MASTER THESIS

Barter and the Sharing Economy: Understanding Perceptions of Sharing in a

Barter Tourism Exchange

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis deals with perceptions of sharing within a sharing economy activity: a barter tourism exchange. The barter tourism exchanges of this research are working travel experiences facilitated by the global online network Help Exchange. Host and guest perspectives, the two parties of a barter tourism exchange, provide a comprehensive view to how sharing is understood within a non-monetary, sharing economy activity.

This chapter will present the rationale and overview of research relevant to this study, as well as introduce the research question and outline the structure of this thesis.

1.1 Rationale

At the commencement of this project, the study subject emerged to reflect my interest n the relatively new and buzzword-worthy 'sharing economy.' I was looking for an area of the sharing economy to study when I was introduced to Help Exchange and the accessibility to travel that this form of exchange presented. A traveler could use his or her skills, time, and energy as a form of payment for food, accommodation, and for access to an authentic cultural experience. This alternative mode of travel depicted a way to get off the beaten path, to not have to partake in hotels and mass tourism, and to perhaps have a more meaningful travel experience with the people encountered along the way, because money was not changing hands. This type of exchange gives people access to travel who may not have the money to pay for it, and it was the notion of a lack of monetary exchange which initially propelled this research into being. As the project developed, the focus shifted to barter, as that is how this type of travel functioned, and on to different modes of consumption and eventually, to sharing. As I researched the sharing economy, the language of sharing permeated the literature on the phenomenon, but the content described activities which seemed devoid of sharing and concentrated on

profit gain. This led me to question if a non-monetary sharing economy activity could involve sharing, because economic exchange was not an aspect of it.

Different streams of literature were taken into consideration as the basis of this study: the sharing economy, barter from an anthropological and economic perspective, and modes of consumption, which included barter and sharing. There were no academic sources which commented specifically upon barter as a component of the sharing economy, barter and tourism, nor on sharing within the sharing economy, so this research aims to fuse these streams of study.

1.2 Research Question

With the sharing economy as the context, this study aims to answer the following research question:

How do hosts and guests perceive sharing within a barter tourism exchange?

1.3 Thesis Structure

Chapter one has presented the background to the study, the rationale and contributions of the research, along with the research objective.

Chapter two, Literature Review, begins with a comprehensive review of the sharing economy to provide the context with which barter and barter tourism exchanges are approached. A barter tourism exchange will be described as an aspect of the sharing economy. The literature on barter, succeeded by a look at different modes of exchange, including sharing, follows.

Chapter three presents the research locations. Help Exchange, the Secastilla study, the Santa Cruz study, and the criteria for selection of the research locations are discussed

Chapter four presents the methodological considerations of this study. It outlines the approach to research, the research design, and the challenges and limitations experienced with the chosen methodology.

Chapter five presents the findings and discussion of the data analysis process. The Framework for Analysis Models illustrate the two main themes which emerged from the analysis, which guide the discussion and determine the participant's understanding of sharing within the barter tourism exchange.

Chapter six concludes with a summary of the study, the main contributions, limitations to the study, and suggested areas of future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 The Sharing Economy

The following sections will review the literature on the sharing economy. This will describe the phenomenon, breaking down the three systems within the sharing economy: product service systems (PSS), redistribution markets, and collaborative lifestyles. Four concepts relevant to all sharing economy activities will be discussed, followed by the five major trends which have driven its development. Motivations for participation in the sharing economy will be addressed, and part one of the literature review will conclude by considering whether the sharing economy actually involves 'sharing.'

2.1.1 What Is The Sharing Economy?

Sharing has been a topic of great attention in terms of business and consumption practices. The "sharing economy" (Botsman and Rogers, 2010), "collaborative consumption" (ibid), "the mesh" (Gansky, 2012), the "collaborative economy" (Botsman, 2013), "commercial sharing systems" (Lamberton and Rose, 2012), "access based

consumption" (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012), and the "access economy" (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2015) all refer to a phenomenon which has given rise to thousands of for-profit and nonprofit businesses in the last decade. What these terms have in common is that they refer to a means of consumption which utilizes access over ownership, and relies upon the Internet to function. The term 'collaborative consumption' was first defined as "those events in which one or more persons consume economic goods or services in the process of engaging in joint activities with one or more others" (Felson & Speath, 1978). This definition includes such activities as drinking beer with friends, but refers to a type of consumption prior to the advent of the Internet, and therefore does not contribute to the modern understanding of the phrase.

The abovementioned terms have been used somewhat interchangeably, but Botsman, who claims responsibility for spreading the terms "sharing economy" and "collaborative consumption" into the vocabulary of the public, clarifies the slight differences amongst them. She defines the "sharing economy" as "an economic model based on sharing underutilized assets from space to skills to stuff for monetary or non-monetary benefits," while "collaborative consumption is "an economic model based on sharing, swapping, trading, or renting products and services, enabling access over ownership" (Botsman, 2013). Belk (2013) considers collaborative consumption to be "people coordinating the acquisition and distribution of a resource for a fee or other compensation." By including "other compensation" this definition includes "bartering, trading, and swapping, which involve giving and receiving non-monetary compensation" (Belk, 2013). Collaborative consumption is also simply considered a type of consumption where goods and services are shared online, while the 'sharing economy' is "an umbrella concept which encompasses several ITC developments and technologies, among others collaborative

consumption, which endorses the consumption of goods and services through online platforms" (Hamari, Sjoklint, and Ukkonen, 2014). In *What's Mine is Yours: The Rise of Collaborative Consumption*, Botsman and Rogers (2010) loosely define collaborative consumption as "traditional sharing, bartering, lending, trading, renting, gifting, and swapping, defined through technology and peer communities" (p.xv). Founded on the concept of sharing assets and enabling access over ownership, the sharing economy has become a disruptive force to traditional means of consumption. Internet and mobile technology-enabled peer-to-peer platforms are the key for facilitating the market-based trades between private individuals for any variety of goods and services, which are defining sharing economy activities today (Fraiberger and Sundararajan, 2015). To further define and understand this broadly encompassing concept, the three systems within collaborative consumption will be discussed: product-service systems (PSS), redistribution markets, and collaborative lifestyles.

Product-service systems

Product-service systems turn products into services and epitomize the concept of access over ownership, where consumers pay to access the benefits of a product without needing to own it. Two models of PSS are relevant for collaborative consumption: "usage" PSS and "extended-life" PSS. Within a usage PSS, a company or an individual owns a product, which becomes a service as multiple users are able to share the benefits of its use (Botsman et al, 2010). The platform- a peer-to-peer marketplace- facilitates the exchange of the product or service between suppliers, the individuals or small businesses who supply goods and services to the marketplace, and consumers, the individuals who buy, rent, and consume (Sundararajan, 2014). Consumers benefit from convenient access to the product without any of the additional costs or inconveniences of

ownership. This "rental" business model facilitates the switch to a "usage mindset" by maximizing the utility of traditionally underutilized products (Sundararajan, 2012). Extended-life PSS reduces the need for product replacement or disposal because "after-sales services such as maintenance, repair, or upgrading becomes an integral part of the product's life cycle" (Botsman et al, 2010, p. 101). This model of PSS aims to minimize the wasteful, throwaway nature that have been built into products in the last century in the name of convenience, time-saving, and ease (Botsman et al, 2010). Gansky's (2012) "the mesh" refers to an ecosystem of businesses based upon network-enabled sharing. Mesh businesses share four characteristics: "sharing, advanced use of Web and mobile information networks, a focus on physical good and materials, and engagement with customers through social networks" (Gansky, 2012). While the mesh is a broad concept like collaborative consumption, it correlates specifically to product-service systems (Mont, 2002; Botsman et al, 2010), as the central aim of a mesh business is to "'sell' the same product multiple times" (Gansky, 2012). PSS correlate to "consumer sharing systems" which are defined as "market-managed systems that provide customers with the opportunity to enjoy product benefits without ownership, [characterized by] between-customer rivalry for a limited supply of the shared product" (Lamberton and Rose, 2012). Access-based consumption (Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2012), while also a broad concept, focuses upon activities as defined by PSS and the mesh. Access-based consumption is defined as "transactions that may be market mediated in which no transfer of ownership takes place" where the consumer gains the benefit of using the product or service based upon rental or access-based payment (Bardhi et al, 2012). Again, the authors use the example of Zipcar and car sharing for traditional access-based consumption, which falls into the category of usage PSS and the mesh. Yet, the authors mention the existence

and proliferation in the last decade of additional forms of access-based consumption, such as through redistribution markets and collaborative lifestyles (Bardhi et al, 2012).

Redistribution Markets

Redistribution markets aim to redistribute unwanted or underutilized goods, to maximize their use and lifespan. Redistribution networks function thanks to the power of social networks and Internet enabled peer-to-peer marketplaces (platforms) to facilitate the redistribution of goods and services from where they are idle to where they are needed (Bardhi et al, 2012). This system of the sharing economy reduces waste as it encourages reselling and reuse. Peer-to-peer platforms such as Craigslist, Amazon and Ebay were the first redistribution markets which began to acclimate consumers to online exchange over a decade ago, and paved the way for the platform-based exchange that defines the sharing economy. Transactions can occur through any means of monetary, non-monetary or free exchange, while challenging traditional relationships between buyer, seller, and producer and the longstanding beliefs of Western consumerism to "buy more" and "buy new" (Botsman et al, 2010).

Collaborative Lifestyles

The third system within the sharing economy is collaborative lifestyles, which involves the "sharing and exchange of less tangible assets such as time, space, skills, and money" (Botsman et al, 2010, p. 73). These exchanges are happening on a local and global level by harnessing the power of the Internet as a tool to connect, coordinate and transcend physical boundaries for such activities to occur. Within collaborative lifestyles, the focus is often upon human-to-human exchange, rather than a physical product, and therefore can enhance the social connectivity and the formation of relationships more so than other forms of collaborative consumption (Botsman et al, 2010). While such exchanges can

occur through a traditional monetary transaction, Botsman (2010) highlights the usage of non-monetary transaction means such barter, gifting, swapping or lending within collaborative lifestyles. Barter as a type of collaborative consumption will be further explored in part two of the literature review.

As stated above, many names are used, often interchangeably, to classify this new wave of collaborative businesses and consumption practices. The term ''sharing economy'' will be used for the remainder of this thesis to further describe this broad and multidimensional phenomenon.

2.1.2 What Makes the Sharing Economy Work?

In *What's Mine is Yours: the Rise of Collaborative Consumption,* Botsman and Rogers (2010) identify four underlying principles for the functioning of all sharing economy systems: critical mass, idling capacity, belief in the commons, and trust between strangers.

Critical Mass

Critical mass is an issue faced by all markets (Geron, 2013), which describes the "existence of enough momentum in a system to make it become self-sustaining" (Botsman et al, 2010). The point of achieving critical mass will differ with every case, but it applies to the success of all sharing economy businesses. Sellers want more buyers, while buyers want more sellers (Geron, 2013). For a sharing economy system to be successful and achieve critical mass, there needs to be enough choice and convenience available to satisfy and retain users. Initial users of sharing economy systems also provide the social proof to encourage others to overcome what psychological barriers

that may exist to participate in new behaviors, and reach critical mass (Botsman et al, 2010).

Idling Capacity

A central notion of the sharing economy is how to redistribute and turn the unused potential- the idling capacity- of goods and services into value. This applies to physical products, like cars, bikes, tools, and equipment, but also less tangible assets, like time, space, skills, and knowledge, which are infrequently or unused by their owners. Sharing economy providers are maximizing idling capacity thanks to the Internet and social networks, which organize and connect people with idle assets to potential users (Botsman et al, 2010; Gansky, 2012; Sundararajan, 2014) The Internet as the fundamental aspect of the sharing economy will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

Belief in the Commons

The "commons" refers to the ancient Roman concept of *res publica*- the things set aside for public use, the resources belonging to all people. Much of what was public has undergone privatization in the last centuries, due to the belief that individuals would overuse and abuse these privileges due to self-interest (Botsman et al, 2010). Yet with the sharing economy, the more people who join and use it, who add to it, and shape and fuel its evolution, the more value is added to the system and to those involved. Participation in the sharing economy taps into an innately human quest to be a part of something (Gansky, 2012) such as "part of a solution or even a movement of people with similar interests," (Bostman et al, 2010, p. 91). Participation in the sharing economy often appeals just as much for "sharing" and "collaboration" as for "consumption."

Trust Between Strangers

Most activities within the sharing economy require users to trust someone they do not know. With the help of the Internet, peer-to-peer marketplaces have allowed sharing to occur globally, transcending geographical distance and connecting strangers without previous social ties, in the transactions and exchanges that define the sharing economy. For such connections and subsequent exchanges to occur, a level of trust is necessary. With the Internet and the power of social networks, we are today in an "age of radical transparency" as power shifts from businesses more into the hands of customers. Rather than what a business says about itself, a brand can be more defined by how people experience it and what they say about it online (Gansky, 2012). This forces businesses to be honest and transparent to develop trust with their customers. The same forces are at work within the sharing economy, occurring mutually between users and providers to establish trust. Most sharing economy companies will "act as curators and ambassadors, creating platforms that facilitate self-managed [peer-to-peer] exchanges and contributions" (Botsman et al, 2010, p. 92). Platforms will generally have built-in reputation systems to establish trust between potential users and act as a regulatory device. Online reputation systems allow for the rating, usually with one to five stars, review, and references of users so that it becomes public knowledge within the network who can be trusted, and who cannot. Reputation systems regulate the network and create trust "because salient details are made visible not only to transacting parties but to the entire community, [and] sellers (and buyers) have to stay honest and reliable to stay in business. In the sharing economy, reputation serves as the digital institution that protects buyers and prevents the market failure that economists and policy makers worry about," (Sundararajan, 2012, n.p.). From this online reputation, users are better informed about who to exchange with, as a positive review becomes the equivalent to a direct

reference from someone the user actually knows (Botsman et al, 2010). One's online reputation not only encourages honest and responsible behavior, but serves as an actual currency- reputation capital- within the sharing economy. Reputation capital signifies trustworthiness and also grants access for users- the more one participates in the sharing economy, the more reputation capital one may earn. Likewise, the more reputation capital one has, the more one can participate, as others will be willing to engage and exchange with them. Reputation systems and the subsequent earning of reputation capital are vital aspects to ensure the functionality of sharing economy systems by build trust between strangers, minimizing uncertainty, and serving as a regulatory device of the networks (Botsman et al, 2010; Sundararajan, 2012; Belk, 2013).

2.1.3 Driving Trends of the Sharing Economy

While the future of the sharing economy is unknown, it does not appear to be a momentary trend or a blip on the radar. The sharing economy is estimated to generate over $355 billion in revenues by 2025 (Hernæs, 2015*)* and investors and policymakers alike are considering it to be a 'mega-trend' with significant economic and societal impacts (Hamari et al, 2014). Today, over 10,000 companies operate within the sharing economy (Stein, 2015). What brought the sharing economy to life and how did it spread as far as it has today? Five main trends are identified as the factors leading to the development of the sharing economy: the Internet, the global financial crisis, the subsequent values shift, environmental and resource pressures, and population growth and greater urban density. The primary driver of the sharing economy's development, the Internet and mobile technologies, will be discussed in detail.

After the global financial crisis of 2008, consumers began to reevaluate the hyper-consumerism and throwaway culture that had taken root. Increased unemployment and

decreased income, along with the distrust of traditional institutions, opened the doors to "new models for delivering products and services that offer more value at less cost" (Gansky, 2012, p. 28). Many countries continue to embrace a culture of austerity as a post-recession response to the overconsumption of recent decades, as consumers rethink what is valuable within their lives (Gansky, 2012; Euromonitor International, 2014). In addition to changing their consumption patterns, it has caused people to revalue the relationships and sense of community that had been neglected, causing a return to the local marketplace and to the connection between producer and consumer. Consumer awareness that finite growth and consumption based on unlimited resources is not a realistic combination, joined with the cost and risk of old ways of business due to climate change and depleted resources, has propelled many sharing economy business models (Botsman et al, 2010; Gansky, 2012; Sundararajan; 2014). As people choose to lower their ecological footprint and be more "green," sharing economy businesses seem attractive as many facilitate the efficient use and sharing of resources (Sundararajan, 2014). Lastly, greater urban density and a growing population has allowed the sharing economy to thrive (Gansky, 2012; Stein, 2015), as "the space constraints and population density of urban living favors consumption that involves access to shared resources over asset ownership" (Sundararajan, 2014, p.4). Greater populations within cities make sharing easy and accessible, making the sharing economy primarily an urban phenomenon, although the power of the Internet to connect makes sharing economy activities possible globally.

