An investigation into positive relationships between backpackers of different cultures in Byron Bay

Rebecca Whitelaw

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AN INVESTIGATION INTO POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN BACKPACKERS
OF DIFFERENT CULTURES IN BYRON BAY.

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A Thesis Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements of the Degree of Bachelor of Business
in Tourism Management with Honours

April 2008
An Investigation into Positive Relationships between Backpackers of Different Cultures in Byron Bay.

Rebecca Whitelaw
Statement of Originality

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree.

I certify that the sources of information used in preparing this thesis have been acknowledged in this thesis

_____________________________________
(Student Signature)
Acknowledgements

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Abstract

As the issue of guest – guest relationships has not been fully explored by the current literature and particularly in the area of backpackers. This study aimed to gain some understanding of the nature of positive intercultural relationships among backpackers in the Byron Bay region. The subsequent aim of this research was to see if there was any similarity between elements of the cultural profiles which might partially explain why there are positive relationships between backpackers’ guest-guest relationships. Five objectives were created in order to answer the aims of this study. Objective one was to fill in some of the research gaps that were discovered in the process of this research. The issue of positive relationships and friendships has not been fully explored, whereas the majority of the research focuses on the negative aspects of backpacking and tourism. Objective two was to find out which cultural factors influence the development of friendship among backpackers of different cultural backgrounds. The contribution to the knowledge base on how backpackers relate to other backpackers was objective three. Objective four was to enhance the participants’ cultural self knowledge. By completing Paula Chu’s cultural compass and hence gain an understanding to how they each perceive time, activity, human relationships and nature. Objective 5 was to gain an insight into the value of Paula Chu’s cultural compass as a research tool and producing the cultural profiles of the different backpackers who complete the cultural compass.

A qualitative methodology has been used to undertake this research. To achieve the outcomes of this research Paula Chu’s cultural compass was used as a methodological instrument, and subsequently its validity was evaluated in the process. The research comprised of two stages. Stage one involved information collected from the backpackers completing the individual culture compass by Paula Chu (Seelye, 1996). Stage two involved the use of a semi structured interview consisting of two questions (Wengraf 2001) which address the positive relationships that the backpackers have towards each other (Seelye 1996).

This study found the key elements for establishing positive relationships amongst backpackers from different cultures was the individual’s personality, the similarities between the
two parties and their attitudes towards life. While having similar culture compasses did not necessarily have an impact on the formation of positive relationships, as it was found that culture was not of as much importance as personality. This research is significant as it found that guest–guest relationships were important when studying backpackers as most backpacker accommodation encourages interactions between backpackers. Future research could possibly focus on guest-guest relationships of different groups of tourists.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces this thesis on an investigation into positive relationships between backpackers of different cultures. The aim of this study is the development of a better understanding of the nature of positive guest – guest relationships between backpackers of different cultures. This chapter contains an overview of the current statistics relating to backpackers and of Byron Bay. The background and the significance of the research are also discussed. The aims and objectives of this research along with the research approach are also outlined. This chapter also contains the structure for the thesis.

1.2.1 Current Statistics Concerning Backpackers and the Byron Bay Region

Tourism Research Australia in 2006 reported that two thirds of international backpackers (66%) were aged 20-29 years, 68% of backpackers travelled alone and 15% travelled with friends/family. In 2006 the majority of backpackers travelled for the purpose of holiday, which accounted for 72% of international and 65% of domestic backpackers. Other purposes that international backpackers also travelled for included education (10%) and to visit friends and relatives (8%). Of all international backpackers, holiday visitors spent the majority of nights (64%) followed by education visitors (20%) (Tourism Research Australia 2007). Approximately half a million international backpackers stay an average of 70 nights in Australia.

Table 1.1 shows how many backpackers (both international and domestic) visited
Australia from 2000 – 2006. This table also indicates the amount of nights that backpackers stayed in backpacker accommodation and the average length of stay in this type of accommodation. Table 1.1 also shows how many nights that both international and domestic backpackers stayed in Australia, as well as the average number of nights that backpackers stayed.

### Table 1.1 Visitors and nights spent in backpacker accommodation 1999-2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>International</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors (thousands)</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>479</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>482</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nights in backpacker</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation (million)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average stay in backpacker accommodation (nights)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nights in Australia (million)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average stay in Australia (nights)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors (thousands)</td>
<td>462</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nights in backpackers</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accommodation (million)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average stay in backpacker accommodation (nights)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nights away from home (million)</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average stay away from home (nights)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: (Tourism Research Australia 2007)*

Table 1.2 indicates the how many international backpackers visited Australia in 2006. This table breaks the international backpackers down into their country of origin, how long they stayed in Australia, and how many nights on average that they stayed in backpacker accommodation and how much money they spent on their trip.
Table 1.2 International visitors, nights and expenditure spent in backpacker accommodation 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Visitors ‘000</th>
<th>Nights in Australia million</th>
<th>Average stay in Australia nights</th>
<th>Nights in backpacker accommodation nights</th>
<th>Average stay in backpacker accommodation nights</th>
<th>Expenditure $ millions</th>
<th>Average expenditure per trip $</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>5239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korea</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>6373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>5256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>5716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>5054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>5579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Europe</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>5698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Countries</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>4468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>545</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2814</td>
<td>5161</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Tourism Research Australia 2007)
Table 1.2 shows that European and North American visitors accounted for over two thirds of international backpackers (69%). They also contributed three quarters (73%) of expenditure by international backpackers and tended to have the longest average stay in backpacker accommodation (Tourism Research Australia 2007)

International backpackers were much more likely to stay in regional Australia than other international visitors, spending 34% of nights in regional Australia, compared to 18% by non-backpackers (Tourism Research Australia 2007). The Northern Rivers of NSW in particular Byron Bay, is the sixth most popular destination for international backpackers to visit (Tourism Research Australia 2007). Clearly a better understanding of guest-guest relations that this research will give will be of advantage to both government and private tourism bodies.

1.2.2 Byron Bay

Byron Bay is located 180 kilometres south of Brisbane and 800 kilometres north of Sydney on the far north coast of New South Wales. The map (figure 1.1) shows where Byron Bay is situated in relation to the rest of Australia and its capital cities. Byron Bay has become a popular and fashionable tourist destination for both domestic and international visitors. In terms of international visitors, Byron Bay is also well established as an important component of international backpacker itineraries. In 2006, Byron Bay was the sixth most visited destination in Australia by international backpackers (Lawrence 2005). Some of the reasons that make Byron Bay popular for backpackers are “its mix of surf beaches, pastoral land, dramatic ridgelines, cosmopolitan people and inspirational creative energy” (www.byronbay.com.au Accessed on 2/5/07). Tourists have always been drawn to the most easterly point of Australia (www.byronbay.com.au).
Figure 1.1 Byron Bay in relation to Australia’s states and their capitals (www.byronbay.com accessed on 2/5/07)

The map in figure 1.2 highlights the Northern Rivers of New South Wales and where Byron Bay is in relation to the local towns in the region.

Figure 1.2 Northern Rivers of NSW (www.byronbay.com Accessed on 2/5/07).
1.3 Explanation of major terms

The major terms of tourist, backpackers, guest-guest relationships, culture, personality and friendship are briefly explained here as they are mentioned numerous times throughout chapter one. These major terms are best explained by briefly explaining them here and then discussing them further in chapter two.

Many researchers do not differentiate between the different categories of tourists. Most researchers refer to a tourist as a temporary visitor staying at least 24 hours in the region visited for the purpose of leisure (Reisinger and Turner 2003). This definition is similar to Leiper’s definition of tourist. According to Leiper (2003) tourists can be defined as persons travelling away from their normal residences and visiting other regions in their home country or other countries.

According to Tourism Research Australia (2007) a backpacker is a person who spends at least one night in either backpacker or hostel accommodation. Backpackers generally have the following elements in common:

- A preference for budget accommodation,
- An emphasis on meeting other travellers
- An independently organized and flexible travel schedule
- Longer (months), rather than brief (weeks) holidays,
- Travel more widely
- An emphasis on informal and participatory activities.

Backpacking can also be seen as a “rite of passage” (Richards 2004). The elements that
define what can be described as a backpacker include time, risk, enclaves, social aspects of backpacking, identity and impacts (Richards 2004). Leiper’s (2003) definition of multi-destination tourism is a good way to describe backpacker travel. This definition of visiting a series of destinations in one trip encompasses how backpackers travel. This definition of multi-destination tourism also looks at how, in history, young people of wealthy status used to undertake this type of tourism as part of their “rite of passage”. Chapter 2 will entail further academic and lay discussion on the definitions of backpackers.

Guest-guest relationships are the interactions between tourists. These interactions can take place at any time or place during the tourist’s trip. Typically these interactions take place at the tourist destination (Yagi 2001). A host is defined as a national of the visited country who is employed in the tourism industry and provides a service to tourists (Reisinger and Turner 2003). Therefore a guest-host relationship could occur in a range of settings. These include: purchasing goods or services from tourism providers or other residents, asking for information from either tourist information centres or locals on the street, or even at a tourist attraction (Reisinger and Turner 2003).

Hofstede (Mead 2000) defines culture as the total shared way of life of any human group. In the context of this study, culture refers to that group’s modes of thinking, acting, feeling, valuing. The word ‘culture’ in this context of this study refers to the values and practices that are acquired and shared by people in a group. A key attribute of culture is that it is by definition something shared with other members of a group; it cannot be a property of individuals (Verluyten 2004). The concept of culture will be discussed in chapter 2 section 2.3.

Personality can be defined as a dynamic and organized set of characteristics possessed by a person that uniquely influences his or her cognitions, motivations and behaviours in various
situations (Ryckman 2004). An in-depth discussion of personality in relation to human relationships and other aspects of cultural contact can be found in chapter two under section 2.5.

According to Rawlins (1993, p. 11) “friendship is essentially voluntary. People make and unmake friendship of their own choosing and according to their own standards; outside sources cannot compose friendship on two persons.” Friendship is something that any individual needs for success in life with two-thirds of people seeing or speaking to their friends at least once a week. Friendship is usually based on the way people live their lives and the values they express (Vernon 2007). The issue of friendship will be discussed further in chapter two section 2.5.

1.4 Background to the Research

Guest-guest relationships, the interactions between tourists, take place at the tourist destinations (Yagi 2001). Direct and personal encounters with other tourists, especially positive ones, are reported more often than other types of encounters (Yagi 2001). However, this issue of guest-guest relationships has not been sufficiently explored in the current literature.

The basis for this research will be an investigation into guest-guest relationships between backpackers of differing cultures. This research will investigate the positive relationships between backpackers of different cultures. Only the positive relationships will be explored in this research as the ethical limitations of this research allows solely the investigation of the positive relationships between backpackers. While it is important to note that negative relationships have impact on how people relate with each other it is not the purpose of this research to look at this type of relationship.
1.5 Significance of the Study

This research will investigate the positive guest–guest relationships between backpackers of different cultures. This knowledge is important as it could benefit hostel staff as they will increase their knowledge of different cultures and where they can place guests from a variety of cultures. Although more site specific analyses of tourists’ reactions to tourists of their own nationality, and other nationalities, may provide a base for management decisions on mixing and separating tourist markets (Yagi 2001), guest-guest relationships have not been fully explored by the current literature (Yagi 2001).

