hadn't made the effort, if it hadn't been for Grith, who started it. I hadn't.*

Hence, it seems that although Peter had no objections to going away on vacation, he would not have started travelling if it had not been for his wife pushing for this kind of family activity. This 'inertia' on Peter's behalf is also prominent in relation to the recent change in the family's travel career. Thus, when asked about this recent transition, Peter engaged in the following lines of reasoning:

*P: Well, but it wasn't a transition, it was a beginning. Because, I think it's me, because Grith has always wanted to go, I just didn't think there was any reason to spend a lot of money and waste the holidays and then come back and say: 'Damn that was boring. When everyone else went out and had fun, went to restaurants, we had to go back to the room and take care of the children'. And then I think it is a pity, I almost think one could call it selfish, to drag your small children with you on vacation [...] I can't see the point of it, nobody gets anything good out of it. The parents don't have a nice experience, the kids can't remember it afterwards, I don't think there is any point in it. The kids have to be old enough to stay up till 10 or 11 p.m., then you can enjoy a trip to the South ... .... So I've been the one putting a curb on it [going on a packaged tour], saying that I didn't want to do that. I think it would have been a waste of money and a waste of time – both our time and the kids' time and that simply doesn't work, that wasn't worth it, that is simply the catch to it*

*I: So last summer when you went on the packaged tour with the kids, was that the 'right' time to do that?*

*P: Yes! It was exactly the right time to do that, good grief! Yes! They still talk about it ...*

As indicated by the fragment of the interview that is reproduced above, to Peter it was a very nice experience to go on a packaged tour with his wife and his children. In relation to the 'niceness' of this experience, the following conversation took place:

*P: It was simply, but, I have never experienced anything as good as that [the packaged tour], I really haven't, it was simply fantastic. Not once, not even once, for that entire week were the kids moody or cross*

*I: So, looking back at it, is it the nicest experience you have had with your children?*

*P: Definitely. Definitely! Yes, unquestionably, unquestionably, yes*

Furthermore, when Peter was prompted as to why the packaged tour ended up being his nicest experience with his children, he engaged in the following lines of reasoning:

*P: I think there are more things to it. I think, like, when we are at home, we know lots of people, who drop in and they don't have children; at least not kids Julie's age. And often that means that she might be, you know, 'no, really, we were just talking', right? I think that was mostly it, because there were no interruptions, right? There [during the packaged tour] nobody came by, no-one called, it was just 100 percent time ... There were no interruptions, it was just the four of us, for the entire week [...] You get to know your kids.*

*Because, in everyday life, there are so many hours during which you don't see them [the children], and you don't know what they are doing during all of that time. So you get to know your children a lot.*

Drawing on the fragment of the interview that is reproduced above, it seems that especially the packaged tour was a nice experience for Peter because it allowed for 'reconstruction' of the nuclear family in a way that resembles Peter's ideas of ideal family life. Furthermore, although Peter had not anticipated it, the packaged tour also brought the family closer together both before and after they went on vacation. In relation to the anticipative phase, especially Peter appreciates the fact that the children (and especially the oldest one) were very active during the joint decision-making process. For example, Peter mentioned a couple of very tangible evaluative criteria that the oldest child contributed with during decision-making as well as ways in which these criteria had a profound effect on the final choice of destination and accommodation. Peter also mentioned the post-tour effects as an unexpected, positive outcome of the packaged tour. The following quotation relates to this aspect of the packaged tour:

*P: Also a long time after we came home we had 'that thing'. I didn't think it [going on the packaged tour] could mean so much, I really didn't think so. It is fantastic, it was that*

Hence, both before, during, and after the family went on the packaged tour this vacation has contributed a lot to this nuclear family. This aspect is highlighted by the following fragment of the interview:

*I: So if you try to look back at the different kinds of vacations you have had, because you have also had other vacations than the packaged tour, what would you say that a nice vacation is?*

*P: A nice vacation, that's when you feel good, it can be said that plainly*

*I: So, a good vacation is that when everybody feel good?*

*P: Yes, but it is. It can't be any different*

*I: And it sounds as if that becomes a bit easier as the children grow older?*

*P: A lot easier. And also, the nice vacation is told when you come back home and say 'we would like to go there again' or 'we should have bought two weeks instead of one'. Then it's spelled out, you know?*

*I: So the nice vacation that's something about the four of you having nice experiences together or?*

*P: That's exactly what it is all about*

As mentioned previously, the family's first packaged tour was a major success to all members of the family. Hence, there is no doubt in Peter's mind that the family will go on packaged tours in the future. Simultaneously, though, Peter finds that some issues will inevitably be different next time (as indicated by the following fragment of the interview):

*P: There were no expectations [prior to their first packaged tour], I mean, we did expect that the place looked like the brochure. And it did. But otherwise we didn't really have any expectations due to the fact that we had never tried it before. If we went again, to a different country, like Greece, then, for sure, then all four of us, because we have only gone once, and only to one place, would compare the two places. Of course we would. And then expectations would probably be different. But the first time we had no expectations – none at all.*

*I: So it might become more difficult the second and third time?*

*P: A lot. A lot. And, for sure, it has to beat the first packaged tour, if we go somewhere else. It has to, because otherwise it would be a failure and 'why didn't we go there [Turkey] again?' Also, like I said at the outset, to us it is a lot of money and it means a lot that it is a success*

In conclusion, to Peter, going away on a packaged tour with his wife and kids was not just a nice vacation, it was actually the nicest experience he has ever had with his children. Ironically, the utter successfulness of this first packaged tour actually seems to complicate matters in relation to the future vacations for this family. Hence, Peter seems rather concerned as to whether future packaged tours will enable a 'reconstruction' of the family that resembles the one that characterises the family's first packaged tour.

#### 4.12. RELAXATION, ROCK AND DAYTRIPS

This interview was done with 34 years old Carl. He and his 30 years old girlfriend (Ann) have three children (11, 6, 6) and live in a detached house in a larger city. Carl and Ann did not do much travelling before they had kids. However, as both of them are 'into' music, they did go to music (rock) festivals. Apart from festivals, to Ann and Carl especially vacations away from home have to do with visiting relatives. For a series of years, Ann and Carl have engaged in the same pattern of activities during the summer holidays. Hence, the first part of the holidays is the time after the children's holidays have started whereas Ann's and Carl's have not. During this period of the holidays the children often stay with their grandparents and do things with them. For example, the grand parents take the children to amusement parks, to zoos, and to their holiday cottage. In relation to these activities that the children engage in during the summer vacation (without Carl's or his girlfriend's participation), Carl made the following comments:

*C: During school holidays, the children have lots of plans: To stay with grand parents, and well, my girlfriend's parents are divorced, so they go both to her dad, her mum, and my parents, and to their aunt's place. And they do that before our vacation starts.*

*C: And they get outright spoiled, you know? For example, when they stay with my girlfriend's dad, like, last year, in one weekend they went to [a specific amusement park] and [a safari park], ... because now they*

*were with him, they ought to. Then they are with my parents and then they go see this and that. So, actually, they do lots of stuff, those kids [laughing]*

Drawing on Carl's comments on the things that the children do with the grandparents it seems that he appreciates the fact that the grandparents (want to) do things with the children a lot. One reason for this appreciation could be that during the first week or so of his and his girlfriend's vacation, they stay at home (although this is 'spiced up' with various daytrips and things such as sleeping in a tent in the garden or at a forest close by). Hence, it seems that the fact that the children have had various nice experiences before Carl's vacation starts somehow 'takes the edge' of the demand for experiences during the first week of vacation. In relation to the 'relaxation at home' that characterises the start and the end of the summer holidays, Carl made the following comments:

*C: But it is that the kids want to, actually, they also want to spend time at home. They don't feel a need to do something everyday, because they need some time at home as well. There are lots of children in this neighbourhood, kids they know from school and so, they just run out the door and then there is someone to play with. And sometimes, I mean, even when we are at [the music festival], sometimes they say that they miss some of the kids who live close by*

The fact that Carl enjoys to relax at home during the vacation does not mean that the family spends the entire time at home. On the contrary, this nuclear family goes on a series of daytrips during this part of the vacation. In relation to these day trips Carl's argued as follows:

*C: And then you get around to going and seeing things and it's not just because of the kids because actually you like it too, but because of the kids you pull yourselves together and go*

After having spent time at home, relaxing, Carl and his nuclear family goes to a music (rock) festival. Carl and his girlfriend both play in bands and they also went to music festivals before they had children. However, after they had children they started to go to a more child-friendly festival instead of the one they preferred before they had children. The child-friendliness of this festival relates to a series of different topics, but for example, it includes (1) that the camping area is split up into three different areas, i.e. 'savage camping'; 'family camping' and 'quiet camping'; (2) that there is music that the kids enjoy as well as music that Carl and his girlfriend appreciate; and (3) that there are babysitting facilities (maximum duration of two hours and only if parents can be contacted by mobile phone). After a conversation where I asked Carl about the practicalities relating to taking the children to a music festival the following conversation took place:



*C: So it isn't stressful to take the kids there*

*I: Is it something that they look forward to, speak about?*

*C: Yes. They talk about it from one festival to the next. They all have, well 3 or 4 bracelets [the ones that function as admission tickets to the festival], that they won't have cut off. You know those made out of fabric? And they are all ragged, but no, the kids want to keep on to them*

Carl's two youngest children are 6 years old twins whereas the oldest daughter is 11 years old. Most of the times, and especially at the festival, the 11 year old daughter prefers to do other things than the two youngest children do. In order for her also to have a nice vacation, for the last couple of years, Carl and his girlfriend have invited one of the daughter's friends to come along to the festival. In relation to another part of the interview (one focusing on the prestige, Veblen or Band Wagon effect that vacations abroad might have for teenagers), the following conversation took place:

*I: So it doesn't sound as if your oldest kid is much into the prestige of vacations abroad?*

*C: No, she isn't, not at all. But it is also a big thing at school, that thing with the music festival. Because more of the kids that come here, we hear from their parents that they have pestered about going there. And some of the kids have already asked if they can come along this summer [laughing]*

To this family it seems that the music festival is the nicest possible vacation because it includes various activities both for the small children; for the teenager (and her friends); and for the adults. The following two fragments of the interview elaborate on this issue:

*C: Festival is super [smiling]*

*I: It seems that a lot of families with children have this 'thing' that works for them, which includes something for everyone in the family?*

*C: Yes, but you have to, because otherwise the children will give you a hard time, you know? And you don't want that*

*I: So it isn't nice if the children don't enjoy it?*

*C: Right. And on the other hand you can't act as if you have the nicest possible time looking at them enjoying themselves at the playground for two hours. I mean, you have to go and do stuff they like and then afterwards you are more, like, to go do something you like, you have to. But they are great at that, I think*

*C: And then, we are very much into music, both of us play instruments. And we like to go to concerts and so. And I know that, for me, it could become very pitiful if I had to stay at an ordinary caravan site for two weeks*

Drawing on the interview with Carl, although, at a first glance, it seems rather unconventional to go to a music (rock) festival with small children, it really seems that this special kind of vacation works extremely well for this family. Especially, it seems that the rock festival offers the family the opportunity to have nice experiences together while it also allows for Carl and his girlfriend to have experiences that they enjoy.

