HOST-GUEST RELATIONSHIPS IN NON-COMMERCIAL

TOURISM SETTINGS:

WWOOFING IN NEW ZEALAND

By

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates host-guest relationships in a non-commercial tourism setting within the context of WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) in New Zealand. WWOOF is a worldwide membership network of organic farms, and is comprised of non-monetary exchange relationships between WWOOF hosts and guests (WWOOFers). It involves tourists offering their help with activities on these farms in exchange for accommodation and food.

The purpose of this research is to examine WWOOF hosts and guests' meanings and understandings of the host-guest relationship and the dynamics that influence the nature of the WWOOF encounter. An examination of hosts and guests' expectations and their subsequent effect on the encounter, and of personal outcomes, assist in making sense of the multiple roles of both parties.

The study contributes to the limited research that explores non-commercial host-guest relationships in tourism. Through consulting literature on the commercial home, it builds on previous work on WWOOFing by focusing on hosts *and* guests' perceptions rather than only one perspective. It gives voice to an under-acknowledged group of hosts and tourists, who are not counted as contributors to economic development of tourism in New Zealand.

The research was developed within a social constructivist paradigm. Using phenomenological methodology, in-depth interviews with hosts and guests in New Zealand allowed for a thorough analysis of their personal narratives of the WWOOF experience, and the host-guest relationships. Twenty-eight interviews were conducted during June and July 2011 (some with two interviewees): resulting in data from 24 hosts and 15 WWOOFers.

The findings suggest that WWOOF hosts and guests interact within work and social dimensions. The work dimension dictates that the guest offer help with work on the organic property in return for accommodation and food provided by the host. The social dimension demands interpersonal exchange and social bonds are developed. A model is presented, which demonstrates that host-guest relationships in WWOOFing evolve and are constantly being negotiated and evaluated. Hosts and guests have multiple roles within the two dimensions: employer-employee, host-guest, (family) host-family member, and friends. These roles are dependent on the level of formalisation of the encounter and the level of interpersonal connectedness. The encounter involves the host's obligation to meet the

needs of the guest and the guest's obligation to adhere to implicit and explicit rules and guidelines determined by the host. Space and time are mostly shared within the host's home or hosting space.

The study shows that the relationships that occur are complex and multi-faceted. The various dimensions, which are essential in creating closer, interpersonal relationships, are negotiated within various levels of the relationship. The aspects that influence the roles adopted in work and social spheres and the evolution of the relationship require an understanding of the temporal roles of hosts and guests, trust, shared values and stories, as well as work and social exchange elements.

For my grandparents Ruth & Julius Cronauer,

who taught me to reach for the stars.

"What are we doing when we travel? Crossing boundaries of reality, enlarging the spirit, exposing oneself to the unknown, discovering, being endangered, being infected, escaping, conquering, getting lost, forging a path, taking on the world, abandoning native origins, freeing oneself, asking questions, looking for something, finding oneself, going native, falling apart, experiencing the multiplicity of existence. Digging a tunnel to China. Sailing off on the blue-green sea of forever. Following a siren's call, following a drumbeat, getting away from it all."

(Leigh, in Sprengnether & Truesdale, 1991: 477)

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LIST OF TERMS USED IN THIS THESIS

TERM	**DESCRIPTION**
WWOOF:	World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms *(see section 1.3)*
WWOOF farm:	An organic farm or property that is registered in the WWOOF network.
WWOOFer:	An individual who volunteers on a registered WWOOF farm. In this thesis the terms WWOOFer, guest, and volunteer (tourist) are used to describe this person.
WWOOF host:	An organic farmer/property owner who hosts a WWOOFer. In this thesis referred to as host.
WWOOFing:	*Or* doing WWOOFing: volunteering on a WWOOF farm
WWOOF NZ:	The membership network of WWOOF in New Zealand.

CHAPTER 1:   PREPARING THE GROUND: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

This thesis is concerned with host-guest relationships in the non-commercial tourism setting within the context of WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms) in New Zealand. Through researching perspectives of both hosts and guests the study offers an in-depth insight into the relationships between these parties and the dynamics that influence the nature of the WWOOF encounter. An examination of the parties' expectations and their subsequent influence on the encounter, and of personal outcomes assist in making sense of the multiple roles of both parties within the relationship. In-depth interviews with WWOOF hosts and guests in New Zealand allowed for a thorough analysis of their personal narratives of the experience, and the host-guest relationships.

This chapter presents the background to the study, and provides an overview of the contributions of various streams of research to the understanding of hosts and guests, including the importance of studying both parties in the context of WWOOFing. It further introduces the research objectives and briefly highlights methodological considerations. Finally, the structure of this thesis is outlined.

1.2   MY INTEREST IN THE TOPIC

The decision to undertake this study was driven by my academic interest in investigating interpersonal relationships in tourism, my personal experience travelling as well as my interest in organic living. The fact that two strangers can develop close bonds while interacting within the temporal and spatial constraints of a tourism setting, while knowing that they are probably not going to see each other again after the encounter, fascinates me. Therefore, I find it astonishing that these relationships are not a major focus when studying tourism management. Particularly, during my undergraduate study in Germany the management sphere of tourism was emphasised and phenomena were taught from a tourist or tourism business perspective. It was only when I came to New Zealand that I learned about the importance of the social science side of tourism research. I learnt about WWOOFing, but have never been able to participate in it. As an environmentalist and animal rights advocate I identify with the values the network portrays and what it stands

for. I view WWOOFing as a means to create awareness about ethical practices through knowledge exchange. Connecting people who want to look after the planet and learn from each other should be a primary goal in tourism to ensure sustainability. Finally, having learnt about volunteer tourism in my honours year also contributed to my pursuit to exploring the WWOOF phenomenon.

1.3   STUDY CONTEXT: WWOOFING

WWOOF is a worldwide membership network of organic farms, which provide a voluntary experience for people who want to gain knowledge about organic farming, connect with nature and get to know the locals (McIntosh, 2009). WWOOF is not recognised by its members as an organisation as such but claims to be a worldwide community of hosts and volunteers (WWOOF, 2012a). WWOOF properties range from urban gardens to rural, traditional farms. The WWOOF concept involves tourists offering their help with activities on registered organic properties in exchange for accommodation and food.

The WWOOF network was founded in 1971 in the UK by Sue Coppard. As a secretary in London and a passionate supporter of the organic movement, she felt the urge to spend quality time in nature during the weekends and wanted to provide people living in urban areas with access to the countryside (Eldridge, 2005; McIntosh, 2009). She approached organic farmers in rural areas to give her work on their properties in exchange for board. What had started out as a weekend experience, resulted in more organic farmers wanting to gain voluntary help on their properties. "Working Weekends on Organic Farms" emerged, consisting of an exchange relationship between the volunteer (WWOOFer) and the farming host(s). With an increase in demand and a desire to spend longer periods of time on farms, the organisation became "Willing Workers On Organic Farms" (Maycock, 2008; WWOOF, 2011). The name later changed to "World Wide Opportunities On Organic Farms" in recognition of the organisation having created a worldwide network of organic farms and WWOOF volunteers (Maycock, 2008; WWOOF, 2011). Additionally, the term "work" created some confusion resulting in people associating WWOOFing with migrant work (WWOOF, 2011). Now, there are WWOOF farms in over 90 countries with 7,500 hosts and approximately 100,000 volunteers (WWOOF, 2011). Whereas WWOOF started as a phenomenon within the organic "hippy" movement, it is now recognised as a network for social and knowledge exchange. It is still embedded within the environmental ethos but more as a vehicle for cultural exchange and learning (Stehlik, 2002) as opposed to being

exclusively for people who are passionate about organics. WWOOFers usually help on the farms for four to six hours a day (WWOOF Ltd (NZ), 2010) and are free to pursue leisure activities afterwards. By staying in the hosts' home, WWOOFers share space and usually a considerable amount of time with their hosts. Like in farm tourism and commercial homes guests use the facilities on the property and are usually accommodated in the house or a sleep-out.

Every country involved has its own WWOOF network and becoming a member of the network in the specific country is a requirement for WWOOF hosts and volunteers (McIntosh, 2009). An application fee for both parties applies (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006) and covers a twelve-month membership with the country specific organisation (McIntosh, 2009). WWOOFers then have access to the hosts' contact details in the country and are required to arrange their stay on the property of choice. There are also autonomous WWOOF farms in places that have no national WWOOF network, which are listed in the International WWOOF Association (IWA) as "WWOOF Independents" (WWOOF, 2011).

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In 1974 the concept was introduced to New Zealand by Dick Roberts (McIntosh, 2009; Mosedale, 2009) who listed six farms interested in providing a "real" New Zealand farm experience (Katz, 2009). The number of farms and WWOOFers participating in the network has increased considerably from about 100 hosts twenty years ago to about 1,200 (Nelson Mail, 2007), which reflects its growing popularity. Roughly 5000-6000 volunteers (data from February 2010) are members of WWOOF New Zealand (Ord & Amer, 2010). WWOOF New Zealand promotes concern and care for the natural environment and greater cultural awareness (McIntosh, 2009).

The New Zealand context was chosen because of the popularity of the WWOOFing experience in the country. It is one of the oldest WWOOF countries and offers a variety of WWOOF settings from traditional farms, to medium-sized semi-commercial farms to urban gardens.

1.4   ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVES ON WWOOFING

WWOOFing has only recently emerged as a research interest in academia and, thus, there is still a lack of academic literature on the topic. It has been studied in the context of farm

tourism in New Zealand, in particular by Alison McIntosh (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001), as well as from the perspective of education (Stehlik, 2002), and agriculture (Maycock, 2008). McIntosh's research has mainly been concerned with exploring motivational aspects and the profiles of hosts and guests (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001). Other studies (e.g. Maycock, 2008; Stehlik, 2002) are more descriptive, providing information about the concept itself, whilst McIntosh's New Zealand-based research provides more analytical insight.

WWOOFing has also been associated with volunteer tourism (McIntosh, 2009; Moscardo, 2008; Schloegel, 2007). Schloegel (2007, p. 257) described WWOOF as a "well-established international volunteer program" whilst Moscardo (2008) discussed volunteer tourists' contribution to the growth of agriculture through their participation in WWOOFing. Most recently, in their book *Managing volunteers in tourism: attractions, destinations and events* Holmes and Smith (2009) present a chapter written by McIntosh, which emphasises the importance of communication between hosts and WWOOFers, their cooperation and trying to match their motivations. Importantly for the present study, Choo and Jamal (2009, p. 433) see WWOOF as a form of non-commercial farm stay, which encourages "agritourism through short stay volunteering on organic farms."

Consequently, WWOOF has been studied from different perspectives. Yet, the extant literature has failed to consider interpersonal host-guest relationships and the non-commercial hospitality element it entails. Importantly, WWOOFing embodies characteristics of more traditional hospitality exchange. It is the social meaning of hospitality which defines the host-guest encounter in WWOOF. C. A. King (1995, p. 222) calls social aspects of hospitality, private hospitality, which is about "one individual hosting another, without concern for financial reimbursement" and includes "acts by individuals toward individuals in a private setting such as the home." He further describes hospitality as "a relationship between individuals, who take the roles of host and guest" (C. A. King, 1995, p. 228). In private hospitality, the host is responsible for the guest's wellbeing, and the guest is obliged to respect the host's home. Since there is a lack of studies on non-monetary hospitality exchanges, literature on the commercial home in tourism has been consulted for the present study. The volunteer tourism literature has failed to examine interpersonal relationships between hosts and guest, whereas studies on the commercial

home have managed to capture a variety of dynamics of the social aspect of these relationships.

A lack of studies on the host-guest relations in the non-commercial accommodation sector has been identified. Also, the published literature on farm tourism has provided minimal analysis of visitors' perspectives of farm tourism and minimal attention has been given to the hosting aspect in volunteer tourism, let alone personal relationships between host and guest.

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This study examines host-guest relationships in WWOOFing from a non-commercial hospitality perspective by consulting literature on the commercial home and traditional hospitality. The nature of the WWOOF encounter, which includes elements of hospitality, farm tourism, volunteer tourism, and membership-based hospitality exchange-networks, called for an in-depth examination of the relationship between WWOOF hosts and guests from both parties' perspectives.

The objectives of this research are:

(1) to *compare* the meanings and understandings of the host-guest relationship of WWOOF hosts and volunteer tourists (WWOOFers),

(2) (within this comparison) to *understand* how expectations influence the host-guest relationship, and

(3) to *evaluate* the personal outcomes influenced by this relationship.

The focus is on objective (1) and the two secondary research questions, (2) and (3), help to provide an understanding of pre- and post- experience perspectives of both parties.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study was shaped by the social constructivist paradigm, as the socially constructed realities in the phenomenon of WWOOFing were examined (see Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It enabled me to investigate the multiple meanings the participants attributed to situations and their multiple roles in these circumstances (Creswell, 2007; Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). For this study a phenomenological research approach has been found suitable as the complexities of a social phenomenon are investigated (O'Leary, 2004). The process and structure of mental life are conceptualised in order to examine how

situations are meaningfully lived in reality (Wertz, 2011). Phenomenological researchers aim to develop a description of the essence of the experience by examining each person's perception and by investigating what they experienced and how they experienced it (Creswell, 2007; Wertz, 2011).

Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with WWOOF hosts and WWOOFers *(volunteer tourists on organic farms)* separately. Interviews were chosen because the research is concerned with examining personal experiences, expectations, and relationships. Active conversations with the interviewees were important to gain enough knowledge about the circumstances of the relationship. Personal narratives of their encounters enabled an in-depth interpretation of their meanings and understandings.

Twenty-eight interviews with 24 hosts and 15 WWOOFers were conducted to gain the perspectives of both parties involved in the encounter. Hosts and guests were not interviewed about the same experience and, thus, were recruited independent from each other. A research journal assisted in interpreting the findings. In order to reach a broad variety of farm property types and to include both rural and urban-based WWOOF experiences two regions were chosen, Nelson (more rural) and Wellington (more urban).

1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The contents of this thesis are presented in six chapters exhibiting six phases of organic farming. Like a farmer *'preparing the ground'*, chapter one has provided a background to the study, identified how the present thesis seeks to contribute to the literature, and outlined the research objectives to be investigated.

Chapter 2 *'sows the seeds'* by reviewing the literature on host-guest relationships in the broader tourism literature before discussing studies on hosting in the commercial home in more depth. A brief overview of volunteer tourism research concerned with hosts and guest is offered, which is followed by the review of the WWOOFing literature. The chapter concludes by introducing a conceptual framework to examine host-guest relationships in WWOOFing.

Chapter 3, *'feeding the soil'*, outlines the research approach, inquiry paradigm, and the research strategy. It reflects upon the research process, data collection and analysis, and the analytical framework. The strengths and challenges of the methodology are presented.

Chapter 4 *'grows the plants'* by presenting the findings of the study according to the analytical framework. The chapter introduces a variety of dynamics that are important in examining host-guest relationships in WWOOFing.

The findings are *'harvested'* in the discussion, chapter 5, which starts by introducing a *'Model of Host-Guest Relationships within Social and Work Dimensions in WWOOFing'* developed from the analysis of the findings. The chapter discusses four main dimensions: the work-social, host-guest, exchange, and the relationship evolution dimensions. It includes the interpretation of the dimensions that were found to be crucial for the development of interpersonal relationships between hosts and guests: obligations, rules and guidelines, the negotiation of shared and private time/space, shared values/stories, trust, and reciprocity. The discussion of expectations and outcomes follows.

Finally, chapter 6 *'savours the produce'* by providing a conclusion of this study and the research objectives are revisited. It discusses the contribution of this thesis to academia and knowledge, its limitations, and recommends actions for future research. Lastly, implications for hosts and WWOOFers are outlined.

CHAPTER 2:   SOWING THE SEEDS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews the literature relevant for examining host-guest relationships in WWOOFing. One can look at WWOOFing from a range of different perspectives, which thus draws together literature on host-guest relationships from a variety of different areas in tourism. For the purpose of the present study four main streams of literature have been evaluated: tourism, hospitality, farm tourism, and volunteer tourism literature *(figure 1)*.

The review discusses the ways hosts and guests have been examined within these studies. It highlights the need for a more in-depth examination of the relationship between hosts and guests in the non-commercial tourism setting of WWOOFing, by giving attention to studying both parties' perspectives. It emphasises the necessity to consult a broad variety of literature in order to explain the WWOOFing encounter and assess this relationship from a home stay perspective. The chapter transcends from a tourism provider-customer macro-level perspective, into examining the social perspective of host-guest relationships within tourism and hospitality on a micro level. The focus of this chapter is thus to draw on concepts of commercial home settings and to apply them to WWOOFing. This includes using literature from private spheres of hospitality to examine relationships between hosts and guests in WWOOFing, as well as reviewing literature from volunteer tourism studies to inform understandings of personal expectations and outcomes of tourists and hosts.

The chapter begins by providing a brief overview of the examination of hosts and guests in the tourism literature and then proceeds to consult studies on commercial hospitality. Studies on host-guest relationships within the literature on farm tourism and volunteer tourism will also be discussed briefly as WWOOFing has been examined from these perspectives. A discussion of previous studies concerned with the WWOOF phenomenon follows. Finally, the last section will highlight gaps in the literature and present a conceptual framework to examine host-guest relationships in WWOOFing.

Figure 1: Perspectives relevant to studying the WWOOF host-guest encounter

Figure content:
- WWOOFING
- HOST-GUEST IN TOURISM — TOURISM: LARGER SCALE HOSTING (COMMUNITY LEVEL)
- HOST-GUEST IN HOSPITALITY — HOSPITALITY: SMALLER SCALE HOSTING
- FARM TOURISM
- VOLUNTEER TOURISM — SMALL & LARGE SCALE
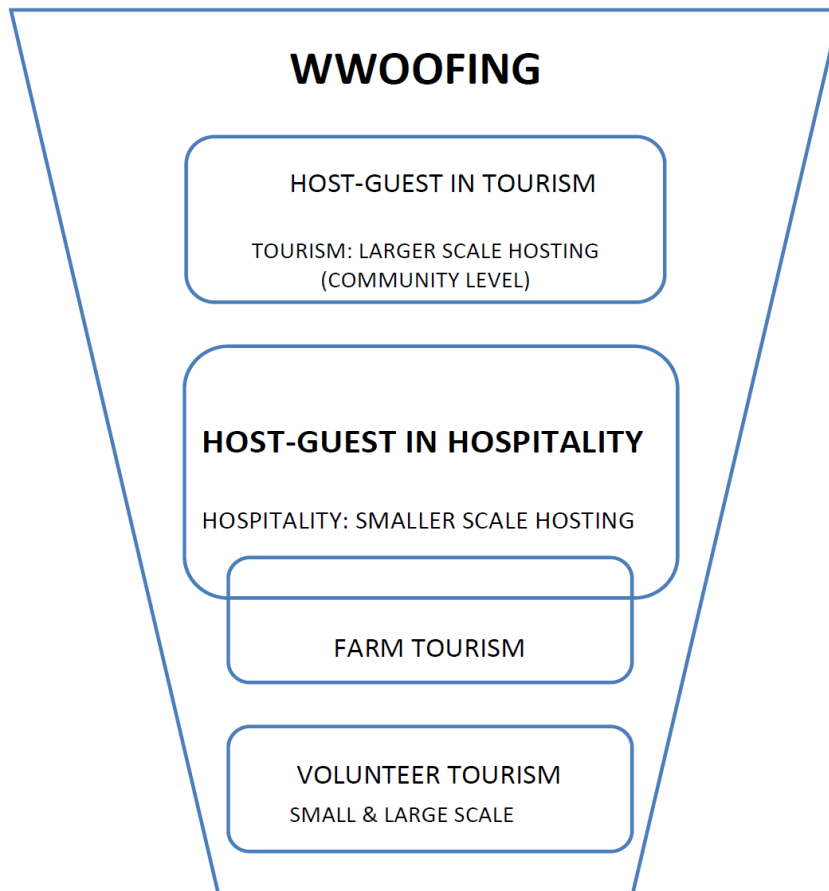
2.2 HOSTS AND GUESTS IN TOURISM

The concept of hosts and guests has been a subject of discussion within the broader tourism literature since the late 1970s (Sherlock, 2001) when Valene Smith (1989) published the first edition of *Hosts and Guests*, which examined the host-guest encounter in tourism from an anthropological point of view (Nash & Smith, 1991). Smith's work focused on the effect of host-guest (tourist) interactions on indigenous communities. According to Smith (1989, p. 44) touristic transactions between hosts and tourists are "based on understandings about how the parties involved will treat each other and on the conditions that could bring about the termination of the relationships." The term 'host' in the tourism literature is mainly concerned with the community on a micro level, or the destination itself on a macro level. The host is often referred to as the host community or the resident population of a destination (e.g. Akis et al., 1996; Van der Duim, Peters, & Wearing, 2005; Zhang, Inbakaran, & Jackson, 2006). The term 'guest' refers to the tourist,

usually seen as the consumer of products offered by the host. Studies have mainly been concerned with tourists' impact on host communities and residents' perceptions on tourism development. Research on the effect of tourism on host communities has focused on developing countries due to the obvious negative impacts and socio-cultural costs it has had on underdeveloped destinations. Touristic transactions have been criticised for their negative implications for host cultures (Black, 1996) and communities (Selwyn, 2003). The concept of "othering" has been discussed in the context of Western tourists interacting with hosts in developing countries (e.g. Smith, 1989; White, 2007). Urry's (1990) notion of the 'self' gazing upon the 'other' represents the tourist ('self') as having escapist motives and wanting to experience an 'authentic' holiday. In anthropology research the 'other' has been discussed in terms of the host applying certain rituals in order to make sense of the stranger as 'the other' (e.g. Pitt-Rivers, 1968; Sweet, 1989). Resident's attitudes towards tourists and tourism development have also been extensively studied (e.g. Akis, Peristianis, & Warner, 1996; Inbakaran, Jackson, & Zhang, 2007; Lawson, Williams, Young, & Cossens, 1998; Sinkovics & Penz, 2009). Despite so, interpersonal relationships between the individual tourist and host have not gained much attention. Zhang et al. (2006) criticise the lack of a theoretical foundation for the study of host-guest interactions in tourism, which has limited the amount of research on this issue. The need to understand host-guest interactions for the sustainable development of tourism has been highlighted though (e.g. Zhang et al., 2006).

In tourism, hosts and guests are traditionally seen as opposites (Nash & Smith, 1991), with the host engaging in productive processes within a destination and the guest consuming these products. Thus, the host is at work whilst the tourist enjoys leisurely activities (Andrews, 2000). As early as 1976, the UNESCO (1976) argued that host-guest interactions are transitory as tourists usually stay in a host community for a limited amount of time and, thus, interactions between the two parties are superficial and do not go beyond the temporal dimension of the encounter. Host-guest encounters in this context lack spontaneity, as tourism activities are usually scheduled leaving only a short time to interact. Therefore, interactions are inauthentic and superficial, as hosts are forced to provide the tourists with a condensed version of their life and culture (UNESCO, 1976). In addition to the spatial and temporal constraints, scholars have criticised that encounters are imbalanced because the tourist displays economic superiority, although they have been studied as the agent of contact between cultures (e.g. Andrews, 2000; Nash, 1989).

Uncertainty that strongly influences tourists when arriving in a destination was regarded as contributing to an avoidance of meeting the locals (UNESCO, 1976).

Studies in tourism have generally focussed more on tourists' needs and motivations, and their behaviour in the destination (Zhang et al., 2006). Regarding host-guest (tourist) interactions the impact on the tourist and his/her travel behaviour has been explored (e.g. Su & Wall, 2010). These studies usually suggest that the closer the level of interaction with the host the greater the impact on the tourist. However, it has been questioned as to whether or not these interactions can be truly 'authentic' (see MacCannell, 1973). Studies on host-guest interaction are under-represented in the tourism literature; the focus is on the differences rather than the commonalities hosts and guests have. Most tourism researchers have also considered the effects of relationships with the host on the customer/tourist, but have failed to examine the effect on the individual host in more depth. Studies that have focused on the effect of tourism development on the host often address the phenomenon of 'othering' (Nash & Smith, 1991; Pitt-Rivers, 1968).

The traditional host-guest paradigm has also been criticised. Aramberri (2001) argues that it does not work in the commercial tourism exchange because of the lack of reciprocity and the monetary nature of the encounter. In the past, the relationship entailed duties on both sides, including rules and rituals that both parties were expected to abide to (see Pitt-Rivers, 1968; Telfer, 2000). McIntosh et al. (2011) prefer the term 'transaction' instead of reciprocity, as the power-dynamics within the encounter seldom allow for reciprocal behaviour. Aramberri (2001) further criticises the anthropological approach to the host-guest relationship within tourism as it is based on the view of Western tourists entering into a relationship with hosts from developing countries. He further argues that host societies have been viewed as communities that are prone to being negatively impacted by outside forces, such as 'strangers', creating problems that can potentially destroy these communities. However, the hosts are now providers of services whilst guests have taken the role of customers, where relationships are of monetary nature. The author calls for the removal of the host-guest model from tourism, as the traditional hosting aspect of this encounter does not seem to apply to the commercial context. Tourists are being subjected to fake authenticity and do not become temporary members of the host's environment (Aramberri, 2001). Whilst Aramberri's (2001) observation regarding the predominantly economic transactions between hosts and tourists is a legitimate criticism, he does not

consider non-commercial tourism exchange. Therefore, the host-guest model which derived from the basic meaning of hospitality (see Selwyn, 2000; Telfer, 2000) should not be discarded. Rather, it provides an opportunity to investigate more interpersonal, non-monetary exchange between the hosts and guests as individuals.

Theories of social exchange

Theories of social exchange have been used to examine exchange relationships and host-guest encounters in tourism. In particular, Social Exchange Theory has been utilised to investigate residents' attitudes towards tourism (Hernandez, Cohen, & Garcia, 1996; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010). Exchange theory originates in the field of social psychology and "assumes self-interested actors who transact with other self-interested actors to accomplish individual goals that they cannot achieve alone. Self-interest and interdependence are central properties of social exchange" (Lawler & Thyne, 1999, p. 217). It is based on a *quid pro quo* relationship, which dictates that those individuals who treat their counterpart in a positive way or have positive attitudes towards them benefit from the positive reciprocal behaviour of the other person, and vice versa (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Furthermore, in the case of residents' attitudes towards tourism development, if residents perceive the benefits of tourism to be greater than its costs, they are likely to support development (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010). Social Exchange Theory has been criticised for failing to encompass emotional dimensions of interpersonal exchange (Lawler & Thyne, 1999). This is addressed in a recent study of host-guest relationships, which has applied another exchange theory, namely Emotional Solidarity (Woosnam, Norman, & Ying, 2009). It is based on the premise that individuals who interact with each other and share common beliefs and behaviour have emotional solidarity. Emotional solidarity fosters the feeling of togetherness in a group. The model was developed by Durkheim in 1915 who proposed that members of a religious group have collective beliefs and behaviours that they identify with (Woosnam et al., 2009). Woosnam et al. (2009, p. 255) concluded that the positive feelings residents had for tourists "are likely the result of sharing beliefs, behavior, and interaction."

Both theories introduced above are valid means of measuring the perceptions of hosts and guests. However, they have both been applied at a host community level rather than considering the individual host-guest encounters in private home settings, which will be

studied in the present research. These theories do not frame this research but will be revisited in the discussion chapter.

2.3   HOSPITALITY AND HOSTING GUESTS

Having reviewed literature on host-guest relationships on a macro level, the hospitality literature at the micro level will now be explored to gain a deeper understanding of interpersonal host-guest encounters.

Examining the commercial home literature enables insights from studies of social relations and interactions of hosts and guests as well as the significance of the home as the setting of the encounter. The WWOOF encounter exhibits many characteristics of the commercial home, for example aspects of host and guest obligations (a 'loose agreement' between them), the home as the setting of the encounter, and the host's dominant position in the relationship. The elements missing are of monetary and commercial nature; and unlike the commercial home encounter, WWOOFing also entails a voluntary help component in the exchange. To examine host-guest relationships in WWOOFing, it is necessary to also consider more traditional, interpersonal host-guest relationships, yet there is limited research on non-commercial, and private hospitality in tourism. Therefore, studies on the commercial home assist in making sense of the WWOOF phenomenon.

Lynch (2005a, p. 534) defines the commercial home as referring to:

> "[…] types of accommodation where visitors or guests pay to stay in private homes, where interaction takes place with the host and/or family usually living upon the premises and with whom public space is, to a degree, shared. 'Commercial home' therefore embraces a range of accommodation types including some (small) hotels, bed and breakfasts (B&Bs), and host family accommodation, which simultaneously span private, commercial, and social settings."

In the present study, the term 'commercial home' will be used to refer to the types of accommodation included in Lynch's (2005a) definition. Focusing on the emotional importance of the commercial home to the host, McIntosh, Lynch and Sweeney (2011) suggest that the focus of commercial home hosting is the home rather than the commercial aspect. Therefore, the commercial home literature assists in gaining insight into emotional, social, and interpersonal aspects that play a role in host-guest encounters within the home setting.

As stated by Causevic and Lynch (2009) two streams of thought are apparent in the literature on host-guest relationships in the hospitality setting: the management dimension and the social and emotional dimensions of hospitality (e.g. Lashley, 2008). Lynch, Germann Molz, McIntosh, Lugosi, and Lashley (2011) criticise the narrow focus of hospitality, which is concerned with the business and management sector. This "reduces hospitality to an economic activity, just as it reduces the interactions between hosts and guests to commercial exchanges and the elements of hospitality (food, beverages and beds) to commodities" (Lynch et al., 2011, p. 5).

Reflecting upon the more traditional and social dimensions of hospitality, Telfer (2000, p. 39) defines it as "the giving of food, drink and sometimes accommodation to people who are not regular members of the household." By looking at definitions of hospitality, the ideas of exchange and reciprocity are embedded in the host-guest encounters (Lynch et al., 2011). For example, Lashley (2000, p. 4), stresses that "hospitality primarily involves mutuality and exchange, and thereby feelings of altruism and beneficence." Moreover, Tucker (2003, p. 80) regards reciprocity, together with obligation and control, as "an inevitable part of the social exchange in the host-guest relationship." By allowing guests into their home, hosts accept their responsibility of caring for them (Telfer, 2000; Tucker & Lynch, 2004). The responsibility of hosting is part of a traditional convention and moral obligation when allowing strangers into the home (Pitt-Rivers, 1968; Selwyn, 2000). It "implies a selfless commitment to the meeting of the psychological and emotional needs of guests" (Lashley, 2008, p. 70). According to Andrews (2000), Telfer's (2000) definition of hospitality implies the idea of the stranger becoming an insider in the host's private domain. Both parties become interdependent, as the encounter is based on reciprocity and exchange and, thus, reciprocal obligations dominate the encounter (see Andrews, 2000; Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Telfer, 2000).

Studies on host-guest encounters within the hospitality literature have discussed the concept of traditional hospitality excluding monetary exchange (e.g. Selwyn, 2000; Telfer, 2000) and numerous studies on commercial homes have referred to traditional hospitality in relation to commercial host-guest encounters. In particular, these studies have addressed the dominant role of the host in the relationship, the obligations of being a 'good host' and a 'good guest', and the rules of the exchange (e.g. Darke & Gurney, 2000; Jennings & Stehlik, 2009; Tucker, 2003) as well as moral obligations (e.g. Selwyn, 2000). The

temporality of the experience and the negotiation of hosts and guests' roles have also been addressed. In addition, the management of intimacy and distance between hosts and guests, including private and shared space, has been a major focus (e.g. Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Hall, 2009; McIntosh et al., 2011).