The Internet

The fundamental component of the sharing economy is the use of the Internet and its innovation over the last decade. Cyber peer-to-peer communities, such as Wikipedia,

Flickr, and YouTube, were at the forefront of the sharing economy, making sharing and cooperating online second nature for users. The sharing economy started online as people began posting comments, and sharing photos, videos, files, code, knowledge and ideas (Botsman et al, 2010). Through the use of the Internet and mobile technologies, the same sharing behaviors are able to be applied to physical areas of everyday life. The new sharing economy has been driven by the 'consumerization' of information technologies, whereby consumer needs, rather than those of businesses or governments, drives radical innovation. Sundararajan (2014) considers this trend important as it is "the mass market placing of the capabilities of these new digital technologies (powerful mobile computers, GPS technology) in the hands of millions of consumers that creates the possibility of digitally intermediated peer-to-peer business. It is also the growing familiarity with the idea of platform-enabled peer-to-peer exchange (initially of digital content) among consumers" (n.p.). Sharing economy businesses thrive on this growth, and are all characterized by the advanced use of the Internet and mobile information networks (Gansky, 2012). While the Internet and mobile platforms allow consumers and providers to engage in the sharing economy with ease and efficiency, the Internet has also enabled the emergence of digital "reputation systems." Online feedback and reviews of both providers and users, usually by a one to five star rating system, function as a regulatory device for creating trust between strangers and eliminating the bad actors that may exist within the networks (Stein, 2015). Trusted economic exchange within countless sharing economy marketplaces has occurred due to such online reputation systems, combined with "a wide variety of other digital identity verification, reputation and credit scoring systems (which often leverage the real-world social capital that mobile device usage, Facebook, and LinkedIn and other social technologies bring online)" (Sundararajan, 2014, n.p.). The Internet, a tool for removing geographical

barriers, connecting people, and developing trust among strangers, is a critical component for the growth and function of the sharing economy. For the sharing economy to have reached its current level of development, we can credit the past ten years during which consumers gained experience and became comfortable with peer-to-peer exchange (Sundararajan, 2013), thanks to "eBay, PayPal, and Amazon, which made it safe to do business on the web. We needed Apple and Google to provide GPS and Internet-enabled phones that make us always reachable and findable. We needed Facebook, which made people more likely to actually be who they say there are" (Stein, 2015). The Internet and mobile technology are the fundamental components of the success of the sharing economy, enabling user to access whatever they want and need with the touch of a button.

2.1.4 Why Are People Participating?

A review of the literature reveals that the primary motivations for participation in the sharing economy are economic and social benefits.

Economic Benefits

Studies have identified economic benefits as the primary motivation for participation in the sharing economy (Botsman et al, 2010; Ganksy, 2012; Geron, 2013, Babe, 2014; Hamari et al, 2014; Sundararajan, 2014; Trivett, 2014; Vision Critical, 2014). The sharing economy allows anyone to get involved, whether as a consumer or a supplier. Consumers of the sharing economy benefit through cost savings that the "access over ownership" business model supplies. Sharing economy services, such as renting a room on Airbnb, are often the more affordable alternative to their traditional counterpart. It is more convenient and less expensive for users to pay to access a product when it is needed, rather than buy, maintain, store, and perhaps repair or replace it (Gansky,

2012). Consumers are not only saving money by utilizing redistribution markets and product-service systems, but are benefiting through the cost-savings of collaborative lifestyles. Consumers are rediscovering ways to exchange without money, such as bartering and swapping their tangible goods and less tangible assets, to acquire what they want and need (Botsman et al, 2010).

Additionally, millions of people have become "micro-entrepreneurs," (Sundararajan, 2014) as suppliers of idle goods and services. Participation as a supplier or a "mini-corporation" (Stein, 2015) within the sharing economy is relatively low-risk and is helping people gain financial security (Babe, 2014; Sundararajan, 2014;). In 2014, hosts on Airbnb earned a collective $768 million in New York alone (Babe, 2014). The sharing economy enables people, many of whom may be below medium income, without a college degree, or constrained by employment in traditional corporations, to reap the economic benefits that are possible. The economic benefits, both money making and saving, are the primary motivation for user participation within the sharing economy.

Social Benefits

Social benefits are an important motivation for participation, as social capital is said to be created by all types of sharing economy activities, especially when people share their "non-product needs (skills, time, space), [thereby] building and strengthening relationships with family, neighbors, friends, coworkers and total strangers" (Botsman et al, 2010). The consumer values shift that has been driving the development of the sharing economy motivates people to participate in order to regain senses of community and strengthen social connections. Hamari et al. (2014) found that enjoyment is an essential motivator for participation and "some people might take part in collaborative consumption simply because it is fun and provides a meaningful way to interact with

other members of the community" (p. 24). Whether a digital, virtual, or physical community, consumers want to participate and feel like they are a part of something. To fulfill this social need, people are participating and contributing as members of the thousands of communities that have developed within the sharing economy (Botsman et al, 2010; Belk, 2013). Beyond strengthening social relations, the sharing economy is fostering social change, as people participate in "skill and resource-sharing platforms [to democratize] access to knowledge and information," (Babe, 2014) as the sharing economy does not discriminate and can be accessible to all people (Sundararajan, 2014; Vision Critical, 2014).

2.1.5 The Language of Sharing in the Sharing Economy

The sharing economy is defined by the terms "sharing" and "collaboration" but do the activities that make up this growing movement really involve sharing? To answer this question, one must understand what sharing is. Sharing is another type of consumption, distinct from gift giving and marketplace commodity exchange. Sharing is considered to be nonreciprocal and pro-social behavior (Benkler, 2004), or the more reciprocal "act and process of distributing what is ours to others for their use and/or the act and process of receiving or taking something from others for our use" (Belk, 2007, p. 127). Sharing is "an alternative to the private ownership that is emphasized in both marketplace exchange and gift giving. In sharing, two or more people may enjoy the benefits (or costs) that flow from possessing a thing" (Belk, 2010), a 'thing' being tangible items but also intangibles like values, time, and ideas. Most sharing economy economy initiatives, while often promoting an alternative to private ownership through "access over ownership" models, do not actually involve sharing, as collective ownership and nonreciprocal exchange are not common features of sharing economy business models. Belk (2013) considers

sharing economy activities to occupy a middle ground somewhere between market exchange and sharing, more aptly called "pseudo-sharing," as such commercial ventures often use the vocabulary of sharing ("bike sharing"), while realistically they are correctly defined as opportunities for short-term rental. People engaged in the sharing economy may consider their actions to be sharing, as they lend their time, skills, goods, or ideas, but in reality, few sharing economy initiatives are based off free or nonreciprocal exchange. People are participating to receive something in return, as the prevailing model has become young companies seeking to maximize profits. AirBnb, in early 2015, was valued at $40 billion (Freiberger et al, 2015), Uber, the 5-year old ride-sharing company, was recently valued at $50 billion (Macmillian and Demos, 2015), and 15 other sharing economy companies are valued at over $1 billion (Newlands, 2015). Sundararajan (2012) dismisses the idea of sharing in the sharing economy, saying, "We may call it the "sharing" economy (its philosophical roots are in peer-to-peer), but the services in it aren't free or reciprocal – these are real markets in which you pay for what you get" (n.p). Bardhi and Eckhardt (2015) also consider the sharing economy to have grown out of its sense of sharing. They consider it to be an "access economy" where convenience and cost efficient access to resources are what consumers are paying for. The foundational framework of the sharing economy, with sharing and social connection at its core, has also been disrupted, as the majority of sharing economy activities have monetary transaction and profit maximization at their core. Because of this, barter- the non-monetary exchange of goods or services- is a particularly interesting facet of the sharing economy. The prevailing language of sharing and the common (mis)conception of sharing permeating most discussions of the sharing economy, coupled with a non-monetary sharing economy activity (barter), leads me to question how people who are

actually involved in such an activity (barter tourism exchange) understand the sharing capacity of such an exchange.

2.1.6 The Sharing Economy and Tourism: A Barter Tourism Exchange

Barter, the non-monetary exchange of goods or services, will be discussed in depth in the following section of the literature review. Regarding the intersection of the sharing economy and tourism, this thesis will focus on barter tourism exchanges. The literature all agrees that barter is a type of exchange included in the sharing economy (Botsman et al, 2010; Gansky, 2012; Belk, 2013). Under the umbrella of the sharing economy, there are many companies and tools facilitating barter, where people are finding non-monetary means to acquire what they need and want. This includes tangible goods and products, services, and less tangible things like skills, knowledge, and time. The sharing economy is permeating the tourism industry, as countless companies have arisen to offer an alternative, "sharing" option for every aspect of a travel experience. From peer-to-peer accommodation rentals or exchanges (AirBnb, Home Exchange, VRBO), to ride, car, or bike sharing schemes (Lyft, Uber, Zipcar), to sharing a home-cooked meal with a local in their home (EatWith, Eat With a Local, Feastly). Covering the necessities of accommodation, transportation and dining, these examples are the most established and well known of tourism-related activities within the sharing tourism economy, thus far. Such activities are for-profit, market-based commodity exchanges (Sundararajan, 2012).

The sharing economy intersects with tourism in lesser known ways, in which different elements of a tourism experience can be bartered and acquired by non-monetary means. The Internet has facilitated numerous ways for this to occur, such as through Craigslist's "Barter" section, online barter networks such as Bartercard, or Local Exchange Trading Schemes (LETS). Each of these exchange mechanisms use the power of the Internet to

organize and connect people, facilitating the trade of goods or services without a monetary transaction. Within these networks, there is the possibility to barter all aspects of a travel experience, such as accommodation, dining, transportation, entertainment, events and more. These exchange networks facilitate barter in general, so tourism-related trades occur at a case-by-case basis.

A more systematic means to barter travel experiences exists in the form of working travel exchange networks. Such networks (Help Exchange, Work Away, Moving Worlds, Help Stay, WWOOF) facilitate educational and experiential tourism, by connecting travelers with hosts around the world, and in exchange for a few hours of work per day, guests receive free room and board. While these networks do not advertise or market themselves as "barter" networks, the exchange that occurs is barter. Two parties agree upon an exchange of different items- the skills, labor, energy and knowledge of the guest for the accommodation, meals, knowledge, authentic experience, and learning opportunity offered by the hosts. This thesis will refer to this type of activity as a "barter tourism exchange" as it is an exchange of tourism for both parties. There are a number of words to classify the participants involved in this barter exchange: host-guest, provider-consumer, employer-employee, business-customer, or simply exchange participants. This thesis will refer to the two parties of a barter tourism exchange as hosts and guests. In barter tourism exchanges, hosts and guests build social capital (Botsman et al, 2010) by trading their non-product assets like time, knowledge, and skills. Although this is a niche area of tourism and of the sharing economy, it is a type of tourism which has been occurring long before the terms "sharing economy" and "collaborative consumption" became commonplace. Barter tourism exchanges are a sharing economy activity which appear to embrace sharing, commodity exchange, and barter. The following section of

the literature review will examine these modes of consumption, to facilitate the analysis of how barter tourism exchange participants understand sharing in the activity.

2.2 Barter

Part two of the literature review will examine one method of exchange within the sharing economy: barter. The literature on barter will be reviewed to gain an understanding of what it is, the traditional misconception and problem of barter, the motivations to barter, and the social dynamics of an exchange. Barter is often considered a type of marketplace commodity exchange (Chapman, 1980; Dalton, 1982), but as the literature will show, it is not as simple as placing barter within the confines of commodity exchange, as the boundaries between different types of exchange-gift, commodity, sharing, and barter- are often blurred and interconnected. The following sections will aim to clarify these types of exchange, to aid the analysis of barter tourism exchanges and the meaning and understanding attributed to the activity by the hosts and guests.

2.2.1 Barter: Definition and Characteristics

In its concisest sense, barter is a moneyless market exchange (Chapman, 1980; Dalton, 1982). Most people have bartered, perhaps without even realizing it. Bartering can be as simple and easy as two children trading something from their lunchboxes, each wanting what the other wanted to give away. Williams (1996) defines barter as "the direct exchange of goods or services without money changing hands," and the content of this basic definition is widely accepted within anthropologic and economic literature (Chapman, 1980; Humphrey and Hugh-Jones, 1992; Celarius, 2000). Celarius (2000) ads on to this, defining barter as "the exchange of often unlike goods and services without the direct use of money by free and voluntary participants" (p.73), noting that those involved in barter are doing so by their own free will. For Humphrey (1985), it is

difficult to give a tidy definition of barter, as it implies an "open ended, potentially innovative, negotiable transaction, in which need not only answers need but can also create new demand" (p.50). Later, in *Barter, Exchange, and Value: An Anthropological Approach,* Humphrey argues not to define barter, as creating a general definition or model for it would remove each exchange from its social context, stripping it of cues with which it can be better understood (Humphrey and Hugh-Jones, 1992). Yet, barter is a transaction characterized by certain features, while exchanges need not encompass all to be considered barter. Characterizing elements include: the demand for things (goods or services) which are different in kind; the participants are considered equal and freely engaging in the exchange; exchanges are agreed upon without measuring the objects against a standard of value common to both parties, and the exchange can occur at once, or one part subsequently (Chapman, 1980; Humphrey et al, 1992; Celarius, 2000). The only motivation to barter is the mutual benefit which the exchange presents (Chapman, 1980).

Barter is typically considered to fall within the lines of a market commodity exchange (Dalton, 1982; Belk, 2010), and because obtaining the other party's goods is the only motivation to barter, Chapman (1980) calls it "a purely economic transaction" (p. 49). From within an anthropological perspective, it has been argued that barter should be considered separate from other types of exchange: gift exchange, formalized trade, credit, or monetized commodity exchange, but that "barter in one or another of its varied forms coexists with these other forms of exchange, and is often linked in sequence with them and shares some of their characteristics" (Humphrey et al, 1992, p. 2). Belk (2010) argues that the lines between commodity exchange, sharing, and gift giving are blurry and imprecise, therefore making it challenging to find a place for barter within these

confines. Barter is clearly identified as a type of exchange within the sharing economy (Botsman et al, 2010; Gansky, 2012; Belk, 2013) but as previously discussed, the amount of actual *sharing* within the sharing economy is arguable (Botsman et al, 2010; Sundararajan, 2012; Belk, 2013). Therefore, from within the context of the sharing economy, it is difficult to determine if barter should be considered a type of commodity exchange (Sundararajan, 2012), sharing (Botsman et al, 2010), "pseudo-sharing" (Belk, 2013) or some combination of them all. The following sections will break down these different types of exchange to see where barter, and specifically barter tourism exchanges, fit in regards to them. Who engages in these exchanges? How do the participants interact and what social relations are required for such exchanges to occur? Questions such as these will be asked in order to better understand the social dynamics of these types of exchange, and determine how a barter tourism exchange- as a type of sharing economy activity- relates.

First, the next sections will look into a common misconception of barter, its social context, and its main problem.

