Voices from the margin: youth, identity and belonging in a tourist destination

Antonia Cristina Canosa
Southern Cross University

Publication details
Canosa, AC 2016, 'Voices from the margin: youth, identity and belonging in a tourist destination', PhD thesis, Southern Cross University, Lismore, NSW.
Copyright AC Canosa 2016
Voices from the Margin: Youth, Identity and Belonging in a Tourist Destination

Antonia Cristina Canosa

BBus Tourism (SCU), MA Social Anthropology (UOL)

Centre for Children and Young People
School of Education
Southern Cross University

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

November 2016
Declaration

I certify that the work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original, except as acknowledged in the text, and that the material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

I acknowledge that I have read and understood the University's rules, requirements, procedures and policy relating to my higher degree research award and to my thesis. I certify that I have complied with the rules, requirements, procedures and policy of the University (as they may be from time to time).

Name: Antonia Cristina Canosa

Signature:

Date: 21st November 2016
Abstract

Until recently, children and young people have been a largely invisible and silenced group in society (Hardman, 1973; Prout & James, 1997). As a result, children and young people’s views and opinions have also been marginalised in social research about their lives. Childhood has often been researched as a process of socialisation, neglecting to focus on the myriad ways children and young people play an active role in the construction of their social world. Such an approach fails to acknowledge their capacity to understand, internalise and express their own views and opinions (Kehily, 2008). While the social sciences – particularly through the interdisciplinary contribution of childhood studies – have come some way in challenging these biases and associated underlying preconceptions, such views and approaches are still common in many tourism-focused studies (Canosa & Graham, 2016; Poria & Timothy, 2014).

In light of the evident gap in tourism scholarship around understandings of childhood and the key role children and young people can play in research, this study employed a qualitative, ethnographic and participatory methodology to explore the lived experiences of children and young people growing up in a popular tourist destination in New South Wales, Australia. Specifically, the study sought to understand how young people negotiate a sense of identity and belonging amidst the continuous flow of visitors and other related demands on host tourism communities. Socio-cultural theory was employed as the guiding theoretical framework.

In line with the participatory approach of the study, young people in the community of Byron Bay were consulted at the outset of the study and their views informed important design and methodological decisions. The research included interviews and focus groups with 74 young people in the community between the ages of 10 and 24 years. Twenty of these young people also engaged in two participatory projects which resulted in the creation of three stop-motion animations and 11 peer-interviews. Additionally, 14 adults in key youth and community roles were interviewed. This was primarily to gain their perspectives on the opportunities and challenges faced by young people in the Byron Shire.
Findings centred around a range of key issues including participants’ lived experience of their environment and the many subtle strategies employed to negotiate identity and belonging. In this way, the study offers a more nuanced understanding of young people’s own interpretation of life in a tourist destination and of the opportunities and challenges they face. The study also sheds light on young people’s active and agentive role in society despite the alienation that is commonly felt growing up in a popular tourist destination. As such, the study contributes to two very different areas of scholarship, tourism studies and childhood studies. It does so within broader anthropological interests in the social and cultural aspects of young people’s lives.

The study also contributes to methodological advancement addressing the limiting positivist tradition in tourism studies by drawing on the rich and long tradition of participatory, child-centred and child-led research in other social sciences (Kellett, 2010). Importantly, the emancipatory values underlying the critical approach taken in this study aimed to uphold young people’s agency and participatory rights, and, ultimately, emphasise the importance of ethically sensitive, youth-driven research.
Acknowledgements

There are so many wonderful people whom I have had the privilege to meet and who have enriched my life and helped me on this great adventure that was my PhD journey. This section of my thesis is dedicated to you all!

First and foremost, I must thank my wonderful supervisors for their continued support and mentoring throughout this journey. I seemed to have collected quite a few supervisors over the years, so to Professor Betty Weiler and Dr Brent Moyle who saw me off at the starting line, thank you for your guidance and encouragement in those early days. Thank you also for your continued friendship and for extending opportunities to collaborate on projects that have contributed to my professional development.

To Professor Anne Graham and Associate Professor Erica Wilson who saw me to the finish line, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your patience and steadfast support throughout these years. You have been far more than supervisors, challenging me at every corner and instilling in me intellectual integrity and passion for research. I thank you for all the time you spent in meetings, responding to my endless emails and for the long hours spent reading drafts of my thesis. I am forever in your debt. Last but not least, my heartfelt thanks go to Dr Meredith Wray, my external supervisor, for encouraging me to actually start this journey and for seeing me to the finish line. Thanks for all the lovely chai-teas we had together and for your time and friendship.

To all my wonderful colleagues at the Centre for Children and Young People and the School of Business and Tourism, thanks for the many encouraging chats we had along the way and for your kindness in times of need! In particular, I would like to thank the postgraduate students for their collegiality and support: Alexandra Bec, Hanyu Chen, Mohd Hairi Jalis, Manli Zhu, Andrea Boyle, Monica Torland, Sabine Muschter, Patricia Bibi, Rod Caldicott, Kate Neale and Julia Truscott.

My thanks and appreciation also go to Southern Cross University, the Australian Postgraduate Awards and the School of Education for generous funding throughout my research. Thank you to the Collaborative Research Network and the Social Policy Research Centre at the University of New South Wales for funding my attendance at
the Higher Degree Research Symposium in 2014 and at the Australian Social Policy Research Conference in 2015; both proved to be enormously beneficial to my professional development.

Thanks to the many scholars and academics I met along the way whose counsel helped form my research interests and approach. In particular, I would like to thank Dr Rob Hales and Associate Professor Martin Young for your valuable input at confirmation of candidature. Thanks also to Professor Keith Hollinshead for teaching me to be a “disciplinary trespasser” and venture in the “postdisciplinary imaginary”! My appreciation also goes to Professor Nigel Thomas, Professor Tess Ridge and Professor Kelly Johnson for your early counsel which fuelled my interest in participatory and child-inclusive research.

Thanks to all the participants in this study and the many young people and adults who helped make this project possible. Thanks to the lovely staff at the Byron Youth Services, Byron Youth Council and Byron Youth Theatre who opened the doors to me and facilitated access to young people in the community. In particular, I would like to thank Deborah Pearse, Lotje Boer, Rosalie Bryant, Stephanie Sims, Belle Arnold, Phoebe Lines, Lisa Apostolides, Nicqui Yazdi and David Hickson. To all my lovely co-researchers and research participants thanks for taking the time to participate in my research and thanks for challenging me to understanding things from your perspective!