Various scholars (e.g. Andersson Cederholm & Hultman, 2010; Causevic & Lynch, 2009; Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Felix, Broad, & Griffiths, 2008; Tucker, 2003, 2009; Tucker & Lynch, 2004) have extensively discussed the complex relationship between hosts and guests within the hospitality setting. They have examined the host and guest's role within the Bed and Breakfast and commercial home setting as well as motivational aspects of the host (e.g. Tucker, 2003; Tucker & Lynch, 2004). The authors, particularly Tucker (2003, 2009) and Tucker and Lynch (2004), concentrate on the specific nature of the encounter as it is distinct from large-scale hospitality. However, research concerned with the commercial home has failed to focus on host-guest relationships although they are the very essence and key experience of the private hospitality service encounter (Tucker, 2003). Research has concentrated on either the host *or* guest in homestay accommodation and has offered broad characteristics of these individuals (Lynch, 2005b). The focus has been on the commercial homestay host in the service encounter (see McIntosh et al., 2011). The host-guest relationship is special insofar that complete strangers stay in the host's home. It has been acknowledged that the majority of the guests engaging in this very personal socio-cultural exchange are motivated by the desire to experience the 'real' life of the locals in the destination. Studies have referred to this desire as wanting to go 'back stage' (Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Tucker, 2003), a term coined by Goffman (1959). Most studies often concentrate on aspects of guests' motivations, expenditures and perception of service quality, and demographic profiles as these are elements of concern to private commercial establishments (Felix et al., 2008). It has been found that one of the motivators for guests to stay in private hospitality establishments is related to the opportunity for cultural and social immersion. Furthermore, the gender role in providing accommodation has been discussed (e.g. Darke & Gurney, 2000), as well as the commercial home host as entrepreneur (Lynch, 2005a).

2.3.1 HOST-GUEST RELATIONSHIPS

Causevic and Lynch (2009) outlined, that the socio-cultural context of the encounter determines the meaning of the host-guest relationship. These relationships are multi-dimensional in nature and "a mirror that reflects social norms, values, beliefs and ideologies" (Lynch, Di Domenico, & Sweeney, 2007, p. 173). In their study of commercial homes in Scotland, Di Domenico and Lynch (2007) affirm the complex nature of the host-guest relationship within the more private hospitality setting. The authors concur that in order for the host to maintain a private life, certain rules and protocols are necessary that guide the relationship. Causevic and Lynch (2009) stress that looking beyond the commercial perspective of the host-guest relationship and researching hospitality through the lens of social relations of hosts and guests as people in society is necessary as the participants may go through social catharsis.

Despite these studies, there are only few comparative studies (Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Oppermann, 1995) on the perceptions of both hosts and guests; the importance of socialising in the host-guest encounter has largely been ignored and instead perspectives of the individual have been emphasised (Andersson Cederholm & Hultman, 2010; Felix et al., 2008). Most studies concerning host-guest relationships in a commercial home setting examine specific establishments in specific places (Causevic & Lynch, 2009; Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Felix et al., 2008; McIntosh & Johnson, 2004; Tucker, 2003; Tucker & Lynch, 2004; Walter, 2008) and use a qualitative approach with the majority of researchers attaining data through interviewing hosts (e.g. Andersson Cederholm & Hultman, 2010; Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Lugosi, 2008; Tucker, 2003) and to a lesser extent both parties (e.g. Causevic & Lynch, 2009). According to Lynch (2005b) most research on homestay accommodation has applied questionnaires and interviews with hosts as opposed to guests. The author calls for an examination of the sector from an interpretivist approach as most research has been conducted within the positivist paradigm.

Studies exploring motivations of people hosting complete strangers have found that social motivations prevail income motivations (e.g. Tucker, 2003, 2009; Tucker & Lynch, 2004). The host-guest relationship is a social phenomenon (Causevic & Lynch, 2009), which emphasises the need to focus on the non-commercial side of these encounters. However, only few scholars concerned with tourism and/or hospitality phenomena have actually examined the encounter from this perspective. Increasingly, there has also been call to look

at hospitality encounters from this social lens rather than the commercial one (see Causevic & Lynch, 2009; Ritzer, 2007).

Andersson Cederholm and Hultman (2010) identified three significant factors that shape host-guest relationships in the commercial home encounter: situated friendship, in-between space of the private and the public, and local host as traveller. Accordingly, friendships between hosts and guests are temporary and constrained to the setting of the encounter (Andersson Cederholm & Hultman, 2010). The boundaries between the public and private spheres of the home are in-between spaces where host-guest interactions take place. The local host as a traveller stands for the host's desire for freedom and control and being mobile. In addition, key themes explored within the literature include: the imbalance in the relationship where the host dominates the encounter, the negotiation of different roles, and the negotiation of rules and guidelines (e.g. Robinson & Lynch, 2007; Sheringham & Daruwalla, 2007).

In their edited book, *Commercial Homes in Tourism: An International Perspective,* Lynch, McIntosh and Tucker (2009a) present some of the key aspects of commercial home research. These key aspects include meanings of home, home and gender, the anthropomorphic home, home behaviours, and the tensions inherent in the commercial home (Lynch et al., 2009a). Lynch and MacWhannell (2000) have previously stressed the significance of the meaning of 'home' in the commercial home host-guest encounter. They described the home as a refuge for the guest, but also pointed to the spatial boundaries of the encounter. Lynch (2005a) presented the characteristics of the commercial home in a model *(figure 2)*. As the focus of this study is on the social and private domains, monetary exchange and business management aspects will not be explored. Instead, the research will study aspects that most directly influence host-guest relationships *(highlighted in blue in the model),* such as sharing of host-guest space, the importance of the home setting, and the social and private domain. Throughout all these aspects a power imbalance in the relationship between host and guest exist, which is of central importance in the WWOOF encounter.

Figure 2: The commercial home enterprise* (Source: Lynch, 2005a, p. 549)
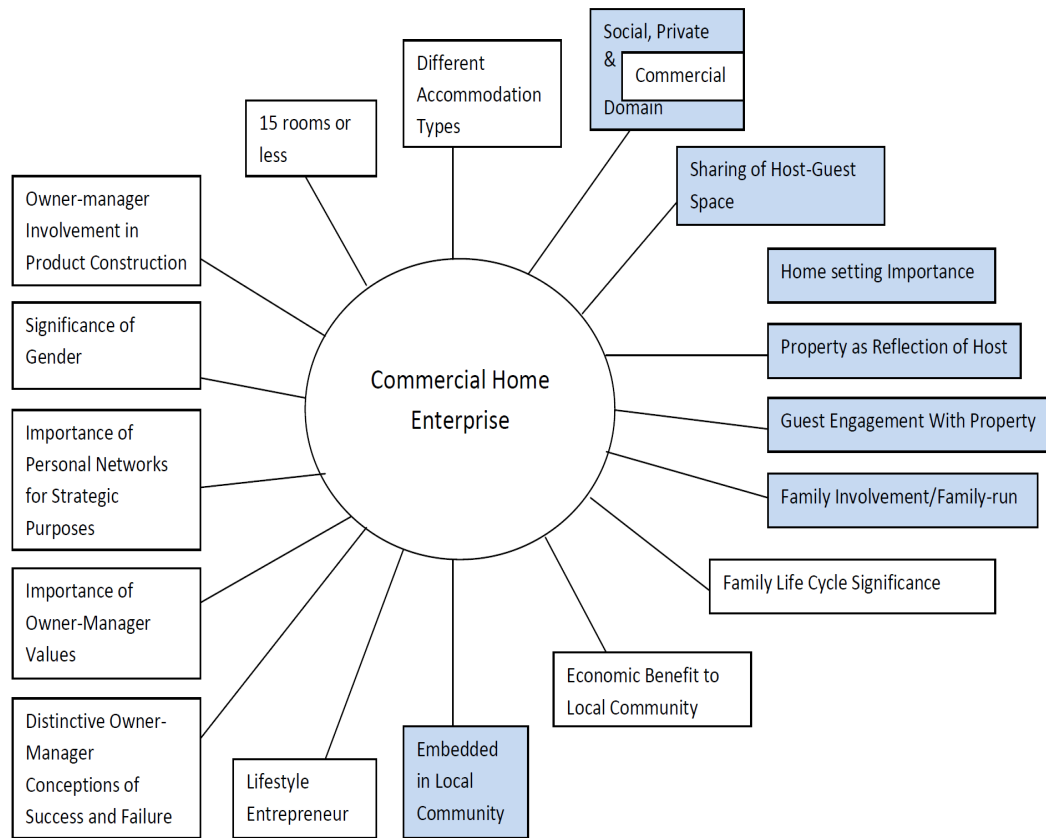
Factors relevant to WWOOFing highlighted in blue

This section presents the aspects of the host-guest encounter as discussed in the commercial home literature. The negotiation of space within the hosting space, the development of relationships, power distance, and obligations and rules are presented.

The negotiation of space in the commercial home

Enabling a shared space for host-guest interaction is the central idea of the social sphere within the commercial home (Lugosi, 2008). Therefore, numerous studies have addressed the negotiation of private and commercial space (e.g. Andersson Cederholm & Hultman, 2010; Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Lugosi, 2008; Lynch et al., 2007; Sheringham & Daruwalla, 2007; Tucker, 2003). In particular, the physical separation of the private and commercial sphere within the home hosting space has been examined (e.g. Lynch et al., 2007). Host-guest interactions are often influenced by the host's relationship with the commercial home, which determines the guest's perception of the experience (McIntosh et al., 2011). Whilst some hosts make no distinction between the space they share with their

guests and less public domains, others regard having private space as important (Stringer, 1981). Goffman (1959) introduced the theatre metaphor of 'front' and 'back' stage, which was used by various scholars to describe public and private spaces within the commercial home. Retaining a sense of privacy while sharing (commercial) space presents a dilemma for hosts (Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Tucker, 2003), particularly if they have nothing in common with guests. As the guest influences the host's sense of space (Sheringham & Daruwalla, 2007), social control and spatial management strategies are applied by the host to maintain a sense of privacy (Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007). However, controlling the guest's movement too much can create distance between the two. In contrast, opening spatial boundaries offers opportunities in learning and enrichment from one another (Dikeç, 2002).

The development of relationships and situated friendships between hosts and guests

Hospitality studies have also explored the importance of establishing a less formal interpersonal relationship (e.g. Andersson Cederholm & Hultman, 2010). Selwyn (2000, p. 19) suggests that "hospitality converts: strangers into familiars, enemies into friends, friends into better friends, outsiders into insiders, non-kin into kin." Intimacy is an important touristic value in the commercial home and the host, as a central feature of the private home experience, can turn into the product itself (Lynch, 2005a). Selwyn (2000) refers to the development of relationships in host-guest encounters as the core purpose of hospitality. Stringer (1981) also emphasised that both hosts and guests regarded going beyond the obvious service provided by the B&B venture as an essential foundation to foster interpersonal relationships. This shows that even in an encounter involving monetary exchange the social dimension remains to be an invaluable component. Often, private hospitality hosts' motivation to provide accommodation to visitors is not only of financial nature but also encompasses a distinct social dimension, where the desire to get to know people plays a central role in choosing to share their home with them (Lynch et al., 2007). Emotional bonds can be experienced (see Lugosi, 2008) and Selwyn (2000, p. 19) suggests that hospitality can turn strangers into friends by constructing "a moral universe to which both host and guest agree to belong." Hence, having common value systems fosters host-guest exchange.

It is suggested that most bonds between hosts and guests are temporary, and friendships that go beyond the encounter are rare. Relationships can transform into 'situated friendships', which are close bonds between hosts and guests that occur within the spatial and temporal constraints of the commercial home (Andersson Cederholm & Hultman, 2010). Lugosi (2008, p. 147) calls these interactions meta-hospitality, which are "short-lived, emotional states of being when participants create a shared existential space in which differences are temporarily negotiated or tempered" and individuals search for points of commonalities. Similarly, in their study on commercial friendships of hairdressers and their clients Price and Arnould (1999) found that shared space contributes to formation of friendships, yet, interaction outside of this shared space in which the transaction takes place is not desirable.

The mutual understanding that the guests are mobile and will not outstay their welcome (Bell, 2007a; Lashley, 2008; Pitt-Rivers, 1968) might foster seeking temporary intimacy and the guest becomes a 'temporary insider' (see Lynch et al., 2007) or 'temporary companion' (Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007). The host feels that formal roles s/he has to abide to in the encounter with the guest diminish once personal bonds have been established (Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007).

Earlier work by Pitt- Rivers (1968) is concerned with social relations between hosts and guests and the rituals of groups when faced with the entry of a stranger into tribal environments. Through the stranger, the host comes in contact with a belief system that challenges the hosts' known world and introduces the mysterious (Pitt-Rivers, 1968).

Pitt-Rivers (1968) further addresses the way the stranger is treated according to certain rules and conventions, which determine the encounter. Within this relationship the host predominantly decides over certain rules and obligations, however conventions also allow for the guest to defend his/her status as the one that needs to be looked after.

Imbalance in the hospitality encounter: obligations and rules

The level of intimacy "depends on the extent to which the hosts are prepared to interact with their guests" (Tucker & Lynch, 2004, p. 15). This points to a power distance between the two parties (Lynch et al., 2007; Sheringham & Daruwalla, 2007) and, thus, an imbalance in the relationship. This imbalance has been acknowledged in the hospitality literature (e.g. Bell, 2007a; Tucker, 2003), whereas the tourism literature views the guest's position as

superior (Andrews, 2000). In tourist-host encounters, the tourist is often in a superior financial position, whilst the host has to work to provide the tourist with a service (Andrews, 2000).

There are certain expectations that the host should communicate to the guest in order to establish the nature of the relationship. Hence, the guests are expected to understand the rules defined by the host, which are dependent on what level of interaction the host chooses for the specific encounter (Tucker, 2003; Tucker & Lynch, 2004). Although the host expects the guest to understand and act in accordance with these rules, the relationship depends on the co-operation of both parties. This way, interactional rules are explained and some kind of 'oral behavioural contract' is formed.

However, Tucker and Lynch (2004) suggest that rules and guidelines are important in hospitality transactions to minimise the risks that hosts are subjected to by allowing strangers into their home and are introduced to the guest out of self-interest. Earlier work by Stringer (1981) discussed hosts' expectations of guests to abide to 'familial norms' of the host (family). These rules can counteract the initial uncertainty that the host is fazed with. Rules and restrictions, which are dictated by the host function as important control mechanisms (Bell, 2007b). Hence, guests have to abide by these rules without having much room for making decisions regarding the level of interaction with the hosts themselves. Hosts have their "own definitions of social acceptance and personally defined norms and behaviour" (Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007, p. 334) There are applied to ensure a controlled environment in which host-guest transactions take place.

Lynch et al. (2007) call the methods applied by hosts in managing the interaction "social control methods". Social control presents an important tool to distinguish between spatial allocations of host and guest space as well as to determine the length of the interaction, which influences the ability of the guests to make the host's domain a temporary home (Lynch et al., 2007). Robinson and Lynch (2007, p. 141) state that "as soon as hospitality becomes a trade exchange, it becomes an instance of a controlled negotiation between a customer and a host." Lynch et al. (2007) propose that hosts have control over the guests' movement within the hosting space by allocating them to areas that have been reserved for them to avoid an invasion into private quarters in the home.

Telfer (2000) and Tucker and Lynch (2004) talk about the guest's submission to social rules regarding the interaction set out by the host and a dependency on what elements of hospitality the host is willing to provide. Being a guest implies feeling restricted to a certain extent. It has been found that both parties feel a variety of obligations (Tucker, 2003). More traditional, reciprocal obligations, such as the giving of a gift by the guest as a symbol of their appreciation of the host are components of the hospitality encounter (Darke & Gurney, 2000; Lashley, 2008). However, obligations to serve the guest without a reciprocal response are embedded within some traditions (Lashley, 2008). Telfer (2000) argues that altruistic motives to host people are necessary to be able to provide sincere hospitality without having personal gains in mind. In many cases, especially in the commercial home, hospitality is not reciprocated, because it represents a service encounter.

In traditional hospitality, not only the guests are required to acknowledge their host's way of doing things, but also within the principles of reciprocity, the host has a certain degree of responsibility, as s/he has to ensure the wellbeing of the guest (Telfer, 2000). Obligations, such as respecting the host's home, apply to the guest but the host's commitments to making the guest's stay as pleasant as possible are felt more strongly (Lashley, 2008). Oftentimes hosts feel obliged to act as representatives for the people in the host community, destination, or even their home country (Tucker, 2003; Tucker & Lynch, 2004). Di Domenico and Lynch (2007) argue that social obligations within the commercial home are more strongly felt by guests than in a hotel, because of the direct encounter with the host in his/her home. Although leisure time does not imply the inclusion of obligations, having the urge to be of use to the host is likely to be felt in the home sphere. In the volunteer tourism literature Lepp (2009) suggests that obligations can be positive in that they help volunteer tourists to distance themselves and differentiate their experiences from those of mainstream tourists. However, they can pose a threat to the guests' freedom as independent travellers (see Lepp, 2009; Tucker, 2003). In some cases, the host's identity may impose so many obligations on the guest that free independent holidaying is impossible. Despite so, the loss of independence appears to be a factor that guests accept in return for a personalised experience. Adding to this notion, Tucker (2003) acknowledges the fine line that highlights the stage between establishing a close social bond that potentially leads to friendship between host and guest, and remaining on a more distanced level of interaction. Tucker (2003) suggests that hosts may feel opposed to letting the guest stay for an extended period of time as obligations become too intense. Furthermore, guests

may be unable to escape the host's control and may lose their sense of anonymity (Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007). Despite the power imbalance, Darke and Gurney (2000) view the commercial home encounter as a situation in which the host's ability to be competent in presenting home and self gets tested, which puts pressure on the host to be a 'good host'. Nevertheless, the host is the one who decides whether or not the encounter will take place in the first place, as s/he has the freedom to turn away guests (Tucker & Lynch, 2004).

The central importance of the host in providing the experience in the home has been discussed (e.g. McIntosh et al., 2011; Tucker & Lynch, 2004). Studies have examined the 'home' itself and it's importance within the commercial hospitality setting (see Lynch & MacWhannell, 2000). The symbolic significance of the home as the space of interaction between hosts and guest has been discussed (see Lynch et al., 2007). In particular its emotional significance for the host and the host's relationship with the commercial home have gained attention (e.g. Lynch & MacWhannell, 2000; McIntosh et al., 2011; Sweeney & Lynch, 2007). McIntosh et al. (2011) view the home as a reflection of the host's life and a means of self-expression. It is, thus, very personal which has an influence on the host-guest encounter.

This section has presented research concerned with hosts and guests in the commercial home and the various dynamics of the encounter. According to Lynch et al. (2009b) host-guest interactions in the commercial home require further investigation, as the relationship affects guests' perceptions of the host destination. However, the interpersonal connection hosts and guests have within a social perspective on hospitality encounters has not gained much attention.

2.4   HOSTS AND GUESTS IN FARM AND VOLUNTEER TOURISM

WWOOFing has been studied from a number of perspectives in farm and volunteer tourism literature (see McIntosh, 2009; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001). It is therefore relevant to review how hosts and guests have been investigated in these two contexts.

Farm tourism has been associated with private hospitality encounters and tourism entrepreneurship (Pearce, 1990). According to Jennings and Stehlik (2009) farm stays can be characterised as commercial homes because the physical farm property as the home of

the host plays a significant role. Furthermore, Lynch (2005b) points out that research on homestay accommodation has concentrated on farm tourism businesses. In most studies, the host and the home environment are seen as attractions because the guest desires to experience local life (Felix et al., 2008). Much research of small tourism firms has focused on farm tourism, with a particular emphasis on farm stay accommodation (e.g. Busby & Rendle, 2000; Oppermann, 1995; Pearce, 1990). Themes addressed include the social dynamics of the host-guest encounter and gender roles in providing accommodation (cf. Jennings & Stehlik, 2009). The business perspective on farm tourism has been dominant (McIntosh et al., 2011). Those studies have provided information related to business practices and the nature and characteristics of the farms that have diversified into tourism, as well as the benefits gained from farm tourism (e.g. Di Domenico & Miller, 2012). Perspectives of host and guest have largely been looked at separately (except Oppermann, 1995). The focus has been on the hosts in terms of profiles and motivations and the farm tourism business itself (Pearce, 1990). Minimal analysis of the guests' perspectives of farm tourism has been undertaken, with some exceptions. For example, a study by Kidd, King, and Whitelaw (2004), assessed the guests' demographic profile, their perceptions of the farm stay accommodation and activities undertaken in the context of farm tourism in Victoria, Australia. Studies have not examined the nature of social interaction between hosts and guests within the farm stay context. However, it is important to keep in mind that most farm stays can be classified as commercial homes and, thus, the literature on commercial homes may be consulted to study them (see Jennings & Stehlik, 2009).

WWOOF has further been characterised as a volunteer tourism experience (Choo & Jamal, 2009; McIntosh, 2009; Moscardo, 2008). Thus, it is important to briefly explore how hosts and guest have been researched in volunteer tourism studies. The discussion in this section is based on the premise that hosts and guests in volunteer tourism have been studied in a specific way and emphasis has been on the volunteer tourist rather than the host (e.g. McGehee & Andereck, 2008). Motivational aspects of volunteer tourists and their personal outcomes/rewards of the experiences have been at the centre of attention (e.g. Broad, 2003; Brown, 2005; Callanan & Thomas, 2005; Campbell, 2009; McGehee & Santos, 2005; Mustonen, 2007; Rehberg, 2005; Zahra, 2011; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007). In particular, it has been debated whether volunteer tourists' motivations are mainly altruistic or self-centred (Campbell, 2009). Volunteer tourism has been considered as a way to foster mutually beneficial relationships between the volunteer tourist and the host (e.g. Hustinx &

Lammertyn, 2004; Lee & Woosnam, 2010; McIntosh & Johnson, 2004; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; Thyne, Lawson, & Todd, 2006). Increased academic interest in volunteer tourism may be attributed to the importance of alternative tourism and the demand for more responsible forms of tourism. However, the more negative consequences of volunteer tourism for both the sojourner and the host have only been a major concern for few scholars, in particular Guttentag (2009), Lyons (2003), McGehee and Andereck (2008), Raymond and Hall (2008), and Simpson (2004). Host-guest (volunteer tourist) encounters on a personal level have almost been ignored (except McIntosh & Johnson, 2004; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007). The volunteer tourism literature has criticised the effects of host-guest encounters on hosts in developing countries (cf. Simpson, 2004), but has lacked in researching them within a developed country context (except McIntosh & Zahra, 2007).

The most commonly accepted and most referred to definition of volunteer tourism is by Wearing (2001, p. 1) who regards volunteer tourists as those "who, for various reasons, volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that might involve the aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments or research into aspects of society or environment". There has been debate over this definition, but as volunteer tourism is such a broad concept it is very challenging to develop a definition that captures its diversity. Definitions commonly entail the quest for sustainable, alternative travel (e.g. Wearing, 2004). Wearing's definition, for example does not quite capture the diversity of volunteer tourism and WWOOFing.

Volunteer tourists have a profile, which is distinct from other tourists, in terms of their travel motives and itinerary (Zahra & McIntosh, 2007). Individuals undertaking volunteer tourism do not necessarily have typical escapist motives but pursue meaningful engagements through experiences that are long-lasting and rewarding. According to Zahra and McIntosh (2007, p. 115), volunteer tourism facilitates cathartic experiences, which constitute personal change and "make a positive difference to an individual's relationship and purpose in life." It provides the individual with a platform to break free from social and personal identities and to explore multiple subjectivities (Desforges, 2000; Lyons, 2003). The opportunity to "make a difference" often demonstrates a major reason why people want to travel to a country and engage in volunteer work (Butcher & Smith, 2010; Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011). However, volunteer tourism organisations have been criticised for promoting this opportunity without considering the host (Butcher & Smith, 2010;

Simpson, 2004). In reality, the host has often been subject to "othering" (cf. McGehee & Andereck, 2008; Simpson, 2004) as host-guest relationships within volunteer tourism do not always cultivate positive change (Uriely, Reichel, & Ron, 2003). Unintended consequences can be the outcome of the help provided by volunteer tourists who mean well but lack useful skills. Thus, self-development and personal benefits are highlighted in promotional material rather than more serious development issues. The notion of "us" and "them" (Simpson, 2004) is dangerous as it reinforces power distance and positions the volunteer tourist as superior. Raymond and Hall (2008) emphasise that volunteer tourism in a developing country context can either break or reinforce stereotypes. Despite the notion that interactive experiences between hosts and volunteer tourists are the foundation of volunteer tourism (see Mustonen, 2007), interpersonal relationships between the two parties have not gained much attention, and outcomes for the volunteer rather than the host have been examined (Lyons, 2003; Pizam, Uriely, & Reichel, 2000). Thus, there is a need to study the interpersonal sphere of these relationships and give attention to both parties.

2.5 WWOOFING AS NON-COMMERCIAL HOST-GUEST EXCHANGE

As discussed in previous sections, host-guest interactions have been researched in the broader tourism and the hospitality literature. Whilst the hospitality literature has contributed to understanding host-guest relationships on a social level, hosts and guests in tourism have mainly been studied from a customer-producer perspective, or have been investigated separately. Hospitality research has considered two perspectives: the commercial business and the more social perspective. Within the social sphere the commercial homestay literature has identified various dynamics that are part of the host-guest encounter. The present study benefits greatly from these studies. Although WWOOF has been studied from different perspectives the literature has failed to consider interpersonal host-guest relationships and the traditional, non-commercial hospitality nature it exhibits. Importantly, WWOOFing embodies characteristics of more traditional hospitality exchange. It is the social meaning of hospitality, which defines the host-guest encounter in WWOOF.

A brief overview of WWOOF has been provided in *section 1.3*, and journalistic publications (e.g. Browner, 2007), in particular magazines concerned with the environment have covered WWOOFing. Despite so, there is a lack of academic literature on the topic although

it has been studied by Alison McIntosh in the context of farm tourism in New Zealand (McIntosh, 2009; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001). McIntosh and Campbell (2001) were the first to publish a paper on the WWOOF phenomenon focusing on hosts' motivational aspects and their environmental values, as well as WWOOF's contribution to farm tourism in the New Zealand context. They found that WWOOF is making an increasing contribution to farm tourism in the country. McIntosh and Bonnemann (2006) later conducted a study drawing on the differences between WWOOF and commercial farm stays in New Zealand. They concluded that the WWOOF experience is indeed different in that it offers the opportunity to learn about organics and alternative lifestyles, and includes elements of rurality, sincerity, and personal meaningfulness. Other literature (e.g. Maycock, 2008; Stehlik, 2002) is mainly descriptive, providing information about the concept itself. Stehlik (2002), a WWOOF host himself, gives an overview of the educational aspects of WWOOF by referring to his own experiences of hosting. WWOOF as a gap year experience was discussed by Maycock (2008) who, amongst other things, identified the increasing 'global society' and the desire to go back to a more contemplative existence as drivers for the increasing popularity of WWOOF. Moreover, in her thesis on WWOOFing, Nimmo (2001) identified push and pull motivations of WWOOFers in New Zealand. Most studies are mainly descriptive whereas McIntosh's New Zealand-based research provides more analytical insight.

The WWOOF encounter

According to McIntosh (2009), financial benefits are not the primary reason for hosts to become involved in the WWOOF network, but the belief that practicing farming in an organic manner mainly for ethical and health reasons contributes to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly approach to farming. Unlike most volunteer tourism experiences WWOOF is special because it is based on a non-monetary exchange relationship, which involves trust. Oral contracts and agreements between host and guest guide the relationship similar to private hospitality settings.

The encounter is based on an element of sincerity, with both parties ideally having genuine interest in sharing personal worldviews and cultural understanding with each other. Thus, the cooperation of both partners determines success or failure of the relationship with the social exchange component of the encounter being the most crucial aspect (Mosedale, 2009). The encounter challenges assumptions about ethnicity and culture and can be a

valuable experience for both host and WWOOFer (Stehlik, 2002). Although it is based on a voluntary experience there is no guarantee that the WWOOF volunteer's understanding of and attitude towards organic farming will be influenced positively and a lack of mutual understanding and values in the interaction may lead to misunderstandings and conflicts (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). Conflicting behaviours, such as eating habits, and language difficulties, or a lack of privacy can result in serious interpersonal problems (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). Nevertheless, the encounter fosters personal enrichment, particularly for the WWOOFer who might be at a junction in life and in search for an alternative way to look at the world (Stehlik, 2002). Most WWOOFers have no background knowledge about organic farming but are enthusiastic about being able to learn from the host (Stehlik, 2002). In essence, the concept is a way to understand how people live and what value the land has for them. WWOOF is an important mouthpiece for the organic movement, making the farm industry and the public aware of alternative solutions to industrial agriculture (Mosedale, 2009). It is a simple and safe way of travelling and exploring destinations (Katz, 2009) and attracts a variety of types of people appealing to budget travellers as well as organic agriculture enthusiasts and corporate people (Eldridge, 2005).

A similar, more recent membership network that is based on the hospitality exchange between host and guest is CouchSurfing. It is a very popular of a number of web-based hospitality exchange networks and is based on a hospitality exchange between a local who offers a place to sleep in his/her private home and a guest (Lauterbach, Truong, Shah, & Adamic, 2009). Unlike in WWOOFing, the CouchSurfing exchange is often reciprocated and, thus, the guest turns into the host in his/her own country. CouchSurfing has mainly been studied with regards to mobility, reciprocity (Germann Molz, 2007), and trust (e.g. Lauterbach et al., 2009; Tan, 2010). Studies on CouchSurfing have failed to capture the interpersonal relationship between host and guest and have focused on perspectives of the individual.

The aspects of unpredictability and adventure (see Desforges, 2000) are important components of the attraction of WWOOFing and other membership-based networks. The fact that the experience is relatively easy to access also contributes to the tourist's motivation to join WWOOFing (Mosedale, 2009). Immigration New Zealand requires tourists who intent to engage in WWOOFing to acquire 'Work and Holiday' Visas. Although

voluntary, it considers the exchange of labour for accommodation and food to be work (WWOOF, 2012). This aspect and the fact that WWOOFing is often a component of backpacker's work and travel experience (Stehlik, 2002), often leads to the WWOOFers being referred to as workers (e.g. Nimmo, 2001).

The alternative way to life chosen by the hosts is often inspirational for the volunteer tourist who is keen to attain insight into the local culture (Katz, 2009). Thereby, a certain degree of open-mindedness is necessary to get fully immersed in the host-guest encounter. Furthermore, motivations for the volunteer to join WWOOF are multifaceted and include wanting to acquire knowledge about life on organic farms, getting to know the hosts' everyday life and organic philosophies, and being involved in rural family life (McIntosh, 2009). Additionally, making a difference on a social level and giving back to the community are deeper reasons to undertake WWOOFing experience (Eldridge, 2005). It has been found that the hosts' reasons include finding a way to provide for oneself without causing any damage to the environment (Maycock, 2008), being able to create a relationship with the WWOOFer within which the host has the ability to build on cultural exchange and learn about the guests' travel adventures (Mosedale, 2009). Mosedale (2009) also argues that an alternative lifestyle would often not be possible for the host without the help of volunteers undertaking a variety of tasks for the them. Thus, the host wants to experience the WWOOFer's enthusiasm and passion about the encounter. As a result both parties embark on a journey together and form relationships. Bearing in mind that training and the sharing of knowledge is involved it makes sense that some hosts prefer the WWOOFer to make a longer commitment rather than staying for a short-period of time, thus being unable to get to know each other properly (McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). WWOOFers can be counterproductive if the time spent on training them was not sufficient leading to inefficient processes and an unsatisfactory relationship with the host (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001). The host is however not always the one to blame for problems that can occur. Research conducted in New Zealand suggests that few WWOOFers are actually interested in organic farming and instead use WWOOFing as an opportunity to have a free bed for the night (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001). For that reason, understanding the difference between expectations and motivations of hosts and WWOOFers facilitates the minimisation of potential conflicts in the encounter (McIntosh & Campbell, 2001). Getting to know each other prior to the WWOOF experience through the WWOOF website, telephone, or email, and being sure that WWOOFing is the right thing to engage in for

oneself (Browner, 2007) is the first step into making the experience work for both parties. An "oral" contract can also be a means of communicating expectations and aims for the relationship to each other.

Officially, WWOOFing does not contribute economically to the New Zealand tourism industry. Neither the organisation nor the WWOOF hosts make a profit through the membership network (Nimmo, 2001). The WWOOF website and handbook do not claim to be for tourists. Instead the handbook refers to the volunteers as 'town-dwellers' (Nimmo, 2001; WWOOF Ltd (NZ), 2010) and the website as 'WWOOF volunteers' (WWOOF, 2011).