2.2.2 Barter as the Predecessor to Money

A persistent misunderstanding exists, based in the economic literature, wherein barter is the predecessor to money, and in barter lies the origins of currency and monetary systems. Humphrey (1985) counters this notion by stating, "No example of a barter economy, pure and simple, has ever been described, let alone the emergence from it of money; all available ethnography suggests that there never was such a thing" (p. 48). This idea, disseminated from the economic and anthropological literature throughout history, suggests that barter "[provides] the imagined preconditions for the emergence of money," (Strathern, 1992, p. 169), and this idea is essential to the way in which barter

has been understood. From within this assumption, barter is an obvious activity, natural and innate to human character (Chapman, 1980; Humphrey, 1985; Strathern, 1992; Schiller, 2014), and it places barter as the most rudimentary form in the evolutionary development of economies (Chapman, 1980; Dalton, 1982; Humphrey, 1985). In addition to being described as a method of exchange characteristic of primitive economies, the economic and anthropological literature has historically considered barter to occur in the margins of society (Humphrey, 1985). Described as 'chicanery,' 'negative reciprocity,' 'haggling,' and 'theft,' (Humphrey, 1985), the vocabulary of barter has perpetuated the misconception that its place is amongst outsiders, as "the unsociable extreme" (Sahlins, 1972, as cited in Humphrey, 1985, p. 49), and as a primitive form of exchange occurring in non-monetized economies between strangers (Thomas, 1992, p. 21). With the permeation of these negative connotations, it was historically easier to accept the idea that barter was unsophisticated and inefficient compared to monetary systems, and for it to gain a marginalized reputation.

Barter, although an ancient method of exchange, is an ubiquitous contemporary phenomenon existing in many forms, from organically occurring to systematized and sophisticated, and between many types of societies, from primitive economies to advanced capitalist economies (Chapman, 1980; Dalton, 1982; Humphrey et al, 1992). Barter arises under the following circumstances: in the absence of money and a monetary system; alongside a common currency which people, for some reason, choose not to utilize; and when there is a lack of money to be distributed (Chapman, 1980; Dalton, 1982; Humphrey et al, 1992; Cellarius, 2000). In accordance with these monetary circumstances, it is generally "a means for petty, infrequent, and emergency transactions," (Dalton, 1982, p. 185). Barter may therefore serve as a solution to the

problems of money, in contrast to the predominant misconstruction of a common currency taking effect to solve the inefficiencies of barter.

This leads to the question: what are the problems with barter that have allowed this misconstruction to be so persistent? The primary inefficiency with barter is the double coincidence of wants.

2.2.3 The Double Coincidence of Wants

The problem, historically, with barter is that its occurrence is highly improbable, requiring a "double coincidence of wants." This phrase was first coined by English economist William Stanley Jevons and describes the difficulty of barter "to find two persons whose disposable possessions mutually suit each other's wants. There may be many people wanting, and many people possessing those things wanted; but to allow of an act of barter, there must be a double coincidence" (Jevons, 1875, p.9). Additionally, this double coincidence generally needed to occur in the same location and at the same time. This fundamental requirement has caused barter to be considered an inefficient and inconvenient form of exchange (Humphrey et al, 1992; Botsman et al, 2010), which was supposedly surpassed by the benefits of a common monetary system, as discussed previously. To overcome the inherent challenges of barter, information rather than any particular social relation between the barterers, is a necessity (Humphrey et al, 1992). Information is essential to both parties to determine each other's supply and demand, to establish an exchange, and to see it through. Acquiring such information may have been challenging in the past, giving barter the reputation of a cumbersome and difficult to arrange type of exchange. Within the last decade, information has become excessively accessible and the double coincidence of wants has been overcome, due to the Internet. Barter exchanges have never been easier, as the Internet "enables diverse and

dispersed individuals and businesses to connect on a global scale and efficiently match their haves and wants without ever needing to know one another" (Botsman et al, 2010, p. 158). The Internet provides the information that is necessary for a barter exchange to occur, matching traders and facilitating a relationship of trust between them, due to online reputation systems. While Internet-less barter, requiring face-to-face interaction and a satisfaction of the double coincidence of wants, is still widespread today, technology has removed the headache of barter, making it an easy, convenient, and systematized form of exchange.

2.2.4 Social Conditions of Barter

Barter is a transaction means which has occurred widely throughout history and in the present day, with certain economic or social conditions typically associated with it. Throughout history, periods of financial hardship, such as the Great Depression, have led to the revival of barter networks, as people were forced to find non-monetary ways to obtain what they need (Botsman et al, 2010). This is especially visible after the global financial crisis of 2008, after which the sharing economy, and the many opportunities for barter within it, began to grow. Barter is often derived out of necessity, and because of the perpetuated accompaniment of such negative connotations as cheating and haggling, a stigma is attached to the concept. Yet, as the sharing economy gains ground and such behaviors become more familiar, people are becoming more comfortable with the notions of barter, sharing, and the realization that one's tangible and intangible assets can be utilized within a respectable form of trade. Barter, along with all other sharing economy activities, requires trust between the transacting parties for success (Botsman et al, 2010; Gansky, 2012; Sundararajan, 2012). However, barter has been considered by some to be a system lacking trust between the exchanging parties,

because it can often occur between parties with no, or poor, social ties (Chapman, 1980; Anderlini and Sabourian, 1992). Barter exchanges require no further interaction once the exchange is satisfied by both parties, and therefore, the relationships created by barter can be considered solitary and fleeting. However, because barter is an exchange between humans, it is inextricable from a social or psychological situation (Chapman, 1980), and is a form of exchange which, itself, creates social relations (Humphrey et al, 1992).

Humphrey et al (1992) say that barter creates four social relations: discontinuity, the creation of trust, the interaction with dissimilarity, and the bid for equality. It is possible for a barter exchange to be a one time occurrence and for those involved in the exchange to never interact again. Despite the possible discontinuity of social relations in a barter exchange, it is more likely to create trust between the transacting parties. Previous to the Internet's power to connect, it would have been rare for a barter exchange to happen just once, by chance. Instead, a repeat transaction would likely occur, and the transacting parties would try to establish trust and a good reputation to facilitate future trades (ibid). Now, in the era of the Internet, where there are countless online networks to facilitate and match willing traders, face-to-face barter transactions occurring by chance and subsequent repeat transactions are less common. Because of the Internet, many barter trades will just occur once, never requiring the transactors to meet or interact in person. Despite this, modern Internet-facilitated barter still results in the creation of trust between the transacting parties. Through fair-dealings, barterers build a reputation of trust through online reviews and ratings that accompany most sharing economy platforms. With this online reputation capital, potential barterers can establish trust in each other, and build upon their reputation capital for future exchanges. Humphrey et al's (1992) third social

relation arising from barter is the interaction with dissimilarity because barter exchanges occur when different, and often incomparable, goods or services are exchanged. The items will not be measured by a commonly held standard of value. Instead, each party will bid for equality and look for what they consider to be balance in the value of their exchanged items. A "perfect balance" is created by immediate barter when each party is satisfied with the exchange and are left free from any debt, the exchange resulting in a relationship of equality (Humphrey et al, 1992). These characteristics of exchange present barter to be dynamic and open-ended, both in face-to-face organically occurring exchanges and in Internet-facilitated exchanges.

2.2.5 Determining Barter's Place

As a greatly marginalized form of exchange throughout history and within the limited literature on the subject, it is difficult to determine where barter fits in relation to other forms of exchange and how people conceptualize the phenomenon, in regards to the interaction and relationship between the participants. Types of exchange within economic and anthropological literature are dominated by gift and commodity/market exchange. Gift and commodity exchange have been envisaged as a binary pair (Gregory, 1980), at opposite ends of a continuum (Sahlins, 1972 as cited in Humphrey et al, 1992), or as points upon a multidimensional landscape of exchange (Cellarius, 2000). Barter and sharing are often neglected on their own, as they have been considered either gift or commodity exchange within the literature (Humphrey et al, 1992; Belk, 2010). Yet these forms of exchange have their own place along the continuum or the multidimensional landscape, although the boundaries between them all are often difficult to determine. Barter is considered to be commodity exchange, closely related to gift exchange, sharing, and pseudo-sharing, and is accepted as a mode of exchange within the sharing

economy, which is often characterized as sharing, but might be more aptly defined as market commodity exchange. So where does it actually belong? Some sources within the anthropological stream of literature suggest that it is fruitless to attempt to differentiate these forms of exchange, whose contrasts are often exaggerated and blurred (Appadurai, 1986; Strathern, 1992). Yet, I will attempt to provide the basic distinctions between these forms of exchange (gift, commodity exchange, and sharing) to better understand how they relate, and to set the stage for the analysis and discussion of how a participant perceives a barter tourism exchange- an experience which appears to be a confluence of these constructs of consumption.

Commodity Exchange

As previously stated, commodity exchange is generally conceptualized at one end of a spectrum, or as one of an opposing pair, contrasted with gift exchange (Sahlins, 1972; Gregory, 1980; Humphrey, 1985). Gell's (1992) formula considers gift/reciprocity=good while market exchange=bad, and he defines commodity exchange as "the exchange of alienable objects between transactors in a state of mutual independence, and the exchange as one which establishes a qualitative relationship between exchange objects" (1992, p. 144). This corresponds to the definition of barter in which the transactors are independently engaging in the exchange and the relationship between the exchanged items is primary. Commodity exchange should not be considered bad as Gell suggests, and instead the commodity potential of all things should be questioned, which lies in the exchangeability of one thing (past, present, or future) for something else (Appadurai, 1986; Strathern, 1992).

Utilizing Belk's (2010) prototypes, a prototypical commodity exchange is buying bread at a store. This is an exchange which rarely forms social bonds, as the exchanging parties

typically need not ever interact again once the transaction is complete. This exchange is ideally simultaneous without any lingering debt, as commodity exchange is concerned with exchanging the rights to objects, rather than the relationship between the exchangers (Belk, 2010), as "commodity exchange is logically separable from social reproduction *per se*" (Gell, 1992, p. 161). Because of the lack of ties to one another, it is suggested that this type of exchange should occur between strangers, rather than friends or enemies who have some sort of social relationship (Belk, 2007).

This is therefore a balanced and reciprocal action, where the exchange is characterized by calculability; "Weights, measures, and specifications together with fixed or explicitly bargained or auctioned prices help make clear exactly what we give and what we get in such exchanges" (Belk, 2010, p. 718). This generally is a monetary exchange, with the involved parties utilizing a commonly held standard of value for the objects, and thereby making an exchange between strangers easy to fulfill. Commodity exchange is characterized by impersonal exchange between freely engaging and independent parties concerned with the qualitative relationship between alienable objects in a trade or barter context (Belk, 2010).

Gift Exchange

Although gift exchange is not a relevant aspect of a barter tourism exchange, the basics of this method of exchange will be discussed because this is an activity which is generally contrasted with commodity exchange.

At the opposing end of the exchange spectrum is gift exchange, considered by some to represent reciprocity and a 'good' form of exchange contrasted against the bad/negative reciprocity of commodity exchange (Gell, 1992, Belk, 2010). Gift exchange is the

exchange of inalienable objects, resulting in reciprocal dependence and a qualitative relationship between the transacting parties, rather than between the transacted objects, as is the case with commodity exchange (Gregory, 1982, as cited in Gell, 1992). Gell (1992) argues that the difference between gifts and commodities is the social context in which the exchange occurs, rather than the relationship between the people and the objects or between the parties exchanging. He says that gift exchange occurs in the "contextual setting of social reproduction through marriage, affinity, and alliance," (1992, p. 144). Gift exchange results from and creates social relationships (Humphrey et al, 1992) and is considered a friendlier form of exchange (Gregory, 1982, as cited in Belk, 2010).

The 'pure or perfect gift' is the prototype of gift giving, which is something that is immaterial, priceless, and imposes no obligation of a return gift. The perfect gift is considered to be an impossibility because of the relationship of indebtedness that gift giving incurs (Belk, 2010). While gift exchange is non-reciprocal in appearance, in practice it creates a reciprocal, dependent relationship between the giver and receiver which is enacted overtime; the "contrived asymmetry" of gift exchange brings about a cyclical relationship of mutual indebtedness between gift exchangers (Gregory, 1982; Gell, 1992; Strathern, 1992; Belk, 2010). Gift giving is driven by the obligation to give, to receive, and to give a reciprocal gift (Mauss, 1925/1967, as cited in Belk, 2010), and although this notion was based upon primitive societies, it is reflected in contemporary society. With these underlying motives, gift and commodity exchange share many resemblances such as the transfer of ownership, exchange, reciprocity, and distinguished parties (buyer/seller, giver/receiver). Gift giving is therefore a form of

reciprocal exchange, dependent upon social reproduction, which results in a relationship of mutual obligation.

Sharing

Sharing, as a mode of consumption, has been neglected in prior consumer research because it has been classified within the confines of either gift or commodity exchange (Belk, 2010). The recent popularity of sharing economy activities has brought more attention to sharing, but as previously stated, it is debateable whether such activities truly involve sharing. Sharing is nonreciprocal pro-social behavior (Benkler, 2004); it is generally a communal act which connects people and creates feelings of bonding and solidarity (Belk, 2010). Belk (2010) uses the prototypes of mothering and the allocation of resources within the family to explain sharing. In mothering, a woman shares her body, and following birth, her mother's milk, nurturing, and care. This sharing is seen as natural and is done freely, with no expectation of exchange or reciprocity. In the allocation of resources within the family, the shared items are joint possessions, requiring no invitation nor inducing debt for their use. There often entails the mutual obligation to shared resources and responsibilities such as not overusing or damaging the shared possessions to the detriment of other family members. Unlike gift exchange and commodity exchange, which both involve reciprocity, sharing can exist apart from exchange and reciprocity. This is often understood using Salhin's (1972) concept of generalized reciprocity, which refers to supposedly altruistic transactions, in which the balance between giving and receiving is not kept track of (Gell, 1992; Belk, 2010). Generalized reciprocity correlates to Belk's (2007) definition of sharing as an "act and process of distributing what is ours to others for their use and/or the act and process of

receiving or taking something from others for our use"(p. 127), wherein sharing is give-and-take but in a fluid and unmonitored way.

Sharing is often overlooked as a subject of study because "it is an activity that is more characteristic of the interior world of the home rather than the exterior worlds or work and the market" (Belk, 2010, p.716), in addition to its ubiquity and its taken-for-granted character that results from this. Two types of sharing exist: *sharing in* and *sharing out.* The prototypes of sharing and the sharing that is characteristic of the interior world are considered sharing in*,* which involve common ownership and expanding the boundaries of the aggregate extended self beyond the sphere of the family. Sharing out, on the other hand, "involves giving to others outside the boundaries separating self and other, and is closer to gift giving and commodity exchange" (Ingold, 1986, as cited in Belk, 2010, p. 725), as it preserves the boundaries between the self/other. Many sharing economy activities can be understood as sharing out, as they involve the division of resources among people without necessarily creating social bonds, such as a car-sharing scheme. Sharing in is exemplified by Widlock (2004), who perceived that "sharing food with neighbours, relatives, or anyone who happens to be around at the time is done for the sake of shared enjoyment of whatever it is that is being shared. Sharing in this perspective is not primarily *sharing out* between dyads of givers and receivers but a *sharing in,* extending the circle of people who can enjoy the benefits of the shared resource" (p. 64). The occurrence of both sharing prototypes within the family/home realm, the association of sharing to the family unit and the interior world, and the resultant effects of sharing in trust and bonding will be important elements to consider in the subsequent analysis section.

2.3 Critical Review of the Literature

As the sharing economy is a new phenomenon, there are enormous gaps in the literature. The majority of the literature on the sharing economy falls into two categories: descriptive accounts of what it is and how it is growing (Botsman et al, 2010) or something more similar to a how-to guide or report for businesses on how to adapt to this new paradigm for business and consumption (Gansky, 2012; Euromonitor International, 2014; Vision Critical, 2014; Cusumano, 2015; Matzler, Veider, & Kathan, 2015). Others (Sundararajan, 2012; Sundararajan, 2014, Koopman, Mitchell, & Thierer, 2014) are offering suggestions for how policy and regulation can best adapt to these new business models, and regarding what the lasting impact this phenomenon might have on different industries. As the sharing economy matures, there will be ample opportunity for research into the impacts of the phenomenon on all industries, especially the tourism industry, as accommodation, transportation, and dining are three major sectors of the sharing economy. To date, there has been no research specifically on barter in regards to the sharing economy, nor on barter and tourism from a sharing economy perspective.