The researcher has an interest in intercultural communication and different cultural contexts. Backpackers were chosen as participants in this study as currently there is limited knowledge or research into backpackers, and in particular their relationships to each other.

1.6 Aims of the Study

The overall aim of this research is to gain some understanding of the positive intercultural relationships among backpackers in the Byron Bay region. Although negative cultural aspects may well have an influence on relationships among backpackers, due to ethical constraints only the positive aspects will be explored in this study. Paula Chu’s cultural compass (cited in Seelye 1996) was used to ascertain the cultural profiles of the backpackers and subsequent in-depth interviews investigated the nature of the positive relationships between backpackers. Another aim of this research was to see if there was any similarity between elements of the cultural profiles which might partially explain why there are positive relationships between backpackers’ guest-guest relationships.
1.7 Objectives of the Study

Objective 1: In the process of this research some research gaps were discovered. The issue of positive relationships has not been fully explored with a majority of the research focusing on the negative aspects of backpacking and tourism. The issue of friendship in tourism has not been explored with only one article able to be found on this issue. Another research gap was the issue of guest-guest relationships. This issue has not been fully explored with a majority of the research focusing on the guest-host relationship. These issues will be discussed in more detail in 1.5 and chapter 2.

Objective 2: Which cultural factors influence the development of friendship among backpackers of different cultural backgrounds.

Objective 3: To contribute to the knowledge base on how backpackers relate to other backpackers.

Objective 4: The participants’ cultural self knowledge may also be enhanced as a result of this research which is a possible benefit of this study for them. When taking part in this research the backpackers will have the opportunity to complete Paula Chu’s cultural compass and hence gain an understanding to how they each determine time, activity, human relationships and nature.

Objective 5: Insights into the value of Paula Chu’s cultural compass profiles of the different backpackers who complete the cultural compass.

Each objective raises one or two research questions by attempting to fulfil the objectives of the study the following research questions will be used to investigate the positive relationships between Byron Bay regional backpackers:

1. What are the backpackers’ cultural profiles?
2. How do the culture compass cultural profiles of the backpackers differ?

3. What are the positive relationships backpackers have towards different cultures?

4. To which cultures do backpackers’ best relate?

5. How do the backpackers form positive relationships despite coming from different cultural backgrounds?

1.8 Research Approach

This is an exploratory research thesis using the interpretative social science paradigm (Neuman 2006). Interpretivist researchers seek to uncover meaning and understand the deeper implications revealed in data about people (Lewin 2004), which facilitates studying the complicated issue of culture. A qualitative methodology has been chosen to undertake this research. The reasons for choosing this paradigm are that this paradigm describes a meaningful social action. This research looks at human interactions. A qualitative methodology best suit an investigation of the multi-variant nature of human relationships and this will include semi-structured interviews. This research looks at backpackers as a group and it also looks at how the backpackers’ values are an integral part of this research and that these values vary in ways that cannot be fully determined by numbers alone (Neuman 2006). Subsequently, Paula Chu’s cultural compass was used as a methodological instrument and its validity was evaluated in the process. Following this semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted to achieve the outcomes of this research.

This study relied on a non-random, convenience sampling method (Neuman 2006) of backpackers in the Byron Bay region. This research utilised a snowball approach (Atkinson and
resulting in two participants from each of the five different countries. The countries that were included in this study were: Ireland, Sweden, Canada, New Zealand and Germany.

The research comprised of two stages. Stage one involved the backpackers completing the individual culture compass by Paula Chu (Seelye, 1996). Stage two involved the use of a semi structured interview consisting of two questions (Wengraf 2001) which address the positive relationships that the backpackers have towards each other (Seelye 1996).

The individual culture compasses of the backpackers were constructed and then compared. The compasses were then be analysed by nationality and then compared to compasses from other nationalities. The themes arising from the interviews were then linked back to the data gathered by the cultural compasses in order to generate knowledge about the positive guest-guest relationships between backpackers in the Byron Bay region. The mind mapping software (Mindmapper) was used to ascertain the main themes that have arisen from the interview questions (Witsel, 2006).

1.9 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 1: This chapter outlines the basis for this research. It provides background knowledge on backpackers, Byron Bay and the key concepts that are used in this research. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a background to the research.

Chapter 2: This chapter outlines the relevant literature required as background information for this study. The literature reviewed in this chapter included: the motivations, experiences and culture of backpacking. Following this the nature of culture, intercultural communication and
personal psychology is discussed. The culture compass and the key theoreticians whose theories can be seen as a background to understanding Chu’s individual culture compass are explored.

**Chapter 3:** This chapter outlines the methodology used to undertake this study. This study utilised a qualitative methodology and the paradigms that influence this research are discussed. This chapter also discusses the sampling technique utilised as well as the data collection and analysis techniques used.

**Chapter 4:** This chapter outlines the results from the culture compass and the interviews conducted. This chapter also discusses the various features that arose from the analysis of the interviews and how they relate back to the literature.

**Chapter 5:** This chapter outlines how the aims, objectives and research questions were answered as a result of this research. This chapter also outlines the contribution that this research has made along with the implications for further research.

**1.10 Conclusion**

This chapter outlined the background information that forms the basis of this research. This chapter looked at the statistics of both international and domestic backpackers in Australia and how they have changed in the last 10 years. The destination of Byron Bay where the focus of this research is on was discussed. The aims and objectives of this research were defined along with the research questions which focused this research. This chapter also looked at which research approach was taken as well as an outline of the thesis chapters.
2. Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Study of the current literature available on backpackers showed that three main themes emerge: motivations, experiences and culture of backpacking. This study will outline each of these areas listed above. Following this, the nature of culture and intercultural communication will be explored. Friendship and personality psychology will also be discussed along with the key theories behind the culture compass.

2.2.1 Definitions of Backpackers

While section 1.3 defined backpackers this definition requires further clarification. Defining what exactly is a backpacker is a difficult concept, as even amongst backpackers themselves, the scope of the term is contested. According to Anderskov’s (2002) research some participants did not classify themselves as backpackers if they had a high budget, if they did not interact enough with the local community, did not haggle, did not travel off the “beaten track”, or they travelled for a too limited amount of time. The respondents of Anderskov’s study defined a backpacker as having a sense of freedom and independence, a low budget, whilst being tolerant and interacting with local people.

This type of response can also be seen on the Lonely Planet website’s discussion forum (http://www.lonelyplanet.com.au). The forum on what is a backpacker produced quite heated discussion with various opinions including that backpacking was actually “hiking in the forest with a backpack on your back”.

The general consensus on this forum is similar to Anderskov’s study. They stated that a backpacker was a low budget, independent traveller who travelled to a variety of destinations.

### 2.2.2 Backpacking Activity

Backpacking traditionally is undertaken by young people in the 18-36 age groups (Ipalawatte 2004). Backpackers generally travel for extended periods of time (e.g. months or even years) and usually to multiple destinations. This is compared to an average international tourist to Australia who spends an average of 29 nights in Australia, whereas an international backpacker will spend an average of 72 nights in Australia (Tourism Research Australia 2007). Backpackers do not tend to travel to a specified destination or maintain a planned itinerary like other tourists. Rather, they tend to stay in hostels where interaction is encouraged and supported (Ipalawatte 2004). Interaction is encouraged in backpacker hostels through the way that the hostel is designed: many/most hostels have communal kitchens and eating areas as well as open plan areas with a pool table or other games. The rooms at these hostels are mainly dormitory style with bunk beds.

### 2.2.3 Motivations:

There are numerous motivations identified for tourists to travel to multiple destinations (Leiper 2003). The major motivations from Leiper (2003) include: escape from perceived mundane environments, rest and relaxation, sunlight, regressive behaviour, self evaluation, self-esteem, prestige and confidence, social interaction, spend time with friends and family, nostalgia, education and curiosity and novelty (Leiper 2003, p.73). Backpackers as a subgroup of all
tourists, have motivations associated with their age group (Ipalawatte 2004) and desired outcomes which include: self evaluation, social interaction, self esteem and confidence.

The personal motivation behind backpacking varies from person to person. Maoz (2007) has indicated that backpackers travel for the following reasons: to visit relatives, to visit sites of historical significance, to experience the natural environment while others travel to experience different cultures (Cohen 2003; Maoz 2007).

Pearce (1990, p. 5) identifies escape as the main motivation for backpacker travel. Pearce defines the motivation of escape in two ways; escape from relationships or escape from a career. Thus the main motivation for backpacking is the avoiding making any big life decisions and having the time to travel a different country (Pearce 1990).

Loker (1991, p.32) identifies a different set of motivations for backpackers. Loker’s study identifies two main motives for backpacking. These two motives are: seeking excitement / action / adventure, meeting local people and characters, and fulfilling a life long dream and ambition (Loker 1991).

Whatever the motivation for backpacker travel, all backpackers originated from their own country, or place of residence at some stage. This place of origin is termed the “traveller generating region” (Leiper 2003, p. 37) Figure 2.1 is Leiper’s (2003) model of whole tourism systems.
All tourists start out at their own traveller generating region. These regions are the tourist’s place of residence. The transit route is any destination that the tourist stops at or passes through on the way to the destination region. The tourist destination region is the destination that the tourist heads for. The tourist spends a majority of their time at this destination for the purpose of leisure (Leiper 2003).

A backpacker’s journey can also be analysed using Leiper’s model of whole tourism systems. Figure 2.2 is one example of an imaginary backpacker’s journey.

Figure 2.2 Leiper’s (2003, p. 38) Model of Whole Tourism Systems
Figure 3.2 Leiper's Whole Tourism System Model displaying elements added by the author of an imaginary backpacker's journey (Leiper 2003, p. 38)

Figure 2.3 A model of an example of an imaginary backpacker’s journey. Source: Author for this study
As shown in Figure 2.3 Leiper’s (2003) theories about transit routes and traveller
destination regions best fit a backpacker’s motive for travel. This is because backpackers tend to
live in the present and do not always have an itinerary planned before they leave the traveller
generating region. The destination for backpackers starts out as a tourism destination region and
then acts as a transit route to the backpacker’s next destination region.

A tourist attraction can be defined as “an empirical relationship between a tourist, a site
and a marker (a piece of information about a site)” (MacCannell 1976, p. 41). A marker refers to
any information about a site. This information can be found in many forms including guide books,
museum guides, texts, lectures and stories told by people who have visited it (MacCannell 1976,
p. 110). Markers can be seen as beneficial to backpackers in particular as stories told by other
backpackers about a particular sight can influence whether other backpackers plan to visit the site.

2.2.4 Experiences:

Backpackers will no doubt encounter a combination of both positive and negative
experiences during their trip. Most backpackers, however, talk about their overall experiences as
being positive and life altering (Elsrud 2001). Backpackers generally describe their experiences
while travelling as broadening their horizons (Uriely, Yonay et al. 2002). The experience of
visiting and encountering a different culture enhances their enjoyment (Noy 2004). Most
backpackers seek to travel different paths to other forms of tourists and subsequently often have
different authentic experiences. (Elsrud 2001; Uriely, Yonay et al. 2002; Noy 2004). According
to Tourism Tasmania (2004) backpackers are interested in experiencing a different culture.