2.6 A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK TO EXAMINE HOST-GUEST RELATIONSHIPS IN WWOOFING

The conceptual framework for this study *(figure 3)* emerged from the review of the streams of literature discussed above. It draws on the gaps in research and seeks to capture hosts' and guests' meanings and understandings of the WWOOF host-guest relationship as well as expectations and personal outcomes. Since the WWOOF literature, which has mainly consulted farm and volunteer tourism perspectives, has not addressed the host-guest relationship, the commercial home literature has been consulted. Studies on the commercial home have concentrated on the host and the significance of the home and have either focused on the host <u>or</u> guest in the examination of the encounter. Furthermore, the published literature on farm tourism has provided minimal analysis of visitors' perspectives of farm tourism and minimal attention has been given to the hosting aspect in volunteer tourism, let alone personal relationships between host and guest. In order to understand the WWOOF relationship, hosts and guests' expectations also have to be examined and their personal outcomes evaluated. Only this comprehensive view enables an in-depth examination of the parties' personal narratives of the encounters.

The host-guest interaction is at the centre of the conceptual framework constituting the host and the guest in the hosting space *(figure 3)*. The focus is on the meanings and understandings the parties have of the relationship. Elements of the commercial home discussed in previous sections help to explain these host-guest dynamics. The meanings and understandings of the relationships will be explored from individual perspectives of both WWOOF hosts and guests. However, individual perceptions may overlap in some aspects. Expectations and personal outcomes are important in order to making sense of the

WWOOF encounter. For example, as WWOOFers can be seen as volunteer tourists, they might have similar expectations and outcomes to those discussed in relation to the volunteer tourist. Unlike most volunteer tourism studies though, the present study considers both host and guest perceptions, which may overlap regarding expectations. Similarities and differences between the two parties are examined and including both perspectives contributes to understanding the gaps in the literature. Although WWOOF has similarities with the commercial home it has distinct characteristics, such as the non-monetary exchange and membership aspect and the exchange relationship, which is based on reciprocity. These aspects will be further explored in the present study. The conceptual framework will guide the research and entails the three research objectives, which will be introduced in the next chapter.

Figure 3: Conceptual framework: The host-guest relationship in the non-commercial tourism setting of WWOOFing
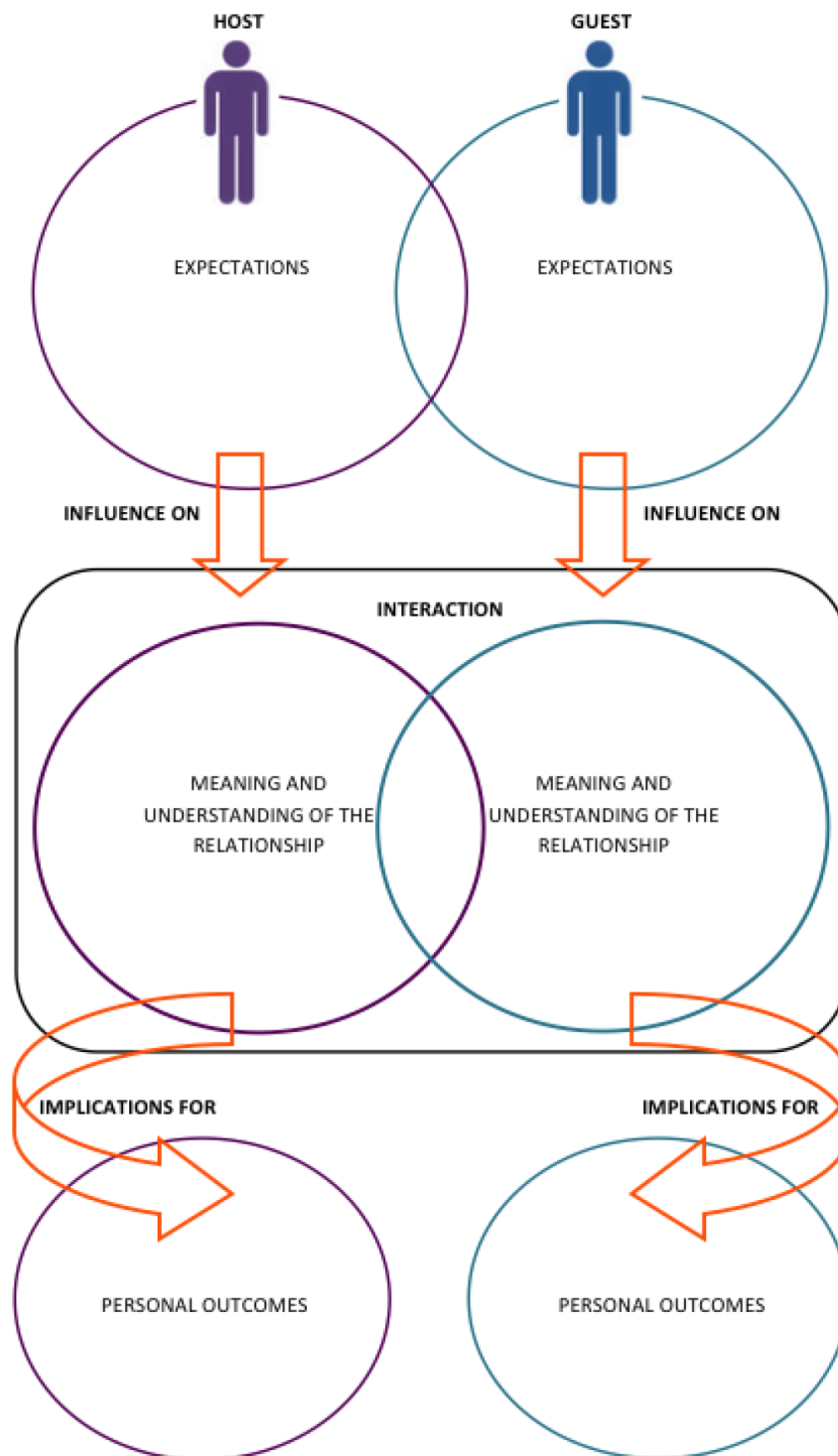
2.7 CONCLUSION

This review has critiqued the literature concerned with host-guest relationships and has pointed out the gaps, which informed the present study. The research objectives outlined in *section 1.5* and the conceptual framework *(figure 3)* emerged from these gaps. WWOOFing is an emerging topic in academia and under-researched with mainly descriptive data about hosts and WWOOFers' motivations and characteristics. Therefore four streams of literature have been consulted to evaluate studies on host-guest relationships; tourism, hospitality, farm tourism, and volunteer tourism literature. Very little academic research has been concerned with WWOOFing, but scholars that have examined it mainly explored WWOOFing in New Zealand. Commercial home research has focused on the host, mostly within a positivist research paradigm. Studies have mainly investigated the hosts' role in the commercial and private spheres of the home, whilst the volunteer tourism literature has concentrated on the tourist and personal outcomes of the host-tourist interaction.

The tourism and hospitality management perspective has not given much room to studying interpersonal relationships between hosts and guests with equal consideration of both parties. The strengths of research on the commercial home lies in the thorough discussion of the hosts' role in the encounter and various dynamics, such as time and space, social control, and rules and obligations. Whilst much attention has been given to the tourist as a consumer of the 'tourism product', studies concerned with relationships between host and tourist are rare. The guest's role within the commercial home has also not gained much attention. Additionally, there is a lack of research on personal outcomes of the host-guest encounter in private hospitality settings for either host or guest. The commercial home stay rather than the farm stay literature has been examined, as it provides a more comprehensive insight into dynamics between hosts and guests, and comprises aspects of the farm tourism literature. As explained in the next chapter, a micro-level approach to examining host-guest relationships in the non-commercial tourism setting of WWOOF in the present study is taken.

CHAPTER 3: FEEDING THE SOIL: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two emphasised the need to examine host-guest relationships in the non-commercial tourism setting of WWOOFing. It highlighted the complexity of studying these relationships and identified research gaps. To understand hosts and guests' perceptions, their personal experiences, feelings, and relationships, in-depth interviews were employed. Being able to actively engage in conversations with interviewees facilitated my personal connection with research participants and the exploration of various circumstances experienced during WWOOFing.

The objectives derived from the gaps in the literature and displayed in the conceptual framework *(figure 3)* are three-fold and aim to (1) **compare** the meanings and understandings of the host-guest relationship of WWOOF hosts and guests (WWOOFers), (2) (within this comparison) to **understand** how expectations influence the host-guest relationship, and (3) to **evaluate** the personal outcomes influenced by the relationship. This study aims to attain in-depth insight into the nature of host-guest relationships by considering both hosts and guests' perspectives and examine WWOOFing as a socially constructed and individually perceived real-life phenomenon.

The chapter begins by outlining the approach to research and the formulation of the approach to inquiry, which is discussed in relation to the research objectives. Following this, the inquiry paradigm and the research strategy is introduced, which applies in-depth semi-structured interviews with hosts and guests. Then, data collection and analytical techniques are outlined and the chapter concludes with a discussion of the strengths and challenges of the method adopted.

3.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

As stated by N. King and Horrocks (2010, p. 126) "doing social research is an active and interactive process engaged in by individual subjects, with emotions and theoretical and political commitments." Host-guest interactions in WWOOFing are constructs of social exchange and subject to individual perceptions of both hosts and guests. The meanings and understandings of the relationships are subject of hosts and guests' individual ways of seeing reality. A qualitative approach was chosen to bring meaning to the social

phenomenon at hand (Dey, 1993) and to investigate a 'real world' setting (Golafshani, 2003; Patton, 1990). The intention of this study is to let the voices of both hosts and guests be heard (see Creswell, 2007). The research seeks to provide an understanding of the various determinants that drive the host-guest relationship in WWOOFing. It is not the purpose to lead the research from an objective point of view, which would guide the researcher-subject relationship in a unidirectional way (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). Qualitative research is subjective because human subjects are involved. Thus, researchers and subjects have different attitudes, values, perspectives, ideologies, etc., which all impact on the different stages of the research, from beginning to end (N. King & Horrocks, 2010). Creswell (2007) stresses that the qualitative researcher is the key 'instrument' in the data-gathering process. By merely being involved in communicating with project participants, I have an impact on their behaviour and responses (Golafshani, 2003; Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). A qualitative approach enables me to actively construct and shape the course of the interaction together with the interviewees (see N. King & Horrocks, 2010). Furthermore, my own philosophical value system, as well as personal background and prior understandings influence my understanding and the subsequent interpretation of the data (Creswell, 2007; N. King & Horrocks, 2010). Through a qualitative approach the research investigates the meanings that are attributed to social situations (N. King & Horrocks, 2010). The data for this study has been acquired in a natural setting, which is "sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns and themes" (Creswell, 2007, p. 37).

3.3   THE INQUIRY PARADIGM- SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

A basic set of beliefs, or paradigm that guides the investigator, influences the researcher's worldview and therefore his/her way of conducting qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It is important to understand why people behave in a certain way within the context of a phenomenon within particular social contexts (Goodson & Phillimore, 2004). Thus, my chosen paradigm guides the qualitative inquiry into the phenomenon of WWOOFing. A constructivist epistemology is regarded as most appropriate to investigate socially constructed realities in the phenomenon at hand (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Constructivism is an interpretive paradigm (Golafshani, 2003) and "holds that truth is a particular belief system held in a particular context" and people have "multiple realities" in their minds (Healy & Perry, 2000, p. 120). It deals with discovering the meaning people project on reality. As participants attribute multiple meanings to situations, the complexity of their thinking is acknowledged in social constructivism (Creswell, 2007). Hence, their behaviour is

a consequence of attributing meaning to one specific event, which has implications for action. Goodson and Phillimore (2004) stress that tourism settings are socially constructed and call for the examination of individuals' roles in this construction of reality through interaction with others.

My aim as a constructivist researcher is to inductively make sense of multiple perceptions the research participants have about the phenomenon of WWOOFing and to create a pattern of meaning through interpretation (Creswell, 2007). Thus, both the subject and I construct the findings by actively engaging in the research to create deeper understanding of their multiple realities (Golafshani, 2003). Most importantly, social constructivism acknowledges that reality is fluid and changing. Knowledge is generated in the process of interaction between participant and researcher and cultural and social contexts shape the way individuals see and understand the world. Therefore, the subjective nature of this research is a resource and fosters reflexivity, which "enables a critical stance to be taken towards the impact of both the researcher and the context in which the research takes place" (N. King & Horrocks, 2010, p. 126).

3.3.1   APPROACH TO INQUIRY- PHENOMENOLOGY

For this study a phenomenological research approach has been found suitable as it describes the meaning several individuals attribute to one phenomenon and what all the individuals have in common as they experience this phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). According to O'Leary (2004) the foundation of phenomenology is the notion that individuals creatively 'construct' their social world and that, through inter-subjectivity, they "experience the world with and through others" (p. 122). Thus, investigating how people involved in the phenomenon make sense of the experience is necessary (O'Leary, 2004). In this undertaking the process and structure of mental life are conceptualised in order to examine how situations are meaningfully lived in reality (Wertz, 2011). The phenomenon in this study is the host-guest relationship within the non-commercial WWOOF tourism setting in New Zealand. Phenomenological researchers aim to develop a description of the essence of the experience by examining each person's perception of the experience and by investigating what they experienced and how they experienced it (Creswell, 2007; Wertz, 2011). It emphasises the subjectivity of individuals' lived experiences of one phenomenon. In the context of this study it is important to consider that situations can be described from various levels of generality. This means that participants can look at a situation considering

their own experience, have opinions about a typical experience, or very general opinions about all types of experiences (Wertz, 2011).

3.4   RESEARCH DESIGN

3.4.1   IN-DEPTH SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

In-depth semi-structured interviews were the most appropriate method of collecting data for the present research. They allowed me to gain rich descriptions of the lived experiences of hosts and guests in the WWOOFing phenomenon (see O'Leary, 2004). They were necessary in order to build a rapport and to thoroughly explore the participants' personal thoughts and ideas (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Building a rapport involved making interviewees feel respected and comfortable to share their personal experiences with me. Developing a positive relationship, which allowed for an open discussion, facilitated trust (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In semi-structured interviews questions are posed in a way that allows for flexibility in letting the interviewee decide on the direction of the interview and questions emerge during the conversation (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). It is important to allow the participants of this study to digress, as they talk about personal feelings, thoughts and experiences.

The conceptual framework *(figure 3)* and the literature were used to identify the themes that needed to be covered in the interviews. Therefore, questions concerned with participants' expectations, the host-guest relationship(s) in the encounter(s) experienced, and personal outcomes were developed. Thus, a recollection of their thoughts and feelings before-, during-, and after the encounter(s) could be achieved.

The two interview guides *(see appendix C)* covered the same topic areas for both hosts and guests, and most questions were the same. Some questions had to be modified to suit their roles as host *or* guest. Participants were asked about their personal background and why they became hosts/WWOOFers. Questions concerned with their WWOOF experience(s) and the host-guest relationship(s) followed. They were then asked about their expectations and responsibilities in the encounter, as well as rules and obligations they felt were present. The interview concluded with questions about their overall experience and their personal opinion on what I should take away from the interview. Digressions during the interviews were valuable because they reflected the interviewees' interests and knowledge, and questions were posed in a way that allowed for the exploration of their multiple truths (see DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

3.4.2 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

A qualitative study has the purpose to produce understanding and, while generating data, the qualitative researcher in it "continuously reflects upon the phenomenon under study" (Stenbacka, 2001, p. 553). Every qualitative researcher has to consider the reliability and validity of research from the design stage of the study through the analysis process to judging the study's quality (Patton, 2001, as cited in Golafshani, 2003).

Qualitative researchers should view reliability and validity in terms of trustworthiness, rigor and quality (Golafshani, 2003). Stenbacka (2001, p. 552) suggests that good validity in qualitative research can be achieved if the research participant is well-chosen and is "given the opportunity to speak freely according to his/her own knowledge structures.". Healy and Perry (2000) suggest that one should view the quality of a study through the lens of the paradigm chosen by the researcher. As a constructivist researcher I give space to the voices of the participants to be able to present an honest account of their WWOOFing experience.

To ensure consistency of qualitative data, "the steps of the research are verified through such items as raw data, data reduction products, and process notes" (Campbell, 1996, as cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 601). Consistency in this study is achieved through a thorough and systematic data coding process, which is reflective of the social phenomenon and the perceptions of the subjects involved *(section 3.6)*. Thorough descriptions throughout the research process are important to ensure inter-subjectivity (Stenbacka, 2001). The research process facilitated credibility through establishing a rapport between research participants and me. Furthermore, I wrote reflexive notes in a research diary upon completion of each interview, which supported the data collected from interviews.

3.4.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to N. King and Horrocks (2010), qualitative researchers have the responsibility to be aware of how knowledge is produced, read, re-interpreted, and used. Therefore, I have highlighted my epistemological and personal assumptions, which influence this research (see Davies & Dodd, 2002; N. King & Horrocks, 2010). Davies and Dodd (2002) suggest that ethics should be treated as "an essential part of rigorous research" (p. 281). Ethics depends on the subjects under investigation, and the settings in which research takes place; therefore, ethics have to be responsive to change (Davies & Dodd, 2002).

Edwards and Mauthner view ethics as concerning "the morality of human conduct. In relation to social research, it refers to the moral deliberation, choice and accountability on the part of researchers throughout the research process" (2002, p. 16, as cited in N. King &

Horrocks, 2010, p. 104). My moral values have an influence on knowledge construction, as even 'general' ethical principles are subject to how I see them and the way I act upon them (see N. King & Horrocks, 2010).

As acknowledging and respecting participants' individual moralities was essential, approval from Victoria University of Wellington's Human Ethics Committee was attained prior to undertaking fieldwork. The ethics approval ensured that participants were sufficiently informed about the purpose of this study and their role in it. It emphasised their right to know how data was collected, analysed, and used in the write up of this thesis. It was stressed that findings are reported in a non-attributable manner. All interviews were confidential and pseudonyms were chosen to protect participants' identity *(see tables 3 & 5)*. The hosts and guests in this study did not share the same experience.

An information sheet *(see appendix A)* was sent to participants via email after the initial phone contact and was given to them again in person before each interview. This was done to ensure that they had read and understood the information sheet. Their rights as project participants were stressed again verbally and further questions could be clarified. Both the interviewee and I signed two copies of the consent form *(see appendix B)*, one of which was kept by the participant. All participants gave consent to the interviews being audio-recorded and transcribed *verbatim*. They were given the opportunity to receive the interview transcripts to provide feedback and comment on any issues prior to coding and analysing the data. This was done to give them the opportunity to reflect upon the interview and modify sensitive information. Ethical considerations have been taken into account in the reporting of the findings, which give an account of participants' thoughts and ideas in a synthesised way.

3.5   DATA COLLECTION

WWOOF New Zealand was contacted prior to obtaining ethics approval and the research purpose and aim were explained to the WWOOF NZ administrator. I was advised to become a member in order to have access to hosts and volunteers' contact details. An announcement introducing my research to members was placed on the WWOOF website by a WWOOF coordinator to facilitate contact with potential participants and emphasise the organisation's support in my research. The following sections present the arrangements for data collection and the sample population. First the host sample is introduced followed by the WWOOFer sample.

3.5.1   SAMPLING HOSTS

Characteristics of the host sample population

The organic farms selected for this study are all registered as official WWOOF NZ farms and their profiles are available to be accessed by WWOOF NZ members via the website and WWOOF handbook. The hosts' requirements for participation were four-fold: the hosts had to operate at least one WWOOF farm in New Zealand, be members of the New Zealand WWOOF network at the time of fieldwork, be located in either the Wellington or Nelson region *(figure 4)*, and have hosted at least one WWOOFer. In order to reach a broad variety of farm property types and to include both rural and urban-based WWOOF experiences the two regions were chosen; Nelson (more rural) and Wellington (more urban).

Figure 4: Regions included in the sample
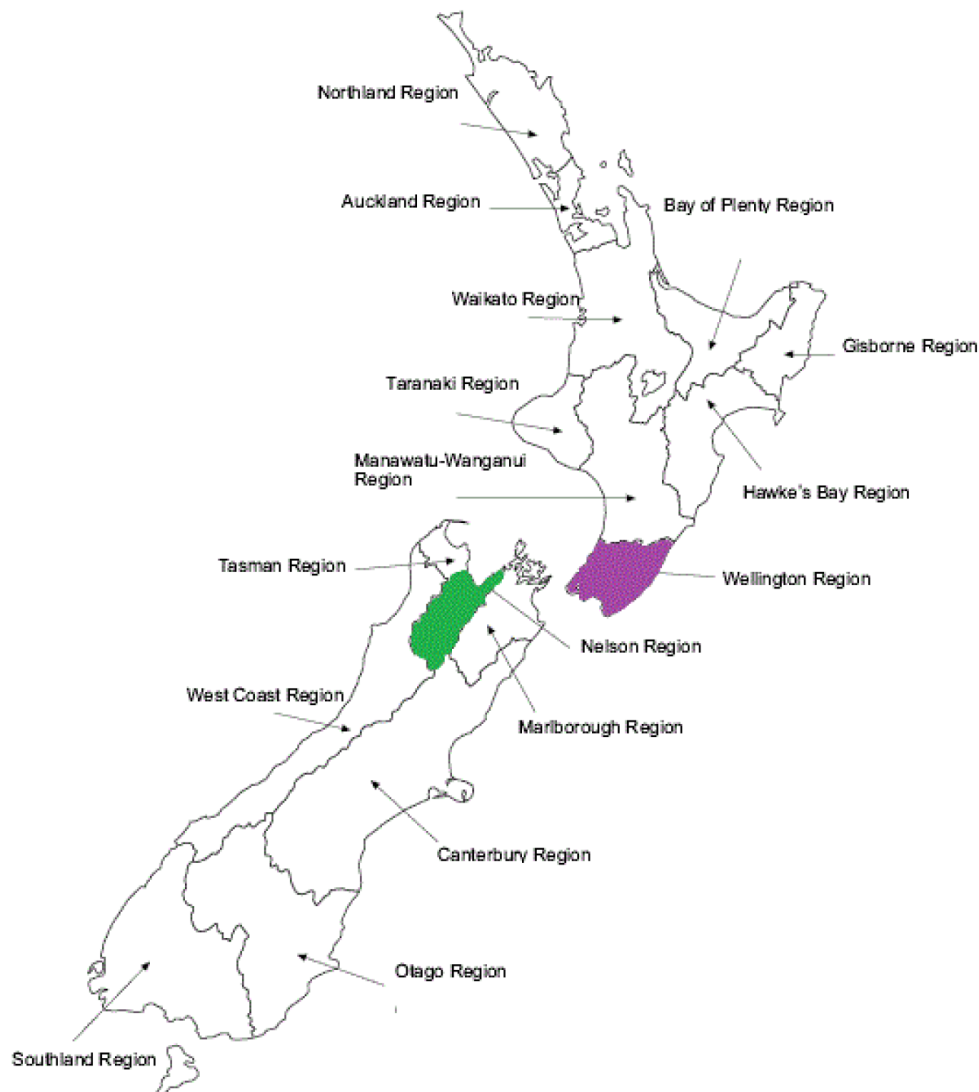
(Wellington=purple; Nelson=green)

Sampling hosts

In order to find out whether the size of the farm has an influence on the WWOOFing relationship the organic farms were categorised into different farm types, as illustrated in *table 1*. Urban gardens and lifestyle blocks were determined using the hosts' qualitative description of their property as an indicator; e.g. 'we require help with the maintenance of our lifestyle block' or 'vegetable patch'. The remaining farms were categorised according to their size (in hectares) as listed in the handbook and website profiles. Each farm name was listed by region and size. Within each cell a random number generator was used to order the farms. This determined the order in which hosts were contacted, which allowed for a bias-free selection of participants.

Table 1: WWOOF farm types by region

WWOOF Farm Types	Wellington Region	Interviews Wellington	Nelson Region	Interviews Nelson	Total Population	Total Sample
(Urban) Gardens	12	1	14	2	26	3
Lifestyle Blocks	23	2	16	2	39	4
Small Farms < 5 HA (~12 AC)	25	2	35	1	60	3
Medium-sized Farms 6-19 HA (~ 14- 46 AC)	13	1	24	2	37	3
Large Farms 20- 49 HA (~ 49- 121 AC)	10	0	18	1	28	1
Huge (semi-commercial) Farms 50 HA < (~ 124 AC <)	7	1	10	0	17	1
Total	90	7	117	8	207	15

Method of contacting hosts

The WWOOF website as well as the handbook were utilised to attain the contact details of all hosts in the two regions. WWOOF NZ split New Zealand into 21 WWOOF regions and one Pacific Island region. For the purpose of this thesis the Wellington region was comprised of the WWOOF categories Wellington and Wairarapa. The Nelson region does not include Golden Bay, as this is a separate WWOOF category (Tasman) *(see figure 4).*

From the website announcement, only two hosts responded; one of these did not fit the selection criteria as he lives outside the study regions. However, this respondent was used to conduct a pilot interview to test the research instrument. As a result, unnecessary and ambiguous questions were discarded and the interview structure slightly changed to enable improved flow in the interview. The data from the pilot interview is not included in the analysis.

The total population was 207 with 90 hosts living in Wellington and 117 in Nelson *(table 1).* Hosts were contacted by phone, as I wanted to have the opportunity to build up a rapport with participants from the very beginning and to explain the research and immediately answer any questions. If necessary a follow-up phone call was undertaken a few days after the initial attempt. Potential participants who did not respond to the second phone call were treated as 'non-response' *(table 2).*

Table 2: Hosts in the sample

	Phone	Email	Web	Total
Contacted	30	3	2	35
Interviewed	**14**	**0**	**1**	**15**
Non-response	13	3	0	16
Not eligible	1 [A]	0	1 [B]	1
Declined	2	0	0	2

[A] had not hosted WWOOFers
[B] used as pilot interview

Interviews conducted with hosts

Out of the 33 hosts contacted, 15 in-depth interviews were conducted during June and July 2011. Of these, nine were conducted with host couples and six with hosts who were running the property by themselves or were the person available to talk to at the time of the fieldwork; hence 24 hosts participated in the study. Seven interviews were conducted in the Wellington region and eight in the Nelson region. All interviews took place on the hosts' properties. Interviews lasted 45 minutes up to 1 hour and 25 minutes and I recorded the interviews and later fully transcribed them to facilitate the analysis process. My visit to each WWOOF place entailed being shown around the property to get an insight into the experience that was provided to WWOOFers as well as the general WWOOF farm environment. At the time of my research only two farms were currently accommodating WWOOFers. In these cases the hosts were all interviewed away from their guests. After each interview I reflected upon the visit by recording my thoughts that were later written down into a research journal. This was done to gather information about the hosts' way of life and to record any observations about my role in the interview. All hosts were experienced WWOOF members, with the most experienced having hosted WWOOFers for over 20 years.

Profile hosts

As illustrated in *table 3*, 13 hosts were female and 11 were male, and more than half (13) had immigrated from other countries. The hosts as well as the WWOOFers were given pseudonyms that match their nationalities.

Table 3: Nationalities and gender of hosts

	HOSTS	NATIONALITY
1	Regina *(f)* & Wallace *(m)*	New Zealand
2	Rebecca *(f)* & Marcus *(m)*	New Zealand
3	Celeb *(m)*	New Zealand
4	Betty *(f)*	New Zealand
5	Jess *(f)*	New Zealand
6	Caitlin *(f)*	New Zealand
7	Alice *(f)* & Brady *(m)*	New Zealand & England
8	Paige *(f)* & Brandon *(m)*	USA & New Zealand
9	Dorothe *(f)* & Phillip *(m)*	Switzerland & New Zealand
10	Lile *(f)* & Robert *(m)*	Ireland
11	Elsa *(f)* & Alan *(m)*	Germany & England
12	Neske *(f)* & Tiede *(m)*	Netherlands
13	Cosmina *(f)* & Dinu *(m)*	Romania
14	Ralph *(m)*	USA
15	Elisabeth *(f)*	England

(f)= female; (m)= male

3.5.2   SAMPLING GUESTS (WWOOFERS)

Characteristics of the WWOOFer sample population

The requirements of recruitment for WWOOFers were: the participant had to have volunteered on at least one registered WWOOF farm in New Zealand with a minimum stay of four nights, and be either a domestic or international tourist. A keyword search on the WWOOF website assisted in creating a list of WWOOFers that mentioned Wellington or Nelson in their profiles. This approach was taken to ensure consistency in the recruitment of both hosts and WWOOFers and to be able to conduct face-to-face interviews with participants in these regions. However, the focus in the present study was on WWOOFing in

New Zealand overall rather than focusing specifically on the participants' experiences in these regions.

Sampling WWOOFers

I listed the Wellington/Nelson WWOOFers in chronological order according to the last time they had accessed the WWOOF website to focus on the most recently active WWOOFers in the specified regions. In total 108 WWOOFers were contacted *(table 4)*; all had been active on the website in the last three months. In addition, three WWOOFers were put in touch with the researcher through hosts, though they were interviewed separately from their hosts. They had WWOOFed in either the Wellington or Nelson region. Additionally, an interview about the history of WWOOFing in New Zealand was conducted with one person who was listed as a WWOOFer.

Method of contacting WWOOFers

Initially, I had planned to recruit WWOOFers by phone to develop a rapport, as this method had been successful with hosts. Out of the ten called only two responded, with some phone numbers being disconnected. Contact by email was more successful. However, large numbers of potential participants still did not respond, and others were not eligible because they had not yet WWOOFed *(table 4)*.

Table 4: WWOOFers in the sample

	Phone	Email	Recommended by host	Total
Contacted	**10**	**98**	**3**	**111**
Interviewed	**1**	**9 + 1***	**3**	**13 + 1***
Non response	8	50	0	58
Eligible; replied but unavailable	1	22	0	23
Not eligible (no WWOOFing experience)	0	16	0	16

*One Interview conducted about the history of WWOOFing in NZ (not in the WWOOFer sample)

Interviews conducted with WWOOFers

Originally, face-to-face interviews were planned in the regions, however many of those eligible had already left the region or indeed the country. This was particularly a problem as research was conducted in winter when less WWOOFing opportunities are offered.

In total nine face-to-face interviews were conducted in Wellington (including 2 recruited from the Nelson list). The interviews were conducted at a place chosen by the WWOOFer, which included, cafes, private homes, and WWOOF farms. The remaining four were interviewed via Skype, with one WWOOFer living in Auckland and three back in their country of origin, two from Germany and one from the Czech Republic *(table 5).* Interviews lasted from 40 minutes up to 1 hour and 30 minutes and I recorded all interviews and later fully transcribed them.

Table 5: Profile of WWOOFers

	WWOOFers	Nationality	Meeting	Number of WWOOF experiences in NZ
1	Monique *(f)* & Marcel *(m)*	France	Face-to-face	4
2	Pascal *(m)* & Nathalie *(f)*	France	Face-to-face	4
3	Christophe *(m)*	France	Face-to-face	4
4	Raffaela *(f)*	Germany	Skype	3
5	Rainer *(m)*	Germany	Face-to-face	2
6	Simon *(m)*	Germany	Skype	7
7	Thorsten *(m)*	Germany	Face-to-face	2
8	Emilie *(f)*	Austria	Face-to-face	1
9	Travis *(m)*	England	Face-to-face	2
10	Danielle *(f)*	Ireland	Skype	3
11	Lydie *(f)*	Czech Republic	Skype	2
12	Charlotte *(f)*	Canada	Face-to-face	1
13	Kakama *(f)*	New Zealand	Face-to-face	1

(f)= female; (m)= male

Nationalities of WWOOFers

Table 5 illustrates that the vast majority of WWOOFers were international tourists with most coming from France and Germany; only one WWOOFer came from New Zealand. There was a good gender balance in the sample with eight WWOOFers being female and seven male. All participants were between 19 and 30 years old with the majority in their early twenties. The WWOOFers' level of experience varied from having volunteered on one WWOOF property to having stayed on seven properties.

3.6   DATA ANALYSIS

The inductive approach to data analysis relevant for the present study dictates that data gathered is organised into increasingly abstract categories throughout the research process (Creswell, 2007). This means that patterns, categories, and themes are organised in a way that a comprehensive set of themes can be identified. This involves reflecting on the various themes, so that abstractions can be detected and patterns connected (Creswell, 2007).