The literature on barter comes primarily from the economic and anthropological streams, in which the main focus of study are primitive societies and economies. This results in a potentially outdated understanding of the concept, and a two-world viewpoint: primitive societies versus civilized/Western world. Within this literature, the focus of study has been on commodity or gift exchange, as barter is seen to fall somewhere within these confines, and barter as its own type of exchange has been overlooked. Limited academic research has been made of barter in its modern sense, and no research has been found on the social relations and the dynamics of exchange for the participants of a barter exchange. Research on barter tourism exchanges, from the approach this thesis takes, is non-existent. However, activities which are technically barter tourism exchanges, despite

not being classified in that manner within the literature, such as WWOOFing and some types of volunteer tourism, have some presence in academic literature. Because the focus of this research is on barter and perceptions of sharing, the WWOOFing and voluntourism literature is not particularly relevant to this research. However, this thesis will hopefully add to that research to create a richer body of information regarding activities which fuse barter and tourism.

Chapter 3: Presentation of Research Locations

Two research locations have been chosen for this thesis: Secastilla, Spain and Santa Cruz, California. Both locations were selected through searches of the Help Exchange (HelpX) network. Participation as a HelpX guest occurred in both locations to gain firsthand experience of the phenomenon of a barter tourism exchange. The chosen locations provide insight into the diversity of experience that is possible through the Help Exchange network and as a mode of travel in general, and were selected in part because of the drastically different nature of experience they offered.

3.1 Help Exchange

Help Exchange is an online network established in 2001 by a British traveller, Rob Prince. It functions primarily as a tool to arrange barter tourism exchanges, by connecting working travellers with hosts who provide free accommodation and food in exchange for a few hours of work per day. The network is intended to serve as a facilitator of cultural exchange as travellers gain practical knowledge and a new perspective by staying in the homes of local people (Help Exchange, 2015). HelpX has registered host users in 123 countries worldwide, with the most registered hosts in Australia (6,017), New Zealand (3,671), France (1,834), the United States (1,137), and Spain (1,064) (Help Exchange,

2015). Users pay a nominal membership fee (20 Euros for two years worldwide) to gain access to user reviews and contact information. An online rating system allows users, both hosts and guests, to be reviewed via a 1 to 5 star rating and written comments. Help Exchange is not the only network of this kind (Work Away, WWOOF, Help Stay, Moving Worlds), but was chosen for this study as it is the oldest known platform for enabling such barter tourism exchanges and for the diversity in the types of host locations. Hosts are categorized as either: Organic Farmstay, Non Organic Farmstay, Homestay, Backpacker Hostel, Accommodation Business, Boat, or Other. WWOOF (Willing Workers on Organic Farms) might be the most well-known network for barter tourism exchanges, but it was not used for this research as it limits the type of tourism exchange to an agricultural setting, and requires separate memberships for each country for attaining host contact information. Both HelpX participation locations were chosen based off of: 1) the rating of the host (number of reviews and combined positivity of star rating and guest comments), 2) personal interest in host offering as deduced from host profile and reviews, 3) length of host involvement with HelpX 4) location. The selection of the research location was weighted heavily by the host's rating.

3.2 Secastilla Study

A Spanish research location was chosen while I lived in Girona, Spain during the fall/winter of 2014/2015. The fulfillment of the abovementioned criteria is how Secastilla, Spain was chosen as a location for HelpX participation and will be discussed below.

3.2.1 Rating

Initial interest in this host location was sparked by the host rating. At the time of first observation of the host profile, early October 2014, the hosts had 49 guest reviews. This figure stood out dramatically compared to other Spanish hosts. An extensive search of

potential Spanish hosts resulted in 0-2 reviews on average. Secastilla had overwhelmingly positive reviews (3 3-star, 6 4-star, 40 5-star ratings) with words like "transformative", "absolutely amazing", "highly recommend" and "inspiring" throughout the guest comments. The number of reviews and positive rating was an indication to the host's active involvement with the HelpX network and with barter tourism exchanges.

3.2.2 Personal Interest

Secastilla was chosen due to personal interest in what the hosts offer. A very lengthy host profile details all aspects of what to expect as a guest in Secastilla, and what the hosts expect in return. The profile promised a true rural experience at a homestead dedicated to self-sufficiency, the traditional production of wine and olive oil, and hard, yet rewarding, manual work. The importance of hard work, in combination with social connections formed around the kitchen table with food and wine, were stressed as key elements of life in Secastilla. The exhaustive host profile included many of my personal interests (self-sufficiency, traditional food and wine production, communal living, rural life) while also describing a stay in Secastilla as a challenging and boundary-pushing experience, not for the faint of heart. Secastilla was chosen because it would be a learning opportunity, and an opportunity to engage in authentic, communal, rural Spanish living.

3.2.3 Length of Host Involvement

HelpX profiles show the "Join Date" of all users. The hosts had joined HelpX on May 29, 2011, and had acquired 49 reviews in the three and a half years since. This active involvement suggested that the hosts would have valuable insights from their experiences as barter tourism exchange hosts, and were contacted because of this.

3.2.4 Location

Secastilla is a tiny village (less than 50 inhabitants) in the foothills of the Spanish Pyrenees in the province of Aragon. The rurality of Secastilla, in addition to its proximity (320 kilometers) and connectedness via public transportation (approximately 6 hours) to Girona contributed to its selection as a research location.

3.2.5 Timing of Research

After contacting the host initially via the HelpX platform, email correspondence ensued to determine availability, establish the length of stay, and additional logistics (transportation, arrival time, what to bring). Two weeks were spent in Secastilla participating as a HelpX guest from the end of October to early November 2014. Two and a half additional weeks were spent as a return guest in Secastilla in February 2015.

3.3 Santa Cruz Study

A research location in California was chosen, while I lived there for the spring of 2015. An organic farm in Santa Cruz, CA was selected based off of the same selection criteria.

3.3.1 Rating

At the time of first observation, the Santa Cruz farm had 14 reviews, far more than any other possible host locations in California. Most of the reviews did not have a star-rating, as this is a feature that was added to Help Exchange in 2010. Of the more recent reviews, there were 3 5-star and 2 4-star ratings. Each of the 14 guest reviews had positive comments about their experience at the farm. Comments contained words like "highly recommend", "exceeded my expectations", and "very enjoyable." The number of reviews and the positive rating were a lead factor in choosing this host location.

3.3.2 Personal Interest

Personal interest in the host's offering played a larger role in selecting the Santa Cruz location. The farm is the exclusive kitchen garden for a two-Michelin star restaurant, thereby providing a unique learning opportunity for people interested in the culinary

world. The farm hosts a full-time apprenticeship program (5 months, 40+ hours per week), and HelpX guests are treated as apprentices, taking on a much larger workload than most HelpX hosts ask for. Guests are involved in all aspects of the running of a small farm, from biodynamic growing techniques, to assisting in a wide range of gardening and homesteading classes, to the care of farm animals. This host location was chosen primarily because it provided an opportunity to engage in an intensive learning environment of organic food production, homesteading, and the culinary industry, representing the structured and established educational travel opportunities that exist via barter tourism exchange.

3.3.3 Length of Host Involvement

The Santa Cruz host has been a member of HelpX since April 9, 2008. Because of this longstanding involvement, this host was regarded to be a beneficial source with many years of experience with barter tourism exchanges.

3.3.4 Location

Lastly, Santa Cruz was chosen as a host location due to its attractive location as a California beach town and its easy accessibility.

3.3.5 Timing of Research

After initially contacting the host via HelpX in December 2014, subsequent communication occurred via email until the arrival date at the farm. Two months were spent in Santa Cruz as a Helpx guest/apprentice from April through May 2015.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Qualitative Research

A qualitative approach was used for this research, as qualitative methods deal with meanings. Meanings form in social practice, in addition to being individually constructed.

Qualitative research aims to uncover the meaning ascribed to a phenomenon (Dey, 1993), and is therefore subjective, as it deals with human subjects with different attitudes, perspectives, values, etc. The participant's understanding of the sharing in a barter tourism exchange is a construct of social exchange and is individually constructed by both hosts and guests. The meaning and understanding attributed to the interaction are dependent upon each participant's view of reality. The research seeks to understand participant perceptions of the junction of barter, tourism, and sharing. As a researcher within the qualitative approach, I employed the emic perspective, looking for an insider's view into the phenomenon to understand the experiences and perceptions of the study participants (Dey, 1993). Qualitative data analysis establishes patterns and themes to make sense of the phenomenon.

4.2 Inquiry Paradigm: Interpretive Social Sciences/ Social Constructivist

A paradigm is a basic set of beliefs to guide action in life and determine one's worldview. A research paradigm will determine the design of a research project and helps maintain consistency in the collection and analysis of empirical data (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Jennings, 2010). My chosen paradigm guided my research into the phenomenon of barter tourism exchanges. The interpretive social sciences paradigm, also known as social constructivist, has been chosen as the most appropriate paradigm for the investigation of this phenomenon. Jennings (2010) considers this paradigm appropriate for the study of host-guest interactions and travel experiences in tourism research. Researching within this paradigm, my goal is to inductively understand the multiple perceptions the research participants have of the phenomenon of barter tourism exchanges and sharing within these. This understanding was then interpreted to create a pattern of meaning (Creswell, 2007).

The paradigm "assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (knower and subject co-create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures' (Denzin and Lincoln, as cited in Jennings, 2010, p. 40) This paradigm is based on the idea that the insider view of the emic perspective provides the best opportunity to understand the phenomenon at hand, as it allows for multiple realities to be identified (Jennings, 2010). The researcher's interaction and engagement with the participants and the social context that is thus created will impact the participant's view of reality, allowing for the co-creation of understanding that the paradigm prescribes (ibid). Researching within the interpretive social sciences paradigm is intrinsically connected to the values of the participants, and of the researcher, as together, they subjectively create knowledge. Because of this, research within this paradigm is not representative of the wider population, as the findings will be specific to the research population. However, generalizations can be drawn from the in-depth knowledge of the research phenomenon to be applied to wider populations.

4.3 Approach to Inquiry: Phenomenology

Experience is an intrinsic part of a tourism product. Therefore, a phenomenological approach will be used to study barter tourism exchanges. Phenomenology involves the study of lived experience (Pernecky & Jamal, 2010) and will therefore be a suitable research approach to understanding how participants (hosts and guests) involved in a barter tourism exchange understand and experience the phenomenon. This approach of inquiry was chosen because phenomenology has been used in previous tourism studies to describe and understand the experiences of hosts and guests who participate in a tourism phenomenon (Jennings, 2010; Pernecky et al, 2010). Within phenomenology,

many approaches to research exist, and a phenomenological approach can be applied within a range of research paradigms. Hermeneutic phenomenology is considered most appropriate for this research, as the "task of the hermeneutically inclined researcher is to engage with and explore the aspects that shapes one's understanding" (Pernecky et al, 2010, p. 1063), approaching a phenomenon from the viewpoint of meaning, understanding and interpretation. The phenomenon in this research is the host-guest perception of sharing within barter tourism exchanges in Spain and California. With a hermeneutic phenomenological approach, the researcher is an essential aspect of the interpretation that occurs. The researcher and the participant(s) co-create meaning; "the participant engages in interpreting and assigning meaning to the experience; in recounting this to the researcher, another level of interpretation occurs: co-construction of the experience as recounted by the participant to the researcher" (Pernecky et al, 2010, p.1069). The researcher carries pre-understandings and pre-judgements of the world- essential to phenomenology- into the research process, which shape the resultant co-creation and interpretation of meaning (ibid). Therefore, for this thesis I will share in the construction of meaning with the research participants, as our interaction and my predisposition influence the meaning held by the participants of barter tourism exchanges, and the subsequent interpretation of this phenomenon and lived experience.

4.4 Data Collection Methods

Primary data was collected by means of participant observation and in-depth semi-structured interviews. Secondary data consisted primarily of Help Exchange user profiles and guest reviews, in addition to the published data used in the review of literature.

4.4.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation was chosen as an appropriate data collection method for this qualitative research within the interpretive social sciences paradigm. Participant observation, a primary method within anthropological and sociological fieldwork, is also apt for studying a phenomenon within tourism research, especially regarding relationships among people (Kawulich, 2005; Jennings, 2010). Therefore, it is pertinent for this research of the understanding of host and guest perceptions of sharing in a barter tourism exchange. Participant observation is the "process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day or routine activities of participants in the research setting" (Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte, 1999, in Kawulich, 2005), by which the researcher learns about a phenomenon by immersing his or herself fully in the natural setting of the phenomenon under study. This method is concerned with the insider's (emic) perspective of reality and meaning (Jorgenson, 1989). By becoming a social actor, this method allows the researcher to enter the natural setting of the phenomenon and observe in a fairly unobtrusive manner, compared to the manipulated environments of survey and experimental research (ibid). For this thesis, I became a participant observer for extended time lengths in both research locations: Secastilla (one month) and Santa Cruz (two months). The purpose of such was to gain an in-depth insider's understanding of the sharing and commodity potential of barter tourism exchanges by becoming a guest in such an environment. With this method, I was able to adopt the emic perspective to gain an understanding of barter tourism exchanges and the exchange dynamics which ensue, by gaining "direct experiential and observational access to the insiders' world of meaning" (ibid). Extensive field notes and photographs were taken to record observations during these periods of research. By becoming an active participant within the research phenomenon, I was able to develop relationships with the other social

actors- the hosts and other guests- which facilitated the in-depth semi-structured interviews, which occurred at the end of each period of participant observation.

4.4.2 In-depth Semi-structured Interviews

In-depth semi-structured interviews were chosen as a primary data collection method for this research, as it is a characteristic method within qualitative research. This method allowed for the collection of rich descriptions of lived experience from hosts and guests regarding barter tourism exchanges. Semi-structured interviews were guided by a list of issues to address, which added some structure to the interviews. The order for addressing issues varied with each research participant, and interviews evolved fluidly based on the nature of interaction and thinking processes of researcher and participant (Jennings, 2010). Interviews are essentially a conversation, and the researcher must actively engage in the exchange in order to establish rapport and a relationship of mutual trust with the study participant (ibid). Interviews were conducted with each guest in the final days of his/her stay at the barter exchange location, and of hosts during the final days of participant observation in each location. The timing of interviews was chosen to provide the maximum amount of time establishing a relationship with each research participant. This allowed the interviews to proceed from a place of trust and understanding that was established over the period of participant observation. Interviews ranged in time from 30 minutes to 75 minutes, most taking around 45 minutes to complete. The nature of semi-structured interviews allowed for flexibility and digressions in the interviews, as they progressed in an informal, conversational manner. The interview settings varied and were chosen to be neutral and familiar for both interviewer and interviewee, to ensure a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere for the conversation to take place. These settings included a kitchen (the center of all activity in Secastilla), and various outdoor picnic tables (centers of communal meals and activities in Santa Cruz).

Many interviews became an opportunity for personal reflection for the participants, as "the process of being taken through a directed, reflective process affects the persons being interviewed and leaves them knowing things about themselves that they didn't know- or at least were not aware of- before the interview," (Patton, 2002, in Jennings, 2010, p. 171). Participants often mentioned that they had not previously thought about the issues that the interview brought up, and that they were glad to have been able to reflect upon them.

Two sets of questions (for hosts and guests- see Appendix A) guided the interviews, covering the same topics areas for both hosts and guests, with many questions being the same. No two interviews followed the same course, as each progressed naturally depending upon the responses of the participant and the discussion direction which ensued from there. Questions regarding previous participation with barter, motivations for participation, host-guest relations, understandings of sharing, and expectations of barter tourism exchanges were developed. Participants were asked about previous experience within a barter tourism exchange of this kind, and discussions regarding previous experiences were had with those participants. Some questions asked outright whether the exchange was understood as sharing or commodity, and many questions inferred to this, so that the interviewee's deeper understanding of this could be deduced during the analysis process. Some questions were adapted to the participant, based upon the previous knowledge and understanding about the participant gained through participative observation. In this way, the interviews were intersubjective and meaning was co-created by both researcher and participant through the dialogue that ensued, as prescribed by the chosen methodological approaches to research.

