Shaping the ‘Volunteer Tourist Bubble’: Gendered Experiences of Volunteer Tourists

by

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ABSTRACT

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Within the volunteer tourism sector there exists an uneven gender divide with a four to one ratio of women to men volunteering abroad. This thesis explores this trend from a feminist perspective, by investigating the way volunteer tourists perceived gender to have influenced the spaces, activities and interactions they experienced while abroad. To explore these experiences, I began by conducting semi-structured interviews with former volunteer tourists; I then conducted a case study of a volunteer trip in Guatemala, using participant observation and follow-up interviews. Through a feminist critique of this data, I argue that volunteer tourism is a gendered space, which can be conceptualized as a ‘volunteer tourist bubble.’ This ‘bubble’ is constructed through notions of fear and care, which shape and are shaped by volunteer tourists’ various subjectivities. These findings reveal ways in which gendered and racialized regimes of power are both challenged and reinforced in the ‘volunteer tourist bubble.’
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Chapter One: Introduction
The Gender Gap in Volunteer Tourism

1.1 Context

Since the structural adjustment policies of the 1980s and 1990s there has been an increasing emphasis on the privatization of traditionally state-led processes within international development. This shift has resulted in the emergence of new actors who are influencing the field in new ways. These new actors, including private individuals, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and corporations, have begun to fill the development deficit left by the reduction of traditional state-led development institutions (Richey & Ponte, 2014). The actors involved in the volunteer tourism sector, including volunteer tourism organizations and the volunteer tourists themselves, are prime examples of new actors engaging with development issues (Sin, Oakes & Mostafanezhad, 2015: p. 119). Volunteer tourism, which has been defined as a form of alternative travel where an individual pays a fee to engage in various types of volunteer work while travelling abroad, has seen tremendous growth in the last two decades with approximately 10 million individuals participating each year (McGehee, 2015). With the increased flow of people from the Global North to places in the Global South, which volunteer tourism has contributed to, new challenges and opportunities have emerged that need further examination.

The majority of volunteer tourists are young, white, middle class women from the Global North, with a four to one ratio of women to men participating in the sector (Mostafanezhad, 2013). Although this substantial gender gap exists and has been cited by several authors (Bandyopadhyay & Patil, 2017; Mostafanezhad, 2013), an in-depth review of literature on volunteer tourism has shown that there are few studies specifically focusing on gender within the
sector (see Bandyopadhyay and Patil (2017) and Mostafanezhad (2013) for important exceptions).

The literature on tourism and development studies more broadly has argued that the spaces, activities and interactions involved in these processes are not gender neutral; and that in order to truly understand the nuances of tourism and development a feminist analysis is required (Apostolopoulos, 2001; Cook, 2007; Gibson, 2001; Heron, 2007; Pritchard & Morgan, 2000). Based on this assertion I conducted a feminist analysis of volunteer tourism from the perspective of volunteer tourists, in an effort to further explain the intricacies of this phenomenon. In particular, I have drawn on feminist geography and its attention to fear and care in mediating individuals’ experiences with space in gendered ways. Although feminist geographers have extensively researched the geographies of fear and care in other contexts (England, 2010; Lawson, 2007; Raghuram, Madge & Noxolo, 2009; Smith, 1998; Valentine, 1989; Wilson & Little, 2005, etc.), the gendered geographies of fear and care within volunteer tourism have not yet been adequately explored, and are therefore the focus of this thesis. It is important to explore what kind of relationships and ideas about gender participating in volunteer tourism reinforces and/or challenges, and what this means for volunteer tourists’ understandings of gendered and racialized regimes of power that influence the sector.

1.2 Research Aim and Objectives

The research I present in this thesis begins to address the above knowledge gap. Specifically, this research aims to analyze the experiences of volunteer tourists from a feminist perspective, exploring the role of gender in mediating these experiences. To fulfill this aim, this research achieves three objectives:
1. To explore whether and how gender influenced the experiences of former volunteer tourists in the spaces, activities and interactions they participated in while volunteering abroad.

2. To examine whether and how gender influenced the experiences of volunteer tourists in the spaces, activities and interactions they participated in, during a specific volunteer trip in Guatemala.

3. To analyze volunteer tourists’ experiences from a feminist perspective, specifically the ways in which the space of volunteer tourism is constructed through notions of fear and care.

Various qualitative methods, which I explore in Chapter Three, including semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and discourse analysis are used to meet this aim and these objectives. Ultimately, through a feminist critique of this data, I argue that volunteer tourism is a gendered space, which can be conceptualized as a ‘volunteer tourist bubble.’ This ‘bubble’ is constructed through notions of fear and care, which shape and are shaped by volunteer tourists’ various subjectivities. These findings reveal ways in which gendered and racialized regimes of power are both challenged and reinforced in the ‘volunteer tourist bubble.’ This research therefore contributes to the existing understanding of gender within volunteer tourism from a feminist perspective and leads to future discussions on the potential implications of the gender ratio that exists in volunteer tourism.

1.3 Thesis Outline

The following five chapters illustrate how I achieve the above objectives in order to answer my research aim. In Chapter Two, I provide a literature review of the relevant bodies of knowledge that form the foundation of this thesis. Specifically, I examine literature on feminist
geography, including the geographies of care and fear; critical tourism and development literature, focused on the gendered experiences of women from the Global North while travelling and working abroad; and literature on volunteer tourism as it relates to development, subjectivity formation and gender. In Chapter Three, I detail the research design including the qualitative, feminist approach to research that I used in this study, the methods I used to collect and analyze the data that informs the findings, as well as a reflection on my positionality. In Chapter Four, I present the main research findings from semi-structured interviews with former volunteer tourists currently residing in Guelph, Ontario who volunteered in many different countries around the world and highlight the various ways volunteer tourists perceived the spaces, activities and interactions they experienced while abroad to be gendered. Within this chapter, themes around fear and care emerge that are later revisited in the discussion section. In Chapter Five, I present the main findings from the case study of a volunteer trip in Guatemala. In this section I include findings from both participant observation and follow-up semi-structured interviews with participants from the volunteer trip. This chapter further explores the themes of fear and care, as well as the effect of volunteer tourists’ intersecting subjectivities on their experiences abroad. In Chapter Six, I suggest that volunteer tourism constructs a ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ which needs to be understood as a gendered space and I discuss how the geographies of fear and care shape and are shaped by this ‘bubble.’ Ultimately, in Chapter Seven I conclude by re-examining the research aims and objectives, presenting the main contributions of this thesis and suggesting potential limitations of the study and opportunities for further research.
Chapter Two: Literature Review
Contextualizing the Study of Gender in Volunteer Tourism

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to review relevant literature relating to gender and volunteer tourism in order to contextualize and justify the research I present in this thesis. Specifically, this research contributes to and has drawn from the existing bodies of literature on feminist geography, critical tourism and development studies, and volunteer tourism. These various bodies of literature establish the importance of researching the ways gender mediates volunteer tourists’ experiences from a feminist perspective.

2.2 Feminist Geography

Feminist geography is a theoretical framework that takes a critical and self-reflexive approach to examining gendered regimes of power within everyday life (McDowell, 1997). There are many important insights provided by feminist geographers that are relevant for this study, including the notions that: all knowledge is complex, situated and embodied (Domosh, 1997); gender and geographies are mutually constituted and produced over time and space (Bondi & Davidson, 2008; McDowell, 1997; Rosewarne, 2005); space is often organized in a way that privileges men at the expense of women (Koskela & Pain, 2000; Rosewarne, 2005); gender is one of several elements of social difference and inequality (Bondi & Davidson, 2008; Nelson & Seager, 2008); and there is a need to deconstruct ideas of gender, including what constitutes as masculine and/or feminine (Bondi & Davidson, 2008; Nelson & Seager, 2008). This critical body of knowledge provides important context for the research presented in this thesis, as many feminist geographers have struggled with concepts that this thesis addresses.
2.2.1 Conceptualizing Gendered Subjectivities and Intersectionality

The concept of gender has often been considered in terms of a binary, with men/masculine being on one end and women/feminine on the other (Nightingale, 2011). However, feminist geographers have challenged this binary and have asked questions about what it means to be a ‘man’ or a ‘woman’ in certain spaces (Bondi & Davidson, 2008; Johnston, 1996). In feminist geography gender has often been conceptualized as fluid, dynamic and relational, (re)producing multiple masculinities and femininities across time and space (Bondi & Davidson, 2008; Sundberg, 2004; Nightingale, 2011). Gender has also been conceptualized as a process of performativity, in which individuals act out their subject ‘identities’ in different ways in the various spaces they occupy (Doan, 2010; Butler, 1990). It is important to note, that although the term ‘identity’ has been used in many feminist studies on gender and other social categories of difference, the term has also been critiqued for promoting the fixity of these categories (Nightingale, 2011).

In feminist geography, the term ‘subjectivity’ has often been used as it challenges the fixedness of ‘identities’ and the notion that individuals are free to construct them. The term subjectivity, highlights that categories of difference are produced through “everyday movement of bodies in spaces […] out of the multiple and intersecting exercise of power within socio-natural networks” (Nightingale, 2011: p. 153). These regimes of power (e.g. patriarchy, religion, colonialism, etc.) lead to individuals’ subjectivities being neither permanently assigned nor freely chosen (Bondi & Davidson, 2008; Secor, 2002). Throughout this thesis, I use the term ‘subjectivity’ rather than ‘identity’ in order to acknowledge the many influences and structures affecting individual subjects. As a result, when authors and participants use the word ‘identity,’ I
have interpreted these experiences with regards to my understanding of the concept of ‘subjectivity.’

Another concept related to subjectivity that is important for this study is that of intersectionality, a term coined by critical race theorist Kimberle Crenshaw (1989). Intersectionality is a way of theorizing the relationship between different social categories (e.g. sex, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, age, etc.), or how an individual “stands at the crossroads of multiple groups” and how this position may influence one’s experiences (Minnow, 1997: p. 38 as cited in Valentine, 2007). Feminist geographers have been particularly interested in the way these various oppressions are enacted and produced in different spaces (Nelson & Seager, 2008; Nightingale, 2011; Valentine, 2007). Intersectionality is a useful lens from which to analyze the gendered experiences of individuals from the Global North travelling and volunteering in the Global South, and throughout this research I keep the definition of gender as fluid, performative and intersectional at the forefront of analysis.

2.2.2 Understanding Gendered Space

In feminist geography, space has been theorized as both a social and physical construction, that is formed by multiple and complex gendered and racialized power relations, which exist from the local to the global and govern people and their actions (Crouch, 2000; Secor, 2002). Of these social processes that construct space, this research focuses most explicitly on the role of gendered relations. Feminist geographers have asserted that space is gendered and “place doesn’t just reflect gender, it produces it,” (Nelson & Seager, 2008); therefore, to explore the role of gender in individuals’ experiences an understanding of how gender and space are mutually constituted is required. Gendered spaces are shaped by and shapers of the various performances of gender that occur within them and people’s reaction to these performances
(Doan, 2010). Browne (2006) has argued that in certain spaces the surveillance of gendered performances, in which judgement is passed on the way gender is performed through the gaze of the onlooker, often results in individuals policing their own gendered performances (Browne, 2006).

The repetition of gendered performances in certain spaces, often shapes the spaces in which they occur (Browne, 2006). A common example of this is the public/private division of space that exists in the Global North, which is often constructed along gendered lines, with private spaces associated with femininity and public spaces with masculinity (Doan, 2010; McDowell, 1997; Rosewarne, 2005). As public spaces are socially constructed as masculine the needs of women in these spaces are often ignored, leading to fewer women feeling comfortable occupying these spaces and subsequently emptying them of women (Rosewarne, 2005). This private/public construction of gendered space is problematic, as it contributes to socially constructed ideas around what spaces and performances are safe and acceptable for certain genders, which has material implications for individuals’ access and occupation of space. This understanding of gendered space is useful for exploring how gender shapes the space of volunteer tourism.

2.2.3 The Geographies of Care

Within the literature on gendered space, a common theme is the geographies of care, which have often been analyzed within the private spaces of individuals’ everyday lives. Although care has often been seen as a “taken-for-granted” or “mundane” part of women’s experiences, feminist geographers have argued that care is a part of all interactions even when it is overlooked or ignored (Dyck, 2005: p. 233; Lawson, 2007: p. 3). Care is not a static nor individual action, rather it is a public concern that is constructed relationally in the context of
broad societal issues, an action that needs to be considered as simultaneously ethical, political, personal and public (Conradson, 2003; Lawson, 2007; Raghuram 2016). Furthermore, feminists have argued that in order for care to be genuine an individual must care about as well as for the object of their care (Raghuram, 2016). Feminist geographers are particularly interested in the spatial nature of care, how and by whom care is enacted, and understanding regimes of power that mediate care and care work (Barker, 2011).

The spaces where care occurs have been referred to as ‘caringscapes,’ including sites such as homes, streets and institutions, which shape and are shaped by global processes and social relations of care (Baker 2011; Popke, 2006). Through these global processes, such as neoliberalism and globalization, geographies of care have extended beyond the local to the global scale (Lawson, 2007: p. 6). For example, the privatization of care in the 1980s and 1990s that was influenced by neoliberal policies contributed to the emergence of new international actors who developed to meet the resulting care deficit; these actors (e.g. migrant care-givers, ethical consumers, volunteer tourists) have connected the world in new, more intimate ways (Dyck, 2005). This expansion of ‘caringscapes’ and actors involved in care has had both gendered and racialized consequences.

As several feminist geographers have explained, the discourses and practices of care are heavily gendered (Baker, 2011; Conradson, 2003; England, 2010). In their study on the gendered geographies of care, Armstrong and Armstrong (2001: p. 1, as cited in England, 2010) highlighted that “[c]are work is women’s work. Paid and unpaid, located at home, in voluntary organizations or in the labour force, the overwhelming majority of care is provided by women.” Such an association of care work with women and the private spaces of the home reinforces hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity, which limit specific genders’ experiences with
caringscapes, performances of care and caring relationships (Barker, 2011; Conradson, 2003). Influenced by this gendered division of care work, neoliberal policies that have contributed to the retrenchment of public institutions responsible for caregiving, have increasingly burdened women with caregiving activities (England, 2010: p. 146).

According to Lawson (2007) new international connections, that have occurred through globalization, may lead to people in the Global North increasingly viewing people in the Global South as similar to themselves rather than as distant and separate. Although this may be seen as a potential benefit of the expansion of caringscapes, Raghuram (2016) encouraged us to examine the geographies of care from a postcolonial view. She argued that, to this day, many international relationships of care operate on an uneven power imbalance constructed during colonialism, which positions the Global North as the providers of care (Raghuram, 2016). This is problematic as individuals in the Global South are constructed as in need of care from the ‘powerful,’ care-giving Global North, perpetuating rather than challenging ideas of the ‘Other.’ As diverse actors, such as volunteer tourists, continue to take on new roles within international relationships of care, new questions are raised about the ethical responsibilities and abilities of organizations and individuals to care for distant ‘Others.’ Furthermore, questions have been raised around how these actors are changing the ways care is enacted and understood in particularly gendered and racialized ways (Lawson 2007; Popke, 2006; Raghuram et al., 2009; Raghuram 2016).

2.2.4 The Geographies of Fear

Another important theme within the literature on gendered space is the geographies of fear, which contrary to the geographies of care, have often been analyzed within the public spaces of individuals’ everyday lives. In her influential work, Valentine (1989) examined the perception of fear that women from the Global North associated with certain environmental
contexts in their home countries. She found that many women were fearful of large open spaces, such as parks and woodlands, as well as closed spaces with restricted exits, such as subways and alleyways (Valentine, 1989: p. 386). Within these public spaces, women specifically spoke about fearing violent physical and/or sexual attacks from strange men (Rosewarne, 2005; Valentine, 1989). Koskela (1997) argued that these fears reflect the regimes of gendered power that exist within a society.

In these studies, women’s feelings of fear were often linked to a socially constructed sense of a woman’s “uncertainty, helplessness and vulnerability” within a given space that may result from women’s past experiences with space, as well as secondary information (e.g. parents’ differentiated concern for their children based on their gender; outdoor advertisements that sexualize women) (Koskela, 1997: p.304; Rosewarne, 2005; Valentine, 1989: p. 386). Studies have also shown that there is a temporal component to women’s fear, as public space that is accessible to women during the day is often perceived as more dangerous in the evening as it becomes dominated by men (Valentine, 1989; Koskela and Pain, 2000: p. 271). As women feel excluded from, sexualized in, or are told to avoid public spaces they internalize the belief that they need to be afraid (Valentine, 1989). This fear may cause them to avoid certain places, further emptying them of women and perpetuating the dominance of masculinity within that space (Valentine, 1989: p. 389). In this way, the geographies of women’s fears are not only about women, but also about masculinities and femininities and what it means to be a ‘woman’ or a ‘man’ in certain spaces.

Women have adopted various strategies to cope with or challenge their fear of public spaces. Valentine (1989: p. 386) found that women negotiated public space by developing “mental maps” of routes to destinations that made them feel safe, specifically by avoiding spaces
and times they perceived as dangerous. Valentine (1989) also argued that women often rely on their male relations to access spaces they fear; she argued that this further perpetuates patriarchal relations that subjugate women. In Koskela’s (1997) analysis of gendered fear in Helsinki, Finland, she found that some women adopt strategies to access spaces, such as reasoning with themselves that they have nothing to be afraid of, or walking and dressing in a way that makes them feel confident (Koskela, 1997). By using public spaces in women’s everyday routines these spaces are more likely to be considered as familiar and safe, resulting in a demystification of the dangerousness of certain spaces (Koskela, 1997). Although these strategies work for some women, in some spaces, it is important to consider both the intersectionality of women’s fears as well as the various contexts women fear at both a local and global scale (Koskela, 1997: p. 304).

With the increased travel of women from the Global North to the Global South engaging in volunteer tourism, it is important to explore how the geographies of care and fear are being stretched across space. The way women from the Global North access and occupy space and embody notions of fear and care within certain spaces, is influenced by socially constructed gendered norms that mediate individuals’ everyday experiences. This thesis draws from the existing work of feminist geographers who examine the ways the geographies of care and fear are gendered and racialized, to understand how the spaces, practices and actors involved in volunteer tourism are influenced by unequal power dynamics between the Global North and Global South. To provide further context, I now turn to literature from critical tourism and development studies to explore the existing research on gender as it relates to individuals from the Global North travelling and working in the Global South.

2.3 Gender, Tourism and Development

With volunteer tourism, the tourism industry is increasingly being brought into the field
of international development. According to Cook (2011), much non-feminist literature has often assumed that these processes of globalization are gender neutral; however, recent work by feminist scholars (Cook, 2007; Fechter, 2010; Heron, 2007; Roth, 2015) has shown “the systematically gendered […] nature of material practices, spaces, discourses, and consequences of globalization” (Cook, 2011: p. 341). Fechter (2010: p.1281) explained that many of the existing studies on the gendered dimensions of globalization, have focused on socio-economically disadvantaged women from the Global South. Such an exclusive focus on these women is problematic, as it ignores the role that women from the Global North play in the processes of globalization, which contribute to uneven socio-economic development and creates a limited perspective of the way gender influences globalization (Fechter, 2010). This section examines literature on the role of gender in mediating the experiences of women from the Global North, specifically while travelling abroad as tourists and as individuals involved in the field of development (i.e. women working for NGO’s, governmental organizations, teaching abroad, etc.).

2.3.1 Gendered Experiences of Tourist Women

Gender is crucial to the construction of tourist spaces, however, in the past tourism literature has not adequately engaged with this concept (Pritchard & Morgan, 2000: p. 885). According to scholars focused on the gendered dimensions of tourism, this practice has historically been seen and theorized as a predominantly masculine space (Elsrud, 2006; Gibson, Jordan & Berdychevsky, 2013; Pritchard & Morgan, 2000). However, as is seen in the existing literature focused on gender and tourism, gender mediates the various facets of the industry and women now participate in tourism in equal numbers to men (Wearing & Wearing, 1996; Yang, Khoo-Lattimore & Arcodia, 2017). Critical tourism researchers have argued for the importance
of considering tourism as “a site and process of construction, legitimation, reproduction and reworking of gender relations” (Aitchison, 2005: p. 22 as cited in Pritchard, Morgan, Ateljevic and Harris, 2007: p. 6).

According to Elsrud (2006: p. 181), the reworking of tourism spaces that were once ‘normalized’ as masculine has started to occur through tourist women’s increased occupation of these spaces. However, until recently studies on gender and tourism have predominantly focused on women as producers of tourism (i.e. service workers) (Gibson, 2001; Harris & Wilson, 2007; Pritchard et al., 2007). By extending a feminist analysis to tourist women, their role in tourism can be explored and we can begin to understand the various gendered and racialized power hierarchies that mediate the industry. An important theme that has emerged in existing work on tourist women, is the various constraints that limit their experiences with tourist spaces, activities and interactions (Gibson, Jordan & Berdychevsky, 2013; Harris & Wilson, 2007). Specifically, constraints include negative connotations associated with women who seek adventure (Elsrud, 2006); the gaze of other tourists and local people (Gibson et al., 2013); and women’s perceptions of fear and safety (Wilson & Little, 2005). These social and cultural constraints regarding what is acceptable behaviour for women, greatly influence women’s travel decisions, including their itineraries, the spaces they occupy, and the people with whom they associate (Harris & Wilson, 2007).

Several feminist researchers have focused explicitly on the way perceptions of fear and safety constrain tourist women (see Jordan & Aitchison, 2008; Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Wilson, Holdsworth and Witsel, 2009; Wilson & Little, 2005). Within the context of international travel women spoke about fearing physical and/or sexual assault and many had stories of being “observed, followed or more aggressively harassed” by local
men (Jordan & Aitchison, 2008; Wilson et al., 2009). This fear may have been influenced by the unfamiliar physical and cultural environments tourists found themselves in (Jordan & Aitchison, 2008; Wilson & Little, 2005: p. 167) as well as by problematic racialized and colonial ideas of the ‘Other,’ which construct local men as hyper-sexual or as savages (Cook, 2006).