The aim of the analysis process was to make sense of the data in the transcribed interviews (Patton, 1990) and to make it meaningful to others (Dey, 1993). To do this, data reduction had to be achieved through identifying themes and patterns, which were later put into categories. The analytical framework *(figure 5)*, which emerged from the literature and research objectives, was utilised to include these categories. The research analysis is about examining "how actors define situations, and explain the motives which govern their actions" (Dey, 1993, p. 36). According to Patton (1990) the thoroughness of the analysis process greatly depends on the analyst. Therefore, a systematic approach of coding interviews and clustering themes was needed. The analysis process of interview data began with open coding using pen and paper, which was followed by a more systematic coding process, which included coding using the qualitative analysis software, NVivo 9. The stages that guided the analysis of the data are described below.

Dey's (1993) model *(figure 6)* presents the analysis of qualitative data as an iterative process. The model illustrates three basic stages of data analysis: describing, classifying, and making connections. Even though Dey's (1993) model is dated, it is a useful tool to lead the qualitative researcher through the data analysis process. Thus, it guided the analysis process for the present study.

Furthermore, the analytical framework assisted in identifying those categories that were important to addressing the research objectives, and guided the analysis as well as the

identification and grouping of themes. As indicated by the arrows in *figure 5* the hosts'
interview transcripts were analysed first followed by those of guests.

Figure 5: Analytical framework for host-guest relationships in WWOOFing

	EXPECTATIONS	MEANINGS & UNDERSTANDINGS	PERSONAL OUTCOMES
HOST			
EXCHANGE			
GUEST			
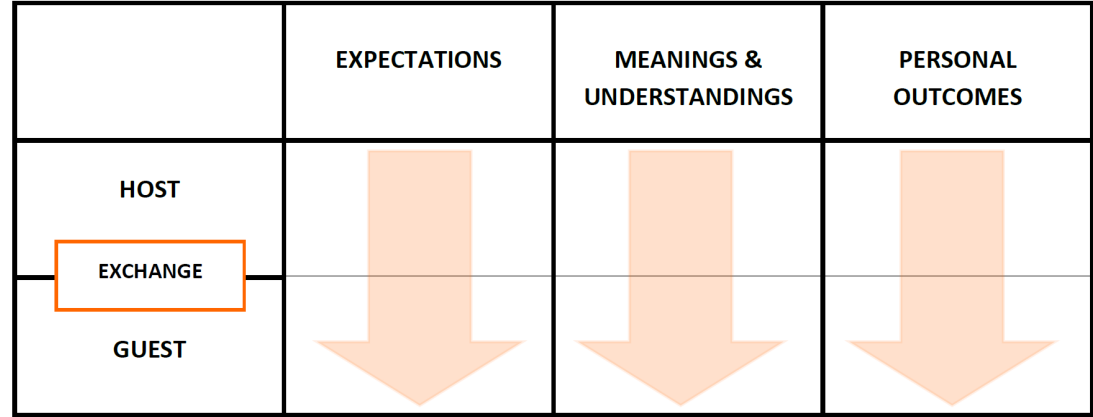
Figure 6: Qualitative analysis as an iterative spiral (Source: Dey, 1993, p. 53)

Account

Connecting

Classifying

Describing

Data

Qualitative analysis as an iterative spiral
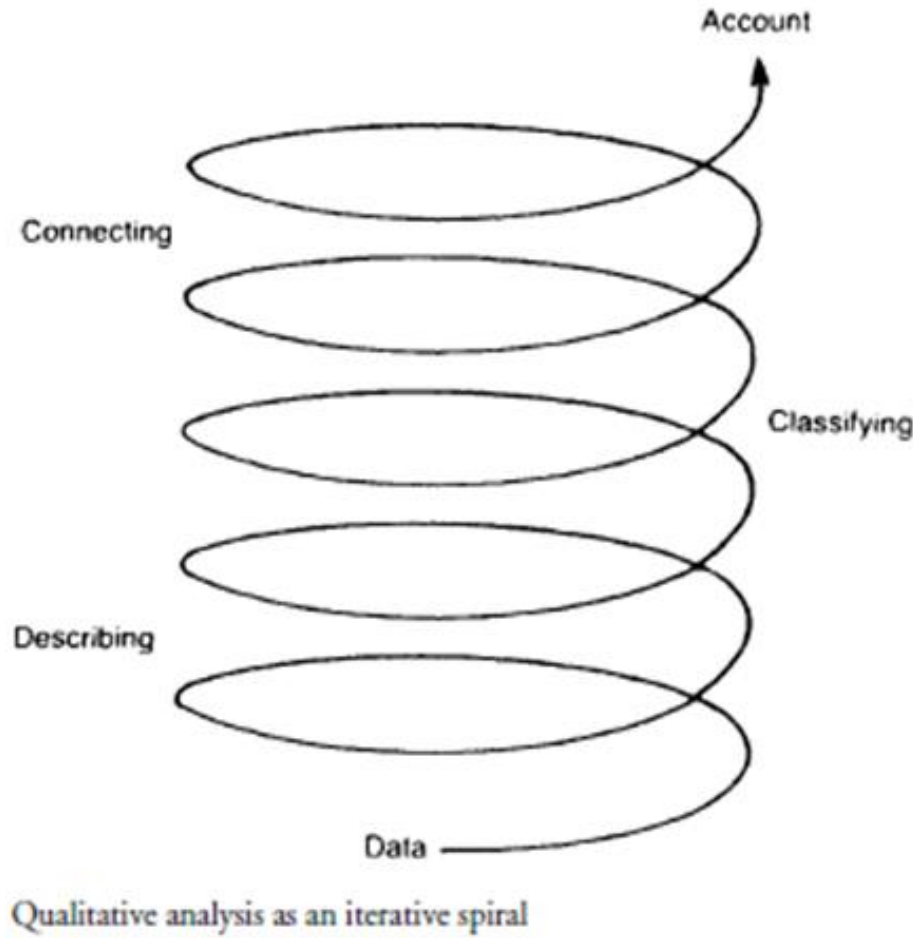
I carefully read each interview transcript several times prior to the coding process to attain an overview of all transcripts. Taking notes on a separate sheet of paper assisted in attaining a first overview of potential topics. Then, I manually coded raw data using the transcripts. In this first *description* stage, thorough descriptions of the phenomenon as experienced by each individual were generated (Dey, 1993; Patton, 1990). Notes were taken in the margins of each transcript. The focus was on describing how participants perceive the WWOOF encounter and the host-guest relationship within it. Emphasis was put on describing the characteristics of the experiences participants articulated, the social setting of the WWOOF interaction and the spatial context in which the encounter occurred (Dey, 1993). This was done because the meanings and understandings the participants have of the host-guest relationship were dependent on the context of the encounter. The research journal assisted in this stage and offered a good recollection of the hosting space in which encounters took place. It also helped me remember my feelings about the interview situations, which enabled an improved account of the conversations with participants.

Next, I undertook a case analysis to identify emerging themes within each individual interview (Patton, 1990). In this *classifying* stage, re-reading the transcripts, including the "thick descriptions" (Gertz 1973/2000, as cited in Sergi & Hallin, 2011) in the margins, facilitated the development of themes. These were written on coloured post-it notes, to be able to highlight themes related to each research objective. This was followed by a cross-case analysis to group answers from different participants into categories and sub-categories. The themes were put onto different sheets of paper, where they were clustered. The clustering process of themes helped to reduce data and identify categories and sub-categories. In the *connecting* stage, relationships and patterns between different categories were identified and different concepts connected (Dey, 1993; Patton, 1990). Similar themes were clustered and overlaps between different categories identified; this led to a reduction of themes. If themes fitted more than one category, they were re-classified into new categories.

I re-analysed and coded the interview transcripts a second time electronically using the qualitative analysis software, NVivo 9. Categories and sub-categories that emerged from manual coding were transferred. Some additional sub-categories emerged during the electronic coding process. NVivo assisted in merging similar sub-categories, and managing them within main categories. Importantly, host and guest categories could be looked at individually or together. NVivo enabled me to distance myself from individual interviews

and focus on the categories. Quotes for each category were printed out and further notes were taken while reading them. Potential quotes to use in the thesis were highlighted and eventually some were selected to support the presentation of the findings.

As illustrated in Dey's (1993) model the spiral symbolises that every stage of the analysis process involves reflecting upon the previous stage; thus going back and forth to ensure thoroughness. To facilitate the new perspective gained by transitioning to the next stage of the analysis I reflected upon previous steps taken.

3.7   STRENGTHS AND CHALLENGES

STRENGTHS

The two-perspectives approach to the research is identified as a methodological contribution. Studies examining host-guest exchange in tourism have mainly focused on either hosts *or* guests and have emphasised their relationship in economic rather than social terms. By not only focusing on the individual, the voices of both parties involved in the WWOOFing exchange are heard and both parties' perceptions compared. This enables an in-depth insight into the WWOOF phenomenon and the dynamics of the host-guest relationship.

As a constructivist researcher I am able to explore hosts and guests' multiple realities through engaging in an in-depth conversation with them. By conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews a rapport with participants was built and a trust relationship was established. This is important because their personal experiences are shared with me and feelings and perceptions expressed. The fact that interviews with the host took place in their own home also facilitated trust.

The fact that I have never been actively involved as a WWOOF host or WWOOFer is also a strength, as this 'outsider' perspective minimised a bias towards either host or guest.

Reflecting upon the time spent with project participants by audio-recording myself after each interview allowed me to reflect upon my visit and the interaction with them. For example, as place usually plays an important role in the course and outcome of interviews I recorded where the interview took place and if there were any interruptions. This was done to facilitate any observations I made regarding my role in the relationship with the interviewees. During the data analysis process I was able to go back to these notes in the research journal to support the data.

CHALLENGES

Recruiting WWOOFers who were available at the time of fieldwork was quite challenging, as interviews were conducted during wintertime (June/July 2011) when less WWOOFing opportunities are offered. As mentioned above, four WWOOFers were interviewed via Skype. They had volunteered on farms in either the Nelson or Wellington region, which ensured consistency in the sampling of participants. Conducting Skype interviews still enabled active face-to-face conversations and the build up of a rapport.

I am aware that my relationship with the participants impacts data interpretation, as my own value systems influences the way I react to responses of participants (Davies & Dodd, 2002). For example, a participant's philosophy to life can contradict my philosophy, which can present a challenge to my knowledge construct (Davies & Dodd, 2002). However, according to Davies and Dodd (2002), these challenges should be appreciated, as they are evidence that participants have had the opportunity to communicate their own ideas and concepts.

As couples were interviewed, it is to consider that the responses from participants could be influenced by the presence of their partner. They may have different opinions about the same situation individually, but adjust to fit their partner's opinion during the interview. The way they perceive the experience may also change over time, and might therefore not entirely reflect the feelings they had during or immediately after the experience. Moreover, both partners have to be viewed not only as a couple but as individuals, too. This is particularly important to consider for the analysis process.

Contradicting comments in individual interviews are an interesting part of doing qualitative research but it can be challenging to interpret these. It might be difficult to distinguish between aspirations and reality the participants talk about. Thus, opinions or feelings might seem to contradict each other.

3.8   CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the methodology, used in this study in order to address the research objectives. The conceptual framework facilitated the development of the methodology, by highlighting the necessity to take a two-perspectives approach to examining host-guest relationships in the non-commercial tourism setting of WWOOFing. The chapter has justified the placement of this study within the social constructivist paradigm, and has introduced the research design. The procedures for data collection and data analysis have been outlined and the purpose of the analytical framework in facilitating

interpretation of findings has been presented. Inductive analysis of data generated the themes discussed in chapter 4, which is structured according to the research objectives as illustrated in the analytical framework *(figure 5);* and hosts and guests' perceptions are presented within each category.

CHAPTER 4:   GROWING THE PLANTS: NEGOTIATING THE HOST-GUEST ENCOUNTER IN WWOOFING

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The following chapter presents the negotiation of the host-guest encounter in WWOOFing. It introduces the key themes prevalent in conversations with hosts and WWOOFers. The chapter starts with giving an overview of hosts and guests' motivations for participating in WWOOFing and the nature of their relationship including the parties' various roles and obligations. It proceeds to present the understanding the project participants had of the encounter and the meaning they attributed to it. This section examines the parties' expectations of each other, rules and guidelines that govern the relationship, the negotiation of private space and time, shared values and sharing stories, as well as the importance of trust in the relationship. The chapter concludes by presenting the parties' personal outcomes of the encounter and refers to the analytical framework to lead into chapter 5. The hosts' perspectives will be discussed first in each section followed by those of guests, unless stated otherwise. To conclude each section, summaries are provided.

The themes that most adequately address the three research objectives *(see section 3.1)* are the centre of attention in this findings chapter, as concentrating on all the data generated would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Conversations with members of the two groups revealed that the relationship between WWOOFer and host is about understanding each other in a way so that mutual exchange can take place. The way the two parties perceive each other and themselves has an influence on the nature of the relationship. The WWOOFing experience as a whole was mainly about the social aspect of the encounter. Through reviewing literature on the host-guest relationship in tourism and hospitality, it became apparent that these encounters could have deeper social implications for the parties involved.

4.2   MOTIVATION

It is important to gain an overview of hosts' and WWOOFers' motivations for wanting to participate in the WWOOFing experience in order to understand the three major components of the experience as illustrated in the analytical framework *(figure 5)*, namely the meaning and understanding of the host-guest relationship, the participants'

expectations of the experience, and their personal outcomes. All research participants had heard about the WWOOF concept by word-of-mouth from third parties who had either been involved themselves or knew about it. Hosts were primarily motivated by the prospect of getting help on their property whilst WWOOFers wanted the opportunity to interact with the locals.

4.2.1 HOST MOTIVATION

The prospect of receiving help on their organic property was the main motive for hosting WWOOFers. However, the socio-cultural nature of the encounter was also quite significant for the hosts. The quote by *Betty* below confirms the importance of having a combination of both while *Robert* puts more emphasis on teaching the volunteers about organic farming:

> *"We became WWOOF host because we enjoy meeting people […] just the social aspect of it and the help around the property, we're not getting any younger and to have some young strong people to do some of the jobs is wonderful, you know, it's good."* **(Betty)**

> *"[…] the cultural exchange stuff with meeting people from all over the world that's all like extra stuff, but for me it's far more about the practical hand on experiences and spreading knowledge basically, do you know. Everything else is just fluff."* **(Robert)**

Organic farming was viewed as a lifestyle or hobby and most hosts identified self-sufficient living and the contribution to environmental sustainability as drivers for getting involved in and learning about organic principles. It seemed that hosts' attitude towards farming was embedded in an organic philosophy, which was implicitly talked about. This philosophy involved minimising their impact on nature through sustainable practices.

They further recognised their responsibilities that came with being a host, which included satisfying WWOOFers' physical needs, such as giving them food, and providing them with a refuge, thus conforming to the requirements of the WWOOFing agreement:

> *"And I mean a lot of the young people, they have been travelling for quite a while and then they stop and they get fed and they get food, you know, and it's a bit of home cooking rather than baked beans."* **(Elsa)**

4.2.2   WWOOFER MOTIVATION

The opportunity to get to know the locals and experience something new was the prevalent motivation for WWOOFers. Having a cheap holiday was also important. WWOOFing was perceived as an opportunity to work and travel, to have a break from life back home, to get to know people, to meet kiwis rather than people working in the tourism industry, and to have a different, off-the beaten track travel experience. Most volunteers were interested in the social exchange[1] aspect of WWOOFing rather than the more practical organic farming aspect. Being immersed into family life demonstrated an invaluable aspect of the encounter. The quotes below illustrate WWOOFers' multiple motivations, with *Emilie* discussing her motivations from the perspective of a tourist, whereas *Simon* sees a WWOOFer as someone who is more than a tourist:

> *"I wanted to have a bit of holidays but I didn't have a lot of money and I wanted to meet people and experience their lifestyle, and yeah I think that was the main reason, that I wanted to see different areas and live with different people."* **(Emilie)**

> *"[…] WWOOFing still is the best way to get to know a country actually because if you stay in a hotel or even hostel you get to know a lot of other tourists; whereas when you just go WWOOFing you step into a family within a minute and then you're there and you get to know everything from basic household things and the daily routine and everything, so it's really something very special, nobody can do that unless they go WWOOFing, not even whatever millionaire can buy that. It's a very special thing to just be able to step into a family and get to know things you couldn't possibly otherwise."* **(Simon)**

Although less important as a motivation, the majority of WWOOFers did express some degree of interest in organics and the learning aspect of the encounter. In this context, personal development, gaining knowledge from the host and getting hands-on experiences of organic farming were the main drivers, for example:

> *"I'm a vegetarian, I'm very interested in looking after your body and the organic farming side of things is something I thought I want to learn more about. I guess that was a real driver for signing up to it, for my personal development and learning more about organic farming."* **(Travis)**

When asked, hosts identified similar motivations for why they thought people became WWOOFers, for example *"[…] it's a cheap way around the country"* **(Betty, host)***, "[…]*

---

[1] In this thesis 'social exchange' refers to the non-commercial host-guest exchange within the social dimensions of WWOOFing. The term is not to be associated with Social Exchange Theory.

they're young and they want to explore things" **(Dinu, host)**, and *"[…] they want to meet other people, learn about the country, and offer something"* **(Phillip, host)**.

These motivations suggest hosts and WWOOFers may have different understandings of the key elements of the WWOOFing exchange. For hosts the work element is key, whilst establishing an interpersonal relationship with their guests was desirable but, in the host's eyes, not a condition of the WWOOF exchange. However, the interpersonal experience within the WWOOFing setting was the major driver for WWOOFers.

4.3   THE NATURE OF THE WWOOFING RELATIONSHIP

4.3.1   INTRODUCING A MODEL OF WORK-SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF WWOOFING EXCHANGE

The model below *(figure 7)* was developed from the empirical analysis. Its components will first be briefly explained and it will then be used as a framework for explaining the host-guest relationship in the WWOOF setting in New Zealand. The WWOOF experience was comprised of two dimensions- the work and social dimension. The model demonstrates the different roles hosts and guests have within these dimensions.

As both parties used a work-terminology to describe the help WWOOFers provided on the organic property, the term 'work' instead of 'volunteering' is used to talk about the provision of labour in return for accommodation and food. The encounter takes place within the spatial context of the host's property, here referred to as 'hosting space', and the host greatly determines the conditions of the relationship.

Figure 7: Work-Social Dimensions of WWOOFing Exchange

	HOST ⟷ EXCHANGE ⟶ GUEST	
WORK	EMPLOYER	EMPLOYEE
SOCIAL	HOST	GUEST
	(FAMILY) HOST	FAMILY MEMBER
	FRIEND	FRIEND
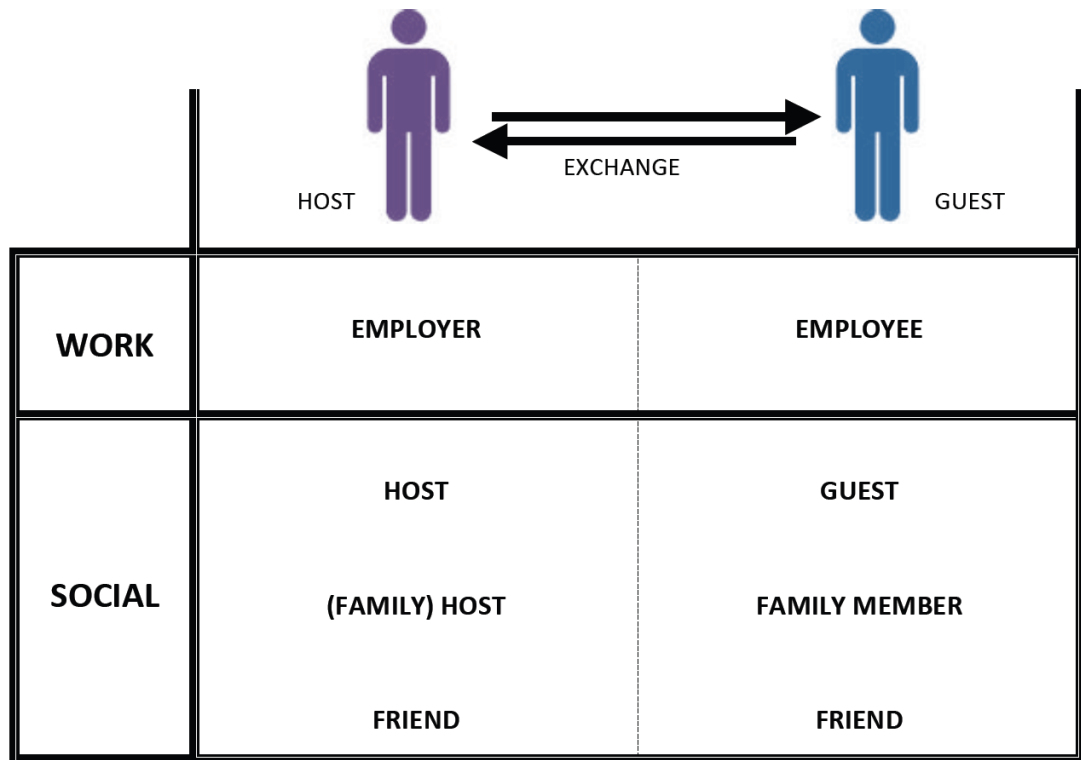
The work dimension involves negotiating the relationship around the WWOOF agreement with work in exchange for accommodation and food *(section 4.3.2)*. In this setting the host can sometimes be seen as an employer and the guest as an employee (worker). The work aspect is the foundation and is present in all WWOOF encounters, whereas the more social component of the relationship might not necessarily occur in every case. The guest agrees to assist with work on the farm property while the host has to fulfil his/her hosting duties. Hosts usually decide on the types of work that need to be done.

The social aspect of the encounter embodies more than just the practical aspect of WWOOFing but allows for a more intimate exchange on a personal level *(section 4.3.3)*. Hosting duties are still important but hosts develop a more personal relationship with their volunteers. It is about the interaction between the parties outside of the work related WWOOF 'deal'. In this element social obligations that go beyond the work agreement are common *(section 4.3.4)*. This dimension can be seen as entailing three levels of closeness, with the host-guest relationship being the least intimate, and the friendship the closest *(figure 7)*.

The basic interpersonal relationship that occurs within the social dimension is the host-guest relationship. Here, guests usually help with chores that are not included in the actual 'deal' and spend a considerable amount of time socialising with their hosts. Both parties see themselves and each other in their roles as hosts and guest.

The second level presents the stage in which the guest is integrated into the host's family life. The WWOOFer is considered both a guest and family member, whilst the host takes up the responsibility of hosting this family member. The hosts might even have a parental role within the family- relationship and WWOOFers have to fulfil their responsibilities as family members by responding to the hosts' hospitality. This level is quite common in the WWOOF encounter.

The most intimate level the parties can reach is that of friendship. It seems to be more intimate than the family level. This could be due to friendship being a more balanced relationship, with the guest potentially having more input in the encounter, and the fact that individuals choose to become friends. Thus, it is not a forced relationship and unlike other levels is not subject to too many social obligations.

The social relationship has the potential to evolve over time depending on the extent to which the different roles of the parties involved change. Hence, a more formal social relationship can evolve into a less formal, even friendship-like relationship between the two parties. Thus, guests can resemble family members or even become friends. However, being able to achieve the different stages in the relationship is dependent on certain aspects, which will be addressed in subsequent sections. Within the different levels of the relationship the work relationship always remains as a foundation. Hosts and WWOOFers who are friends, for example, still experience situations in which they view each other as employers-employees, but can switch back to behaving like friends again once the work is done.

There are limits as to how involved the WWOOFers are in the lives of the hosts and explicit and implicit expectations and rules govern the relationship. Depending on whether the parties are in a situation within the work or social dimension, they change their roles accordingly. This will be subject to elaboration in this chapter *(section 4.4.1)*. There is a fine line between being able to reach a more social base of the relationship and remaining within the work dimension. As will be discussed later *(section 4.4.2)*, components like

length of stay, private time and time spent together, and spatial contexts play a role in reaching certain levels in the relationship. Also, sharing values and stories as well as trust are important and will be discussed in this chapter *(sections 4.4.3 & 4.4.4)*.

Both hosts and guests discussed the nature of the relationship by addressing their varying roles. The importance of one's own status perceived by the host and oneself was echoed throughout the conversations with the WWOOFers. They were aware that their roles differed within the relationship depending on different dynamics, such as time and space. Time being the length of stay on the organic property and space being both the physical and mental space. The volunteer's status was further dependent on how the role of the host was perceived and whether the relationship was more formal or informal. Overall, volunteers talked more about their status in the relationship than hosts. This can probably be attributed to the fact that WWOOFers enter an unknown place, having to establish their roles within this new environment. In contrast, the host has the advantage of living in the setting where the WWOOF exchange takes place and is thus familiar with the physical circumstances of the encounter. Each individual has always one role he/she is constantly in, namely host or guest. The various roles of hosts and WWOOFers and the different dynamics of the relationship are discussed below.

It is important to note that hosts talked about experiences and relationships with WWOOFers in general whereas guests had specific hosts in mind. Moreover, hosts had been hosting WWOOFers for years and had a more holistic view of their past experiences. Hence they might not have been able to remember particular guests. Depending on whether hosts talked about the social component of the experience or the work dimension, they viewed their guests from different angles.

4.3.2 THE WORK RELATIONSHIP

All participants used a work terminology, as opposed to terms related to volunteering, to talk about the assistance hosts received from their guests on the organic property. Most hosts referred to the WWOOFers as workers or as 'people doing work' and some WWOOFers talked about an employer-employee relationship they had while doing tasks. WWOOFers discussed their differing roles in the relationship and addressed challenges involved with trying to identify what these roles were in the eyes of their hosts. Thus, there was uncertainty as to what the roles of individuals were and having multiple roles in

different situations within the encounter was recognised by both parties. The excerpt below illustrates the conflict a host had in identifying his role in relation to his guest:

> *"I'm not having a working contract with them...it's one of these vague things. They are not really working for me. They have a place to stay and for the place to stay they do some work for me but no, I'm not an employer. But it's very vague this business."* **(Tiede, host)**

Other hosts identified guests as workers or employees who followed the hosts' instructions regarding organic farming within the work dimension of the encounter. This formal relationship surrounding the 'deal' was clearly distinguished from the less formal, social dimension. Similarly, some WWOOFers saw their host as an employer when doing work they were assigned to do. In this context, clear guidelines were important to ensure they completed the tasks to the hosts' satisfaction.

WWOOFers pointed to the difficulty of distinguishing between work duties and leisure, which specifically presented a dilemma in cases where hosts and guests had developed a more informal, closer relationship. Thus, there can be blurred boundaries as to what the volunteer's role is depending on whether the parties move within the work or social dimension in a particular situation. Both parties have to negotiate their differing roles in these situations. For example, although *Charlotte* felt like a friend and family member within the social dimension, in situations that involved work on the property she was the worker completing tasks that had been assigned to her by the host. In this situation, the host had the role of an employer. Managing these varying roles was considered challenging:

> *"[…] I mean sometimes the categories were a bit harder to see. Because usually like there would be moments where she was my employer in the sense I'd be 'oh what did you want me to get done this week?' And then we'd make a list and we'd go through it and all of that, okay and then when that was over we'd put that aside and then we'd be more like flatmates or friends living together or something like that and then that was fine. […] So I mean it's a bit tricky because it's your employer, but it's your friend, but it's your host, but it's your friend and you're part of the family [...] it's a lot of things at the same time. So depending through which eye you're looking at them, like the employer eye or the friend eye, you think 'I should do this, oh no I have to do that', or 'oh no I don't have to do this."* **(Charlotte, WWOOFer)**

Knowing their role in the relationship was critical to understanding behaviours and responsibilities. Particularly for volunteers it was important to feel that they were not only seen as workers, since they all wanted to establish a social relationship with their hosts.

They highlighted numerous times that, in their eyes, WWOOFing goes beyond the exchange of labour for food and board:

> *"I want to do WWOOFing but I don't work like a worker or a seasonal worker, it's different to WWOOFing, it's not for just work and go to your small house and just stay alone."* **(Christophe, WWOOFer)**

4.3.3   THE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP

While the work dimension was the foundation of the WWOOFing encounter and the 'deal', establishing a relationship on a personal level was considered essential in order to add value to the experience. This was communicated by the guests more so than by the hosts. Being integrated into the host family or even becoming friends with their host were aspects that WWOOFers expected to gain from the encounter *(section 4.4.1)*. Most felt integrated into their hosts' lives and got involved in activities other than WWOOF-work. Likewise, hosts emphasised the importance of a more intimate relationship. Social interaction with their guests and the enjoyment of meeting interesting people made the experience more exciting. For *Tiede* the social relationship was even more important than getting the tasks done set out in the agreement:

> *"Personally I think the social contact is for us way more important even than doing all the clean-up. It's handy that they do it, but I want to have some social contact back from them. If they are just here to do work, then we're not slave labours, I like to have people around me and that's fun."* **(Tiede, host)**

Going beyond the WWOOFing 'deal' really demonstrated a desirable component contributing to making the relationship work. WWOOFers frequently said that without the prospect of social interaction they would not want to engage in WWOOFing. Participants were aware of their status as strangers upon first contact with each other. This first 'meet and greet' was seen as an important indicator whether or not they would get along with each other throughout the encounter. Within a short period of time both WWOOFers and hosts often understood whether or not the relationship was likely to evolve to a more personal one, for example:

> *"[…] the other funny thing is that you can usually tell within a day whether it gets to that level or whether it doesn't and if it doesn't it's always the question whether to stay or not, because there can be other things interesting for you but usually you are able to tell whether it gets to the level of friendship or not within a day or two- it's quite fascinating actually."* **(Simon, WWOOFer)**

There seemed to be a point of time where the relationship transformed from a host-guest relationship to a more personal one. Hence, WWOOFers and hosts changed categories to friend or family member. Yet, the stage this happened is difficult to define and it depends on different factors, such as privacy, values and trust *(sections 4.4.2- 4.4.4)*.

Both parties were generally aware of the uncertainty involved in the WWOOFing encounter, at least during the meet and greet stage and the first days. Hosts appeared to be more relaxed about the fact that WWOOFers were strangers and most noted that having strangers stay on their property is very much part of their reality:

> *"For us it's part of our life having strangers with us, which is, it's fun and it's challenging and it's yeah it's a lifestyle [laughs]."* **(Dorothe)**

ROLES IN THE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP

Conversations with hosts revealed that the hosting responsibilities they had towards their guests were always present within each level of the relationship, even if the parties had developed closer personal bonds. This meant that by moving into the family level, the host was both family member and host. Likewise, the WWOOFer, then, was seen as both a guest and family member. The more intimate the social relationship got the less formal were these hosting duties. However, the extent to which the relationship was balanced by the host varied. Within the work sphere as well as the first level of the social dimension the host greatly determined the relationship through giving instructions and guidelines. The volunteers had more input in the family and friendship levels and, thus, those relationships were more balanced. The extent to which the WWOOFer was seen as a guest further depended on the length of time they spent together. The quote below illustrates the hosts' responsibility of always treating the volunteer as a guest. They take their hosting duties seriously and sometimes take over a parental role:

> *"It's like having another dependent [laughs]. But yeah it's more a hosting role but [...] they're good friends as well yeah they're still like having a guest or visitor really; [...] most people are here for a short time so there isn't really time to develop more than sort of a, you know, 'nice to meet you' host sort of a relationship."* **(Jess)**

Hosts appreciated positive friendships and pointed to the importance of getting enriched by and learning from the experience *(section 4.5)*. Even if their relationship with the volunteer did not result in friendship, the host still benefited from their help:

> *"[...] it's nice making friends and having new contacts around the place. And sometimes it's just about getting holes dug and that's cool in itself."* **(Celeb, host)**

Anecdotes about positive experiences confirmed hosts' appreciation of a less formal relationship with their guests and their subsequent change of role. Particularly, WWOOFers were seen as friends if they visited the host again:

> **Wallace:** *"But I mean the second time he came I said to him 'you're not coming as a WWOOFer anyway.'"*
>
> **Regina:** *"More as a friend."*
>
> **Wallace:** *"If you come back a second time you're coming as a friend."*

Similarly, WWOOFers *Nathalie* and *Pascal*, knew that they were considered friends because their previous host asked them to housesit upon their return visit:

> **Nathalie:** *"It is a little bit different because now we're more friends…"*
>
> **Pascal:** *"It's house sitting."*
>
> **Nathalie:** *"…than host and WWOOFer". [...]*
>
> **Pascal:** *"Yeah it's a friendship, a friend relationship."*

For WWOOFers it was important to feel integrated into their hosts' everyday life as either a family member or friend. Importantly, this change of roles did not necessarily have to be verbalised but it was more a perception or gut feeling the WWOOFers had about the nature of the relationship with their host. Initially volunteers perceived themselves as guest and it seemed as if they made a conscious decision of becoming closer to their hosts. As shown below, one WWOOFer described the process of going from guest to family member or friend as a process of growing up. She further stressed that becoming more integrated meant feeling less restricted:

> *"Yeah, the first* [host] *I felt a bit like a guest and I often tried to adjust really quickly but that made me change lots myself and that wasn't good so I sort of got into the family and I got involved really quickly at the beginning because I tried to do all exactly how they did it and then I sort of got more independent after three days and it felt a bit like being a child doing everything what the parents say and then getting older and doing what I want to do [laughs]."* **(Raffaela)**

Predominantly, length of stay influenced the level of interaction in the relationship and vice versa. Individuals mentioned that there is no point putting effort in building up a friendship if the actual WWOOF encounter only lasts a short period of time:

"We knew that we'd be moving on in a week or so and so it was more just about, you know, having a good time together and getting to know each other and learning different things from each other while we were there rather than thinking I was making a friend for life." **(Danielle, WWOOFer)**

WWOOFers emphasised the importance of allowing time to adjust to the WWOOFing situation and valued the opportunity to establish a closer relationship with hosts over time. With regards to the time spent with hosts *Christophe* identified two different options of doing WWOOFing:

"Yeah, I think there are two different WWOOFers: you can stay just one week and travel around New Zealand or you can stay longer and, yeah, establish more relationship between the host and the WWOOFer. I think for me, I like to stay more than two weeks I think, because yeah after you have the routines and it's easier because when you are every time in a different family each week you need you…it's very hard because the two or three first days you need to…yeah it's just presentation… ." **(Christophe, WWOOFer)**

Charlotte recognised the challenges involved of becoming too close to the host. However she also had an interesting thought that might best summarise certain conditions attached to different roles the individual has in the relationship, for instance having a very personal relationship comes with its ups and downs:

"[...] So there was like a few moments like that it was a bit hard because it was, well the family dynamics I mean if you're part of them, well you're part of them for better or for worse." **(Charlotte)**

4.3.4 OBLIGATIONS

Although the WWOOFing exchange is based on a loose 'deal' and no set contractual agreement, elements of obligation were evident in the host-guest interaction. Two types of obligation were identified by project participants; one being the obligation to comply with the WWOOF agreement, and one doing more than merely fulfilling the 'deal'. That is, WWOOFers would feel obliged to fulfil duties other than providing the host with their labour, whereas hosts would feel bound to offer more than accommodation and food to guests. The latter was also partly a responsibility of hosting the guest. This section will first examine hosts' obligations towards WWOOFers and will then look at the WWOOFers' obligations towards their hosts.