4.4.3 Challenges to the Interview Process

Challenges in the interview process were minimal. Because of the extended time spent in each location, fully immersed as a participant in the daily routine of both locations, the relationships I had built were substantial enough for the interviewees to feel comfortable opening up and expressing themselves in the interviews. This was vital to the research process, as the level of openness that each interview allowed would have likely been impossible without the familiarity and ease that I had established with each participant during the period of immersive participant observation.

The only recognizable challenge to the interview process was realizing, post-interview, that there were more issues that would have been beneficial to discuss with the participant. In these cases, email communication did occur with select participants to inquire after certain issues. This type of communication did not produce a fluid dialogue, such as the in-person interviews allowed, but instead generally produced concise answers. Had these issues been addressed during the rapport of the in-person interviews, I would have been able to encourage elaboration or allow the discussion to develop organically from their responses.

4.5 Sampling Strategy: Purposive Sampling

This research employs purposive sampling, the principal strategy within qualitative research (Hoepfl, 1997). Purposive sampling "seeks information-rich cases which can be studied in depth" (ibid, n.p.) of which there are 16 types (Patton, 1990, as cited in Hoepfl, 1997). Common to each type is the underlying principle that the case is selected purposefully in order to fit the research (Coyne, 1997). Maximum variation sampling, a type of purposive sampling, is considered the most useful sampling strategy within naturalistic research (Hoepfl, 1997), and was thus considered fitting for this study. This

sampling strategy "aims at capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or program variation" (Patton, 1990, in Hoepfl, 1997, n.p.). Small and diverse samples, like those of the Secastilla and Santa Cruz studies, would typically be considered a weakness, but maximum variation sampling turns such sample characteristics into a strength, because "any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared aspects or impacts of a program" (ibid). The research locations were purposely chosen- based upon the host profile and guest comments- as representatives of the distinct and diverse options of barter tourism exchange that are possible through the Help Exchange network. With maximum variation sampling, the contrast of the research locations and samples allowed for commonalities and patterns to emerge and be identified across the data.

4.5.1 Characteristics of Sample

Using maximum variation sampling, two diverse research locations were chosen, and all active hosts and guests present in the location made up the sample population. Characteristics of the sample population, including its size, or any defining characteristics of the research participants (age, gender, nationality, experience with barter tourism exchanges, etc.) were not known prior to arrival and commencement of participant observation in both locations. Once in each research location, all hosts and guests active in barter tourism exchanges in the location at the time of participant observation were considered as the sample population. In Secastilla, the sample was comprised of 4 people: two hosts (male and female, age 30-35, American and Spanish) and two guests (male and female, age 18-30, American and Bulgarian). In Santa Cruz, the sample was comprised of three hosts (1 male and 2 females, age 25-55, American) and 6 guests (3

male and 3 female, age 22-35, American). Therefore, the sample population was comprised of 5 hosts and 8 guests, with each of whom an in-depth semi-structured interview was conducted.

4.6 Method of Contacting Participants

For both research locations, hosts and guests were contacted to request participation by different means. After an extensive search of the Help Exchange website, and the desired research location was identified, the hosts were contacted by email via their HelpX online profile. The initial emails provided preliminary introductions of myself and the planned research of barter tourism exchanges, and inquired if there was availability in the location to participate as a HelpX volunteer and use it as a research location. A request was made to the hosts to discuss their experience with barter tourism exchanges, which was inferred from their HelpX profiles and guest reviews. Subsequent email correspondence ensued to confirm availability and determine logistics for participating in the research location.

Once in the research location, the other active guests in the location were informed of my position as a researcher of barter tourism exchanges, in addition to being a full participant in the exchange activities occurring there. In person, I requested to interview the other guests upon the completion of my time in the research location (or at the end of a guest's stay if he/she was to leave before the research completion). In each research location, each active guest agreed to be interviewed.

4.7 Determining Trustworthiness of the Research Findings

What allows a researcher to convince his or her audience that the research findings are worth paying attention to? Within qualitative research, this notion is addressed by

trustworthiness, as opposed to the measurements of reliability and validity within the positivist paradigm. Trustworthiness is generally measured by the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research (Shenton, 2004). Guba's (1981) criteria for evaluating the trustworthiness of the research was considered. Measures were taken in the research design to heighten its credibility (rather than internal validity), transferability (rather than external validity), dependability (rather than reliability), and confirmability (rather than objectivity). Ensuring the credibility is the most important component for establishing the trustworthiness of the research (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Credibility considers how accurately the research findings describe and represent the multiple realities of the phenomenon under study (Hoepfl, 1997). Keeping in mind that credibility depends more on the analytical abilities of the researcher and the richness of the gathered data than on the sample size (Patton, 1990), measures such as data triangulation, prolonged engagement in the research locations, and persistent observation, iterative questioning, and thick description were used to enhance the credibility of the research findings (Hoepfl, 1997; Shenton, 2004). Within qualitative research, there are less concrete ways to enhance or measure the transferability of data, as the researcher cannot generalize how the data would transfer to specific cases. The best the researcher can do is "provide sufficient information that can then be used by the reader to determine whether the findings are applicable to the new situation" (Hoepfl, 1997, n.p.), which was accounted for through thick descriptions of the phenomenon. Taking confirmability into account, I aimed to remain neutral towards the research findings and in their interpretation. No specific measures were taken to ensure dependability of the research, because Lincoln and Guba (1985) consider the demonstration of credibility satisfactory for determining the dependability of the research findings.

4.8 Data Analysis

An inductive, exploratory approach to data analysis was considered appropriate for this research, by which the collected data are organized into abstract categories, from which patterns, themes, and categories can be determined (Creswell, 2007). The analysis process aims to assemble the data in a sensical manner and thereby make it meaningful for others (Dey, 1993). Dey's (1993) model (see Appendix B) for the analysis of qualitative data shows this as an iterative process of three basic stages: describing, classifying, and making connections. This model served as a basic guide for approaching the analysis process for the data collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews.

To make sense of the data, a systematic approach to coding was needed, and thematic analysis was chosen as the means for examining the empirical data. The analysis process began with the *description* phase by carefully reading every interview transcript and the field notes taken from both research locations. With the research question in mind, notes were taken in the margins to develop thorough descriptions of the phenomenon. Thick description was generated, which assisted in the *classifying* phase which followed. Manual coding allowed patterns and potential themes to be identified from the raw data- the interviews, thick descriptions, and field notes- which were then clustered into tentative conceptual categories, and eventually consolidated into more concise and relevant categories. The *making connections* phase began using axial coding to determine links and relationships between categories. Categories were combined in new ways to understand 'the big picture' and gain new understanding of the phenomenon. The phases illustrated in Dey's (1993) model are not a single occurrence,

so each stage was repeated throughout the analysis process to consolidate overlapping categories, draw connections, and reflect upon the previous phases of analysis. Eventually, two relevant themes emerged to form the final framework of analysis.

4.9 Methodological Limitations

The main methodological limitation of this research design is related to the sampling method and size. Purposive sampling may result in a sample of limited scope or in insufficient depth in the data collected in the research sites (Patton, 1990; Hoepfl, 1997). The relatively small sample size of this research may be considered a limitation due to lack of depth in the data obtained, but this is accounted for through the thorough measures to determine and enhance the credibility of the research. Because of the subjectivist epistemology and the importance of the co-creation of meaning between researcher and research participant of the chosen research paradigm, the lack of objectivity may be viewed as a limitation. Rather, the subjective nature of the paradigm and the research, along with personal biases and worldview, were stated outright. By admitting to my personal dispositions, the potential limitation due to lack of objectivity becomes a measure to enhance the confirmability of the research findings (Shenton, 2004).

Chapter 5: Analysis: Results and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter presents the results and discussion in regards to the host and guest perceptions of sharing within the barter tourism exchange. It begins with a look at host and guest motivations to participate in a barter tourism exchange, followed by host and guest perceptions of barter. These motivations are key for addressing the research question, because in combination with the spatial environment of the exchange, the

motivations determine the two main themes identified during the thematic analysis process. The relevantly identified themes then provide the framework for analysis, as illustrated in Figures 2 & 3 (see Appendix B) for interpreting the hosts' and guests' understanding of the exchange, which will subsequently be compared.

Each section will relate the findings to the literature presented in Chapter 2. Attention is paid to the similarities and differences between studies of the sharing economy and barter, and the social dynamics within these, as well as within barter tourism exchanges as found in this study. The prototypes of sharing and commodity exchange will be of particular importance for the discussion of the themes and subsequently how hosts and guests interpret the barter tourism exchange.

5.2 Host/Guest Motivations to Engage in A Barter Tourism Exchange

It is important to understand why hosts and guests are motivated to engage in a barter tourism exchange of this kind, as the social and psychological circumstances which encompass this motivation are fundamental to interpreting one's perception of the experience. Hosts' primary motivation to participate was the access to labor that the exchange presents. Guest motivations were focused on the experiential opportunity of the exchange, but were split between the social versus the learning opportunity of the exchange.

5.2.1 Host Motivation

The opportunity to get work done on their property was the primary motivation for HelpX hosts to participate. They viewed the barter tourism exchange as a way to accomplish projects or work which otherwise would not be possible. Prompted by the question of

what the initial motivation to host was, the quotes below confirm the priority of labor that the exchange provides:

> *"That [getting help on the farm] was the only motivation that I had...If I had not learned that this was a viable way, of bartering for labor, I would have sold the farm and stopped." (Zoe)*

> *"I like to get a lot of work done and it's free labor… A good 80% of it is we can get a whole lot of work done." (Preston)*

> *"We had a whole lot of work we needed help with. Not just hands, but expertise, ideas, perspectives… Number one was having the help to get to do things." (Samantha)*

Motivating them to a much lesser degree, hosts mention an altruistic aspect of hosting. They view their hosting as providing an opportunity for societal benefit, as guests are given a means to gain valuable practical skills and experience without having previous experience in the field. *Zoe* mentions this as a necessary element of her choosing to be a host:

> *"I see it as a valuable exchange for society in general, not just for me. They're learning something, so, we've had scores of people come through and none of them would be able to be here if I had to hire them, because none were experienced...Part of the reason I do it is because I have this impetus, I think a social obligation to help young people learn what we're doing. There is an altruistic part that is very important to me. And if that wasn't there, I wouldn't do it." (Zoe)*

Relationships and connections formed through the exchange, in addition to the different perspectives and viewpoints brought by the guests, are viewed as added value to the hosts. Both aspects are mentioned by every host as an important benefit of the exchange, while not being a motivating factor for participation. Hosts mention that they allow relationships to form organically, never pushing one to occur:

> *"I would not call it [forming relationships] a motivation. I would call it a perk. Because my main goal is to get work done, and when people are nice, and we enjoy things, it becomes a very positive exchange, and if I can make a meaningful experience for them, it's pretty bad ass." (Preston)*

"I have made very important relationships here.. But I think, especially in the beginning, I don't mind ever just having a professional relationship with somebody...If this at any point develops into a more intimate relationship, I'm definitely going to be open to that, but I'm not going to come in, day one, and be like 'Let's be friends!' It doesn't bother me at all if someone comes and leaves this property and we've just had a professional relationship. That's what I'm here for. I'm not here to be everyone's best friend...I'm open to that if it happens organically." (Clare)

Hosts discuss guests' diverse backgrounds and different sets of experience as a valuable addition to the exchange, as its provides a new lens with which to approach common tasks or elements of life in the host location:

"We've learned a lot about how people organize things in different communities, or how to do things in a more efficient way...You get very different perspectives on things when you get people over." (Samantha)

"I learn an incredible amount from the Helpxers and apprentices who come. I don't have all the answers...They have a fresh way of looking at things, and often you can find a solution or you can play off each other." (Zoe)

"...When you have someone who also feels comfortable adding from their experience or their knowledge to what you're doing. I think that's when the farm gets the most out of it....When you have someone who also feels comfortable maybe making a suggestion or saying 'Oh, I have this background...'" (Clare)

Host motivation for participation in this type of barter tourism exchange is conclusively dominated by the need for labor, and the opportunity that having additional hands provides to the host. Host intention is thereby to experience the "work realm." The educational and experiential opportunity that this presents to society is also a key motivation for hosts, yet with less significance. Forming connections and new perspectives were invariably mentioned by hosts as added value to the exchange.

5.2.2 Guest Motivations

The data revealed that guests are all motivated to participate in a barter exchange of this kind because of the experiential learning opportunity it presents, which is understood in two ways. Guests either view the exchange primarily as an educational work exchange,

learning skills and gaining experience, or as travel exchange, forming social connections while learning and gaining experience. The following statements represent guest motivation for work experience:

> *"I was mostly trying to get a certain set of experiences on my resume going forward…"* **(Sydney)**

> *"It was experience, to learn some new skills…"* **(Steven)**

> *"It was motivating to me to be able to get an experience and be away from home and get more responsibilities and what not. And something to put on my resume."* **(Lea)**

The guests who were motivated to participate for the travel and social exchange opportunity still consider the learning and experiential aspect as fundamental, but in combination with the social connections and a deeper understanding of a place that they gain from the exchange:

> *"My relationships are really important to me too...Developing relationships with people is primary because no work get done if that's not coming together in some way, or not quality work. So my main motivation is to come in where I'm giving, with a giving attitude. Not where I'm like, 'What do you have for me? Let me take all your knowledge and food and stuff.' But coming in in that way where I'm respectful and adhere to what's going on and give to it and also learn while I'm helping you out."* **(Matt)**

> "*To learn and develop new skills. And for the cultural exchange. Meeting people in their natural environment...I highly value the social aspect of this way of traveling and getting experience."* **(Laurie)**

> *"You experience a place in such a different way...It kind of takes you off the beaten path and it gives you access to see the real life of places. To take you away from a spot that's meant for tourists. So you see how people actually live...You experience an actual life. You're part of it. You're working alongside these people, you're doing what they do everyday."* **(George)**

These examples represent the guest intention to experience the "home realm", as opposed to the previous guest intention to experience the "work realm."

Guests from both the home realm and work realm perspectives mention the removal of financial barriers that this type of exchange allows. Due to the moneyless nature of barter, guests are able to participate in the barter tourism exchange for an extended time period without monetary means. Barter arises when money is scarce, as described by *Lea* and *Austin,* or when people, like *George,* choose not to use it:

> *"As someone who doesn't have a big bank account to travel, it really helped to see another side of the country. I would never have been able to afford five months here if I wasn't exchanging my work for this." (Lea)*

> *"I was limited on money, but had plenty of time." (Austin)*

> *"I do love the idea of barter travel. I'm pretty passionate about overthrowing the system that exists in this country right now. I think the right way to start that revolution is to just live this way. To not have every exchange be a money exchange. And you're not doing anything illegal, but you're doing something to sort of undermine the status quo of capitalism. So that's definitely part of it. I feel good about doing this kind of work for a free place to stay." (George)*

Guest motivations are driven by gaining experience from the exchange, although these are split between those who view it primarily as a work exchange and something to enhance their resume, and those who perceive it to be a travel exchange, where having an authentic experience in a place and building social connections are key. The lack of financial restrictions of a barter tourism exchange were also mentioned as added value of participation, especially in regards to making extended participation feasible.