Apart from the summer holidays, Ann and Carl have had some additional vacations away from home. However, most of these vacations have been short breaks/extended weekends, during which they go visit relatives (both in Denmark and abroad). Most of these stays are combined with some kind of activities with their children. For example, some relatives live close to a larger amusement park and hence, a visit to the amusement park is an integral part of these stays. Moreover, when they have visited relatives in Norway they have enjoyed the scenic landscapes while the relatives went to work. Apart from vacations with his girlfriend and children, Carl has had one 'wilderness' trip to Northern Scandinavia with a group of fellow male musicians. Carl recalls these 14 days of canoeing in the middle of nowhere as a very nice vacation and when asked why this was a very nice vacation, Carl argued as follows:

*C: The niceness of it? But it was, to be together, us guys, and that we didn't have to do anything at all [laughing]. I mean, it might sound silly, but I mean, if we felt like settling down and getting drunk at 10 a.m., then we just did that. And there was nothing we had to do, nothing we could do, I mean you couldn't do things like cleaning up and stuff*

In sum, to Carl it seems that especially a nice vacation has to do with relaxation and being laid-back. Thus, regardless of where he spends his vacations (at home, at the music festival, or with friends and relatives) primarily Carl defines a nice vacation as a vacuum from obligations and things that need to be done. Hence, in relation to Apter's two meta-motivational systems Carl's vacation motivations seem to relate far more to relaxation than to a need to have 'grand' experiences, or in Carl's words:

*I: So a nice vacation is about cosiness or ...?*

*C: Yes and with absolutely no stress*

#### **4.13. SHORT-BREAKS AND ACTIVE HOLIDAYS AS 'ENERGY GENERATORS'**

This interview was done with Beth and John (58, 60), who are empty nesters. Beth and John are amongst the more experienced travellers in this study. Thus, during their nearly 40 years of marriage they have tried a host of different vacations. For example, when they had small children (in the 1970ties) they went on packaged tours without their children (to e.g. Spain, Italy,

Greece, and Thailand). Later on, they took the children skiing in Sweden and to friends at a Scottish castle for a series of years. Apart from going on vacations as a couple (with or without their children), they have also gone on vacations with friends, acquaintances, and relatives. Also, they have gone on vacations individually (for example, for around 25 years, almost every year John has gone on hunting trips and Beth has had city breaks and active holidays with female friends). At present both of their children and their grandchildren live abroad and hence, they also do a lot of travelling in order to spend time with the children and grandchildren. Finally, due to her line of work (as a middle manager), Beth has been on a series of field trips to other countries and they have had some trips (e.g. to the USA), the purpose of which was to deliver puppies to their new owners. To Beth and John, going away on vacation (or for other purposes) is thus a highly integrated part of their lives. However, as indicated by the fragments of the interview that are reproduced below, Beth and John discriminate between the holidays where they go visit their children and grandchildren (5 grandchildren in the age group between 2 and 6) and the ones that they spend apart from their children and grandchildren:

*J: Actually, most of our holidays are spent doing that [being with children and grandchildren]*

*B: Actually I have done that that I have made my work schedule so that I have 10 extra holidays a year because my ordinary holidays are simply not enough. I mean, I couldn't cope if I spent all my holidays on my children, I simply couldn't. I really love to spend time with my children, but I also have to accumulate energy and you can't do that when you are around small children all day long*

*J: No, that drains your energy, actually*

Although John and Beth agree that it is actually demanding to spend time with their grandchildren, they also find it extremely important to spend quality time with their children and especially with their grandchildren. In relation to grandchildren, the following dialogue emerged:

*B: Actually, I would like to go to Disney World with xxx and xxx [names of the two oldest grand children], just John and I and the two oldest*

*I: It seems like that is becoming an item; grand-parents taking grandchildren on vacation?*

*B: Yes ... It is another way of experiencing your grandchildren. And it is lovely to give your grandchildren some nice experiences but it is also very nice for us to have those experiences with them because you get to know them better*

*I: Yes, well, and your grandchildren don't exactly live around the corner?*

*B: No, they don't. Actually, that's the greatest problem; to get them all together*

Beth's comments regarding the spending of quality time together with the grandchildren, to some extent, resemble the vacations that she and John took with the children when they were younger. Thus, at the end of the interview when John and Beth were asked the question on the

particularities of a 'nice vacation' they argued that each phase of life has its own 'nicest vacations' and that the phase as a nuclear family was characterized by the nicest vacations being those, during which they 'reconstructed' the family, or, to lent Beth's words:

*B: When we had small children and we went skiing in Sweden (and it was cheap and cosy and down-to-earth) at that point in time it was a nice vacation to be so much in contact with nature and being so much in harmony with one another. I mean, it was like, during daytime the children were outside and we made that work and then we had dinner and then we raced one another in the bobsleighs – John and I, each having a kid on board – and when we went inside we played cards and stuff. No frill. No hanky-panky, nothing. At that point in time that was what was nice [...] And it continued when we returned home. Because mostly we went skiing in February and then we continued to play cards and stuff for the remainder of the winter. And then the weather got better and better and then we started doing more things individually and then [high season in John's line of work started]. But then we re-connected again at the next vacation and that was the cycle we had in those years. And that was what we needed back then and we thought that it was great*

Thus, during the course of their lives, to John and Beth, a host of dear holiday memories relate to times spent with their children and/or grandchildren. Nonetheless, although John and Beth really appreciate chances to spend time with their children and grandchildren, simultaneously, it is extremely important to them to also have vacations that do not include the children and grandchildren. In relation to the vacations that John and Beth take without their children and grandchildren the following conversation took place:

*I: So you try to have at least one vacation during which you do something on your own?*

*B: Yes we prioritize to be able to do that. But sometimes it includes simply staying at a holiday house and that's okay. I mean, I enjoy doing nothing, or doing what you like, or just sitting in front of the fire and glance at that. I mean, what we like to do when we're on vacation is to relax but we also enjoy being active*

Hence, to Beth and John there seems to be a major difference between vacations that they spend with their children and grandchildren and vacations spent without the offspring being present. Furthermore, as Beth and John have a long history of also going away on vacation without one another, they also discriminate between the vacations they take as a couple and the ones they take individually. When asked about the vacations that they take individually, the following lines of reasoning were explicated:

*B: It doesn't have to be that democratic or joint. It has to do with giving one another freedom. No, I also think it is about enjoying it with the other when he or she leaves ... It's half of the vacation that the spouse thinks it's okay that you are in for a good time. That's important. That's really important [...] I think it is important that you go out and accumulate energy – also individually. I mean, it would be unfair if John*

*couldn't go on a hunting trip because I don't want to do that. And it would be equally unfair if I couldn't take an educational trip or go hiking because he doesn't enjoy that*

As indicated by the fragments that are reproduced above, to Beth and John both their individual traveling and the vacations they take as a couple (both short-breaks/extended weekends and 'real' vacations) relate to (1) being active and (2) getting away from home. The following fragment of the interview relates to these issues:

*B: I need to get out of the house in order to accumulate energy*

*I: Some say that vacations spent at home end up with one doing something?*

*B: Yes, because there is always something that you just need to do, otherwise you feel guilty [...] Well, I can relax at home but it's always with a twist of guilt. Because, but, you could Hoover the kitchen floor, wash the cupboards, do the garden, or there's some laundry laying about, or something. No, I feel that I need to get away from home to have a vacation. But I can also feel that – and we are getting better at that – that we sometimes need to do something together during the weekends. Because that generates energy [...] I can feel that I need to experience something else that taking care of my home, I can feel that*

Quite interestingly, Beth does not discriminate between vacations and weekends in relation to their ability to generate energy. On the contrary, to Beth both 'extra-ordinary' things that she and John do during weekends and 'real' vacations act as 'energy generators'. This inter-relationship between weekends and 'real' vacations seems to have much to do with the aspirations John and Beth have for future vacations. Thus, as John faces retirement within a few years, Beth and John have considered what kind of living they would appreciate in future. In relation to this dimension the following quotes are relevant:

*B: But I think a lot about our network. And I think we will make use of the networks we create in other contexts. Like, xxx and xxx joined us in the holiday house, and xxx and xxx we stay in a holiday house with every year and they are very keen on us doing that in future also, if we can get around to it. And it could also be something as simple as going for a walk with friends*

*J: Yes, and xxx and xxx*

*B: Yes, ad xxx and xxx. I think we do some things together, both during our vacations and on weekends, but we are also very open about getting in contact with people that we initially like*

*B: Now that we are talking about vacations and leisure and things like that, I think that we are facing a milestone. At present I am building my future life*

*I: Trying to figure out how it should be for the next 20 or 30 years?*

*B: Yes, and it doesn't have to be about 'grand' vacations. I think we might rent holiday houses more often, take more short-breaks, and I think that we, in that way, are going to prioritize spending time with friends more ... I mean, something that is un-demanding and then it is also going to be about our children and*

*grandchildren and then it is also going to be something like 'let's go see the North Cape' or 'let's take the grandchildren to Disney World'. I mean, we are actually rather impulsive in that way*

In conclusion, although Beth and John have had many different kinds of vacations during the last 40 years or so (roughly, they have around 4 vacations away from home per year) and although – at the surface level – these vacations seem to relate to different aspirations, needs, wants, and motives, some fundamental issues seem to underlie all of the vacations that they have. First, it is very important to them to go away from home in order to accumulate energy. However, whereas most research indicates that 'recharging the batteries' relates to relaxation and 'doing nothing', this is not the case for Beth and John. On the contrary, in order for them to accumulate energy they have to 'do things' and be active during their vacations away from home. Thus, 'wanderlust' (also literally speaking) characterizes Beth and John whereas they seem to have absolutely no 'sunlust'. Secondly, many of their vacations are spent in the company of their children and grandchildren. Although these vacations do not generate energy, they are essential to Beth and John. Due to the fact that the children and grandchildren live in other countries, these vacations qualify as John's and Beth's chance to bond, and re-bond, with their children and grandchildren. Thirdly, to Beth and John it is extremely important that they spend time with people they like. Hence, it seems that in order for Beth and John to have a nice vacation they need either to (1) spend quality time with their children and/or grandchildren or (2) to 'do' something in the company of friends or other people that they like and who might, eventually, become friends (regardless of this being simply a Sunday walk or going on an educational vacation).