HOSTS' OBLIGATION TOWARDS WWOOFERS

Most hosts talked about fulfilling their part of the WWOOFing agreement as their main obligation they had. The quote below illustrates the responsibility the host felt toward the volunteer as part of living up to the requirements of the 'deal':

> *"The only obligation I feel is I need to produce a really nice, hearty meal at the end of the day and they need a nice clean, warm, comfortable room. That's the contract, you know, I give them that and they give me some help."* **(Elisabeth)**

The extent to which hosts felt obliged to do certain things seemed to change over time. More types of obligation were felt in the social setting. The responsibilities the hosts felt that went beyond the mere WWOOFing agreement were very much social obligations attributed to their role as hosts. They had a caring role in the relationship making sure to look after their guests in a social more interpersonal context:

> *"[...] certainly I guess hospitality wise and so on we know we've got an obligation to be friendly to them and take some time out to talk to them, all that sort of thing."* **(Marcus)**

Sometimes hosting guests would mean taking on a parental role, especially if the WWOOFers were young. Particularly women felt parental responsibilities towards WWOOFers and jokingly called themselves *"the kiwi mum"* **(Betty)**. Hosts would be particularly concerned about their guests' wellbeing and safety, for example:

> *"Well, I guess with the safety thing, with them going out at night, we feel a bit obliged, especially if they're young, that we should kind of make sure that they're safe."* **(Celeb)**

Interestingly, most hosts talked about WWOOFers being present in situations where challenges occurred within the family. They mentioned feeling obliged not to have disputes and not to discipline their children in front of the WWOOFers *(quote Jess)*. However, some referred to the reality that being integrated into the family can also entail experiencing conflicts *(quote Dorothe)*:

> *"Obliged to behave in a certain way? Certainly, you know, I wouldn't scream at the kids, not that I scream at the kids, but, you know, you do feel a little bit constraint but because it's not like constant it's only once in a while so again it's not a problem I don't think."* **(Jess)**

> *"I mean it's daily life, it's family life and there are situations when you have a conflict with your partner or whatever it just comes out, you know, you can't really hide things in a family when somebody lives with you, especially not if they stay with you for longer [...] and there may be situations when we say 'look, this has*

nothing to do with you, you know, it's us and we have to sort that out' just to make them feel okay with it." **(Dorothe)**

In the context of making sure to be a good host, an obligation to entertain the WWOOFers was echoed throughout conversations with hosts. However, this was often perceived as problematic considering the hosts' busy schedules:

"[...] that's why we rather have couples or two people at the same time because if I just have one person they quite often are in their room all alone, then you have the feeling that you actually have to entertain them. Yeah, and that for me is quite…yeah it's a bit much, you know. If I constantly have the feeling that I have to entertain them, I have to do something with them or with her or something like that then I do not feel comfortable with that." **(Neske)**

WWOOFERS' OBLIGATIONS TOWARDS HOSTS

The guests recognised that depending on what they perceived as their status in the relationship they would feel obliged to do certain things or behave in a certain way. Interestingly, WWOOFers did not talk about feeling obligations with regards to the work dimension within the encounter. The obligations they felt were of social nature. On the one hand, they felt obliged to provide hosts with help that went beyond the initial WWOOFing agreement because they felt like a family member, on the other hand those who felt like guests felt obliged to go the extra mile for the hosts, for example:

"[…] usually in the first place you always feel like a guest because I mean that's what you are, you are a guest who's kind of 'paying' for being allowed to be a guest and that usually gives you the experience or the feeling you have to do something which makes you more welcome or which makes you kind of worth being there and that's why you usually try to do a lot more than you need to concerning, well, you could call it the contract probably." **(Simon)**

Moreover, WWOOFers mentioned that they were often confused as to what point their obligation to work within the context of the WWOOF agreement ended, thus having trouble distinguishing between work and leisure:

"[...] in fact sometimes I'd be like 'am I working right now?' or is it…like she's asking me to make dinner oh that's work because she's asking me blahblahblah, whereas if I offered to cook dinner, but when I'm offering so it's not like work." **(Charlotte)**

There was a fine line between the help being just a friendly gesture and it being an obligation. The WWOOFers' struggle with this issue is captured in the following quote:

"I think I felt a little bit obliged to do the dishes just because it had started that way, I hadn't really intended it but I did feel… but then, I mean, they were cooking every

day, they were cooking every meal, they were feeding me, so it wasn't a big deal." **(Kakama)**

Interestingly, most guests who had become quite close to their hosts didn't seem to mind embracing duties outside of the agreement. This was partly because they wanted to spend time with hosts *(section 4.4.2)*, but also because being fully accepted and integrated into the host's life was something they appreciated very much and giving something back was their way of showing appreciation. To prevent WWOOFers from feeling bad about not helping in every social situation some hosts realised that giving clear guidelines in the beginning of the relationship that outline what the actual WWOOFing help entailed was much appreciated by their volunteers *(section 4.4.1)*. That way WWOOFers knew what help, if any, was expected on top of their proper WWOOFing work. It also made it easier to distinguish between the more formal requirements of the 'deal' and informal help.

4.3.5 SUMMARY- THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP

This section established that the WWOOF encounter is comprised of the more formal work dimension and the more informal social dimension. Within these dimensions the nature of the relationship between host and WWOOFer is dependent on their roles. These roles were negotiated through evaluating own perceptions of the nature of the relationship and those of the counterpart, as well as a personal analysis of situations occurring in these two dimensions. The roles of both parties are dependent on the level of closeness between the two as well as the length of the encounter. Particularly for WWOOFers it was important to know their multiple roles as WWOOF encounters took place within the host's domain. Obligations that were felt in both dimensions were identified. Fulfilling hosting duties was the main obligation felt by the hosts, with fulfilling one's part of the WWOOF agreement by offering accommodation and food as the most important duty. However, integrating the WWOOFer into the host's life was considered part of the responsibility of looking after the guest. WWOOFers, in turn, felt obliged to assist their hosts in everyday life and not only to comply with the 'deal'. Guests found it challenging to distinguish between what was considered work and what was social. However, guests who had developed a closer relationship with their hosts often did not mind helping with tasks outside the WWOOFing 'deal'. The relationship is about negotiating the different roles and reaching a level of closeness that both parties agree upon as well as reaching a balance between the work and

social dimensions. Factors that influence these roles and types of relationships will be presented in the subsequent sections.

4.4 MEANING AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE EXPERIENCE

4.4.1 SETTING EXPECTATIONS

After a thorough exploration of the nature of the relationship, the expectations WWOOFers and hosts had of the relationship and each other can now be examined. The work/social distinction was apparent and in general hosts talked more about expectations regarding help with various tasks whilst volunteers' expectations were more related to social aspects.

It is evident that hosts very much determine the relationship by setting the rules or guidelines of the encounter according to what they expect. These rules apply to the WWOOFing tasks set out by the hosts as well as living with each other within the context of the host's daily life. Hosts' expectations were communicated both before and during the experience, whereas WWOOFers' expectations were likely to be verbalised before via phone or email, if at all. Some encounters happen at short notice and getting to know each other before the encounter is not always possible. The hosts in the sample had years of experience and seemed to have established a routine and, thus, were aware of what they expected from their guests. Volunteers, in turn, had expectations regarding particular encounters with hosts in specific environments and almost all of them were first-time WWOOFers.

The conversations with participants revealed, *"[…] both people are expecting to contribute to the relationship as well as gain something from it"* **(Danielle, WWOOFer)**. Nonetheless, disappointment occurred if hosts and/or WWOOFers felt their expectations were not being recognised. Unlike the hosts, though, WWOOFers commonly did not verbalise their expectations, which potentially led to misinterpretation by the host.

EXPECTATIONS RELATED TO THE WORK DIMENSION

The hosts' perspectives on conveying their expectations indicated that communicating them during the pre-meeting and meet and greet phases was important in order to give the WWOOFer an idea of what was expected prior to actually doing the tasks:

> *"You pretty much do start doing that when you sort of talk to them on the phone or by email and stuff like that anyway, that's the whole idea of it is so that I*

> [WWOOFer] *come here with a fairly clear expectation of what we require and what sort of conditions there're going to be and things like that."* **(Brandon, host)**

The kind of expectations verbalised were related to the types of tasks hosts needed help with and daily working routines. Social expectations were not addressed to the same extent as expectations related to the WWOOFing 'deal'. As exemplified in the following response, hosts were in charge of giving WWOOFers an overview of what the daily routine entailed and how to function within the framework provided by them:

> *"We more tell what we expect from them. It's more, ok these are the ground rules, you work 4 hours a day and for the 4 hours […] you work and all the rest what comes on top of it, all the social contact that's all extras."* **(Tiede, host)**

Many highlighted the importance of providing on the job training and supervision for WWOOFers, since many were inexperienced and language barriers were identified as a challenge with regards to understanding tasks. This hands-on approach to teaching allowed hosts to give guests an interactive introduction to their work and to talk about expectations. It also enabled direct feedback and the transfer of organic farming specific knowledge.

Hosts expected volunteers to fulfil their part of the 'deal' by being committed to working hours, which were typically four to six hours daily. They were commonly flexible and many tried to match the WWOOFers' interests and skills to the tasks. Many said that *"there's no point getting someone to do something that they are going to absolutely hate doing"* **(Betty)**, and hence *"let the WWOOFer decide what they want to do when and if they're keen about a job, then they're likely to do a better job"* **(Caitlin)**. Essentially, hosts expected the volunteers to do their best and make an effort to comply with the tasks they set out:

> *"If I was feeding them and providing them somewhere to stay I'd feel a bit upset if they wouldn't do anything. So in that sense just the expectation of putting in the time that you can see they've actually done quite a bit that, you know, what you'd expect for that amount of work and that sort of feels like it's about balance because the time that they put in is about balance too, you know, what they receive in return."* **(Jess, host)**

Language barriers were not seen as a major problem if WWOOFers had the right attitude and a willingness to learn. As exemplified below, the level of supervision within the work dimension was dependent on the volunteers' ability to understand English:

> **Dinu:** *"I think the language sometimes can be frustrating because you want to tell them to do something and sometimes you physically need to show them what to do or it would be simple if they understand the language."*

> **Cosmina:** *"And that's not that, you tell them 'all right you do this, do you understand', 'yes' and then you come back and they're doing something totally different."*

Guests regarded guidance on tasks as very helpful. An introduction to the daily routine and tasks was particularly helpful so the WWOOFers were able to get an overview of what was expected. In particular, guests for whom English was not their native language appreciated these guidelines. This was crucial to be able to fulfil one's part of the WWOOFing agreement and to understand farming-specific terms.

The WWOOFers' initial expectation was more about the social exchange with the host rather than about organic farming. The balance of these two components varied between individuals, as some were more, some less interested in organics. Still, as exemplified below, organic farming was generally not the main driver for becoming a WWOOFer. Nevertheless, most saw the potential of being able to learn about both organic principles and issues regarding everyday life through the experience:

> *"[...] they were very knowledgeable people and I really respected that and I just wanted to... and in a sense I wanted to learn as much from them as I could [...]."* **(Kakama, WWOOFer)**

EXPECTATIONS RELATED TO THE SOCIAL DIMENSION

As discussed above, the interpersonal relationship was underpinned by the requirements of meeting the hosts' expectations regarding the 'deal'. However the notion of what was involved in the social relationship with each other differed between the two groups. Guests regarded the social relationship with the host as an immersion in local life, whilst for the hosts it meant gaining help with tasks outside the time spent doing physical work. Although, getting help on their property was the main motive for being a host, most expected their volunteers to want to become part of their lives. Being interested in the host was a requirement of the relationship and hosts wanted WWOOFers to show an interest in their families. However, it was important for hosts not to have their daily lives interrupted; hence, there were also expectations around respecting the hosts' (family) lives and daily schedules:

> *"[...] you have to set a little bit of an expectation of things like when you're getting ready in the morning they stay out of the way, they stay out of the bathroom, you know. We're number one, we've got to get the kids to school and things, so you just, you know, relax, stay out [of] the way."* **(Celeb, host)**

Most hosts expected certain times of the day to be spent together as part of the WWOOFers' integration into family life. Having meals together was one of the most important activities and a time of being able to socialise and getting to know each other better. It was important to know each other's expectations in order to avoid misunderstandings and have clarity as to what the rules and guidelines entailed *(section 4.4.1)*. Hosts further talked about expectations that are common sense, such as *"respect our property and respect our space and our privacy"* **(Betty)**, and *"I expect them not to molest my children and I expect them not to steal from me"* **(Caitlin)**.

Hosts expected the WWOOFers to have a positive attitude towards all aspects of the experience. They didn't want to feel their hospitality was being abused, as illustrated by the response below:

> *"No, no some people just view it as a [...] cheap accommodation and, you know, seriously like those people like fuck I get tired of them so quickly. Because what the fuck are you here for, do you know?"* **(Robert, host)**

Part of having the 'right' attitude was also showing an interest not only in the hosts' life but also in the tasks WWOOFers were helping with on the host property. This also seemed to be a matter of respecting the hosts' efforts put into maintaining the property:

> *"I send out emails to say that I requested they have a genuine interest in sustainable living, learning sustainable living skills and organics, and if they don't then we're not really interested in having them here."* **(Ralph, host)**

Some WWOOFers had felt uncertain as to what to expect in terms of fulfilling tasks, as most of them were first-time WWOOFers and they felt having clear expectations was dependent on previous experiences. However, all anticipated having interpersonal relationships with hosts. In this context, most talked about the meaning they attributed to a good WWOOFing experience. For them WWOOFing signified an intangible experience in form of the relationship with the hosts:

> *"Yah, because we worked hard during the day so if you work hard during the day and there is nothing between it's not WWOOFing, you can't just work hard just for a meal and accommodation it's…when sometimes we worked for six hours, seven*

> *hours it's like a real job, you expect other, more than just they give you the meal and something."* **(Christophe, WWOOFer)**

In exchange for their willingness to work, WWOOFers hoped to receive more than accommodation and food and wanted to develop a relationship with the hosts, however temporary this would be:

> *"[…] we were willing to work hard but we also wanted to get something positive from it and I think as a host they would also need to realise that we are travelling, we want a positive experience, you know, if we didn't want to have the positive aspects of WWOOFing like, you know, the meeting people and having a nice place to stay then we would find a different job that paid money."* **(Danielle, WWOOFer)**

Some WWOOFers felt overwhelmed by the hosts' expectations and talked about their discomfort in having to deal with situations in which they felt pressured to fulfil these expectations. Therefore clear guidelines as to what hosts expected was appreciated by WWOOFers.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RULES AND GUIDELINES

The importance of having clear rules and guidelines as a foundation for a mutually beneficial experience was echoed throughout the conversations with hosts and guests. Like expectations, rules and guidelines were basically concerned with the daily work routine, such as working hours, the nature of tasks, and specific farming techniques, as well as managing the social relationship between the two parties. Unsurprisingly, they were established and communicated by the hosts, who stressed that they were trying to give clear instructions to avoid misunderstandings. This was important as most WWOOFers were considered inexperienced. Rules were used to communicate boundaries and values:

> *"I mean we don't tell them they've got to be in bed at ten o'clock or anything silly like this, you know, but we're very clear, like in our profile we say no drinks, no tobacco and no vegetarians and we make that very clear from the beginning and that's our choice and we don't have to explain ourselves or justify it. [...] That's just the way we are and that's the way we choose to be and if they don't like it well then don't ring up, you know, don't apply to come here. Simple [laughs]."* **(Betty, host)**

Hosts stressed the importance of giving WWOOFers an introduction to their daily routine and to talk about basic rules to avoid misunderstandings, thus, being very clear about how life on the WWOOF property works in terms of tasks. Yet, also with regards to everyday social life clear guidelines were important. The quote below best illustrates the importance of the initial meet and greet in communicating these expectations:

> *"[…] as soon as they arrive in the house we sit down and talk to them. And the first thing we usually have with them is a beer or whatever like that and we just go through a few things. It's like 'look we expect this from you and in return you giving us this, this is what we give you' [...] And that's kind of just setting down the basic few rules so that people realise what's expected of them and what you're going to get in return for it."* **(Lile, host)**

Having written-down rules was a way of conveying what was expected, but verbalising them was considered more appropriate. This was important for the integration process of guests into the hosts' lives. One host proposed that the more distant the two parties are in the relationship the more rules have to be put into place to guide them through it:

> *"There're people who make WWOOFers cook, you know, they provide their food right, but they don't cook it. And they provide WWOOFer accommodation but they don't occupy it with them in any way and if you've got people living there and you're not living with them then you have to make rules for them so that they don't leave the dishes dirty or, you know, make the place a mess or damage stuff. You know what I mean? It's like as soon as you actually step back from any kind of real interaction with them and treat them as a labour force, you've got to make rules."* **(Wallace, host)**

Although volunteers expressed an appreciation of having rules and guidelines in order to be able to understand the hosts' expectations regarding tasks, they also realised that WWOOFing was about establishing a social relationship, which should not be directed by too many rules. Thus, a balance of rules and guidelines seemed important to WWOOFers. The following quote exemplifies the importance of being clear about the rules of living together:

> *"If there's some rules that are kind of clear from the start, well then it's easy, you know them from the start and you just function within those rules; whereas if the boundaries are not clear then you kind of feel uneasy whenever you're getting near a boundary [...] because you're not sure where it ends."* **(Charlotte, WWOOFer)**

In addition, having to abide to too many rules resulted in feeling restricted, which impacted negatively on the experience. Both parties recognised that previous experiences determined how thorough hosts were in explaining and implementing rules and guidelines, as well as communicating expectations to the WWOOFer. Rules and guidelines assisted in spelling out hosts' expectations, and communicating these in a clear manner was considered crucial in the volunteer's integration process into the host's life. It was highlighted, though, that a balance between having too many rules and not enough rules was important. Particularly, the inexperienced WWOOFer appreciated guidelines regarding work-related tasks.

4.4.2   NEGOTIATING PRIVATE AND SHARED TIME/SPACE

As reflected in the conversations with project participants, privacy but also spending time together played a significant role in the relationship. Importantly, the need for privacy did not seem to depend too much on the hosts and guests' social closeness, but was more dependent on **time** (length of WWOOFer's stay) and **space**, inter alia whether or not the parties had their own private space within the hosting space. Respecting each other's privacy by balancing own and shared time/space was crucial to ensuring a pleasant experience. Since finding this balance was not always possible, both parties had to negotiate what was best for them while respecting each other's privacy. Hosts talked more about the importance of privacy than WWOOFers.

The model below *(figure 8)* reflects the participants' voices by illustrating the diverse facets of privacy in the host-guest relationship. It shows both spatial and temporal dimensions and will assist in explaining the negotiation of private and shared time/space. Time together was usually spent within the boundaries of the hosting space, which refers to the setting in which the encounter took place. Own time was not only important within the hosting space but also spent away from the setting in private areas or away from the farm property.

Figure 8: Own Time/Space and Together Time/Space in WWOOFing
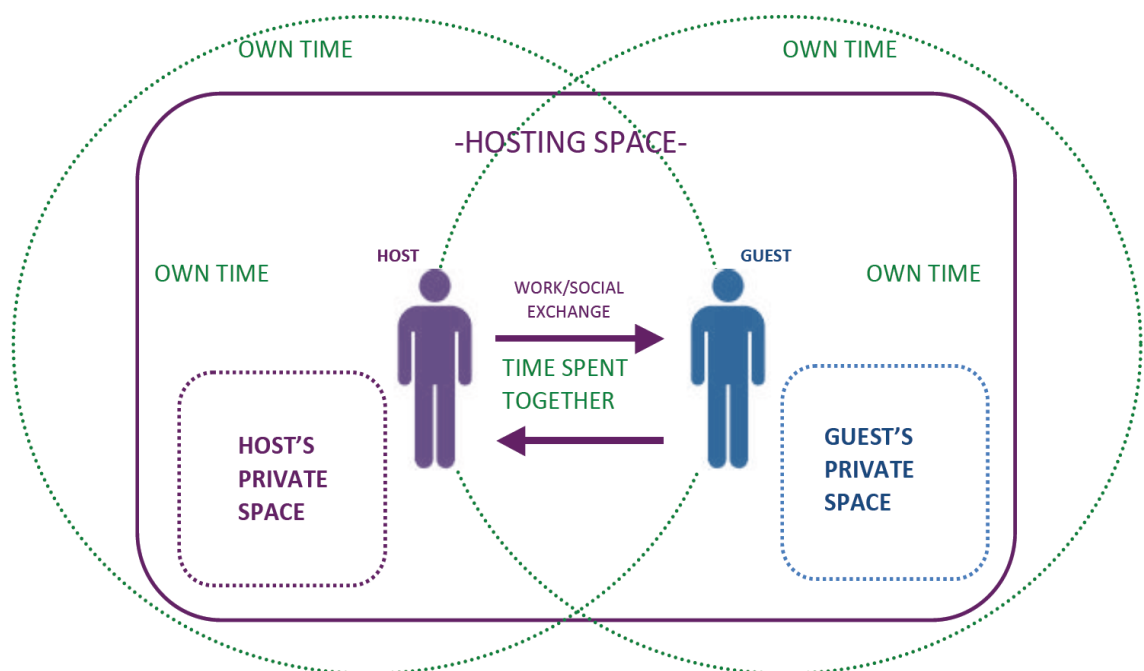
Hosts acknowledged that the guest's privacy was of equal importance to their own. Typically guests had a private space they could escape to within the property, for example their own bedrooms or sleep-outs. This helped create a space for guests to withdraw from the host. However, to get further distance from the host environment required leaving the property *(figure 8)*. Thus, there was an important distinction between private space and shared space as illustrated in the quote below:

> *"Yeah because they have their own space, which is usually downstairs, so it's more they have their space and then we sort of share up here in the kitchen and then my own space is basically my room so yeah. So we do each have our own space and shared space and that, I think, that works good."* **(Jess, host)**

Expectations around taking part in the hosts' family lives were communicated. The hosts regulated the level of involvement by setting boundaries regarding privacy. Ideally, WWOOFers would participate in the hosts' lives but were only involved to a certain extent, which allowed for private time for hosts. Then, they did not have to be concerned about their hosting duties. This 'own time' *(figure 8)* was either incorporated into the day as a routine or communicated to the WWOOFer by requesting privacy.

All WWOOFers were conscious about allowing hosts to have private time, because they were aware of potential personal challenges of sharing one's life with a guest. While hosts stressed the importance of doing things without having to involve their guests, integrating them in family activities was vital in building up a closer relationship:

> *"There are times when you need to be able to do something just with your family without involving anyone else. However, generally we try to involve the WWOOFers because we work as a family, I mean, you know, I find it in a way not fair to expect them to be part of the family and then to exclude them from family things [laughs]."* **(Dorothe, host)**

Generally, WWOOFers seemed to be confident in making the host environment a temporary home and many had the desire to socialise with their hosts. However, they also appreciated spending time by themselves and physically away from the hosting space *(figure 8)*:

> *"[...] you kind of try to spend your free time either experiencing the country or doing stuff, which is not connected to the WWOOFing places."* **(Simon, WWOOFer)**

Wanting to have privacy was further dependent on whether hosts and/or guests came into the WWOOFing relationship as couples. For both parties it was equally important to have

couple time in private. Often, hosts would prefer couples to a single WWOOFer, as they were more likely to spend time by themselves, giving the host privacy. In turn, WWOOFers were also aware of respecting their hosts' couple time.

Subsequently, negotiating own time and time spent together was considered important and its success or failure had an influence on the intensity and length of their relationship. Finding a balance was seen as challenging for both parties at times. However, for hosts it seemed more challenging as the entire encounter took place in their home space and they had to fulfil hosting duties:

> *"And there's always extra people you've got to cook for and then they're in your space and in your face and it is really hard. I'm not saying I don't enjoy it, I used to enjoy it a lot more though."* **(Paige, host)**

On a more positive note, most hosts seemed to have found ways to deal with balancing their private lives and their lives as hosts. Leaving the shared space was sometimes necessary in order to have private time. Hosts further commented on the decision of getting involved in WWOOFing and having to accept the consequences of doing so. Hence, making a commitment to hosting WWOOFers and fulfilling their part of the deal meant that to some extent their private lives had to be shared with guests. So, hosts basically had two choices, either to accept this or to have clear physical boundaries as to how close WWOOFers were allowed to get to them. The latter was chosen by the host below:

> *"We like having people around, that's the choice that we've made. So we know that they're going to be here and, you know, we don't hear anything from our bedroom, it's at the other end of the house and it's very quiet; and we say to people, 'you can stay up, you can watch a movie, Internet stuff whatever, just turn the light off when you walk out of the door', and they're kind of worried about bothering us and we're like 'you're not bothering us, don't worry'. So we just go on with our routine and people can do what they want, stay up as long as they want in the lounge here and it doesn't bother us."* **(Rebecca, host)**

Balancing shared and own time was addressed more by hosts than WWOOFers. This can be explained by looking at the WWOOFers' expectations, which were mostly about getting to know the locals by spending time with them, whereas the primary concern for hosts was getting help on their property. The possibility of sharing too much time and space was particularly communicated by host couples and those who had a family:

> *"Sometimes I feel that I spend a lot of time with them during the day and sometimes we might. Most of the meals we try to have together with them and I think we*

> *spend a fair amount of time with these people and sometimes you get close, too close, and then you're having them around you all the time [laughs]."* **(Dinu, host)**

Hosts had a personal limit regarding the time they felt they could spend with WWOOFers. Most identified clear boundaries to the guests' length of stay, noting that within a short period of time their relationship with each other worked best as it was not too invasive to the hosts' private lives. Since hosting WWOOFers involved looking after them, it was further apparent that hosts felt relieved from their obligations of hosting once guests had left. This underpinned the importance of being able to distinguish between their lives as hosts and their private lives as demonstrated in the following quote:

> *"And [Brandon] got a few jobs done that he wanted done; it's great. But they stayed for a week and when the week was over I was ready for them to go, not because I didn't like them, I just wanted my space back, and I didn't want to cook such big meals, and I didn't want to be stuck down with their schedule."* **(Paige, host)**

For hosts, it was important to have a break from WWOOFing to resume their private life and to relieve themselves from the duties of hosting; they felt *"WWOOFed out!"* **(Betty, host)**. The main reasons that fostered this desire were the WWOOFers' length of stay on the host property combined with a lack of physical private space. So, having a balance between private- and hosting- time was much appreciated. The example below illustrates an extreme situation in which the guest overstayed his time. The spatial constraints of the host family home can further be problematic:

> *"Sometimes after a while you do feel like, with that guy that stuck with us for eleven months, he was lovely [...] but he didn't go out that much, he was a bit of a home buddy and so at times we kind of wanted our own space to just not have to involve someone else in the conversation. So that can get a little bit awkward, especially in a small house, we don't have that much room. We don't have kind of separate spaces you could get off to really and if you want to have a conversation about them it can be slightly awkward [laughs]."* **(Celeb, host)**

Overall, hosts felt comfortable with adjusting the time spent engaging in WWOOFing to personal circumstances, making it acceptable to be selective, thus not feeling obliged to constantly host WWOOFers:

> *"We're quite happy to say 'no we're fully booked' or, you know, 'nah we've got no work at the moment' and then after a while we get a bit of cabin fever saying 'oh yeah come on over, come along, no problem', you know [laughs]."* **(Betty, host)**

4.4.3 SHARED VALUES & SHARING STORIES

Shared values and sharing stories were seen as indicators for mutual interest and influenced the level of the interpersonal relationship within the social dimension of the encounter. Hosts and WWOOFers had similar thoughts on these aspects and therefore their opinions will be presented together.

The stories that were shared had multiple natures ranging from very personal intimate stories to those told by hosts to facilitate the volunteers' learning process. The former were only shared in a friendship and/or family environment, whereas the latter were used in a more frequent manner. Hosts appeared to be more open about sharing personal and family matters with their guests than WWOOFers themselves. However, both parties considered learning from each other's stories a valuable outcome and a form of knowledge acquisition, thus leading to knowledge exchange in most cases:

> *"I think it's that both people, the host and the WWOOFer, are interested in each other and want to share their knowledge and their stories with each other, because I think that's how you learn the most and have the best experience."* **(Emilie, WWOOFer)**

Sharing stories was considered a process that helped making the transition from merely having a work relationship to becoming closer in the social dimension:

> *"So there's not one answer to say at what point you become a friend, but there's things that you help create. Me sharing my personal story, really, offer them an opportunity to share your* [WWOOFers'] *story if they so choose and at meal times particularly. And sometimes the work that we have to do out there, it's very easy to have conversations."* **(Ralph, host)**

Guests reflected upon the importance of the hosts being open-minded to sharing their views on life, which ultimately points to the WWOOFer's interest in exploring the host's value system. This goes beyond a relatively superficial exchange of experiences between two partakers of social interaction, pointing to the importance of the search for deeper meanings within the experience. At the same time, communication between the actors in the WWOOFing interaction is key to conveying these deeper meanings. Both relationship partners indicated that having something in common aids in creating a foundation of interaction embedded in similar value systems. Ideally, both possess ideas or (character) traits that are not mutually exclusive. Yet, even if they don't have one or more of these traits in common, a ground for exchange through sharing stories and/or values can be achieved through open-mindedness:

> *"[...] he's kind of into the organic thing. He went to a Steiner school in Australia, so he's fully into it and that was really cool, I guess that's what had him kind of stay longer, is that we're on the same kind of way of length."* **(Celeb, host)**

Therefore it is essential to show interest in each other to reach a level of reciprocity in the relationship. Hence, lack of mutual exchange in the context of sharing interests, values, and stories cultivates difficulties, for example:

> *"[...] I'm very interested in people and I'll ask them all sorts of questions about their lives and blahdiblahdiblah… But when someone asks you nothing in return about yourself and your children or your lifestyle or anything…that's kind of like that doesn't really work."* **(Rebecca, host)**

Conflicts of ideas and beliefs are potential challenges, yet there is a level of dependency on each other, which is embedded in the obligations and social norms that frame the encounter. In conversations with hosts, passing on WWOOFing knowledge was considered a desirable act. Hosts seemed to gain a high level of satisfaction out of sharing this organic 'insider knowledge'. This could encompass practical approaches to organic farming or, more importantly, deeper organic values related to sustainable living. Even though this would be likely to take place within the work dimension it positively influenced the interpersonal relationship. Sharing values also had an educational aspect to it with the host embodying the role of a teacher and the WWOOFer the student who, depending on level of interest, either accepts or rejects attaining knowledge about WWOOF values.