To my lovely family and friends thank you for being there always! Thanks for asking how things were going even though it was hard to grasp what it was I was doing! Thanks to my mum and dad for always believing in me and encouraging me to do my best. Thanks for teaching me to trust God, “my refuge and my strength, an ever-present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1). Thanks to my wonderful husband who had to put up with my endless ups and downs, and for remaining so grounded: my rock in times of trouble! To my beautiful children Davide, Sara and Daniel thank you for being so patient with mummy. Thank you for helping out during my fieldwork even when you thought “fieldwork” meant going to chop sugarcane in the fields!! Without your love and your hugs mummy could never be a Doctor! And finally thanks to God for continuously renewing my strength to “soar on wings like eagles” (Isaiah 40:31).
List of Publications

Refereed Journal Articles


Book Chapters


Refereed Conference Papers


Posters and Presentations


Other Publications


# Table of Contents

Abstract .................................................................................................................................................. i

Acknowledgements ............................................................................................................................... iii

List of Publications .................................................................................................................................. v

Table of Contents ..................................................................................................................................... vii

List of Tables and Figures .................................................................................................................... x

## CHAPTER ONE  INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY ................................................................. 1

- BACKGROUND ................................................................................................................................. 2
- RESEARCH CONTEXT: BYRON SHIRE ......................................................................................... 6
  - Historical evolution of the visitor economy ............................................................................... 8
  - Socio-cultural context .................................................................................................................. 11
- RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS ............................................................................................ 14
- SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY .................................................................................................. 15
- THESIS OUTLINE .......................................................................................................................... 16

## CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW ................................................................................. 20

- INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................................ 20
- A TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH ........................................................................................ 21
- TOURISM STUDIES: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH ......................................................... 23
  - A historical review of communities in tourism research ...................................................... 23
  - Tracing young residents’ voices in tourism research .......................................................... 29
  - A way forward ............................................................................................................................ 36
- CHILDHOOD STUDIES .................................................................................................................. 39
  - Theorising childhood ................................................................................................................ 39
  - Socio-cultural theory ................................................................................................................ 42
  - Young people as social and cultural agents ........................................................................... 43
- IDENTITY AND BELONGING ....................................................................................................... 46
  - The “identity project” ................................................................................................................ 47
  - Sense of belonging, connection and community ..................................................................... 51
- SUMMARY ........................................................................................................................................ 55

## CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY ................................................................................... 56

- INTRODUCTION ............................................................................................................................ 56
- BEYOND POSITIVISM: A CRITICAL APPROACH .................................................................... 57
- THE CRITICAL AND TRANSFORMATIVE WORLDVIEW .......................................................... 59
- REFLEXIVITY AND THE EMIC RESEARCHER ......................................................................... 62
- QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND THE BRICOLEUR .................................................................. 64
  - Critical ethnography ................................................................................................................ 65
  - Participatory research with young people ............................................................................ 68
- RESEARCH METHODS ..................................................................................................................... 70
  - Consultation with the Byron Youth Council ........................................................................ 71
  - Recruiting participants ............................................................................................................. 73
  - In-depth interviews .................................................................................................................... 75
  - Focus groups ............................................................................................................................. 77
  - Participant/participatory observation .................................................................................... 78
  - Secondary data analysis ........................................................................................................... 79
Participatory film-making project ................................................................. 79
Peer-interview project .................................................................................. 82
DATA ANALYSIS ............................................................................................... 85
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS ........................................................................ 89
Access and informed consent ....................................................................... 91
Protection of children .................................................................................... 92
Anonymity and confidentiality ....................................................................... 93
METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS AND REFLECTIONS ......................... 93
SUMMARY ........................................................................................................ 95

CHAPTER FOUR GROWING UP IN A TOURIST DESTINATION: Perspectives and Experiences of Children and Young People ............................................................................. 96
INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 96
CONSTRUCTING IDENTITIES IN A TOURIST DESTINATION ....................... 97
Children, nature and the rural idyll .................................................................. 97
Children and the environmentalist identity ...................................................... 99
Challenges of living in rural areas .................................................................. 103
Urban childhoods and multicultural identities ................................................. 107
NEGOTIATING BELONGING IN A TOURIST DESTINATION .......................... 110
Feelings of alienation ...................................................................................... 110
(Un)Safe spaces in the community ................................................................. 118
REAFFIRMING IDENTITY AND BELONGING .............................................. 125
Avoidance and “locals-only” spaces ................................................................. 125
Straightedge among young people in Byron Shire ......................................... 129
“Having a say”: Voice and participation ......................................................... 134
FUTURE ASPIRATIONS AND MIGRATION ............................................... 137
GENDERED PERSPECTIVES ........................................................................... 140
SUMMARY ........................................................................................................ 143

CHAPTER FIVE GROWING UP IN A TOURIST DESTINATION: Perceptions of Adult Stakeholders .................................................................................................................. 144
INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 144
THE POLITICS OF BELONGING .................................................................... 145
Threats to young people ................................................................................ 149
Consuming places and spaces ....................................................................... 157
YOUTH IDENTITIES, CULTURES AND TRIBES ........................................... 167
BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION ...................................................................... 173
Progressing the youth participation agenda .................................................. 181
SUMMARY ........................................................................................................ 183

CHAPTER SIX GOING DEEPER: The Participatory Projects .......................... 184
INTRODUCTION ................................................................................................. 184
PARTICIPATORY FILM-MAKING PROJECT ................................................... 185
Rubbish Run ................................................................................................... 185
Just One Piece ............................................................................................... 186
Alpaca versus Bus .......................................................................................... 189
PEER-INTERVIEW PROJECT ........................................................................ 191
Drugs, alcohol and safety .............................................................................. 191
Message to tourists ....................................................................................... 193
IN SITU ETHICAL DILEMMA ...................................................................... 195
Positive aspects of co-researching with children ........................................... 196
Complexes of co-researching with children .................................................. 197
BEING A MOTHER IN THE FIELD ............................................................... 209
Advantages of researching with accompanying family members ............... 210
Complexities of negotiating fieldwork and care-work ........................................ 212
SUMMARY ........................................................................................................... 214

CHAPTER SEVEN DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION ............................................. 215
TOURIST DESTINATIONS AS COMPLEX COMMUNITIES .................................. 217
YOUTH, IDENTITY AND BELONGING ................................................................. 219
Young people’s lived experience of childhood in a tourist destination ............. 220
Youth subcultures and neo-tribes ................................................................. 222
EXPERIENCING CITIZENSHIP ........................................................................ 224
IMPLICATIONS AND FINAL REFLECTIONS ..................................................... 227
WORKING BEYOND DISCIPLINARY BOUNDARIES ............................................ 228
FUTURE RESEARCH ......................................................................................... 231
Voice agenda ..................................................................................................... 231
Ethics agenda .................................................................................................. 233
Political agenda ............................................................................................... 234
Gender agenda ................................................................................................. 235

REFERENCES ..................................................................................................... 237

APPENDICES ...................................................................................................... 260
APPENDIX A – Recruitment brochure for the participatory projects ............... 260
APPENDIX B – Interview/focus group schedule for young people .................. 262
APPENDIX C – Interview schedule for adult stakeholders ............................... 264
APPENDIX D – Peer-interview schedule .......................................................... 265
APPENDIX E – Consent form for young people ............................................... 268
APPENDIX F – Opt-out parental consent form ............................................... 270
APPENDIX G – Consent forms employed by the co-researchers ....................... 272
APPENDIX H – Newspaper articles ................................................................. 276
List of Tables and Figures