The concept of the sexualized gaze has been an important theme in the narratives of tourist women (Jordan & Aitchison, 2008). The term ‘tourist gaze’ was first coined by Urry (1990), who argued that in the tourist-host relationship tourists exercise power over local hosts by observing or gazing upon them. Maoz (2006) extended this concept by suggesting that in tourism the gaze is multidirectional, with the tourists and hosts being both the subject and object of the gaze allowing for both actors to have power and agency (Maoz, 2006). Jordan and Aitchison’s (2008: p. 329) study found that the often unwanted, uninvited and sexualized gaze of local men led to tourist women’s self-surveillance, which influenced their access and occupation of certain public spaces.

On the contrary, tourism has also been viewed as a way for women from the Global North to overcome constraints such as gendered expectations of care and gendered ideas around fear. According to Gibson (2001), tourists frequently saw tourism spaces in the Global South as heterotopias in which they could challenge patriarchal structures of their home societies, by exploring and redefining their sexuality and independence. In this way, holidays abroad act as potential sites of resistance and empowerment for women from the Global North, as well as potential journeys for self-discovery (Gibson et al., 2013; Harris & Wilson, 2007). This view positions women in the Global North as empowered agents rather than as passive victims of patriarchy (Harris & Wilson, 2007: p. 238).
Incorporating gender into tourism studies challenges the assumption that tourism encounters are gender neutral. According to Pritchard and Morgan (2000: p. 887) gender must be central in tourism studies as “notions about femininity and masculinity create and sustain global inequalities and oppressions.” Therefore, if we extend the discussions from the literature on gender and tourism to volunteer tourism, it becomes evident that in order to understand this sector the role of gender must be explored. Although, in many ways volunteer tourism is similar to traditional tourism, there are also important differences that this thesis seeks to investigate. A significant part of this difference, is the fact that volunteer tourism is not simply a subset of tourism, rather it combines elements of both tourism and development; as a result, below I explore literature on the way gender influenced the experiences of women from the Global North working in development.

### 2.3.2 Development Work as a Gendered Experience

Although many academics have noted the feminization of on-the-ground development workers over the 20th and 21st century, few have focused exclusively on this phenomenon (for exceptions see Cook, 2007; de Jong, 2009; Heron, 2007; Roth, 2015). Several studies have indicated that the majority of frontline workers are women, whereas positions at the senior management level are dominated by men (Fechter & Hindman, 2011; Roth, 2015). Additionally, during their careers abroad, it has been found that women development workers faced gender discrimination in both their places of employment as well as in the projects that they participated in (Heron, 2007; Roth, 2015; Fechter & Hindman, 2011; Laville, 2016). Yet it has also been argued, that with the recent focus on gender equality in international development projects, the field has opened many opportunities for women seeking to work abroad (Roth, 2015: p. 61).
The space where international development work occurs (an imagined space some refer to as ‘Aidland’) has been conceptualized as a space where subjectivities of women from the Global North can be both challenged and reinforced (Cook, 2007; Heron, 2007; Roth, 2015). Specifically, Roth (2015: p. 101) referred to ‘Aidland’ as a ‘bubble’ which is separate from local communities and argued that this ‘bubble’ provides a suitable space for development workers to renegotiate their gender subjectivities. She states:

…[W]omen and men working in aid [are able] to ignore and play with conventional gender expectations and to reconcile “femininity” and “masculinity.” […] the diversity and fluidity as well as the differences between expatriates from the Global North and nationals and internationals from the Global South contribute to an opening up of negotiations as to how gender is done and undone. (Roth, 2015: p. 112)

This renegotiation of subjectivities may be expressed in a variety of ways; for example, women development workers described increasingly taking on roles that were seen by local people as masculine (i.e. managing a project, leading an organization etc.) (Cook, 2007; Heron, 2007; Roth, 2015). These women explained that because they were white they could access opportunities that were not available to local women, which they believed led to local people viewing them as a “third sex” (Roth, 2015) or as “honorary men” (Heron, 2007). In this way, gender may be fluid and redone in the context of development (Roth, 2015).

The existing literature on women development workers also discussed how encounters with the ‘Other’ influenced women’s subjectivities. In his concept of Orientalism, Said (1978) argued that through one’s proximity to the ‘Other’ they come to know themselves. In her book on women development workers in Pakistan, Cook (2007) illustrated how, through the practical ways women from the Global North attempted to situate themselves in the unfamiliar spaces of development, (i.e. by choosing to dress with or without a head covering, by choosing to take a taxi or walk to the market etc.) they confronted who they were and how they wished to represent
themselves (Cook, 2007: p. 26). Additionally, both Heron (2007) and Cook’s (2007) studies illustrated how these women often understood local women as disempowered and oppressed, which made their own freedom, and mobility as independent women from the Global North all the more valuable (Heron, 2007; Cook, 2007).

It is important to consider how the process of ‘doing development’ is predicated on various positions of power that privilege people from the Global North. Lahiri-Dutt (2017: p. 1) explained that the normative belief that women from the Global North should be the ones ‘doing development’ is problematic as it positions them as people with the power, knowledge, authority and expertise needed to solve the world’s development problems. Additionally, Mindry (2010) argued that women from the Global North’s involvement in development is often influenced by a feminized care ethic that disproportionately holds women responsible for care giving tasks, which in a globalized world extends to people in the Global South (Cook, 2011; Mindry, 2010). According to Cook (2011: p. 343) such a gendered construction of care in the field of development is problematic. She explained:

First, it obscures power relations at work in North-South histories and contemporary interactions. Second, questions of whiteness as a system of domination are circumvented so as to mask the ways in which Northern women activists are implicated in structures of underdevelopment in the South. Third, altruistic narratives disincline activists from acknowledging how their engagements generate material benefits for themselves. These occlusions render Southern subjects as passive victims in need of rescue, rather than as activists in themselves who have their own nuanced critiques of global injustice and histories of resistant struggle (Cook, 2011: p. 343).

As a result, feminist scholars have called for practitioners of development, specifically white women, to engage in a process of reflexivity before attempting to ‘do development’ work (de Jong, 2009; Lahiri-Dutt, 2017; Mindry, 2010).

As illustrated in this section, through the processes of tourism and development women from the Global North are afforded with various opportunities to both transgress
and reinforce their gendered subjectivities within the spaces of the Global South. Although important work on the role of gender within international relationships has occurred, more feminist research is needed to challenge the assumption that international relationships are gender neutral and to explore the systematically gendered nature of the material practices, spaces, discourses and consequences of these international relationships (Cook, 2007). The next section presents a review of literature specifically on volunteer tourism, which reveals the way the sector is related to processes of globalization and how it acts as a space of subjectivity formation for volunteer tourists.

2.4 Volunteer Tourism

Approximately 10 million individuals participate in volunteer tourism each year, drastically increasing the flow of people travelling from the Global North to the Global South (McGehee, 2015). The volunteer tourism sector has been heavily researched with work having looked at both the potential benefits and critiques of the sector. The type of uncritical development that volunteer tourism often supports is a common critique of the sector, with academics having argued that volunteer tourism perpetuates ideas of people in the Global South as ‘Others’ and relies on neoliberal notions of individualism that depoliticize development issues (Griffiths, 2016; Palacios, 2010; Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011). Another central focus in the literature on volunteer tourism is the way the sector influences volunteer tourists’ subjectivities (Butcher & Smith, 2015; Godfrey, Wearing, Schulenkorf & Grabowski, 2016; Sin, 2009; Tiessen & Heron, 2012; Wearing, McDonald, & Wearing, 2013; Wearing & Neil, 2001). There is, however, limited work on gendered subjectivities as it relates to volunteer tourism (see Bandyopadhyay & Patil (2017) and Mostafanezhad (2013) as important exceptions). This section further explores these key themes.
2.4.1 Volunteer Tourism and Development

As previously outlined, volunteer tourism is a form of alternative travel in which an individual pays a fee to engage in various types of volunteer work while travelling abroad. For example, individuals may volunteer abroad building wells or schools, working in orphanages, teaching English, or a variety of other development or conservation focused initiatives.¹ Volunteer tourism is often extolled by organizations and participants as a form of sustainable development (Raymond & Hall, 2008). These proponents have argued that volunteer tourism creates shared benefits to local people and natural resources in host communities, as well as to volunteers (Wearing, 2001: p. 12). These benefits are said to include economic and political empowerment of local people, as well as providing greater opportunities for intimate interactions and cross-cultural understandings between volunteers and host communities (Sin, 2010), which allows volunteer tourists to “escape the ‘tourist bubble’ through intimate encounters with local people” (Mostafanezahd, 2014: p. 2). However, this view of the sector is increasingly being challenged with opponents problematizing these claims and arguing that volunteer tourism has the potential to influence the field of development in a negative way.

The negative consequences of volunteer tourism on development are both practical and theoretical. Guttentag (2009) catalogued some of the practical consequences of volunteer tourism on development, including: a neglect of local people’s desires, hindering the progress of work that is being done by local people due to the volunteers’ lack of skills, a promotion of dependency on the Global North and unwanted cultural change in the host community.

Theoretically, academics have argued that viewing volunteer tourism as a form of sustainable development simplifies the complex nature of the economic and political relationships between

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¹ This research specifically examines development focused volunteer tourism, which places an emphasis on alleviating the material poverty of people in the Global South through a variety of means.
the Global North and Global South, which directly influences development problems and solutions (Butcher & Smith, 2010; Crossley, 2012; Simpson, 2004). In this way, volunteer tourism makes the practice of development “doable, knowable and accessible” to untrained individuals in the Global North (Simpson, 2004: p. 681). It has also been argued that volunteer tourism furthers conceptualizations of the ‘Other’ through the discourses used in promotional materials and/or the structure of trips, which frame people from the Global South as in need of assistance from people in the Global North. Emphasizing the need of local communities increases the divide between ‘us’ (the volunteer tourists) and ‘them’ (the host communities).

In their research on volunteer tourism in Cusco, Peru, Godfrey, Wearing and Schulekorf (2015) provided an interesting example of how theoretical concerns with volunteer tourism occur materially. They explained that rather than escaping the “‘tourist bubble’ through intimate encounters with local people” (Mostafanezhad, 2014: p. 2), the established system of host families in Cusco has led to the development of a “volunteer tourism enclave” (Godfrey et al., 2015: p. 141). Similar to the ‘bubble’ Roth (2015) described existing in ‘Aidland,’ in this enclave (which I will later refer to as the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’), the local community catered to volunteer tourists’ desire for the familiar, with a well-established infrastructure for volunteers to take advantage of including backpacker bars, hostels, and adventure tourism options (Godfrey et al., 2015: p. 141). As a result of such enclaves, volunteer tourism can exist “separate from, but parallel to, the host community” and rather than disrupting unequal power dynamics through affective relationships with local people, volunteer tourists can gaze at host communities from within their volunteer enclaves (Godfrey et al., 2015: p. 141). As illustrated by this example, due in part to the continued separation of local communities and volunteer tourists, the unequal power dynamic between the Global North and Global South is reinforced, as development
becomes something that is done to rather than with communities in the Global South (Simpson, 2004; Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011).

2.4.2 Volunteer Tourism as a Project of Subjectivity Formation

Volunteer tourism has also been researched as a space of subjectivity formation for volunteer tourists. In their work on reconfiguring self through volunteer tourism, Wearing and Neil (2000: p. 396) argued that volunteer tourism provides a unique model of “identity formation” and that because volunteer tourists are often young people, the experiences they engage with while abroad allow them opportunities to explore a “multiplicity of subjectivities.” Many times, however, volunteer tourists’ subjectivities are reinforced rather than challenged during their volunteer tourism experiences (Wearing & McGehee, 2013). Wearing and McGehee (2013: p. 119), explained how such a confirmation of subjectivities may occur, stating:

The power differentials between Western tourists comprising the dominant discourses of their culture, and those of the host culture, may in fact mean that the tourist merely imposes his/her ideas and values onto the host culture and thus comes away more confirmed than ever concerning gender, race, age and/or ethnic rigidities. That is, the original self may be confirmed through its pre-tourist subjectivity (Wearing & McGehee, 2013: p. 119).

In this way, through their interactions with local people in the Global South, or the ‘Other,’ volunteer tourists often come back from their experiences abroad with a greater sense of ‘self.’

This research raises many important questions regarding power and privilege. For example, do gendered and racialized regimes of power influence the subjectivities of volunteer tourists? How do the gendered experiences of volunteer tourists maintain gendered and racialized regimes of power that mediate volunteer tourism? Although much research has been done on how volunteer tourism has the potential to influence the subjectivities of volunteer tourists, few researchers have examined how volunteer tourists’ subjectivities influence their experiences with volunteer tourism (see Judge (2016) for an important example of how race shapes the experience
of volunteer tourists). With the four to one ratio of women to men volunteering abroad, I argue that the lack of research on the role of gendered subjectivities within volunteer tourism, is particularly problematic.

2.4.3 Volunteer Tourism and Gender

With the proliferation of research examining volunteer tourism, it is surprising that such little work exists focusing explicitly on the role of gender within the sector. Many authors have cited gender as one of several variables - including race, class, ethnicity, and age – that should be taken into consideration when researching volunteer tourists (e.g. Alexander, 2012; Andereck, McGehee, Lee and Clemmons, 2010; Griffiths, 2015; Judge, 2016; McIntosh & Zahra, 2007; Wearing & Niel, 2000). In her study, which analyzed the influence of a volunteer tourism trip in South Africa on volunteer participants, Alexander (2012) included gender as one of four important variables. With regards to gender, her analysis found that some personality traits that were affected by volunteers’ trips were influenced differently depending on whether one was “female or male” (Alexander, 2012: p. 124). Alexander (2012) explained gendered differences as the result of both biology and the environment, however, a feminist critique was not present in this gendered analysis. In her work on volunteers’ embodied performances of race during a volunteer tourism trip in Zimbabwe, Judge (2016: p. 245) identified and began to analyze the role of gender during the trip as it intersected with the “dynamics of surfacing racialized difference.” For example, she discussed how young volunteer men, racialized as black, often performed certain forms of ‘African masculinity’ that other white volunteers did not (Judge, 2016: p. 247).

Other authors addressed gender in relation to gender inequality in communities where volunteer projects took place, or as one of several issues volunteer tourists were attempting to
address during their projects (Barbieri, Santos & Katsube, 2012; Campbell & Warner, 2016; Kirillova, Lehto & Cai, 2015). For example, Kirillova et al. (2015: p. 395) explained how witnessing gender inequality may have resulted in some volunteer tourists viewing local cultures as inferior or minimizing the gender inequality in the community, with volunteer tourists having said things such as “they just don’t know any better,” further perpetuating a sense of cultural superiority. Although the reviewed studies began to raise important issues of gender in volunteer tourism, their focus remained on other aspects of volunteer tourism, simply adding gender or mentioning it in passing.

An example of research that focuses more narrowly on issues of gender in volunteer tourism, is the work of Mostafanezhad (2013). In Mostafanezhad’s (2013) research, she highlighted the uneven gender divide in volunteer tourism and examined the experiences and motivations of volunteer women in Northern Thailand. Specifically, she argued that female celebrity humanitarians have influenced female volunteer tourists (Mostafanezhad, 2013). Through notions of motherhood and care, which were used to explain celebrities’ involvement with development, celebrity humanitarians have cultivated a “gendered generosity” that in turn has influenced young, female volunteer tourists (Mostafanezhad, 2013: p. 486). She explained that this gendered generosity may reinforce “traditional cultural norms about women’s roles in Western society” (Mostafanezhad, 2013: p. 490), causing female volunteer tourists to focus on volunteer work traditionally considered as female work (i.e. caregiving and working with children) (Mostafanezhad, 2013: p. 486). She argued that as children in the Global South become the center of volunteer tourists’ focus, the political and economic systems responsible for underdevelopment, such as neoliberalism and colonialism, are made invisible (Mostafanezhad, 2013: p. 486).
Recently, a paper was published by Bandyopadhyay and Patil (2017) entitled “‘The white woman’s burden’ – the racialized, gendered politics of volunteer tourism,” which examined the popularity of volunteer tourism with white women from the Global North. The authors argued that the large number of white women in volunteer tourism provides insight into current manifestations of colonialism (Bandyopadhyay & Patil, 2017: p. 7-9), asking:

If for British women in the colonial period, saving Indian children and women from their savage men and culture was a bid for inclusion in nation and empire (Burton, 1994), what are the particular concerns of the predominantly young, white women who participate in volunteer tourism today? How does this participation matter for their sense of self? [...] And, what are the larger structural and institutional contexts within which their participation in this activity has emerged and grown?

Interestingly, Bandyopadhyay and Patil (2017: p. 11) called for more research on volunteer tourism to examine the rise in popularity of volunteer tourism with young white women that takes into consideration “historic and ongoing power relations” that address race and gender. They argued that more research needs to be done, examining “what sorts of concerns, tensions, and identities” lead to participation in volunteer tourism, and what the consequences of this participation may have on subjectivity formation (Bandyopadhyay & Patil, 2017: p. 11).

This section reveals that volunteer tourism is a gendered practice, that has not adequately been explored as such. The work of Mostafanezhad (2013) and Bandyopadhyay and Patil (2017) revealed a need for additional critical research on gender and volunteer tourism to more thoroughly understand the implications of the feminization of the sector.

2.5 Conclusion: Examining the Gendered Experiences of Volunteer Tourists

The literature reviewed in this section reveals a strong body of knowledge from which to analyze the gendered experiences of volunteer tourists. The literature on feminist geography shows the importance of thinking about the processes by which space is socially constructed, and how space and gender are mutually constituted. Specifically, this literature reveals how space is
influenced by and influences gendered and racialized ideas of fear and care. The critical tourism and development literature, begins to explore how gender has shaped individuals’ experiences abroad as both travellers and development workers. Furthermore, the literature highlights how women from the Global North have used spaces in the Global South to explore their subjectivities, as well as the material ways women from the Global North negotiate their safety and subjectivities within the Global South. Finally, the literature on volunteer tourism, shows how volunteer tourism has been considered as a form of development, and as a space of subjectivity formation. What is lacking in the literature is an extensive examination of how the gendered subjectivities of volunteer tourists, influence and are influenced by the space of volunteer tourism. This thesis attempts to fill this gap.
Chapter Three: Research Design
Designing a Feminist, Qualitative Research Project

3.1 Introduction

In order to achieve the study’s aim and objectives I used a qualitative research design, drawing on various research methods consistent with the work of other feminist geographers. Data collection consisted of two separate components: in-depth semi-structured interviews with former volunteer tourists currently residing in Guelph, Ontario, who volunteered in many different countries around the world; and a case study of a two-week long volunteer trip in Guatemala, which included participant observation and follow-up interviews with participants of the trip. These qualitative research methods, which I discuss in more detail throughout this chapter, allowed me to explore the nuances of volunteer tourists’ experiences through first-hand accounts of their stories as well as participant observation. In this chapter, I outline these methods including the recruitment process, the demographic makeup of participants, my own positionality and how it may have influenced the various facets of this thesis.

3.2 Research Approach

I used a qualitative research approach throughout this study as it allowed for the use of flexible methods and an interpretive approach to data analysis. Qualitative research, which is “concerned with exploring phenomena ‘from the interior,’” allowed me to take the perspectives of research participants as a starting point while I conducted this research (Ormston, Spencer, Barnard & Snape, 2013: p. 3). The methods used, which included semi-structured interviews, reflexive journaling and participant observation, enabled me to collect data that were both detailed and nuanced, as well as to identify and explore emergent themes throughout the research process (Ormston et al., 2013). This allowed me to draw meaning about research participants’ understandings of gender based on their lived experiences. These flexible methods made it
possible to be sensitive to participants’ various backgrounds and created space for participants’ voices to be heard (Crang, 2003: p. 495).

In many instances, feminist geographers rely on qualitative methods in the design of their research projects to uncover the voices of women and their personal stories (Domosh, 1997). Taking a feminist approach to research encouraged me to be reflexive and to write myself into my research as an embodied individual with life experiences that needed to be taken into consideration (Wilson, 2004). Because this project explores volunteer tourists’ perceptions of the influence of gender on their experiences abroad, it was important for me to take an approach that involved methods which would allow me to explore the nuanced experiences of volunteer tourists as well as my own positionality.

Although many academics have expressed the need for more research on volunteer tourism to be done from the perspective of host communities (a sentiment I support - see McGehee and Andereck (2008)), I intentionally chose to focus my study on volunteer tourists’ perceptions of their experiences. I made this choice because I believe in the importance of ‘anthropologizing the West,’ a term used by anthropologist Arturo Escobar (1988) in his call for academics to examine the institutions and people in the Global North when theorizing development issues. ‘Anthropologizing the West’ is key to understanding the ways in which individuals in the Global North - represent and relate to people and places of the Global South. This understanding is fundamental to breaking down the long existing divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’ that exists in the field of international development.
3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Semi-structured Interviews with Former Volunteer Tourists

The first component of data collection involved semi-structured interviews, which I used to explore the way volunteer tourists perceived their experiences volunteering abroad. Many researchers studying volunteer tourism have used this method (Mostafanezhad 2013, 2014; Simpson, 2004; Tiessen & Heron, 2012), as semi-structured interviews are considered to be a highly efficient way of gaining information about an individual’s lived experience (Mura & Khoo-Lattimore, 2012: p. 713). They also offered a flexible framework that could be adapted depending on the responses, experiences and knowledge of participants (Guiney & Mostafanezhad 2014). I found this flexibility to be invaluable when collecting data as interview participants were from diverse backgrounds and had volunteered in a variety of different countries with different organizations. Furthermore, interviews allowed participants to tell their stories and include any details they deemed relevant to their gendered experiences.

For this study, I interviewed former volunteers who were currently residing in Guelph, Ontario who had volunteered in many different countries around the world. I conducted interviews over a six-month period, from April to September 2016. I recruited participants through several sampling methods which took place mainly on the University of Guelph campus, including: announcements in classrooms, posters around campus, email list-serves and social media sites. To delineate the sample participants needed to meet three specific criteria: first, participants had to be over the age of 18; second, they must have participated in a development-focused volunteer tourism trip; and third, the trip must have been between one and 52 weeks.

I arranged interviews via email, and conducted them in a prearranged, semi-private location agreed upon by the participant. I encouraged participants to pick a place where they
would feel comfortable talking about their volunteer experiences. Meeting spaces included my on-campus office, the campus pub and cafeterias, local cafés, and via Skype. I arranged interviews at a time that was most convenient for the participant, including evenings and weekends. Prior to the interviews I provided participants with consent forms via email, which outlined information regarding the project and the rights of participants (see Appendix A and Appendix B for ethical considerations). Interviews lasted from 25 to 90 minutes, during which time I asked questions that were both descriptive (i.e. what types of volunteer activities did you participate in) and reflective (i.e. did you feel as though gender affected your relationship with local people) (see Appendix C for entire set of interview questions).