#### **4.14. STARTING TO 'GO & SEE' IN THE 1960TIES**

The informant, upon whom this section draws is 92 years old Jacob. Jacob has had a rather unique travel career as he and his wife started to go on vacation when he was around 50 years old and, for most years that have followed, Jacob has gone on vacation during the summer holidays. Even today, Jacob is rather active and, for example, he gets around driving his own car. In 1964 (when Jacob was 50 years old), he sold his farm and went to work in a factory. Thus, during the time prior to 1964, Jacob was self-employed and, as a result hereof, travelling had to do with daytrips, during which he, his wife and the children drove somewhere and returned home in time to do the 'evening chores'. However, in 1964 when he became an industrial worker, Jacob started to have 2 weeks of summer holidays and in 1965, for the first time, Jacob and his wife went away on a 4 days trip to another region of Denmark. The reason why Jacob and his wife took this trip was that their daughter had gone to that region of Denmark to work. Hence, the two weeks of vacation gave Jacob and his wife a unique opportunity to go visit her. However, apart from visiting their daughter, they also visited other relatives and they

went sightseeing in the region. According to Jacob, in the mid-1960ties it was not common for workers to leave home during the holidays. As indicated by the following part of the interview, to Jacob the four days trip qualifies as a transition in his life:

*I: So, the trip in 1965 was the first time you went away from home for more than an afternoon?*

*J: Yes, it was*

*I: Was it good?*

*J: Yes, but it was [laughing], we experienced a lot during that trip, right? We did take trips with the children before that, but that was only for the afternoon, then we went home again*

From 1965 and forward, Jacob has build a travel career which is comprised of a host of different types of vacations. For example, the first vacations were spent at caravan sites (first they bought a frame tent and later on they bought a caravan) whereas later phases of the travel career include stays in holidays houses and derelict farms as well as packaged tours. Although Jacob has spent vacations in Denmark as well as abroad, he has done more domestic traveling than he has gone abroad. One reason why the majority of vacations have been spent in Denmark is, according to Jacob, the fact that it is difficult to be a tourist if one does have competencies relating to foreign languages.

Although Jacob's travel career is comprised of some very different vacations (in terms of means of transportation, accommodation etc.) one key theme emerged in relation to all of his vacations. This theme is labeled 'point of departure'. Thus, regardless of type of vacation, to Jacob, vacations have always related to a wish to 'see things' and as a result hereof, the places he has stayed at during the vacations have always been points of departure. Hence, to Jacob a 'nice vacation' relates to one's going to the destination; setting up a 'base camp'; going on a host of daytrips; and returning to the 'base camp' in the evenings.

Jacob and his wife have spent most vacations in the companionship of relatives (either during the entire vacation or relatives have come by and visited them for part of the vacation). For example, the first vacations were taken together with his brother and sister-in-law and/or with his cousin and his wife. Later on, some vacations included Jacob's children, their spouses and the grandchildren. Thus, to Jacob a 'nice vacation' also relates to one's spending quality time with relatives.

At the end of the interview, when we engaged in a dialogue on how Jacob defines a nice vacation, at first Jacob told about some of the nice experiences he has had during his vacations.

Most of these memories relate to scenic landscapes and beautiful countryside. During this part of the interview, the following dialogues emerged:

*I: So has it mostly been about you seeing beautiful landscapes or?*

*J: Yes, because that's the best part of it*

*I: Yes, because it doesn't sound as if you have had 'lazy' vacations?*

*J: No*

*I: So you mostly went and saw things?*

*J: Yes, loads of that, all the time*

*I: What's so nice about going and seeing things?*

*J: But it is; it gives you a lot to think about*

*I: So why does one go on vacation? Why is it nice to get away?*

*J: It is nice to be with people you like and to experience, I think*

*I: Experiencing something else than home?*

*J: Yes ... You need to have some experiences and something to talk about. Right?*

*I: You mean something to talk about when you get back home?*

*J: Yes. Yes*

*I: And to have had some experiences?*

*J: Yes, yes. You always experience something. There's always something you can make use of*

*I: Does one become 'wiser'?*

*J: Well, it doesn't make you any more stupid [laughing]. But for sure, lots of the experiences make you think, they do. And I think the best thing is to keep oneself busy. It is nice to have things to do, it is*

To Jacob the notion of 'nice vacations' thus relates to whether the experiences you have during the vacation make a lasting impression. In conclusion, to Jacob, a nice vacation has always been about experiences. Furthermore, to Jacob nice experiences are to go and see things that will make lasting impressions and to do so in the companionship of people close to you.

#### **4.15. GOING ON HOLIDAY AND LEAVING THE BEACH AND THE BOAT BEHIND**

This interview was done with 43 years old Linda. Linda's nuclear family is comprised of her husband (42) and their two children (11, 8). To Linda, going away on holiday has always been an integral part of 'nice living'. Hence, both during her childhood and early youth she went on holiday. When she was 21, she met her husband and they have gone on vacation (more than once) for practically all the years they have been together. During a typical year, Linda and her family would have one trip to Southern Europe, one stay at a holiday house in Denmark, one skiing holiday and some additional short-breaks. Furthermore, Linda differs somewhat from most other informants with children as she and her husband also went on vacation when the children were infants. Apart from stays at a Danish holiday house, Linda and her husband also went on



packaged tours when the children were small (e.g. when the oldest child was one and two years old respectively and when the youngest child was two years old). Although Linda admits that it is more troublesome to go away on vacation with infants, it was important for her and her husband to take these vacations. The fact that Linda and her husband went on vacation when the children were small is rather surprisingly compared to other informants and even more so, because Linda and her husband live 'first row to the sea' and hence, in an area that other informants would visit during their holidays. The following fragment of the interview relates to the uniqueness of Linda's 'home environment':

*I: Many people take a series of daytrips where they, for example, go to amusement parks or to the beach – do you do that as well?*

*L: Well, it's like we have the beach just outside our door, so we go a lot to the beach ... Go across the road to the beach, last week we did that three times and we also went sailing in our boat four times last week*

As indicated by the fragment, Linda's 'home environment' much resembles the kind of 'holiday environments' that most people appreciate. Nonetheless, to go away on vacation is important to Linda. When asked about reasons why vacations away from home are important, Linda and the interviewer engaged in the following dialogue:

*I: But much of what you do during your vacations in Southern Europe you could also do at home?*

*L: Yes, if one could count on the weather being nice*

*I: So do your vacations have to do with 'weather guarantee'?*

*L: Yes ... We have two weeks of vacation coming up next week and we have big plans – if the weather is nice – we'll have a look at the weather forecast on Wednesday and if the weather is going to be nice, we'll go sailing from Friday. If the weather is going to be nice, we'll stay at home and then go sailing. But if the weather forecast indicates rain and thunder from Saturday and on, then we'll do all we can to go to Italy instead [laughs]*

For the last six years, every summer the family has spent time at a larger caravan site in Italy. Quite interestingly, not all of these trips were planned in advance. For example, Linda's told the following about last year's vacation in Italy:

*L: Well, last year we went to the holiday house first and we had not planned to go to Italy. But then the weather got bad and then on Monday we called and booked at the caravan site so that we were to turn up there during Saturday. But it was the weather that caused us to suddenly decide to go to Italy*

As indicated by this fragment of the interview, Linda and her family are quite willing to make last minute changes in their holiday plans in order to experience nice weather. This flexibility may

very well relate to the fact that, before they had children, Linda and her husband always booked last minute 'cancellation' packaged tours (at a substantial discount):

*L: Before we had children it was mostly about booking the holidays on Tuesdays and leaving on Saturdays. Where we were cold as ice, you know?*

However, along with other informants, Linda argues that degrees of flexibility have decreased after she had children:

*L: After we had children, I have a talent for planning that is above average, I mean we make lists and stuff*

*I: So is it harder to be impulsive when one has kids?*

*L: Yes, and our kids, they are not, like if we said to them that now we head down South, but we don't know where we are going to stay; my children would not like that at all. Our skiing holiday is also something that is booked more than 6 months in advance. ... And like, the packaged tour we took 2 weeks ago was booked 2 or 3 months in advance. So mostly, we plan some of it in advance*

*I: So it sounds as if you have 2 or 3 'safe' vacations that are planned and booked well in advance and then there might be one additional holiday that lures its way in there as well?*

*L: Yes, like the trip we took to Germany that was something that simply popped up two weeks before we actually went there*

Quite interestingly, Linda thinks that acceptable degrees of 'newness' and flexibility may increase as the children grow older:

*L: Usually, the saying is that small children like to go to the same place. Our children still want to go to the same place in Italy where we have already been 5 times [...] They still enjoy that it is a familiar place*

*I: Do you think that will change in future?*

*L: Yes, I think it will. I think, at some point in time they will want to try something new and have some new experiences*

As mentioned previously, during the summer holidays this family goes to Southern Europe and also stays in a Danish holiday house while they go skiing in the winter. It is interesting that the winter and summer holidays are very different in terms of the family's wishes regarding socializing. In so far the skiing holidays are concerned, they spend time with friends. For example, the last skiing holiday was spent with three other families and Linda thinks that spending the skiing holidays with others is nice because that enables all members of the family to do what they wish to during a specific day (i.e. to go down more demanding slopes; to spend time at the 'children's slope', or to laze about). However, during the summer holidays, the family prefers to be on their own. As a result, Linda and her family do not have as many visitors during their stays in holiday houses as most other informants; nor do they appreciate to be

accompanied by others during the vacations in Southern Europe. In relation to the fact that Linda prefers to spend the vacations in Europe with only her husband and her children, the following dialogue emerged:

*L: We did try one year to go to the Italian caravan site with some friends. And we thought that was cozy, but we didn't think that we had much time together [as a family]. Because it was as if you – unconsciously – tried to be considerate and unconsciously you planned things together*

*I: So although everybody agreed it should be relaxing, then – out of politeness and consideration – you ended up planning everything a bit more?*

*L: Yes, and also that our children never had us for themselves. Because it tends to be something like 'no, we'll just finish this conversation' – us adults or the kids did something on their own although they might have liked to have done something with us. So we've figured out that we'll much rather be on our own during those holidays*

As indicated by the fragment of the interview that is reproduced above, to Linda it is very important to spend quality time with her children during the holidays. In relation to this issue, Linda talks about the fact that a series of more individual activities often end up taking a lot of time during everyday life and hence, the summer holidays is an excellent chance to be with your children without a series of everyday obligations (especially the children's attending sports, being with friends, etc) getting in the way. Additionally, Linda finds that the holidays enables her to offer the children a chance to experience something new while offering them the safety inherent in her and her husband being present.