Table 1.1: Visitor Summary 2015 .............................................................................................................8
Table 2.1: A Critical Typology of Young Residents’ Voice in Tourism Research.................................31
Table 3.1 Research Methods ....................................................................................................................71
Table 3.2: Participants’ Profile ..............................................................................................................74
Table 3.3: Co-researchers’ Training Program ........................................................................................83
Table 3.4: Phases of the Thematic Analysis Process ..........................................................................88
Table 5.1: Political Activism ..................................................................................................................180
Table 6.1: Young People’s Message to Tourists ...............................................................................194

Figure 1.1: Northern Rivers Region .....................................................................................................7
Figure 2.1: Transdisciplinary Approach ...............................................................................................21
Figure 2.2: Transition to a Youth-Driven Approach in Tourism Studies .............................................38
Figure 2.3: Conceptual Framework ........................................................................................................55
Figure 3.1: The Study’s Methodological Approach .............................................................................66
Figure 3.2: Participatory Film Workshop ..............................................................................................80
Figure 3.3: Peer-Interview Workshop ....................................................................................................84
Figure 6.1: Rubbish Run .........................................................................................................................187
Figure 6.2: Just One Piece ....................................................................................................................188
Figure 6.3: Alpacas versus Bus ..............................................................................................................190
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Children and young people have been referred to as an invisible group in our society and, until recently, their silence has been commonplace in the social sciences (Prout & James, 1997). This still holds true in tourism research where children and young people remain an “under-researched” field of inquiry (Canosa, Moyle, & Wray, 2016, p. 334). There has been a growing awareness that communities are not homogenous and that the multiplicity of voices within the community need to be heard (Beeton, 2006; Easterling, 2004; Moscardo & Murphy, 2015).

Nevertheless, research on young residents in tourism is scant and further evidence is needed to build on early studies in this area (Canosa, Brown, & Bassan, 2001; Crick, 1989; Gamradt, 1995). The aim of this research is to address this gap and extend the very limited body of existing knowledge by focusing on the views and perspectives of young people. The research endeavours to explore the lived experience of children and young people1 growing up in an iconic Australian tourist destination. The study adopts a participatory anthropological approach to explore these experiences within the wider socio-cultural milieu in which attitudes and perceptions are created, and allows for the co-construction of knowledge that occurs as a consequence.

Byron Shire in New South Wales (NSW), Australia, was chosen as a research site because it embodies the rapid socio-cultural changes which take place in a community as a consequence of tourism. Critical ethnography and participatory methods are employed to bring to the fore the voices of young people who still largely occupy a persistently marginal position in social life. With its emphasis on identity, belonging and connection, the study explores how growing up in a tourist destination has important implications for the wellbeing and future of young residents. This chapter introduces the research and provides an overview of the background and research context, as well as the theoretical and methodological contributions of the study.

---

1 The terms “children” and “young people” are used interchangeably in this thesis and refer to participants between the ages of 10 and 24 years.
BACKGROUND

There has been considerable recent interest concerning children in tourism research, with studies arguing that children’s voices have often been neglected (Carpenter, 2015; Poria & Timothy, 2014; Schänzel & Carr, 2016), particularly in the areas of family tourism (Carr, 2011; Khoo-Lattimore, 2015; Obrador, 2012; Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015), holiday experiences (Rhoden, Hunter-Jones, & Miller, 2016; Small, 2008), and children as members of host communities (Buzinde & Manuel-Navarrete, 2013; Canosa et al., 2001; Canosa et al., 2016; Rich & Franck, 2015). Such debates mirror the discourse around children’s participation in research in other applied fields, although tourism studies have been noticeably slow to engage.

Although research on youth and tourism is beginning to gain traction among scholars, a vast majority of these studies do not rely on data generated directly from children (Poria & Timothy, 2014). In addition, previous studies have focused primarily on children and young people as guests (tourists) rather than hosts, meaning little attention has been given to them as residents of communities. There is currently a multitude of studies focused on young travellers which explore the educational values of travelling, particularly with the development in recent years of socially responsible types of tourism such as volunteer and pro-poor tourism, (e.g. Bailey & Russell, 2010; Palacios, 2010; Sin, 2009). Other studies focus on young travellers’ motivations and behaviours (e.g. Benckendorff, Moscardo, & Pendergast, 2010; Boukas, 2013; Pearce & Son, 2004).

There is still little evidence about the coping skills and resilience of children and young people in response to tourism, suggesting knowledge related to children and young people requires further expansion in the tourism field. Previous research suggests young hosts are more vulnerable to the demonstration effects of tourism (Brunt & Courtney, 1999; Leiper, 1995/2004; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; P. E. Murphy, 1985; Tovar & Lockwood, 2008). Early community research in tourism studies during the late 1970s, focused on the negative outcomes of tourism for host communities from an adult perspective (Easterling, 2004; Nash, 2007).
Social scientists, particularly anthropologists, began to identify and report on some of the socio-cultural influences that tourism had on host communities including the commodification of people and culture (Greenwood, 1972; Nuñez, 1963), the disruption to family life and changes in the social structure of communities (Boissevain, 1979), and the demonstration effects of tourism on youth (V. L. Smith, 1977a). A seminar held by the World Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in 1976 on “The Social and Cultural Impacts of Tourism” marked the beginning of tourism research focused on host communities (Picard, 2007a). These critical accounts were collected in V. L. Smith (1977b) seminal book *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*, which included anthropological accounts on the changes taking place in host communities as a consequence of tourism development. Whilst going some way towards recognising another perspective on tourism beyond its economic successes, these early ethnographic accounts still assumed that tourist destinations were “passive” recipients subject to the exogenous forces produced by tourism (Leite & Graburn, 2009).

The influences of structural Marxism and, later, political economy in the social sciences, may have been the cause for this blind assumption that human action and historical processes were “almost entirely structurally or systemically determined” (Ortner, 1984, p. 144). These views are fairly representative of early tourism research on communities and provided the starting point for further studies which now form part of a body of knowledge referred to as tourism social impact studies. Since these seminal studies a great deal of research has been conducted on residents’ perceptions of the social impacts of tourism albeit from an adult perspective (Deery, Jago, & Fredline, 2012; Moyle, Weiler, & Croy, 2013; Nunkoo, Smith, & Ramkissoon, 2013). Sharpley (2014) notes that the field of tourism social impact studies has been “one of the most researched topics within tourism studies” (p. 64).