In total, I conducted 30 interviews with former volunteer tourists (see Appendix D for participant descriptions). Twenty-four of the participants identified as women and six as men. With that said, the participants expressed diversity in what the categories of ‘woman’ or ‘man’ meant to them. For example, two volunteers who identified as women explained:

I've always been, like you know, a girl who's into sports and […] I was just a tomboy growing up […] my definition of the word tomboy was just kind of like a girl who likes to do […] traditionally masculine things and doesn't wear dresses everyday.

I don't think of myself as a super feminine woman. I have really strong arm muscles and I like to carry really heavy things.

Similarly, a volunteer who identified as a man explained that he did not always perform his masculinity in a way he perceived as traditional, explaining that he is “not an assertive person by nature” and in a Canadian context he is seen as “sensitive” and “conscious.” Another participant who identified as a man explained: “it's a different kind of guy who really is interested in this stuff [volunteering]… people that are very open minded and very willing to self-criticize, very willing to look inward and see what they're doing wrong and adapt accordingly.” In these responses, I saw that although each volunteer identified as a ‘woman’ or a ‘man’ these gendered
categories were not fixed and were understood differently by different participants. The majority of participants spoke about being heterosexual, however not all participants openly identified their sexual orientation; one woman identified as having a female partner.

The majority of participants were born in Canada (27). Three participants were born outside of Canada in countries in the Global South but were currently residing in Guelph, Ontario. Of the 30 participants, the majority (28) of participants identified their race or ethnicity throughout the interview, however, their descriptions were often very fluid and in the interviews several spoke about how they were racialized differently in the various spaces they occupied. For example, one participant explained that she was “culturally [and] emotionally Canadian, but racially […] Chinese.” She explained how she was racialized in different ways during her volunteer trip in Uganda, stating “I found that […] in regard to my time in Uganda, I refer to myself as white because [although while there] people sometimes called me like China or Japan or Jackie Chan, the prevailing perception was that I was from Canada, therefore Western, therefore white.” Another volunteer who identified as Caribbean, explained that in Canada people would identify her as “Afro-Caribbean or black” but during her volunteer trip in Kenya people would identify her as a “mzungu which was female white person.” She explained that their identification of her as a mzungu “was very much a part of how they immediately identified with us, and perhaps even how we were perceived, like our behaviour and our abilities.”

Throughout this paper, I use the identifiers used by participants themselves when talking about their race/ethnicity. As a result, I use terms such as ‘mixed race,’ ‘brown,’ ‘coloured,’ and ‘white’ in order to represent participants in the way they chose to be represented.

Additionally, participants were highly educated with 11 participants either having graduated from or currently enrolled in an undergraduate degree, and 18 participants graduated
from or enrolled in a graduate degree. One student was a high school graduate who worked in the Guelph community. Of the 30 participants three studied engineering, three geography, six epidemiology, 15 international development and three were in other fields. It is important to note that many of the participants who studied international development spoke about studying the critiques of volunteer tourism during their program of study and had critical opinions of the volunteer tourism sector.

Participants volunteered in several different regions of the world including Africa (19 participants), Latin America (16 participants), and Asia (8 participants) (see Appendix E for list of countries to which volunteers travelled). These regions are representative of the most popular destinations of volunteer tourism (Keese, 2011). Volunteers had a combined experience in 25 different countries around the world, adding important diversity to the findings. Additionally, volunteers travelled with many different volunteer tourism organizations and participated in a variety of activities ranging from working in orphanages to building schools to caring in hospitals.

3.3.2 A Case Study of Volunteer Tourism in Guatemala

In addition to semi-structured interviews with former volunteer tourists, during the summer of 2016 I conducted a case study of a two-week long volunteer trip in Guatemala. This case study allowed me to gain an in-depth, firsthand understanding of the gendered experiences of volunteer tourists using various forms of data collection within the same case (Yin, 2003). Methods included participant observation, which involved field notes and reflexive journaling, as well as follow-up semi-structured interviews once participants returned home from the trip. Through the case study I was able to explore multiple perspectives within a specific context,

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2 Participants often volunteered on more than one trip, that is why this number does not equal 30.
which fostered a greater depth of insight into the way individuals’ subjectivities influenced their experience of the same volunteer tourism trip.

During the trip, we volunteered in several communities throughout Guatemala, focusing on community development projects through tree planting and permaculture, as well as learning and showing solidarity through meeting with local groups engaging in grassroots development work. I chose to conduct the research in Guatemala for two reasons: first, Guatemala has been described as a popular destination for individuals seeking to volunteer abroad (Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2011); and second, I had prior experience travelling in the country as a volunteer, a tourist and an academic including a three-month long study abroad program. During and in preparation for my semester abroad I took several courses on the history, politics and cultural groups of Guatemala. Having a preliminary understanding of the cultural context of Guatemala helped me navigate the various experiences that occurred during the trip.

Once I established the desired study site, I reached out to several volunteer organizations to propose my research project. The organization I partnered with was Canadian based and had been working in Guatemala for nearly a decade. The organization engaged in volunteer tourism in a non-traditional way, where the focus is on volunteer work, solidarity and learning. The organization was open to the research project if the process was transparent and did not negatively influence the volunteers’ or the community partners’ experiences. I provided the organization with details of the ethics application as well as information about the research. As requested by the Research Ethics Board, I chose not to identify the name of the organization in an effort to protect the identity of participants of the trip and local partners (from people who were not on the trip) (see Appendix B for ethical considerations).
I used participant observation to explore and expand upon the themes I identified during the semi-structured interviews with former volunteer tourists. Participant observation has been commonly used by researchers conducting research on volunteer tourism (Koleth, 2014; Mostafanezhad, 2013, 2014; Sin, 2009; Vodopivec & Jaffee, 2011). Similar to other researchers, it allowed me to facilitate access to people volunteering abroad, to more accurately understand the experiences and feelings of volunteers, and to observe on-site interactions (Sin, 2009: p. 486). In addition, with participant observation I was positioned as an ‘insider’ enabling me to build trust and rapport with the volunteer group and in turn gather more “in-depth explorations of the volunteer tourism encounter” (Sin, 2009: p. 487).

During the trip to Guatemala I acted in the dual role of participant volunteer and researcher. I took notes and participated in all the activities (both volunteer and recreational) performed by the other volunteers (see Appendix F for a copy of the consent form). Volunteer activities included: planting, agricultural initiatives and learning from local people about Mayan culture. Recreational activities included: shopping for souvenirs, hiking, exploring the local communities and drinking/eating in local bars and eateries. In an attempt to promote methodological rigor and to reflect on my own positionality, I used both field notes and reflexive journaling. I took notes during group debrief sessions, as well as during free time. During group debriefs, I jotted down notes about interactions between participants, as well as topics that were being discussed and specific comments made that I deemed particularly relevant (i.e. comments reflecting on gender, positionality, power imbalances etc.). During free time, which we generally had once around mid-day and again in the evening, I reflected upon the spaces, activities and interactions that we had experienced since my last entry. Each evening I concluded with more
reflexive comments regarding my positionality and the access to certain spaces, interactions and activities I had and how I believed my experience was influenced by my various subjectivities.

Following the volunteer trip in Guatemala, I conducted semi-structured interviews with willing participants from the trip, including one team leader (see Appendix G for a copy of the consent form). Interviews were held in person and via Skype three to nine weeks after the end of the trip. These interviews allowed me to check my observations with the lived-experiences of the volunteers. During these interviews, questions remained similar in scope to the interviews with former volunteer tourists however, I tailored them to the specific trip (i.e. what was your experience like with the host families we stayed with etc.) (see Appendix H for the full question guide). The interviews lasted between 30 and 90 minutes.

There were 13 participants on the trip, including two team leaders. Ten participants took part in follow-up interviews. Participants on the trip were between the ages of 18 and 30 and came from a variety of different educational backgrounds, with all volunteers having some level of university education (see Appendix I for participant descriptions). Participants were citizens of either the United States of America or Canada. Throughout the trip, 11 participants identified as women, and two as men. Of this group, three women identified as queer. The majority of participants interviewed identified as white (8). One volunteer identified as Latinx, specifically half El Salvadorian, half Guatemalan, and one participant identified as Vietnamese-American. One volunteer as well as the team leaders said that they were fluent in Spanish, and the rest of the volunteers spoke little-to-no Spanish. Throughout this thesis self-selected pseudonyms are used in order to protect participants’ confidentiality, however the exact details of their comments

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3 Latinx can be defined as “relating to people of Latin American origin or descent (used as a gender-neutral or non-binary alternative to Latino or Latina)” (Oxford Dictionary, 2017)
and their demographic information may identify them to those who participated on the trip. Participants were made aware of this prior to signing the consent form.

3.4 Positionality

Feminist researchers have argued that it is important to understand how the researcher’s own subjectivities may influence the research process. As a researcher focused on gendered subjectivities, understanding my own positionality was a crucial part of each phase of this research. Before beginning data collection, I reflected in a journal entry on my positionality and how it might influence the research process. I stated:

I am a cisgender woman. I am straight and in a monogamous relationship. I am a white Canadian. I am university educated and relatively financially stable. I identify as a feminist and believe strongly in equal rights. I believe that all of these things at varying degrees impact my views on gender and how gender impacts a volunteer’s experience…Throughout this research process I am and will continue to do my best to be cognisant of how my positionality, biases and experiences impact the way I collect and analyze data (excerpt from my journal entry, April 20th, 2016).

Throughout the course of my data collection I was reminded time and again of my various subjectivities and experiences and how they shaped the data to which I had access. My previous experience as a volunteer tourist often helped me connect with participants, both in the semi-structured interviews and during participant observation. In semi-structured interviews, I was able to draw on shared experiences or mutual understanding of volunteer tourism to relate to participants. Additionally, in several instances during semi-structured interviews the types of conversations I had with participants were directly influenced by my gendered subjectivities. For example, participant women would often refer to our shared subjectivity as women, talking about common experiences.

During participant observation, the types of interactions I was privy to and the way I interacted with volunteer tourists and local people were also affected by my subjectivities. As a
white woman who was similar in age to the participants, I was in the majority on the trip regarding both my gender and race, which clearly positioned me as an ‘insider’ with the other volunteers and allowed me access to information. Additionally, volunteer tourists often came to me if they had questions about Guatemala as I had volunteered there on two separate occasions and had lived there during a study abroad semester.

Throughout the data collection, an essential component of my positionality that I had overlooked in my initial reflection was the role of researcher that presented me with a variety of unanticipated challenges. For example, a main component of the volunteer trip was group debrief sessions. The discourse in these conversations was at times Western-centric, Islamophobic, sexist and homophobic. I was incredibly conflicted internally as I felt I had a responsibility to challenge the harmful language being used. If I was solely a participant in the trip I would have felt more comfortable calling people out on their prejudice and ignorance. As a researcher, however, I was hesitant to be confrontational for several reasons: 1) I wanted to be understanding that not everyone had studied these issues to the same extent that I had and therefore had limited understanding of the complexities of development, 2) I wanted to observe the team dynamic with minimal direct influence from myself, and 3) I was concerned that if I was too confrontational it would impact my relationship with participants and influence both their actions as well as willingness to participate in my study.

Another interesting experience of being a researcher in the field was the response of the participants to being observed. One volunteer told me “you make it very obvious […] you’re very conspicuous when you’re taking notes; I can feel you watching me” (field notes, July 7th, 2016). Interestingly, this particular participant had not been a central actor in my field notes. After this encounter, my presence as a researcher became somewhat of a running gag with the
participants. If someone did something particularly silly or someone agreed with me on a subject, participants would make statements dictating the notes they assumed I was transcribing (i.e. “7 spills her water all over the table”). Additionally, every day at least one participant would ask me how my research was going and if I was getting “good information.” During such conversations, I found it challenging to know how much to share with participants and I had to learn how to balance the intimacy of relationships formed with volunteers, the level of participation and contribution I had in group activities and discussions, as well as the expectations and privileges that came along with my position as a researcher.

It is also important to note how my subjectivities and experiences not only influenced the data collection but also the process of data analysis and my interpretation of the findings. For example, when women spoke about the role of fear and care in their experiences abroad, I was often able to relate to and understand their stories through my own experiences as a woman volunteering abroad. Therefore, as someone who identifies as a feminist, and who has had many experiences volunteering abroad, my interpretation and understanding of the research findings must be viewed with my positionality in mind.

3.5 Data Analysis

An integral component of my data analysis process was understanding that data collection and analysis are interrelated processes (Corban & Strauss, 1990), and that data analysis is “an ongoing practice, entangled in all aspects of the research process” (Ringrose & Renold, 2014: p. 772). In an effort to implement this understanding in my research, after conducting each interview with former volunteer tourists I reviewed the interview notes and transcribed the audio recording as soon as possible. I continually compared the interviews to one another in order to identify common experiences shared by participants. Additionally, before
entering the field to conduct the case study I identified preliminary themes from the semi-structured interviews with former volunteer tourists to guide the data collection process during the case study. Upon returning home from Guatemala, I transcribed the field notes and identified initial themes from the field. These themes were then used to inform the remainder of the interviews with both participants of the case study and former volunteer tourists.

Once I completed collecting data I used the qualitative data analysis software, NVivo, to organize and code the data. Based from my review of the literature, I conducted an initial round of deductive coding using the categories of gendered spaces, gendered activities, and gendered interactions. Within this coding process, additional subcategories emerged, including: gendered division of space, gendered segregation of tasks, and gendered encounters of care (see Figure one for example of coding chart). Another key theme that emerged inductively was volunteer tourists’ gendered experiences of fear. As this theme became prevalent, I began coding for it, in an iterative way that involved several rounds of open coding. Once I determined a point of saturation in which no new themes or patterns emerged, I concluded the data analysis. Feminist scholars have used such a deductive and inductive coding process when they are interested in exploring the perspective of individuals and what might be “unexpected” as it relates to feminist literature (Leavy, 2007). The findings that emerged through this process are explored in the following sections, using examples from participants’ quotations and my field notes that were representative of key themes.
3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explained the methodological approach to research and analysis I used throughout the study. As outlined in this chapter a qualitative, feminist research design allowed me to gain complex insight into the gendered experiences of volunteer tourists. Rather than focusing on the experiences of volunteers from a single case study, by pairing a case-study with semi-structured interviews I was able to examine a breadth of volunteer experiences that occurred in many different countries, with individuals with a variety of subjectivities. The following chapters highlight the findings that resulted from these methods and are divided into two chapters based on the two components of data collection. This division was chosen in order to delve deeper into the nuances of each method as the themes of fear and care were perceived differently by the volunteer tourists in these different sets of data.
Chapter Four: Findings Part I
The Gendered Experiences of Former Volunteer Tourists

4.1 Introduction

Throughout the presentation of the findings in this thesis it is important to keep in mind that the gendered experiences of volunteer tourists are set within a backdrop of gendered norms and stereotypes that exist within and between specific regions in the Global North and the Global South. Discussion on why these gender norms exist in volunteer tourism and how they are reinforced and rearticulated are presented in Chapter Six. In this chapter I detail the findings from the semi-structured interviews with former volunteer tourists and the analysis of these interviews. This chapter specifically focuses on the role of gender in the experiences of former volunteer tourists and is largely made up of quotations from participants. The experiences of volunteer tourists are divided into the spaces, activities and interactions volunteers had access to, as research on tourism and gender suggests these are important gendered sites (Pritchard & Morgan, 2000). Throughout this chapter, themes surrounding fear and care emerge as they relate to participants’ gendered experiences, which are further explored in the ensuing discussion.

4.2 Gendered Spaces

4.2.1 Volunteer Tourists’ Gendered Access to Space

Even though participants travelled and volunteered in 25 different countries around the world a common theme in the majority of interviews was that gender influenced the access volunteers had to certain spaces. Both volunteer men and women\(^4\) believed that certain spaces were available differently to them because of their perceived genders. In the majority of

\(^4\) As outlined in the methods throughout the thesis I refer to participants as men or women based on their own self-identification. For example, if a participant said, “as a woman I felt like I was unable to do certain activities” I refer to that participant as a volunteer woman. This form of self-identification was also used in reference to other aspects of an individual’s subjectivities such as race and sexual orientation.
interviews participants spoke about volunteer women having more access to domestic spaces (i.e. kitchen and laundry spaces) than volunteer men and volunteer men having more access to public spaces (i.e. streets, markets, transit etc.) than volunteer women. For example, as seen in the following quotation a volunteer woman spoke about differentiated access to domestic spaces during her trip in Kenya:

Places that would have been more available to me […] I think I probably spent a lot more time with the women in the community than my male teammate would have for sure. They would invite me into their kitchens more often than they would invite him. I don’t think he was welcomed into that in the same way, by virtue of probably his gender.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Kenya)*

In this way, the spaces volunteer women perceived as more accessible also influenced the activities they participated in and their interactions with local people, in particularly gendered ways. In the interviews, it became apparent that spaces where conversations focused on ‘feminine’ topics (i.e. menstruation, female genital mutilation, maternal health etc.), were often off-limits to volunteer men and more available to volunteer women. For example, a volunteer man recounted how on his trip to Brazil, there were certain spaces he was unable to access because of his gender. He stated:

There’s definitely [spaces] that I’ve been excluded from for being a male too. In Brazil, there was a maternity ward […] at this hospital and it was only females [volunteers who were] allowed in, or same with other medical things.

*(Volunteer Man, White, Group Travel to Brazil)*

Similarly, a volunteer woman explained that volunteer men on her trip were asked to leave a certain space, stating:

When it came to conversations with the women in the community, like the conversation on female genital mutilation, we asked the men, the guys, to leave the room halfway through. They were uncomfortable and we could tell the [local] women weren’t really open to talking about it.

*(Volunteer Woman, Brown/Coloured, Group Travel to Kenya)*
These examples reveal how in several instances volunteer tourists perceived certain spaces as ‘women’s space’ in ways that excluded men.

Overwhelmingly, however, when talking about gendered space, both volunteer men and women focused on the spaces they perceived to be limited to volunteer women. These spaces were often public spaces, specifically public spaces after dark. Many participants spoke about their experiences and perceptions of streets as dangerous spaces for women. For example, one volunteer woman stated:

I think that right off the bat I would say that, being a woman and wanting to spend time maybe running [in the streets] alone or going out in the evenings, is not necessarily something that I could do as easily there as I could in Canada.

(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Costa Rica)

Participants also spoke about feeling as though their access to marketplaces and plazas were often mediated by gender. One volunteer woman explained this, stating:

There were some instances where we were playing in the plaza at night where I wouldn’t feel 100 percent comfortable. There was one run in where there was a guy who was pretty drunk who tried to join in […] He got a little too in my face […] and it was one of those realizations for me that I’m not inherently safe everywhere I go because of my gender.

(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Bolivia)

As seen in this quotation, many women believed that their perceived genders directly related to their safety in certain areas, which they felt limited their access to spaces. Specifically, this restricted access to or an increased discomfort in certain spaces was often spoke about in relation to bars/pubs. For example, one volunteer woman who had gone on a trip to Kenya stated:

I would say probably more things being off limits than available to me. Unfortunately, yeah, I would rarely go out after dark […] I wouldn’t really have gone into bars or pubs or anything similar to that […] I would feel extremely uncomfortable.

(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Kenya)

As illustrated in this quotation, participants often discussed the temporality of their restricted access to space, with many women fearing spaces after dark. Finally, participants spoke about
public transit as a space they feared, and subsequently avoided. A woman who travelled to Peru explained this, stating:

There was one point when I got into a cab by myself I felt a little bit concerned but... I felt fine during the day but just like the one time that I was by myself at night I felt uncomfortable.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Peru)*

These quotations illustrate that volunteer tourists perceived many of the spaces they had access to as gendered spaces, which they believed influenced their performances of their masculinities and femininities within these spaces.

### 4.2.2 Local Perceptions of Gendered Spaces

Participants often spoke about their perceptions of local gender norms and how they believed these norms affected their use of space in gendered ways. One volunteer man - who was assigned to a group by the volunteer organization, which consisted of himself and several women from his team - believed that local gender norms restricted women’s access to the marketplace to which they travelled. He explained:

We went in to the market one day. Three or four girls would go with a guy because it was not a safe place and I guess the cultural norm is you would respect that if a man was with women, you would leave them alone. Although I wasn’t exactly really excited to be in charge of protecting three women. No thanks. But, that’s not the way it works there I guess.

*(Volunteer Man, White, Group Travel to Kenya)*

The volunteer believed that for women to be safe in public spaces, the local gender norms required them to be accompanied by a man. Another volunteer, who worked in Kenya, believed that her host mom’s concern for her was the result of local gender norms. She spoke about how these perceived norms limited her access to certain spaces:

My Kenyan mom who I was staying with would not allow me to go [out after dark]. She was more concerned for our safety then we were, so out of respect for her hospitality and her care, I didn’t.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Kenya)*
Similarly, a volunteer who worked in Sierra Leone felt like her ability to leave the compound she was living on was limited by her host’s concern for her, which she perceived to be based on her gender. Reflecting on this experience she understood the restriction of her mobility as her host’s attempt to care for her, but at the time she resented this expression of care as it limited her mobility. She stated:

There was a lot of like strict, fairly strange rules about what I could and couldn’t do. So, I was not allowed to leave the compound unescorted […] I strongly think it was because I was a woman. I really had to try to see that it was because they were trying to protect me and that was just the only way they knew how. But it definitely felt like the loss of a freedom, like, we’re very lucky in Canada to be able to go where we want whenever we want as women.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Individual Travel to Sierra Leone)*

This example reveals how her perception of local women as oppressed, made her value the ‘freedom’ she had in Canada. Volunteer women often discussed resisting local gender norms when they felt as though they were limiting their access to certain spaces. A volunteer woman described the way she embodied her resistance during her trip to Ghana, explaining:

The whole idea of people telling me not to go out because I’m a woman and because I’m a young woman happened a lot in Ghana […] my host mom would say “why are you going out? You’re a woman, you shouldn’t be going out” […] I fought it and I just went anyways and in the slum, as well, I would talk to the men. A lot of the norms over there was dress a certain way and obviously I did that part, but you’re supposed to, in some way, respect men more than women and I, again I held them both to equal respect levels. I didn’t really follow that. I mean I respected the norms to a certain extent but to a certain extent I didn’t.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Ghana)*

This example reveals that participants perceived local people and themselves as having had different understandings of what spaces were appropriate (and in some instances safe) for women to occupy. Although participants volunteered in diverse countries around the world, many spoke about experiencing a gender divide between public and private
spaces, which they often perceived to be reinforced by the way local people enacted their care for the volunteer tourists’ safety.