Being empathetic was important in the development of a closer interpersonal relationship. Having an understanding and feeling for each other contributed to becoming closer and taking a step away from the generic work relationship. Though only few participants explicitly talked about empathy, they described it through the way they talked about situations. For example, it was particularly important when there was a language barrier:

> *"[...] the biggest challenge was to communicate in a good English and to improve [...] but they [hosts] were really patient and maybe because they came from Europe so they're used to travel and they knew that then they go in France it's difficult to speak French, and they need to speak French because French people don't speak English [laughs]. And so they are used to try to communicate and try to speak another language and [...] not every Kiwi understands that because our last housemate he was Kiwi and so he never really learned a foreign language."* **(Nathalie, WWOOFer)**

4.4.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST IN THE RELATIONSHIP

Conversations with project participants revealed that trust seemed to be an important element of the encounter contributing to feeling safe and making sense of the uncertain. Not having had any unpleasant experiences with WWOOFers was a common explanation for trusting them. Often hosts talked about their attitude and how personal traits, such as being an open-minded person, helped to have faith in guests. Their counterparts seemed to be a bit more conscious about the reason trust plays such a significant role and identified various indicators for trust, with feeling safe, having a positive first impression, sharing common interests, and the structure of the WWOOFing system as most important.

Although hosts had access to WWOOFers' profiles on the WWOOF website, they experienced a great deal of uncertainty as to who their guests were upon the initial meet and greet. This could be due to the fact that they let strangers into their private space whilst their counterparts had nothing to lose, at least not in terms of material possessions. Additionally, the fact that WWOOFers were visitors to New Zealand played a role in why hosts had a certain degree of trust in them. They thought of WWOOFers as tourists seeking a refuge, hence being dependent on the hosts' hospitality. When asked why hosts trust WWOOFers, shared values *(section 4.4.3)* and a 'communal ethos' amongst the participants were viewed as crucial contributors:

> *"Well it's just the sort of people who do WWOOFing I think, you know, generally people who won't take advantage of your trust or whatever."* **(Alan, host)**

> *"[…] and whether underneath there's kind of a communal ethos amongst the people and that if you're not willing to sort of be part of the community and give and take maybe you wouldn't sign up for WWOOFing in the first place."* **(Caitlin, host)**

While they were aware that guests could abuse their trust quite easily, the hosts had a bigger-picture perspective as many are quite experienced and weigh up the probabilities of trust misuse by referring to previous experiences with WWOOFers:

> *"No, it* [trust] *has never been an issue. And it would be very easy to exploit if they would want to, but it's never been an issue."* **(Elsa, host)**

Hosts are aware of the danger of trust misuse but since they never had a problem before they trust their guests unless they give them a reason to question their trustworthiness. To prevent abuse of trust, setting clear boundaries *(section 4.4.1.)* was regarded as important by hosts. Interestingly, many hosts themselves seemed almost surprised about their ability

to trust people. It's as if they became aware of the level of trust they have towards their guests during the interviews. In particular, they talked about making the key to the house accessible to WWOOFers:

> "This is where the key is. They could come back the next day, you know, the next week and steal everything because they know where we put a key for the WWOOFers so that they can come and go as they like." **(Caitlin, host)**

Hosts justified providing their guests with a house key by referring to the 'communal ethos' of WWOOFing and the fact that they are generally trusting. Also talking about expectations during the initial meet-and-greet facilitated trust. There were certain conditions of trust and the two parties had to earn each other's trust. Generally speaking this happened on a *quid pro quo*, or favour in return for a favour, basis. For hosts, the notion of *quid pro quo* was related to WWOOFers fulfilling tasks to their satisfaction and going the extra mile, for example *"If you're making dinner we'll do the dishes"* **(Celeb, host)**. Hosts would reward their volunteers if they had done a good job:

> **Neske:** *"[…] well, you do some more extra stuff for those* [WWOOFers] *because if they're just going out of their way then we go out of our way as well, so then we'll just take him to see a sunset here or we go and sit…you know."*
>
> **Tiede:** *"Yeah or we go to the movies or whatever."*

In the WWOOFers' case returning favours was more based on intangibles as illustrated in the quote below:

> "I'm trusting…everyone who is like tolerant to me and who accepts me how I am and in [place] it was different, they didn't accept me that well and they didn't trust me." **(Raffaela)**

Some volunteers highlighted the trust they had in the WWOOFing system as a relatively safe structure, which to them seemed to be the foundation for trust in the relationship:

> "I just trust the project of WWOOFing and I think if there would be anything bad or anything would happen the host would be crossed out or expelled from the project. So because it's a system of reference so I think if there would be something very wrong they would have wrong reference so it's via trust the whole system." **(Lydie, WWOOFer)**

It seemed that WWOOFers are generally trusting of people and feel that doing WWOOFing is a safe way to travel. Many talked about taking a leap of faith and those who travelled as a couple or in pairs mentioned that this helped them to feel safe although they were aware of potential risks. Moreover, previous WWOOFers' feedback on the hosts' web profiles played a role in being able to trust the hosts. Showing volunteers that hosts had faith in

them by enabling them to be responsible for certain tasks seemed to lead to reciprocation of trust and strengthening of their relationship. In addition, WWOOFers felt less restricted being able to contribute to the relationship by showing initiative with the input of ideas. Also the first meet and greet played an important role in determining whether hosts and guests could trust one another:

> *"[...] but generally I mean within few minutes of meeting people we felt quite relaxed and realised, you know, that generally you can be lucky, you meet nice people along the way so [laughs]."* **(Danielle, WWOOFer)**

The notion of New Zealanders as trustworthy people and the country being very safe was echoed throughout the conversations with both groups of participants. Hence, trust was seen as being *"a kiwi-thing"* **(Celeb, host)** because *"people have always been very generous and trusting"* **(Jess, host)**:

> *"I think it depends on where you come from as well because in New Zealand they are just so much more trusting [...]."* **(Travis, WWOOFer)**

In the context of trust and New Zealand being a safe country, many hosts and some WWOOFers initially talked about theft. This indicates that for hosts betrayal is the worst thing that can happen in the relationship:

> *"They are all quite safe and also I think here in New Zealand we are quite safe in a lot of things because they can't really steal anything. What would they do with a big TV? Where would you bring it, you know? They can't take it anywhere [...]."* **(Neske, host)**

Being able to get to know each other prior to the encounter through various means of communication contributed to being trusting. Although letting a stranger into one's home is *"always a gamble"* **(Regina, host)** participants were positive that showing respect and honesty facilitated trust. Importantly, both parties talked about the freedom to end the relationship without having to attain mutual consent. This was part of the WWOOFing 'deal' and was seen as important as both groups felt they could end the relationship if difficult situations, such as a reason for mistrust, occurred:

> *"And on one particular occasion the WWOOFer waited till we went to bed and waited till we fell asleep and I found him at quarter to two in the morning downloading files from my computer to his, so he was asked to go."* **(Elisabeth, host)**

> *"Well, I have a basic rule for that: if it ever happens that I arrive at a WWOOFing place and realise within maybe one or two days, I'm not getting along with the host for whatever reason, I would just tell them and say 'look it's pretty obvious, it's not*

working out between the two of us, I'm sorry but I…' I would leave, because I don't think there is a point in staying then." **(Thorsten, WWOOFer)**

4.4.5   SUMMARY- MEANING AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE EXPERIENCE

This section emphasised hosts and guests' differing expectations and the importance of the social dimension in fostering interpersonal exchange. The importance of communication and a certain degree of structure through rules and guidelines was apparent throughout. Shared values and contributing to the exchange by sharing stories on a personal level as well as being trusting/trustworthy influenced the evolution of the WWOOF relationship. Temporal and spatial dimensions further influenced the parties' roles. Still, the encounter was greatly determined by the host, which meant that the WWOOFers were dependent on the hosts' decision-making. The closer the parties' got, though, the less formal the relationship became and the less rules and guidelines were needed to 'manage' the WWOOFer.

4.5   PERSONAL OUTCOMES OF THE EXPERIENCE

This section is concerned with the hosts' and WWOOFers' personal outcomes of their relationship. When asked about their personal outcomes some volunteers had difficulty defining what they had learnt or taken away from the experience. Hosts seemed to be more capable of reflecting on it, including very personal outcomes and particular encounters with WWOOFers. Prevalent themes were learning, personal rewards, memories about the experience, personal growth, the importance of feedback, keeping in contact after the experience, the importance for WWOOFers of having achieved something, and how the experience could inform future encounters. The importance of being able to take very personal things away and feeling enriched was echoed throughout the interviews with both hosts and guests. Personal outcomes entailing deeper meaning and social, more personal benefits prevailed outcomes related to learning skills and learning about organic farming. Interestingly, despite having had expectations that were more focused on gaining help on the property and transferring skills, hosts spoke enthusiastically, and somewhat philosophically, about their personal gains and the social value of the experience.

Despite their rather sparse interest in organics, volunteers valued gaining knowledge about agricultural matters and acquired practical skills they considered useful in everyday life. Those WWOOFers who learnt more on a personal and self-development level conveyed their gratifying experiences through self-reflection. They learnt how to be more diplomatic,

how to listen to oneself, enjoy quiet time, to reflect, as well as to learn about people and different cultures. The self-development process achieved through the WWOOF experience was regarded invaluable impacting on different situations in life.

A mixture of work as well as social benefits appeared to be outcomes for hosts; thus, individually different emphasis was placed on different types of outcomes. The following quote exemplifies what most hosts thought they took away from the encounter. It also emphasises the importance of actively including children into engaging with the WWOOFers and the benefits they can gain:

> *"I think it's great for the girls* [daughters] *to meet people from different cultures and to be exposed to different things. […] What do we gain? But we do gain the work, which is helpful; I do get jobs done and for the…yeah I mean we've learnt about the different countries, we've learnt much more about the world and understand things."* **(Caitlin, host)**

Those who put greater emphasis on spending time with their WWOOFers highlighted gaining different perspectives on matters in the world and the notion of being able to learn from and about each other. Through showing interest in each other mutual learning could be achieved:

> *"[…] for us we kind of find out all kinds of things about the world and we get a different perspective and we get a bit of a young person's perspective on the world. Not that we're hugely old, you know, twenty years younger… and get a perspective on what they think and that's kind of interesting."* **(Celeb, host)**

Participants had grown personally and learnt more about themselves through their encounter with people. Hosts seemed to straightforwardly talk about this more so than the volunteers. Though hosts did not learn any practical skills from their WWOOFers, through their interaction and the challenges that occurred they seemed to gain a more comprehensive understanding about themselves, which was conveyed by taking a rather philosophical perspective on their personal outcomes. Hence, the encounter seemed to make it possible for hosts to consciously evaluate their behaviour in certain situations:

> **Phillip:** *"We don't in a sense, up to date, we haven't learned in a sense extra things for ourselves in terms of how we can improve certain things here in terms of the garden or the trees and that sort of things. However, on a more personal level there is always something that you in a sense can learn from another person by, I guess, by learning about them you in a sense learn more about yourself."*
>
> **Dorothe:** *"Yeah, yeah I think that brings it really to the point. It's really the challenges that you face or things, you know, communication and, I guess it's*

something you learn by doing it and being tolerant and accepting towards another person and it's a lot of learning in that."

One particular host felt inspired and enriched by his WWOOFers, which left a tremendous impact on his life. The following quote shows that WWOOFing can awaken philosophical stances on life and create deeper meaning in the lives of the people involved. It possibly resembles the closest the experience can get to the original purpose of WWOOFing celebrated in the 1970s during the organic movement:

> *"WWOOFers give me a lot of hope, really, give me hope for the future [...] because they're probably aware of the state of the planet, it's not in good shape and when you see WWOOFers that are really into learning new things give it a go, some of them just soak it up like a sponge and also wish to make a difference in the world; they give you huge hope. [...] And also hope for my children and their generation, so hope for humanity, which is a pretty big thing. […] So that gives me a lot of inspiration and hope to keep going here."* **(Ralph, host)**

Hosts were able to recall WWOOFers' names and specific situations with guests in the more distanced past and also wished for the volunteers to have memories about the experience that go beyond merely remembering organic farming and practical skills. In the particular case below the host felt that sharing her wisdom could benefit WWOOFers in different situations later on in life:

> *"[...] the girls* [female WWOOFers] *like to sit and chat with me and I can sort of feel a bit like a wise woman, I like to consider myself as a wise woman and to be able to part that on some of these young girls is really good, gives them little things of wisdom [...] to go away with when they're growing their children and hopefully one day they'll remember those things, you know."* **(Betty, host)**

Hosts noted that WWOOFers leave a legacy behind, either tangible or in the form of memories. Recalling these memories was considered a satisfying experience and hosts chose anecdotes to convey their feelings when looking at the tangible outcomes of WWOOFers' work they had left behind:

> *"[...] our section here, it's really nice looking around and going, and kind of remembering, ahh* [name] *dug all that bit up there and he dug this whole trench and now I've got potatoes growing and I've got spinach and, you know, things."* **(Celeb, host)**

The act of remembering WWOOFers was considered enriching for the hosts' lives, thus, motivating them to continue being involved in WWOOFing. They *"[…] don't tend to remember the bad ones because they're gone and you'll always remember the good ones"* **(Betty, host)**.

In terms of the actual practical tasks, seeing the results of the work volunteers put in helping on the organic property was considered important and had a positive effect on satisfaction levels. WWOOFers were proud of what they had achieved and talked positively about having had the opportunity to complete particular projects:

> *"[…] it's more an experience, really, to be there to do things and to actually see results after you've finished, even if it's only just weeding some things and you see the area's cleared and you think, well that's something my host didn't have to do."* **(Thorsten, WWOOFer)**

Some volunteers mentioned that just taking away a good story from the experience had a positive impact on their lives. For others, the personal outcomes of the experience had much more meaning. All guests had vivid memories about their WWOOF experiences. Many remembered particular situations that had an impact on their lives. The value of the things they had taken away from the experience seemed to become apparent in situations in everyday life, which provoked reflection upon WWOOFing, for example:

> *"Sometimes even now it happens to me. Like the other day I was going on a tramp with some friends and we walked into the forest and I remembered all the things he [the host] told me about the forest and the trees [laughs]."* **(Emilie, WWOOFer)**

The dialogue with both hosts and guests uncovered that what had been experienced in the encounters could inform future relationships with other hosts/WWOOFers. Various volunteers stated that they had adapted certain practical and social skills that could assist in making future experiences successful. For example, one WWOOFer felt confident that she had learnt how to deal with tricky situations:

> *"And I think I want exactly look at a situation and say, actually there is something important that I'm learning here. [...] And I think that will help me in all my other experiences, also to reflect as I'm going from this experience now, be able to say 'right what am I going to do about this now?'"* **(Kakama)**

Others believed that in hindsight they would organise their trip better, communicate what they expected, or have more rules and guidelines when preparing for future encounters. Amongst other things, hosts learnt to refine their expectations and be more precise about tasks WWOOFers were asked to complete. Individual experiences can be pivotal moments in developing an understanding of the directions the participants want to go in life. For example, through their experience as WWOOFers one host couple learnt how to be the hosts they wanted to be:

"[…] it's that experience that I'm trying to keep in mind and it's that all like good stuff that I experienced there I just want to do it my own way, do you know, I'm trying to improve on it where I can see it could do with improving […]." **(Robert)**

FEEDBACK

For most volunteers, immediate feedback given during the encounter was considered very helpful in order to know if they had done the job right and to avoid misunderstandings:

"You've got that feedback and it makes you feel good, just that you actually, yeah like you said, it's a positive experience that you get the feedback and you know that you're doing A the right thing and B you're doing it properly." **(Thorsten)**

Overall they wished for more feedback from their hosts. They wanted to be encouraged, but were also willing to improve their skills. Without the hosts' feedback there was uncertainty as to whether things had been done correctly.

In the hosts' opinion repeat visits were an indication of good feedback. These visits did more than just confirm that volunteers had liked their stay, in fact hosts felt they had managed to develop a closer relationship with them and that WWOOFers had gained something personal out of the experience. Visitor books were often utilised to give the guest a chance to express their feelings and reflect upon the experience. This appeared to be the most commonly used method to encourage guests to give feedback.

CONTACT AFTER THE ENCOUNTER

Keeping in contact with each other after the encounter was a challenge and required a lot of effort. Whether or not individuals would keep in touch was in some cases influenced by the level of relationship and the extent to which the encounter was perceived as positive. Most WWOOFers did not seem to maintain contact with hosts:

"No, I mean, a couple of weeks ago I wrote a comment on his WWOOF page and then he wrote one on mine, only because I was thinking a lot about my experience in the last few weeks and yah I wanted to write him a recommendation. But…and maybe if I went back to [host's location]*, maybe I would contact him or visit him."* **(Emilie)**

It seemed more important to hosts to attempt to keep in touch than for WWOOFers. Hosts acknowledged that immediately after the encounter they would endeavour to foster the relationship by different means, such as writing emails or using social networking sites. However, only few managed to maintain long-term contact. This quote by a host couple describes the post-WWOOFing relationship as follows:

> **Elsa:** *"It seems to for a little while and then it fizzles out."*
>
> **Alan:** *"Yeah people have their own…they get involved in another life further on but quite often we get emails from them or whatever for a while and then it sort of goes into something else [...]."*
>
> **Elsa:** *"Which is probably partly neither of us is good in keeping in contact."*

Most hosts said that they would like to be better at keeping in touch with volunteers, but unfortunately relationships seem to fade away after a while. A few addressed that they were determined to stay in touch with the WWOOFers but failed to do so. It almost seemed as if they had made a mental note to themselves to follow up on them but the importance of doing so faded away after the WWOOFers had left. Those who still had a connection with a few volunteers stated that some send the occasional postcard and for special events, such as Christmas, they might hear from each other.

In summary, personal outcomes of WWOOFing were more than just the benefit of having learnt new skills. It seemed to open a path to a different perspective on life. Although hosts' motivations and expectations revolved around getting help on the property and the fulfilment of tasks, personal outcomes seemed to be much more of social nature. So, for both parties, the learning experience involved learning about oneself and life in general. Interestingly, hosts appeared to be much more able to talk about personal enrichment in this context than WWOOFers.

4.6 CONCLUSION

The three themes set out in the analytical framework *(figure 5)* were addressed and fitted within the work and social dimensions of the host-guest encounter in WWOOFing. The Model of Work-Social Dimensions Of WWOOFing Exchange *(figure 7)* was introduced, which presents the various roles both parties have within different levels of their relationship. The formal work dimension was clearly distinguished from the social dimension of the encounter. Even if the parties had established close social bonds they could still have an employer-employee relationship within the work dimension, which presented the foundation of the WWOOF exchange. The distinction between work and social will assist in discussing the evolution of the host-guest relationship in the next chapter. It will discuss the negotiated roles in the encounter and connect the host-guest relationship within the non-commercial tourism setting of WWOOF to the literature examined in chapter 2.

CHAPTER 5: HARVESTING: INTERPRETING THE HOST-GUEST RELATIONSHIP IN WWOOFING

5.1 INTRODUCTION

A reoccurring theme throughout the conversations with hosts and guests was the negotiation of roles in the encounter and the importance of establishing a relationship that goes beyond the WWOOF 'deal'. WWOOFing thrives on providing an opportunity for people to meet and to establish close relationships (see McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006). Importantly, the size of the farm was found to have no influence on the host-guest relationship. This chapter makes sense of the different components that were found to make the WWOOF relationship work. It allows for a comprehensive discussion of the three main research objectives illustrated in the conceptual and analytical frameworks. Firstly, the chapter will introduce a model *(figure 9),* which seeks to explain the roles of both parties within the work and social dimensions of the relationship. These dimensions, including the effect of imbalance and obligations are discussed. Next, host and guest roles, including the role of closeness and temporal relationships are explored. The influence of expectations, and rules and guidelines on the encounter follows. A discussion of the negotiation of privacy and shared time/space, using a second model *(figure 10)* to illustrate their importance with regards to the length of the encounter, is next. The role of trust and sharing stories/values in fostering a more intimate and informal relationship will be expanded on, and the importance of reciprocity and *quid pro quo* in establishing an interpersonal relationship is highlighted. An examination of the impact of expectations on the relationship and the relationship's influence on personal outcomes for hosts and guests follows. The chapter concludes by revisiting the model presented in *section 5.2 (figure 9).*

Each section connects the findings in chapter 4 to the literature presented in chapter 2. Emphasis is put on similarities and differences between studies in the commercial home and volunteer tourism literature as well as the host-guest relationship in WWOOFing as found in the present study. Hosts and guests' perceptions will be discussed collectively unless there are significant distinctions between both parties.

Some themes that emerged in the findings chapter have already been discussed in the broader tourism and hospitality literature, such as host and tourist/guest encounters in either tourism or hospitality spaces (Andersson Cederholm & Hultman, 2010; Lugosi, 2008;

Lynch, 2005a; Rehberg, 2005; Selwyn, 2000; Wearing & Grabowski, 2011), the dynamics of hospitality (Andrews, 2000; Darke & Gurney, 2000; Lashley, 2000; Robinson & Lynch, 2007; Sheringham & Daruwalla, 2007; Tucker & Lynch, 2004), and the role of private space in the commercial home stay setting (Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Lynch & MacWhannell, 2000; McIntosh et al., 2011; Stringer, 1981; Telfer, 2000; Tucker, 2003). Volunteer tourists' motivations in terms of self-interest and altruism (e.g. Broad, 2003; Brown, 2005; Brown & Morrison, 2003; Callanan & Thomas, 2005; Fennell, 2006; Mustonen, 2007; Rehberg, 2005) and personal outcomes (e.g. McGehee & Santos, 2005; Raymond, 2007; Sin, 2009; Zahra, 2011; Zahra & McIntosh, 2007) have also been examined. The novel contribution of this thesis is the exploration of the host-guest relationship in the non-commercial WWOOF setting in New Zealand. Interpersonal relationships have not been examined in-depth and studies have lacked a comprehensive perspective of both parties involved in hospitality/tourism encounters. Particularly, the relationship between host and volunteer tourist has rarely been discussed from both perspectives and the focus has been on the volunteer tourist (except McIntosh & Zahra, 2007).

Unlike most volunteer tourism experiences, WWOOF is based on the exchange of labour for accommodation and food and, despite its non-commercial nature, has many similarities with the commercial home regarding host-guest interaction and the home setting (cf. Tucker, 2003; Tucker & Lynch, 2004). WWOOFing has been referred to as a form of non-commercial farm stay (cf. Choo & Jamal, 2009). However, it is more than a home-stay volunteering experience. A variety of dynamics have been identified in this study, which are believed to assist future research on WWOOFing

5.2 INTRODUCING A MODEL OF HOST-GUEST RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN SOCIAL AND WORK DIMENSIONS IN WWOOFING

Chapter 4 introduced the two dimensions in the relationship between hosts and guests, namely the work and social dimensions, illustrated by the *Model of Work-Social Dimensions of WWOOFing Exchange (figure 7)*. The more interpersonal social relationship has been identified as the most important aspect of WWOOFing. Thus, understanding the factors, which contribute to the evolution of the host-guest relationship from a more distanced level to a closer social relationship, is important. As explained in *section 4.3.1*, both parties can have multiple roles in the encounter and within these dimensions. These roles help to position themselves in the relationship.

The *Model of Host-Guest Relationships within Social and Work Dimensions in WWOOFing (figure 9)* was developed from the findings and will frame this discussion. It seeks to explain the meanings and understandings hosts and guest have of the relationship by connecting their perceptions. The model entails four dimensions: the work-social, the host-guest, the exchange, and the evolution dimensions. These dimensions are vital for understanding hosts and guests' perceptions, their roles, and the nature of the relationship. They function as the central drivers of the WWOOF encounter and are required to make the relationship work. Through these four dimensions different levels of the relationship emerge. Within these different levels rules and obligations of the exchange apply. The aspects that determine the level of the relationship were found to be expectations, the negotiation of private time and space, trust, and sharing stories/values. Other aspects that seem to be more common sense, such as showing empathy and mutual respect also contributed to the evolution of the relationship. The level of formalisation, which determined the extent to which rules and guidelines played a role, as well as the level of closeness, were dependent on the hosts and guests' roles in the relationship *(figure 9)*. All components of the relationship listed above were not mutually exclusive. Although presented in different sections they are interrelated, but deserve to be discussed separately to stress their importance. By revisiting the model at the end of this chapter, all dimensions are connected and the picture of the nature of host-guest relationships in WWOOFing as found in this study, completed.

Figure 9: Host-Guest Relationships within Social and Work Dimensions in WWOOFing
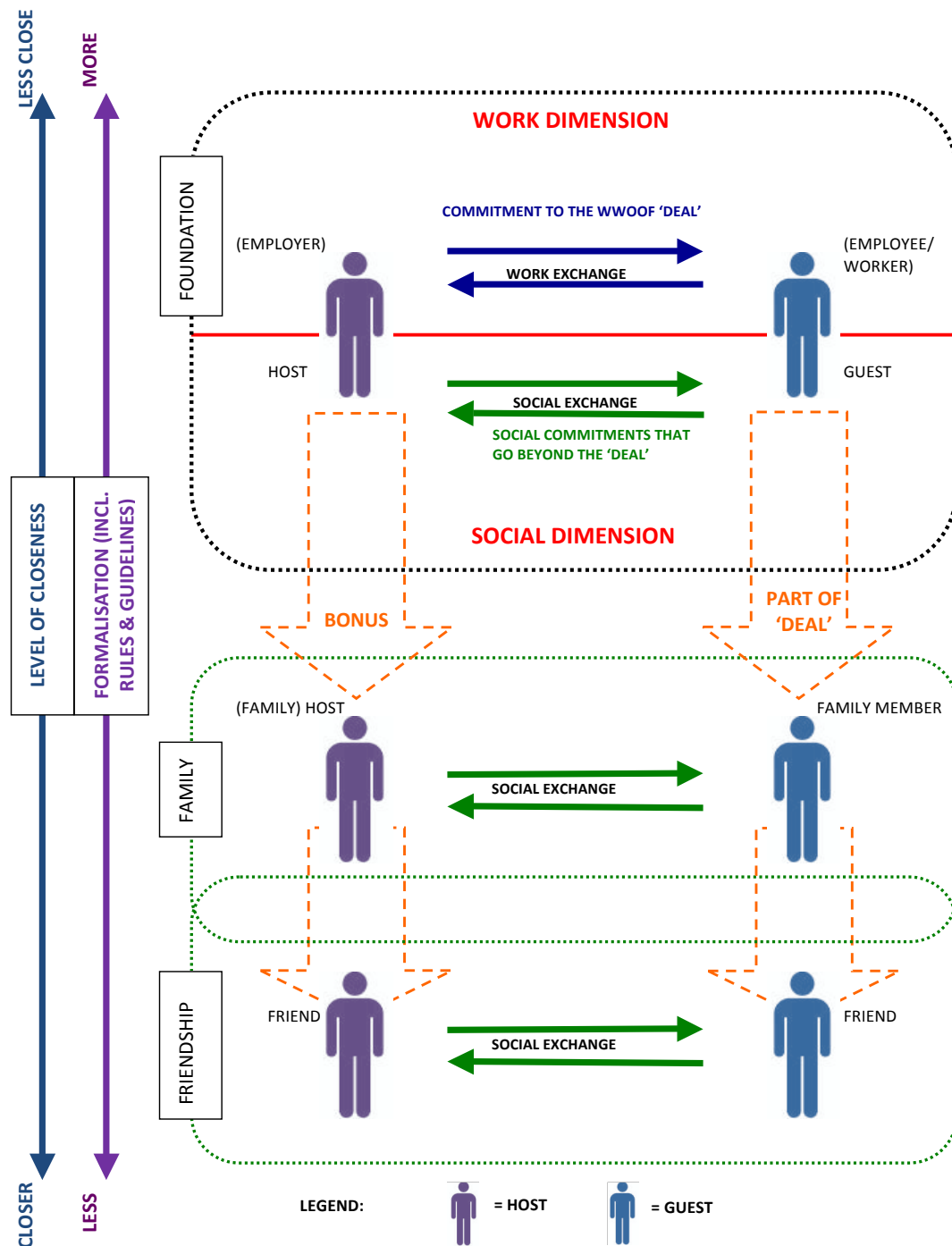
5.2.1 WORK AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

Research participants clearly distinguished between work and social dimensions of WWOOFing *(see section 4.3.1).* Various roles within these dimensions were predominantly identified by the guests when talking about work and social aspects *(figure 9).* For most hosts the social dimension was seen as a 'bonus' on top of the WWOOF work agreement, but for WWOOFers the social aspect was part of the 'deal' and part of their expectations *(section 5.3).* Accordingly, hosts' expectations primarily revolved around gaining help on their property, whilst guests expected to interact with the locals on an interpersonal level *(see section 4.4.1).* These expectations influenced whether or not individuals saw establishing a close relationship with each other as a main concern. The relationship within the work dimension has been found to be more distant and formal, but it can function as the trigger to developing a closer relationship within the social dimension of the encounter. Particularly, if the host works alongside the WWOOFer in a supervisory position a good foundation for the evolution into the more social sphere can be achieved. Also, if the WWOOFers fulfil their tasks in the work dimension to the host's satisfaction, the host is usually more willing to establish a closer relationship with the WWOOFer. But in cases where both parties develop closer interpersonal ties from the very beginning of the encounter, the guests' ability to fulfil work-related tasks could become secondary. Some hosts, to an extent, were willing to trade the prospect of getting tasks done with the interpersonal relationship with the guest. The guests' expectation to develop social ties with hosts supports their willingness to take steps to achieve closer relationships with hosts. Hosts may, however, be reluctant to bond if their guests do not abide to the rules set out by the hosts.

The evolution from the work dimension and the more formal host-guest relationship to a (pseudo) family relationship or a friendship was recognised in the conversations with WWOOFers more so than with hosts. Guests talked more about their differing roles in different stages of the relationship, whilst hosts mainly talked about their hosting responsibilities. This may be due to the obligations and responsibilities the host felt towards the guest. A relationship within the social dimension can only be achieved if all the conditions of the encounter are being respected. These conditions were complying with the WWOOFing 'deal', abiding to the 'rules' of the encounter, which were often not explicitly communicated, and mutual respect and understanding.

Imbalance in the relationship

It is the host who decides on the conditions of the encounter, which leaves the guest a passive participant. This imbalance with the host making decisions about the level of closeness and frequency of interaction between host and guest *(section 5.4)* is present throughout the encounter and all levels of the relationship. The commercial home literature suggests that the host is dominant because the exchange takes place in his/her own home were specified 'house rules' appointed by the host apply (see Tucker & Lynch, 2004). Hence, there is a power distance between the two parties (Sheringham & Daruwalla, 2007) and the host rather than the guest determines both parties' roles to a great extent, since the host usually decides on the routine of the encounter (see Bell, 2007a; Tucker, 2003). Though, volunteer tourism research has stressed the guests' power in determining the experience through self-interest (Wearing & Grabowski, 2011), WWOOF presents a different encounter with power inequalities and imbalance because the host determines the 'rules of the game'. In WWOOFing the power imbalance is further caused by a need to deal with uncertainty by managing the guest through communicated expectations and guidelines (cf. Darke & Gurney, 2000; Tucker & Lynch, 2004) *(section 5.3).* The extent to which rules and guidelines are needed to deal with this uncertainty decreases the closer the interpersonal ties between host and guest get. Hence, the level of closeness and formalisation is greatly determined by the host and his/her willingness to interact with the guest.