Research in this space has, however, been critiqued for providing a narrow and simplistic view of tourism as an external agent impacting on pristine life ways (Hollinshead, 2009; Lanfant, Allcock, & Bruner, 1995; Leite & Graburn, 2009; Meethan, 2001; Picard, 2007a; Sampaio, Simoni, & Isnart, 2014; R. E. Wood, 1980).
In addition, Hollinshead (2009) argues that these studies envision host communities as passive agents of the tourism phenomenon, whereas in reality host communities can, and often do, respond and adapt to change in creative and agentive ways.

Tourism research on social impacts has focused mainly on residents’ perceptions as a basis for understanding attitudes and ultimately community support for tourism development (Moyle, Croy, & Weiler, 2010a). Typically, such studies segmented residents using a raft of socio-demographic variables in an effort to predict support for tourism (Gursoy, Chi, & Dyer, 2010; Haralambopoulos & Pizam, 1996; Liu & Var, 1986; Milman & Pizam, 1988). A focus on understanding residents’ perceptions was given traction by the argument that “residents’ perceptions of and attitudes towards tourism impacts were at least as important as the actual impacts, if not more so” (McGehee & Andereck, 2004, p. 132). Mounting empirical work soon led to the identification of social exchange theory as a theoretical framework that was well positioned to provide conceptual clarification on the interaction between hosts and guests (Moyle, Croy, & Weiler, 2010b).

Indeed host-guest interactions have been at the core of both anthropological and tourism research since the late 1970s. Deery et al. (2012) argue that this interest in the exchanges between hosts and guests and the subsequent attitudes and perceptions of local residents towards tourism development, marked the beginning of the field of tourism social impact studies. Despite this growing body of knowledge, Sharpley (2014) has questioned whether the volume of research in this area has resulted in actual progress, and in a holistic understanding of residents’ concerns about tourism development.

According to Hollinshead (2009) it is critically important to address the common cliché that tourism is an “uninvited” and “sterile cultural force” (p. 146) which comes from the outside to impact on original and distinct local communities. Communities respond to change and tourism in transformative ways, which often results in tourism becoming intricately intertwined with local culture (Picard, 2007a; R. E. Wood, 1980). R. E. Wood (1980) argues that we should abandon “Western romantic ideals of cultural preservation” (p. 565) and acknowledge that cultures are not passive but in constant flux and renewal. In R. E. Wood’s (1980) view, efforts
should be made to understand the “cultural strategies that people develop to limit, channel, and incorporate the effects of international tourism” (p. 566).

Scholars have identified the stagnation currently being experienced in the field of tourism social impacts studies and the need for a new research agenda (Deery et al., 2012; Nunkoo et al., 2013; Sharpley, 2014), which may possibly include a greater focus on processes of human agency (Canosa et al., 2016). Moreover, the active and often creative ways in which host communities adapt to the changes driven by tourism has the potential to provide a rich and interesting research agenda for a field of research that has been referred to as being in a state of “arrested development” (Deery et al., 2012, p. 65).

There is a need to understand the adaptations and transformations that occur at a local level and to heed the voices of local residents (Moscardo & Murphy, 2015; Sharpley, 2014). Furthermore, in order to foster sustainable tourism development and practice, a greater focus on community involvement is required (Beeton, 2006; Hardy, Beeton, & Pearson, 2002). Community-focused tourism research has reached a level of maturity displayed by the theoretical and methodological eclecticism of studies in this area and the varying disciplinary approaches taken by anthropologists, sociologists, geographers and tourism researchers. Nevertheless, children and young people have been an overlooked category or marginalised group in tourism research.

This mirrors a past trend in the broader social sciences. It was not until the 1990s that social researchers began to recognise the need to focus more intensively on how children and childhood are understood and researched (Morrow, 2011). Qvortrup (1997), for example, argued there was a lack of social research on children as a separate group apart from their relationships with parents and within the family unit. Following Qvortrup, James and Prout (1997) initiated a wave of research which went beyond understanding childhood as a mere period of socialisation and clearly acknowledged children as social agents in their own right. James and Prout (1997) argued that children are not passive subjects of social structures and processes but they play an active role in the construction of their social world and they are capable of understanding and expressing their own views and opinions.
Such views, linked to the social construction of childhood, potentially play a key role in tourism studies where there is a dearth of research focused on children and young people. Importantly, children and young people, particularly under the age of 18 years, are often not considered as citizens in their own right and thus their views and perceptions are often neglected (Morrow, 2011). Young residents of tourist communities are not readily involved in or invited to engage in the research process, nor do they often benefit directly from its outcomes. Rather, young residents remain objects of investigation rather than equal subjects in the research process (Freire, 1970).

Within the interdisciplinary field of childhood studies there is also a dearth of research focused on children’s experiences of growing up in a popular tourist destination, where place and space are contested with visitors, migrants and temporary residents. Existing literature on young people’s experiences of their socio-spatial surroundings has focused predominantly on the rural/urban dichotomy (White 1996; Kong 2000; Nairn, Panelli et al. 2003; Powell, Taylor et al. 2013), often neglecting to explore how identity and belonging are negotiated in complex community contexts such as tourist destinations. This study aims to address these gaps by focusing on the views and experiences of young people between the ages of 10 and 24 years in the iconic Byron Shire and by actively engaging them in the research process.

**RESEARCH CONTEXT: BYRON SHIRE**

The ethnographic site of this research is the destination region\(^2\) of Byron Shire which is situated in the Northern Rivers, NSW, Australia (see Figure 1.1). Byron Shire was created in 1906 under the Shires Act 1906 (NSW) and includes the townships of Byron Bay, Bangalow, Brunswick Heads, Mullumbimby, Ocean Shores, as well as the broader Byron Hinterland areas such as Federal, Eureka and Main Arm. Byron Bay, the main tourist attraction in the area, is situated in a particularly favourable geographic location, being one of the few destinations on the east coast of Australia.

---

\(^2\) Tourist destination regions are defined as “places where a tourist’s main visiting activity occurs” (Leiper, 2004, p. 51).
with north-facing beaches which provide safe bathing and excellent surfing conditions (M. Lawrence, 2005). Byron Shire is commonly perceived as a “lifestyle or creative region” and has experienced significant tourism growth and demographic, cultural and economic changes over the years (Gibson & Connell, cited in M. Lawrence, 2005, p. 86). It is estimated that an annual average of 1.5 million tourists visit Byron Bay with an expenditure of $426 million (Tourism Research Australia, 2015). Of these, over 180,000 are international visitors and 62% are young overseas travellers between the ages of 20 and 30 years (see Table 1.1).