4.2.3 Organizations’ Influence on Notions of and Access to Gendered Space

Participants perceptions of the Global South and their experiences of safety and fear were often influenced by the rules and restrictions of the volunteer tourism organizations. Many participants discussed how the restrictions of their organizations limited the spaces they perceived as safe, which in turn limited their occupation of these spaces. One volunteer woman discussed how she felt safer in the evenings when the men from her team were around. Explaining this sentiment, she stated:

Not necessarily that there’s any real danger in the community but it’s just a... you’re told at the beginning of the trip [by the organization] that you should always be with somebody else [specifically a man], it kind of makes you feel more safe, which isn’t always something you feel in Canada.
(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Costa Rica)

Another volunteer woman said that she was not concerned for her safety at all until the organization had told her “make sure that you follow these rules, it’s for your own safety.” She further explained, “I was so young and then [the organization] is just kind of feeding you some like fear stories, you just don't know what to make of it.” Similarly, a participant speaking about her time in Nicaragua explained how the gendered nature of her safety was revealed through the various warnings of the organization. She explained:

We were never really told [by the organization] like “oh, you can’t do this because you’re a woman,” but they definitely made us aware, like “girls if you’re going somewhere in the dark make sure you have a guy with you... somebody that could kind of help you out.”
(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Nicaragua)

These quotations illustrate how the various discourses of volunteer tourism organizations, and the regulations they enforced to keep participants ‘safe,’ often contributed to feelings
of insecurity or a heightened sense of risk, which influenced participants’ access to space in a gendered way.

4.2.4 Imaginaries of the Global South as a Gendered Space of Fear

In the semi-structured interviews, participants discussed why they perceived certain spaces as gendered and how this mediated their access to these spaces. First, many participants relied on imaginaries of the Global South as a dangerous place. Several volunteer women spoke about the concerns their parents and friends had for their safety when they told them that they wanted to volunteer in the Global South. One volunteer woman described how the concern of her family restricted her travel plans and the spaces where she felt comfortable travelling; she stated:

I wanted to [travel] on my own for a day because [the other volunteers] didn’t want to go [to Bolivia], and I was like “well I would really like to go.” My mom and my aunt and my grandma, when I gave them a phone call and was like “oh I might go over to Bolivia,” they were like “absolutely not. You’re not going by yourself. You’re not.” So yeah, they would just not allow it.

(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Peru)

Other volunteer women spoke about their fear of the unknown, specifically feeling disoriented or more cautious in foreign spaces. They explained that because of the unfamiliar spaces they were in they subsequently took more precautions than they would in Canada. One volunteer woman discussed her fear of being in a foreign country as a heightened sense of awareness, stating:

I think there was the first sense of like nervousness in a foreign country. When we were in Quito […] that was the first time that I felt like, “I need to know where all my things are,” kind of feeling.

(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Ecuador)

Similarly, another volunteer woman spoke about spaces she was comfortable in, while in Canada, being more intimidating to her in a different country. She explained:

We would go out to a bar in the evening […] women are just automatically hit on and, you know, it becomes a little bit of a less comfortable context when you're away from home and stuff like that. So, in that sense maybe going out and
drinking and dancing was more [...] kind of intimidating than it would be back home.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Thailand)*

Additionally, in many instances volunteer women felt like they were the continual subjects of local men’s gazes and they gave examples of how interactions with local men often left them feeling conspicuous and sexualized. A volunteer woman, who had worked in Kenya, explained the discomfort she felt when she was no longer in the safety of the volunteer site, saying:

In other circumstances in Kenya, where I wasn’t necessarily working at the school, I felt very uncomfortable as a woman sometimes. I felt very much that, yeah, just walking down the streets the comments that I would get or glances... [I] felt very uncomfortable with that.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Kenya)*

Similarly, a volunteer woman who had worked in Honduras described her experiences in the streets, stating:

Going into places where you’re female and you’re white, you get noticed. Whether it’s anywhere from being called at as you’re walking down the street or being admired or being given special attention or being given no attention, depending on where you are and the situation.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Honduras)*

This participant raised the issue of how her racialized subjectivity intersected with her gendered subjectivity to influence her experience. Likewise, a participant who volunteered in Egypt discussed the way she was treated as a white woman, explaining:

[I had] a lot of male attention in terms of hair colour and just being an obvious foreigner, and that was the case for my other roommates as well who were female [...] the first thing that you kind of notice on that walk is that there’s a lot of comments made in Arabic, sounds made at you as you walk by and that kind of thing. I think there’s a certain stigma that comes with you as being an easily identifiable Western woman [...] the connotation that comes with that is that you’re automatically more sexual, that you’re automatically more loose, that you’re automatically more okay with male advances.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Egypt)*
These quotations illustrate how the perceptions many volunteer tourists had of the Global South as a dangerous place, influenced their experiences of certain spaces.

4.2.5 Experiences of Gendered Violence and Fear

Although concerns around safety were often shaped by preconceived notions and constructions of the Global South as dangerous, many volunteer women gave examples of situations during their trips where there was an immediate threat to their safety. In many cases this threat, or fear of imminent danger limited their access to certain spaces. A volunteer woman in India spoke about an experience in which her sister was sexually harassed when she left the protection of the group, to go to the bathroom. She further explained the incident, stating:

> My sister went to go to... I don’t know went to go to the washroom or by tickets or something, and she got like I would say probably classified as molested […] and that wouldn’t have happened if [a male teammate] was with her. No one would have approached her like that if she was with a man […] So I think being a white woman, it magnifies everything.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to India)*

As seen in this quotation, being a woman greatly influenced the safety of the participant’s sister. Many of the participants who were women told stories of being groped or harassed in public places. In one traumatic story a participant who had volunteered in Costa Rica, spoke about two fellow volunteers, a young couple, who were brutally beaten and the girlfriend raped and almost killed during a nightly patrol monitoring animals on an ecotourism project. She stated:

> After this event I was so, so scared and I didn’t recognize that as a female thing [at first] but that was the first time in my life when I’ve started thinking about [my] vulnerability as a woman, and knowing that men had watched my friend for a long time and planned this, and because of her identity and the way she looks [it] was possible for this to actually be a thing. And so that awareness made me really open my eyes to walking anywhere in the dark.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Costa Rica)*

This participant explained that this event greatly affected the remainder of her trip, and shaped the way she understood her position as a woman volunteering in Costa Rica. Another volunteer woman on an independent project in Kenya spoke about having a similar realization, after she
experienced a dangerous situation. Specifically, she believed that her gender heightened her susceptibility to harm. She explained this feeling, stating:

I thought I was prepared for it and then I got there and had the brutal awakening that no, it’s not just about confidence and having a good head on your shoulders. It’s not safe being a woman alone no matter how tough you think you are and that was really an awakening for me and I ended up in a few situations that were really crappy and I was like lucky the way things turned out […] When I was there, I was like this isn’t about being cool and independent, this is about realizing life is different and you can’t… you just need to play it safe.

(Volunteer Woman, White, Individual Travel to Kenya)

As illustrated in these examples, several volunteer women spoke about being shocked or “rudely awakened” to the harsh realities of life for many women in various regions in the Global South. These realizations influenced the spaces they inhabited or considered safe and in many instances volunteer women changed how they travelled, including: opting to travel only when men on their teams were present or in larger groups, avoiding certain areas and times they perceived to be dangerous, and in general attempting to “play it safe” during their volunteer trips. Throughout the interviews, it became apparent that gendered fear was based on both material threats and perceived threats to women’s bodies and that the women I interviewed felt these threats viscerally whether or not they experienced actual gendered violence.

4.3 Gendered Activities

4.3.1 The Gendered Segregation of Tasks

The semi-structured interviews with former volunteer tourists revealed that within the spaces of volunteer tourism, the gendered segregation of certain tasks often occurred. Both volunteer men and women spoke about the gender division of labour specifically in relation to volunteer projects involving construction, childcare, sea turtle patrols and agriculture. For example, one volunteer woman who had worked at a community center described her experience, stating:
I would say that at the community centre it was normal for the boys to be... for the men to be playing outside and playing games with the boys, whereas the women right off the bat were kind of put in more teaching roles [...] And then just in the kitchen in the evening if there was ever any opportunity to help with cooking, it would just be assumed that it would be a female that would help.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Costa Rica)*

A volunteer man described his perception of the gendered segregation of tasks on a construction site, pointing out that the women on his team worked less physically hard than the men, stating:

We [the five men on the trip] were either moving rocks or breaking rocks, mixing concrete and cement by hand or pick ax and hard clay and dirt [...] And a lot of the girls would sit down with the little hammers and just... I don’t know how to describe it, but haphazardly kind of throw down the hammer as if it were a playpen like in a sandbox.

*(Volunteer Man, White, Group Travel to Kenya)*

Another volunteer woman expressed her frustration with the gendered segregation of tasks, specifically regarding a task with which she had a great deal of experience with in Canada. She described her experience, stating:

They [the local organization] had water buffalo that they used to plow the land. I’m used to cattle I’m comfortable... obviously they don’t know that but I wanted to [work with the water buffalo] but they [said] “no.” But they were letting all of the male volunteers do that. Whereas all of the women we were expected to go and sort seeds.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to India)*

As illustrated in these quotations, throughout many different regional contexts participants perceived their genders to have influenced the activities they engaged in. In several interviews volunteers expressed frustration with the perceived gendered norms of local areas, which they felt mediated the activities they engaged in. Furthermore, the narratives of volunteer tourists revealed how participants often believed that activities were segregated based on their perceived genders, which may have influenced how they enacted different forms of care for local people.

It is important to note that a minority of volunteers interviewed believed that gender had little or no effect on the activities in which they participated. However, in
these instances the volunteers indicated that the large number of women on their trips may have accounted for this perceived equality. For example, when asked if gender influenced the types of activities she participated in, a volunteer woman who had travelled to Nicaragua stated:

I don’t think so because, especially on the second trip when there was only one boy, it wasn’t like the guys were able to do all the hard work. The girls had to do it, there was nobody else.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group travel to Nicaragua)*

When asked if she thought gender affected the types of tasks she participated in, a volunteer woman who had travelled to Honduras stated:

Not so much. But I think partly it was because we outnumbered [the volunteer men], so there was very little that they could do that we couldn’t… the other thing was, most of the [organizational staff] who were organizing the activities and getting us to do things, most of them were from Canada or Europe or the UK and they’re very used to the ideas of equal gender roles.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Honduras)*

In this explanation, the volunteer perceived gender norms in the Global North as ‘equal,’ implying that she perceived local gender norms as different and perhaps less ‘equal’ in the Global South.

**4.3.2 Perception of Gender Influencing Activities**

In instances in which participants believed certain practices were segregated by gender, several discussed the perceived physical differences between men and women and how biological differences limited the activities people of each gender could successfully do. For example, two volunteers described what they perceived to be the physical limitations of women and men. In reference to his construction trip in Thailand a volunteer man stated:

They were trying to help, the two girls on our Thailand team, [but they] didn’t help that much. They seemed pretty much unable to physically […] I don’t know, everyone was having really bad periods and stuff too which was really knocking them out for a long time.
In a second example, a volunteer woman justified why she was assigned to more detailed work while the men on her team were assigned to other jobs that she perceived as more physically demanding. She explained:

I was the one who painted the alphabet and did all the sorts of finishing touches on the school and I think that was because, I don’t think it was like “oh, you’re a girl therefore you have to do this it’s easier for you.” It was just a “we’re all going to suck at this because we’re guys with big hands and, you know, we paint the whole wall we don’t do the fine detailed stuff.”

Explanations such as the above quotations, reveal the pre-existing beliefs that some of the volunteer tourists held regarding what constituted as masculine or feminine work.

Other participants believed that the gendered segregation of tasks was the result of volunteer men trying to assert their masculinity by engaging in certain activities. For example, one volunteer woman spoke about the eagerness of men on her team in Kenya to lift heavy buckets of water, stating “I think the men actually, the guys they wanted to show off their strength to be like ‘oh, I can do this, this isn’t tough.’” Similarly, another volunteer woman spoke about her trip in Honduras, stating: “the couple of men on the trip were more eager to do the heavy lifting or fix the cement and building stuff […] they definitely made more of an effort to demonstrate that they were hard workers.” These explanations revealed how in some instances the pressures to perform certain notions of masculinity were manifested during volunteer tourism trips. Interestingly, the explanation that men were attempting to prove their strength/masculinity was mostly seen in the stories of volunteer women and the explanation of physical limitations of genders were more commonly seen in the stories of volunteer men.
Several volunteers also perceived the gender roles of local communities to have limited what activities they participated in. An example of this was seen in an interview with a volunteer woman who had travelled to Kenya and volunteered on a construction project. She stated:

I think that when we were building the [local] guys were really good with us, but I think a lot of them felt like they should be doing it, you know what I mean? If I was pushing the wheel barrow one of the [local] guys would be like “no I’ll do it” […] So I think it was…in their mind it was more so “yes you’re doing this but we can do it better.”

(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Kenya)

Although there may have been other reasons for local men helping the volunteer (i.e. a lack of necessary skills (Guttentag, 2009)), her emphasis on gender in this encounter reveals the importance she placed on gender within her experiences. A volunteer man who had volunteered on a construction project in Peru, discussed his perception of how local gender roles affected the activities the women on his trip participated in, stating:

I think some of [the local people] were kind of surprised how many [volunteer] girls tried to do construction jobs I think […] The girls, they would start something and then the [local] guys would be like, “oh, don’t worry about it – we’ll do it,” and then in the end the Peruvian guys would end up doing it and the girls would watch, but they taught us about that. […] In the region, the males like to have more of a leadership position […] and we were taught that if you go there to volunteer and the guys end up doing more than the girls it’s okay.

(Volunteer Man, Coloured/Brown, Group Travel to Peru)

It is important to consider how volunteers’ perceptions of gender norms in both their home countries and the countries in which they volunteered, influenced the types of activities they participated in while abroad. These activities were in a sense the way volunteers embodied their care for people in the Global South. For example, through constructing a school, volunteers were able to show that they cared about the issue of education, or by working in an orphanage, volunteers were able to care for children’s basic needs. As a result, in many cases the way people performed their gendered
subjectivities limited the activities in which they participated and by extension the type of care they performed.

4.3.3 Resisting Perceived Local Gender Norms

Although volunteer tourists often believed that they had unequal access to activities based on their genders, their privileged position as people from the Global North allowed them access to some activities that were unavailable to local people of the same gender. In the interviews, this was discussed specifically in relation to volunteer men caring for children and volunteer women doing construction work. These examples are illustrated in the interviews of two volunteer women, the first who had volunteered in Mexico and the second in Ecuador:

So, we [the volunteers] spent the Thursday afternoon in a park with some ice-cream and playing with a whole bunch of orphaned girls […] When we were at the orphanage it was all women, you know, working in the gift shop, working at the front desk, working with the kids. There are no [local] men working with those kids because they had a history of abuse […] Which is why it’s really kind of special for the [orphaned] girls to play with the [volunteer] guys on the team because they don’t have dads and they don’t even have a father figure, right? (Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Mexico)

At one point these [local] women came to [the construction site] to start helping, they asked if they could use one of the shovels […] and then the guys that we were working with, like the local guys, sort of made fun of them so they stopped working with us. (Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Ecuador)

These examples reveal how the access to activities volunteers had was based not only on gender but also on the privilege that came along with being from the Global North.

Many volunteer women spoke about wanting to use their privilege as people from the Global North and the access they had to activities they perceived local people considered to be
masculine\textsuperscript{5} to challenge what they believed to be local gender norms. For example, a volunteer woman who was working in Uganda explained how she would specifically do activities that were considered by the local people as masculine to prove a point. She stated:

> Often, I felt like I was just doing something to prove a point. For example, there was this beautiful mango tree right outside the office so I would climb it to go get mangoes and one day I was coming down and there was a crowd. [...] One of them was like, [...] “What are you doing?” And I was like, “I want a mango, I'll get one myself.” And they were like, “don't do that, you'll fall and die,” like, “you should get one of the boys to climb and do it for you.” And I was like, “no, I'm totally fine by myself.”

\textit{(Volunteer Woman, White, Individual travel to Uganda)}

This ‘proving a point’ sentiment was an underlying theme in many of the interviews. One volunteer women, who had worked in Honduras, spoke about ‘teaching’ local people about gender equality by picking up shovels when they were taken away from her by local men on the work site. She stated:

> I’ve had men take shovels away from me, definitely. And I’ve picked them up later again [...] They now see me as a capable person, and a female [...] That is something I can teach the women there. I can teach the men there, that I am as capable as you are and don’t take advantage of me. I can be woman and I can mix cement all day long.

\textit{(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Honduras)}

As seen in this example, this volunteer performed her femininity in a way that she perceived to be different from local perceptions of how women should behave. Instances of volunteers attempting to defy gender norms were also evident in some of the stories of volunteer men. These men spoke about engaging in tasks which they perceived local people saw as more feminine, such as laundry, sweeping, cooking, and resisting being put in leadership positions. Interestingly, the two men who spoke about resisting local gender norms both ended up being

\textsuperscript{5} Although traditional cultural and gender norms vary greatly from place to place, volunteers who worked in construction across the globe tended to perceive them as traditionally masculine activities. It is important to note that this perception exists in many but of course not all societies around the globe.
leaders during their respective trips. As illustrated in the examples above, many volunteers believed that by not conforming to what they perceived to be local gender norms, they were championing women’s rights and changing local people’s perceptions of gender.

This section reveals the role volunteer tourists’ subjectivities played in influencing the activities they participated in while abroad. Volunteer tourists’ understandings of what constituted as masculine and feminine work, were shown through their accounts of their experiences abroad. This section also highlights how volunteers’ perceptions of local gender norms influenced the way participants engaged with certain activities. Additionally, volunteers’ resistance of perceived local gender norms, revealed how their understandings of what it means to be a ‘man’ or a ‘woman’ may have been influenced by their interactions with local people.

4.4 Gendered Interactions

4.4.1 Gender Mediating Interactions with Host Communities

The final part of volunteer tourists’ experiences that I explored in the semi-structured interviews, was the way they perceived gender to have mediated their interactions with people during their trips abroad. Both volunteer men and women believed that their gender affected the relationships they formed with local people. Specifically, many volunteer men spoke about how their expressions of masculinity affected their interactions with local men and several believed they were treated as equals or given more responsibility because of their gender. For example, a man who volunteered on a construction project in Peru perceived, “I was more equal with the[local] guys than the [volunteer] girls were […] I think [because] I was a guy and everything it helped me a lot more to interact with them.” Another man who had volunteered in Costa Rica, stated, “[the local people] kind of gave me a lot more responsibilities and duties and a lot of times it was said openly ‘it's because you're a guy.’” These examples highlight how volunteers
perceived their masculine subjectivities to have positively influenced their relationships with local men.

Conversely, when discussing how gender affected their interactions with local men, many women spoke about feeling watched or sexualized by them, as well as feeling like local men viewed them as inferior. One volunteer woman explained this feeling of inferiority during her trip in Kenya, stating: “I felt like being female, like [the local men] thought they could sort of, I don’t know, maybe bamboozle us in a way because we weren’t as strong as men.” Another volunteer who worked in India explained how she felt men were trying to take advantage of her because of her perceived gender, stating, “it was kind of like the second we tried to leave on our own just the four of us [women] people started, like men in particular, were trying to take advantage of us.” Additionally, a woman who volunteered in Uganda stated that when she was with her friend who was a Ugandan man, “people would outright ask him for me; they’d be like, ‘can I have her?’” In this way, the interactions between volunteer women and local men influenced the types of spaces women felt comfortable in and the types of activities with which they engaged.

Alternatively, volunteer women discussed the various ways they perceived their genders to have positively affected their relationships with local women and children. Participant women spoke about feeling as though they were able to form closer relationships with local woman by discussing their ‘shared’ experiences as woman. For example, a woman who volunteered in Ghana spoke about how she perceived gender to have influenced her experience, stating: “in terms of access to the women, 100 percent if I wasn’t a woman I don’t think I would have had that access.” Several women also felt like they were more readily able to form relationships with
local children because of their perceived gender. For example, a volunteer woman in Costa Rica stated, “working with the kids I think just naturally having someone who is a woman was easier for them to kind of feel comfortable and bond with.” Interestingly, a man who volunteered in Kenya believed that the way local children perceived his masculinity affected his interactions with them; he explained this, stating:

The kids were terrified of me because I had facial hair […] they were used to if a male was old enough to grow facial hair he was not someone you should be playing with or holding hands with. He was like either a father figure or a community leader or something more… like a warrior and that’s not someone you’re going to approach. Some of the brave kids might ask you to play sports and have competition and then I did my best to try and talk to little girls and get them to do handshakes and stuff but they were even more terrified than little boys. [I was] left out of the community-building, relationship-building. I was the only person who didn’t end up… who didn’t get a picture with a child, like, holding my hand or sitting in my lap, just because of, I guess, the position that I had kind of taken on in the trip […] I was a little bit saddened that I wasn’t able to create a relationship past big man to big man.

(Volunteer Man, White, Group Travel to Kenya)

In this example, the volunteer believed that local understandings of gender and what it means to be masculine were responsible for his inability to form close relationships with local children. It is evident that the volunteer had very set expectations of how local children should respond to his ‘goodwill’ (through taking photos with him), and that he was disappointed when his expectations were not met.

Another common theme in the interviews was the perception of differing conceptions of masculinity and femininity between volunteer tourists and local people. Volunteers often discussed how they felt as though their performances of their gendered subjectivities impeded the formation of relationships with local people of the same gender. Specifically, several volunteer men believed that differing conceptions of masculinity between themselves and local men often negatively influenced the relationships they were able to form as well as their own
self-worth. For example, one volunteer man spoke about being unable to work as hard as local men and how this made him feel emasculated. He stated:

[The other volunteer man] and I felt a little bit emasculated at times because these guys were really hard workers and we were these soft, weak Westerners who didn’t work out enough to be here and do the work as well as we should have […] And these guys could go all day, in the dead of really hot days they could dig for so long. While, here we are, we’re trying to dig but we’re exhausted so quick.