In relation to the explication of what constitutes a nice vacation, Linda does not only speak about the vacation itself or the memories relating to nice vacations. On the contrary, to Linda the anticipative phase is a key ingredient of niceness of vacations:

*L: To me, vacations is a breath of fresh air. And the joy of anticipation relating to the holidays, yes. That's the reason why I have split my summer holidays up in two parts; first I have one week off and later on, I have two weeks, because that way, I can look forward to the holidays twice*

To Linda, apart from the joy of anticipation a nice vacation also relates to being with her family and doing something nice with her husband and her children; e.g. to go sailing, to take a bicycle ride in Italy, to go to the beach, or to go skiing. Thus, Linda finds that the things the family does at home (i.e. sailing and being at the beach) are as nice as the things they experience when they go away during the holidays. As such, the fact that Linda and her family leave the beach and the boat behind during parts of the summer holiday is not a token of lack of appreciation of

these things. Instead, as explicated below, the 'leaving the boat and the beach behind' relates primarily to Linda's definition of a bad vacation:

*L: The only thing I label a bad vacation that is if it rains and storms for an entire week. Then it is a bad vacation – regardless of where I am*

#### 4.16. A BIT OF EVERYTHING

This interview was done with 41 years old Pamela. Pamela's nuclear family is comprised of her husband (44) and their two children (9 and 6). Both Pamela and her husband have jobs that entail much responsibility and as a result, both of them work long hours. In the past, Pamela and her husband have primarily spent the holidays travelling in Europe. However, close relatives live in an area where many Danes spend the summer holidays and around 10 years ago, Pamela and her husband were asked if they were interested in buying a caravan together with other relatives so that they could use the caravan as accommodation during the time they spent in that part of Denmark. The buying of the caravan was the starting point for a new kind of vacation for this family as neither Pamela nor her husband had ever spent the holidays at a caravan site before that point in time. However, today camping is a critical part of the family's travel career as they have bought another caravan on their own; a caravan that stays put at a caravan site not too far from their home. In regard to the weekends and parts of the holidays that the family spends at the caravan site, the following dialogue emerged:

*I: So, starting to go to a caravan site, that sounds like a transition?*

*P: Yes, it was*

*I: And it sounds like, I mean, you still do that?*

*P: Yes, but I love it today. A mental state of relief emerges when I get into the car and the bags are packed and when we take that half hour's drive there. As soon as we get to [a place halfway to the caravan site] I feel it. And it is the same for my husband, who had never gone camping in the past either*

*I: That feeling – what is it that is does to you?*

*P: But, it's the things we've talked about before. All the things you spend much energy and money building up at home, sometimes it's nice to get away from that. So it is a relief, a relief because you have more time, more time for the nice and close things – and the closeness, the children love that too. And you can only be close together in a caravan that is perhaps 20 or 30 square meters all included. So it is petite and comprehensible and we are close together all of the time*

Apart from the relief and closeness that Pamela mentions in the fragment of the interview reproduced above, a major reason why the family appreciates spending time at a caravan site has to do with the fact that there are many opportunities for doing things at the caravan site, as indicated by the following fragment:

*P: In a completely different way and in a way that you don't get in a holiday house. Because in a holiday house you depend on going away in order for the children to get to a playground. You have to make a decision to leave the holiday house and go some place in order for the children to play, or to do the groceries or something. But when you are at a caravan site, well, but it is a camp, everything is just around the corner and it's free and it's a world that is safe for all parties involved*

Although Pamela did not expect it at the outset, spending time at a caravan site has become an integral, and important, part of the family's recreational pattern. However, the family's travel career includes other things than spending time at the caravan site. For example, the children spend parts of the holidays with relatives and friends without Pamela and her husband being part of these vacations. As explicated below, Pamela finds that the vacations the children have without her and her husband are important:

*P: But I am also very conscious about the fact that the children need to have some experience with other people. Because it is during this separation that you figure out that you are part of a 'good' family. They don't figure that out if we are together all the time.*

Quite recently Pamela and her husband have started to take advantage of the fact that their children are capable of having a good time without their parents being present and as a result hereof, Pamela and her husband are starting to go on vacations without their children. For example, in a couple of months Pamela and her husband are taking a packaged tour to Rome. To Pamela, this tour is different from the kinds of vacations she has preferred for a series of years because the trip to Rome is what she calls an 'utter experience tour'. However, the trip to Rome is not simply a trip that she takes to enjoy being with her husband. On the contrary, Pamela offered the following comments regarding the decision to go to Rome:

*P: We are a nuclear family and we spend as much time as possible together. However, the children wouldn't appreciate a trip to Rome – yet. But eventually they will. And just the other day we told them that now we go to Rome – in advance, and we check it out and so, and then we'll bring them there later on. I mean, they are also into experiences and actually they are also rather interested in monuments and stuff like that.*

As indicated by the quote above, Pamela feels that the travel motivations of the family are changing at present. The following fragments relate to these changes:

*P: Personally and fundamentally I collect experiences and it took me by surprise that I can enjoy spending a week at a caravan site without doing anything but going to the beach or for a walk in the forest. It's like, there I'm not, it's sort of another kind of experiences that I collect now than it was 5 or 10 years ago. Back then it was all about going and seeing something that we had never seen before and things like that.*

*I: Do you think it is going to change as the children grow older; the kind of vacations you appreciate?*

*P: Yes, I am confident it will [...] If you had asked me 8 years ago if I would spend more vacations in a row at the same place I would have answered: 'No, are you nuts, I want to go out and experience something new'. But our pattern of needs has simply changed, so when we go on vacation now it's like, we don't have enough energy in everyday life to say 'now we are in surplus, so let's spend it on a vacation where we do a whole lot of things'. We use our energy during everyday life, so when we go on vacation we recharge. That is why vacations need to be something that all of us think is cosy and nice without being too demanding*

*I: So at present vacations seem to be more about relaxation than about experiences?*

*P: Yes, we are into relaxation. I think it is mostly about that, at least it is at present. But I can feel that it is getting better. As the children grow older and we grow older and as we get on top of things ... then our stress level is changing*

*P: So we do a bit of everything, but we prefer to be with the children when we go on vacation, that's what we like to do the most*

Thus, in relation to Apter's two meta-motivational systems, for a period of time Pamela and her family have mostly gone on vacation to lower stress by means of relaxation. However, at present the 'general' stress level is decreasing and as a result, Pamela is starting to appreciate the chance to have the kind of vacations she had before she had children; i.e. vacations that allow for her to have new experiences. This duality also emerged when, during the last part of the interview, Pamela was asked about her conception of a nice vacation:

*I: So what is a nice vacation?*

*P: Well, that's the one where there is ... Well, it entails something new. And the 'new' could be all sorts of things, like a different sunset, some animals you haven't seen before or something. But it entails something new.*

*P: And there has to be days where you do nothing. Because those days that's when you think 'no, I also need to ..., and I also need to ...'. But you don't need to, you don't have to do much when you are on vacation, you know? And that exercise is what we all need; otherwise we burn out in the end*

In conclusion, the travel career of Pamela and her family is rather interesting because Pamela is very aware of the fact that both of Apter's meta-motivational systems are at play. Hence, for a series of years, the everyday life context of this family has been rather hectic and as a result, during this period of time, primarily vacations have had to do with relaxation; something that a stay at a Danish caravan site enables the family to do. However, as the stress level is decreasing at the moment, the family is becoming more attracted to vacations that offer them ample opportunities for having 'new' experiences. Thus, this interview seems to shed additional

light on the fact that everyday life acts as a context that is crucial for the kind of experiences we seek during our vacations; i.e. lowering the stress level by means of relaxation or achieving arousal by means of having new experiences.

#### 4.17. BEING PART OF A FAMILY AND DETACHING ONESELF FROM IT

Together with interview 18, this section focuses on a nuclear family comprised of Josh (46), Ursula (44) and their three daughters: Irene (15), Ann (12), and Mary (8). Whereas section 4.18 accounts for the interview with Josh and Ursula, this section accounts for the interview with Irene, Ann and Mary. For many years, each summer this nuclear family has spent one week of their summer vacation away from home. All of these summer vacations the family has spent in a rented holiday house. Roughly one third of the vacations were spent in Denmark; another third in other Scandinavian countries; and the remaining vacations were spent in other parts of Europe (predominantly Eastern Europe, Italy, and France). The following fragment of the interview relates to the latest of these summer vacations, which was spent in a cottage in Sweden) [R stands for interviewer/researcher]:

*R: Was it a nice vacation?*

*I, A & M: Yes*

*R: What was nice about it?*

*M: There were lots of things to play on [trees, rocks, etc]*

*A: There was lots of space ... so we [the two youngest; Ann and Mary] could play*

*R: But it sounds as if you couldn't do lots of the things you do back home?*

*I, A & M: Yes*

*R: But it doesn't sound as if you mind?*

*A: I think it is nice to relax*

*R: Was there a TV?*

*A: Yes, there was a TV*

*M: But it didn't work*

*A: No, we couldn't make it work*

*R: Was that bad?*

*M: No, no*

*A: Not at all*

As indicated by the segment of the interview that is reproduced above, all three informants enjoyed the vacation they had in Sweden. The reasons why they enjoyed that vacation have a lot to do with the way these three informants define a nice vacation:

*R: So what is a nice vacation to you?*

*M: To have fun*

*A: To relax*

*I: To relax*

*A: But also to see something, but not too much, but to see something that is a bit exiting*

*M: To have experiences, to have experiences*

*R: So, it sounds as if a nice vacation has to do with relaxation?*

*A, I & M: Yes*

*R: Why can't one just do that at home?*

*A: Well, but you can, but it is just not the same thing [...]*

*M: It becomes boring when you get use to something and have done it many times*

*A: But also, like normally [in everyday life] we don't usually play cards and stuff like that, but you do that when you are on vacation*

*R: That thing about playing cards during the vacations – why is that cosy?*

*A: Because you don't have a lot of other things to do. And you don't have a lot of other things on your mind*

*R: So, if each of you were to try to tell my in one sentence what a nice vacation is?*

*M: To relax. And to have a cosy time*

*R: Anything else?*

*M: To experience something, sometimes, sometimes but not all of the time*

*A: Well, to relax and to be with the family. And to go see something once in a while*

*R: Once in a while, is that like every second or third day or?*

*A: Typically, we go on vacation for one week, so it's like 2, perhaps 3, times during that week*

As indicated by the fragments of the interview that are reproduced above, relaxation and having a cosy time with the other family members (e.g. playing cards) seem to be focal to these three informants' conceptions of a nice vacation. Furthermore, the fragments indicate that although they do want to have experiences (i.e. leaving the house in order to go 'do & see' things), all of the informants are very explicitly about the fact that it is important not to have too many experiences during the vacation. However, the issue about not wanting to have too many experiences does not replicate about all of the informants' vacations. Thus, apart from vacations with the nuclear family all of the three informants have vacations without their parents and siblings. For example, 15 years old Irene went on a school trip to Paris last year; 12 years old Ann has taken a school trip to Bornholm [the only Danish island far distanced from the main lands]; and 8 years old Mary goes on a series of shorter trips (2-3 days). Apart from that, the informants have a series of vacations where they, mostly individually, spend time with relatives (e.g. grand parents and the parents' close friends). As indicated by the following fragments the informants' define these vacations differently from the ones they take with the nuclear family:



*R: Was it [a school trip to Paris] different from the vacations you have with your parents?*

*I: Yes. In one way it was more fun, there were more people to talk with*

*R: Was there more action?*

*I: Yes [laughing]*

*R: So compared to the thing about both relaxing and experiencing that we talked about before – was there much relaxation during the Paris trip?*

*I: No, there wasn't. But you can talk a lot with each other and it is also fun that you can experience so much*

*R: You have also tried to travel without mom and dad?*

*A: Yes*

*R: Was it nice?*

*A: Yes, actually it was*

*R: What is nice about it?*

*A: The thing about being with people your own age*

*R: Before, you talked about nice vacations with your parents, but what about nice vacations without your parents?*

*M: To go swimming everyday, to relax, to watch TV perhaps, and to ride the bicycle*

*A: If it is with my friends then it is all about being with them and perhaps actually experiencing a lot of things – something special and different and well, to play cards*

Especially the two oldest informants argue that vacations spent without their parents (and particularly school trips) are different from the vacations they take with their parents. For example, both of them argue that it is perfectly alright for school trips and vacations with friends to incorporate many experiences and activities whereas they argue that relaxation is much more important to them when they go on vacation with their parents. Apart from the school trips, the three informants also enjoy the vacations they have with their grand parents etc. Especially, they relate the niceness of these vacations to the following two issues: (1) That one is 'being spoilt' and (2) that it is nice to spend time away from one's siblings. It thus seems that the informants are very aware of the fact that their travel careers are comprised of different sets of vacations, i.e. some vacations relate to being part of a nuclear family whereas the other vacations relate to having experiences on one's own (possibly with one's friends) and thus, with detachment from the nuclear family. Even more importantly the informants are very aware of the fact that they wish for different things in relation to the different set of vacations, i.e. trips with friends their own age especially relate to talking with these friends and to having experiences whereas they wish for relaxation and not too many experiences during the vacations with their nuclear family.