The abundance of natural resources, coupled with the potential for an alternative lifestyle and cultural diversity of the communities, have contributed to the popularity of the region both as a domestic and international tourist destination. Tourism has, in fact, been a major catalyst for the region’s economic growth and development since the 1980s (M. Lawrence, 2005). As such, Byron Shire provides a rich research context in which to explore how childhood is experienced in a popular tourist location.
### Table 1.1 Visitor Summary 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Domestic overnight</th>
<th>International</th>
<th>Domestic day trip</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>601,940</td>
<td>180,710</td>
<td>766,300</td>
<td>1,548,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nights</td>
<td>2,086,940</td>
<td>1,270,960</td>
<td></td>
<td>3,357,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Av night stay</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>^</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>20-24 (19%)</td>
<td>20-24 (36%)</td>
<td>25-29 (25%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-34 (15%)</td>
<td>25-29 (26%)</td>
<td>55+ (19%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55+ (12%)</td>
<td>15-19 (10%)</td>
<td>20-24 (15%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Est spend ($m)</td>
<td>$282 M</td>
<td>$68 M</td>
<td>$76 M</td>
<td>$426 M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life-cycle</td>
<td>Families with children (28%)</td>
<td>Young people, 20-30yrs (62%)</td>
<td>Families with children (26%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DINK (21%)</td>
<td>Single (70%)</td>
<td>DINK (26%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Singles (33%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Singles (22%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backpackers</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tourism Research Australia (2015)

### Historical evolution of the visitor economy

Byron Bay was originally home to the Bundjalung Aboriginal people and was referred to as Cavanba or meeting place (Wray, Laing, & Voigt, 2010). The region is home to a rich indigenous cultural history dating back 22,000 years. The Bundjalung and Arakwal people call this area home and are Aboriginal Traditional Custodians of the Byron Bay district (Arakwal People of Byron, n.d., p. para. 1). Although Byron Bay was first named by Captain Cook in 1770 after Admiral John Byron, it was not until the 1850s that the first white settlers started to populate the area, with cedar logging being the main activity (Ryan & Smith, 2001). Gradually more settlers arrived to the area and land was further cleared for crops including maize and sugar cane.

From the 1880s, Byron Shire gradually developed a wealthy economy including dairy, meat, fishing and sand mining (M. Lawrence, 2005). Following the opening of the Caper Byron lighthouse in 1901, Byron Bay became known as the most easterly point in Australia and started to gain prominence for its beautiful beaches and unique flora and fauna (M. Lawrence, 2005). From the 1970s an influx of new people arrived into the area and contributed to the formation of a “surf-oriented lifestyle” (M. Lawrence, 2005). Kijas (2003) explains how “population growth rates soared
way above state and national averages, as new patterns of internal migration from alternative lifestylers...retirees, young families and hobby farmers brought large numbers of new settlers to the region” (p.21).

According to C. Gibson (2002a), the decision in 1972 to host the prominent alternative lifestyle event, the Aquarius Festival, in the nearby hinterland village of Nimbin, was a major catalyst to the migration trends of the area which have continued over the years with overall population growth rates three times the national average. This process of “counterurbanisation” peaked in the 1970s and 1980s fuelled by the alternative counter-culture movement of migrants from the cities to the North Coast hinterland and Byron Bay (Kijas, 2002, p. 5).

The extensive coastal area and the unique natural and scenic beauty of the region have been contributing factors to the development of a thriving tourism industry particularly in and around Byron Bay (M. Lawrence, 2005). The first motels and camping grounds were developed in the 1970s to cater for the growing number of visitors to the area (M. Lawrence, 2005). In the 1980s, Byron Shire began to attract developers which further contributed to the transformation of Byron Bay and surrounding areas from its “seaside industrial character” to a kind of “ersatz yuppie, ‘waxhead’ (surfie) and hippie paradise” (P. Murphy, 2002, p. 5).

C. Gibson (2002a) argues that the Far North Coast region has seen a real shift in regional identity from dairy, fishing and sugar harvesting to “lifestyle” or “alternative” (p. 2) images connected to the many creative industries present in the area such as the music and arts industries, “gourmet” agricultural production and the many tourism and recreational services. The gentrification process in and around the township of Byron Bay was cause for dramatic change in the style of the towns and socio-cultural fabric of the communities in the area (M. Lawrence, 2005; P. Murphy, 2002).

The late 1980s and 1990s was the time of the building development for the Byron Shire area with an increase of over 300% in the number of new developments lodged through the Byron Shire Council (Green, 2000). M. Lawrence (2005) argues that this development activity resulted in further diversification of accommodation with an
increase of beds in the backpacker hostel category from 60 to 700 for the ten-year period to 1995. There was also a rise in the development of guesthouses, bed and breakfast establishments, up-market accommodation and luxury apartments (Wray et al., 2010). Byron Shire soon became known as a cultural destination particularly during the 1990s when an “eclectic mix…of innovative retail and hospitality based entrepreneurial ventures” where established in Byron Bay Central Business District (M. Lawrence, 2005, p. 77).

A variety of festivals were also established in and around Byron Bay at this time. These festivals, as well as the burgeoning creative industries which found fertile ground in the Byron Shire, contributed to establishing the region as a cultural tourist destination both nationally and internationally. Music, and, since the 1990s, film, have played an important role in the accumulation of cultural capital with the total “creative” industries accounting for 4.1% of the local workforce and approximately 3500 jobs in the Northern Rivers (C. Gibson, 2002a, p. 9).

According to M. Lawrence (2005), the link between the growth of arts and music events and the growth of the tourism industry in Byron Shire is apparent, with Byron Bay establishing itself as an internationally-renown destination among the global backpacker network with other destinations such as Ibiza, Bali and Goa. Development of entertainment venues and nightclubs in the 1990s has also contributed to a “party” image of the town. The “nocturnal economy” is a significant draw card both among domestic weekenders and international backpackers (Wray et al., 2010). Since the 1990s, Byron Shire has also earned a reputation as a health and wellness destination with an increasing and diverse range of beauty, health, wellness and spiritual services including new age shops, alternative medicine practices, and yoga and spiritual retreats (Laing et al., 2010; Wray et al., 2010).

The migration waves and the growing visitor economy have according to C. Gibson (2002a) created new forms of cultural production and consumption which are reflected in “new articulations of regional identity” (p. 2). As such, Byron Shire embodies the socio-cultural changes that take place in a host community due to tourism and provides a rich and interesting research context for exploring young people’s experiences of life in a tourist destination.
Socio-cultural context

Byron Shire is home to an eclectic and multicultural mix of residents or as Wray et al. (2010) refers to “subcultural groups” including “surfers, alternative lifestyle groups, religious sects, unemployed on social security” and “the wealthy seeking a more peaceful lifestyle” (p. 160). The socio-cultural fabric of the communities in the area has changed and developed substantially due to the historical evolution of the area from rural/farming area to a predominantly service/tourism industry. The wave of settlers have brought with them philosophies connected to “vegetarianism, eastern religious practices such as meditation, music and other creative expression” (H. Wilson, 2003, p. 4).

The socio-cultural values and practices that make this region so unique have now become consumable aspects and drawcards for visiting tourists. M. Lawrence (2005) argues the strong concern for the environment, and strong sense of place among residents of the Byron Shire, is a direct consequence of the consumption-oriented tourism industry prevalent in the area. With its legacy of environmental conservation and local activism values of the 1970s, Tatray (2002) describes the Byron Shire as “a cultural laboratory for an emerging worldview and a new way of doing business and government that reflects a new ecological paradigm” (p. 131).