*(Volunteer Man, White, Group Travel to Thailand)*

In this example, the volunteer illustrated the way the performance of his masculinity affected his interactions with local people, as well as the way his interactions with local people influenced his performance of masculinity. In several instances volunteer women also spoke about how differing conceptions of femininity between themselves and local women affected their interactions. As explained by a volunteer woman who worked in Uganda, she believed that her female neighbours saw it as a “cross against her” as a woman that she could not do laundry in the same way as them. She stated:

When I was doing laundry, they would just kind of laugh at me and just be like, “oh my god, she doesn’t know what she’s doing! She’s never done this! These people are so lazy they have machines; they don’t know anything!” And in some ways because I was a woman, it was like a cross against me, but because I was white it was, like, justified but when my friend lived with me, he was a man, […] it was kind of like, “oh he doesn’t know how to do this but it’s ok because he’s a man and he’s white.” So, it was kind of acceptable in that way.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Individual Travel to Uganda)*

This example highlights how understandings of femininity and masculinity were also bound up with understandings of race. This quotation also illustrates the common perception that existed in the interviews, that cross-cultural (mis)understandings of masculinity and femininity oftentimes influenced the interactions they had with local people.
Many volunteers discussed altering their performances of their masculinities and femininities as a way of dealing with certain interactions. A volunteer man who had gone on several volunteer trips in the past and felt his display of masculinity varied from the local gender norms in several cross-cultural contexts, spoke about the challenges this presented him with. He stated:

Masculinity is constructed in a very interesting way in different cultural contexts and I think the way that I behave in a Canadian context is seen as appropriate and sensitive and conscious of power and privilege and how those play out in the lives of my female friends. Whereas that doesn’t necessarily translate in other contexts and so I am also a fairly introverted person too. But there’s times where you almost have to take on the role of being this loud, obnoxious man, in some cultural contexts and I... there have been numerous cases where I have refused to play that role and as a result it has influenced my relationship with other males who are local because people think that I have mental health problems.

He further explained the tension around his performance of masculinity, saying:

The construction of masculinity within a particular cultural context has been very challenging because I feel like in order to create relationships with community partners I have to play a certain role sometimes of which, most times, of which I’m not comfortable with and so I just don’t and I wonder how that influences how I’m perceived and the work that I do and if that influences my [experience] at all.

(Volunteer Man, White, Group Travel to Multiple World Regions)

Volunteer women also discussed how they responded to certain gendered interactions. Similarly, many volunteer women spoke about enacting certain performances of femininity to navigate their relationships with local people. For several women, this manifested in acting more reserved while volunteering abroad. For example, a volunteer woman who had worked on an agricultural project in Costa Rica, stated: “I sort of found that [being a woman] just caused me to retreat a little bit.” Another volunteer woman who had worked in Kenya explained why she felt she had to act more reserved while volunteering abroad, and how this affected her relationships with local people, stating:
I’m extremely extroverted here [in Canada], very independent, very confrontational and willing to argue a lot. That’s just totally not the appropriate identity to be travelling, it’s not a safe identity to be travelling as. So, I was like a very demur married, Christian woman and that kind of frustrated me […] I resented being constrained and not being able to be who I was for a long time so I felt like a lot of my friendships were a little bit fake. I was like, “you’re not actually… you don’t actually know me.”

"(Volunteer Woman, White, Individual Travel to Kenya)"

Alternatively, other volunteer women spoke about acting more assertive in certain situations than they would in a Canadian context. This was illustrated by one woman who had volunteered in Uganda, who spoke about being more physically assertive in situations where men would imply sexual advances. She explained her response, stating:

"My neighbour’s boyfriend] just thought that I would be like, “oh yeah, I totally want to sleep with you,” so to make my point I was just a lot more physically aggressive with him. You know when you playfully, like, […] just fling out your right hand to hit someone? So, I kind of did that but I might have swung a little bit harder. […] I was, like, I can't really do much else about it so I'm going to do this, maybe childish but also effective sometimes.

"(Volunteer Woman, White, Individual Travel to Uganda)"

With that said, she also explained that she was able to respond in such a way because of the privilege she had as a foreigner in the community, and that she believed if a local woman behaved in the same way the response of the local man would have been much different. This example illustrates how in some instances participants explicitly spoke about the intersectionality of their subjectivities.

4.4.2 Gendered Interactions with Teammates

In many instances participants spoke about volunteer men acting as protectors, guardians, or leaders of their groups, and how such performances influenced their interactions with their fellow teammates as well as with local people. According to participants, the role men played as protectors was generally appointed by volunteer organizations, who often required that at least one volunteer man be in a group of volunteer women if they wished to leave the group.
headquarters. A volunteer who had worked in Kenya described the responsibility he felt to keep
the women on his trip safe, and how this influenced the way he performed his masculinity,
stating:

Chin up, chest out. It was a symbolic thing. At the time I was a little concerned
about what if this isn't symbolic. […] There were definitely jeers and whistles.
[…] I did feel responsible for [the volunteer women] and a few times I asked my
friends like, “keep up,” or, “please don't wander, I don't want to lose you or they
[the organization] will be mad.”
(Volunteer Man, White, Group Travel to Kenya)

In this example, the volunteer explained how his perception of women’s vulnerability made him
uncomfortable in his role as ‘protector.’ This discomfort in turn, influenced the way he
performed his masculinity and how he interacted with the volunteer women on his team. Other
men spoke about feeling uncomfortable taking on the role of guardian/protector. Referring to his
trip to Botswana, one participant explained this discomfort, stating:

There’s the side of being the representative for the group that has been really
challenging, especially when I felt inexperienced or responsible for other people's
safety […] For me it was very strange to have to act on behalf of this group, all of
whom were older and had more experience than me […] There's definitely this
dynamic [from the organization] of like, “if you're going out at night make sure a
male is with you” […] So I play that role sometimes of guardian or, like, the
protector […] But again you don’t want to assert your masculinity; I don't know.
You play that role but you don’t want it to appear like you're doing that role
because there's some sort of power hierarchy that is established by, anyway you
just wish those roles didn’t exist.
(Volunteer Man, White, Group Travel to Botswana)

One volunteer woman who acknowledged that the men on her trip protected her physically,
explained how she felt as though she was also able to protect the men on her trip, but in different
ways. She explained:

I was the one who got to mother them, right? So, the guys physically were very
protective of me and I was sort of like protective of them in the sense of drinking,
water, getting sunscreen, getting enough sleep. I had the first aid kit. I was the
'mom,' so I think gender definitely played a part in that.
(White, Volunteer Woman, Group Travel to Mexico)
This quotation provides an example of how volunteer men and women spoke about caring for and interacting with each other in gendered ways.

Although many volunteers acknowledged that in some cases these gendered performances were useful (i.e. with regards to safety), in some instances they also led to team conflict. A volunteer man, who felt responsible for the safety of the women on his team, spoke about his frustration with the volunteer women, when he perceived they were being too loud and drawing the attention of local men. He stated:

[The women on the trip] would draw attention to our group all the time, even though in Thailand that’s considered rude. We would be walking down the street in a place we’ve never been before, amongst people we’ve never seen before and they were being really loud and really, like, laughing and yelling, attracting so much attention and [the other volunteer man] and I were like, “this is not okay”. We had to talk to them and be like, “this is not... you can’t just do anything. You have to think about what you’re doing.” As a guy, you did feel more responsible and like there’s... you feel like [you’re] waiting for some sort of sexual assault to happen.

(Volunteer Man, White, Group Travel to Thailand)

A volunteer woman who worked in Costa Rica explained her frustrations with the way her male teammate performed his masculinity when interacting with her and the local people. Referring to her teammate, she stated:

He was not very, like, what you would think of as a masculine man and that really came out [during the volunteer trip]. He was an artist, a very talented artist, into gardening, not so much into machetes or, I don't know, things that men do in that community; they use a machete for everything. It seemed to me that he felt quite emasculated […] and so he would try so hard to act out those things that were normal for men to do. […] It was interesting to see him sort of struggle to be differentiated from us [the volunteer women] in a way. Especially because I don’t think of myself as a super feminine woman […] So it was weird for him to see me as a more athletic muscular person and him struggling to be, like, “no, let me do that.”

(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Costa Rica)
Another volunteer woman, who considered herself to be a caring and emotional person spoke about her frustration with her teammates who associated these traits with her gender. She stated:

*I think my character has always been very caring and also very emotional and I became that person on the trip in our group […] I think sometimes I struggle with the fact of being so emotional and then that being tied with being a woman and people just assuming that because I’m a woman I’m emotional, like connecting those two. So, I think that was a bit of challenge.*

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Ecuador)*

As shown in these quotations the ways participants and their teammates preformed their gendered subjectivities affected their relationships with one another. Additionally, in some instances gendered performances seemed to change within the context of volunteer tourism, owing to the volunteers’ previously held gender norms as well as their perceptions of local gender norms in the countries in which they volunteered.

### 4.5 Summary of Findings

Overall, these findings reveal that gender played an important role in the the experiences of volunteer tourists. Specifically, participants believed that gender influenced the spaces they had access to, the types of activities they participated in, as well as their interactions with host communities and their teammates. Within these findings several important themes emerge. First, the many stories of concern around safety and security reveal the gendered geographies of fear within volunteer tourism. The findings also highlight the influence of gender on the activities and interactions volunteer tourists participated in, and how this may have influenced volunteer tourists gendered performances of care. Participants’ stories reveal the way gender was enacted differently in the different spaces volunteer tourists occupied, as well as the intersectionality of gender with other subjectivities. Finally, these findings foreground some of the implications of the unequal gender ratio of women to men volunteering within the sector. In the following chapter, these themes are explored within the context of a specific case study.
Chapter Five: Findings Part II
Gendered Experiences in Practice - The Case of Guatemala

5.1 Introduction

Guatemala, a nation that annually sees both mass and alternative tourists in high numbers (Vodopivec & Jaffe, 2009), was the destination for the two-week long volunteer trip that I analyzed as a case study for this thesis. As outlined in the methods section, this trip focused on community development through tree planting and permaculture, as well as learning and solidarity through meeting with local groups engaging in grassroots development work. The majority of participants identified as white women; two participants identified as white men; one participant identified as a Latinx, Guatemalan and El Salvadorian woman; the majority of participants identified as Canadian or American; three participant women identified as queer. It is important to note these subjectivities include participants’ own descriptions of their subjectivities and that I acknowledge that subjectivities are multiple and shifting. Simply because the participants did not identify other subjectivities, does not mean that they did not exist, or that they did not influence their experiences in Guatemala.

This chapter examines how participants experienced the various aspects of the trip including volunteering with different projects, learning from local community partners, debriefing in group sessions and the recreational component of the trip. Throughout this chapter, I use short vignettes based on my field notes, to illustrate the various experiences I observed while conducting participant observation. These vignettes are supported with direct quotations from the follow-up interviews with the participants of the trip. Many of the themes outlined in the previous chapter are present in the findings from the case study, however, they occasionally manifest in different or contradicting ways. Specifically, the findings in this section reveal
insight into the unequal gender ratio on the experiences of participants and the intersectionality of gender with other subjectivities and the potential implications of these two themes.

5.2. Volunteers’ Experiences of Gendered Spaces in Guatemala

Throughout the volunteer work we have done so far, I have noticed that the women and men on the team have, for the most part, been occupying the same spaces. However, because of the uneven gender ratio of participants there is always a greater presence of volunteer women than volunteer men. The majority of local people who we are working with are men. The local women have been a great support at the organization’s headquarters, providing us with meals, water and tea, but that is the extent of our interactions with them on the volunteer site.

(excerpt from my field notes, July 1st, 2016)

As a geographer, during the volunteer trip in Guatemala I was particularly interested in the spaces that we, the volunteers, had access to and the ways we inhabited these spaces. Furthermore, as a feminist geographer I was interested in the way our access and occupation of space intersected with our various subjectivities. The above vignette illustrates an observation that I made after our first day of volunteering, which extended to the various spaces where we volunteered throughout the trip. Whether it was on the side of a mountain during our eco-reforestation project, or at the volunteer organization’s headquarters cementing a tilapia fish pond, the twelve participant women generally occupied the same spaces as the two men on the trip. These spaces, however, tended to be dominated by local men and void of local women.

Although this was an important theme in my participant observation, when asked in the follow-up interviews about the role of gender in the spaces where we volunteered, none of the volunteers noted the gendered (and racialized) occupation of these spaces.

I also observed how gender seemed to influence volunteers’ experiences with other spaces, including both private (i.e. hostels and homestays) and public spaces (i.e. bars and streets). For example, during our stay in a community in the highlands, we were given access to a traditional Mayan sauna that was at the back of our host’s property. Roxanne, the woman program leader, told us that the volunteer women should dress modestly before entering the
sauna. Upon hearing this Sarah, one of the volunteer women who had started heading to the sauna in her two-piece bathing suit, exclaimed in an angry tone:

> I'm getting fucking sick of being in a country where I can’t be a woman. Next time I travel I’ll go somewhere where I can fucking be a woman or at least where I’m in control and can do what I want. I have tits get over it!  
> (excerpt from my field notes, July 3rd, 2016)

In this way, Sarah revealed how her understanding of what it means to “be a woman” was being challenged (or perhaps reinforced) by volunteering abroad and the discomfort and frustration that occurred as a result. This frustration may have been influenced by the organization’s gendered rules around dress, the restricted access to space, as well as Sarah’s preconceived ideas about how women should occupy space.

During our time spent with local families in the village where we were volunteering, gender also influenced our occupation of space. We, the volunteers, were split into groups of two and billeted to different homes throughout the village. One night when I and the volunteer I was placed with were walking back to our homestay after dark from our team get-together, we were greeted in the street by a member of the host family we were staying with, who had been sent to find us and escort us home. The individual explained that the mother of the household was very worried for our safety and when we returned to the homestay she told us that it was dangerous for two women to be out after dark without a man. In the follow-up interviews several women also noted experiencing such restricted access to space, specifically during nights and evenings.

Two participants recounted an experience in which they were prevented from entering a local bar during the evening. Cassandra explained her perception of the event, stating:

> We did go to the bar to drink one night and we stayed outside, like, the bar keeper - the woman - she didn’t want us to stay in the main bar where all the men were hanging out. She was like, “oh, go to the other side.” She’ll still serve us and we can sit outside […] she was kind of watching out for us.

Another volunteer, Rosie, further explained this event, stating:
She [the owner of the store] was like “I’m not serving you in there, it’s a room full of men. I’ll bring you the booze over to this counter” […] So we bought a beer each and we went and sat outside […] I sat crossed legged on the ground with my backpack […] and when all the guys were leaving the restaurant she was like “[are you] drunk?” Just because I was sitting on the floor. And it was just really weird and she was like “should we be walking you home?” […] And at that point I was like “should I be afraid because I’m a woman in the middle of a corn field?”

Cassandra and Rosie’s descriptions of this event, as well as my own experience being escorted home in the dark, revealed how certain norms regarding access to space (i.e. women not being out after dark and women not drinking in a bar with men) were made evident to us through our interactions with local people and their responses to our actions.

Although in some instances, gender influenced the spaces considered safe for volunteers to access; in many of my observations as well as in the follow-up interviews the majority of participants expressed feeling an overall sense of safety during their time in Guatemala. For example, when I asked Sasha, one of the volunteer women, if gender influenced the spaces she had access to on the trip, she stated:

I don’t know if it made a big difference in the end, I felt fairly comfortable, like, I didn't feel like I was in an area of the world where based on my gender I was going to be discriminated against differently […] or because I was a woman I wasn’t more scared of abuse or I wasn’t more scared of people in the streets, which you might be in other areas of the world if you were a female travelling. I didn’t feel that.

Sasha discussed how, from her perspective, Guatemala was not as dangerous for women as other countries in the Global South. Other participants spoke explicitly about the safety the volunteer tourism organization provided. Sally stated, “We were pretty much chaperoned or it was in the middle of the day [when we were in public] or I was in a big group so I never worried when I was in a group.” Lucinda agreed, stating “I wasn’t scared, I didn’t feel in danger at all but it did help being with a group of people especially when we used to go out at night. It’s always safer when you travel in groups anyways.” The structure of this volunteer tourism trip allowed the
participants to feel safe in spaces that were, as illustrated above, considered dangerous by some local women.

Although in the follow-up interviews volunteers perceived the role of gender in mediating access to space as quite minimal, several women spoke about the fear they had of the Global South prior to travelling abroad. Sarah explained her fear as the result of being an inexperienced traveler, stating, “the reason I chose to go to Guatemala is because I wanted to travel and basically [...] I’m pretty green so I didn’t really think that going by myself would be the safest bet.” Another volunteer, Sally, stated that she wanted to do something that was “by myself but not completely independent. Solo but not totally solo.” From her perspective travelling to an unfamiliar place would not be “the safest decision.” Volunteers on the trip were wary of travelling alone in the Global South and used the safety that came along with this particular organization (i.e. a set itinerary, a group of other people from the Global North, team leaders etc.) to access spaces they formerly perceived as dangerous. By being able to pay for the protection that the volunteer group provides, these women from the Global North were able to access spaces in Guatemala and for the most part feel relatively safe doing so.

5.3 Volunteers’ Experiences of Gendered Activities in Guatemala

*We spent the last two days at the volunteer headquarters working on several different projects. Under the supervision of one of the local Guatemalan men, half of us focused on a permaculture project, which involved weeding the overgrown gardens. The other half of the group worked with the organization’s local handyman cementing a five-foot-deep hole in the ground, which would one day become a tilapia fish pond. We retrieved sand and water from the nearby beach, mixed it with cement and covered the walls of the hole with it. The participant men and women equally participated in these volunteer activities. Today four local Guatemalan women came to the headquarters as a part of the cultural learning aspect of the trip. These women taught us how to dye wool with natural materials, and brought us to their weaving cooperative where they told us about their project, fed us lunch and taught us how to use the traditional loom.*

(excerpt from my field notes, July 7th, 2016)
During our time in Guatemala we engaged in various activities with local Guatemalan people. The types of activities led by Guatemalan men and women were often segregated by gender. During the volunteer aspects of our trip, which included the eco-reforestation and agricultural projects, we were instructed by and worked alongside local men. The majority of activities that focused on cultural learning were led by Guatemalan women, which included teaching us how to roast coffee beans, weave and dye wool, cook a traditional Guatemalan meal and make Mayan chocolates.6

Although the volunteers spoke during follow-up interviews about witnessing what they perceived to be a very clear gender divide in the activities that local people participated in, this perception did not seem to influence the types of volunteer activities in which we engaged. Lucinda stated, “I don’t think it made a difference what gender [we were] because we all just did the same thing and put in the same amount of labour and work into the things we did.” Similarly, Saff explained:

I don’t think the organization or any of the people felt like I should be doing more [because I am a man] […] I like to work kind of hard so, I worked hard but I don't think anyone was in the shadows thinking, “oh, he has to work harder than everyone else [because he is a man].” Everyone, I thought, everyone worked hard.

Isabel, who also stated that gender did not affect the types of volunteer activities she was able to do, believed that the uneven ratio of women to men might have influenced the access volunteers had to certain activities. She explained this, stating:

I think it might have been the dynamic of our group too, just because it was so female oriented, but I never felt like, you know, you can’t do this because you’re a woman or you’re going to have a harder time with this because you’re a woman. Whereas I do feel like that here [in the US] a lot. In the US it’s kind of just more noticeable, but in Guatemala I never felt restricted because of my gender.

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6 There were a few exceptions to this, including a tour of a small-scale coffee cooperative, a fishing trip and learning about the Guatemalan civil war. These activities were led by local men.
Reflectively, when asked this question Sally stated, “I have no idea. I’m sure it did, but there was never a time that I was like called out or told I couldn’t do something, so it didn’t feel like it did but I’m sure it did in some ways.” Interestingly, none of the volunteer tourists commented on the fact that as volunteer women they were engaging in volunteer work that did not seem in line with the local gender norms they spoke about observing.

Participants did, however, believe that the activities they practiced in within the homes of Guatemalans were influenced by local people’s understandings of gender. For example, Lucinda spoke about the gendered nature of the activities she did at her homestay, explaining:

[In our homestay] we helped them cook, we helped them clean and we helped them sew. So, we did things that were assigned to only what women did in Guatemala.

Several participants explained that they viewed gender as “traditional” or “very defined” based on their experiences with homestay families. For example, Sasha described her perception of gender in Guatemala, explaining:

I definitely felt that gender in Guatemala is very defined. […] I definitely know that if you are a woman in Guatemala you're expected to do very different things than a man in Guatemala. I definitely saw that gender very much affects their... like their whole life and their world outlook and their world views and from what I saw I didn't see a lot of people kind of fighting those stereotypes as you would here [in Canada] for instance.

Likewise, Isabel stated, “it seemed like the gender roles in Guatemala were pretty defined, the women were always... a lot of them were weaving or cooking or just in the house where as the men were out working and fixing things or whatever.” Reflecting upon how this influenced her own perception of gender she continued: “I think the host family made me realize my gender role more than anything else.” Other volunteers also spoke about how their homestay hosts displayed gender roles through gendered displays of care. Cassandra stated, “with the homestays the dad
went to work to his job at the bank and then the mom stayed home and took care of the family and cooked and stuff.” These findings revealed that although volunteer tourists often transcended what they perceived to be local gender norms while volunteering, there remained spaces where volunteers perceived local gender norms to have influenced the activities in which they participated.

5.4 Volunteers’ Experiences of Gendered Interactions in Guatemala

After an early morning of saying goodbye to our homestay hosts, we arrived at the headquarters of the eco-reforestation project. Several volunteer women recounted stories of how their homestay ‘moms’ had let them try on the traditional trajes (the intricately woven Mayan skirts) and blouses. Sarah had even had her hair braided into two tight pigtails by her host ‘mom.’ (excerpt from my field notes, July 3rd, 2016)

Although in many instances I observed what I perceived as gendered interactions - such as the above vignette where the volunteer women seemed to have connected closely with their homestay ‘moms’ - when asked whether or not gender influenced their interactions with local people the responses of participants were mixed. Two of the volunteers who believed that gender did not affect their interactions with local people explained that they shared a mutual respect with Guatemalan people regardless of gender. Saff described this, explaining:

In terms of [gender] and interacting with Guatemalans […] I never really noticed really anything. I don’t know, it seemed like they were just talking to me, like, normally. […] From what I experienced gender didn't make really a difference in the host family at all; they treated me with respect, they treated Sarah with respect, we treated them with respect. It wasn’t really on a gender level, it was more on a person level.