One last theme that emerged during the interview is the prestige of vacations. In relation to prestige, the following conversation took place:

*R: I was thinking, when you go back to school after the vacations, is it something that you talk about – where you have spend the holidays?*

*M: Yes, we do that every time. We have to bring along a thing from our vacation*

*R: What happens if you haven't been on vacation – do some kids not go on vacation?*

*A: Yes, there's a boy in my class, who only goes to a caravan site at [the closest, larger city] and that's not very far from home, so that's a bit like ...*

*R: Almost a bit embarrassing or?*

*A: Yes, actually it is*

*R: Is there some sort of prestige in going on vacation?*

*A: Yes*

*I: Yes, if you've been to the US or something like that*

*R: So that's kind of prestigiously - going to the US or?*

*I: Yes, the US and Australia too, I think*

*A: Yes, and France*

*I: And places that are like a bit exotic and a bit far away*

*A: And where the flight is longer*

*I: Yes, like the US or Australia*

Quite interestingly, the oldest two informants seem to have an evoked set of prestigious destinations (including 'exotic', far away places; the US; Australia; and France). Furthermore, Ann mentions the boy that does not 'really' go on vacation. Henceforth, it seems that these two teenagers are aware of a hierarchy of vacations based on their 'prestige value'; a hierarchy where a caravan site close to home is at the bottom and flying to places far away from home is at the top.

#### **4.18. GOING MAINSTREAM**

As mentioned previously, this interview was done with 46 years old Josh and 44 years old Ursula, who are the parents of Ann, Irene and Mary from section 4.17. Before they had children, Josh and Ursula did a lot of individual travelling. For example, they hitchhiked in Europe; drove a motorcycle across Europe; and stayed in Nepal for 5 months. Apart from that, Ursula also went to Latin America with a friend, a trip that lasted close to half a year. Most of these trips incorporated some planning although they were not pre-planned to such an extent that Ursula and John had decided on e.g. accommodation in advance. In relation to this series of trips, the following conversation took place:

*I: So trips like the one to Nepal - how come you took them?*

*J: Well, but a lot of people did that*

*U: Yes, you just did that at that point in time. It was back in the 80ties. We were a bit unconventional because we didn't go to India, we didn't go to Goa. One was supposed to do that, but we didn't feel like doing that [...]*

*I: How come trips like that were 'in'?*

*U: We are [a particular type of scientists] of trade – and then you travel*

*J: Yes, a lot of people did that [...]*

*U: It was expected, during our studies you were supposed to do some kind of travelling. Either as part of your studies or on your own*

To Ursula and Josh, individual travelling was an integral part of life before they had children and every summer during their time as university students, they did individual travelling. However, when they had children a major transition in their travel career occurred; as indicated by the following fragment of the interview:

*I: When did it change from individual travelling to more traditional vacations?*

*U: When we had children!*

*I: Did you also travel when the children were small or did you have a break back then?*

*U: We went to Sweden by car, with a tent, when I was pregnant with Ann and Irene still used the potty. So – how old was she? She was just under 2 years old. The potty and trolley and then putting up a tent in the Swedish forests*

*I: It sounds as if that was rather different from when the two of you travelled on your own?*

*U: Yes, it was a point in time where we thought we were the same as before we had children. It was the summer of 93 and we still believe that we were into backpacks - and children. Then in the summer of 94 we didn't go on vacation – because it was just so troublesome, and I think it was in 95 that we rented a holiday house for the first time*

As Ursula explicates above, the first vacation she and Josh took after they had children resembled the ones they had before they had children. However, as Ursula also explicates it turned out to be rather troublesome to travel with children in that way. In relation to this issue, Ursula and Josh offered the following comments:

*U: Despite the fact that they have children, some people still manage to do the things they did when they were younger*

*I: And it sounds as if you tried to do that on that trip to Sweden?*

*U: Yes but we didn't want the bother of that, you know?*

*J: No, but perhaps that was stupid? One of my colleagues told how they drove across Australia with two children using diapers*

Ursula's and Josh's vacations have become rather 'mainstream' and conventional after they had children. Hence, every summer they rent a house (e.g. a holiday house; a cottage; or a derelict

farm) for one week. Roughly one third of these vacations are spent in Denmark; a third in other parts of Scandinavia; and the remaining vacations are spent in other parts of Europe (predominantly Eastern Europe, Italy, or France). In relation to these (more traditional) vacations, Ursula said the following:

*U: But I think, to us it has to do with the fact that we took on some obligations when we decided to have children, right? And I don't know, I mean we have spent a few summer vacations at home and that was also great. I mean, we think it is great to get back home. I mean, for me it's like, two weeks away from home? I mean, back when we travelled for longer periods of time, today I'm like; 'how could you travel for such a long period of time?' Two weeks – then it is great to come back home, because at home that's where you live your life, you know? You don't live your life during the vacations – you live on everyday life. Vacations are nothing but small brackets, you know?*

Ursula's and Josh's travel career has changed quite substantially after they had children; i.e. going from individual travelling lasting close to a month (and sometimes more) to pre-planned one week stays in houses different places in Europe. In relation to the change towards vacations that are much more planned, Ursula mentioned that:

*U: Regarding the way we book our holidays now, I think that the worst thing is that we are always doing it so damn early on. Sometimes it could be nice to be more 'cool' about it*

Although all members of the family have a say in relation to the decision-making processes regarding vacations, Ursula is the initiator, information gatherer, and 'project manager' in relation to the family's summer vacation and mostly, by means of the internet, she finds a couple of alternate houses that correspond to the family's evaluative criteria and then the other family members decide on one of these houses. Hence, the one week of summer vacation is important enough for the family for them to spend some time and resources planning for it. The following fragments of the interview focus on reasons why it is important to the family to go away for a week during the summer holidays.

*U: For the kids [...] it is also about the fact that now we have this week, during which they have to make it work with one another. And there's no TV, no computer, they have to go outside and play or what it is they want to do [...] But it also has to do with have the time to relax together. And to see something different, something differently and to have a cosy time*

*J: And I also thing that the children have to have some sort of experience during the vacation. Seeing something they haven't seen before*

*U: Yes, they have to get that*

*I: How comes that's important?*

*J: Well, but because it's part of upbringing*

In concordance with the interview with Irene, Ann and Mary, Josh and Ursula acknowledge that the 'key ingredients' of the family's joint vacations are relaxation and being together as a family. This is probably also the reason why one of the family's key criteria for the choosing of accommodation is that they are on their own (i.e. no other people living close by the rental house). However, as Irene, Ann and Mary, Josh and Ursula also find that it is important that the vacation incorporates experiences in the form of 'seeing something different'. The following fragments of the interview address the 'experience' dimension of the family's joint vacations:

*U: So we see a few things – I think that the kids find that we drive around too much during the vacations – but we don't drive around that much, do we?*

*J: No, one can't claim that we do*

*U: According to the girls, the vacation we had this summer is the best we've had because that's probably the one where we did the least and drove around the least. That's rather amazing. But it's okay because we played a lot and we've been together a lot. The kids don't like to drive around a lot*

Although Ursula indicates that she and Josh probably favour to 'do more' during the vacations that their daughters do, at the same time, the two interviews do suggest that this family is able to make compromises that incorporate both relaxation and some (but not too many) experiences. This issue is also highlighted by Ursula as follows:

*U: But regarding vacations, the kind of that that I feel is vacation with my family that is to make me and my family leave our home and 'fuck all the things we should have done and all the things that need painting and all the stuff in the garden', and then go somewhere else and say; 'okay, this is where we are for this period of time' and then to talk about what we want to do. And very often - actually we are an embarrassing bunch because we don't experience much during the vacation – we get up late in the mornings and spend a long time having breakfast – and we play a lot [this includes both sports activities and things like playing cards]. But it is very relaxing*

As Ursula suggests, the vacations the family enjoys at present, foremost, have to do with relaxation and having a cosy time. In contrast, the trips she and Josh took before they had children had much more to do with excitement than with relaxation. This duality was the focal theme when, at the last section of the interview, Ursula and Josh were asked about their conceptions of 'a nice vacation':

*I: So, if you look back on all the trips you've had and if you were to try to sum up, what is a nice vacation then?*

*U: Ohhh, ... but, what is a nice vacation, John?*

*J: Well, what is a vacation?*

*U: Yes it also has to do with what a vacation is?*

*J: Was it a vacation we had in Nepal, for example, or when we hitchhiked in Scotland – was that a vacation?*

*I: When do you feel that it is a vacation – what do you associate with ‘we’ve been on vacation’?*

*[...]*

*U: The thing we do with the kids, I think that is vacation?*

*J: Yes, yes*

*U: The things we did before we had children they weren’t vacations per se, that was something different. It also had to do with using yourself [...]*

*I: So it sounds as if the thing you do with the girls is about relaxation and getting away?*

*U: Yes*

*I: And that is vacation?*

*U: Yes*

*I: But Nepal, for example?*

*U: To walk around with 25 kilos in the backpack and have troubles with your digestion, there’s not much vacation in that [...] It is damn hard – it’s never been vacation. To hitchhike across Europe, that’s not vacation, no way. To desperately try to find a place to sleep, that’s not vacation*

*J: No, but you can make it work somehow, I think that’s our experience*

*U: Yes, yes. But it is hard work and everyday you pack the tent, you need to go there, and you need to find a place to sleep*

To close this section, Ursula and Josh reject the idea that all of their travelling qualifies as ‘vacations’. Although we would define (at least some of) their individual travelling as vacations if we draw upon traditional definitions of tourism and vacations, nonetheless, Ursula and John argue that the individual travelling they have done in the past does not qualify as vacations as it is ‘hard work’ to travel individually. Hence, Ursula and Josh argue that much clearer connections exist between the notion of ‘vacation’ and the vacations they take with their children than between that notion and the kinds of individual travelling they did in the past. Furthermore, it seems that especially ‘relaxation’ is the notion that, in Ursula’s and Josh’s minds, discriminates between activities that qualify as vacations (e.g. the one week trips they take with their daughters every summer) and activities that do not (e.g. individual travelling). Thus, to Josh and Ursula it seems that ‘relaxation’ is a key ingredient of vacations.