Discussion

These motivations suggest that hosts and guests share in their understanding of the primary element of a barter tourism exchange: an exchange. As Chapman (1980) noted, engagement in barter is solely motivated by the mutual benefit that it presents to both parties, which in the case of a barter tourism exchange is free labor, food and a free place to stay, experience, skills, relationships, and other non-product items. These motivations align with the sharing economy literature which find economic (Botsman et al,

2010; Ganksy, 2012; Geron, 2013, Babe, 2014; Hamari et al, 2014; Sundararajan, 2014; Trivett, 2014; Vision Critical, 2014) and social benefits (Botsman et al, 2010; Belk, 2013; Babe, 2014; Hamari et al, 2014) to be the primary motivators for participation. While *what* the hosts and guests aim to receive will differ (as is the nature of barter, in which different items are exchanged), a mutual exchange, which each party considers to be balanced and of equal value, is the consistent motivator for participation in an exchange of this kind. Barter arises in times when money is scarce or when people choose not to use it (Humphrey et al, 1992; Botsman et al, 2010), which is exemplified by both hosts and guests. Hosts credit bartering for labor as a feasible alternative when they cannot pay for labor or when they prefer to not use money. Guests, as well, consider bartering their labor as a viable way to travel or live inexpensively, both because money is limited or because they prefer not to use it. When hosts and guests choose not to use money, it often is noted to be a stance taken against the capitalist system. Chapman (1980) notes that a barter exchange is inextricable from a social and psychological situation, so while the parties are motivated by the mutual advantage that the trade affords, how each host and guest understands the barter tourism exchange will depend upon the social and psychological context which they bring into the exchange.

5.3 Barter: Host and Guest Understandings

The data analysis concluded that hosts and guests were comparable in their understanding of barter. For both parties, the initial motivation to participate is to receive something from the equal and reciprocal opportunity that the exchange presents. Each of the barter tourism exchanges of this study were enabled by the Internet, which acted as a tool for connecting individuals and matching want with want. As is characteristic of barter, there were no common scales with which each party values and compares the

exchanged items (Humphrey et al, 1992). Hosts and guests both need to consider the exchange to be of equal value, and if they do not, they are free to terminate the exchange, as they are freely and independently engaging in the barter tourism exchange (Chapman, 1980; Humphrey et al, 1992). *Preston*, a host, comments upon the nature of independently participating in the barter exchange:

> *"I'm going to work people as fairly, but as hard as I see fit. And if they don't like it, they can leave, and if I don't like it, I can ask them to leave." (Preston)*

Because hosts are responsible for allowing the exchange to occur (they choose to become hosts and they decide which guests come to their property), therefore they are more in control of determining the circumstances of the exchange. This can manifest as a "take it or leave it" scenario, in which the hosts offers a certain product, service, or experience, and the guest is free to accept or reject what is being offered without negotiation. *Lea,* a guest, summarizes the understanding that she is freely engaging in the barter tourism exchange, but what it being exchanged is not up for negotiation. If she doesn't consider it to be a fair exchange, she is free to not participate:

> *"Because you're being given so much, you shouldn't really complain, or you shouldn't really disagree with something. You start thinking that you can't really voice your complaints. I mean, 'If you don't like it, then leave.' And that is true. If you don't like it, leave. We're not forced to stay here." (Lea)*

To avoid dissatisfaction with the exchange, it is important for both hosts and guests to clearly define their expectations of the exchange, so that entering into the exchange and agreeing that it is of equal value can be an educated decision. Expectations are determined through host profiles, which describe the experience and what is needed from the guests, and from initial communication, prior to the exchange occurring. This process allows for hosts and guests to establish some amount of trust in one another, which is vital in both a barter and sharing economy exchange. By reading a host profile or a review left by a guest, or by communicating via email or skype, hosts and guests

develop a degree of social connection before the exchange occurs. A guest needs to feel comfortable visiting the host's property, and a host needs to trust a guest enough to allow the guest into their home and to be capable of providing the service that is expected of them. A barter tourism exchange of this kind relies upon trust in order to occur. While the hosts and guests probably have never met one another in person, it is not an exchange that is occurring between total strangers, as some level of trust will have been established prior to the fulfillment of the exchange.

Discussion

Hosts and guests comprehend barter in the same fashion. Both parties are motivated by a mutually beneficial agreement in which goods or services, which are different in kind, are exchanged (Chapman, 1980; Humphrey et al, 1992). Therefore, participants of a barter tourism exchange are motivated by the transaction, and barter itself is clearly conceptualized as a moneyless commodity exchange (Chapman, 1980; Dalton, 1982). The Internet and its power of connection make this type of sharing economy activity easy and feasible to arrange, while eliminating barter's traditional problem, the double coincidence of wants (Botsman et al, 2010). The Internet provides the information, rather than any actual social relation, which is necessary for a barter exchange to occur (Humphrey et al, 1992). This information, attained from online profiles, comments and ratings, provides the basis of trust between hosts and guests that is a necessary input for the functioning of barter and sharing economy activities in general (Botsman, 2010; Gansky, 2012; Sundararajan, 2012).

Besides trust, a barter exchange does not require any previous social relation between the barterers, but exchanges of this kind are imbued with and create social relations. Humphrey et al's (1992) four social relations of barter- the interaction with dissimilarity,

the bid for equality, the creation of trust, and discontinuity- are visible within the barter tourism exchanges of this research. Hosts and guests exchange dissimilar items, and aim to be equal in the exchange, as there is no commonly held standard of value for what is being bartered. Clear expectations help to determine the value of the exchanged item, and preliminary trust and social connection, established through online reputation systems and initial communication, are necessary inputs to the exchange for both hosts and guests. These also allow the hosts and guest to bid for equality and feel balanced in the exchange. Through fair dealings and interaction during the exchange, trust in one another is developed further. Although barter tourism exchanges of this kind are enacted over time, as long term stays are often encouraged or required by hosts, they often result in discontinuity. This is not to say that the social relation between the host and guest is generally discontinuous, but that once the barter tourism exchange is over, it is unlikely that a host and guest will enter into the barter agreement again. If a guest returns to a host location or the relationship between host and guest continues, it is often in a different capacity than it was initially during the barter tourism exchange, such as a friendship or as peers, rather than as host and guest.

5.4 Understanding the Spatial Environment of the Exchange

The physical and spatial environment in which the barter tourism exchange occurs is important for determining the participants' understanding of the exchange, while it is slightly less significant than their intention for participation, as previously exemplified by the work and social realms. As part of the barter tourism exchange agreement, hosts provide accommodation for their guests, although the nature of accommodation varies from case to case. The chosen research locations offered two very different accommodation scenarios, and were chosen so as to gain an understanding of how the

spatial environment affects one's perception of the exchange. In one location, the guests lived in the same house as the hosts, using the same bathrooms, kitchen, and communal spaces. Guests either had a private room or shared a room with other guests. Hosts and guests ate each meal together, worked together each day, and often spent down time together in the house or in the local bar. This spatial context can be understood as the "home realm."

In the other research location, guests did not live in the same house as the hosts, but on a property with multiple accommodation structures. Guests either lived alone, in a four-person bunkhouse with other guests, or in a private tent if all other structures were filled. Together, guests used the same bathrooms and kitchen, but did not share these with the hosts. Guests worked alongside one host daily, while interaction with the others was limited. Guests generally ate together and spent down time together, but time spent with the hosts was primarily during working hours. Communal meals with both hosts and guests did occur, but were sporadic and limited to special occasions. Interaction with hosts generally occurred in communal spaces on the property, and not within the living space of the hosts or the guests. This spatial context can be understood as "boundary to the home realm."

5.5 Understanding the Themes

The relevant themes, identified from the empirical analysis, for understanding the research question are *shared home realm* and *boundary to home realm*. These themes fuse the abovementioned spatial and motivational contexts, and provide the framework for understanding the hosts' and guests' perception of the sharing capacity of the barter tourism exchange.

The *shared home realm* refers the hosts' and guests' understanding of sharing in the barter tourism exchange. It reflects the physical space in which the exchange occurs, but more so the intention of the host and guest. The data analysis has shown that if a guest is motivated to engage for the social connections or deeper understanding of a place and its people (thereby they are motivated to engage in the home realm), they are able to do so without sharing the physical home realm/living space with their hosts. Their understanding of being a part of the *shared home realm* impacts the incentive they feel, the outcomes of the exchange, and the perception of sharing in the barter tourism exchange. Alternately, the data revealed that each host is motivated to engage in the work realm, but if a host is sharing the physical space with their guests, they are likely to understand the exchange as a sharing relationship.

The *boundary to the home realm* refers to the hosts' and guests' understanding of the barter tourism exchange as a commodity exchange. A host, motivated to engage in the work realm, and with a spatial boundary to the home realm by not sharing their physical living space with their guests, will understand the exchange more in commodity terms. A guest that is participating primarily to engage in the work realm, can share the physical home realm with their hosts, and still perceive the experience more in commodity terms.

Therefore, guests are able to transcend the spatial environment, and it is their intention which ultimately determines how they perceive the barter tourism exchange. Hosts' understanding of the exchange is more influenced by the spatial environment in which it occurs. This outlook, of whether the exchange is occurring within the *shared home realm* or with a *boundary to the home realm*, influences the drivers, outcomes, and ultimate understanding of the exchange for both hosts and guests.

The *shared home realm* and the *boundary to the home realm* will be related to the literature regarding sharing and commodity exchange, and a comparison of each scenario will follow in order to further understand the perception of commodity exchange or sharing in a barter tourism exchange.

Discussion

The concept of the *shared home realm* correlates to sharing and the prototype of the allocation of resources within the family, as identified by Belk (2010). Those who experience the *shared home realm* and ultimately understand the barter tourism exchange as a sharing relationship, will associate the exchange with the interior world of the home and the family. This occurs because the exchange often takes place within the host's physical home and the guest is incorporated into daily life within the home. "Sharing in" occurs within the *shared home realm*, in which hosts extend their aggregate extended selves beyond the sphere of the family and the circle of those who can enjoy a shared resource is widened (Widlock, 2004; Belk, 2010). The sharing which occurs within the *shared home realm* corresponds to the allocation of resources within the family, as guests recount feeling a sense of familial obligation and a responsibility towards the shared resources of the family. The sharing which occurs within the *shared home realm* will be understood more as generalized reciprocity, in which sharing is fluid and the giving and receiving is not strictly kept track of (Gell, 1992; Belk, 2010), as would generally occur between family members. As a result of sharing in, those who engage in the *shared home realm* will experience social connections, bonding, and a sense of being a part of a community, family, or team, who work towards a common goal. These relate to the social benefits, such as a renewed sense of community or being 'a part of something', that are noted as motivators for participation in sharing economy activities

(Botsman et al, 2010). The *shared home realm* and the participants' ultimate understanding of sharing in the barter tourism exchange is inextricably tied to the interior world of the home and the family, as will be illustrated in the following sections.

The *boundary to the home realm* correlates to the prototype of commodity exchange: buying bread at the store (Belk, 2010). Those who experience the exchange with a *boundary to the home realm* are principally concerned with the fulfillment of the exchange (Chapman, 1980) and the qualitative relationship between the exchanged items, rather than between the people fulfilling the exchange (Gell, 1992; Belk, 2010). The exchange is impersonal and requires little to no social connection of the hosts and guests (Belk, 2007). It is an exchange which is distanced from the intimacy of the home, in which one's personal benefit is primary, rather than a communal or shared goal. Commodity exchange is characterized by calculability (Belk, 2010), and because barter does not utilize a commonly held standard of value (Humphrey et al, 1992), clear expectations are crucial for determining equality within the exchange. Those who experience the *boundary to the home realm* are very aware of what they put into the exchange, and what they receive in return. As Chapman (1980) said, barter is a purely economic transaction, and for those experiencing the *boundary to the home realm,* their perception is transactional. They are motivated solely by the benefit granted by the exchange, and finding balance and feeling equal within it is key for establishing trust and fulfilling the agreement. Just as a customer will continue to buy bread from a store if he does not feel that he is being cheated by the shopkeeper, a host or guest within a barter tourism exchange will fulfill the agreement if they perceive that what they put into the exchange is equal to what they receive. As sharing is characterized by its connection to the interior world of the home and the family, those who experience the exchange with a

boundary to the home realm are therefore prevented from perceiving the barter tourism exchange as a sharing relationship.

5.5.1 Shared Home Realm: Guest

As explained above, a guest who ultimately understands the barter tourism exchange within the *shared home realm* will be motivated to participate for the travel and social exchange, and the exchange will often occur within the physical home realm of their hosts. Guests operating within the *shared home realm* will experience certain drivers to their actions, outcomes of the exchange, and will perceive the barter tourism exchange in sharing terms. This is exemplified in the left side of Figure 2: Framework for Analysis: Guest Understanding (see Appendix B).

Guests operating within the shared home realm mention that their actions are driven by notions of familial obligation and a common goal, which they share with their hosts. *Matt,* a guest sharing the physical home space with his hosts, mentions that this intimacy and constant interaction created close relationships and the feeling of belonging to a family:

> *"I felt like I was part of the family and they treated me to dinner, lunch, breakfast everyday...It's nice to have that communal aspect. That caring, family, tight-knittedness." (Matt)*

Guests who do not share the spatial home realm with their hosts are able to transcend this barrier and still experience the *shared home realm* with their hosts. Extended interaction with the hosts, and the relationships that result from this, fuel guest understandings of sharing within the exchange. Guests who experience the exchange within the *shared home realm* mention that they feel a certain level of responsibility and obligation to the family, the shared resources, or the project in general. *Matt*, who experiences the *shared home realm* as a pseudo-family member, expresses how a feeling of familial obligation drives his actions:

"If I have a relationship with them, I'll go a littler but further. At the same time, I do just naturally want to do a good job regardless, but it feels a little more obligatory for some reason when you're part of a family. But obligatory in a good way." **(Matt)**

Working towards a shared goal with the hosts is the second driver of guest actions identified from the data. *George* expresses this and the effect it has on the work:

"I felt like kindred souls, all meeting up towards a common goal…And I think it produces much better work when people work together in that way. If they feel like the success of a project is also their success, and they're not just working for someone." **(George)**

The outcomes of the exchange for guests who understand their role within the *shared home realm* is ownership towards the property, the project, and to the hosts, which results from the shared goal or familial obligation. *George*'s comments on a past barter tourism exchange in which he did not share the spatial home realm with his hosts, reflects his understanding of being within the *shared home realm*. Working towards a shared goal and the daily interaction of working alongside his hosts impacted the ownership he felt and his ultimate understanding of the barter tourism exchange as a sharing relationship:

"I really just wanted to make things easier for him. I felt responsible for his property. I wanted to do it really well and impress him, kind of. I wanted it all to work for him. I wanted to help him do it. And here too. I do want to make [the hosts'] lives here easier, by doing whatever I can do." **(George)**

George's comment reflects the notion of generalized reciprocity and how what is given and taken from the exchange is not strictly accounted for. Although guests within the *shared home realm* still seek balance and equality from the barter agreement, what is exchanged is more fluidly passed between the hosts and guests. The exchange is not transactional, but guests instead perceive that they are doing their part and fulfilling their role as a member of a family or of a team.

Guests who experience the barter tourism exchange within the *shared home realm,* as a result of the spatial environment and their intention to participate, ultimately understand the sharing potential of the exchange. A sense of obligation to one's family and working towards a common goal are identified as what motivates the guests once they are involved in the exchange, which results in feelings of ownership towards the hosts and the work. These were commonalities for every guest who perceived the barter tourism exchange as a sharing relationship. A close relationship with the hosts, either as a result of sharing the spatial home realm or from extended periods of time spent together, was also a contributing factor to each guest who understood the exchange as sharing. Guests who experience the *shared home realm* and perceive the barter tourism exchange as a sharing relationship experience sharing in. The hosts expand the boundary between self/other and allow others to benefit from the shared resources, in the case of this research: accommodation and food, and non-product assets like time, skills, and knowledge. As previously discussed, the connection to the interior world of the home or the family is a fundamental component for shaping a guest's perception of the barter tourism exchange as a sharing relationship.