Authentic experiences are defined as real interactions with people who would not
normally interact with tourists from other cultures (Huxley 2004). Backpackers are mainly
interested in gaining authentic experiences while at certain destinations (Huxley 2004). One of the motivations of backpackers is to experience the culture of the local people and the destination from the perspective of a local (Cederholm 2004; Huxley 2004; Pearce and Foster 2007).

As mentioned under section 2.2.3 “Motivations”, backpackers do not usually plan their entire trip before they leave and often rely upon the experiences of other backpackers to gain information about different destinations (Sorensen 2003). Alternative sources of information that backpackers use for information about different destinations also include internet sources, the lonely planet guides and pieces of information that can be found at the reception desk of the hostel (Sorensen 2003). Advice from other travellers could potentially be another source of information. This type of information would be word-of-mouth recommendations from another backpacker who might have just come from the potential destination. Backpacker hostels are frequently open plan with communal kitchens, shared dining areas, common rooms and games rooms which provide plenty of room for people to interact. There are opportunities for the backpackers to network and share experiences and tips they have picked up from their journey.

Most backpackers tend to travel alone or in groups of two (Tourism New South Wales 1997), therefore networking with other backpackers can be very valuable in gaining information about different destinations (Murphy 2001; Howard 2007). Some backpackers prefer to travel to different destinations than a traditional tourist and may also have a preference to travel on their own. A minority of backpackers also prefer that no other backpackers travel to the same places as they are planning to go. Most backpackers, however, are keen to share their experiences with other backpackers (Mohsin and Ryan 2003; Huxley 2004).
2.2.5 Culture of Backpacking:

A culture influences the behaviour of group members in uniform and predictable ways. The values of the group are shared to different degrees by all members. Therefore culture is something that is learned and includes a system of values (Mead 2000). Culture in the context of this study means the total shared way of life of any human group; substantially, culture is composed of that group’s modes of thinking, acting, feeling, valuing. So culture is human creation. It is not something static: it develops and adapts. Hofstede (Mead 2000, p. 144) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another”. Culture includes systems of values, and values are the building blocks of culture, and a culture is particular to one group and not to others. The dimension of culture and intercultural communication will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter. The culture of backpacking refers to how the backpackers interact with each other and the different relationships that are formed through these interactions (Teo and Leong 2006).

According to Muzaini (2006) and O’Reilly (2006), the culture of backpacking relates to experiences that backpackers have with the local people and other backpackers. Another cultural aspect of backpacking relates to host/guest relationships that form between the backpackers and their hosts (Peel and Steen 2007). Hosts in this case relates to the people the backpackers come in contact with during their stay and who provide a service of some kind. The attitudes that the hosts have towards the backpackers vary.

Some hosts have negative responses to having backpackers come into their community as they believe the backpackers do not have any respect for their beliefs and culture. They believe that the backpacking culture has a detrimental effect on their own culture (Peel and Steen 2007). Other hosts welcome backpackers as they believe they will have a positive effect on the community as they are there to experience the culture first hand (Peel and Steen 2007). As
backpackers often travel to places that are not frequented by other tourists the backpackers can stay with families from the local community which often promotes both the culture of the host community and gives the host community insight into the culture of the backpackers (Allon 2004; Maoz 2007).

The phenomenon of relationships between backpackers or guest/guest relationships among backpackers has been accorded very little attention in the literature. Yagi (2001) investigates how tourists of different nationalities see each other and how their differing cultural characteristics have had an effect on how tourists see each other. The results of Yagi’s study indicates that the American and Japanese tourists have either a neutral or negative impression of each other. Yagi, however, does not fully investigate how or why positive relationships between guests occur as the results of the study are generally neutral or negative when asked about interactions between other tourists (Yagi 2001).

According to Richards (2004) revised conceptual model of backpacker travel, the elements of culture, self identity and personal development are an important aspect of backpacker travel for the individual person, just as the above literature touches on. However, the current literature on backpacker interactions lacks research on the different relationships between backpackers. Specifically why backpackers form positive relationships with some backpackers over others has not been addressed. This study explores these positive relationships and the reasons why they are formed.

Friendship is something that any individual needs for success in life with two-thirds of people seeing or speaking to their friends at least once a week. Friendship is usually based on the way people live their lives and the values they express (Vernon 2007). People today have a larger social circle and therefore groups of friends than compared to 50 years ago where a person tended to stay in one particular group of people. Your friends tend to share something in common with
you (Vernon 2005). In the case of this study the common element would be backpacking or travel. Kemp’s (2002) study on volunteer’s for the 2000 Olympics found that one of the key experiences for volunteer’s for the study found that throughout the course of the volunteer period that the volunteers found new friends. Overall, though, there has been little research found concerning friendships in the travel context.

2.3 Culture

This section looks at the different views and definitions of culture and intercultural communication and how these relate to tourism and backpackers.

The word culture ranges from referring to the arts, literature, music, paintings, and so on; to a refined way of thinking, talking and acting (Verluyten 2004). This is not what is meant when the word ‘culture’ is used in the field of intercultural communication. As discussed previously in chapter one section 1.3 culture in this situation refers to the collective mental programming of people in an environment and everything that people have in common (Kim, Prideaux et al. 2002; Verluyten 2004). Culture determines the identity of a group in the same way as personality determines the identity of the individual (Jones and McCleary 2004). This cultural identity can lead to the formation of cultural stereotypes. Cultural stereotypes are the presupposition that one’s own group represents the normal, or even universal and that one’s own culture and its socially construed concepts of reality is superior and normative in relation to other cultures and world-views (Lillhannus 2002).

Cultural tourism is frequently quoted as being one of the largest and fastest growing segments of global tourism. Tourism and culture both play an important role in image and creation processes (Richards and Wilson 2006). This is important as culture can often play a part
of destination image (Pritchard and Morgan 2001).

The word ‘culture’ in this context of this study refers to the values and practices that are acquired and shared by people in a group. A key attribute of culture is that it is by definition something shared with other members of a group; it cannot be a property of individuals (Verluyten 2004). However, cultural attributes are learned and develop with individual experiences. It is through different forms of communication, that distinctions of culture are created, maintained and modified. Culture refers to forms of knowledge or ways of life that people regard as exemplifying their place in the world (Meethan 2003). Culture is not something that can be classified as right or wrong (Becker 2000). It is an accepted fact that there are different cultures throughout the world. The societies in which individuals grow up have their own sets of rules about the way we behave and interact with others. These rules or norms are not written down and the participants are often aware of these rules and norms. These sets of rules are different between the various national cultures throughout the world (Hope 2004). Cultural values and differences can also differ in the different culture’s conceptualization of different services (Cheung, Murrmann et al. 2004). Because culture provides the framework for social interactions, the social rules and customer expectations that are related to service encounters are likely to vary from culture to culture (Mattila 2000). This suggests that this research is significant as it by implication aims to identify these social interactions amongst backpackers of different cultures.

2.4 Intercultural Communication:

Intercultural communication research has, by definition, been related to the understanding of interactions between national cultures as the fundamental principle. For the purpose of this
study, national culture is an important element as it can be an influence for the choices the people make. Intercultural communication in a globalised world is forced to take the circumstances into account and include questions of globalization and cultural identity (Jensen 2003).

Even though tourism encourages cross-cultural contact, it may not be enough on its own to enhance knowledge about one another’s cultures or encourage a ‘greater mutual understanding and respect between the two cultures’ (Thyne, Lawson et al. 2006, p. 201). Interculturality is best described as a person who has lived in another country for a period of time and which has brought them in contact with people of another culture. Nevertheless, Alred, Byram and Fleming (2003, p.132) indicated that experience of other cultures alone is not a sufficient condition for interculturality. In addition to the most probably necessary exposure to other cultures, the successful interculturalist requires “reflection, analysis and action” (Alred, Byram et al. 2003, p.132). According to Thyne, Lawson and Todd (2006), whose analysis also showed that the hosts showed less acceptance/tolerance of tourists more physically/culturally different to themselves, seemingly confirming the theory behind social distance and host/guest relationships (Thyne, Lawson et al. 2006).

Cultural misunderstanding between tourists and hosts will almost certainly persist. Steiner and Reisinger (2004, p. 119) look at reconceptualising communication so that it places more value on cultural diversity, rather than trying to overcome diversity through ‘communing’. In this way, language can encourage tourism scholars, policy makers, host communities and tourism enterprises to change their expectations of intercultural encounters which can then trickle down as tolerance and mutual understanding between individual tourists and hosts. Steiner and Reisinger (2004) also state that intercultural communication becomes a problem when the degree of cultural differences between communication participants is large enough or significant enough
to distort understanding of each other’s communication behaviour and to create different messages and interpretations (Steiner and Reisinger 2004, p. 120).

2.5 Personality Psychology

There are numerous definitions of personality. Personality can be defined as “a dynamic and organized set of characteristics possessed by a person that uniquely influences his or her cognitions, motivations and behaviours in various situations” (Ryckman 2004, p. 4). Barick and Mount (1991, p. 2) identify three main theoreticians who define the notion of personality. McDougall (1932 cited in Barick and Mount 1991 p. 2) states that “Personality may to advantage be broadly analysed into five distinguishable but separate factors, namely intellect, character, temperament, disposition, temper.” Tupes and Christal (1961) reanalysed the correlations of personality and found that there was good support for five factors theory. This time however, the five factors were: surgency, emotional stability, agreeableness, dependability, and culture. Norman’s (1963) definition on personality is especially significant because his labels of extraversion, emotional stability, agreeableness, conscientiousness and culture (openness to experience) are still used commonly in the literature today and are more commonly referred to the “Big Five” (Barick and Mount 1991).

There are two main theories for defining personality. They are trait theories and type theories. Personality traits theories are “enduring patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and oneself that are exhibited in a wide range of social and personal contexts” (Barick and Mount 1991, p. 2). The most common models of traits incorporate three to five broad dimensions or factors. Lewis Goldberg also proposed a five dimension personality
model nicknamed his theory the “Big Five” as well (Barick and Mount 1991, p. 2). There are several differences between the two “Big Five” theories. Goldberg’s “Big Five” theory is as follows:

1. Extraversion – outgoing and stimulation-oriented vs. quiet and stimulation-avoiding.
2. Neuroticism – emotionally reactive, prone to negative emotions vs. calm, imperturbable, optimistic.
3. Agreeableness – affable, friendly, conciliatory vs. aggressive, dominant, disagreeable.
4. Conscientiousness – dutiful, planful, and orderly vs. laidback, spontaneous, and unreliable.
5. Openness to experience – open to new ideas and change vs. traditional and oriented toward routine.

Personality type theories refer to the psychological classification of different types of people. Personality types are dissimilar to personality traits, which come in different levels or degrees. Type theorists classify people into one of two ways. They are either introverts or extraverts. Trait theorists believe that introversion and extraversion are the extremes in a continuous dimension, with many people between these two extremes (Engler 2006).