The region is characterised by the presence of vocal community groups that have formed over the years to protect the environment and safeguard locals from the neoliberal forces of tourism development (Essex & Brown, 1997; M. Lawrence, 2005). Some of these groups include the Byron Environment and Conservation (BEACON), the Victims of Holiday Letting (VOHL), Byron Residents Group, Sunrise Residents Group, Suffolk Park Residents Group and Byron Young Residents Alliance (BYRA).

The strongest debates and concerns in the area have been focused precisely on tourism development. The rise in the demand for residential properties and the lack of affordable housing has forced most families, and in particular lower income and single parent families, to move out (C. Gibson, 2002a). Research undertaken by Green (2000) found that tourism and residential development in Byron Bay are threatening the very uniqueness of the town’s character and are causing a reduced
sense of community among residents. When the permanent population more than triples in the peak summer holiday season, this places substantial demand on water, sewerage, waste collection and other community services (Stokes, 2008).

Since 1998 when the first Tourism Capacity Study was commissioned, Byron Shire Council gradually worked towards the implementation of sustainable tourism policies and practices which culminated in 2008 with the development of the Byron Shire Tourism Management Plan that was to guide the future development of tourism in the region for the next 10 years (Wray, 2009). Tourism management problems have not, however, subsided and have developed among residents a strong concern for the environment and a strong sense of place (M. Lawrence, 2005). Brown’s (1992) study on community attitudes towards tourism reveals that among the key aspects of life in the Byron Shire that residents valued are “the unique sense of place” and the “relaxed atmosphere”. Fredline, Tideswell, and Lee (2005) also argue that 60% of Byron Bay’s residents believed that tourism had a negative impact on their personal quality of life and on the community as a whole.

More recently, Wray (2009, 2011) reported that the increased popularity of Byron Bay as a tourist destination and a place to live had continued to place strains on the town’s infrastructure and service facilities, and had increased concerns among residents. Recent studies also point to the negative perceptions towards the local tourism industry felt by residents (Buckley, 2008; Buultjens, White, & Neale, 2012; Fredline et al., 2005). There is evidence that some residents leave the Byron Shire at peak times (e.g. Schoolies, Christmas-New Year and Easter) to “escape the noise, traffic congestion and violence associated with alcohol abuse” (McLeod, Nolan, & Bartholomew, 2008, p. 22).

Although the eclectic and vibrant socio-cultural fabric of the communities in the Byron Shire is the main drawcard for people visiting the area, H. Wilson (2003) argues that residents are “equally aware of the well-known spiral effect of loving a place to death” as the increased visitation numbers mean increased pressures on land and resources, and increasingly “social divisions” (p. 9).
Demographic profile

The resident population of Byron Shire was 24,674 at the last census (ABS, 2011a), with 6,506 residing in Byron Bay (ABS, 2011b). Regional Development Australia has forecasted the Northern Rivers to be the fastest growing region in NSW during the next 20 years, with 1.2% growth per annum (0.4% above the state average) and an extra 76,000 people from 2007 to 2027 (RDA-NR, 2013b). Based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2011a) census, Byron Bay local government area (LGA) has, however, a number of issues including: higher rates of underemployment (42% part-time employment compared to the NSW average of 28.2%); unemployment levels that continue to be high (8.5% unemployed compared to the NSW average of 5.9%); a high proportion of single parent families (22.7% one-parent families compared to the NSW average of 16.3%); low income levels ($885 median weekly income per household compared to the NSW average of $1,237); and housing stress ($350 median weekly rent compared to the NSW average of $300).

Among these socio-cultural challenges Byron Shire is also facing a declining youth population, with 10% of its population aged between of 15 and 24 years compared to the Australian average of 12.3% and the New South Wales average of 12.9% (ABS, 2011a). Wray (2009) suggests that the lack of educational and vocational opportunities for young people and the ageing of the population may be the cause of such migration losses. Furthermore, the Byron Shire Council Youth Strategy and Action Plan confirmed a decline in the youth population and identified a number of significant issues and challenges faced by youth in Byron Shire, including: high unemployment rates, discrimination, homelessness and juvenile crime associated with alcohol and substance use (Byron Shire Council, 2011b).

In 2011, the Northern Rivers Social Development Council, in collaboration with the Northern Rivers Youth Advisory Council, conducted a youth census to explore important socio-demographic characteristics of the youth population in the area as well as identify important issues and concerns for youth growing up in the Northern Rivers area. The study revealed that the majority of young people living in the area are between 14 and 16 years of age (37.8%) and between 17 and 18 years of age.
(38%) (NRSDC, 2012, p. 8). This percentage drastically drops among the 19-21 age group (9.9%) and the 22-25 age group (7.5%).

For those young people who reported to be employed, over 50% of respondents indicated they work casually and 45% indicated they do unpaid work at home or for other family members (NRSDC, 2012, p. 18). For those young people who are employed the top three industries included: Retail (45%); hospitality and tourism (36%); and social and community services (13%).

The background to the research reveals a considerable gap in knowledge and understanding of young people’s views and experiences of growing up in a tourist community. The significance of this is amplified in the context of a tourist destination like Byron Shire, which, as the discussion above has highlighted, has the added distinctive feature of undergoing considerable socio-cultural changes in a relatively short time span.

**RESEARCH AIM AND QUESTIONS**

The aim of this research is to explore the lived experience of young people (between the ages of 10 and 24 years) residing in the Byron Shire. Specifically, this research is interested in how young people negotiate a sense of identity and belonging in regions where tourism is the main economy. As such, it seeks to address the lack of research on young people’s experiences of growing up in host communities. Furthermore in line with the critical approach (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Freire, 1970; hooks, 1994; Kelly & Kamp, 2015; Pritchard, Morgan, & Ateljevic, 2011), the research seeks to facilitate the emergence of young people’s voices within tourism research. The specific research questions guiding the study are:

1. How do young people perceive that growing up in a tourist destination affects their lives including their sense of identity and belonging?

2. How do adults who work with young people perceive the experience of growing up in the Byron Shire?
3. How does participatory research with young people challenge and extend understandings of their lived experience of growing up in a tourist destination?

From the outset, the research involved extensive consultation with a group of young residents who form part of the Byron Youth Council to consolidate important methodological aspects of the project. Fieldwork was then carried out over 12 months and included a range of methods such as secondary data analysis (e.g. historical documents, newspaper articles, key policies and statistical data), in-depth interviews (n=14 adult youth workers; n=6 young people), focus groups (14n=68), and two participatory projects. Prolonged engagement in the field facilitated a deeper and more nuanced understanding of young people’s lived experiences as well as creating the opportunity for an authentic involvement of young people in the participatory projects.

**SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This research is significant in that it provides rich insight into the views and experiences of young people who grow up in a tourist destination. In doing so, it not only addresses a significant gap in much tourism research to date but also challenges existing disciplinary boundaries by bringing tourism studies into dialogue with childhood studies. It does this within a broader anthropological approach enabling deeper exploration of the social and cultural issues shaping young people’s lives. Importantly, the research also engages a critical and transformative lens that seeks to profile the voices of a previously marginalised population.

The study also makes a significant methodological contribution by employing participatory methods. Actively engaging young people in the research process offers a unique and deeper insight into young people’s lived experiences and provides the potential for empowering young people to bring about positive transformational change in their lives and communities (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010a; Kellett, 2005). Participatory research with children and young people is rarely employed in tourism research (Anglin, 2014; Buzinde & Manuel-
Navarrete, 2013). This study contributes to making participatory methods more accessible in researching social issues related to childhood and tourism.

The study also has important implications for local government policy and planning to inform sustainable tourism planning and youth development programs. Policies and programs should be geared specifically towards enhancing the positive and decreasing the negative influences of tourism in the community (Wray, 2009) and aim to foster an environment where young people are consulted and valued (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2011). Focusing on the needs of young people growing up in socially, culturally and economically complex communities – such as tourist destinations – is crucial to the wellbeing of children and young people.

THESIS OUTLINE

This thesis explores the lived experiences of young people growing up in a tourist destination paying particular attention to how they negotiate a sense of identity and belonging. Following from this Introductory Chapter, I overview the other six chapters in the thesis.

Chapter Two presents a review of the literature and the interdisciplinary interests that inform the study. In order to build synergies between two broad interdisciplinary fields of inquiry (tourism studies and childhood studies), the research adopts a transdisciplinary approach which allows for movement between and beyond disciplinary boundaries (R. J. Lawrence, 2010). The relationship between a child’s development and the environmental influences in the community, which contribute to shaping his/her identity, is a complex or “wicked” problem which requires a creative approach that transcends the disciplinary barriers of single or multiple disciplinary research (Brown, Deane, Harris, & Russell, 2010).

The study is also underpinned by anthropological interests in the social and cultural dynamics of young people’s lived experiences; as such, it employs socio-cultural theory to explore these issues (A. B. Smith & Ballard, 1998; A. B. Smith & Bjerke, 2009; A. B. Smith, Taylor, & Gollop, 2000). Further, the study is conceptually
located within the broader paradigm of the sociology of childhood and the related field of childhood studies and their emphasis on young people’s active and agentive role in the construction of their social world (Rogoff, 2003, 2008; A. B. Smith & Ballard, 1998; Woodhead, 2008). This study thus aims to ensure children and young people’s competence and capability in expressing their views is reflected in research about their lives (James & Prout, 1997; Woodhead, 2008).

The chapter draws attention to the absence of young people under the age of 18 years in previous tourism studies arguing that they are an “under-represented”, “forgotten” and even “voiceless population” (Canosa & Wray, 2013; Poria & Timothy, 2014; Small, 2008; Wu, 2012). In this chapter, I also review literature related to two key constructs, identity and belonging. As identities are actively and reflexively formed, and they often intersect with race, gender, class and age (Furlong, 2013), I focus on the narratives and stories told by young people as essential expressions of their sense of identity and belonging (Thomson, 2007a).

In Chapter Three, I establish the ontological and epistemological stance of this study, the critical or transformative worldview (Creswell, 2014). The ontological basis of this study lies in the view that reality is shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, gender and (to which I add) age-specific values, all of which are underpinned by power dynamics (Pritchard et al., 2011). This project is thus a product of its times and mirrors the eighth moment research described by Denzin and Lincoln (2011b) as it provides a context for critical conversations about democracy, justice, freedom, empowerment and community participation.

The chapter also draws attention to the positivist legacy which has dominated – and perhaps still dominates – the field of community-focused tourism research and which has precluded the involvement of young people in the research process (Canosa et al., 2016). The general lack of understanding of the socio-cultural, political and environmental context in which perceptions about tourism are formed in host communities, as well as the lack of engagement with wider theoretical and methodological innovation and progress in other social sciences, has resulted in a stale and repetitive reproduction of quantitative-based studies which runs the risk of
adding little knowledge to, and understanding of, the deeper implications of tourism development for host communities (Deery et al., 2012; Sharpley, 2014).

As such, this research takes a qualitative, ethnographic and participatory approach and is influenced by seminal authors such as Freire (1970) and hooks (1994); the critical turn in tourism research (Higgins-Desbiolles & Whyte, 2013; Pritchard et al., 2011) and the childhood studies’ paradigm (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010b; Kellett, 2011; Prout & James, 1997). I also employ reflexivity as a conscious ethical strategy reflecting on my own subjectivity and its implications for the research process. Critical ethnography and participatory methods are employed as methodological tools to respond to the social inequality of the absence of young people’s voices in tourism research (Berg, 2009). Chapter Three also describes in detail the fieldwork methods and ethical considerations of the study.

In Chapter Four, I present the findings from the interviews and focus groups with 74 young people between the ages of 10 and 24 years. These findings provide insight into the lived experiences of young people growing up in the Byron Shire and attempt to address Research Question One of the study. Findings highlight the multiple constructions and interpretations of childhood in a tourist destination. Young people’s narratives fluctuate between experiences of nature and an idyllic childhood to experiences of alienation and a perceived lack of safety due to the popularity of the region as a tourist destination. The chapter, however, also highlights the active and agentive role that young people have in negotiating identity and belonging in their community.

Chapter Five explores adults’ perceptions of the issues that young people face growing up in the Byron Shire and addresses Research Question Two. Whereas findings in this chapter have many similarities with the findings from the interviews and focus groups with young people, they also highlight how adults foregrounded the socio-cultural forces which shape the experience of childhood and the threats and dangers that young people face growing up in a tourist destination. Adults thus have more of a “structural” view of childhood compared to young people’s experiences of “agency” in their community. Structuring the findings chapters to keep the integrity
of the different stakeholder voices means there is necessarily some overlap in the issues reported.

In Chapter Six, I explore how this agency is enacted when young people are invited to participate as co-researchers. Through participatory and visual methodologies the chapter outlines some of the benefits of co-researching with young people. In so doing, it addresses Research Question Three of the study by reflecting on the opportunity that participatory research with children provides for delving deeper into their experiences, views and opinions. The chapter also describes some of the ethical complexities of participatory methods and the need for a reflexive engagement in the field. I conclude the chapter by reflecting on my own subjectivity as a “mother in the field” and the embodied and relational nature of research.

The thesis concludes in Chapter Seven by integrating the findings from the previous three chapters and discussing their overall meaning in relation to existing literature. The contribution of the thesis is also presented with a number of implications for future research.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

This review of relevant literature is structured in two parts. The first part provides an analysis of how tourism has come to be a potent force of social change for residents of host communities (i.e. a structural view). Here, a historical account is presented of the theoretical and empirical developments in tourism community research tracing its origins back to the first anthropological studies on culture contact in host communities. The role that young people have played in tourism community research is then critically reviewed.