5.5.2 Boundary to Home Realm: Guest

The right side of Figure 2 illustrates the drivers and ultimate understanding for a guest who experiences the barter tourism exchange with *a boundary to the home realm.* These guests are motivated to participate for the experiential and learning opportunity that the exchange provides, and the benefit they receive from the exchange is their main concern. The guest may share the spatial home realm with their hosts, but as previously explained, their intention to engage in the work realm is more influential to their ultimate understanding of the exchange. Guests operating with a *boundary to the home realm* will

experience certain drivers to their actions, outcomes of the exchange, and will perceive the barter tourism exchange in commodity terms.

The data analysis revealed that guests who experience the exchange with a boundary to the home realm are driven by the need to fulfill the agreement which they made with their hosts, as well as for their personal goal or benefit. *Sydney* sums up both drivers to her actions:

> *"I feel responsible to carry out the responsibilities that were set up by the agreement we made. Which were that I'm going to work in exchange for room and board…If a nice, positive relationship had formed, that would have been great, but it's not something that I came here for. That was not ever high on my list of priorities…I was coming here to learn about farming, to see if this was something I wanted to do, and take a breather. It wasn't really something that was on my radar." (Sydney)*

Sarah comments on the need to fulfill the agreement and mentions her personal goals from the experience, which lie completely within the work realm:

> *"I agreed to do this, and I'm going to see it through. And I enjoy the work. It's been a challenge to do. So, I like to fulfill my agreements and I made an agreement. And I enjoy it as a whole. I've gotten a lot out of it… I think as volunteers, we get a lot out of it. We get experience, we get a reference, good experience to put on the CV." (Sarah)*

While the fulfillment of the agreement and personal goals drive the actions of the guests who experience the exchange with a *boundary to the home realm,* the data analysis revealed that the outcome of these drivers was often a lack of ownership or initiative to go above what was determined as equal value within the agreement. *Sarah* mentions seeing this from other guests and the challenge that it poses:

> *"I've noticed that not everyone is motivated to bend over backwards for this farm because we're not getting tons out of it. It's frustrating when other people don't just inherently do their best...It just kind of puts a dark mark a little on some of the work just because, you know when you're working with a team of people, you want to feel like you're all striving towards the same goal, and when you're not, that can be dissatisfying." (Sarah)*

If one party within the barter exchange feels that the exchange is unbalanced, it can cause dissatisfaction for the guest, along with others who may be affected by this lack of giving one's all. Sydney expresses her concern that the exchange has at times been unequal:

> *"We have worked really hard and given up a lot of days that would have been weekend days, and I think it has been more work than I expected in that sense. And I don't feel like we really get that much in return for that extra step that we do. We do get room, we do get board. But the value of that is, I think, a lot less than the time that we put into work. I don't think it's 100% equal."* **(Sydney)**

Yet, the concern with value and reciprocity in itself is characteristic of commodity exchange. As previously described, guests who experience the exchange with a *boundary to the home realm*, understand the barter tourism exchange as a commodity exchange greatly due to their intention to participate solely within the work realm. These guests are motivated to participate for the work experience that the opportunity presents, they are driven by the need to fulfill this work agreement and for gaining personal benefit from the exchange, and put into the exchange only what they deem to be of equal value to what they receive. This is contrasted with the generalized reciprocity that is evident within the *shared home realm*. When this is viewed as imbalanced, it causes discontent with the exchange. Guests who experience the *boundary to the home realm* understand the barter tourism exchange fully as a commodity exchange between themselves and the host, with whom they made the agreement. Again, *Sarah* summarizes this point, clearly stating that her intention to participate was to engage in the work realm, and that her ultimate understanding of the experience is a commodity exchange, rather than a sharing relationship:

> *"Even if it's not a full monetary exchange, I think it's essentially the same relationship. I'm not doing this out of the goodness of my heart to [the host's property]. Even though I like this place. I wouldn't just be here without the rewards that I already mentioned that I feel like I'm getting. So I feel like an employee. I try*

to act like one. I feel the same way here as I have with other jobs I've had in the past." (Sarah)

While the spatial context of the exchange may play a part in the guest's understanding, the data revealed that the intention to participate is more influential for determining a guest's final understanding of sharing within the barter tourism exchange. In the case of those guests experiencing the exchange with a *boundary to the home realm*, their initial motivation to engage in the work realm is crucial for determining their ultimate understanding of it as a commodity exchange.

5.5.3 Host Understandings

Unlike guests, the data analysis revealed that the spatial context in which the exchange occurs is essential for shaping hosts' perceptions of sharing in the barter tourism exchange. As previously discussed in the host motivation section, hosts are conclusively motivated to participate for the the labor opportunity that the exchange provides, as is characteristic of barter (Chapman, 1980). Hosts, therefore, are motivated by the need to receive help and labor in exchange for the accommodation and food that they provide in return. The initial motivation for hosts is very much to engage in this commodity exchange that they have determined is of equal value. Hosts, both who share and have a boundary to the spatial home realm, exhibit the same motivators to participate, and the same drivers to their actions once involved in the exchange. Their actions are driven by the need to fulfill the agreement which was made with the guest, ensuring that it is fair and of equal value. The work is primary to hosts and they are driven by the need to ensure that they receive from their guests something of equal value to what they provide. *Bennett* comments on the necessity of balance in the exchange for both parties:

> *"I think, as long as everyone is doing what they agreed to do, in the transaction sense of put in the time, work the hours and work hard, be present with it. Then yeah, it is a sharing exchange. Above and beyond these basic guidelines… But*

*you don't want your employees discontented, just as you don't want your guests discontented in the hospitality sense. When people are not on the same page or not happy, it creates problems." **(Bennett)***

Preston also mentions this need to fulfill both sides of the agreement:

*"We work very hard, but if people work hard, we try to treat them well. It's a good exchange and people come out really happy about it." **(Preston)***

Samantha also comments on the give-and-take nature of the barter exchange and how it is important that it is balanced:

*"I think it's really great the way [the other host] organizes things. You get six hours of work a day, two days off a week. Nobody has ever complained about food. Or comfort. It's not a mansion, but we share what we have and we're happy with that." **(Samantha)***

The hosts receive a certain amount of work from the guest, which they have predetermined in the agreement is of equal value to allowing the guest to share the home and its resources, as any member of the family would. Once the agreement is fulfilled, or being fulfilled, it is possible for the exchange to become a sharing relationship or for it to remain more of a commodity exchange. Time spent together and the spatial context in which the exchange occurs are determinants of this.

5.5.3.1 Shared Home Realm: Host

When a host shares their physical home realm with their guests, as illustrated in the left side of Figure 3 (see Appendix B), the exchange, generally, is ultimately understood as a sharing relationship by the hosts. *Preston,* a host who shares his physical home realm and works alongside his guests each day expresses how time, and the sharing which takes place naturally when coexisting within the home realm, ultimately lead to a deep sharing relationship:

"We spend a lot of time with people. You spend so much time with people, you either love it or hate it. You spend so much time with people, you get to know them, you work hard. You spend long hours of beer drinking and conversation, and whiskey drinking and conversation, and long hours of silence. But working

*with people and being around people, you get to know people through that...creating a unique and very very rich, deep experience." **(Preston)***

Samantha, who also shares the physical home realm with her guests, comments that it is very common for her work relationships with the guests to become friendships or more social relationships, and that "*Time and sharing will do that.*" For hosts, experiencing the barter tourism exchange as a sharing relationship occurs naturally when the exchange occurs within the spatial home realm, as is characteristic of sharing and its prototypes (Belk, 2010). It procures a level of intimacy that bypasses the work realm, despite the hosts' intention to engage in the work realm. Hosts "share in" by physically sharing their home, their food, and their time as they work, eat, and relax with their guests each day. This connection to the interior world of the home and family naturally cause hosts to understand the exchange as sharing and occurring within the *shared home realm*.

5.5.3.2 Boundary to the Home Realm: Host

When a host does not share the physical home realm with their guests, the exchange occurs with a *boundary to the home realm*, and is generally understood as more of a commodity exchange. With a *boundary to the home realm*, the hosts and guests lack a level of intimacy that is inherent when the physical home realm is shared, as well as the amount of time spent interacting with the guests is limited. Hosts with a *boundary to the home realm* understand there to be elements of sharing involved in the exchange, but the data analysis revealed that the barter tourism exchange is considered to be more of a commodity exchange than a sharing relationship. *Bennett* is a host who previously shared the physical home realm with his guests, and worked with them each day, but at present does not share the home realm nor have daily interaction with the guests. Although he likes to consider the exchange as a sharing relationship, the boundary to the

spatial home realm and the limited daily interaction prevent this. These limitations keep him from developing the relationships with guests that come with time spent together and from the intimacy of the home realm, which naturally lead to a perception of sharing within the barter tourism exchange:

> *"I think now, I feel a little less integrated because we don't have the same schedules, we don't do the same things. I'm off doing different activities and working on different projects. So I definitely felt a lot more part of the crew that I was living and working with, than I do with current crews [of guests]." (Bennett)*

Zoe also previously shared the physical home realm with past guests, but no longer does at present. She comments that this spatial boundary to the home realm is both a benefit and a detriment:

> *"It's a benefit for me because I feel like I'm not 'on' 24/7...But on the downside, that same distance prevents me from getting to know them on the same level that I used to know them." (Zoe)*

For hosts, it is the time spent together, within the physical home realm and while working, and the relationships which form as a result of this, which determine the hosts' understanding of sharing in the exchange. When a host experiences the exchange with a *boundary to the home realm* and has limited interaction with their guests, their understanding of the exchange is more

characteristic of a commodity exchange, despite there being a want for it to be sharing.

Clare, another host who does not share the physical home realm with her guests, does spend each day working alongside them. The time spent each day with the guests allows her to gain an overall understanding of the barter tourism exchange as a sharing relationship because of the complex dynamics of communal living, daily interaction, and the fluid exchange of knowledge. Despite this overall understanding of sharing, a host can perceive the experience as a commodity exchange with certain guests:

"I think when people are very cut and dry, like 'This is when work starts. Are we done yet?' In and out. And I think when peole are a little more closed off to a group setting and they're just here to work and for the free room and board...If someone is clearly wanting to be more cut and dry about the situation, that's probably how I'll respond to them. If that's what they're here looking for, then that's probably what they'll get in return." **(Clare)**

Clare illustrates how a guest's intention to engage in the experience solely within the work realm impacts and is reflected in the host's understanding of the exchange.

Therefore, hosts who experience the exchange with a *boundary to the home realm* are generally not able to interact or connect on the same level as hosts within the *shared home realm.* This boundary prevents the natural evolution of the host-guest relationship from occurring, which time together and the sharing of the physical home produce. Without this organically developed relationship, hosts maintain their initial understanding of the exchange, which is for the purely transactional (Chapman, 1980) purpose of engaging in a mutually beneficial, commodity-based exchange.

Conclusion

To conclude this chapter, this study found that there are noticeable similarities and glaring differences in how hosts and guests, but also between different guests, perceive sharing within a barter tourism exchange. Hosts and guests share in their initial understanding of the barter tourism exchange as a mutually beneficial opportunity to exchange and receive something. The commodity potential is characteristic of barter and is the foundational motivation for both hosts and guests to engage in this sharing economy activity. Hosts conclusively participate in order to engage in the work realm- thereby as a commodity exchange- but the spatial environment in which the exchange occurs determines their understanding of sharing. Hosts who share their physical home realm with their guests generally perceive the exchange as a sharing relationship, as

time spent together and the closeness of cohabitation leads to this natural evolution of their understanding. Hosts who experience a *boundary to the home realm* by not sharing the physical home realm with their guests generally perceive the exchange in commodity terms, as this boundary prevents the time and closeness which sharing the home realm naturally facilitates. Guests are also influenced by the spatial realm in which the exchange occurs, but their understanding is more influenced by their intention to engage in the home realm or in the work realm. The home realm describes the motivation to engage for the social or travel experience that the exchange presents, whereas the work realm describes the intention to engage primarily for the learning or resume-boosting opportunity. Guests who engage for the home realm ultimately understand the exchange as occurring within the *shared home realm* and as a sharing relationship, whereas guests engaging for the work realm experience the exchange with a *boundary to the home realm* ultimately perceive the exchange as a commodity exchange.

Therefore, because of the split between the *shared home realm* and *boundary to the home realm* perspectives, there is no one, conclusive understanding of sharing within a barter tourism exchange of this kind, as found by this current study. The social and psychological context which each participant brings to the exchange, as well as the spatial environment in which it occurs, are determinant of hosts' and guests' final perceptions of sharing in the exchange.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This study has developed an understanding of perceptions of sharing within a barter tourism exchange. The language of the sharing economy, filled with 'collaboration' and 'sharing', led to this investigation of how much sharing is actually involved in these

activities. Collaborative lifestyles, in which less tangible assets like time, skills, and knowledge are exchanged, seemed more likely to involve sharing than other sharing economy activities. So by focusing on barter, the study was able to move away from the monetary exchange perspective, while still addressing a mode of consumption beneath the sharing economy umbrella. The study compared host and guest perceptions to gain a comprehensive perspective of the roles involved in a barter tourism agreement. The research question, concerned with finding meaning from a comparison of host-guest understandings of sharing and barter, determined the methodological approach and data analysis, and the formation of the Framework for Analysis Models. The study has determined that a barter tourism exchange is complex and dynamic, and that understandings of sharing within it are heavily determined by the social and mental context brought into the exchange by the participant.

This chapter revisits the research question and summarizes the main findings of the study. The main contribution and the limitations of this study, as well as suggestions for future research, will be discussed.

6.2 Research Summary

This research aimed to answer the question:

How do hosts and guests perceive sharing within a barter tourism exchange?

Because of the pervasive language of sharing within the sharing economy, the goal was to understand how the participants of such an activity actually perceive sharing within it. A non-monetary sharing economy activity was chosen because the potential for sharing was greater than in a purely economic transaction-based activity, such as "house-sharing" via AirBnb. The research locations were chosen and the barter tourism

exchanges were facilitated by Help Exchange, a global working travel exchange network, which matches travelers with hosts.

Barter, Barter Tourism Exchanges, & the Sharing Economy

Barter and barter tourism exchanges are a sharing economy activity which are complex and dynamic in how they are perceived by the hosts and guests who participate in them. The perception of a barter tourism exchange, initially, is as a commodity exchange, as both parties are motivated to participate for the mutual benefit that the exchange allows (Chapman, 1980). Guests were motivated for the experiential opportunity of engaging either in the work realm, for the learning and job opportunity, or in the home realm, for the social and travel exchange opportunity. Hosts were unified in the motivation to engage primarily within the work realm. As noted with most sharing economy activities, social and economic benefits drive participants to engage in the exchange. So while barter tourism exchanges of this kind are not profit driven like most sharing economy activities today, the initial perception of the exchange is commodity based and is not characterized by attributes of sharing.

However, barter is inseparable from the social and psychological context which the participants bring into the exchange. It is the hosts' and guests' intentions for the exchange, in addition to the spatial context in which it occurs, which are fundamental for shaping the perceptions of sharing within the barter exchange. Because the barter tourism exchange is carried out over time, these understanding are dynamic and can develop over the course of the exchange. Therefore, hosts and guests both understand barter tourism exchanges as being laden with sharing attributes, while other hosts and guests perceive it as a purely transactional exchange. It is the spatial context of the

exchange and the social context brought by the participant which have a heavy hand in determining this understanding.

To return to the question of where barter, and a barter tourism exchange, belong in relation to the different modes of consumption, it is still difficult to determine. As the literature stated, it is challenging to differentiate and provide a place for barter, as the lines between the different modes of consumption are often blurred and overlapping (Belk, 2010). This research shows that a barter tourism exchange is initially understood as a transaction, which fits closest to a commodity exchange. A social and spatial context are joined to this initial commodity understanding which shape the participant's understanding as the exchange is carried out over time. Barter tourism exchanges are a sharing economy activity which can be understood as full realizations of sharing, while also as a type of commodity exchange. It is a complex type of consumption whose understanding is dependent upon the meaning and intention that the participant attributes to it.