The WWOOF relationships that emerge on a social level clearly differ from relationships in tourism that remain focused on monetary exchange and the provision of high quality services (cf. Stringer, 1981). The transformation process from strangers to friends as described by Tucker (2003) plays a significant role in WWOOF encounters and the various types of relationships that can develop are influenced by a variety of factors, which will be discussed in subsequent sections.

The role of obligations in the relationship: hosting and 'guesting'

Although the WWOOF experience is based on a loose agreement and no monetary exchange takes place, mutual obligations are part of the work and social exchange. Hosts are obliged to ensure the guests' wellbeing whilst guests have to abide to the house rules. These mutual obligations of hosting and 'guesting' have been discussed in the private hospitality literature (e.g. Andrews, 2000; Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Lashley, 2008).

Obligations are manifested in the WWOOF 'deal' but adhering to social obligations was considered essential in achieving an exchange relationship. Considering the imbalance of the relationship, it is questionable whether in this largely host-dominated encounter mutual exchange can take place. This has to be further investigated.

Participants always had certain responsibilities attributed to their roles as hosts and guests. These responsibilities were embodied in those obligations that went beyond the mere exchange of labour for accommodation and food. Particularly hosts felt an obligation to be a 'good host' (see Telfer, 2000) even though the encounter was largely planned by hosts to fit their own needs. Particularly in the social dimension hosts felt they had to provide their guests with entertainment opportunities and an overall pleasant stay. Whereas the work resembled an apprenticeship situation in which the host could have the set task of teaching and giving instructions. As a result, exchanges in the social dimensions are more complex because of the various roles that have to be negotiated *(see figure 9)*.

WWOOFers' roles were more passive and it was only when they reached a level of friendship with the host that they felt less constrained in their position as a visitor. Feeling obliged to abide to the rules and to offer their help within the social dimension of the encounter was common. Respecting the hosts' home was part of the obligation of being a 'good guest' (Telfer, 2000). Telfer (2000) and Tucker and Lynch (2004) talk about the guest's submission to social rules regarding the interaction set by the host and a dependency on what elements of hospitality the host is willing to provide. Being a guest implies feeling restricted to some extent. In the WWOOF encounter the extent of this restriction is dependent on the level of closeness between host and guest. Even though more rules and guidelines were in place in the work dimension, obligations were felt more intensely on a social level. This could be a consequence of the social dimension being less structured with daily life imposing unanticipated social obligations on individuals. Although both hosts and guests were expected to fulfil their part of the WWOOFing 'deal' within the more formal dimension, these obligations were not felt very strongly as they were perceived as a part of the very nature of WWOOFing. Additionally, a lack of guidelines contributed to feeling more obligations, which is triggered by the uncertainty inherent in the encounter. Guests differentiated between helping out of politeness and feeling obliged to help. There was often a lack of clear social guidelines, which the host had failed to communicate. Therefore, guests relied on the hosts to tell them what was expected of them within the social sphere,

which, once again, points to the superior position of the host. Here, a lack of communicated expectations could cause misunderstanding and frustration because it negatively affected the guests' desire to fulfil tasks to the hosts' satisfaction. Most WWOOFers talked about feeling obliged to help the host during leisure time and implied that lending a helping hand was a response to the hosts' hospitableness and therefore not a major inconvenience. Yet, these respondents also wished for the host to communicate to them in which situations they were not expected to help. Thus, honouring commitments was seen as a minor obligation (cf. Stebbins, 2000). Therefore, communicating what they expected from each other contributed to the evolution of the relationship.

Work-like obligations are felt as part of the WWOOF agreement, but as the very foundation of the encounter the work-related tasks are agreed upon and usually quite structured. From a more holistic perspective, feeling an obligation to be a good host or guest might actually be a necessary and desired component of the WWOOF experience. Lepp (2009) suggests that obligations can be positive in that they help volunteer tourists to distance themselves and differentiate their experiences from those of mainstream tourists. This can make the experience meaningful to the guest. Although leisure time does not imply the inclusion of obligations, having the urge to be of use to somebody is felt (see Lepp, 2009). Still, WWOOFers might feel these obligations pose a threat to their freedom as independent travellers (see Lepp, 2009; Tucker, 2003). Most obligations felt by the guest within the social dimension were acceptable because they were felt as necessary in order to develop a closer relationship with the host.

It is important to consider that WWOOFers may not mind their obligations because they are getting something back from their hosts and have a component of self-development through the experience. They also feel that they are expected to contribute to the hosts' daily life as part of their integration. Thus, obligations are felt during social exchange and are accepted throughout the WWOOF leisure experience as part of the choice participants have made by participating. As these obligations are such a significant determinant of the parties' varying roles in the relationship they need to be further examined. Interestingly, Tucker (2003) found that the longer the guests stayed in the commercial home, the more obligations were felt by the hosts. In this case, guests were then perceived as overstaying their time because the hosts felt an invasion of their privacy. Obligations felt by research participants in the present study do not seem to be dependent on length of stay, but rather

the level of the relationship between host and guest. In WWOOF obligations might be seen as minor or minimal, but they are real even if the powerful rewards of the activity significantly outweigh them and the participant has an option to quit the activity at any time.

5.2.2 HOST AND GUEST ROLES

Importance of closeness in the relationship

The findings chapter revealed that the WWOOF encounter has many elements of private hospitality with the host greatly determining the level of interaction and the nature of the relationship (cf. Tucker & Lynch, 2004). Like in private hospitality transactions, hosts and WWOOFers experience emotional bonds (Lugosi, 2008) and intercultural exchange can take place, as also discussed in the volunteer tourism literature (cf. Wearing & Grabowski, 2011). It is to be considered that almost all WWOOFers (except one) were international tourists and therefore establishing interpersonal ties with the hosts was important. WWOOFers seek a 'real' and meaningful experience and want to immerse themselves in local life, similar to other volunteer tourists (see Wearing & Grabowski, 2011).

The present study shows that intimacy is an important aspect in the WWOOF encounter (cf. Andersson Cederholm & Hultman, 2010). The closer the parties get the less formal the relationship and therefore fewer rules and guidelines have to be employed. Like in private commercial hospitality settings, the WWOOF encounter takes place in the host's personal space, the home (Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Lynch, 2005a; Tucker, 2003), which calls for the negotiation of the parties' different roles in the relationship in order to create an environment in which interpersonal exchange can take place within shared and private space (Lynch et al., 2007). Guests' roles in the encounter were not always clear as they changed depending on the situation and the WWOOFers' own interpretation of obligations and responsibilities in these situations. The guests' confusion about their role further stems from a lack of communication about expectations hosts' had and the responsibilities they gave to WWOOFers.

Levels in the relationship and roles

The parties' various roles are constantly negotiated and evaluated (see Sheringham & Daruwalla, 2007) and depend on the level of the relationship. The evolution from a more distant to a closer relationship entails the transformation from more formal roles the

individual has to less formal ones. This is, less rules and guidelines that are determined by the host apply to less formal relationships *(see figure 9)*.

Depending on the circumstances individuals may find themselves in various roles and are required to adapt to these situations; one person can have multiple roles. The desirable evolution of the host-guest relationship from the work into the social dimension is determined by the need to find deeper meaning through social exchange. This deeper meaning has to do with learning from each other and about oneself through the other. Both parties seek closeness, but there is more pressure on the guest to establish a social relationship with the host. This is, hosts still benefit from the help they gain on a work level even if a closer relationship never emerges, whereas guests' expectation is to be able to establish social bonds with locals and, unlike their counterparts, they do not see the long-term (tangible) outcomes of their work unless they return *(section 5.6)*. Still, hosts regarded meeting people and sharing knowledge and ideas as important components of the experience. This conforms to the notion that the purpose of the 'home' as the space for hospitality interaction indicates the establishment of interpersonal bonds (e.g. Tucker & Lynch, 2004).

The work aspect of WWOOFing does not define the encounter, but relationships that are being established through reciprocity and exchange. Failing to establish closer relationships with the hosts diminished guests' levels of satisfaction, as they expected interpersonal relationships to be part of the WWOOFing 'deal'. As presented in the previous chapter *(section 4.2)*, hosts' and WWOOFers' motivations differed. For hosts, the relationship on an interpersonal level was important, though more formal work relationships without much social interaction were acceptable, too. However, when a family (pseudo) relationship or friendship developed, whether or not WWOOFers were efficient workers became secondary, as personal connections were deemed more valuable in these instances.

Temporal relationships

The WWOOF encounter offers the setting to create emotional bonds, similar to those that can be experienced in hospitality interactions (see Lugosi, 2008). However, relationships are temporal and contact between the two parties is usually not maintained after the encounter. So, establishing friendships seems contradictory because the temporal constraints of the experience usually involve the termination of these friendships with the end of the encounter. Some hosts even mentioned that building up a closer relationship

with WWOOFers does not seem to be worthwhile if they only stayed for a short period of time (cf. Lynch et al., 2007). This is understandable, as friendships usually require a high level of self-disclosure. Yet, host-guest relationships in WWOOFing may result in meaningful friendships (see Maycock, 2008), even if they are temporal and situated within the spatial dimensions of the encounter. The factor of length of time of the encounter was linked to the level of intimacy both parties had, but close friendships were also developed within shorter periods. This supports Andersson Cederholm and Hultman's (2010) notion of situated friendships. Relationships are being formed and transformed during the WWOOF interaction and the parties develop temporary companionships (cf. Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007).

Friendship represents the closest and least formal relationship with fewer rules determined by the host *(see section 4.3.1)*. Hosts stressed that the encounter involved treating their guests as part of the family. This refers to integrating the guests into their lives, and does not necessarily mean that WWOOFers felt they were portraying their roles as (pseudo) family members at all times. Treating the guest as a family member was seen as part of the host's obligation to involve them in their everyday lives. However, social ties were stronger in a friendship situation and guests felt more restricted as a (pseudo) family member than a friend.

The defining feature of friendship in this context presented shared space and time and even within a short period of time the parties could get very close. Thus, the spatial and temporal constraints might contribute to the rapid inclusion of the guest into the family or the establishment of friendships, simply because both parties know that there is only a limited amount of time. The mutual understanding that the guests are mobile and, thus, will not outstay their welcome (Bell, 2007a; Pitt-Rivers, 1968) might also foster seeking temporary closeness and connectedness.

The findings show that every so often friendships last beyond the WWOOF encounter (cf. Lynch et al., 2007). However, these relationships usually diminish after time. Interestingly, in the case of a return visit guests would lose their identity as WWOOFers completely and be considered friends regardless of their status in the previous encounter with the same host. However, it is to presume that WWOOFers would not return if they had not established some kind of social bond with their hosts. Friendships seem to become a

priority as soon as the work dimension, which demands the commitment to the WWOOFing 'deal', has diminished.

5.3 THE INFLUENCE OF EXPECTATIONS AND RULES AND GUIDELINES ON THE ENCOUNTER

Rules and guidelines derived from hosts' expectations provided a structure for both parties to move within their various roles in the work and social dimensions. Unspoken as well as communicated rules and guidelines were present in every stage of the relationship (see Sheringham & Daruwalla, 2007; Tucker & Lynch, 2004). Hosts expected the guests to follow a specific 'protocol' (cf. Stringer, 1981), though expectations were not always verbalised. Bell (2007b, p. 9) suggests that "for both host and guest there are subtle rules of etiquette: how much to offer, how much to accept, how long to stay, and so on: a welcome given freely can be abused, taken for granted, outstayed". Thus, hosts wanted to make sure that certain rules were followed. Guests were obliged to abide by the conventions, which defined the behaviour that was expected from them (see Pitt-Rivers, 1968). This could confuse guests as to what this 'protocol' entailed. Guests identified dealing with this uncertainty about hosts' expectations as a challenge. However, the closer the parties got the more input the guest had in an otherwise host-dominated encounter and therefore less rules and guidelines were needed.

Tucker (2003) suggests that rules and guidelines are important in hospitality transactions to deal with uncertainty and to minimise the risks that hosts are subjected to by allowing strangers into their home. In the WWOOFing encounter, they are also used to deal with uncertainty. Thus, the hosts' self-interest dictates that they "take certain measures to ensure that their guests will understand and play by the rules" (Tucker & Lynch, 2004, p. 15). Hosts explained that they expected their guests to apply common sense when it came to understanding the rules of the encounter. However, this was challenging for guests, as they felt that rules were often not communicated in a clear manner. This is consistent with Di Domenico and Lynch (2007, p. 331) who found that in host-guest encounters there are "situations where the guest is seemingly expected to understand unwritten and unexplained norms of behaviour by falling back on assimilated, tacit knowledge." Despite the challenges that could occur trying to interpret these rules, a seemingly relative freedom to make their own decisions was appreciated by the guests.

More structure was apparent within the work dimension to clarify tasks assigned to the guests. Both parties agreed these work guidelines were necessary due to the WWOOFers' lack of knowledge regarding organic farming prior to the encounter and to communicate the host's expectations. Most hosts regarded providing the WWOOFer with an introduction to their lives as important to clarify basic 'house rules' and to get to know each other in the initial meet and greet phase (cf. Tucker, 2003). The rules communicated by the host (see Tucker & Lynch, 2004) put pressure on the guest to fulfil hosts' expectations, which ultimately increased obligations they felt towards their hosts. Often, guests felt that they were unable to submit to the host's way of doing things because the host had not communicated to them what they expected. This could be frustrating and distinguishing between work and leisure proved to be difficult at times.

Di Domenico and Lynch (2007) suggested that commercial home hosts use social control mechanisms to determine the level of interaction with guests. Furthermore, Robinson and Lynch (2007) argue that controlled exchanges in power relations are an inherent part of hospitality exchanges. However, hosts are aware that WWOOFing is about letting the WWOOFer be part of their lives and usually avoid using too many restrictive rules. The host's dilemma that can emerge is balancing the extent to which the guest is part of the host's life without feeling an invasion of privacy. The importance of balancing privacy and spending time with the guest is discussed below.

5.4 NEGOTIATING PRIVACY AND SHARED TIME/SPACE AND THE LEVEL OF INTERACTION

There was a need for a balance between time spent together and apart as well as shared and private space in order to create a suitable living environment *(see section 4.4.2)*. However, often the amount of time guests wanted to spend with the hosts did not correspond with the more limited time hosts had planned to spend with guests, which could be a challenge. The negotiation of private time and space was identified as a crucial part of the encounter and requires mutual consideration and an understanding of each other's needs. Respecting each other's privacy by finding a balance between own and together time/space led to a closer relationship and increased the likelihood of an extended stay. *Figure 10* was developed from the findings and illustrates that balancing these temporal and spatial dimensions increases the likelihood of a longer encounter. By finding a balance between own and shared time/space the likelihood of developing a more

personal relationship and longer stay is increased. Other personal characteristics, such as trusting each other and sharing values, which are discussed below *(section 5.5)* further assist in creating a longer lasting, more intimate experience. Both parties are aware of the importance of respecting each other's privacy. The level of interaction and the 'right' balance between closeness and distance was determined by the individuals in the encounter. Conflict could arise if one of the parties wanted to spend too much time with the other. This was the case with WWOOFers who relied too much on getting entertained by hosts.

Figure 10: Balancing own and shared time/space
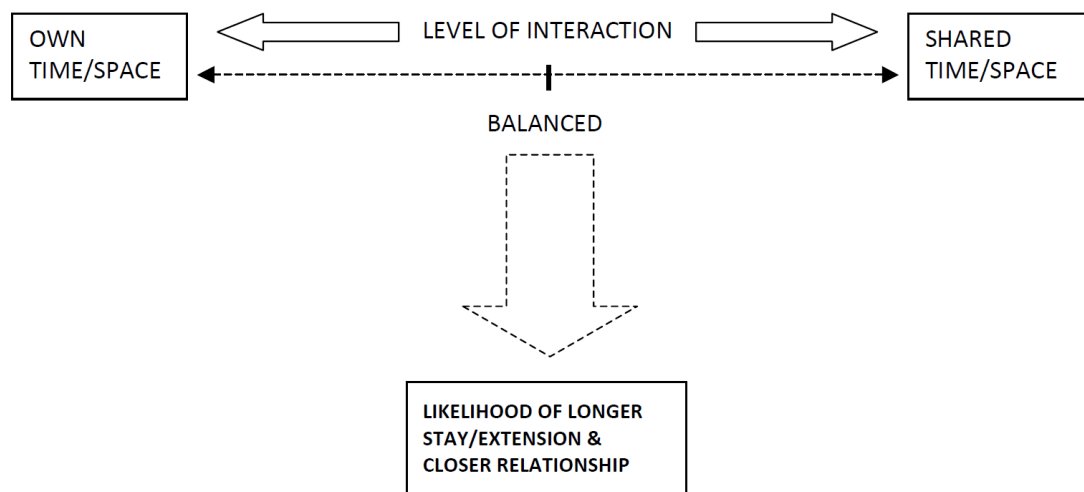
For several reasons privacy was found to be particularly important for hosts. WWOOFers who would constantly be in the hosts' physical space or demanding their time were seen as invaders of privacy and an impediment to behaving in a non-restrictive way. This is, whilst guests occupied the hosting space the host had to follow the protocol of hosting and obligations towards the guests were felt, thus making it impossible to physically and emotionally distance themselves from their hosting role. To be able to physically separate themselves from guests and spend time without them helped them manage their lives as hosts and their private lives. In essence, hosts wanted WWOOFer to get involved in their lives but only to a certain extent. Personal limits to the time they would allow the guests to stay and having periods of the year without hosting were strategies employed that prevented hosts from feeling overwhelmed by the presence of WWOOFers.

Privacy for the WWOOFer primarily meant being able to have a private physical space to escape to and having time off 'work' to pursue their leisure interests. They also expected a high degree of immersion in local life, yet wanted to be independent enough to pursue leisure activities. The immersion into the host's life facilitated a high degree of emotional intensity as evident by looking at interpersonal bonds that were created. Guests viewed the hosts as part of the attraction of WWOOFing. Thus, spending a considerable amount of time with them was generally desired, whereas hosts did not appreciate sharing too much time and space with guests. Time spend apart from each other ultimately meant having a break from obligations and responsibilities.

The passive role of the guest in making decisions in the relationship is probably one of the reasons why research has focused on the host's role in the spatial management of shared and private space within the commercial home (e.g. Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007). Yet, especially for guest couples privacy was important and not always easy to manage as obligations towards hosts could get in the way *(section 5.2.1)*. The individual WWOOFer expects to be able to withdraw from their responsibilities on a regular basis. If the hosting environment does not allow for this to happen, guests may feel uncomfortable or even apprehensive (see Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007).

Guests also expect the host's home to become a temporary home. The significance of the home in creating the WWOOF experience and the dilemma between high and low levels of interaction within this hosting space is important to consider. The findings showed that balancing the level of interaction is challenging and requires setting boundaries and rules, but above all demands communication between the two parties. Spatial boundaries in the WWOOFing home seem blurry, as has also been suggested by the commercial home literature (e.g. Lynch et al., 2007). A separate commercial space, which is often physically separated from private sections in the home, is missing in the WWOOF setting. Whilst private space was appreciated, hosts mainly associated privacy with private time, which did not necessarily imply the need to physically move out of the hosting space. This may be because hosts don't have WWOOFers all the time and the shared space does not bother them too much because WWOOFers do not usually stay for prolonged periods of time. The hosts' freedom to choose when and for how long to allow WWOOFers into their lives was a way to deal with hosting obligations and to balance their private and host lives.

5.5 THE INFLUENCE OF TRUST AND SHARED VALUES AND STORIES ON HOST-GUEST RELATIONSHIPS

Trust

Trust played a significant role in the encounter and mistrust was seldom an issue. In WWOOFing, trust is not so much dependent on the length of the encounter but it can greatly determine the level of relationship and whether or not hosts and guests feel connected. This is in contrasts with Szompka's notion that building trust is dependent on the length of the relationship between individuals (1999, as cited in Andersson Cederholm & Hultman, 2010). Trust was identified as the foundation for feeling safe and being able to make sense of the uncertain. Dealing with uncertainty was accepted as an important part of the encounter and was largely done by taking a leap of faith. The findings demonstrate that past experiences, feeling safe, and first impressions were vital in determining whether or not hosts and guests could trust each other. For WWOOFers being accepted and integrated into the hosts' lives was the most important indicator for trust. This is coherent with a study undertaken by Tan (2010) who established that despite feeling safe, being accepted contributed to the development of trust.

Prior to the encounter, phone conversations and email contact could give hosts/guests basic information about their counterparts. However, the feedback system on the WWOOF website only offered limited help in dealing with uncertainty as to who the host or guest would meet. It was not always possible to have a conversation before the encounter as the initial meeting sometimes happened at short notice. The importance of the initial meet and greet and the subsequent first impression shows that interpersonal connectedness was the first step to establishing a trust relationship and talking about expectations assisted in getting to know each other. Both parties perceived New Zealand as the setting of the encounter and the system of WWOOFing as factors that made the experience safe. Personal characteristics, such as being a trusting and/or trustworthy person were also stressed.

For hosts, the fact that the guest is mobile played a role in trusting them because they were visitors to New Zealand and dependent on the host to giving them a sanctuary (cf. Lynch & MacWhannell, 2000). To prevent abuse of their trust, hosts set boundaries through rules and guidelines. Some hosts and guests seemed surprised about their ability to trust each other, for example giving the guest a house key upon their arrival. Both parties further

referred to the freedom to end the relationship if they had reason to mistrust the other. Uncertainty was identified as part of the consequence for entering into a relationship with a stranger. Guests had to earn the hosts' trust, as they were seen as the 'stranger' entering the host's territory (see Pitt-Rivers, 1968). However, leaving a positive first impression was essential in creating a foundation for trust. Hosts applied fewer rules and guidelines if they had the feeling they could trust their guests. Once the host knew that the 'stranger' was not hostile, mistrust was not an issue (see Pitt-Rivers, 1968).

Trust and reciprocity ultimately determine whether the relationship works or is prematurely ended. Trust was facilitated by reciprocal exchange and the notion of *quid pro quo (see section 4.4.4).* Both parties had to earn each other's trust by doing a favour in return for a favour. The concept of *quid pro quo* calls for an acceptance of the host's family life and a tolerance towards behavioural patterns of the host (family) if the guest wants to be integrated into the host's life (see Lynch, 2005a). Still, within the family dimension obligations were apparent as guests had a specific role to fulfil, which is determined by the host. Being integrated in the family requires adjusting to the way the family operates, including rules and obligations, despite the relative personal closeness to each other. Particularly if hosts adopt a parental role, certain obligations apply to the guest.

The notion of *quid pro quo* also applies to Social Exchange Theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Self-interest and interdependence, as discussed by Lawler and Thyne (1999), are components that are apparent in the WWOOF exchange. However, the present study rejects the notion that within the framework of social exchange individuals solely act out of self-interest. Furthermore, the fact that Social Exchange theorists regard people as instrumental and unemotional and as only having individualistic goals (see Lawler & Thyne, 1999) contradicts the very nature of WWOOFing. Thus, Social Exchange Theory is unable to capture the diversity and various dynamics that are apparent in host-guest relationships within WWOOF exchange.

Sharing stories and values

Sharing stories and values happened on a personal and a more work-related level, with the latter occurring more frequently and including a learning component through sharing knowledge. Open-mindedness to sharing stories informed the development of a trust relationship. For hosts, sharing organic farming related knowledge and wisdom about life was important. The guests' reciprocation of sharing by showing their appreciation had a

positive influence on their social relationship. If hosts and guests have mutual interest in each other, conversations can emerge that are very personal. However, if the interest one person has in the other is not reciprocated, the evolution of the relationship to a closer level is unlikely to happen. WWOOFers were generally interested in exploring hosts' value systems and this helped feel integrated into the hosts' lives. Sharing stories and personal values were indicators of mutual interest in each other and contributed to developing a closer relationship by facilitating interpersonal connectedness. The closer the relationship was between hosts and guests the more personal stories were shared. Being valued was an important aspect of the relationship for both parties. Campbell (2009) found that feeling valued as part of a group facilitates self-esteem and fosters friendships and Stehlik (2002) confirms the importance of sharing stories in the WWOOFing encounter. In the present study, WWOOFers and hosts look for points of commonalities but it is the differences they appreciate in each other, as they want to learn and acquire knowledge from each other.

In terms of the dynamics of the encounter, sharing the host (family) life with WWOOFers gave guests the reassurance that they were accepted. The reciprocal exchange within the work dimension and the notion of *quid pro quo* was a foundation for an exchange relationship in the social sphere. Only if hosts and WWOOFers show an interest in each other's lives, true social exchange can take place. Showing 'emotional solidarity' (Woosnam, Norman, & Ying, 2009), as discussed in chapter 2, contributes to establishing interpersonal connections. Collective activities and emotional bonds are important components of emotional solidarity. However, the present study shows that more aspects are important to consider in order to examine how host-guest relationships in WWOOFing evolve. Although the model assists in explaining why a group of people that share common beliefs and behaviour feel emotional closeness, it fails to capture the evolutionary component of the relationship.

5.6   PERSONAL OUTCOMES

The personal outcomes influenced by the host-guest relationship clearly show that interest in each other and perceived mutual exchange leads to learning from each other and personal growth. Regarding the volunteer tourist, this corresponds with studies examining outcomes of various volunteering experiences on the self (cf. Zahra, 2011). Perceived mutual exchange relates to the personal lessons the parties learn from each other and take away from the encounter. The term 'perceived' has been used to indicate that the amount

one relationship partner gives might not necessarily equate to the amount of what s/he receives, however, it can still be perceived as mutual exchange by the person because the personal impact the counterpart had on his/her life was profound.

Hosts appreciated showing interest in each other by exchanging personal stories and values *(section 5.5)*, which led to learning from each other. Importantly, they stressed that learning about themselves through hosting WWOOFers was the most valuable outcome of the experience, whilst guests put less emphasis on the effect it has on their lives. This can be ascribed to the fact that hosts make a conscious choice of engaging in WWOOFing, whilst for WWOOFers the encounter is often only one aspect of a bigger journey through New Zealand. For hosts, the WWOOF encounter is a constant evaluation of their organic farming and family life. Although they don't learn much about improvements regarding organic farming or new organic farming practices, they have lasting memories and are able to recall particular situations and WWOOFers. WWOOFing contributes to their philosophy in life and knowing that sharing wisdom and knowledge has left a positive mark on the guests' lives, gives hosts satisfaction. Thus, the notion of transferring knowledge leads to an appreciation of the legacy the WWOOFers leave behind. The impact that WWOOFers leave is enriching and hosts tend to remember the good as opposed to bad experiences. McIntosh (2009, p. 271) agrees and proposes that in WWOOFing "social and ethical benefits derived from hosting far outweigh any minor problems."

Completing particular projects and seeing their outcomes was rewarding for WWOOFers. They felt that the experience had an impact on their lives. Learning practical skills they had no prior knowledge about was much appreciated. Furthermore, being able to incorporate the things learnt into everyday life reminded them of their experience and was a pleasant memory.

Hosts and guests usually don't stay in contact unless they developed a close relationship with each other. Hosts seem to try to keep in touch more than WWOOFers, however they realise that contact cannot be maintained constantly. As WWOOFing is an inherent part of the hosts' lives established relationships are likely to have a more significant meaning than to the WWOOFers. Their approaches to managing these relationships are constantly being questioned and tested by encounters with guests. For this reason, feedback plays a significant role in the hosts' constant evaluation of the experience they offer. Knowing that their guests had a positive experience and learnt something gives hosts encouragement.

Rehberg (2005) confirms the possibility of getting to know oneself better through engaging in an exchange relationship with the host. For the participants in the present study this lead to gaining new perspectives on life, self-development and growth.

Moreover, Wearing and Grabowski (2011) suggest that the learning experience is an important outcome for the parties involved in the volunteer experience. Both parties regarded learning from each other and knowledge exchange as important because it leaves the candidates with a lasting memory or a skill that can be useful in their everyday lives after the encounter.

Hosts' personal outcomes are inconsistent with their primary motivations and expectations, which revolved around the work dimension of WWOOF. Outcomes related to social exchange were more important and longer lasting. Although the tangible results of doing the WWOOF work were appreciated, intangible outcomes derived from social exchange had a more personal effect on the individual. Amongst other things, these intangible outcomes included learning from the WWOOFers and getting to know people and diverse cultures. Each WWOOFer not only contributed to their lives as hosts but also to their personal lives. The hosts have a big-picture view and recognise the 'assets' to their lives they've earned throughout the years in form of people leaving memories behind and the connectedness they feel with past WWOOFers. They even feel connected with future guests through their experiences with past WWOOFers. This could be attributed to the 'communal ethos' of WWOOFing, which gives WWOOFers certain characteristics that makes them 'good people'. The assertion they receive from feedback gives them strengths and reaffirms the importance of developing interpersonal relationships with guests. Similar to Stehlik's (2002) study, personal enrichment was one of the most important outcomes for hosts.

The inconsistency talked about above in relation to hosts' perceptions also applies to WWOOFers to a lesser extent. Their expectations were about the social dimension of the relationship, yet not many stay in contact with their hosts. They rather seem to move on quickly after the encounter. The relationship with the host might have been one amongst many with hosts from other farms, hence not allowing for a 'one of a kind' experience. That WWOOFers' main purpose is travelling might not allow for too much emphasis on the value/outcome of WWOOFing. The experience of gaining practical skills left an impact on the WWOOFers' lives, although learning skills was often a secondary expectation they had

of the encounter. Stehlik (2002) suggests that the newness and uncertainty of the encounter is a powerful tool for learning and knowledge acquisition. WWOOFers appreciated the knowledge they had acquired, but it seemed as if the WWOOF experience only demonstrated one component of the New Zealand experience. The fact that they were partaking in the hosts' lives was important during but less important after the encounter. WWOOFers were unable to take away the tangible memory of the experience that, instead, stayed with their hosts. Accordingly, physical distance from the hosting space fosters a mental distance from the encounter and, thus, the relationship with the host.

Compared to other studies that often examine volunteer tourists' personal outcomes of experiences in less developed countries (cf. Zahra, 2011), WWOOFing does not seem to have such a profound impact on the lives of WWOOFers. WWOOFers appreciated the learning experience but seemed to move on quickly. The hospitality literature suggests that the host-guest encounter is temporary and therefore only a part of the bigger journey (e.g. Andersson Cederholm & Hultman, 2010).

5.7 REVISITING THE MODEL OF HOST-GUEST RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN SOCIAL AND WORK DIMENSIONS IN WWOOFING

This chapter has discussed the various dimensions of the host-guest relationship in WWOOFing *(figure 9)*, and the non-commercial hosting setting. The aspects that were found to affect the four levels of the relationship, the employer-employee, host-guest, (family) host- (pseudo) family member, and friendship, were discussed. The negotiation of private and shared time/space, trust and shared values and beliefs were major aspects that influenced the level of formality and closeness. The power imbalance in the relationship dictates that if the guest follows rules and guidelines, hosts are more likely to enter in a more personal relationship with their guests. The study has questioned the notion of mutual exchange in WWOOFing, as the host dominates the encounter. However, valuable exchanges happen within the work and social dimensions, which are influenced by hosts and guests' multiple roles. The host-guest relationship is about negotiating these roles and finding a balance between hosts and guests' needs. Elements of the work and social dimensions and aspects in the various levels of the relationship frame the encounter. The various roles are negotiated by both parties, yet hosts have a profound impact on the level of the relationship.

The study has stressed the importance of considering the wider context of the encounter by examining hosts and guests' expectations and personal outcomes to make sense of the meanings and understandings both parties have of the relationship. The model should not be used without considering these expectations and personal outcomes. The final chapter will, thus, revisit the three research objectives.

CHAPTER 6: SAVOURING THE PRODUCE: CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study has developed an understanding of host-guest relationships in a non-commercial tourism setting. By focusing on WWOOFing the study moves away from an economic exchange perspective into the social sphere of non-commercial host-guest exchange. By concentrating on both host and guest perspectives it offers an in-depth journey into the multi-faceted WWOOF encounter and explores the various dimensions it entails. The study has discovered that the WWOOF encounter is complex and involves a variety of phenomena, which have mainly been addressed in private hospitality research. The conceptual framework *(figure 3)* to examine the host-guest relationship in WWOOFing was used to address the three research objectives concerned with the meanings and understandings hosts and guests have of the relationship, their expectations, and personal outcomes. The application of this framework directed the methodological approach and the analysis of the research findings, and finally led to the development of the *Model of Host-Guest Relationships within Social and Work Dimensions in WWOOFing (figure 9).*

This concluding chapter encompasses the key aspects that were discussed in the previous chapter by revisiting the three research objectives and reflecting upon the purpose of this study. The studies' contribution to knowledge and its limitations will be presented. This is followed by suggestions for further directions in tourism research on non-commercial host-guest relationships. The thesis concludes by presenting the earning opportunities for hosts and guests that emerged from this study.