#### **4.19. BEING TOGETHER AS A FAMILY**

This interview was done with 30 years old Susan and 37 years old Andrew, who have three children (7, 5 and 2). Both Susan and Andrew work full time and both of them work irregular hours. Apart from this, they have a lot of other responsibilities that take up time. As Susan and Andrew do not have a lot of spare time, going away on vacation has not been an integral part of

their adult lives. However, both of them had vacations with their parents while they were children. To Andrew, mostly childhood vacations had to do with accompanying his parents when they visited friends and relatives in other parts of Denmark. Susan, on the other hand, has been on different vacations in different parts of Europe with her parents during childhood. Apart from childhood vacations, both of them had vacations with friends during youth. Most of these vacations correspond to the types of vacations that Ken mentioned. Although vacations away from home have not been an integral part of Susan's and Andrew's life together, this summer they went on their first 'real' vacation with their children; renting a holiday house for a week during the summer holidays. Apart from going and seeing things 4 out of 6 days they also had friends and close relatives coming by the holiday house. Below some of Susan's reflections concerning this vacation are reproduced.

*S: But I think that the nice thing about that vacation was that we spent time together, right? That we didn't do all of those chores that we would have done if we had stayed at home. And then we were extremely lucky because the people in the holiday house next door had children the same age as ours, so we both had 'adult time' and 'children's time', I mean, that we actually also had time to relax*

In relation to the things that they saw during this vacation, Susan made the following comments:

*S: There were two days that we didn't go and see anything during that week. But otherwise we went to see something every day, we went 2 or 3 places each day, that mostly had to do with visiting attractions and visiting acquaintances, so well, we drove around quite a bit. And saw things we wouldn't have seen otherwise. And we were together in a different way that we usually are [...] It was a different experience in the way that we concentrated on being together*

Although Susan and Andrew agree that their first family vacation was a very nice experience they 'rated' it differently as highlighted by the following fragment of the interview:

*I: So this 'first' vacation together if you were to rate it, like if 10 is a major success and 1 is like 'it was okay'*

*A: Then I would say*

*S: Yes, how would you rate it?*

*A: Then I would say 9*

*S: Okay, because I would say 7*

*A: Okay*

*I: So like, 7 indicates that it could be better or?*

*S: Yes, but we did so many things, so the part about relaxation... I mean, you also go on vacation in order to do that*

*A: Yes*

*S: Like being in no hurry[...] But I think it's probably because it was our first vacation together and that was one of the things that we hadn't talked about in advance; what kind of expectations each of us had*

As indicated above, the week at the holiday house has been a learning experience for Susan and Andrew because they – in retrospective – realise that their expectations towards the dedication of time to relaxation and 'doing things' respectively during a vacation differ. Nonetheless, Andrew and Susan are rather confident that this will not be the last vacation they take together. One reason for their positive attitude towards going on vacation again relates to their children's enactment of the vacation:

*I: What about the children – have they commented on the vacation you took this summer?*

*A: Yes*

*S: Yes, they've said that they've been on summer holiday and that we were in a holiday house*

*A: And actually they've told us that they liked it*

*S: Yes, they said that it was a nice vacation*

*I: Do you think there's like prestige in it to the children?*

*S: Yes. There is and they think – like this stay at the holiday house has been good for them, that they are now able to say 'well, we went on summer holiday, we went to a holiday house, we've tried something, we did something during the summer holidays'. And it needn't be something like going to the US or something, it's not necessarily that*

*A: We can easily feel that when we attend soccer or wherever I accompany the children, then I notice that - well, mostly it's other children who do the talking – but that the kids tell 'we went there' and 'we are going there, trying that and doing that', you know*

Hence, it seems that a major reason why the summer vacation was nice is that the children enjoyed it and that they (also) went away on vacation during the summer holidays. As with Grith and Peter, it was the female spouse (Susan), who brought up, and stuck to, the idea of going away on vacation. The fact that Susan was very keen on the idea of going away on vacation relates to the following arguments:

*S: It [going away on vacation] both has to do with doing something for your relationship and to do with being with your children. You can't separate those two things. Both are equally important and they are interrelated somehow [...] It has to do with bringing into focus that it is us as a family that matters. That it isn't work that matters.*

In conclusion, the first vacation Andrew and Susan took as a nuclear family was 'a nice vacation', perhaps not so much in itself, but especially because it enabled them to be together



as a family without work or other duties getting in the way of their 'being a family'. This interpretation nicely corresponds with Susan's definition of a nice vacation:

*S: But to me it has nothing to do with where we are. Instead, it has to do with what it is like; I mean; how we are with each other*

#### 4.20. IF SOMEONE HAD ASKED ME

This interview was done with 38 years old Dan. Dan has relatives in another European country and during childhood and early youth, most years he, and his parents, went and visited these relatives (mostly for extended weekends). Apart from these vacations, during youth and early adulthood, Dan had a series of vacations with his friends. Some of these vacations resemble the kind of vacations that Ken spoke of (section 4.6) whereas others were fishing trips to e.g. Norway with mates. The following fragment of the interview relates to the 'boozing' holidays:

*D: Well, but we needed to go somewhere, to just settle down somewhere and then knock back some beers and scream and shout and well, yes [...] Something happened all the time and we were together for the whole time during that week*

*I: Was it an issue that people didn't know what you were during – I mean, your mates knew – but apart from them?*

*D: Yes, I don't think we would have acted the same way if it had been [accommodation close to home]; at a place you knew and where people knew you. I think that was mainly it*

A feature that characterises all of Dan's vacations away from home is that he has not planned them himself. Thus, all of Dan's vacations are end results of someone inviting him to join them. In relation to this issue, when Dan was asked why he does not go much on vacation at present he argued as follows:

*D: But, then you have to take the initiative. I haven't like had a need to go on vacation, I haven't thought that much about it. If somebody had said 'let's go on vacation', then I had probably done it [...] Also, if you are planning to go on vacation and you say, now I want to go, like, somewhere in Southern Europe. If you go on your own, you are like getting there and 'well, what am I to do now'. If you go with someone else then you can talk about it and figure out what to do. I'd imagine that if I go on my own I would just walk around, not really seeing anything [...] Something like going on vacation, I mean there's this and that and you have to remember this and that. Actually, it would almost make me stressed*

*D: Because when there are two of you then you can talk about what to do and then one says 'let's do it' [...] I think that if I was in a permanent relationship then I would go more on vacation*

As indicated by the fragments of the interview that are reproduced above, reasons why Dan does not go much on vacation relate especially to the fact that it is more complicated to go on vacation on your own than it is to go with someone else (regardless of it being a girlfriend or mates). Furthermore, Dan argues that reasons why he does not go much on vacations probably relate to the fact that he did not go much on vacation as a child:

*D: I wasn't brought up on, like, going on vacation [...] I think it has a lot to do with the way you are raised, having to do with your parents. Stuff like that, I think. If my parents had gone on vacation all the time, then I had gotten used to that and then I would probably had gone on more vacations*

However, although Dan argues that he has not thought much about vacations and that they have not been an integral part of his life, simultaneously he does argue that he has been confronted with his not going away on vacation:

*D: At my place of work, some of my colleagues travel every time they have a vacation. And when they ask what I have planned and I answer 'well, I'm not doing much, I am just going to relax at home', then they ask 'aren't you going away during the holidays?' And when I reply 'no, I'm not' then they become somewhat like 'ohh, like that, well'*

In conclusion, although Dan resembles informants such as Ellen insofar he does not go much on vacation there are some important differences. First of all, the 'not going away on vacation' is not a deliberate choice on Dan's behalf to the same extent as it is to e.g. Ellen. On the contrary, to Dan 'the staying at home' seems to have more to do with his life situation (being a single) than it has to do with his not wanting to go on vacation. For example, Dan has actually joined in most times he has been invited on vacations. Secondly, Dan acknowledges that people (i.e. colleagues) who go much on vacation question the fact that he does not do so. Finally, Dan, rather explicitly, relates the fact that he does not go much on vacation to the fact that he did not do so during childhood.

## 5. GLOBAL THEMES

As indicated by section 4, the 20 phenomenological interviews revealed a wide variety of themes that are relevant to research on consumers' experiences relating to vacations. Obviously, it would be too complex a task to try to deal with all of these themes in depth in this paper. Consequently, the purpose of this section is to introduce these different themes whereas future publications will deal with each of these themes in further depths.

As a first theme it seems that ***the family lifecycle*** (e.g. Brown & Deaton, 1979; Landon & Locander, 1979; Reilly et al, 1984; and Wagner & Hanna, 1983) has a profound effect on informants' conceptions of a 'nice vacation'. Especially this effect seems to relate to the age of the children. Hence, many informants argue that age of the children is decisive for the types of vacations that they take. For example, Grith and Peter (interviews 1 and 11); June and Peter (interview 3); Owen and Karen (interview 5); Keith (interview 9); Steven and Tanya (interview 10); and Carl (interview 12) argue that small children actually delimit the range of possible vacations that one may go on. Furthermore, although the informants differ in their conceptions of when it is 'the right time' to go on more costly and more demanding vacations with one's children, they do agree that transitions in travel motivations and choice of vacation occur when children get older. Many informants (e.g. Ben and Mary (interview 2); June and Peter (interview 3); Henry (interview 4); Owen and Karen (interview 5); Eileen (interview 7); Keith (interview 9); Steven and Tanya (interview 10); and John and Beth (interview 13)) discuss vacations where three generations of the extended family go on vacation together. Finally, more informants (e.g. Ben and Mary (interview 2); June and Peter (interview 3); Henry (interview 4); Owen and Karen (interview 5); Ken (interview 6); Eileen (interview 7); Carl (interview 11); Steven and Tanya (interview 10); and John and Beth (interview 13)) touch upon the vacations they have had as a couple without children (in the years before they have children, as reconstruction of the relationship without the children being present, or during their years as 'empty nesters') and furthermore, these vacations without children seem rather different from the once that they have with children and/or grandchildren. Hence, a forthcoming publication focuses on the findings of the study that suggest that stage in the family life cycle effects travel motivations and choice of vacation. Especially, this line of reasoning draws on the fact that the 20 interviews suggest that it would be far too simplistic to define travel careers as 'ladders' that people climb in search of fulfilment of increasingly sophisticated needs. Instead, it seems far more reasonable to define ***travel careers*** as patterns (Pearce, 2005); thus emphasising that stages in the family life cycle profoundly effect prevalence of various needs and motives.

In relation to the cultural dimension of vacations that relates to wishes to ***'meet the locals'*** informants differ profoundly. Thus, to some informants (and especially June and Peter (interview 2)) some of the dearest holiday memories relate to encounters with locals whereas other informants (e.g. Henry (interview 4) and Grith and Peter (interviews 1 and 11)) argue that they 'keep to themselves' during the (or at least some) holidays because the vacation is mostly about reconstructing the family. Hence, a future publication will emphasise the differences in relation to tourists' wishes to (not) get in contact with locals while being on vacation. As such, this publication adds to the distinction between vacations as 'going away from' and 'going towards something' as the empirical study suggests that the 'going towards' other cultures and ways of

living is less prevalent across the 30 informants upon whom this piece of research draws than we usually think.