6.3 Contributions

This study fuses previous work on the sharing economy, particularly Botsman et al's (2010) foundational work on the sharing economy and Sundararajan's (2012, 2015) more current studies of the sharing economy, with anthropological and economic studies of barter, and the social forces at work within these modes of consumption, primarily utilizing Belk's (2010) prototypes for commodity exchange and sharing. During the course of this research, no literature could be found specifically regarding barter as a mode of consumption within the sharing economy, nor regarding barter, tourism, and the sharing economy. This thesis therefore aimed to combine these streams of research for the study a barter tourism exchange. Literature does exist regarding other types of alternative

travel, such as WWOOF, yet no literature on these types of working travel opportunities have focused on the barter component of the exchange, nor on the exchange as a means of consumption. Investigating both host and guest perceptions produced a more comprehensive understanding than focusing on just one perspective of the exchange. This approach allowed for similarities and differences to be identified across the two groups. The huge variance in the research locations allowed for commonalities to be identified across the data. Participants in both research locations embraced both final understandings of the exchange (shared home realm/sharing and boundary to home realm/commodity exchange), revealing that these understandings are ubiquitous throughout the barter tourism exchanges of this study.

It is possible to rebut the commentators on the sharing economy who perpetuate the language of sharing through all of its activities (Botsman et al, 2010), but also those who consider the sharing economy to be devoid of sharing in entirety (Sundararajan, 2012; Bardhi and Eckhardt, 2015). These authors are commenting on more prevalent sharing economy activities that fall within the confines of product-service systems and redistribution markets, but their comments allude to the dismissal of sharing throughout the entirety of sharing economy activities. Barter tourism exchanges are a very niche subset within the grand scheme of sharing economy, but it is an activity which is understood, by some participants, as a full embodiment of sharing.

6.4 Limitations

The limitations of the study will be addressed to suggest how the study may have been improved. The first limitation is due to the research design in which only two host locations were chosen for research. In each location, the entire active population of hosts and guests was used as the sample. Determining the sample in this manner prevented

the sample size from being controlled, as I was not able to foresee or decide how many people would be included within it. In hindsight, past HelpXers from each host location could have been contacted and interviewed to gain a larger sample of guests, who engaged both within the spatial home realm and with a boundary to the spatial home realm. More host locations also could have been visited to increase the host sample size. Had more host locations been added to the sample, it would have been beneficial to approach it in two ways. The additional hosts could have been similar to the Secastilla and Santa Cruz hosts in that the locations would present a shared spatial home realm, as well as a boundary to the spatial home realm. This would allow the findings of this research to be more easily determined throughout the larger sample. The second approach would be to add host locations which were similarly as diverse as the research locations of this study. With such distinct and varied cases, similarities and themes across the samples would provide even more meaningful contributions to the study. Despite this limitation, purposive and maximum variation sampling did allow for the relatively small, information-rich cases to act as an advantage when commonalities were determined across the diverse samples.

A second limitation also belongs to the research design, in that the research objectives shifted throughout the research process away from the original intention. Because of this evolution over the course of the research process, data collection during the Secastilla study was not approached with the same specific objectives in mind (see also section 4.4.3) as during the Santa Cruz study. Subsequent email correspondence did occur with participants of the Secastilla sample to address further questions, but the rapport that was established during the in-person interviews was not able to be recreated via email.

This stresses the importance of having a solidified research plan and objectives prior to beginning any participant observation and data collection in a research location.

6.5 Suggestions for Future Research

The relative newness of the sharing economy and the lack of studies regarding social dynamics between participants of the sharing economy, create many possible directions for future research. This study focuses on a very specific type of activity within the sharing economy, so future researchers would have ample opportunity to undertake studies of sharing within other segments of the sharing economy. It would be interesting to understand how active participants within an economic-focused segment, such as AirBnb hosts, perceive sharing in such an activity. From such a study, the *shared home realm* and the *boundary to the home realm* perspectives would likely be identified, as AirBnb presents the option to rent a room of a house, and thereby share the experience and the physical home realm, or to rent an entire house, in which little interaction occurs between the host and guest. It is also suggested that a different sharing economy activity, based upon a barter exchange, is studied in regards to how a participant perceives sharing within the exchange. Is the 'sharing' economy just a name, or do other non-monetary exchanges within the sharing economy also embody sharing?

For a researcher of volunteer tourism or other forms of alternative travel, this research hopefully creates awareness to a form of working travel experience that this study has called a barter tourism exchange. Further research could be made into the motivations, expectations, host-guest relationship, or outcomes of participants of this form of tourism. Additionally, the impact of barter tourism exchanges on the local community of the host location, or guests' intentions for future participation are possible directions of study regarding barter tourism exchanges. It is suggested that the researcher engage as an

active participant in the barter tourism exchange to gain a deeper, first-hand understanding of the social forces at work within an exchange and the roles occupied by the hosts and guests.

Final Remarks

To conclude, the sharing economy, barter, and sharing are three broad and complex areas of study. It is my hope that this study presents the connections they have to one another in a clear manner which adds value to the discussion of the many dimensions of the sharing economy as a whole. To many, the sharing economy may share only in name, but within a barter tourism exchange, many sharing economy participants engage to share, and share fully.

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Appendix A: Interview Guides

1. Interview Guide for Hosts
2. Interview Guide for Guests

Appendix B: Models and Figures

1. Dey's Model: Qualitative Analysis as Iterative Spiral
2. Framework for Analysis: Guest Understanding
3. Framework for Analysis: Host Understanding

Interview Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews: Hosts

- How did you hear about Helpx and when did you get involved?

- Approximately how many people have you hosted in this manner?

- Have you used bartering (non-monetary exchange of goods and services) as a transaction means in other areas of your life, prior or currently?

- What were your initial motivations in hosting?

- Have these motivations changed over time? What makes you continue to host?

- For you, what adds value to a hosting experience?

- What benefits- tangible and intangible- do you receive from hosting?

- Have you experienced any negative aspects of hosting?

- Do you see the exchange as mutually beneficial for both hosts and volunteers?

- How do you see your involvement as a host impacting the local community, if at all?

- Do you ever develop relationships with guests beyond a typical host/tourism provider + customer relationship?

- Do you see your participation with Helpx as being part of the sharing economy/collaborative consumption? If so, is this a motivating factor for participating?

- As a "tourism provider", how would your perception of the experience and exchange be different if you were charging the guests to stay here?

- How would charging a nominal fee change the relationship that you have with a guest, if at all?

- How important is HelpX's online rating system for you?

- Has this rating system worked as an effective regulatory device for the functioning of HelpX?

- Would you take a guest who did not have any ratings/references/ reputation capital?

- How does a poor review affect you/ how do you deal with one?

- Besides HelpX's rating/review system, how, if at all, do you establish trust with potential guests prior to their visit?

- How, if at all, have the lengths of stay impacted how you interact with your guests?

- What responsibilities do you feel towards your guests? Does it vary based on how you connect with each guest?

- How important is it for you to build a relationship with your guests?

- With your guests, has your role as a host within a work dimension ever become a social relationship/friendship?

- If so, what were the circumstances that led to this relationship shift (length of stay, repeat visit, etc)?

- If so, did your responsibilities/obligations towards the guest change when the relationship?

- Do you see role here as more of a host or an employer? Or something else- pseudo family member, friend, one party involved in a transaction?

- Do you see the exchange that occurs between you and the guests as a sharing relationship-- you are sharing your home, food, knowledge and experience, and they are sharing their time, energy, skills, etc? Or do you consider it more of a commodity exchange- you are two parties of an agreed upon exchange, fulfilling your sides of the agreement?

Interview Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews: Guests

- How did you hear about this opportunity?

- Have you worked/travelled/spent time in this manner- staying somewhere for free in exchange for your time and work?

- Have you used bartering (non-monetary exchange of goods and services) as a transaction means in other areas of your life, prior or currently?

- What were your initial motivations in volunteering/participating in an exchange of this kind?
- Have these motivations changed over time? What makes you continue to participate in this exchange?

- Would you travel in this manner- anything in which you are giving some of your time and energy in exchange for room, board, experience... ?

- Ideally, how would you interact with hosts in an exchange?

- What adds value to a volunteering experience?

- What do you think is special about this experience and this type of exchange?
- What benefits to do you receive from volunteering?

- Have you experienced any negative aspects of volunteering?

- Do you see the exchange as mutually beneficial for both hosts and guests?

- How do you see your involvement as a volunteer impacting the local community, if at all?

- Do you see your participation as being part of the sharing economy/collaborative consumption? If so, is this a motivating factor for participating?

- How would paying/being paid change the relationship that you have with the host and the experience, if at all? How would being a paid employee change how you interact with your hosts? The experience as a whole?
- Do you see role here as more of a guest or an employee? Or something else- pseudo family member, friend, one party involved in a transaction...

- Do you see the exchange that occurs between you and the hosts as a sharing relationship-- they are sharing their home, food, knowledge and experience, and you are sharing your time, energy, skills, etc? or do you consider it more of a commodity exchange- you are two parties of an agreed upon exchange, fulfilling your sides of the agreement?

- How did you decide to come here? Did you have any reviews or first-hand accounts to impact your decision?

- Would it have been beneficial to have read reviews or previous guest comments regarding the farm and the apprenticeship?

- How did you communicate with the hosts prior to your visit?

- How-if at all- did you establish trust with your hosts prior to your visit?

- Were expectations discussed prior- both yours and hosts?

- How, if at all, has the length of stay impacted how you interact with your hosts and the host community?

- As a guest, what responsibilities do you feel towards your hosts? Does it vary based on how you connect with each host?

- Coming into this situation, what did you expect of your hosts? Has this changed now?

- How important is it for you to build a relationship with your hosts?

- What influence has your relationship with your hosts had on your overall impression of the experience?

- With your hosts, has your role as a guest and volunteer within a work dimension ever become a social relationship/friendship?

- If so, what were the circumstances that led to this relationship shift (length of stay, repeat visit, etc..)?

Appendix B: Models and Figures

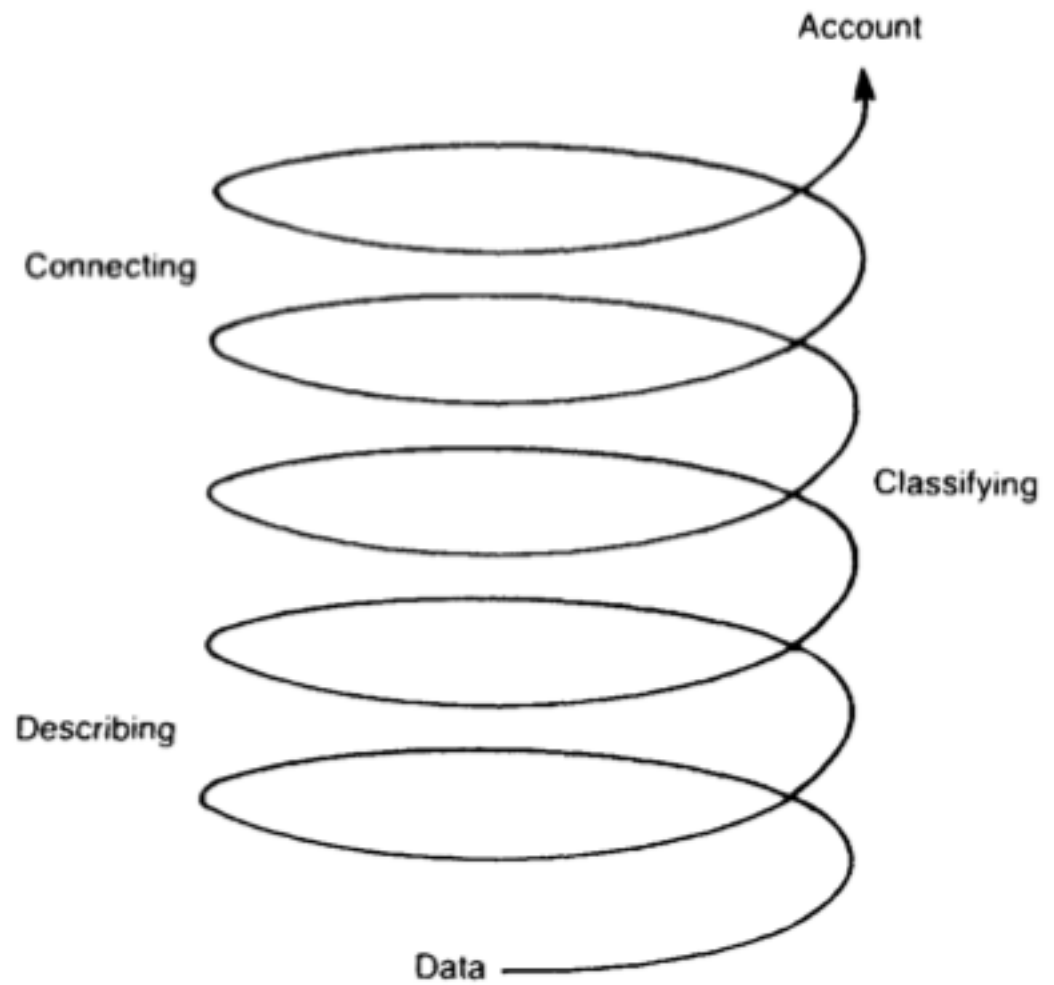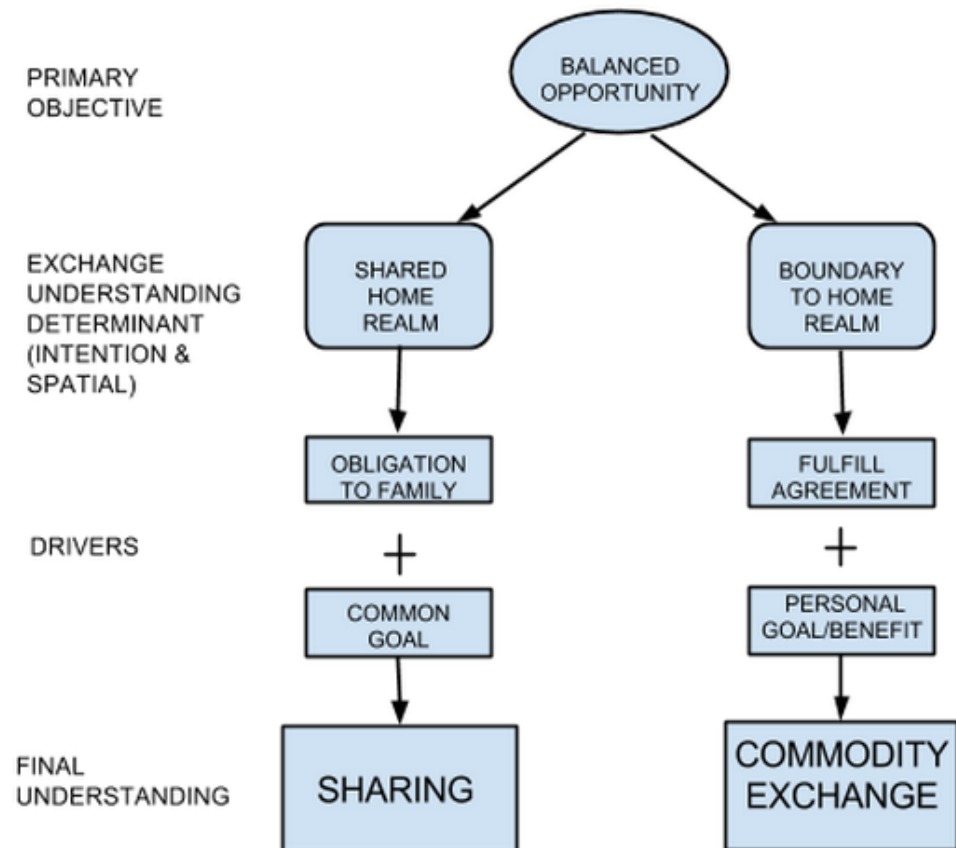**Figure 1:** Dey's (1993) Model: Qualitative Analysis as Iterative Spiral

Figure 2

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS: GUEST UNDERSTANDING

Figure 3

FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS: HOST UNDERSTANDING