Sarah discussed this mutuality in terms of her interactions with the Guatemalan people with which we volunteered. She stated:

I think that they just kind of respected us in general and we respected them […] I never felt - like if I'm thinking of [a local man and woman we volunteered with]- I feel like I was the same with both of them. I felt like it was pretty... no, I don't think it did.
Others, however, felt like gender affected their interactions with local people. Junior, our male team leader, explained why he felt his gender influenced his relationships with local people, stating, “[gender’s] part of my identity, it explains who I am so in any interaction I have with anybody it’s going to be reflected.” More specifically, Rosie felt like her gender allowed her to interact more freely with the local women. She stated, “I felt like there was something to connect over and it was almost like they gave up more information.” Additionally, several volunteers spoke about how with their homestay families they felt like they connected better with the women and children than with the men because of their gender.

Although the majority of volunteers said gender did not influence their interactions with local people, many examples were given of how gender affected the intra-team interactions. When asked if gender influenced his interactions with the team, Saff was hesitant stating: “I don’t think so I mean, hmm... I think being the only male in the group maybe changed it a little bit. I’m not too sure.” He continued, stating:

I was surprised that more males didn’t want to go on the trip. I don’t know why they wouldn’t [...] I mean [the organization] did say that females usually volunteer or come on these trips more than males, but no, I didn’t really mind it too much and I thought it was fine. I mean it doesn’t really... it’s not that big of a deal really.

Interestingly, several of the volunteer women expressed feeling sympathy for Saff because he was the only man on the trip and because he did not have other volunteer men to “bond with.” For example, Sally stated, “I felt kind of bad for Saff the whole time being the only guy,” explaining how he mostly kept to himself and “did his own thing.” This sympathy may be explained by the value that many of the volunteer women placed on the trip being dominated by women. Many of the volunteer women spoke about the gender ratio of the trip and the benefits of having more women than men. For example, Sarah discussed how the greater portion of women on the trip led to a sense of “girl power,” which inspired her during the difficult parts of the trip,
feeling as though if other women could overcome challenges, she could too. Luz echoed this sentiment of female empowerment, stating:

I think it was nice being in a space of predominantly women, identifying, because we’re so used to men taking up so much more space than women. If there was anything empowering about the group it was probably just that, there being a lot of women there.

Other women explained how the female dominated trip allowed for “more unity,” “a safer space,” and overall a greater sense of belonging and camaraderie. This sentiment was explained by Sasha and Lucinda who, when asked if gender affected their experience on the trip, stated:

It might have, in the way that because the trip is mostly female being female sort of allows you to fit in, if that makes sense. You're not different, you're the same as everybody else […] because it was a group of predominantly women you kind of felt like it was a safer space. Yeah, so maybe it made me more comfortable.

It’s hard to say for our group because there is only one boy. But in a way, that does influence a lot of the events that happened or things that went on because there were more girls than boys so, you know, it's easier for girls to connect with each other and as they connect with each other, you know, they do things together and interact with people as well.

In these explanations of gender influencing the team interactions, we begin to see how the feminization of volunteer tourism plays out within the team dynamic.

5.5 The Perceived Influence of the Intersectionality of Volunteers’ Subjectivities

The findings thus far, have begun to show the various ways participants’ multiple subjectivities have influenced their experiences with the spaces, activities and interactions of volunteer tourism. This section explicitly focuses on the intersectionality of participants’ subjectivities during the case study in Guatemala. Throughout certain portions of the trip other subjectivities, aside from gendered subjectivities, influenced the way in which volunteers interacted with the spaces to which we had access. As a group of predominantly white volunteers, with the financial ability to afford an organized volunteer trip, we had access to
spaces that were inaccessible to many people from both the Global North and the Global South. Additionally, during portions of the trip that we shared space with local people, the majority of volunteers did not interact with local people. For example, in instances where we visited local farmers to learn about coffee production, or local weaving cooperatives, the majority of volunteers would enter a room and spread out, effectively occupying the entire space. In such instances, the local hosts would often position themselves on the outskirts of the room, or in many cases in a different room altogether.

An important exception to the way the majority of volunteers occupied spaces during the trip was the experience of Luz, a volunteer woman who identified as Latinx. When I asked her about how she accessed certain spaces during the trip she explained that her ethnicity, which is El Salvadorian and Guatemalan, strongly influenced the spaces she had access to. She stated:

Ok, so I identify as Guatemalan, El Salvadorian, Queer, Latinx […] it was almost like going back home was a privilege in itself because I could navigate both in English and in Spanish spaces […] [During the trip] I often chose to remove myself or not associate with the group [of volunteers]. When we went to just Guatemalan spaces I felt like I was Guatemalan, but even within those spaces I was still white because I’m not from there. I wasn’t born there. I don’t wear what they wear. I don’t do what they do. So, it was very – what’s the word - displacing and diasporic almost […] I felt comfortable being in Guatemala when I was isolated from the group, almost, but at the same time not fully feeling Guatemalan of course. So, it was very difficult to find my footing. But yeah, again like it just reminded me or kept showing me that I don’t fit in anywhere.

The first part of Luz’s explanation was consistent with my observations, in which I noticed how she occupied different spaces than the rest of the volunteers. Luz was often separate from the other volunteers, seeking out different spaces than the rest of the team. For example, when we had free time, the majority of the volunteers would seek out Westernized restaurants and bars, whereas Luz would seek out local eateries and spaces. During the follow-up interview, Luz explained how her ethnicity also led to a “diasporic” or “displaced” feeling, which illustrated the
complex ways an individual’s subjectivities can affect one’s use of space, and the importance of analyzing this aspect of the experience of volunteer tourists.

As illustrated in the following vignette, another important subjectivity that influenced the way volunteers used certain spaces was sexual orientation. The following encounter highlights how Luz and Rosie, two women who identified as queer, were displaced from (or chose to leave as an act of resistance to) a group debrief session as a result of certain conversations.

After we returned back from a morning exploring the city, our two team leaders called us into a room to participate in a group debrief session. The topic of the conversation was addressing our privileges in the context of our trip. The conversation quickly developed into a heated discussion, with one of the volunteers challenging the oppression faced by minorities specifically in relation to the Black Lives Matter movement and LGBTQ+ rights. At this time, Luz became visibly removed from the conversation with her attention turned to her phone. At that moment, the male team leader asked Luz to put her phone away. Upset with his request and the conversation that was taking place, she subsequently left the room. Several minutes later when the individual continued to downplay the struggles of people in the LGBTQ+ community, Rosie, who explained the struggles she faced as a gay woman, quickly left the room and slammed the door behind her, visibly upset and crying.

(excerpt from my field notes, June 28th, 2016)

In this situation, the space in which the group debrief session on privilege occurred turned into a space that two of the women did not want to be in. The group debrief sessions were intended to be a space where volunteers could talk about their experiences volunteering within a development context, as well as confront their own privileges in a safe way. However, the responses of Luz and Rosie revealed how the ‘safe spaces’ that the volunteer tourism organization attempted to create were not experienced in this way by all participants. In the follow-up interviews Luz and Rosie spoke about how their subjectivities influenced this experience. Rosie described her experience with this event, stating:

I felt like an individual that I didn’t even know, [whom] I owed nothing to, made me come out to 13 people […] I have never felt so compelled to defend myself and [the individual] wasn’t even looking at me, or attacking me or anything like that […] It was weird to get that in Guatemala where I thought everyone on that trip would at least have
some sort of background and some sort of like-mindedness and openness to be on a trip like that […] So that was the group dynamic that challenged me the most.

In this explanation, it is evident that Rosie had certain expectations about the kind of volunteers she would encounter during the trip, specifically that the volunteers would all share a similar set of values. Luz explained her experience with the event, stating:

[One of the volunteers] was talking about homophobia, or queer people in the states and then dismissing those people’s experiences, and then trying to argue that the system has failed a white man. It was just mind blowing and then that to me was like, that put things into perspective of how blind people can be that I, someone of colour, that obviously had already identified as Guatemalan, Spanish speaker, people dismissing that, and just dismissing me and that part of my identity. And almost like I was made invisible, like I wasn’t there. That was when I was like “holy shit,” I cannot believe this is being said right now or that this is even being tolerated, but of course it is being tolerated because it’s a group of white people who obviously don’t understand, I mean this conversation or what it feels like to be in these situations.

In this quotation, Luz expressed her anger with the group interaction in the debrief session as well as with the way the group had been interacting with her as a result of her various subjectivities.

When I asked Luz about her struggles during the trip in the follow-up interview, Luz spoke openly about how her subjectivities influenced her interactions with her teammates as well as with local people. Specifically, with her teammates she spoke about her frustration over feeling tokenized. She explained that when the other volunteers needed someone to translate or explain Guatemalan culture to them, they viewed her as Guatemalan; but when they complained about Guatemalan culture/society they suddenly viewed her as Canadian and seemed to forget that Guatemalan culture was her culture as well. In a troubling example, Luz recounted how certain volunteers continually expressed their distaste for Guatemalan food to her, explaining:

Sarah had went to buy pancake mix and then had specifically chosen to come up to me, aside from anyone else, knowing I'm Guatemalan - half Guatemalan - and decides to […] show me this box of pancake mix, point to it and say “do you know what this says? This says fuck frijoles, fuck beans” […] I was like “you
have literally just insulted me to the core and you don't even realize it” [...] The complaining of beans, like that, that's my culture like that is what people eat here, that is what I eat. I'm just not going to get over the fact that she chose to say that to me, again coming to the identity thing, completely dismissing that I'm from there.

In this example, Luz explained how specific volunteers only acknowledged her subjectivities separately, when it benefited them, but they did not seem to have any understanding or sensitivity to how the intersectionality of her various subjectivities may influence her experience.

Luz also explained how identifying as Latinx affected her relationship with local people, as she felt as though she was able to interact more freely with them and form stronger relationships than her mainly white teammates. For example, after our hike with Guatemalan tour guides came to an end, the guides waved goodbye to the majority of the volunteers, but they all hugged Luz and asked me to take a picture of “just the Guatemalans,” referring to the three guides and Luz. However, Luz also spoke about how her perceived subjectivities influenced her experience with local people in a different way, stating:

I mean, I think I was definitely sexualized because I'm Latina and not looking like [the local Guatemalan people]. I’m not as dark or have such distinguishing facial features that are similar to theirs [...] I’m sexualized already because I can speak the language and I am from there [yet] I still have you know the exotic expat feel as well. I think that almost leaves you open... like asking me “do you have a boyfriend,” it’s already like “are you owned by someone already or are you kind of open to be owned?”

Additionally, Luz discussed her experience as a queer woman in Guatemala, stating:

The queer aspect as well, that came up in Guatemala outside of the group and with [...] one of the guides, when... just little things that I kind of picked up on that are obviously just machismo in Guatemala. Like asking someone if they have a boyfriend and not considering that you could have not an opposite sex relationship.

Luz further explained that because of her sexual orientation she felt like she had to suppress a part of herself during the trip. Although Luz’s story is one example, it provides
an important illustration of the intersection of gender with other subjectivities and how they influenced the volunteer tourism experience. Additionally, the findings discussed throughout this section, provide a snapshot of some of the volunteers’ sense of cultural superiority that I perceived as being pervasive throughout the volunteer trip in Guatemala. These examples reveal much about systems of colonial power and the perspectives of many volunteers who displayed a sense of entitlement during their volunteer trips.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the role of gender in volunteer tourism as perceived by myself and volunteer tourists during a specific case study. The findings presented provided a more nuanced understanding of the various themes highlighted in Chapter Four, both supporting and contradicting the experiences of the other volunteer tourists who were interviewed. There may be several reasons for this variation, including the structure of the trip, which focused on solidarity and learning, as well as the organization closely mediating the spaces, activities and interactions the volunteer tourists had access to. Ultimately, the findings in these two chapters demonstrate how volunteer tourism produces and is produced by gendered spaces, in which fear and care are enacted in certain ways, influencing how volunteers understand and perform gender in the various contexts of the Global South.
Chapter Six: Discussion
Volunteer Tourism as a Gendered Space

6.1 Introduction

In the findings presented in Chapter Four and Five, a feminist analysis of volunteer tourists’ experiences reveals some of the ways volunteer tourists’ perceived gender to have influenced their trips abroad. In this chapter, I use insights from the literature on feminist geography, critical tourism and development studies, and volunteer tourism to discuss the themes that have emerged throughout this feminist analysis.

6.2 The ‘Volunteer Tourist Bubble’ as a Gendered Space

The idea that volunteer tourism has the ability to break through the ‘tourist bubble’ through intimate encounters between volunteer tourists and local people, has been promoted as one of the benefits of volunteer tourism (Mostafanezhad, 2014). However, the findings of this research suggest that through volunteer tourism the ‘tourist bubble’ is extended rather than subverted. This finding supports the work of Godfrey et al., (2015) who found that volunteer tourism creates a “volunteer tourist enclave” (Godfrey et al., 2015) within the countries in which volunteer tourists travel. This ‘volunteer tourist bubble,’ as I will refer to it, can be conceptualized as a space that operates both within but separate from local communities in the Global South. The ‘volunteer tourist bubble,’ can be seen to exist when the experiences of volunteer tourists are mediated and shaped by their subjectivities as volunteer tourists. For example, when a volunteer woman spoke about participating in construction work – which she explained was not a common task for local women to participate in - the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ provided the volunteer with a certain degree of privilege. This privilege set her a part from the local community.
The findings reveal that there was a great deal of diversity in how the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ was constructed and experienced. As illustrated in the Guatemala case study, it appeared that the borders of this ‘bubble’ can be more or less permeable based on the rules of the organization and the subjectivities of volunteer tourists. For example, during the volunteer trip in Guatemala I found that the borders of the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ were relatively impermeable as the organization largely controlled the experiences of volunteer tourists. In the narratives of volunteer tourists who volunteered independently the borders of the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ appeared to be more permeable and their experiences less mediated by the volunteer tourism organization. Another aspect of the diversity in and between ‘volunteer tourist bubbles’ was the various subjectivities of volunteer tourists participating in any given trip. The multiple and shifting subjectivities of participants (Nelson & Seager, 2008; Nightingale, 2011; Valentine, 2007) including their gender, ethnicity, nationality, age etc., shape the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ in many ways. For example, in the case of Luz, we saw how her subjectivities as a Latinx woman influenced her experience within the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ as she interacted with local people in different ways than her white teammates.

From a feminist perspective, which sees all space as gendered and socially constructed (Nelson & Seager, 2008), I argue that in order to fully understand how the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ and the subjectivities of volunteer tourists’ are mutually constituted, we must analyze it as a gendered space. Specifically, I argue that in volunteer tourism this mutual constitution occurs through complex gendered and racialized power relations (Crouch, 2000). For example, when volunteer tourist men spoke about having to act as the protectors of the women on their team it revealed how the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ is shaped by gendered ideas about women’s vulnerability (Koskela, 1997) as well as racialized ideas about the dangerous ‘Other’ (Cook,
2006). Similar to the findings of Roth (2015: p. 101), who highlighted how an expatriate ‘bubble’ of development workers created a space in which they could renegotiate their gendered subjectivities, the findings in this study reveal that the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ provides a space in which volunteer tourists’ gendered subjectivities can be rearticulated and/or reinforced.

The role of care and fear are two common and interrelated themes that emerged in volunteer tourists’ narratives of their trips. I argue that care and fear as well as the embodied ways volunteer tourists negotiate them influence the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ in particularly gendered ways. As seen in this study, in some instances the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ enabled participants to overcome their gendered assumptions of care and fear, and explore new ways of performing their masculinities and femininities. However, in other instances the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ also had the ability to reinforce gender norms and power hierarchies in negative, often patriarchal ways. In order to further understand the ‘volunteer tourist bubble,’ the following sections specifically explore the implications of how volunteer tourists embody gendered notions of care and fear while travelling abroad.

6.3 The Gendered Geographies of Care in Volunteer Tourism

As presented in the literature review, feminist geographers have argued that globalization is expanding the geographies of care to include new caringscapes, in which care is enacted in new ways and between new actors (Lawson, 2007; Popke, 2006). The findings of this research reveal how care was enacted in volunteer tourism in various spaces through the activities and interactions volunteer tourists experienced. I argue that participants embodied their care about development issues by caring for local communities through the various types of volunteer activities in which they engaged (including activities not traditionally seen as care work such as construction and agriculture). Based on these findings I suggest that the ‘volunteer tourist
6.3.1 The ‘Volunteer Tourist Bubble’ as a Gendered Caringscape

From the feminist analysis of volunteer tourists’ experiences, it is evident that the caringscape of the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ is influenced by and influences volunteers’ subjectivities and subsequent performances of care in gendered ways. This finding supports existing work by feminist geographers who have argued that the practices of care are heavily gendered (England, 2010; Conradson, 2003; Baker, 2011). As care work across the world often occurs in the ‘feminine’ spaces of the home, ‘traditional’ forms of caring (such as cooking, cleaning and childcare) are often problematically normalized as women’s work (England, 2010: p. 133; Baker, 2011). As seen in the findings, within the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ such a division of care work often exists. For example, the spaces that participants spoke about as being more available to volunteer women tended to be the private spaces of their hosts’ homes, or volunteer sites seen as feminine spaces (i.e. orphanages, schools etc.). The spaces participants spoke about as being more available to volunteer men were public spaces as well as volunteer sites that were seen as traditionally masculine spaces (e.g. construction and agriculture sites). This gendered division of space has the potential to reinforce patriarchal notions of how various genders should perform care as well as what spaces are accessible to women and men (Conradson, 2003).

Additionally, the findings reveal that even when both genders occupied the same caringscape, the ways they enacted their care were often segregated by volunteer and local gender norms. Volunteers often expressed a sense of disappointment or frustration in instances where they felt restricted in the types of care they could enact based on local gender norms,
which differed from their own ideas about how men and women could perform care. For example, a volunteer man in Kenya was saddened when local children did not respond to his care in the way he had imagined (i.e. sitting on his knee or taking pictures with him), and a volunteer woman in India was frustrated when she was assigned the task of seed sorting instead of plowing fields with the water buffalo. These examples illustrate how volunteer tourists’ embodiment of their care was influenced by the gender norms of local people, as well as their own understandings about gender. By women and men enacting their care for local people in ways that uphold gendered ideas about care, the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ has the potential to reinforce masculine and feminine subjectivities in specific ways.

6.3.2 Care and the Feminization of Volunteer Tourism

The data also reveals the potential implications of the feminization of volunteer tourism, which contrary to the findings above, challenges rather than reinforces traditional ideas about care. A prominent theme that emerged was that volunteer women enacted their care about development issues in ways that they perceived to challenge the gender norms of their home and host communities. For example, many women spoke about volunteering for construction and agricultural projects in the Global South, and some believed that volunteering in activities seen as ‘men’s work’ could teach local people about gender equality. During the Guatemalan case study, the feminization of volunteer tourism and the implications for the geographies of care were aptly illustrated. The majority of participants on the Guatemala trip cited the gender ratio as one of the main reasons gender had little influence on the types of care they enacted.

Additionally, by volunteering abroad in a group of predominantly women, many participants expressed feeling more ‘empowered,’ which may have influenced their willingness to engage in activities they perceived as ‘masculine’. I argue, as it was suggested by several participants, that
the lack of men in volunteer tourism allows women more opportunities to perform care through tasks that may traditionally be viewed as men’s work (e.g. tree planting, cement mixing, constructing a tilapia fish pond).

The ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ allows volunteer women an opportunity to perform their care in new spaces and through new practices and interactions. I argue that the feminization of volunteer tourism has the potential to reshape gendered ideas about what types of care should be performed by men and women. Although this may be seen as a potential benefit of the feminization of volunteer tourism, there is also an important racialized component to the way women from the Global North perform their care in the Global South. As the care that volunteer tourist women enact is not always in line with local gendered norms regarding care work, the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ can maintain rather than subvert racialized regimes of power that position women from the Global North as the ‘doers’ of development (Lahiri-Dutt, 2017). This may lead to a problematic reinforcement of power hierarchies which position individuals from the Global North as more powerful than individuals from the Global South (Lahiri-Dutt, 2017).

6.3.3 Defying Local Gendered Conceptions of Care

When volunteer tourists spoke about caring for local people in ways which they perceived to defy local gender norms a racialized consequence of the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ was revealed. Specifically, by enabling volunteer tourists to transcend gendered divisions of care work that exist in local communities, the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ may reinforce a separate set of local and volunteer gender norms. In this way, rather than increasing cross-cultural understanding (Sin, 2010) through volunteer tourism, volunteer tourists remain separate from local communities.
This finding was similar to that of researchers focused on women from the Global North working in development, who found that these women often accessed opportunities that were not available to local women (Cook, 2007; Heron, 2007; Roth, 2015). This was illustrated in the types of care - or volunteering – we participated in during the case study in Guatemala. For example, we volunteered at the organization’s headquarters working on construction and agricultural projects. During this time, we volunteered exclusively with two local men even though we were predominantly a group of women. This pattern of volunteer women transcending gender norms through their performances of care in volunteer tourism was seen in many interviews; however, in the volunteer tourists’ stories it was suggested that local people involved in volunteer tourism did not often enact care in ways that differed from what volunteer tourists perceived to be local gender norms.

In this way, the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ provides a space in which volunteer tourists can renegotiate their gendered subjectivities, extending existing research that explores the way volunteer tourism, tourism, and development in the Global South create spaces of subjectivity formation for individuals from the Global North (Cook, 2007; Gibson, 2001; Heron, 2007; Wearing & Neil, 2000). Similar to the findings of Roth (2015: p. 112), I argue that the difference in gender norms between volunteer tourists from the Global North and the locals they interact with contribute to the “opening up of negotiations as to how gender is done and undone.” By applying Said’s (1979) concept of Orientalism, these findings could be interpreted to suggest that the volunteer tourists’ proximity to the ‘Other’ allows them to come to know themselves. Specifically, through their enactments of care in new caringscapes, volunteer tourists may problematically see themselves as empowered individuals with the ability to overcome gender norms and perform care in new ways not available to local people.
Feminist geographers have argued that care extends beyond the local scale, or the “places with which we are most familiar,” to the global scale through processes that connect people in the Global North and Global South (Lawson, 2007). I argue that the type of care that is performed in volunteer tourism, in which volunteer tourists operate outside of local gender norms, often goes against what volunteer tourism is acclaimed to achieve, such as breaking down barriers between people in the Global North and Global South through intimate encounters (Mostafanezhad, 2014; Sin, 2010). The findings highlight how the care performed within the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ often maintain racialized regimes of power that regulate who cares for whom, in what spaces, and in what ways, as well as who is perceived as powerful and powerless in relationships between volunteer tourists and local people. As volunteer tourist organizations make decisions on the types of projects with which volunteers will engage, and the people with which they will interact, they are effectively shaping volunteer tourists’ geographies of care.