The idea of psychological types originated in the theoretical work of Carl Jung. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator builds on Carl Jung’s theories. The Myers – Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a widely used instrument that can aid in understanding the individual differences (Kolb 2000). The MBTI model is an older and more theoretical approach to personality,
accepting extraversion and introversion as basic psychological orientations in connection with two pairs of psychological functions:

1. Perceiving functions: intuition and sensing (trust in conceptual/abstract models of reality or concrete sensory-orientated facts).
2. Judging functions: thinking and feeling (thinking as the prime-mover in decision-making or feelings as the prime-mover in decision-making).

Scores obtained from the MBTI indicate a person’s preference on each of the following four dimensions (Kolb 2000):

1. Extroversion versus Introversion
2. Sensing versus Intuition
3. Thinking versus Feeling
4. Judging versus Perspective

These psychological types leads to personality typing and hence Chu’s individual culture compass can also make similar assumptions it makes about a person’s personality (Seelye 1996). The assumptions that Chu’s individual culture compass make about a person’s personality are on four different elements. These elements are human relationships, nature, time and activity (Seelye 1996).

Each of the above elements is then split into three dimensions. The human relationships element has the dimensions of individual, mutual and ranked. The nature element has the dimensions of yielding, harmonious and controlling. The time element has the dimensions of past, present and future. The activity element has the dimensions of doing, being and becoming (Seelye 1996).
Based on the answers rated by the participant on the questions presented to them on the various elements and dimensions of the culture compass assumptions can then be made on the participants personality and the types of activities they would be oriented towards (Seelye 1996).

‘The culture compass was used as a methodological tool instead of the MBTI as it is easier and quicker for the participant to complete. Chu’s individual culture compass is free while payment is required to use the MBTI.

2.6 The Culture Compass by Chu (1996)

According to Chu (cited in Seelye 1996) culture or world view is defined as the manner in which a person perceives his or her relationship to nature, institutions, other people, and things. Chu’s individual culture compass looks at where individuals are placed based on their views of human relationships, time, activity and nature. Chu’s individual culture compass is similar in its theories to the personal styles theory of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator or MBTI but as will be explored, integrates a large amount of intercultural theory.

Chu’s culture compass’ aim is to provide an understanding of the different ways we interact with our surroundings and the way we perceive information. Chu is able to provide this by using the dimensions of time, activity, human relationships and nature. Chu’s culture compass is mainly used in management consultancy. In theory this compass has academic weight. To test this theory an academic basis to the compass was required. As it is initially unclear what formed the academic basis of the Chu’s choices of dimensions, the researcher decided to explore overlaps between Chu’s model of the compass and the work of established interculturalists. There are a number of key theoreticians who identify various cultural dimensions. Some of these cultural dimensions can be recognised in Chu’s work on the individual culture compass.
Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck (1961) identify the cultural dimensions of time, activity and human relationships. Hall and Hall (1989 & 1987) identify the cultural dimension of time. Hofstede (2002) identifies the cultural dimension of human relationships. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner identify the cultural dimensions of nature and human relationships (Reisinger and Turner 2003). Figure 2.5 shows Chu’s (Seelye 1996) individual culture compass, with the addition of the key theoreticians whose theories of different cultural dimensions can be recognised in Chu’s individual culture compass.
Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck (1961)

Hall & Hall (1989 & 1987)

Kluckhohn & Strodtbeck (1961)

Hofstede (2002)

Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (2000)

Figure 2.5 Chu's Individual Culture Compass (Seelye 1996) Additional listing of interculturalist authors.
2.7 **Elements of the Culture Compass:**

Within the culture compass there are four ‘dimensions’, each containing three ‘aspects’. These dimensions will be broken down into their individual aspects and then related back to the key theoreticians.

### 2.7.1 Human Relationships:

The first dimension of the culture compass that will be discussed is human relationships. The key authors that have defined the element of human relationships are Hofstede (2002), Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (2000), Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck (1961).

Chu (cited in Seelye 1996) makes the following assumptions about the participants who are oriented towards human relationships and what type of activities in which they find meaning. The *Individual* dimension of the human relationships section assumes that each person is responsible for what happens in his or her life, and must watch out for his or her own rights and welfare. The people who have been identified as individualistic find meaning in personal accountability and have a competitive ethic (Seelye 1996). The *Ranked* dimension of the human relationships section assumes that each of us has his or her place, and respect is due according to one’s position. These people find meaning in tradition, hierarchy, family, protocol (Seelye 1996). The *Mutual* dimension of the human relationships section assumes that the individual’s purpose is to make a contribution to a larger whole. These people find meaning in: interdependence, group goals, affiliation (Seelye 1996).

Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck (1961) describe human relationships as individualistic, collateral (collectivistic) and linear (hierarchical). These descriptions of the elements of human
relationships can also be seen in Chu’s culture compass as these descriptions describe all three of
the individual elements of the culture compass. Hofstede (2002) describes human relationships as
having low/high uncertainty avoidance. Hofsetede’s theories can be related to the individual
element of the human relationships dimension of the culture compass. Trompenaars and
Hampden-Turner (2000) describe human relationships in terms of
individualism/communitarianism, equality/hierarchy and affective/neutral. These theories by
Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner can also be seen in Chu’s assumptions for the human
relationships element of the culture compass.

Hofstede (Hofstede, Peterson et al. 2002, p. 95) uses seven key elements to identify what
classifies an individual. These seven key elements are:

1. Honest people speak their mind
2. Low-context communication is preferred.
3. The task takes precedence over relationships.
4. Laws and rights are the same for all.
5. Trespassing leads to guilt and loss of self respect.
6. Everyone is supposed to have a personal opinion on any topic.
7. The relationship between employer and employee or between parent and child is a
   contract based on mutual advantage.

This definition of an individual correlates with Chu’s (Seelye 1996) assumptions of the
individual element of the human relationships dimension of the culture compass. Another
definition by Hofstede (Hofstede, Peterson et al. 2002, p. 93) has also identified the key elements
of individuals. These key elements are:

1. Language: Individuals are verbal and self-centred. They use I and me a lot.
2. Nonverbal: Individuals make eye contact freely. When in groups, they are likely to stand out visually.

3. Stereotypes: Individuals are defensive and tend to be loners; they run from one appointment to the next.

4. Evaluation: Individuals use other people and measure the importance of others in terms of how useful they are.

5. Stress: Individuals are supposed to continually test their own ability. This can be stressful. They tend to take on stress physically.

These elements also can be recognised in Chu’s (Seelye 1996) assumptions of what characterises an individual.

The cultural dimension of human relationships from the individual culture compass can also be recognised in the theories by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner. Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1998) break this down into five elements. These five elements are:

1. Universalism versus particularism (rules versus relationships)
2. Communitarianism versus individualism (the group versus the individual)
3. Neutral versus emotional (the range of feelings expressed)
4. Diffuse versus specific (the range of involvement)
5. Achievement versus ascription (how status is accorded)

These five elements by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner are best suited to assumptions by Chu (Seelye 1996) of the mutual and ranked aspects of the human relationships dimension of the individual culture compass. These elements by Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner make similar assumptions on human relationships as Chu.
2.7.2 Nature:

The second element of the culture compass that will be discussed is nature. The key authors that appear to have influenced Chu’s interpretation of nature are Trompnaars and Hampden-Turner (2000) and Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck (1961).

Chu (Seelye 1996) makes the following assumptions about the participants who are oriented towards nature and what type of activities they would find meaning in. The Controlling dimension of the nature section assumes that human welfare is primary and that nature serves to meet our needs. The people who have been identified as controlling find meaning in: taking charge of challenges, mind over matter and effective use of resources (Seelye 1996). The Yielding dimension of the nature section assumes that nature is in charge of life on earth. The people who have been identified as yielding find meaning in the fact the nature rules humankind and that we have little control (Seelye 1996). The Harmony with Nature dimension of the nature section assumes that our relationship with nature is symbiotic and that care for the physical world will pay off with a balanced and peaceful existence. The people who have been identified as being in harmony with nature find meaning in: harmony and doing one’s share (Seelye 1996).

Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck (1961) description of the cultural dimension of nature can also be seen in Chu’s individual culture compass’s assumptions. They describe this dimension as subjugation, harmony and mastery which make the same assumptions as Chu for participants who are oriented towards nature.

The description of the cultural dimension of nature which best describes Chu’s (Seelye 1996) assumptions of the dimension is recognised in the work of Trompnaars and Hampden-Turner (2000). The cultural element of nature according to Trompnaars and Hampden-Turner has two elements. These elements are:
1. People either believe we can control and should control nature or they believe that man is a part of nature and must go along with nature.

2. What happens to me is my own doing vs. I don’t have any control over my life as it is destiny. (Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner 1998)

This theory by Trompenaars and Hampden Turner provides the most accurate description on the assumptions Chu has about what characterises a person towards nature.

2.7.3 Time:

The third element of the culture compass is time. The key authors that may have had an influence on Chu’s interpretation of time are Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck (1961) and Hall and Hall (1987).

Chu (Seelye 1996) makes the following assumptions about the participants who are oriented towards time and what type of activities they would find meaning in. The Past dimension of the time section assumes that today flows out of the legacy of the past. The people who have been identified as having an orientation toward the past find meaning in serenity, surrender and history as a context and a teacher (Seelye 1996). The Present dimension of the time section assumes that today is the only reality. The people who have an orientation toward the present find meaning in *carpe diem* or “seize the day” (Seelye 1996). The Future dimension of the time section assumes that today is the only a step toward tomorrow’s goals. The people who have an orientation toward the future find meaning in establishing and working toward goals. These people also have a strong work ethic (Seelye 1996).

Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck (1961) describe the cultural dimension of time as past, present and future. Chu uses the same assumptions as Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck for the dimension of
time. Hall and Hall (1987) on the other hand describe the cultural dimension of time as past, future exactly the same way as Chu has made her assumptions with a minor difference in the present element of the time dimension which Hall and Hall (1987) describe as being monochronic and polychronic. A person who is monochromic prefers to set a certain time to perform each task. They tend to go under the philosophy that there is a time and place for everything. A person who is polychronic prefers to schedule multiple tasks and undertake them simultaneously. Chu’s assumptions of the present dimension do not provide this interpretation of the present section of the time dimension element.

2.7.4 Activity:

The forth element of the culture compass is activity. They key authors that explore the element of activity are Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck (1961).

Chu (Seelye 1996) makes the following assumptions about the participants who are oriented towards activity and what type of activities they would find meaning in. The Doing dimension of the activity section assumes that taking action is the most important activity. The people who have been identified as having an orientation toward doing find meaning in accomplishments and achievements (Seelye 1996). The Being dimension of the activity section assumes that self – expression is the most important activity. The people who have been identified as having an orientation toward being find meaning in spontaneous expression, being oneself and affiliation (Seelye 1996). The Becoming dimension of the activity section assumes that self – development is the most important activity. The people who have been identified as having an orientation toward becoming find meaning in process, purpose and the intention of activity (Seelye 1996).
Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck (1961) description the cultural dimension of activity can also be recognised in the assumptions that Chu makes about the orientation toward activity. Kluckhorn and Strodtbeck (1961) classifications of doing, being and being-in-becoming can be seen in how Chu has chosen the elements of the cultural dimension of activity.