Carr (2002) wrote a rather seminal article on *the tourism-leisure behavioural continuum*, in which he argues that an inter-relationship exists between these two concepts. Drawing on informants' definitions of tourism and leisure respectively, the interviews offer additional insights into these two interrelated concepts. Although informants differ profoundly in their definitions of these two concepts, an interesting finding is that most informants argue that these two concepts are so interrelated that they do not discriminate between them in ways that resemble traditional definitions. Thus, to some informants (e.g. Henry (interview 4); Owen and Karen (interview 5); Ellen (interview 8); Keith (interview 9); Steven and Tanya (interview 10); and John and Beth (interview 13)) the distinction between tourism and leisure behaviour is actually rather arbitrary as these two concepts simply seem to be (not so different) means to the same end; i.e. making the best possible use of the scarce leisure time that is available. Hence, a forthcoming publication discusses discrepancies between (1) traditional distinctions between leisure and tourism and (2) informants' definitions of these two concepts. Thus, this publication discusses the ways in which these informants form coherent wholes of the entire spectrum of 'ways to spend scarce leisure time'; wholes that go beyond our traditional definitions of tourism and leisure behaviour.

As the notions 'experiences' and 'the experience economy' have gained popularity, increasingly notions of tourists as people in search of memorable and out-of-the-ordinary experiences is emphasised. Hence, a host of contemporary research projects focuses on active and highly involved tourists, who are driven by needs for excitement and 'grand' experiences (e.g. Johns & Gyimóthy, 2003; Goulding, 2000; Walker et al, 2005). However, the present study indicates that the need for excitement, thrill, and 'out-of-the-ordinary' experiences is only one dimension of reasons why people go on vacation. Hence, to some informants the primary reasons why they go away on vacation are to relax and to get away from their stressful everyday lives. Thus, the findings of the present study are concordant with O'Dell (2005, p. 30) suggestion that some tourists "... are in search of a different type of experience: Peace and quite. And this is a phenomenon that has been largely overlooked in the literature on the Experience Economy). Hence, as indicated by e.g. Blichfeldt *et al.* (2006) the findings of this study aligns with Apter's (1992) claim that two meta-motivational systems affect preferred levels of arousal and hence, the findings confirm that tourists both **seek excitement** and experiences in order not to be bored and seek to **avoid anxiety** by means of relaxation and 'being freed from experiences'. Even more importantly, perhaps, the study accounted for in this study suggests that to some people going away from home is necessary if one wishes to relax whereas other informants are quite

capable of relaxing while staying at home. A forthcoming publication focuses on this crucial difference between informants (i.e. the 'relaxing at home' people and the 'cannot relax at home' people).

The study reveals a series of interesting aspects of **family decision-making** (e.g. Jensen, 1990; 2002). For example, more informants offered examples of different decision-making processes that the family engaged in – both prior to and during vacations. Although some informants (e.g. Grith and Peter (interviews 1 and 11); Owen and Karen (interview 5); and Keith (interview 9)) account for decision-making processes that resemble extensive problem-solving, rather surprisingly, others informants argue that they do not engage in high involvement decision-making processes and as results hereof, they (1) replicate last year's successful vacation; (2) make last minute, impulsive decisions; or (3) stay at home during the holidays. A forthcoming publication accounts for the different findings that relate to the variety amongst informants' decision-making processes relating to vacations. Thus, this publication will question the assumption that decision-making processes relating to vacations are best described as high involvement and henceforth, extensive problem solving.

The fact that two meta-motivational systems (i.e. excitement seeking and anxiety avoidance) emerged during interviews offers new insights in relation to travel motivations. Apart from insights that relate to traditional push and pull factors, the study also offers insights in travel motivations that relate to the Band Wagon effect and inclinations to comply with norms. Some informants (such as Ken and Dan) directly speak of social pressure, prestige, and the subjective norms relating to vacations. However, these seem to be rather sensitive issues that most informants touch upon only indirectly. Hence, a future publication will focus on these sensitive issues by means of comparison of the data with Ajzen's (1991) **theory of planned behavior**. Due to the fact that the researcher relied on her personal network in order to identify informants, variety in terms of travel experience characterises the pool of informants, upon whom the empirical study draws. Thus, at one end of the spectrum we find Ellen, who's only travel experiences relate to a couple of school trips. At the other end of the spectrum we find people such as Beth and John, who go on vacation at least 3 to 4 times a year (both together with the spouse and/or their adult children and individually). As mentioned in section 3, when I first approached informants and asked whether they would participate in an interview, the first response offered by many of them was something in the lines of "well, you know, I don't think I have much to offer, because I/we haven't travelled much". This initial response was rather interesting as it – together with the subsequent interviews – suggested that (1) most informants had a conception of how much travelling one should have done in order to be an 'interesting subject' and (2) most informants felt that they had done **too little travelling** to be 'interesting'

Furthermore, apart from Ellen and a few other informants, people were actually rather embarrassed if they had not done much travelling (although most interviews revealed that people had travelled more than they thought before we engaged in the interview). In a methodological perspective this dimension of the study is important. Especially it indicates that most of the informants, who felt that they have not travelled much ('enough') would not have participated in an interview, had they not known the researcher beforehand. Thus, it actually seems that the research design, and the issue of acquaintance in particular, enabled me to do a study that draws on informants that are not amongst the people, who would otherwise participate in a research study. For example, at the end of an interview, when the informant (Peter – interview 11) was asked about his feelings towards being interviewed, he responded that he would never have accepted to participate in an interview on the subject of vacations if it had not been for our acquaintance, or as he put it; "no way I would do that, but everything for you, my dear". One key finding of the study is thus that most of the informants, who feel that they do not travel much would not have participated in a study on 'nice vacations', had it not been for their being part of the researcher's personal network. Thus it seems that willingness to be part of a piece of research on vacations is highly contingent upon the amount of travelling that people have done. A forthcoming publication relates this finding to the fact that much tourism research includes an element of 'self-enrolment' on informants'/respondents' behalves.

## 6. VACATIONS AND INSTITUTIONALISATION

The purpose of the study accounted for in this paper was to deepen our knowledge on what a 'nice vacation' is. So, in retrospective it seems appropriate to try to answer the question on what constitutes a nice vacation. However, this is a rather difficult question to answer. Especially it is difficult to offer such an answer as the study revealed that not only does the definition of a 'nice vacation' differ across informants (and their life-contexts), but also, it differs across the reasons why people go on a specific vacation and across the people that one goes on vacation with. Hence, it seems that it would be extremely difficult to construct any form of typology that could account for the different conceptions of a 'nice vacation' as such conceptions differ not only across people, but also, that each individual engages in a wide range of different vacations, the purposes of which differ profoundly. Thus, if I were to answer the question: What is a nice vacation? The answer would be that 'it depends'. Thereto, I would add that it depends not only upon who I am; where I go; why I go there; and with whom I go there. In addition, it also depends on my 'home environment' and the things about this home environment that I appreciate and/or the things that I dislike (at the moment).

Berger and Luckmann's (1966) discussion on the concept of 'institutions' adds to the findings accounted for in this paper as these authors define institutions as all types of behavioural patterns that are delimited by time and space as well as society. Thus, in principle, Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 80) find that "institutionalisation may take place in any area of collectively relevant conduct" and also if the collective conduct only includes two individuals. Hence, in regard to the origins of institutionalisation, Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 70 and 71 respectively) argue that "all human activity is subject to habitualization" and that "habitualization carries with it the important psychological gain that choices are narrowed". As a result, Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 72) find that "institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors. Put differently, any such typification is an institution". Hence, apart from 'traditional' institutions such as e.g. family, school, and religion, behavioural patterns such as the family's annually repeated, well-established vacations away from home may also qualify as institutions. Thus, although Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue that typically institutions emerge in 'collectivities' consisting of many people, they emphasize the fact that within the realm of their broad definition of institutions, institutionalising processes need only the interaction between two individuals in order to occur. Thus, families' annual vacations may also act as institutions. Furthermore, Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue that institutions are crucial to preservation of everyday life-worlds. Furthermore, Berger and Luckmann (1966, p. 72) argue that "institutions always have a history, of which they are the products. It is impossible to understand an institution adequately without an understanding of the historical process in which it was produced". In regard to the 'nice vacation' study, at the micro-level the history that produces people's conceptions of a nice vacation primarily consists of their travel career as well as the everyday contexts that influenced this career.

Drawing on Berger and Luckmann's (1966) broad definition of institutions, the 20 phenomenological interviews suggest that, to some people, vacations qualify as well established institutions. For example, June and Pete (section 4.3); Ursula et al (sections 4.17 and 4.18); Pamela (section 4.16); Linda (section 4.15); and Carl (section 4.12) go on vacation, with their nuclear family, every year during the summer holidays. Furthermore, these informants argue that these summer vacations are integral parts of their lives to such an extent that the lives of these families, during the summer holidays, are defined by a series of taken-for-granted routines. To illustrate the existence of such routines, numerous times during the interview Pete and June (section 4.3) emphasised their inability to plan summer vacations in 'due' time as a highly institutionalised pattern that leads to their, always, having to arrange summer vacations in 'the nick of time'. Thus, to Pete and June leaving home during the summer holidays is an institution; albeit an institution that relies on last moment detailed decision-making. In the same vein, during the interview Linda (section 4.15) emphasised how she and her family need to be

highly flexible due to the fact that 'nice weather' is a key ingredient of their definition of a nice vacation. Hence, to Linda and her family it is an institution to spend the summer holidays doing things together as a family although choice of place to spend the holidays varies profoundly across their different vacations. Furthermore, to Pamela (section 4.16) and her family both the skiing vacations and their stays at a caravan site qualify as reoccurring, predictable patterns of behaviour. This is also the case in relation to Carl's and his family's (section 4.12) annual attending of the music festival. Finally, Ursula et al's (sections 4.17 and 4.18) summer vacations probably qualify as the most institutionalised vacations included in the study. Thus, to Ursula and her family it is not an issue whether to rent a house for a week during the summer holidays. Instead, the decision making process evolves around their finding a country, a region, and a house that meet the family's explicit and stable decision-making criteria. Hence, although choice of accommodation, means of transportation, time of year, and/or length of stay may change, once in a while, these families' accounts for their vacations resemble Berger and Luckmann's (1966) notion of 'there we go again' and hence, it seems that these families have constructed a background of routines that guides decision-making processes regarding vacations. Furthermore, the vacations that these informants emphasised during the phenomenological interviews seem to have become what Berger and Luckmann (1966) label 'historical institutions' as the parents pass these institutions on to their children.