6.2 REVISITING THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The results of this study suggest that host-guest interactions in WWOOFing are complex and multidimensional and encompass relationships which are continuously re-evaluated, negotiated, and transformed. The evolution of the host-guest relationship and the parties' various roles in the work and social dimensions are at the core of the WWOOF experience. The findings have questioned reciprocity of the exchange and have stressed the imbalance of host-guest relationships by referring to the host's dominant position. That is, the exchange takes place in the host's home space and is driven by rules and expectations

determined by the host. Obligations and rules that govern the encounter were identified, despite the fact that WWOOFing is based on a loose agreement.

The main objective of this research was:

(1) To **compare** the meanings and understandings of the host-guest relationship of WWOOF hosts and guests (WWOOFers).

The findings show that WWOOFing can fill the desire for social interaction between hosts and guests in the non-commercial tourism setting. The establishment of interpersonal relationships along with fulfilling the 'deal' in form of the exchange of labour for accommodation and food is characterised by various interpersonal and social dimensions that form and transform relationships. The host-guest relationship in WWOOFing must be understood as being affected by host and guest's individual and collective meanings and understandings of it. Thus, the two-perspectives approach of this study enabled the identification of similarities and differences in hosts and guests' perceptions. Although the research has focused on the two groups there is diversity within these groups, merely because hosts and guests are individuals with individual needs. However, there are differences between the groups and the way they perceive the encounter.

The meanings and understandings both parties had of the relationship are visible in the model of *Host-Guest Relationships within Social and Work Dimensions in WWOOFing (figure 9)*. Both parties seem to have a good idea of what contributes to the evolution of the relationship; yet, guests seem to be more aware of their roles in different situations. This indicates that knowing their place in the relationship is important in light of the host-dominated encounter. Interpersonal relationships and integration into the host's life were the two factors that were most appreciated by guests. Both parties seek social exchange and there are different degrees of emotional connectedness depending on the level of the relationship.

Both parties understand that their roles are governed by rules and guidelines, as well as obligations of hosting and 'guesting'. This consciousness creates a foundation for the identification of their roles within work and social dimensions. The two dimensions are of particular importance as they enable the distinction between exchange related to complying with the WWOOFing work 'deal' and social exchange on an interpersonal level. Nevertheless, the various roles within these dimensions could be blurred, as the distinction

between work and social/leisure was not always clear. Guests were able to point out situations, for example helping to prepare meals, in which they felt their role had evolved or changed depending on whether tasks were completed in the work or social dimension. Hosts primarily perceived themselves as hosts and talked about the guests' roles more than their own. According to the guests, the host's role was dependent on the level of the relationship. The roles guests identified for themselves were usually congruent with those roles that hosts saw the guests in.

For guests a balance between too many and not enough clearly communicated rules and guidelines was important in order to avoid misunderstandings and to be a 'good guest'. Subsequently, knowing the host's expectations greatly benefited the guest. In turn, hosts put more emphasis on observing the guests behaviour rather than asking them about their expectations. It seemed as if the guests had to pass a variety of 'tests' to be able to get rewarded with interpersonal relationships. These 'tests' entailed abiding by rules and guidelines set out by hosts, respecting the host's privacy and property, being trustworthy, and not outstaying their welcome.

An identification of hosts and guests' obligations in their various roles occurred and individuals were conscious about the implications these obligations had on the negotiation of their roles. Their understanding was that, despite some exceptions, their relationships do not usually transcend beyond the setting and 'end at the door'.

The two other research objectives regarding expectations and personal outcomes enabled a more comprehensive examination of individual perspectives of the host-guest relationship in WWOOFing and an insight into pre- and post perspectives of the individual. These additional research objectives are:

> **(2)** to **_understand_** how expectations influence the host-guest relationship, and
>
> **(3)** to **_evaluate_** the personal outcomes influenced by the host-guest relationship.

Since guests expected to develop a relationship with their hosts on a social level, they were more aware of the different stages of the relationship and the different hurdles they had to pass to reach a closer interpersonal connection with the host. Although the requirements for integration into the host's life were rarely communicated, guests' expectations functioned as motivators for fulfilling work-related tasks to the host's satisfaction in the hope that interpersonal relationships would develop.

Hosts' expectations mainly focused on their commitment to the 'deal' and fulfilling their hosting duties. It was apparent that expectations revolve around work. Interpersonal relationships are desired but not a requirement to making the encounter successful. For guests abiding to the wok and social 'rules' of the encounter determined by the host was essential to facilitate closer relationships.

Examining personal outcomes revealed a contradiction between hosts' expectations and their personal outcomes. This has been addressed in the discussion and shows that, while not an exception, the relationships have lasting impacts on personal outcomes. It appears that entering the relationship with lower expectations regarding the social dimension can result in learning experiences derived from social interaction. As guests expect to get immersed in local life through interpersonal relationships with their hosts, failing to establish a close relationship was felt as a disappointment. Yet, the acquired knowledge about organic farming and certain practical skills, usually not a component of the guests' expectations, was appreciated and regarded as useful in the guest's life after the encounter.

The personal learning aspect is evoked by an observation of and the overall experience with each other. Volunteers usually leave tangible memories behind, which foster the integration of the experience with the particular WWOOFer into the hosts' everyday lives. Intangible memories influence guests' personal outcomes. This could be the reason why, after a while, personal outcomes become less important. The situated friendships that might have developed can be revived upon a return visit but longer-term relationships are not a personal outcome for hosts or guests.

6.3   CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study builds on previous work, particularly McIntosh's work on WWOOFing in New Zealand (see McIntosh, 2009; McIntosh & Bonnemann, 2006; McIntosh & Campbell, 2001). It has examined hosts *and* guests' perspectives rather than focusing on the individual. Many of the themes examined here have been discussed in relation to the commercial home and other hosting settings. In particular the role of the host in controlling the experience has been discussed (e.g. Di Domenico & Lynch, 2007; Sheringham & Daruwalla, 2007). However, this study contributes by extending into the non-commercial and hosting space. This study has given voice to an under-acknowledged group of hosts and tourists, who are

not counted as contributors to economic development of tourism in New Zealand. It moved beyond previous studies in a variety of ways.

The present study provides important insight into the relationship between hosts and WWOOFers as opposed to looking at one group's perspective separately as has been done in most studies. It further examines the influence expectations have on the relationship and subsequent personal outcomes of both parties involved. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate a major contribution to understanding the phenomenon of WWOOFing. High-contact encounters, which last longer than those of many tourists with hosts, are at the centre of the experience. Thus, it can foster tourists' immersion into local customs and lifestyles. This socio-cultural exchange can leave lasting impacts on both hosts and guests, and can foster cross-cultural dialogue.

The evolution of the host-guest relationship has not been discussed with relation to WWOOFing. Research on WWOOFing has included work and social dimensions but the explicit identification of these and the multiple roles of both host and guest within these dimensions and their negotiation have not been addressed. Rather than focusing on costs and benefits of the encounter, which has frequently been done in (volunteer) tourism research, the parties' personal narratives of the encounter enabled a more in-depth insight.

This study also contributes to the literature on non-commercial accommodation and hosting as well as the volunteer tourism literature, which has failed to thoroughly examine the host's role in volunteer tourism encounters and which has not looked at WWOOFing in particular. It adds insight into a component of farm tourism in New Zealand and, thus, contributes to the farm tourism literature, which has largely delivered descriptive data on host motivations, guests' profiles, and economic outcomes regarding farm tourism businesses (Busby & Rendle, 2000; Oppermann, 1995; Pearce, 1990). It illustrates that WWOOF is comprised of a number of dynamics, which have been examined from a variety of perspectives. Thus, there is a need to foster research on WWOOF by examining different concepts from various streams of literature.

The methodological contribution was in terms of perspective and depth of the research. The study examined the perspectives of both actors. Unlike previous WWOOF studies, it focused on an in-depth exploration of past and/or current experiences amongst individuals. Rather than focusing on the individual host *or* guest/tourist and his/her relationship with a

destination or activity, emotional dimensions of relationships were at the centre of attention. A constructivist paradigm enabled the researcher to explore the participants' multiple realities of the different stages of their relationships with their counterparts. This study emphasised that a two-perspectives approach to researching hosts and guests in WWOOFing is necessary to attain a comprehensive understanding of the various aspects that affect the negotiation of roles and the transformation process of the relationship from the work into the social sphere. Letting the voices of both parties be heard to express their personal narratives of the WWOOFing encounter is crucial to understanding the exchange.

The *Model of Work-Social Dimensions of WWOOFing Exchange (figure 7)* reveals the complexity of the host-guest relationship in the non-commercial tourism setting of WWOOFing and seeks to assist researchers examining host-guest relationships in tourism/hospitality encounters. Testing whether or not this model (or components of it) could be used to examine these relationships in commercial settings could identify similarities between commercial and non-commercial hosting situations and the roles of hosts and guests. The model could also be used to explore other non-commercial hosting settings, for example CouchSurfing or VFR (Visiting Friends and Relatives). The *Model of Host-Guest Relationships within Social and Work Dimensions in WWOOFing (figure 9)* contributes to understanding the evolution of the relationship, including the level of formalisation and level of closeness.

This study moved away from examining hosts and guests as providers and consumers in tourism. The importance of understanding exchange relationships of hosts and guests stems from the change WWOOFing has undergone over the years. It has become more centred on social exchange than the philosophies of the organic movements that it used to be based on. Therefore, interpersonal relationships should be emphasised. Both models developed in this study *(figures 7 & 9)* can be used to position hosts and guests within the context of work and social exchange in WWOOFing. This helps to better understand the complexity of the relationship in this under-researched non-commercial tourism setting. The increasing popularity of WWOOFing calls for an understanding of how to make sense of individuals' perceptions in order to create a positive experience for both parties. If participants are aware of the need to communicate and negotiate, obligations might not feel too overwhelming and rules and guidelines might become clearer.

6.4   STUDY LIMITATIONS

It is important to address the limitations of this study *(also see section 3.7)*, as they assist in pointing out avenues of further research and possible improvements.

A first limitation is related to the research design. The choice of the two New Zealand regions, Wellington and Nelson, enabled the inclusion of a variety of WWOOF property types in the study, which were classified according to size. It was found that the type of property did not have an influence on host-guest relationships. However, this study has not focused on whether or not there were differences between property sizes in the way participants experience their relationship. Although, the study was limited to the two regions it is believed that they represented a valuable insight into WWOOFing in New Zealand. WWOOFing is a global concept and New Zealand is a good illustration of WWOOFing because of its number of host and volunteer participants. The country was also one of the first to establish a WWOOF network. Future research could compare countries and consider further the diversity of WWOOF farm properties.

Secondly, the setting of this study is in relative economic prosperity and the economic gap between host and guest is small; thus it does not explore the diversity of WWOOFing globally. Research would benefit from the investigation of host-guest relationships in different cultural contexts, such as less developed countries. The nature of power imbalance through cultural differences or social distance between host and guest and the imbalance in the relationship could be examined and compared to developed country contexts.

Thirdly, fieldwork was carried out during wintertime (June, July 2011) when less WWOOFing opportunities are offered by hosts. This made it challenging to recruit WWOOFers in the two regions and to talk to all of them face-to-face. Therefore four WWOOFers were interviewed via Skype. However, as a communication tool both parties were comfortable with, this still enabled an active discussion.

Fourthly, it is believed that the limited time spent with research participants did not allow for an in-depth insight into their everyday routines as hosts/guests. A future study could use participant observation to capture host-guest relationships during the interaction. The study relied solely on interviews and the use of a research diary to support the analysis of the findings. These interviews mostly took place after the experience and, thus, were a

recollection of memories of participants. Nevertheless, a strength of the study is that as an 'outsider' with no previous WWOOFing experience, I was able to position myself as neither being biased towards the hosts nor the WWOOFers.

Since many of the volunteers interviewed were first-time WWOOFers, including more experienced candidates in studying the impact of their previous experience on future encounters would be useful. This would shed light on the influence the host-guest relationship in the previous experience has on the future one and how it affects both hosts and guests' roles.

Further analysis may also identify other factors influencing host-guest interactions in WWOOFing; for example, a gender dimension to the relationships was not explicitly investigated, although the generational aspect emerged in the discussion of the host (family) home.

6.5   SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study opens new aspects for further research on the host-guest relationships in WWOOFing and other non-commercial tourism settings. Future researchers have the opportunity to learn from and address the limitations discussed above. In particular, it is hoped that continued research in this area will advance knowledge of how host-guest relationships develop in hosting contexts other than WWOOFing. A comprehension of the long-term effects of these relationships on the individual host/guest would shed light on the value of participating in WWOOFing. This would also clarify hosts' and guests' reasons for continuing to engage in it. It would further provide a more complete picture of differences related to feelings towards spending time together and time apart.

It is suggested that further research on WWOOFing be longitudinal and follow hosts and guests through different stages of their relationships, including pre-, during-, and post-phases. A few longitudinal studies have examined volunteer tourists' personal outcomes on their lives (e.g. Zahra, 2011), yet hosts' outcomes have been ignored. The researcher could be a participant of WWOOFing, as a study like this would greatly benefit from observational work on host-guest interaction and the negotiation of their various roles.

It is clearly time to move beyond assumptions that hosts and guests in tourism only interact on an economic level. Other non-commercial hosting situations, such as CouchSurfing, are

emerging and with them the interest of scholars. With the increase in importance of these non-commercial hosting experiences it is important to study these groups of hosts and guests. Their voices are often unheard because they do not contribute economically to the tourism industry.

It is hoped that the *Model of Host-Guest Relationships within Social and Work Dimensions in WWOOFing (figure 9)* will guide further research on the phenomenon of WWOOFing, as it enables the examination of hosts and guests' individual perspectives as well as the comparison between the two. Thus, it facilitates a comprehensive view of the phenomenon as opposed to a one-sided individual perspective focusing on either host *or* guest, as has been the case in much previous tourism research. An individual focus on only one group would not have shown the true nature of the WWOOF encounter and the various roles each party has in the relationship. The model is important because it also facilitates an understanding about the elements that have not been captured in tourism research but assist in examining interpersonal host-guest relationships in tourism. For example, volunteer tourism literature has failed to identify the different dynamics that comprise the host-volunteer tourist relationship. In turn, private hospitality literature has largely disregarded *personal* outcomes for both parties and has not extensively explored various roles of *both* hosts and guests.

6.6   FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The research has given WWOOF hosts and guests some opportunities for learning. An awareness of each other's needs and the communication of expectations from the very beginning, assist in balancing the fluid and organic development and the 'rules' of the encounter. Relationships are formed and transformed by individuals. This means that beside the aspects that have been found to contribute to the establishment of various roles, factors such as personal characteristics of the individual and culture play a role. Thus, relationships cannot be viewed as sanitised entities.

Hosts should be aware that guests usually want to be integrated into their everyday lives, which has implications for the management of the time spent together and apart. Guidance on tasks and a clear identification of the extent to which guests are expected to contribute to the completion of household duties should be communicated to avoid misunderstandings. WWOOFers want more than accommodation and food, as they search

for social exchange and a sense of belonging. Hence, it is recommended that hosts and guests communicate about the balance between work and social exchange and consider each other's needs.

It is important for WWOOFers to be independent and not to rely on the host to entertain them, as private time for the host (family) was identified as important. Reciprocal and fair exchange within work and social dimensions should be part of WWOOFing and individuals should communicate if they feel concerned about these aspects. Nevertheless, completing organic farming related tasks to the best of their knowledge and being open to learn from the host should be an important goal of WWOOFers.

6.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

I have nurtured this thesis from the early seeds through to the harvest, and have savoured the richness of the data. I have stressed the importance of researching host-guest relationships in non-commercial tourism settings, and the need to consider the perspectives of both actors involved. I embarked on a journey into the world of WWOOFing and investigated the relationships that are the very foundation of this exchange. Letting the voices of WWOOF hosts and guests be heard enabled an in-depth exploration of their experiences, feelings, and thoughts. Now it is time to give the last words to those who went with me on this journey, for it is only them, who can best express what the host-guest relationship means to them.

> *"I think it's a willingness to give on both sides; a willingness to go beyond the initial agreement of 'okay you do work for me and I'll give you food, room and board'. It's that willingness to go beyond that. I think if we're putting in a little bit of extra effort and they're putting in a little bit of extra effort and people are willing it just makes all the difference."* (Paige, host)

> *"I think that introduction into a place is really important and then setting the vibe, you know, like is it a positive place, is it welcoming, is it caring? And setting the expectations: What is expected of you? 'This is how it works', you know, 'this is how we work here, we would like you to follow these kind of same things'. And then I think once you've got that introduction done you kind of just set the space for a relationship to grow, you know, like you don't need to put effort in or try and it will*

kind of just happen, I think- once you've got those foundations." *(Kakama, WWOOFer)*

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INFORMATION SHEETS

(1) INFORMATION SHEET FOR HOSTS

(2) INFORMATION SHEET FOR GUESTS

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM FOR HOSTS AND GUESTS

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDES

(1) INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HOSTS

(2) INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR GUESTS

APPENDIX A (1):

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

VICTORIA MANAGEMENT SCHOOL
Te Kura Whakahaere

RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET

FOR WWOOF HOSTS

EXAMINING THE WWOOF EXPERIENCE IN NEW ZEALAND- A HOST-GUEST ENCOUNTER WITHIN THE

VOLUNTEER TOURISM SETTING

Dear WWOOF host,

I am a Master of Tourism Management student at Victoria University of Wellington and am doing my thesis research on the host-guest relationship within the WWOOF setting in New Zealand.

Overview of the project
The objectives of my research are three-fold and aim to *compare* the meanings and understandings of the host-guest relationship of WWOOF hosts and volunteer tourists, (within this comparison) to *understand* how expectations and responsibilities influence the host-guest relationship, and to *evaluate* the personal outcomes influenced by this relationship.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research, which will take place in June and July 2011. I will be asking you about **views**, **opinions**, and **experiences** regarding your relationship with WWOOFers. This includes the meanings and understandings you have of your relationship with your WWOOFers. I will also ask you about your expectations and responsibilities within as well as personal outcomes of these encounters.

WWOOFers who work on your farm during the time of my research will **not** be interviewed. However, I will be interviewing WWOOFers who have worked in the region in previous months.

Please note: If there is more than one host I would like to interview all of you together.

What will this involve?
I would like to spend a morning or afternoon with you so I can get to know you and learn more about everyday life on your farm and what a WWOOFing visit would involve. As part of this I would like to interview you for about an hour. During my visit I will keep a research diary to write down any observations I make with regards to your daily routine, your relationship with WWOOFers staying at your farm during the time of research, as well as your tasks and responsibilities. These observations intend to support the information obtained through the interview and convey an overview of what it means to be a WWOOF host. My visit will be scheduled at a time and day that is convenient for you.

How will you be affected by participating in this project?
- Your participation in this project is entirely **voluntary** and you are not obliged to participate.
- The interview will be conducted in person by myself, and will be **recorded** with a portable recording device. Notes will also be taken. You may obtain the **transcript** of the interview upon request.

- All the information you provide me with as well as your identity will be entirely **confidential**. Your name and address will **not** be revealed to anyone and will **neither** be used in the interview transcriptions **nor** the write-up of this Master Thesis.
- I would like to give you the opportunity to receive a **summary** of the research results after the completion of this Master Thesis in February 2012.
- Finally, you have the right to **withdraw** from your participation up until 31 August 2011 in which case all the information you provided will be immediately destroyed.

What will the data be used for?
The data will be used in my **Master of Tourism Management Thesis**, which will be deposited in the Victoria University of Wellington Library. Findings may also be presented at conferences or published in academic or professional journals at a later date. This will mean that the interview transcripts will be kept securely for up to 2 years. Any further use will require your written consent.

Ethical approval
Ethical approval for the proposed research has been granted by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee. You will be provided with a Consent Form, which will inform you about your rights and gives you the opportunity to state how the data collected from you should be handled.

Thank you for your time and help to make this study possible. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact either me or my supervisor, Dr Karen Smith, using the contact details provided below.

I look forward to meeting you and am very excited to talk to you.

Thank you very much.

Kind regards,

Dagmar Cronauer

Researcher	**Supervisor**
Dagmar Cronauer	**Dr Karen Smith**
Master of Tourism Management Student	Senior Lecturer, Tourism Management
Victoria Management School	Victoria Management School
Phone: 021 02311768	**Phone:** 04 463 5721
Email: dagmar.cronauer@vuw.ac.nz	**Email:** karen.smith@vuw.ac.nz

APPENDIX A (2):

RESEARCH INFORMATION SHEET

FOR VOLUNTEER TOURISTS (WWOOFers)

EXAMINING THE WWOOF EXPERIENCE IN NEW ZEALAND- A HOST-GUEST ENCOUNTER WITHIN THE

VOLUNTEER TOURISM SETTING

Dear WWOOFer,

I am a Master of Tourism Management student at Victoria University of Wellington and am doing my thesis research on the host-guest relationship within the WWOOF setting in New Zealand.

Overview of the project
The objectives of my research are three-fold and aim to *compare* the meanings and understandings of the host-guest relationship of WWOOF hosts and volunteer tourists, (within this comparison) to *understand* how expectations and responsibilities influence the host-guest relationship, and to *evaluate* the personal outcomes influenced by this relationship.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research, which will take place in June and July 2011. I will be asking you about **views**, **opinions**, and **experiences** regarding your relationship with your WWOOF host(s). This includes the meanings and understandings you have of your relationship with your host(s). I will also ask you about your expectations and responsibilities within as well as personal outcomes of these encounters.

What will this involve?
Our meeting will involve an interview, which will take approximately 60 minutes and scheduled at a time and place that is convenient for you. As an acknowledgement for your participation and time, you will receive a $20 New World gift voucher.

How will you be affected by participating in this project?
- Your participation in this project is entirely **voluntary** and you are not obliged to participate.
- The interview will be conducted in person by myself, and will be **recorded** with a portable recording device. Notes will also be taken. You may obtain the **transcript** of the interview upon request.
- All the information you provide me with as well as your identity will be entirely **confidential**. Your name and address will **not** be revealed to anyone and will **neither** be used in the interview transcriptions **nor** the write-up of this Master Thesis.
- I would like to give you the opportunity to receive a **summary** of the research results after the completion of this Master Thesis in February 2012.
- Finally, you have the right t**o withdraw** from your participation up until 31 August 2011 in which case all the information you provided will be immediately destroyed.

What will the data be used for?

The data will be used in my **Master of Tourism Management Thesis**, which will be deposited in the Victoria University of Wellington Library. Findings may also be presented at conferences or published in academic or professional journals at a later date. This will mean that the interview transcripts will be kept securely for up to 2 years. Any further use will require your written consent.

Ethical approval

Ethical approval for the proposed research has been granted by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee. You will be provided with a **Consent Form**, which will inform you about your rights and gives you the opportunity to state how the data collected from you should be handled.

Thank you for your time and help to make this study possible. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact either me or my supervisor, Dr Karen Smith, using the contact details provided below.

I look forward to meeting you and am very excited to talk to you.

Thank you very much.

Kind regards,

Dagmar Cronauer

Researcher	**Supervisor**
Dagmar Cronauer	**Dr Karen Smith**
Master of Tourism Management Student	Senior Lecturer, Tourism Management
Victoria Management School	Victoria Management School
Phone: 021 02311768	**Phone:** 04 463 5721
Email: dagmar.cronauer@vuw.ac.nz	**Email:** karen.smith@vuw.ac.nz

APPENDIX B:

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

FOR HOSTS & VOLUNTEER TOURISTS (WWOOFers)

EXAMINING THE WWOOF EXPERIENCE IN NEW ZEALAND- A HOST-GUEST ENCOUNTER WITHIN THE

VOLUNTEER TOURISM SETTING

What does participation mean for you?

This consent form is to ensure that you are sufficiently informed about the purpose of my research project and what it means to you. Importantly, it emphasises your right to know how data will be collected, analysed, and used in the write up of this thesis.

Consent to participation:

➢ I have been provided with appropriate information and have understood the nature and objectives of this research project. I have also had the opportunity to ask questions regarding these objectives and my role in the project. The questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

➢ I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential and will be reported in an aggregated, non-attributable form.

➢ I understand that the interview may, with my permission, be recorded and all recordings will be deleted after the completion of this research project in February 2012.

➢ I understand that all information obtained will be stored in a locked cabinet and/or password-protected file.

➢ I understand that I may withdraw from this study at any time before the final analysis of data (31 August 2011) without providing reasons, in which case information will be immediately destroyed.

➢ I understand that I have the right to decline any question asked in the interview.

➢ I understand that the interview transcript will be kept securely for up to 2 years. Any further use of the interview data will require my written consent.

Feedback distribution:

I would like *(please tick box as required)*:

☐ The transcript of this interview
☐ A summary of the project results

☐ By **mail** (please provide address): _____

☐ By **email** (please provide email address): _____

Participant:

Name *(please print)*: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Researcher:

Dagmar Cronauer

Master of Tourism Management

Victoria University of Wellington

Signature: _____

APPENDIX C (1):

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

WWOOF HOSTS

EXAMINING THE WWOOF EXPERIENCE IN NEW ZEALAND- A HOST-GUEST ENCOUNTER WITHIN THE

VOLUNTEER TOURISM SETTING

SECTION 1: PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND

➢ **Can you briefly describe your background and why you became a WWOOF host?**

Prompts:

o Why did you decide to become (a) WWOOF host(s)?

o For how long have you been a WWOOF host?

o For how long have you been involved in organic farming?

o Have you ever WWOOFed yourself?

➢ **In your opinion, what is so special about WWOOFing?**

o (Couples) Do you have different roles in running the farm and managing WWOOFers?

➢ **Can you give me an overview of the WWOOFing experience you offer on your organic farm?**

o How would you describe the experience you offer for WWOOFers?

o Can you tell me about your daily routine? What are your tasks and responsibilities?

➢ **Can you tell me about your WWOOFers?**

o Prompts: (international/domestic; age; gender; alone/group

o What do you think, what are the reasons why volunteer tourists come to your farm to

volunteer?

o What do you think they want to get out of the experience?

SECTION 2: EXPECTATIONS AND RELATIONSHIP

➢ **Can you tell me about your experience with your WWOOFers?**

➢ **Thinking about expectations...**

o What do the WWOOFers expect? Do the WWOOFers make it clear to you what they expect

from you?

o What do you expect from your WWOOFers?

- o Do you think you communicate to your WWOOFers what you expect from them? (In what way?)
- o What do you think are the expectations your WWOOFers have regarding your duties as (a) host(s)?
- ➤ **Please, tell me about the relationship between you and your WWOOFers. Could you briefly describe the relationship you have with the WWOOFers?**
  - o How important is building a relationship with your WWOOFers to you?
  - o What do you feel is your role in the relationship?
  - o What does your relationship with your WWOOFers mean to you?
  - o Do you usually have the chance to get to know your WWOOFers **before you meet in person**?
- ➤ **Can you tell me about the responsibilities you feel towards your WWOOFers?**
- ➤ **Do you introduce your WWOOFers to rules or guidelines?**
  - o Why? Why not? What kind?
- ➤ **Thinking about obligations...**
  - o What are obligations you feel towards your WWOOFers?
  - o Do you differentiate between your **private life and your life as (a) host(s)**? What do you do to differentiate?
- ➤ **Can you recall and explain challenges that occurred regarding your relationship with your WWOOFers?**
- ➤ **What are positive things you've experienced?**
- ➤ **Can you tell me about the influence your relationship with WWOOFers has on your overall impression of the experience?**
- ➤ **What do you learn from the WWOOF experience?**
  - o To what extent do WWOOFers influence your personal experience of running an organic farm?
  - o How does your relationship with WWOOFers influence your personal life?
  - o How do you go about staying in contact with WWOOFers?
  - o Do they stay in contact with you?
- ➤ **How important is feedback to you?**

SECTION 3: OVERALL EXPERIENCE

- ➤ **Overall, how would you rate your experience(s) with your WWOOFers?**
- ➤ **How are the personal outcomes of the experience affected by your relationship with the WWOOFer?**
- ➤ **Will you carry on providing WWOOFing opportunities on your farm?**

> **What makes the relationship between a host and a WWOOFer work?**

SECTION 4: FINAL THOUGHTS

> **Can you tell me one thing I should take away from this interview regarding host-guest encounters within the WWOOF setting in New Zealand, what is it?**

> **Is there anything else you would like to add?**

Thank you very much for your time and participation. It was nice to talk to you.

APPENDIX C (2):

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

WWOOFers

EXAMINING THE WWOOF EXPERIENCE IN NEW ZEALAND- A HOST-GUEST ENCOUNTER WITHIN THE
VOLUNTEER TOURISM SETTING

*Direction: I am interested in a range of experiences you've had while WWOOFing in NZ. So, feel free
to give me examples (without naming the farm) and/or talk about more general experiences.*

SECTION 1 PARTICIPANT BACKGROUND

➢ **Can you briefly describe your background and why you became a WWOOFer?**
   Prompts:
   o   Origin; travel; how long in NZ for; how long stay in NZ; how many hosts?
   o   What are/will be your main activities during your time in New Zealand?
   o   Why did you choose to go WWOOFing in New Zealand?
   o   Have you participated in WWOOFing before? (If yes, when, where and how often?)
➢ **Can you tell me about your WWOOFing experience in New Zealand?**
   Prompts:
   o   Can you tell me about your daily routine on the WWOOF farm(s)? What are/were your tasks
       and responsibilities on the WWOOF farm(s)?
   o   What do you think is so special about WWOOFing?
   o   What is the best thing about visiting/staying on an organic farm?
➢ **Can you tell me about your host(s)?**
   Prompts: female/male/couple; who responsible for farm work/house duties/etc.

SECTION 2: EXPECTATIONS AND RELATIONSHIP

➢ **Please describe what you expected from your stay on an organic farm as a WWOOFer?**
➢ **Please, tell me about the relationship(s) between you and your host(s). Could you briefly
   describe the relationship(s) you have/had with the host(s)?**
   o   How important is building a relationship with your host(s) to you?

- o What does your relationship with your host(s) mean to you?
- ➢ **What expectations did you have regarding your relationship with the host(s) before helping as a WWOOFer?**
  - o Can you tell me if these expectations you had have been met, exceeded or have not been met? Why?
- ➢ **What do you think are/were the expectations your host(s) has (have)/had regarding your stay on the farm and your tasks as a WWOOFer?**
  - o Prompts: Did your host make it clear to you what she/he expects from you?/ Did you communicate to your host(s) what you expect from them?
- ➢ **Did you have the chance to get to know your host(s) before you met in person?**
  - o Prompts: If yes, what did you talk about in terms of both of your expectations of the encounter?
- ➢ **Can you tell me about the responsibilities you have/had towards your host?**
- ➢ **Did your host(s) introduce you to rules and are/were there restrictions?**
- ➢ **Do/Did you feel obliged to do certain things and/or behave in a certain way? Why?/Why not?**
- ➢ **Can you recall and explain challenges that occurred regarding your relationship with your host(s)? What were they?**
- ➢ **What are/were positive things you experienced with your host(s)?**
- ➢ **Can you tell me about the influence your relationship with the host has/had on your overall impression of the WWOOF experience?**
  Prompt: What have you learnt from the experience?
- ➢ **Do you think you will stay in contact with your host?**
- ➢ **Would you consider WWOOFing on the same farm (on one particular farm) again? (Why?/ Why not?)**

SECTION 3: OVERALL EXPERIENCE

- ➢ **Overall, what do/did you want to get out of your relationship and the experience with your host(s)?**
- ➢ **Would you do it again? Why? Why not?**

SECTION 4: FINAL THOUGHTS

- ➢ **What do you think makes the relationship work?**
- ➢ **Can you tell me one thing I should take away from this interview regarding host-guest encounters within the WWOOF setting in New Zealand, what is it?**
- ➢ **Is there anything else you would like to add?**

Thank you very much for your time and participation. It was nice to talk to you.