In her work, Cook (2011) argued that an emphasis on care and caring relationships in development has the potential to obscure the following: first, the power relations on which such international relationships of care are predicated; second, the role of development workers in maintaining systems of oppression; and third, the material and social benefits such work brings to the development worker. Similarly, I argue that the emphasis on care work in the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ has similar consequences for volunteer tourists, which play out in a gendered and racialized way. In order to challenge the potentially problematic caring relationships formed in volunteer tourism, I argue that volunteer tourists seeking to engage in transformative relationships of care must evoke a feminist ethic of care (Mindry, 2010). This would involve volunteer tourists thinking critically about the politics involved in the caring relationships they form and how their care influences the everyday lives of local people, as well as making a moral
commitment to justice and care (Mindry, 2010). For this to be achieved volunteer tourists must begin by reflecting on their role within the systems of oppression that have led to the uneven development they are arguably trying to right, as well as the unequal relationship on which volunteer tourism is predicated (de Jong, 2009; Lahiri-Dutt, 2017).

This feminist analysis has revealed that the imaginary of the Global South as a dangerous place may influence volunteer tourists’ geographies of care and contribute to maintaining a divide between people from the Global North and Global South. As a result, in the following section I examine the geographies of fear that exist in volunteer tourism and explore how these geographies may influence the ‘volunteer tourist bubble.’

6.4 The Gendered Geographies of Fear in Volunteer Tourism

As outlined in the literature review, scholars have examined the geographies of women’s fear in their home communities within the Global North (Valentine, 1989; Koskela, 1997; Koskela and Pain, 2000), as well as during women’s travels abroad (Jordan & Gibson, 2005; Wilson & Little, 2005). The findings of this study reveal how gendered geographies of fear manifest in volunteer tourism; specifically, in many of the semi-structured interviews volunteer tourists spoke about their fear, or lack thereof, in particularly gendered and racialized ways. In these findings, many parallels to existing feminist work on women’s experiences with fear and safety exist. This section highlights the similarities – as well as differences – between the findings of this research and this existing work on the geographies of fear and what this may mean in the case of volunteer tourism.

6.4.1 Conceptualizing the ‘Volunteer Tourist Bubble’ as a Safe Space for Women

Similar to the research of Valentine (1989) and other feminist geographers (Koskela & Pain, 2000; Rosewarne, 2005) the findings in this study reveal that prior to their trips abroad, the
fear volunteer tourists had of the Global South depended on warnings from family and friends and other sources of secondary information (i.e. information provided by the volunteer tourism organization, parents’ concern for safety). In this study, these discourses were often gendered. Although men spoke about the fear they experienced once abroad, none of the men in this study spoke about fearing the Global South before deciding to travel with a volunteer tourism organization. Regardless, the findings highlight how discourses of fear are often gendered, and how these gendered discourses influence women’s “mental maps” (Valentine, 1989) of places they perceive as safe and their subsequent occupation of space in the Global South.

By participating in volunteer tourism, women’s mental maps of safe spaces may be extended to certain spaces in the Global South. According to Wilson and Little (2005) the unfamiliar people, landscapes, languages and cultures that women from the Global North experienced while travelling abroad heightened their sense of fear. However, I argue that the sense of familiarity the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ promotes, through elements such as a set itinerary, rules, regulations, support staff, controlled interactions with local people and a team of other volunteer tourists, contributes to shaping the Global South as more known and therefore more safe.

In this study, many volunteer tourists believed volunteer tourism was advantageous in terms of their interactions with local communities. Participants explained that by participating in volunteer tourism they were introduced to local customs and expectations in a contained way, which helped the volunteer avoid committing social faux pas. Similar to the findings of Mostafanezhad (2014), participants often explained that volunteer tourism led to more intimate

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7 It is important to think through how men not identifying fear as something that motivated them to travel with a volunteer group might have more to do with their performance of masculinity in front of a female researcher than an actualized lack of fear.
connections with local people that arguably made the stranger or the ‘Other’ more knowable and less feared. In this way, volunteer tourists perceived their experiences as a good ‘first introduction’ to countries in the Global South, which they believed provided them with the confidence to one day travel abroad by themselves. However, rather than breaking the ‘tourist bubble’ I argue that intimate interactions may extend it, bringing certain local people into its folds while others remain distant and separate. Nevertheless, the familiarity that is constructed in the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ positions it as a safe space for women, which enables them to access the supposedly dangerous Global South in a controlled environment.

6.4.2 The Presence of Fear Within the ‘Volunteer Tourist Bubble’

Although the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ may be seen as a safe way for women from the Global North to access and care for people in the various spaces of the Global South, a feminist analysis reveals how volunteers’ fears were often maintained while abroad. Several women spoke about fearing being robbed or sexually assaulted by local men, a fear feminist geographers argue is shared by many women in public spaces (Rosewarne, 2005; Valentine, 1989). Several volunteer men also spoke about feeling afraid, however, in these instances their fear was almost always spoken about in relation to the perceived vulnerability of the women on their trips. In this way, the findings reveal how women and men’s feelings of fear are often linked to a socially constructed sense of a woman’s “uncertainty, helplessness and vulnerability” within the Global South (Koskela, 1997: p. 304).

Participants explained how their various fears were produced and maintained in a variety of ways and how this often related to their various subjectivities. First, many participants spoke about being in an unfamiliar space and the fear associated with not knowing the area, language or social norms, a feeling often shared with tourist women (Jordan & Aitchsion, 2008; Wilson &
Little, 2005) and female development workers (Heron, 2007; Roth, 2015). Volunteers also spoke about how the rules and regulations of the volunteer tourist organizations, which often focused on safety and security, caused them to wonder what exactly they should be afraid of, in many instances heightening their sense of fear. Additionally, several volunteer women perceived their host families’ concerns for their safety as something that caused them fear. Many volunteer women also spoke about feeling frightened or uncomfortable due to the “sexualized male gaze” (Jordan & Aitchison, 2008) of local men. This perception of being watched by local men illustrates how within the volunteer-host relationship the object and subject of the gaze can be renegotiated based not only on race but also on gender, illustrating Maoz’s (2006) concept of the “mutual gaze.” Finally, in several accounts volunteer women discussed frightening encounters with local men, which resulted in a greater sense of unease throughout the remainder of their trips. In this way, the findings reveal how gendered fears were based on both material threats and perceived threats to women’s bodies, which participants felt viscerally whether or not they experienced the actual gendered violence.

These gendered fears may result in volunteer men and women renegotiating their subjectivities in the various spaces they occupied. For example, in order to feel safe volunteer women discussed several strategies – which were similar to ones used by women in the Global North (Koskela, 1997; Valentine, 1989) as well as female solo travelers and development workers (Cook, 2006; Jordan & Aitchison, 2008). These strategies included: altering the way that they dressed, for example wearing clothes worn by local women; changing their behaviours, including women who spoke about acting more reserved or demure, as well as women who spoke about acting more assertive or aggressive; choosing forms of transit or alternate routes to their destinations; and relying on volunteer men (and occasionally local men associated with the
organization) when they were in public spaces. Volunteer men also discussed renegotiating their subjectivities in order to fulfill their assigned (or assumed) roles as protectors and leaders of their groups. One man spoke about walking with his “chin, up and chest out” to symbolically show he was the protector of the four women he was with, and another man spoke about taking on the role of a “loud obnoxious man” when interacting with local men. Through these embodied renegotiations of their subjectivities, men and women felt as though they were able to navigate public space safely while abroad.

In this way, the experiences of volunteer tourists provide an important example of how the geographies of women’s fear is not only about women, but it is about masculinities and femininities and what it means to be a woman or a man in certain spaces. According to Valentine (1989: p. 389) the fear of public spaces, and subsequent reliance on men becomes another way “male dominance [and] patriarchy, is maintained and perpetuated.” Through the embodied ways volunteer tourists negotiate their safety, patriarchal gender norms regarding fear and access to public spaces may be maintained in the ‘volunteer tourist bubble.’

6.4.3 The Lack of Fear Within the ‘Volunteer Tourist Bubble’

The heightened sense of fear, which many volunteer tourists expressed having while abroad, is in line with the work of feminist geographers who have argued that women feel most safe in familiar environments and feel most afraid of strange men (Valentine, 1989; Koskela 1997; Koskela & Pain, 2000; Wilson & Little, 2005). However, as seen in the Guatemalan case study a heightened sense of fear was not felt equally by all volunteer tourists. In this case, the majority of volunteer women expressed an overall sense of safety and security throughout their time abroad. I argue that this feeling of safety was influenced by a tightly constructed ‘volunteer
tourist bubble’ which was shaped by the regulations of the organization, which quickly became familiar and comfortable to many (but certainly not all) of the volunteers.

Within this ‘bubble’ our interactions with local men and women were limited, supervised and predetermined by the organization, and our local partners were introduced as people ‘worthy’ of our trust rather than strangers to be feared. There were several potential consequences of these mediated interactions. First, as mentioned, the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ contributed to the majority of the women on the trip expressing a feeling of safety. Additionally, they spoke about feeling empowered by the fact that they were a part of a group of predominantly women travelling in the Global South. In this way, volunteer tourism can act as a strategy for expanding the spaces women feel safe in, which has the potential to subvert patriarchal gender norms.

I argue, however, that the familiarity provided by the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ may contribute to volunteer tourists being out of touch with the realities of local people as well as expecting to have access to the same rights and subsequent freedoms they experience at home. For example, in the case of Sasha who felt that relative to other countries in the Global South, Guatemala was a particularly safe space for women, the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ may have contributed to a false sense of what everyday life is like for local women in Guatemala. In the case of Sarah, who expressed being upset over the dress code she was asked to maintain in order to respect local norms, it can be hypothesized that the constructed sense of familiarity she felt within the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ led her to conceptualize local culture as inferior. By not thinking critically about cultural sensitivity or their own privileged subject positions volunteer tourists run the risk of perpetuating troubling discourses of cultural superiority.
6.4.4 Difference Within and Outside of the ‘Volunteer Tourist Bubble’

As seen in this study, volunteer tourists’ experiences of fear within the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ were not homogenous, and were greatly influenced by volunteers’ various subjectivities. The Guatemala case study, highlights how the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ was not perceived as a safe space for two women based on the intersectionality of their subjectivities. For example, in the case of Luz we saw how both her ethnicity and sexual orientation led her to feel isolated and threatened by many of the group interactions. Recounting her feelings regarding the group debrief sessions, Luz explained that she felt like she was being physically beaten up by the ignorant and violent discourse being used by group members. In another instance, where Rosie also felt uncomfortable within the ‘volunteer tourist bubble,’ she expressed disbelief that a person who held such different (and in this case homophobic) views was even on the trip, implying that she had assumed a certain level of safety or homogeneity to exist within the ‘volunteer tourist bubble.’ I argue that within this ‘bubble,’ people’s experiences of safety and fear are greatly influenced by their subjectivities.

The ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ is also problematic as it perpetuates racialized regimes of power that privilege the safety of some people over others, and reinforces racialized notions of the ‘Other.’ For example, in the case study volunteer tourists did not acknowledge and were not explicitly made aware of the reality of local women’s experiences of fear within their own communities (i.e. when the volunteers were frustrated that they could not enter a local bar, or go out in the evenings unsupervised). Additionally, in the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ certain people are positioned as known and others as unknown. For example, in many of the stories of volunteer tourists it seemed that within the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ a great sense of familiarity was established; the volunteer tourists often spoke fondly of their team leaders and fellow teammates.
who they relied on for support and protection, as well as their local partners and homestay hosts who many referred to as their ‘families.’

This familiarity, however, did not generally extend to people outside of the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’, and local people beyond the host families, specifically local men, who were not encompassed within this ‘bubble’ were often seen as dangerous. For example, none of the volunteer women interviewed mentioned fearing their male teammates who, at the beginning of their trips, were relative strangers. Rather, their fear seemed to focus on local men. This is similar to what Cook (2007) found in her study of female development workers, in which women from the Global North often formed romantic relationships with men from the Global North to help feel safe in Gilgit, Pakistan. Relying on the men in their teams for safety suggests that within the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ strangers from a familiar environment may become more knowable, whereas strangers outside of the ‘bubble’ from unfamiliar environments may become even more unknown and feared, reinforcing racialized geographies of fear. In this way, the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ may reinforce the idea of the ‘Other,’ and needing to fear the ‘Other,’ which perpetuates troubling colonial discourses (Cook, 2006).

6.5 The Role of Fear and Care in Shaping the ‘Volunteer Tourist Bubble’

To conclude this section, I revisit the conceptualization of the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ as it relates to the gendered geographies of fear and care. I have argued that a feminist analysis of volunteer tourism, reveals how the ‘tourist bubble’ is extended in volunteer tourism rather than broken. The findings of this study reveal how the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ has been constructed as a ‘safe space’ for women from the Global North in the Global South. This imagined sense of safety within the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ may contribute to the proliferation of the number of women travelling abroad with volunteer tourism organizations. However, it is important to note
that there are other group travel options that exist that do not require participants to volunteer while travelling; therefore, a crucial component of the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ is the idea of volunteering, or caring, that is often central to volunteer tourists’ experiences.

I argue that the material ways volunteer tourists attempt to care for local people shape the ‘volunteer tourist bubble,’ in ways that lead to the exclusion and inclusion of certain groups. The local people the volunteer tourists travel abroad to care for and the local host families and organizational staff who care for them, are seen as familiar and are therefore less feared. However, in many instances local people – specifically local men - who the volunteer tourists do not form caring relationships with, are still seen as strangers and because of the cultural differences are often seen as all the more strange and feared.

Additionally, I argue that while abroad volunteer tourists’ subjectivities are influenced by and influence their gendered experiences of fear and care. The renegotiation of their subjectivities which may occur through their various embodiments of fear and care, shape the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ in particularly gendered and racialized ways. In this way, a feminist analysis of volunteer tourism reveals how the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ provides a space for volunteer tourists to renegotiate their subjectivities in ways that both challenge and reinforce gendered and racialized regimes of power. This finding contradicts the acclaimed benefit of volunteer tourism that the breaking down of cultural barriers occurs through intimate relationships between volunteer tourists and local communities (Mostafanezhad, 2014; Sin, 2010).
Chapter Seven: Conclusion
Contributions, Limitations and Research Opportunities

7.1 Thesis Summary

This thesis provides an exploratory look into the gendered dimensions of volunteer tourism, specifically from the perspective of volunteer tourists. The overarching aim of this thesis is to analyze the experiences of volunteer tourists from a feminist perspective, exploring the role of gender in mediating these experiences. This aim was achieved by three broad research objectives, including: (1) to explore whether and how gender influenced the experiences of former volunteer tourists in the spaces, activities and interactions they participated in while volunteering abroad; (2) to examine whether and how gender influenced the experiences of volunteer tourists in the spaces, activities and interactions they participated in during a specific volunteer trip in Guatemala; and (3) to analyze volunteer tourists’ experiences from a feminist perspective, specifically the ways in which the space of volunteer tourism was constructed through notions of fear and care.

These objectives were met through a qualitative, feminist research design that included two key components of data collection. To meet the first research objective, I conducted thirty semi-structured interviews with former volunteer tourists currently residing in Guelph, Ontario, who had participated in volunteer trips around the world. This method provided a breadth of insight into volunteer tourists’ perceptions of how gender influenced their experiences abroad. To meet the second objective, I conducted a case study of a two-week volunteer trip in the country of Guatemala. This case study provided an in depth understanding of how gender influenced volunteer tourists’ experiences within a specific context and allowed me to explore how people with different subjectivities experienced the same volunteer trip. Finally, I met
objective three by analyzing the data collected through the two components of data collection. Through this analysis, in which I coded transcripts of the interviews, field notes and journals from a feminist perspective, themes around gendered space, fear and care emerged. In this way, this research contributes to the knowledge gap outlined in the literature review by exploring the feminization of volunteer tourism, including potential reasons why it exists as well as how it materializes in practice.

7.2 Scholarly Contributions

*Lessons of Volunteer Tourism as a Gendered Process*

This research furthers the academic understanding of the role of gender in volunteer tourism, as well as in international relationships involving individuals from the Global North. Specifically, the research in this thesis meets the call of academics such as Mostafanezhad (2013) and Bandyohpadhyay and Patil (2017) for more research on the popularity of volunteer tourism with young, white women from the Global North, “what sorts of concerns, tensions, and identities” lead to participation in volunteer tourism, and how this trend influences the sector (Bandyohpadhyay & Patil, 2017: p. 11). Additionally, it meets the call of feminist researchers to challenge the assumption that processes of globalization, such as tourism and development, are gender neutral (Cook, 2007; Fechter, 2010; Heron, 2007; Roth, 2015) and to extend gender analyses of these processes beyond women in the Global South (Fechter, 2010). This research revealed how, through volunteer tourism, individuals from the Global North can challenge ideas about gendered space and care work in the Global South; however, this renegotiation is based on their positionality as individuals from the Global North and often sustains troubling gendered and racialized stereotypes.
The Subjectivity Formation of White Women in the Global South

This research builds from and extends work on tourism and development sites in the Global South as spaces in which women from the Global North renegotiate their various subjectivities (Cook, 2007, 2011; Heron, 2007; Roth, 2015), as well as research examining the influence of volunteer tourism on the subjectivity formation of volunteer tourists (Godfrey et al., 2015; Wearing & McGehee, 2013; Wearing & Neil, 2000). The findings revealed how volunteer tourists perceived their subjectivities to shape their experiences and many examples were given in which volunteer tourists performed their masculinities and femininities in different ways depending on the spaces they occupied and who they shared the space with. In this way, this research meets the call of Bandyopadhyay and Patil (2017: p. 11) to explore the consequences of volunteer women’s participation in volunteer tourism on their subjectivity formation as well as feminist geographers’ continued interest in the way space and gendered subjectivities are mutually constituted in the spaces of the Global South (Cook, 2011).

A Gendered ‘Volunteer Tourist Bubble’

Additionally, based on the findings of this research I have conceptualized the space in which volunteer tourism occurs as a ‘volunteer tourist bubble’. Although, in the past it has been argued that volunteer tourism allows volunteer tourists to escape the ‘tourist bubble’ through affective relationships with local people (Mostafanezhad, 2014: p. 2), I have argued that through volunteer tourism a new type of ‘bubble’ is constructed. Building on the work of Godfrey et al. (2015: p. 140) who argued that volunteer tourism creates a “volunteer tourism enclave” in which volunteer tourists operate separate but parallel to local people, I have argued that in volunteer tourism a ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ exists which is often perceived as a safe space for volunteer tourist women. A feminist analysis of volunteer tourists’ experiences suggests that the ‘volunteer
tourist bubble’ allows women from the Global North new opportunities to travel and care for ‘Others’ in the Global South, extending the geographies of fear and care.

*Maintaining Gendered and Racialized Power Hierarchies*

Finally, this thesis has argued that the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ may extend to those that the volunteer tourists form caring relationships with - including their teammates, local people they care for and local people who care for them – but it does not extend to those outside of these caring relationships. As a result, volunteer tourists may perceive those outside of the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ as all the more strange and dangerous because of the unfamiliar environments of the Global South (Jordan & Aitchison, 2008; Wilson & Little, 2005). In this way, these findings illustrate how feminist geographers’ ideas about fear and space (Koskela, 1997; Valentine, 1989) play out in a unique way in volunteer tourism. Furthermore, these findings reveal that although volunteer tourism may lead to more women accessing spaces of the Global South, the material ways volunteer tourists negotiate their conceptions of fear and care while abroad often maintain patriarchal and racialized regimes of power, which privilege men (or in some cases women) from the Global North. A feminist critique of volunteer tourists’ gendered experiences works to problematize both gendered and racialized assumptions, which mediate individuals’ everyday experiences both abroad and within their own communities.

### 7.3 Practical Contributions

A deeper understanding of the gendered and racialized regimes of power in volunteer tourism, which emerged through a feminist analysis of volunteer tourists’ experiences, has the potential to influence the volunteer tourism sector in practical ways. First, I hope this research contributes to individuals’ understandings of how their subjectivities shape and are shaped by their gendered experiences in their everyday interactions. Additionally, I hope that this reflection
on volunteer tourists’ role in perpetuating racialized and gendered ideas of care and fear that I have presented in this thesis, will help problematize volunteers’ understandings of the unequal relationships that can exist in volunteer tourism. This research encourages people who wish to engage in volunteer tourism, or any type of international work or travel, to think critically about their enactment of fear and care while abroad. Furthermore, I also suggest that women from the Global North engaged in volunteer tourism should invoke a feminist rather than feminized care ethic, which involves a moral commitment to justice and caring that accounts for the individual’s position in global power hierarchies (Mindry, 2010: p. 563).

With regards to individuals organizing and working for volunteer tourism organizations, it is my hope that this research encourages them to think critically about the concept of the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ and reflect on ways in which their organizations can disrupt the perpetuation of racialized and gendered regimes of power. Based on the findings of this thesis as well as literature reviewed (de Jong, 2009; Lahiri-Dutt, 2017; Mindry, 2010) I suggest that an important starting point for individuals hoping to engage in meaningful international work, which can potentially include volunteer tourism, is to reflexively examine their positions in the systems of power that maintain uneven development and furthermore to have open conversations about reflexivity with individuals in the communities they wish to ‘help’ (de Jong, 2009, Mindry, 2010).

7.4 Challenges, Limitations and Future Research Directions

One of the main challenges of this research was that many of the narratives of volunteer tourists relied on problematic gendered and racialized stereotypes. Throughout the findings and discussion, I drew on the perceptions volunteer tourists had of their gendered experiences, even when these perceptions promoted troubling discourses. This presented a unique challenge as I
aimed to faithfully represent the voices of participants, without further perpetuating gendered and racialized stereotypes through my research. I attempted to address this concern by emphasizing that the findings I presented are based, in large part, on the perceptions of volunteer tourists rather than reality or the ‘way things are.’