However, a series of other informants (e.g. Ken (section 4.6); Dan (section 4.20); Eileen (section 4.7); and Steven and Tanya (section 4.10)) – although going on vacation – have travel patterns that are characterised by a series of ad-hoc decisions. As such, these informants do not seem to have vacations that qualify as well-established institutions. On the contrary, most of these informants account for a series of vacations that 'just happened' to be a relevant choice at some specific point in time and/or in relation to some specific occasion. As argued in section 4, it seems reasonable to conclude that to these informants 'nice vacations' simply do not qualify as key ingredients of 'nice living'. These interviews add to Berger and Luckmann's (1966) discussion of habitualisation and institutionalisation as something that emerges in relation to important aspects of our lives. For example, Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue that actions that are relevant to all parties involved (within their common situation) are likely to become subject to typification and habitualisation. However, by no means do typifications and habitualisation characterise e.g. Ken's (section 4.6); Dan's (section 4.20); Eileen's (section 4.7); or Steven's and Tanya's (section 4.10) travel careers. As an example, for both Ken and Dan the key trigger in relation to all (but one) of their vacations has been invitations. Especially, they have had numerous invitations from friends to come along on vacations that included a set of friends (mostly around 10 people) going away together. Furthermore, Ken has had a series of vacations that were triggered by invitations to visit friends and acquaintances living in other



European countries. Accordingly, Ken and Dan have not been 'initiators' in relation to the vacations they have had. As another example, Eileen has had some vacations after her husband passed away. However, the initiation of these vacations was not a deep felt wish on Eileen's behalf to 'go on vacation'. Instead, initiation of these vacations was primarily casual conversations with her friends; friends who wished to go on vacation; who had an idea about what kind of vacation to take; and who asked Eileen whether she wanted to come along. Hence, as with Ken and Dan, the vacations Eileen has had after her husband passed away are not characterised by the informant's initiation of vacations. Steven and Tanya have had a series of vacations that they have initiated themselves (as well as quite a few that were initiated by friends). However, closer examination of the chronological account for their travel career that Tanya and Steven offered during the interview suggests that habituation and institutionalisation do not characterise their travel career. Accordingly, a reasonable interpretation of the lack of institutionalisation of Ken's; Dan's; Eileen's; and Steven's and Tanya's vacations is that vacations are simply not especially *relevant* to these informants. Hence, in relation to institutionalisation this series of interviews suggest that, to some people, vacations are simply not relevant enough to become subject to institutionalisation regardless of the fact that the same phenomenon is relevant enough for other people (e.g. June and Pete; Ursula et al; Pamela; Linda; and Carl) to become institutionalised.

A last set of informants (all of whom have 'dependent' children) seem to be in the midst of transition. Thus, informants such as Owen and Karen (section 4.5); Keith (section 4.9); Peter and Grith (sections 4.1 and 4.11); and Susan and Andrew (section 4.20) experience high levels of tension in relation to vacations. As mentioned previously, Berger and Luckmann (1966) argue that habituation incorporates an important psychological gain in so far it narrows choices. Hence, the couples for whom vacations are institutions do not have to define each 'vacational' decision-making situation anew, step by step. Instead, they are able to subsume a large variety of situations relating to vacations to their predefinitions and hence, this arrangement (or institution) "relieves both individuals of a considerable amount of tension" (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, p. 74). The fact that institutionalisation offers a reduction in tension to families in relation to vacations is rather interesting when compared to the interviews with Owen and Karen (section 4.5); Keith (section 4.9); Peter and Grith (sections 4.1 and 4.11); and Susan and Andrew (section 4.20) as all of these informants account for 'vacational' decision-making processes that are characterised by tension. For example, for all of the three couples (i.e. Owen & Karen; Peter & Grith; and Susan & Andrew) their recent vacations away from home are the end result of the female spouses' (i.e. Karen, Grith and Susan) 'pushing' for the family to go on (a new type of) vacation. For example, Peter argues that – although in retrospective, the family's first packaged tour was an utter success – they would not have had this vacation if Grith had not pushed for it.

In the same vein, Andrew explicated that the reason why this family has recently taken their first vacation was that Susan had insisted upon it (i.e. although ‘humourising’, Andrew did make the comment that “we went on vacation because my dear wife made it absolute clear that either we would go on vacation with our children or I would have to go”). Hence, it seems that – due to the female spouses’ demands for it – these families have recently embarked on a path that may lead to the development of a ‘vacational institution’ for these families in future. However, contradictory to Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) emphasising of habitualisation and henceforth, institutionalisation, these interviews suggest that vacations may not be, or become, institutions for all families. This is rather interesting as the couples that experience these high levels of tension are not *per se* unhappy couples. For example, Owen & Karen; Susan & Andrew, and Peter & Grith have been together for 6, 9, and 12 years respectively and do not have marriages one would intuitively label as relationships characterised by problems or crisis. Hence, it seems that although habitualisation and institutionalisation characterise many aspects of couple’s lives together, vacations may not always be one of the aspects in relation to which institutionalisation occurs. One reason why institutionalisation of vacations does not characterise couples such as Owen & Karen; Susan & Andrew; and Peter & Grith seems to be that these couples – in the past – have not defined vacations as highly relevant. However, during the interviews, numerous times, these couples (and especially the female spouses) argued that ‘providing new experiences’ (including vacations) is a critical element of ‘good parenting’. Furthermore, as ‘being a good parent’ is critical to these informants’ self-perceptions, vacations seem to become increasingly relevant; thus possibly explaining why these couples enact high levels of tension in relation to ‘vacational’ decision-making processes. This might also explain why so many other couples with dependent children that participated in the study have habitualised and institutionalised vacations.

In conclusion, the overwhelming majority of tourism research – explicitly or implicitly – adheres to the notion that ‘vacations are important to people’, thus emphasising high-involvement decision-making processes *prior* to the vacation; search for memorable and out-of-the-ordinary experiences *during* the vacation; and/or holiday memories as an important token *after* the vacation. If the notion that ‘vacations are important’ is universally true, then one would expect institutionalisation to characterise practically all of people’s vacation-related actions and behaviours. However, the ‘nice vacation’ study suggests that although vacations qualify as institutions for some informants, this is not the case for all informants. On the contrary, a host of informants’ travel careers have been subject to no (or very little) habitualisation and institutionalisation. Furthermore, a key difference between informants who institutionalise vacations and those who do not seems to be the relevance (or importance) they ascribe to vacations. Thus, although enactments of ‘nice vacations’ differ profoundly across people, one

'robust' finding seems to characterise the 'nice vacation' study: That to some people 'nice vacations' are central to 'nice living' whereas other people simply do not find that 'nice vacations' are critical to 'nice living'.

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## APPENDIX 1 - LIST OF INFORMANTS ETC

<b>Informants (1)</b>	<b>Travel Experiences etc.</b>	<b>Acq (2)</b>
Grith et al Nuclear family (43, 33, 11, 7)	Very limited before they had children. Caravan sites in Denmark and Sweden with small children. Last summer, they went on their first packaged tour	9
Ben & Mary (34, 33) Newly established relationship	Both have travelled with their parents when they were children. Both have travelled during adulthood (but very different forms of vacations). Shared vacations so far: In a holiday house owned by close relatives	3
June & Pete (54, 57) Empty nesters	30 years of shared summer holidays. These two informants have been to a host of different countries and have tried a host of different types of holidays, accommodations, and transportations	1
Henry Nuclear family (40, 41, 7, 5)	Lots of holidays with his parents when he was a child. Individual travelling as an adult (single). Travelling with his wife before they had children. Lots of trips and holidays with, and for, the children as well as some holidays with his wife without the children	7
Owen & Karen Nuclear family (34, 34, 5, 3)	Some travelling when they were kids. Before they met, Karen had a few vacations with female friends as well as more vacations with her parents and siblings. Owen has seen 'more of the world', going as an individual traveller. Some, but not many, vacations as a couple before they had kids. Not much travelling after they had children	8
Ken Couple with no kids (36, 34)	Fewer vacations away from home. The primary reason for doing the interview was to falsify or corroborate the emerging pattern of people 'forgetting' some vacations. Most vacations away from home relate to spending time with friends (both going on vacation with friends and travelling, in Denmark and abroad, to spend time with friends at their places of living)	9
Eileen (67) Widower, 1 daughter in her 40ties	Very few vacations in the past. However, some travelling during the last 8 years or so (both before and after her husband passed away)	8
Ellen (40) Single	Previously, Ellen lived with her parents. Her father died some years ago and after her mother's death last year, Ellen lives on her own (with her dog). Very few vacations indeed	4
Keith (31) Nuclear family (31, 29, 7, 5)	Before he met his wife, Keith enjoyed active holidays. During the last couple of years, Keith and his wife have started to go on vacation with their children	1
Steven & Tanya Empty nesters (59, 57)	Steven's and Tanya's children are adults and they have 2 grand children. Some, but not extremely much, travelling during their many years of marriage (roughly one trip every second year)	5
Peter	With his wife (Grith, interview 1) some vacations away from home	

Nuclear family (43, 33, 11, 7)	after they had children (typically in cottages at Danish caravan sites). Last year, the family took their first packaged tour	8
Carl Nuclear family (34, 30, 11, 6, 6)	Carl and his girlfriend met when they were quite young and soon after, they had their first child. Before they had children, most travelling had to do with music (rock) festivals. They haven't done much travelling with their children (mostly stays with relatives in other regions of Denmark and in Norway), but this summer, for the fourth time in a row, they are going to a (child-friendly) music festival with their children	2
Beth and John (58, 60) Empty nesters with 2 children and 5 grandchildren	Beth and John have done much travelling during the last 35 years or so. During a typical year, they go away on vacation at least 3 or 4 times. They go on vacations with their extended family, with friends and acquaintances, as a couple, and individually. For example, for 25 years, every year John has gone on hunting trips	9
Jacob (92) Widower Adult children	Jacob and his wife started to go on vacations (both in Denmark and in other European countries) in the 1960ties and from that point in time and forward, Jacob has had a variety of different vacations	2
Linda Nuclear family (43, 42, 11, 8)	To Linda and her family, vacations away from home qualify as a key ingredient of 'nice living'. This family takes roughly 2-3 vacations a year and some short-breaks. Furthermore, their house is first row from the beach and they sail a lot	4
Pamela Nuclear family (44, 41, 9, 6)	Before they had children, Pamela and her husband mostly (1) went on vacations in another region of Denmark (spending time with relatives) and (2) on car trips and packaged tours to other parts of Europe. However, after they had children they have bought a caravan, which stays at the same Danish caravan site. Apart from that they have a series of extended weekends and a few packaged tours without the children	3
Irene, Ann, Mary (15, 12, 8) Siblings in nuclear family	Apart from going with their parents on vacation (interview 18), these three girls also have some vacations without their parents: Staying with relatives during parts of the summer holidays and going on school trips	7
Ursula and Josh (44, 46) Parents to Irene, Ann, and Mary	Ursula and John have done a lot of individual travelling before they had children, e.g. trekking in Nepal, hitchhiking or riding a motorcycle around Europe. However, after they had children every year they rent a holiday house, derelict farm or cottage somewhere in Europe (roughly equally distributed between Denmark; Scandinavia, and Southern Europe)	8
Susan and Andrew (30, 37, 7, 5, 2)	Andrew works a lot and as a result, in the past vacations have predominantly been 1 to 3 days visits at friends or relatives.	8

Nuclear family	Sometimes, Andrew took part in these vacations, but most times he did not. However, this year the family went on their first vacation together; renting a Danish holiday house for a week	
Dan (38)	Dan is 38 years old and single. He has close relatives in another European country and, especially during childhood and youth, he visited them during the holidays. He had some vacations with his friends during youth, but he does not go much on vacation at present	8

(1) Names of informants (and a few characteristics) have been changed in accordance with informants' wishes regarding disclosure and confidentiality

(2) Degree of acquaintance is assessed on a 10 point scale where 10 is very high (i.e. the researcher knows the informant intimately and has done so for at least 15 to 20 years) and 1 is very low (e.g. the interviewer and the informant(s) have met a very limited number of times and the contact was facilitated by a person closer to both of them)

**Department of Environmental and Business Economics**  
**Institut for Miljø- og Erhvervsøkonomi (IME)**

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**IME REPORTS**

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