2.8 Conclusions:

This chapter has provided an overview of the current literature on backpacking, taking into account the motivations behind backpacking, the experiences that backpackers have and the culture behind backpacking. This chapter also outlines the concept and different definitions of culture and how these are relevant to this research. This chapter also looked at personality psychology and how it could influence positive relationships amongst backpackers. Chu’s culture compass and the theories that underlie the points of the compass were also discussed in this chapter. Finally, this chapter illustrates how the results of the compass can be of assistance to understanding positive guest-guest relationships.
3. Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and justify the research design adopted in the conduct of the research. This chapter outlines the methodology chosen to undertake this study. The first section looks at qualitative research theory and how the various paradigms associated with this type of research are utilised. The second section of this chapter identifies the sampling method used and the data collection and analysis methods that were used in this research.

3.2 Qualitative Research Paradigm

Qualitative research has been chosen for this study, as qualitative research focuses on the in-depth experiences of the individuals in the study (Neuman 2006). Qualitative research also seeks to explain meaning or deeper understanding of various phenomena (Huberman and Miles 2002). Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the participant’s interpretations of a particular context (Merriam 2002). Qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of meanings people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). This is particularly relevant in this study as the meanings behind what the participants say and the interpretations for what they mean is a crucial element of this study.

Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials – case study; personal experience; introspection; life story (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Qualitative researchers “deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretative practices, hoping
always to get a better understanding of the subject matter at hand”. It is implied, nevertheless, that each practice makes the world visible in a different way (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, p. 3). Qualitative researchers “stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning” (Denzin and Lincoln 2000, p. 8). Qualitative researchers are more likely to deal with the constraints of the everyday social world (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). Qualitative research paradigm has been chosen for this study as complex issues such as culture and perceptions cannot be expressed through quantitative research alone. Hence this study employed in addition to the use of the compass, a qualitative interview methodology was utilised.

As mention previously in chapter two, Chu’s individual culture compass is used in management consultancy and it is normally used along with an organisational culture compass for employees and managers of different organisations to gather different information on the type of worker the employee is (Seelye 1996). The compass can be interpretative in its own way even though it uses numbers as outcomes. For use in this study the individual culture compass the numbers itself are not as important as analysing the similarities and differences between the compasses of the participants. Therefore using a quantitative or mixed method methodology would be ineffective in this study.

### 3.3 Epistemology – Constructionism/ Constructivism

The research epistemology is a perspective that explains the nature and origin of knowledge; it is concerned with what knowledge is and how it can be negotiated (Crotty 1998).
More specifically, epistemology refers to the development of common bodies of knowledge or the establishment of personal knowledge.

Since the purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the positive intercultural relationships among backpackers, the epistemological stance chosen is constructivism as this study is ascertaining the cultural perspectives of backpackers. The epistemological underpinning of constructivism is employed to reveal the relationships between backpackers of different cultures and how they interpret the interview questions (Crotty 1998). The term ‘constructivist’ is sometimes used interchangeably with ‘constructionism’, ‘naturalistic’ and ‘interpretative’ in discussions of qualitative approaches to research (Stewart 2007). In this study constructivism is used as it avoids confusion with terms used in other contexts such as constructionism.

The fundamental premise of constructivism is that we humans are self regulating organisms who live from the inside out. Constructivism suggests that we are proactive co-creators of the reality to which we respond (Stewart 2007). Constructivism acknowledges realism in a personal and subjective way as human beings engage with the world they are interpreting. Constructivists negotiate their reality through concepts of culture and language. Constructivists attempt to make sense or interpret experience, they also seek to understand the complex world of lived experience from the viewpoint of those who live it (Schwandt 1994). This suggests that constructivism a good way of exploring culture and people’s perceptions.

While constructivism holds that learning is essentially dynamic, each participant constructs their own knowledge of the world into a unique pattern connecting perceptions, experiences or understandings in a personal way that the participants become connected into an environment of significant relationships to the wider world (Neuman 2006). Constructivists honour the need to interpret their world (Crotty 1998). The constructivist view holds that all
knowledge, including scientific fact, is a construction of the mind in the social domain (Stewart 2007). Knowledge and truth are created, not discovered (Schwandt 1994).

The interaction of the researcher and the interpretative stance taken to explain meanings, knowledge can then be seen as being individually constructed (Crotty 1998). For this reason it is expected that participants in this study may have differing meanings. This study seeks to understand the backpackers’ view of reality, of themselves and of others. It is through the constructionist context that the different meanings emerge and can be studied in a research capacity.

3.4 Interpretivism

Interpretivist researchers seek to uncover meaning and understand the deeper implications revealed in data about people (Lewin 2004). As mentioned above, this study takes a constructivist view that reality is socially created and that humans are interacting social beings who create and reinforce shared meaning (Neuman 2006); that is, they interpret their experiences. This can be seen in the interviews of this study where the participants are being both reflexive and reflective (Van-Manen 1990). The participants’ responses to the questionnaire and compass can also be seen as both reflexive and reflective as their responses to the questions; though predetermined and defined by the choice given, are also their interpretations and reflections on their lived experience. This study looks at understanding how the backpackers interpret different cultures and the features that they look for when forming positive relationships, with other backpackers. The interpretative approach allows the researcher to understand the nature of the interactions between backpackers of different cultures.
The use of an interpretivist approach highlights the following assumptions (Schwandt 1994):

1. Any event is composed of many inter-related factors;
2. People make sense of their world based on personal experiences;
3. The aim is develop individual understanding instead of universal generalizations;
4. Context makes a difference; and
5. The inquiry is always value laden.

The interpretative paradigm can incorporate a number of different approaches including phenomenology and symbolic interactionism.

### 3.5 Symbolic Interactionism

This study seeks to explore the personal experiences and knowledge of the backpackers through their interactions with other backpackers of a different culture. Symbolic interactionism refers to a set of theories concerning the way that individuals form and maintain their identity in relation to others. It is based on the notion that social interaction is made up of patterned (and often habitual) behaviours which have easily recognizable symbolic meanings which invite responses of similarly patterned behaviours from others (Lewin 2004). Therefore symbolic interactionism provides a suitable framework to interpret the experiences of the backpackers.

The key assumptions of social interactionism according to Newman (2006) are:

- People transmit and receive symbolic communication when they socially interact.
- People create perceptions of each other in social settings.
- People largely act on their perceptions.
How people think about themselves and others is based on their interactions.

It is appropriate to use symbolic interactionism as a methodological tool to analyse the differing perceptions. This methodological tool will help to gain a greater understanding of the perceptions of backpackers according to backpackers of a different culture.

3.6 Sample

This study relied on a non-random, convenience sampling method (Neuman 2006) of backpackers in the Byron Bay region. This research utilised a snowball approach (Atkinsson and Flint 2001). Snowball sampling is a technique of finding research participants. One participant gives the researcher the name of another participant, who then provides the name of a third participant and so on (Vogt, 1999 cited in Atkinson & Flint, 2001). In its simplest form snowball sampling consists of identifying respondents who are then used to refer researchers on to other respondents. Snowball sampling is useful in this study as it focuses on friends and companions who know each other which is also part of the focus of this study.

The backpackers were originally intended to be chosen based on their background. According to Tourism Research Australia (Ipalawatte, 2004) most backpackers who come to Australia are from United Kingdom, Germany, USA, Japan and New Zealand. Research has also shown that the major cultural groups visiting Byron Bay are from the United Kingdom, Germany, USA, Japan and New Zealand (Tourism Research Australia, www.tra.australia.com accessed on 2/5/07).

During the course, however of conducting these interviews interested bystanders took an interest in the research and wanted to be participants. Therefore there was an immediate and
unforeseen snowball effect on gathering participants, which was not as controlled as originally intended. So, due to the availability of respondents and the extreme and quick snowball effect that undertaking these interviews took, the five countries that were interviewed ended up being: Ireland, Sweden, Canada, New Zealand and Germany. The advantages of using the snowball effect were that positive relationships were able to be established by participants recommending their friends as potential participants. The disadvantages of using the snowball effect were that participants from the major cultural groups who visit Byron Bay were not interviewed.

For this research to be effective, participants from each of the above countries were interviewed using the individual culture compass to gain a cross section of the different cultures to analyse. The sampling “is cumulative and dependent upon categories which have been justified as relevant” (Kvale 1996, p. 208).

As this research project used a qualitative, in-depth methodology it requires a small sample of participants (Neuman 2006). “In current interview studies, the number of interviews tends to be around 10 – 15” (Kvale 1996, p. 102). For this study a sample size of 10 backpackers provided a suitable level of saturation. Kvale (1996) states to “interview as many subjects as necessary to find out what you need to know” (Kvale 1996, p. 101). Even though there was not a representative sample of the countries originally wanted as they were not available at the time that the interviews were undertaken. A possible reason for this could be the countries not included may not have had a holiday period during the time that the interviews took place. While they were not originally the nationalities wanted, the 10 backpackers with two participants from each of the above nationalities however, provided a suitable level of saturation as each of the above nationalities have been represented by two participants and each of the participants have provided similar responses to the interview questions.
3.7 Data Collection

Initial contact with the participants was by ‘cold calling’ at the YHA backpacker hostel in Byron Bay. Any available backpacker present in a common area was approached (e.g. the pool area or the kitchen, dining and eating area). Following this, the participants were shown the informed consent form and information sheet about the study. The participants then chose whether they wanted to be a part of the study. The participants who chose to be a part of the study were then asked to sign the consent form before being interviewed.

The research comprised of two stages. Stage one involved the backpackers completing the individual culture compass by Paula Chu (Seelye, 1996). As explained in Chapter two, the Culture Compass relies on a conceptual framework for exploring culture on two levels: within the everyday work context and within the interpersonal context. The Culture Compass thereby allows the exploration of four dimensions of culture or world view. These are: a) orientation toward activity; b) orientation toward time; c) orientation toward human relationships; d) orientation toward the environment/nature. The backpackers were first asked to complete the culture compass. The data from the cultural compasses were collated according to the method proposed by Chu (cited in Seelye, 1996).

Stage two involved the use of two semi-structured interview questions (Wengraf 2001) which address the positive relationships that the backpackers have towards each other (Seelye 1996). “Interviews are particularly suited for studying people’s understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self – understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspective on their lived world” (Kvale 1996: 105). For all interviews notes were taken on the participants responses to the interview questions. While initially it was intended that the interviews would be recorded, notes were taken instead as the participants did not wish to be recorded and preferred that the researcher took notes. The participants did not
divulge why they did not wish to be recorded however; they would not consent to being interviewed for the study if they were recorded. “Psychological noise” and the feeling of being constrained are a couple of ideas on why the participants did not wish to be recorded.

### 3.8 Data Analysis - Compass

The data from the cultural compasses were collated according to the method proposed by Chu (cited in Seelye, 1996). The culture compass is made up of 12 questions each with three parts. The participant ranks each of the three part questions as a 1 (least like me), 2 (next most like me) or 3 (most like me). The number recorded beside each statement is then transferred into the table below and then added in the right column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Score 1</th>
<th>Score 2</th>
<th>Score 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1a</td>
<td>+2c</td>
<td>+3b</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1b</td>
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<td>10b</td>
<td>+11b</td>
<td>+12a</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 4.1 Score card for the Individual Culture Compass (Seeyle 1996)**

The number in the right column is then added to the culture compass based on the element that it corresponds. These points are then joined together with a line. The highest
number for each dimension indicates a participant’s preferred approach. The compasses were then analysed first individually, then grouped according to nationality and then compared to compasses from the cultures that the participants stated that were their favourites.