The research was limited by several factors, that I believe highlight important opportunities for future research. A primary limitation was that all participants in the semi-structured interviews and the case study were residing in either Canada or the United States. The perspectives of volunteer tourists coming from other regions where volunteer tourists commonly come from, including Europe, Australia and Asia, were not accounted for. Specifically, in the semi-structured interviews with former volunteer tourists, all participants were recruited from Guelph, Ontario. As a result, generalizing the experiences of these forty participants to the volunteer tourism sector more broadly, is not possible. However, this exploratory research revealed important themes that could be further investigated in a larger study, which could systematically analyze the role of gender and other subjectivities in volunteer tourism through the inclusion of participants from more diverse backgrounds with regards to race, age, socioeconomic status, gender, and nationality.

The accounts of the volunteer tourists’ experiences were also limited in that volunteers were relying on their memory of events, which in the case of former volunteer tourists often occurred many years in the past. However, in some cases, interviewing volunteers after their trips allowed for greater reflection. One volunteer explained the benefit of reflection, stating:

At the time, I didn’t think [gender influenced my experience] but I definitely think that now it did. So, reflecting on the experience there were times when my gender impacted what people thought I could do but I really didn’t recognize it as such at the time.

*(Volunteer Woman, White, Group Travel to Costa Rica)*
The limitation of an individual’s memory was also present during my interviews with volunteers from the case study, as they were interviewed after returning home from the trip. In the future, in depth interviews over the course of a specific case study, may be helpful in order to further explore the role of gender in mediating volunteer tourists’ lived experiences and understanding how individuals’ subjectivities were shaped throughout their volunteer experiences.

Additionally, this research represented the way that volunteer tourists perceived gender to have influenced their experiences. However, the way host communities perceived gender to have influenced their experiences with volunteer tourism was not assessed. This limitation represents an important opportunity for more research, which incorporates alternative perspectives into a feminist analysis of volunteer tourism. Similar to the call of many other academics researching volunteer tourism (McGehee & Andereck, 2008), I encourage more work to be done examining the host communities’ gendered experiences with volunteer tourism. Specifically, a case study exploring how local people and volunteer tourists perceive gender to influence their experience during the same volunteer trip would be useful for future research on this topic.

7.5 Conclusion

Ultimately, throughout this thesis I have argued that a ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ exists in volunteer tourism, which needs to be conceptualized as a gendered space. Understanding the ‘volunteer tourist bubble’ as a gendered space matters in terms of the power dynamics that are at play within the sector of volunteer tourism. Furthermore, a feminist analysis has shown that more attention must be paid to care and fear which are prevalent themes in volunteers’ accounts of their gendered experiences. These two concepts must be understood in relation to participants’ gendered and intersectional subjectivities, as well as in relation to how they influence each other throughout volunteer tourists’ experiences.
In order to more fully understand the role of gender in volunteer tourism and how gendered subjectivities are renegotiated in volunteer tourism, more research into this topic is needed particularly exploring the experiences of these gendered and racialized subjectivities and fear and care from the perspective of local host community members. In the past, the purpose of volunteer tourism has often been seen largely as the material contributions of volunteer tourists to local communities (Wearing, 2001); however, through this research we have seen that changing ideas about one’s own subjectivities and cross-cultural exchange are important elements of volunteer tourism that are in need of further exploration, specifically from a feminist perspective.
References


CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH INTERVIEW

You are asked to participate in a research study entitled: Gender and Volunteer Tourism
The study is conducted by Amy Kipp, graduate student in the departments of Geography and International Development at the University of Guelph, Canada and is sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Amy Kipp at 519-535-0638 or akipp@uoguelph.ca or Dr. Noella Gray at (519) 824-4120 ext 58155 or grayn@uoguelph.ca

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
This study examines the way in which gender impacts the experiences of individuals participating in volunteer projects abroad.

PROCEDURES
If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Participate in an in-person interview that will last approximately one hour (conducted at a time and place convenient to you).
2. With your permission, this interview will be audio recorded in order to create a transcript of our conversation.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
The potential risks to you as a participant are psychological risks. For example you may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed when recalling a specific negative or traumatic event that occurred during your volunteer trip.

To avoid/lessen this discomfort:
   1. Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are under no
pressure to engage with the researcher.
2. You do not have to answer any questions that you choose to skip and can end the interview at any time.
3. Your name and the organization that you volunteered with will never be directly associated with the audio recording or transcription of the interview. Your name and the name of your organization will never be used in any publications that arise from this research.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY
The results of this research will be shared with participants and other industry actors through the dissemination of research summary reports and academic journals. If you wish to receive results of this research project in the form of a summary report or academic publications, the researcher will send this information to you by email, including a link to an online webpage where updates on publications will be made available. Results will be of use to those involved in volunteer tourism and interested in gender and development issues.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION
This is a voluntary interview, there is no payment for participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Once the interview is complete the recording of the interview will be transferred to a password-protected computer and deleted from the recorder the same day as our interview. The conversation will be transcribed within a 2 week period, then the digital recording will be deleted from the computer. During the course of this study the recordings and transcripts will be stored in password protected computer files in a locked office.

The transcript will only be available to the researcher and the faculty advisor. The transcript will not be accessible beyond these people and will be stored in a password protected computer file in a locked office.

Portions of the transcript may be used in future publications (in the form of direct quotations). Your name and the organization that you volunteered with will not be used in any publications that result from this research. Comments may be referred to using broad descriptors if appropriate (e.g. “a volunteer who travelled to Brazil found that their gender impacted their access to certain locations”).

The researcher will take measures to ensure your confidentiality but it is still possible that specifics you use in the interview may indirectly identify you or the organization that you volunteered with. It is advised that to avoid providing specific details of the organization that you volunteered with if this is a concern for you. For this reason complete confidentiality is not possible within this research project.

The data will be anonymized after the last interview or focus group is conducted (which ever comes last), no later than December 2016.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may exercise the option of removing your data from the study up until two weeks after the interview. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.
RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

i. This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants.

ii. If you have any questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study (REB # 16MR005), please contact: Director, Research Ethics; University of Guelph; reb@uoguelph.ca; 519-824-4120 ext. 56606.

iii. You do not waive any legal rights by agreeing to take part in this study.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I have read the information provided for the study “Gender and Volunteer Tourism” as described in the invitation to participate in this study. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

____________________________________
Name of Participant (please print)

____________________________________
Signature of Participant

Date

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

____________________________________
Name of Witness (please print)

____________________________________
Signature of Witness

Date

If you wish to receive results of this research project please provide your email address below:

____________________________________
Appendix B: Ethical Considerations

In both the semi-structured interviews with former volunteer tourists and during the case study in Guatemala, I needed to account for many ethical considerations. The various intricacies of the ethical concerns of this research were explored in an application to the University of Guelph’s Research Ethics Board (which was approved prior to the start of data collection). A main concern was the impact of the interview questions on the research participants. For example, when asked how their gender impacted their experiences abroad many participant women spoke about being sexually harassed during their volunteer trips. Such conversations must be handled in a sensitive manner. Explaining to participants that they could end the interview at any time, and that they only needed to share as much as they felt comfortable sharing, was in an attempt remind participants that they were in control and create a safe space where sensitive conversations could be had. Additionally, the goal of ensuring participants confidentiality was in an effort to help them feel more at ease knowing that their stories would not be directly associated with their names or the names of their organization.

Other ethical concerns focused on participant observation. Concerns over observing local Guatemalan people were presented by the research ethics board. The focus of my observations was on the experiences of the volunteer tourists rather than the local people themselves. However, to explain this focus and mitigate the concern of the Research Ethics Board, information letters written in Spanish were given to local partners, explaining the research project. Additionally, the volunteer organization was made aware of these concerns and helped provide the necessary introduction between myself and local partners.
Appendix C: Interview Questions, Semi-Structured Interviews, Former Volunteer Tourists

Interview Questions Former Volunteer Tourists
Looking for themes around: Spaces, Activities and Interactions – Access and Limitations

Basics
1. Tell me a bit about yourself and your experience volunteering abroad?
2. As you are aware, my research focuses on gender and volunteer tourism. Do you ascribe to a specific gender?
3. What was the main focus/objective of your volunteer trip?
4. Describe a basic day during your volunteer trip?

Space
5. Where did your volunteer work take place (construction site, orphanage, etc.)?
6. What was your accommodation like?
7. Where did you go during your free time? Where did you go during your planned recreational time?

Activities
8. What kind of activities did you participate in as a part of the project?
9. What kind of activities did you do during your planned recreational time?
10. What kind of activities did you do during in the evenings during your free/unplanned time?

Interactions
11. Who did you interact with during volunteer hours and in what ways? (team members, host community etc.)
12. Who did you interact with during recreational/leisure times? (team members, host community etc.)
13. What was your relationship like with members of the host community during project hours versus recreational/leisure times?

Geographies of Care
14. Did the project you participated in facilitate you caring for others? If so, in what capacity?
15. Who were you caring for (other team members, local people etc.)? What was your relationship like with them?
16. Did you feel cared for during your volunteer trip? If so, in what ways and by whom?
17. Where were did these acts of care occur? (in homestays, at the beach, at the volunteer site, etc.)

Global Citizenship
18. The term global citizen is used in a lot of volunteer tourism promotional material. What is your definition of a global citizen? And who do you think can be a global citizen?
19. Do you feel like your experience contributed to your identity as a global citizen/created you as a global citizen? If so, how?
Gender Identity
20. What was the gender ratio of volunteer participants like during your trip? (approximately)
21. Do you feel like your identity (gender, race, ethnicity etc.) impacted your experience in any way? If yes, how?
22. Do you think you were treated differently or certain things were expected of you because of your gender?
23. Did your gender impact how you acted in front of the host community?
24. Did the gender ratio of your team impact the dynamic?
25. Do you feel like you were restricted or permitted in certain spaces based on your gender? (i.e. safety walking alone, ability to work in kitchen space etc.)
26. Were there certain activities that were off limits or more accessible to you because of your gender?
27. How do you view the gender dynamic within the country you were working in? Does this differ from how you see gender affecting social interactions in your own country?

Concluding Questions
28. Were there certain ways that you were cared for/were able to care that you think were the result of your gender?
29. When you think of a “global citizen” is there a specific gender you associate with it?
30. And finally, what was your favourite part of the trip?
## Appendix D: Participant Description, Semi-Structured Interviews, Former Volunteer Tourists

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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>referred to by local people as mzungu (white person)</td>
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<td>identified as Chinese/white</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the participant explained that she was racially Chinese but referred to herself as white because while abroad the prevailing perception was that she was from Canada, therefore Western, therefore white</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>identified as coloured</td>
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<td>the participant further explained that he was the only person who was not “classically white”</td>
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<td>identified as coloured/brown/white</td>
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<td>the participant explained that while abroad a local woman assumed that she was from India but that she would choose when she would say she was white</td>
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<td>identified as half white, half Filipino</td>
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Appendix E: Countries Where Volunteers Travelled, Semi-Structured Interviews, Former Volunteer Tourists

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<th>Country Visited</th>
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<td>South Africa</td>
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<td>Ghana</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honduras</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecuador</td>
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<td>Belize</td>
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<td>Bolivia</td>
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<td>Mexico</td>
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<td>Nicaragua</td>
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<td>India</td>
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<td>Thailand</td>
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<td>Cambodia</td>
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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Amy Kipp, a Masters student from the Department of Geography at the University of Guelph, in Canada and is sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). The research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Noella Gray and Dr. Roberta Hawkins.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research please feel free to talk to Amy in person while you are in Guatemala or contact her by email at akipp@uoguelph.ca or contact her advisor, Dr. Noella Gray, at 1-519-824-4120 ex. 58155 or grayn@uoguelph.ca

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
This research intends to explore how a volunteer’s various identities (race, nationality, gender etc.) impact their experience while volunteering abroad. By examining this the researcher aims to better understand the different ways the volunteer abroad experience is impacted by the volunteers and how this influences the relationship between the Global North (i.e. Canada) and the Global South (i.e. Guatemala)

PROCEDURES
If you volunteer to participate in this study, the following will be undertaken with your permission

1. The researcher will be taking part in activities alongside the other Operation Groundswell volunteers while noting significant experiences and occurrences within the group. The researcher may record observations regarding the volunteer experience, such as attitudes expressed or interactions between volunteers and other stakeholders.
2. The researcher may not always be taking physical notes in the moment but will record pertinent observations later on.
3. The researcher will take note of significant group activities and occurrences during ‘working’ hours as well as during ‘non-working’ or socializing hours. However, any information that is divulged or activities that are observed within accommodation spaces (e.g. bathrooms, sleeping quarters etc.) will be considered private and will not be documented.
4. Your name will not be recorded in the field notes rather the researcher will be using a confidential, randomly assigned alphanumeric code for each participant
in order to keep her field notes as confidential as possible. The master list of these codes will be kept in an encrypted device that only the researcher has access to.

5. When using the information collected for future publications the researcher will use broad identifiers (i.e. a female volunteer in Guatemala participated in farming activities during her trip).

6. You will be re-contacted after the trip by the researcher to be invited to participate in an hour long interview to discuss your experience. It is entirely your choice whether or not you agree to be interviewed and it will in no way impact your relationship with the researcher or Operation Groundswell.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
The potential risks to you as a participant are psychological risks.

To avoid/lessen this discomfort:

1. Participation in this research project is completely voluntary and you are under no pressure to consent. Choosing not to participate in this research project will not impact your relationship with Operation Groundswell or the researcher in any way. Operation Groundswell will receive a final copy of the researcher’s findings but no identified data will be shared with them.

2. Only the researcher will know who is or is not participating in the research project.

3. You are able to withdraw your consent at any time during the researcher’s observations and your information will be erased from the researcher’s notes. Withdrawing your consent will not impact your relationship with the researcher in any way.

4. Your name and the organization that you volunteered with will never be directly associated with the researcher’s observations. Your name and the name of your organization will never be used in any publications that arise from this research.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY
The results of this research will be shared with participants and other industry actors through the dissemination of research summary reports and academic journals. If you wish to receive results of this research project in the form of a summary report or academic publications, the researcher will send this information to you by email, including a link to an online webpage where updates on publications will be made available. Results will be of use to those involved in volunteer tourism and interested in gender and development issues.

PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION
Participation is voluntary and there is no payment for participation.

CONFIDENTIALITY
The researcher will be using an alphanumeric code for each participant, so no names will be recorded in her field notes. Only the researcher will have access to the master list with names and codes, which will be kept on an encrypted device.

Once the participant observation is over (the end of the trip) the researcher will transcribe her field notes onto a password encrypted computer. The field notes will only be available to the researcher and the
faculty advisor. The field notes will not be accessible beyond these people and will be stored in a password protected computer file in a locked office.

Portions of the field notes may be used in future publications (in the form of direct quotations). Your name and affiliation with Operation Groundswell will not be used in any publications that result from this research. Comments may be referred to using broad descriptors if appropriate (e.g. “a male volunteer who travelled to Guatemala found that his gender impacted his access to certain locations”).

The researcher will take measures to ensure your confidentiality but it is still possible that specifics of the notes may indirectly identify you or Operation Groundswell. For this reason, complete confidentiality is not possible within this research project. The data will be anonymized no later than December 2016.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may exercise the option of removing your data from the study up until two weeks after the trip has concluded. If you withdraw your consent any observations the researcher has recorded in which you are the main focus will be removed from her field notes.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS
iv. This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants.

v. If you have any questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study (REB # 16MR005), please contact: Director, Research Ethics; University of Guelph; reb@uoguelph.ca; (+1) 519-824-4120 ext. 56606.

vi. You do not waive any legal rights by agreeing to take part in this study.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I have read the information provided for the study “Gender and Volunteer Tourism” as described in the invitation to participate in this study. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

____________________________________
Name of Participant (please print)

____________________________________
Signature of Participant

____________________________________
Date

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

____________________________________
Name of Witness (please print)
If you wish to receive results of this research project please provide your email address below:

__________________________________

Signature of Witness                   Date
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN FOLLOW UP INTERVIEW AFTER PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

You are asked to participate in a research study entitled: Gender and Volunteer Tourism. The study is conducted by Amy Kipp, graduate student in the departments of Geography and International Development at the University of Guelph, Canada and is sponsored by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact Amy Kipp at 1-519-535-0638 or akipp@uoguelph.ca or Dr. Noella Gray at 1-519-824-4120 ext 58155 or grayn@uoguelph.ca

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
This study examines the way in which gender impacts the experiences of individuals participating in volunteer projects abroad.

PROCEDURES
If you volunteer to participate in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

3. Participate in an in-person interview that will last approximately one hour (conducted at a time and place convenient to you). This interview will focus on your experience in Guatemala during your volunteer trip with Operation Groundswell.
4. With your permission, this interview will be audio recorded in order to create a transcript of our conversation.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
The potential risks to you as a participant are psychological or social risks. For example, you may feel uncomfortable or embarrassed when recalling a specific negative or traumatic event that occurred during your volunteer trip or you may feel pressure to participate in this interview because of your relationship with the researcher.

To avoid/lessen this discomfort:
4. Participation in this research project is completely voluntary. You are under no pressure to engage with the researcher.
5. You do not have to answer any questions that you choose to skip and can end the interview at any time.
6. Your name and your affiliation with Operation Groundswell will never be directly associated with the audio recording or transcription of the interview and will never be used in any publications that arise from this research.

**POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**
The results of this research will be shared with participants and other industry actors through the dissemination of research summary reports and academic journals. If you wish to receive results of this research project in the form of a summary report or academic publications, the researcher will send this information to you by email, including a link to an online webpage where updates on publications will be made available. Results will be of use to those involved in volunteer tourism and interested in gender and development issues.

**PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**
This is a voluntary interview, there is no payment for participation.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**
Once the interview is complete the recording of the interview will be transferred to a password-protected computer and deleted from the recorder the same day as our interview. The conversation will be transcribed within a 2-week period, then the digital recording will be deleted from the computer. During the course of this study the recordings and transcripts will be stored in password protected computer files in a locked office.

The transcript will only be available to the researcher and the faculty advisor. The transcript will not be accessible beyond these people and will be stored in a password protected computer file in a locked office.

Portions of the transcript may be used in future publications (in the form of direct quotations). Your name and your affiliation with Operation Groundswell not be used in any publications that result from this research. Comments may be referred to using broad descriptors if appropriate (e.g. “a volunteer who travelled to Guatemala found that their gender impacted their access to certain locations”).

The researcher will take measures to ensure your confidentiality but it is still possible that specifics you use in the interview may indirectly identify you or the the trip that you volunteered with. It is advised that to avoid providing specific details of the organization that you volunteered with if this is a concern for you. Additionally, the other volunteers, staff and community partners who you interacted with on the trip may be able to identify you using specific details that you provide. For this reason, complete confidentiality is not possible within this research project.

The data will be anonymized once it has been collected which will be no later than December 2016.

**PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**
You can choose whether to be in this study or not. Having participated in the participant observation portion of this study does not require you to participate in an interview. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may exercise the option of removing your data from the study up until two weeks after the interview. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.
RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

vii. This project has been reviewed by the Research Ethics Board for compliance with federal guidelines for research involving human participants.

viii. If you have any questions regarding your rights and welfare as a research participant in this study (REB # 16MR005), please contact: Director, Research Ethics; University of Guelph; reb@uoguelph.ca; 519-824-4120 ext. 56606.

ix. You do not waive any legal rights by agreeing to take part in this study.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

I have read the information provided for the study “Gender and Volunteer Tourism” as described in the invitation to participate in this study. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

_________________________________________________________________________
Name of Participant (please print)
_________________________________________________________________________
Signature of Participant

_________________________________________________________________________
Date

SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

_________________________________________________________________________
Name of Witness (please print)
_________________________________________________________________________
Signature of Witness

_________________________________________________________________________
Date

If you wish to receive results of this research project please provide your email address below:

_________________________________________________________________________
Appendix H: Interview Questions, Follow Up Interview Questions, Case Study

Follow Up Interview Questions – Case Study

Specific questions will be adapted based on the events of the Operation Groundswell trip in Guatemala.

Trip Specifics
1. To start things off can you tell me a bit about yourself
2. What motivated you to volunteer abroad in Guatemala?
   • Was there a specific reason you chose Guatemala versus another country?
   • Was there a specific reason you chose Operation Groundswell?
3. Have you travelled to a developing country in the past?
4. Have you done volunteer work in the past? Where? What kinds?
5. Why did you choose to travel in a group rather than by yourself?
   • After having travelled in a group what were some of the benefits?
   • What were some of the challenges?
6. What did you expect to get out of this trip and how did your expectations live up to reality?
7. What was your favourite activity that you did during the trip?
8. What was your relationship/interactions like with the Guatemalan people?
   • Community partners
   • People in the streets
   • Homestays
9. What was your relationship like with the other people on the team?
10. Who did you rely most on for support during the trip?
11. Was caring for others an important part of your trip?
   • If yes, who were you caring for?
   • How did you show you care?
   • Why did you care for them?
   • Did you in turn feel cared for by the people you were caring for?
12. Did you learn anything from your trip abroad? If yes, what?
   • Did it change how you act in your day-to-day life in Canada?
   • Did it change your perspective on Guatemala?
   • Did it impact how you view the world as a whole?
   • Do you think you have a better understanding of the experiences of people in Guatemala?
13. What was the biggest obstacle you faced on the trip and why?

Gender Questions:
14. A lot of people think about gender in different ways, what does it mean to you?
15. Do you feel like your gender impacted your experience in any way? If yes, how so?
16. Specifically did gender impact the relationships you formed or the way you interacted with
local people or acted in front of them?
17. Did gender impact the way you interacted with your team?
18. Do you feel different things were expected from you based on your gender?
19. Did gender impact the type of volunteer work you did?
20. Did gender impact the spaces you had access to?
21. Do you feel like your safety was impacted differently based on your gender? Were certain places off limits or more accessible to you because of your gender?
22. Did gender impact your decision to go on a volunteer trip abroad? (i.e. What kind of trip you chose)
23. Did any of your other identities impact your experience in Guatemala?
24. My final question is, what was your favourite part of the trip?
Appendix I: Participant Description, Case Study

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