### 3.9 Data Analysis – Interviews

Notes of the interviews were created for analysis. As mentioned in the previous section the questions were semi-structured open ended questions with the participant being asked to expand on any aspect of the question that they wish. These responses were then placed into different categories. The categories are recognized by the researcher because they are repeatedly present or notably absent when comparing the various interviews (Strauss and Corbin 1998).

According to Wengraf (2001) there are three levels of inferring knowledge from the interview data. The three levels are: discourse, the objective referents, and the subjective referents. These three levels of inferring knowledge must all be taken into consideration when analysing the interview data to gain an accurate understanding of the interviews and themes that arise (Wengraf 2001). The semi-structured interview questions were then analysed using mind mapping techniques (Witsel 2006). The program Mindmapper was used to help with identifying the various elements of the interview data by allowing the user to break it down into the key points from the interviews. By using mind-mapping to present the findings of this study it enabled a way for dealing with the complexities presented by the data whilst also allowing for inductive insights. The mind-mapping approach allowed for the data analysis it to fit in with the interpretative methodology.

The themes arising from the interviews were then linked back to the data gathered by the cultural compasses in order to generate knowledge about the positive guest-guest relationships
between backpackers in the Byron Bay region. The mind mapping software (Mindmapper) was then used to illuminate the main themes that have arisen from the interview questions.

**3.10 Limitations**

One of the limitations of this research was the countries chosen to be interviewed. Originally the top five countries who visit Byron Bay were to be interviewed, however due to the availability of participants and their countries of origin only two of the top five countries were able to be interviewed.

Interviewing backpackers is not always unproblematic. As the purpose of the interview and its concepts has to be understood by both the researcher and the participant “within a linguistically constituted and interpersonally negotiated social world” (Kvale 1996, p. 105), in this case, fully understanding the backpackers’ behaviours and culture is a complicated concept. Systematic reflection on common sense understanding and on ordinary language conversations suggests that this study cannot fully deconstruct their lived experience and worlds. How the interview questions were worded and how the backpackers understood the questions was sometimes prone to attribution errors (Verluyten 2004, p. 62). For example, the researcher had to explain what was meant by culture and other terms that the participants didn’t understand (Kvale 1996, p.105). As a result of this the research interview then becomes flexible, sensitive to context, and dependent on the personal interaction of the interviewer and interviewee (Kvale 1996, p.104). It is this interaction which can cause limitations to the methodological approach as different interpretations of the same verbatim interview texts definitely occur (Kvale 1996, p. 105).

This then leads to the limitation of to what extent can the findings from one study be used as a guide to what might occur in another situation (Kvale 1996, p. 233). The interviewer in this study had input into the clarification of the key terms in the interview questions. A different
interviewer may define the key terms in a slightly different way which would then lead to the participants interpreting the concepts differently. This would then lead to the results not being able to be replicated in a different situation.

A limitation of this study is where and when the interviews were conducted. The first interview was conducted by the pool with a group of Irish men. This presented a limitation as the interview sheets ended up getting a bit wet which made the notes on the interview difficult to read. The time of day to be able to find participants was a limitation as most backpackers were not available during the day but were available around dinner time. This limitation was overcome by simply planning on conducting interviews from 5pm onwards.

Not being able to tape the interviews due to the request of the participants was a limitation to this study. Having to rely on handwritten notes and memory is not always as accurate or convenient as being able to listen to the recorded interview again. Having a small sample is a limitation to this study as more participants could potentially have an impact on the results of the study and lead to different findings.

### 3.11 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the different qualitative paradigms used in this research. The sampling method was also discussed along with how the interview data was collected and analysed. The limitations that this study had as a result of this type of methodology was explored and discussed. This raises interesting insights and thoughts on control, or lack of, as a researcher, and levity / seriousness on the part of the participant. Is research less valid because the participants are simultaneously engaged in socialising and play? While this may not necessarily be the case this issue still needs to be addressed.
4. Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the results and discussion from the culture compass and interviews undertaken in Byron Bay. This chapter first looks at the interview results by country and the compasses that resulted from the interviews. Next, this chapter analyses the different cultures and how they relate to each other based on the cultures that were potentially friendly. This chapter concludes with a discussion on the results of this study and how they relate back to the literature.

4.2 Backpacker Interviews by Country

4.2.1 New Zealand: Alice and Sarah

This interview involved two female backpackers who were friends travelling together. Their culture compasses were similar in the cultural dimensions of ‘yielding’, ‘past’ ‘doing’ and ‘individual’. They had different views in all other aspects of the culture compass. The cultural dimension of ‘individual’ is where the two participants rated as the highest and where they were both similar. These particular girls did not have a favourite culture as they tended to get along with everyone. They did not appear to have a favourite culture as Sarah stated that they “get along with everyone” and when asked what aspect makes them friendly with everyone both Alice and Sarah replied “it is the particular individual’s personality appeals to us most” (Alice). The combined results from the individual culture compass showed that the New Zealand backpackers
were orientated towards the human relationships dimension of individual. According to Chu, having an orientation towards individual assumes that these New Zealand backpackers believe that each person is responsible for what happens in his or her life, and that they must watch out for his or her own rights and welfare. As they have been identified as individualistic it is expected that they would find meaning in personal accountability and have a competitive ethic (Seelye 1996).

Figure 5.1 Culture Compass results for New Zealand Source: Chu (cited in Seelye 1996) adapted by author for this study.
4.2.2 Ireland: Michael and Luke (Pat, John, Sean and Danny)

This interview involved six Irish male backpackers who were all travelling together. While only two of the participants completed the culture compass the rest of the group was then interested and they all put in their opinions about the interview questions 2 and 3. The culture compasses for both the Irish backpackers were very similar. They had the same results for the cultural dimensions of present, individual, harmonious and yielding. The results for the other dimensions were within a point of each other.

These backpackers had very particular ideas on which cultures that they liked; the entire group stated that they particularly “liked the Australians and the New Zealanders”. Piping up from the pool Sean said that he “didn’t really like the English.” This was met with nodding and agreement from the rest of the group. They key aspects that were important, according to the entire group, were that Australians and New Zealanders were “really laid back”. This was seen as a very positive trait, and conducive to the formation of friendship. The entire group also agreed that “similar attitudes and a friendly demeanour” (Michael) are also conducive to friendship formation.

The culture compasses for these backpackers also look similar with both of the backpackers agreeing on the aspects of individual, harmonious, yielding and present. An agreeable high score in these different elements then the following assumptions can be made; that they believe that each person is responsible for what happens in his or her life, and must watch out for his or her own rights and welfare. These individuals have a symbiotic relationship with nature and believe that nature rules humanity. They also take everything one day at a time and live for the day not worrying about the future (Seelye 1996).
4.2.3 Germany: Annette and Alicia

This interview involved two German female backpackers who were travelling in a group with two other German girls. Only two girls participated in the study as the other two girls did not speak English well enough to understand the interview questions. The culture compasses in this case varied in almost every cultural dimension. They were similar in the cultural aspects of mutual, individual, controlling, harmonious and yielding.
When asked about their favourite cultures Alicia and Annette stated “we really like Australians”. The key features that Annette and Alicia look for in forming positive relations were: “the person’s nature” (Alicia), “their personality” (Annette), “the person was open minded and helpful is also important” (Alicia and Annette).

These two culture compasses have a similar shape but they vary in the importance that the backpackers place on each of the cultural dimensions. In this case they agree on the cultural aspect of ‘yielding’. The assumptions that can be drawn suggest that these backpackers think that nature controls all life on earth (Seelye 1996). These culture compasses are similar in the aspects of ‘mutual’, ‘individual’, ‘controlling’ and ‘harmonious’. Thus the assumptions are that they are more orientated towards human relationships and nature.
4.2.4 Sweden: Olaf and Bjorn

This interview involved two male Swedish backpackers who were travelling together. During their time in Byron Bay they had met up with two female Canadian backpackers and were planning to travel with them. The culture compasses in this case were similar in most aspects.
They differed in the cultural dimensions of ‘doing’, ‘ranked’ and ‘controlling’, while in all other dimensions the culture compasses were either identical or within a point of each other.

While this interview was undertaken as group with two female Canadian backpackers Bjorn stated that his favourite cultures were “Europeans, Germans and Canadians”. While Olaf stated that “It is easy to get along with a culture that is similar to my own”. When asked what the key aspects were that made these cultures their favourites Bjorn and Olaf stated that: “the personalities of the individuals are really important as well as the similarities of the individuals to myself”. Olaf added that “whether the individual has a similar background to me is also important”.

The culture compasses for these two backpackers appeared remarkably similar in the cultural dimension of ‘individual’: this is the element that both compasses have the same high score. This suggests that the Swedish backpackers are also oriented towards the individual and the same assumptions can be made as for the New Zealand female backpackers described before. These assumptions are that people who are oriented towards individual believe that each person is responsible for what happens in his or her life, and that they must watch out for his or her own rights and welfare. As they have been identified as individualistic it is expected that they would find meaning in personal accountability and have a competitive ethic (Seelye 1996).
4.2.5 Canada: Jenny and Susan

This interview involved two female Canadian backpackers who were travelling together. They were also travelling with two Swedish backpackers who they met in Byron Bay. The two Swedish backpackers are the same boys from the previous section (4.2.4). Hence, these cross-cultural relationships/friendships are real and current with these backpackers being engaged in

Figure 4.4 Culture Compass results for Sweden Source: Chu (cited in Seeyle 1996) adapted by author for this study.
this type of relationship rather than just being a potential relationship. The culture compasses were similar in the cultural dimensions of human relationships and nature. They differed greatly in the other two cultural dimensions of time and activity.

Jenny and Susan interacted positively with every culture but Susan particularly mentioned that she liked the “Swedish and Brazilians”. According to Jenny and Susan the key aspects that made these cultures their favourites were: “their personalities are a very important aspect as well as their friendly nature”.

The culture compasses for the Canadian backpackers are very similar in the dimensions of human relationships and nature, in particular the aspects of individual, yielding and present. According to Chu (Seelye 1996) the assumptions can be made that they believe that they are responsible for what happens in their own lives, they believe that nature controls life on earth and live day to day without worrying about the future.
Figure 4.5 Culture Compass Results for Canada Source: Chu (cited in Seeyle 1996) adapted by author for this study.

4.3 Cultures backpackers relate positively to.

Figure 4.6 illustrates which cultures the backpackers interviewed stated that they relate positively to.
Figure 4.6 Mindmap analysis of the cultures that backpackers relate positively to.
Interview question two provided a variety of answers with the New Zealand female backpackers not having a favourite culture as they related well with everyone. The Irish and German backpackers stated that Australia was one of their favourite cultures. It is hard to know if they said that Australia was one of their favourite cultures because it is one of their favourites or whether they were saying it just because the interview took place in Australia and the interviewer was Australian. Another aspect to consider is that these backpackers chose to travel to Australia and there would have been some pre-trip motivation to travel to Australia.

The Canadian backpackers stated that one of their favourite cultures was the Swedish and the Swedish backpackers stated that one of their favourite cultures was the Canadians. It is interesting to note that in this case that the Swedish backpackers were male and the Canadian backpackers were female. They had met at the hostel in Byron Bay and had plans to travel together around Australia. The Swedish backpackers also stated that it was easier to get along with cultures which have similar values to their own. The following analyses are of the cultures that stated that they were a favourite amongst backpackers.

Figure 4.7 outlines the participants’ stated reasons for enabling positive relationships across cultures. The key themes that arose during the interviews were broken down into three categories based on what the participants’ reported as important making a culture their favourite.
Participants' stated reasons for enabling positive relationships across cultures.

Similarities
- "Attitudes"
- "Backgrounds"
- "Culture"

Personality (personal nature)
- "Helpfulness"
- "Friendliness"

Attitude to Life
- "Laid Back"
- "Open Minded"

Figure 4.7 Mindmap of participants’ stated reasons for enabling positive relationships across cultures.
This section compares Ireland and New Zealand, Canada and Sweden, Sweden and Germany, New Zealand and Canada, New Zealand and Sweden, New Zealand and Germany. The reason why these countries were chosen for comparison was that they were considered to be potentially friendly. For a culture to be considered potentially friendly in this research it was required that there was a mutual respect between the two cultures; whether this respect was reciprocated, or whether it was just simply stated by one culture as a potential.

### 4.3.1 Analysis 1: Ireland and New Zealand

According to the results of the culture compass Ireland and New Zealand were similar in the cultural attitudes of nature (yielding), human relationships (individual), time (becoming and being) and time (past). Even though these two cultures stated that they liked each other they were dissimilar in the cultural attitudes of nature (harmonious), human relationships (mutual), activity (doing) and time (present and future). In the case of Ireland and New Zealand the positive feelings were mutual as the New Zealand backpackers liked all cultures and the Irish backpackers liked the New Zealand backpackers. The New Zealand backpackers Alice and Sarah stated that “a person’s personality was an important aspect in determining what has made a culture my favourite”. The Irish backpackers Michael and Luke stated that: “Similar attitudes to me, a friendly” demeanour and having a laid back attitude are very important aspects in determining my favourite cultures”.

These aspects are human relationship type traits therefore it would be expected that the combined culture compasses would have an orientation towards human relationships. In this case the combined compasses were orientated toward human relationships therefore the aspects of what makes a culture a backpacker’s favourite can be seen in the culture compass. While these two different cultures like each other the aspects that make them a favourite to each other are dissimilar in this case.
4.3.2 Analysis 2: Canada and Sweden

According to the results of the culture compass Canada and Sweden were similar in the cultural aspects of time (present), activity (becoming) and human relationships (individual). Even though these two cultures stated that they liked each other they were dissimilar in the cultural attitudes of time (future), activity (doing), human relationships (ranked) and the entire dimension of nature (yielding, harmonious and controlling). In this case of Canada and Sweden the positive feelings were mutual as both sets of backpackers stated in their interviews that they liked each other. In this case however, it was two Canadian
girls and two Swedish boys and they had met up in Byron Bay and were planning to travel together around Australia. The mutual attraction may have coloured their responses in the interviews.

In this case both the Canadian (Jenny and Susan) and Swedish (Bjorn and Olaf) backpackers stated that personality was a key factor in determining what makes a culture their favourite. This is reflected in the combined culture compasses as they have an orientation towards a number of similar cultural attitudes which have an influence on personality. There was one main similarity that both the Canadian and Swedish backpackers agreed upon, which is personality. The aspect of similarities to themselves was an important aspect to the Swedish, while friendliness was important to the Canadians.
4.3.3 Analysis 3: Sweden and Germany

According to the results of the culture compass, Sweden and Germany were similar in the cultural attitudes of human relationships (individual and mutual). Even though the Swedish backpackers (Bjorn and Olaf) stated that they liked the Germans (their combined culture compasses were dissimilar in the attitudes of time (past, present and future), activity (being), human relationships (ranked) and nature (harmonious and yielding). The positive
feelings were not mutual in this case as the German backpackers (Annette and Alicia) did not mention anything about the Swedish backpackers.

In this case both the Swedish and German backpackers stated that personality was a key factor in determining what makes a culture their favourite. This is reflected in the combined culture compasses as they have an orientation towards a number of similar cultural attitudes which have an influence on personality. There was one main similarity that both the Swedish and German backpackers agreed upon was personality. The other aspects that both cultures mentioned did not match up in this case.

Figure 4.10 Culture Compass combination for Canada, Sweden and Germany Source: Chu (cited in Seyle 1996) adapted by author for this study.
4.3.4 Analysis 4: New Zealand and Canada

The results of the culture compass for New Zealand and Canada were similar in the cultural attitudes of time (present), activity (being), human relationships (individual) and nature (controlling). Despite the fact that New Zealand backpackers (Alice and Sarah) liked the Canadians (Jenny and Susan), their combined culture compasses were dissimilar in the attitudes of time (future), activity (becoming), human relationships (ranked) and nature (harmonious). The positive feelings did not appear to be mutual in this case as the Canadian backpackers did not mention anything about the New Zealand backpackers.

Both the New Zealand and Canadian backpackers stated that personality was a key factor in determining what makes a culture their favourite. This was reflected in the combined culture compasses as they have an orientation towards a number of similar cultural attitudes which have an influence on personality. The aspects in this case were similar as both cultures agreed that personality was a key factor in positive relationships.

4.3.5 Analysis 5: New Zealand and Sweden

The results of the culture compass for New Zealand and Sweden were similar in the cultural attitudes of time (past), activity (being), human relationships (individual) and nature (yielding). The New Zealand backpackers (Alice and Sarah) liked the Swedish (Olaf and Bjorn) even though their combined culture compasses were dissimilar in the attitudes of time (future), activity (becoming), human relationships (ranked) and nature (harmonious). The positive feelings were not mutual in this case as the Swedish backpackers did not mention anything about the New Zealand backpackers.

Both the New Zealand and Swedish backpackers stated that personality was a key factor in determining what makes a culture their favourite. This is reflected in the combined culture compasses as they have an orientation towards a number of similar cultural attitudes which have an influence on personality. The aspects in this case were similar as they both
mentioned the key aspect to positive relationships is personality. The Swedish backpackers had other aspects which also contribute to positive relationships.

4.3.6 Analysis 6: New Zealand and Germany

The culture compass New Zealand and Germany were similar in the cultural attitudes of time (future), activity (becoming), human relationships (individual) and nature (controlling). The New Zealand backpackers (Alice and Sarah) liked the German culture even though their combined culture compasses were dissimilar in the attitudes of time (present), activity (doing), human relationships (ranked) and nature (harmonious). The positive feelings did not appear to be mutual in this case as the German backpackers (Annette and Alicia) did not mention anything about the New Zealand backpackers.

Both the New Zealand and German backpackers stated that personality was a key factor in determining what makes a culture their favourite. This was reflected in the combined culture compasses as they have an orientation towards a number of similar cultural attitudes which have an influence on personality. The aspects in this case were similar as both the cultures agree that personality was a key factor in forming positive relationships. The German backpackers also had other key elements which can also be a factor in forming positive relationships.

Figure 3 below is a diagram of Chu’s individual culture compass with the results from all the countries culture compasses.
4.4 Discussion:

Personality was a key aspect that the backpackers mentioned when they considered forming positive relationships with backpackers from a different culture to their own. The question then becomes what do the backpackers mean by “personality” though? As discussed in chapter two there were various definitions of personality. Personality according to Ryckman (2004) can be defined as a dynamic and organised set of characteristics possessed by a person that uniquely influences his or her cognitions, motivations and behaviours in
various situations. It cannot be determined in this study how the participants defined personality or if their perceptions of personality match Ryckman’s definition or even any of the other author’s classifications. Further investigation into how the backpackers define personality would need to be conducted to answer this question.

While Chu’s (cited in Seeyle 1996) individual culture compass elements can be recognised in the work of a variety of key theoreticians, these key theoreticians however focus mainly on what defines a person’s culture rather than their personality. While culture itself makes up part of a person’s personality it however cannot be stated that the whole compass would reflect their personality. The compass may pinpoint aspects of the individual’s personality, but it would not fully reflect their entire personality. The question is can you infer that the whole compass would reflect their personality? The answer is more than likely no.

What defines culture is another key issue that needs to be discussed. Chapter two outlined various definitions and theories about what defines culture and what it may mean to different people. For example, Verluyten (2004) stated that one popular definition of culture refers to the arts, music and literature. However during the interviews the concept of culture had to be defined to the backpackers for them to be able to answer the interview questions. For the purpose of this study a combination of a number of definitions described in chapter two were utilised. Culture was defined as the values and practices that are acquired and shared by people in a group (Verluyten 2004). As with the concept of personality how the backpackers inferred this concept may have varied and could have possibly affected the results of this study. By looking at the concept of favourite cultures can also be an issue as favourite cultures can be tied up in race / political stereotypes (Lillhannus 2002). By saying that these countries liked these particular cultures can possibly cause potential stereotyping when these backpackers encounter these cultures again in future travels (Lillhannus 2002).
4.5 Conclusion:

This chapter outlined the key aspects of the different cultures and how the individual culture compasses related to each other. The results from the interviews showed how the cultural dimension of individuality was a key aspect in all individual culture compasses. The results also showed how that the key aspect of forming positive relationships seemed to be the personality of the two individuals involved. The similarities between the two communicating cultures were also a factor in forming positive relationships. The results from the individual culture compass did not necessarily have an impact on the positive relationships between backpackers; it mainly provided a background to the cultural profile of the individual backpackers.
5. Chapter 5: Conclusions

5.1 Introduction:

This chapter address the aims and objectives of this research and how these have been met throughout the course of this study. The research questions formed at the beginning of the study have also been answered through this research. This chapter also highlights the contributions that this research has provided as well as the implications for future research.

5.2 Aim of the Study

The overall aim of this research is to gain some understanding of the positive intercultural relationships among backpackers in the Byron Bay region.

This study found that the key factors that contribute to the formation of positive intercultural relationships were personality, similarities to the backpacker’s own culture and the backpacker’s attitude towards life. The friendliness, culture and background also had an impact on whether positive intercultural relationships or friendships were formed. Therefore this study provided some understanding of the positive intercultural relationships however; further research into this area would potentially provide a greater understanding.

The aim was to see if there was any similarity between elements of the cultural profiles which might partially explain why there are positive relationships between backpackers’ guest-guest relationships.

The cultural profiles of the backpackers varied greatly in which dimensions of the culture compass that they individual participants deemed as important to them. The one key aspect of the culture compass that stood out was the individual aspect of the human relationships dimension. Tourism Tasmania’s (2004) backpacker market profile states that
most backpacker’s travel as individuals or as a couple therefore it would make sense that the backpackers are oriented towards the individual aspect.

### 5.3 Objective of the Study

**Objective 1:** In the process of this research some research gaps were discovered. The issue of positive relationships has not been fully explored with a majority of the research focusing on the negative aspects of backpacking and tourism.

This research focused on the positive aspects of backpacking and guest – guest relationships and found that backpacking encourages positive interactions between backpackers. The issue of friendship in tourism has not been explored with only one article able to be found on this issue. This research found that friendships are struck amongst backpackers but it did not go into the specifics. The issue of friendship was not studied fully in this research and can possibly be a focus for future research.

Another research gap was the issue of guest-guest relationships. This issue has not been fully explored with a majority of the research focusing on the guest-host relationship. The issue of guest – guest relationships was explored using the positive aspects of the relationships. This research found that guest – guest relationships were important when studying backpackers as most backpacker accommodation encourages interactions between backpackers. Future research could possibly focus on guest-guest relationships of different groups of tourists.

**Objective 2:** Which cultural factors influence the development of friendship among backpackers of different cultural backgrounds.

Personalities were also a major factor in determining how the backpackers formed positive relationships or friendships. Therefore it can be stated that positive guest – guest relationships / friendships are formed based on the individual’s personality rather than their
cultural background. However this study has also shown that having a similar background or culture to another person will often aid in the formation of positive guest – guest relationships / friendships between backpackers of different cultures.

**Objective 3: To contribute to the knowledge base on how backpackers relate to other backpackers.**

This study found that backpackers relate to other backpackers through a number of different ways. A majority of the backpackers in this study stated that personality was a key factor in determining positive relationships. At the beginning of this study culture was theorised as one of the key factors in positive relationships through the results of this study it was found that culture is a factor to positive relationships but it is not as important as personality.

**Objective 4: The participants’ cultural self knowledge may also be enhanced as a result of this research which is a possible benefit of this study for them. When taking part in this research the backpackers will have the opportunity to complete Paula Chu's cultural compass and hence gain an understanding to how they each determine time, activity, human relationships and nature.**

The participants in this study expected the results they received for the nature and time sections of the culture compass. The activity and the human relationships sections pointed out aspects of themselves that they did not expect. They did not expect to be as individualistic as they were. The activity section was also a surprise to some of the participants as there was a large variation on how they undertake different activities.

**Objective 5: Insights into the value of Paula Chu’s cultural compass profiles of the different backpackers who complete the cultural compass.**
While the culture compass provided a starting point for a possible reason behind positive intercultural relationships between backpackers, it was found to not be of as much importance as the issue of culture to the backpackers interviewed was not as important as other key aspects. This study found that the key aspects of personality, similarities and attitudes were of more importance than Paula Chu’s cultural compass.

5.4 Research Questions and Answers:

5.4.1 What are the backpackers’ cultural profiles?

The backpacker’s cultural profiles varied depending on the cultural background of the participant. The participants with the same cultural background tended to have similar culture compasses once other culture compasses were compared the similarities and differences were able to be seen. The main similarity with all 10 culture compasses was the cultural dimension of human relationships and in particular the aspect of individuality.

5.4.2 How do the culture compass cultural profiles of the backpackers differ?

The culture compasses differed with each different culture therefore the cultural profiles of the backpackers differ in most aspects of the culture compass. The backpackers had a variety of views on the issue of nature, time and activity. The main aspects of future, doing, and ranked were the aspects that varied the most amongst the backpackers cultural profiles.
5.4.3 What are the positive relationships backpackers have towards different cultures?

The literature has shown that backpackers are interested in experiencing different cultures to their own. Therefore they often have a positive outlook on the different cultures at the destinations they visit. This research has shown that backpackers form positive relationships with people from a different culture to their own through the similarities they have to their own culture. The personality of the person can also have a positive impact on the relationship between backpackers.

5.4.4 To which cultures do backpackers’ best relate?

The backpackers relate best to a variety of cultures. The New Zealand backpackers stated that they got along with all cultures. The other countries interviewed only mentioned a couple of cultures. This could possibly be the case of they haven’t been travelling for very long and therefore have not experienced a variety of cultures yet. This research also found that some of the backpackers related better to cultures that were similar to their own.

5.4.5 How do the backpackers form positive relationships despite coming from different cultural backgrounds?

The main way that the backpackers form positive relationships is through personality. The key aspect from this study for forming positive relationships is the personality of both parties. The other aspects that are also instrumental in forming positive relationships are the similarities of both parties, the nature of the person, whether the person is open minded, friendly, laid back and helpful.
5.5 Contributions of this Research:

This research contributed to the knowledge base on how backpackers relate to other backpackers. This research could possibly assist with destination choice as the backpackers may wish to go to destinations where they know they will get along with the local culture.

The participants’ cultural self knowledge was enhanced as a result of this research through the completion of the culture compass. The culture compass allowed the participants to gain some understanding of their cultural profile to assist them with the relationships with other people which are a possible benefit of this study for the participants.

5.6 Implications for further research:

Further research is still required on the issue of guest-guest relationships as this issue needs further exploration than this study was able to provide. The issue of friendship amongst backpackers is another area that requires further research as this study didn’t provide as much detail as is required to understand this phenomenon. While positive relationships were explored in this research more research on the subject is required to gain a further understanding on how people in particular tourists form positive relationships whilst on holidays.

5.7 Conclusion:

This chapter has reviewed the aims, objectives and research questions that were the basis of this research. Throughout the course of this research the aims and objectives have been met and the research questions answered. There are a number of issues that can be addressed in the future as the basis for another research project.
6. References:


7. Appendices

7.1 Interview Sheets
Information Sheet

Title: An investigation into the positive intercultural relationships among backpackers: A case study of Byron Bay.

I am undertaking research for my Honours degree on the attitudes of backpackers towards different cultures. As Byron Bay is a very popular spot for backpackers I have chosen Byron as the location for my research. This research aims to find out what the current attitudes backpackers have towards different cultures and which cultures backpackers relate well to.

My study uses an academically validated survey tool about cultural dimensions and some interview questions that will be similar to an everyday conversation. It is envisaged that the one-off interviews will take about 20 minutes with the interview taking place in a mutually acceptable venue. The interviews will be electronically recorded with your permission. However, you are free to request that interviews not be recorded, and in this case I will request permission to take notes during the interview. In addition, electronic recordings and transcripts from your interview will be destroyed should you decide to withdraw from the study. No information given in the interviews will be made public in any form that could identify you.

Participation in the study is strictly voluntary and your confidentiality is assured. If you decide to participate, you will not be identified in any way in the study and you are free to withdraw and to discontinue participation at any time. You may also elect not to answer any questions asked.

My research is being conducted under the supervision of Mieke Witsel who is a member of Southern Cross University’s School of Tourism and Hospitality Management. If any issues or questions are raised as a result of your participation in this research please contact Mieke Witsel on (02) 6620 9193 or mieke.witsel@scu.edu.au

Rebecca Whitelaw (Researcher), Honours Candidate.
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The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the Southern Cross University Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The Approval Number is (ECN-07-54)

If you have any complaints or reservations about any ethical aspect of your participation in this research, you may contact the HREC through the Ethics Complaints Officer, Ms Sue Kelly, (telephone [02] 6626 9139, fax [02] 6626 9145, email: sue.kelly@scu.edu.au

Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and investigated, and you will be informed of the outcome.
Culture Compass, Individual personal Perspective (Seelye 1996: pp 160-163):

Part 1. Rank the following according to similarity to your own perspective.

3 - most like me
2 - next most like me
1 - least like me

1. ______ a. My decisions are primarily guided by what I have learned.
   ______ b. I "go with the flow" and adapt my decisions to quickly changing circumstances.
   ______ c. When I make a decision, I focus on the result I am looking for.

2. ______ a. I tend to take each day as it comes.
   ______ b. I tend to keep lists of tasks that I need to accomplish each day.
   ______ c. In time, things do tend to work themselves out.

3. ______ a. It is hard for me to stop worrying about upcoming events or deadlines.
   ______ b. Life has its own wisdom. Worrying is a waste of my energy.
   ______ c. Let's focus on all that today brings, and take care of the rest one day at a time.

4. ______ a. We are meant to attend to nature’s needs as much as to our own.
   ______ b. Humanity’s progress and survival depend on our control of natural resources.
   ______ c. Nature's own power will determine our progress and survival; humanity's power can neither match it nor truly control it.

5. ______ a. In truth, we are much better off now that we can make more effective use of our natural resources.
   ______ b. For all our great plans and projects, nature could put humankind in its place in an instant.
   ______ c. "Effective use of natural resources" is the same as saying "exploitation of the natural world."

6. ______ a. No matter where you live, in the country or the city, there are a variety of forces operating which control your destiny.
   ______ b. In my life, I strive to live simply, which is closer to the natural world.
   ______ c. Modern conveniences actually help us appreciate the natural world.
7. ______ a. Developing my potential and my sense of self is the most important thing I can do with my life.
       ______ b. Being alive and healthy is the most important thing to me; my accomplishments are secondary.
       ______ c. It would be a waste if I did not achieve something important in my life.

8. ______ a. I prefer to relax and enjoy life as it comes.
       ______ b. Peace of mind is possible regardless of external circumstances.
       ______ c. I feel useless if I'm not doing something constructive with my time.

9. ______ a. Taking action is more important than commitment to a belief.
       ______ b. We exist only in relation to other people.
       ______ c. It is essential to be a good person; being a successful person is not the point.

10. ______ a. You’ve got to be guided by what you think is right, even if you can't please everyone.
       ______ b. It works best to have a good leader make the decisions; everyone should cooperate accordingly.
       ______ c. Decisions affecting a group are more effective if everyone participates in the decision making.

11. ______ a. It is the individual I respect—not his or her position.
       ______ b. Leaders of a group deserve respect because of their position.
       ______ c. First and foremost comes unity; people who think of themselves first live at the expense of others.

12. ______ a. The head of a group has to take responsibility for its success or failure.
       ______ b. If someone in my group is having a problem, I am partly responsible for resolving it.
       ______ c. I am accountable for my own success or failure.
Now score your Individual Culture Compass.

Place the number recorded beside each statement in the appropriate space below and add at the right.

1a _____ +2c _____ +3b _____ = _____ Past
1b _____ +2a _____ +3c _____ = _____ Present
1c _____ +2b _____ +3a _____ = _____ Future
4c _____ +5b _____ +6a _____ = _____ Yielding
4a _____ +5c _____ +6d _____ = _____ Harmonious
4b _____ +5a _____ +6c _____ = _____ Controlling
7c _____ +8c _____ +9a _____ = _____ Doing
7b _____ +8a _____ +9c _____ = _____ Being
7a _____ +8b _____ +9b _____ = _____ Becoming
10a _____ +11a _____ +12c _____ = _____ Individual
10c _____ +11c _____ +12b _____ = _____ Mutual
10b _____ +11b _____ +12a _____ = _____ Ranked

Mark the number corresponding to your score for each subdimension on the Individual Culture Compass. You may wish to shade in each section to the appropriate level. The highest number for each dimension indicates your preferred approach.
Individual Culture Compass
Interview Questions:

1. Did you expect the results you got from the culture compass?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

What do you think of the results?

2. Among the backpackers you meet on your travels, which are your favourite cultures?

   c) What aspects of these cultures have made these your favourites?