In the second part of the chapter, I focus on an appreciation of human agency in processes of social and cultural transformation (i.e. an agentive view). Departing from the traditional roots of Marxist critical theory which is centred around power structures and their impact on society, the review of literature takes a transformative critical approach highlighting the role of human agency. As such, the second part of the literature review focuses on young people as agents of social and cultural change.

To conclude, the guiding theory (socio-cultural theory) and key constructs underpinning the thesis (identity and belonging) are discussed. Given this study takes a transdisciplinary approach – seeking to build synergies between tourism, anthropology and childhood studies – such theoretical framing offers considerable potential for understanding the experiences of growing up in a premier tourist destination.
A TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

This study takes a transdisciplinary approach and is positioned at the nexus of two fields of inquiry, despite broader anthropological interests (see Figure 2.1). The overarching aim of the research is to explore the lived experience of young people growing up in a tourist destination. The study is interested in whether and how socio-cultural influences of tourism shape the lives of young people, in particular, identity and felt sense of belonging. This is indeed a complex or wicked problem that not only requires the respectful participation of young people but also necessitates a creative and imaginative approach that cannot be confined to single or multiple disciplinary views (Brown et al., 2010; R. J. Lawrence, 2010). Drawing together two interdisciplinary fields of research (tourism studies and childhood studies) requires a new approach which transcends the kind of knowledge boundaries inherent in multidisciplinary and, to a lesser extent, interdisciplinary research.

Figure 2.1: Transdisciplinary Approach
During the past decade there has been a growing interest in “transdisciplinary” approaches to social science research. Considerable conceptual effort has been spent on theorising and distinguishing this approach from more familiar research practices (e.g. disciplinary; multi and interdisciplinary research). The aim of transdisciplinary inquiry is to understand “wicked” problems or complex issues “for which there can be no final solution, since any resolution generates further issues, and where solutions are not true or false or good or bad, but the best that can be done at the time” (Brown et al., 2010, p. 4).

Moreover, a transdisciplinary approach is a holistic approach that draws upon the ideas and methods of multiple disciplines or fields of research to extend our knowledge beyond any single discipline and to create new, integrative and transformative solutions (Rosenfield, 1992; Russell, Wickson, & Carew, 2008; Wickson, Carew, & Russell, 2006). Nevertheless, transdisciplinary research is not intended to reject or replace existing disciplinary approaches, but is, on the contrary, “a way of capitalizing on the disciplinary competencies acquired and of enabling them to interact” (Darbellay, 2016, p. 370). As such bringing into dialogue and drawing on tourism and childhood studies – which are both informed by multiple disciplines (Jafari & Ritchie, 1981; Leiper, 1981; Prout & James, 1997; Tribe, 2004) – opens up considerable potential for better understanding both tourism and childhood. The “inquiry-driven” nature of transdisciplinary research stands in stark contrast to more conventional discipline-driven questions which emerge from the pre-existing agenda of a particular discipline (Montuori, 2010, p. 127).

This study is very much inquiry-driven and has emerged from real life situations, including my own personal experience of growing up in a tourist destination (Positano, Italy). The approach I have taken aims to explore new ways of thinking about how young people are affected by tourism; to steer away from just mixing different theories from different disciplines, to transcending those theories and boundaries to include other knowledges (Canosa, Wilson, & Graham, 2017; Coles, Hall, & Duval, 2005; Coles, Hall, & Duval, 2006; Hollinshead, 2010). As Montuori (2010) argues both “individuals and knowledge are embodied and embedded, not isolated free-floating cogitos” (p. 123); thus transdisciplinary inquiry recognises the
role of the researcher as an active participant of the world (Montuori, 2010, p. 123). For the purpose of this study, I draw on Brown et al.’s (2010) definition of “open transdisciplinarity”:

Open transdisciplinary inquiry aims to be both synoptic and synergistic. A synoptic inquiry seeks to understand a whole through the insights of each of the component parts…a synergistic inquiry seeks to establish a relationship between the parts capable of producing a fresh whole, one that none of the parts could have achieved alone. (p. 76)

TOURISM STUDIES: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACH

In order to understand what progress has been made in community research, we first need to explore the historical developments of previous published work in this area, assuming this reflects evolving scholarly concerns and that “the patterns detected are meaningful trends rather than random fluctuations” (Pearce 2013, p. 58). This section begins with a historical overview of the theoretical developments, as well as empirical progress, in the field of community research in tourism. As the socio-cultural influences of tourism on host communities were first explored by anthropologists (Greenwood, 1972; Nuñez, 1963), I begin with an overview of the first anthropological studies on culture contact in host communities.

A historical review of communities in tourism research

Although anthropologists may have been relatively slow to engage in the study of tourism, today tourism has found a prominent place at the heart of anthropological scholarship (Burns, 2004; Leite & Graburn, 2009; Leite & Swain, 2015; Nash & Smith, 1991; Nuñez, 1989; Scott & Selwyn, 2010). Anthropology’s unique contribution to tourism lies in the way social phenomena are analysed in a holistic way and based on ethnographic methodologies. As Leite and Graburn (2009) argue, an anthropological approach to tourism provides an “experiential immersion…an understanding of how the phenomenon under study fits into broader systems of
meaning and action” (p. 36). This unique approach has opened up new, fresh and unconventional ways of knowing and understanding tourism phenomena which have, over the years, been explored in a variety of tourism-focused anthropological studies (Weiler, Moyle, & McLennan, 2012).

The first two decades of anthropological interest in the study of tourism were focused primarily on the consequences of tourism development for host communities (Leite & Graburn, 2009). Nash’s (1977) concept of tourism as a “neo-imperialist force” and Nuñez’s (1989) concern for what he referred to as the “cocalization” of native people are examples of the critiques to the popular view of tourism as a panacea for the economic problems of developing nations. Tourism, in this sense, was seen by these researchers as a perpetuation of a colonial legacy (C. M. Hall & Tucker, 2004). Although most of these studies were “spin-offs” from other research and happened quite by chance whilst doing ethnographic fieldwork in particular locations (Boissevain, 1978; Graburn, 1976; Nash, 2007), it is at this particular point in time that tourism started to be explored as a force of social, cultural, economic and environmental change.

One of the first – and subsequently most researched – aspects of the tourism phenomenon, were the socio-cultural impacts of tourism, based on the culture contact or acculturation model put forward by Nuñez (1963). Nash (2007) argues that from this acculturative or development point of view, tourism was viewed as a powerful force of change. Acculturation theory was first applied in a tourism context by Nuñez (1963) in his study on the impacts of tourism in a Mexican village. He argued that when two or more cultures come into contact a process of borrowing occurs and the host society is usually more prone to assimilate the cultural traits of the visiting culture.

Historically, anthropologists have been interested in the effects of cultural contact between subordinate and dominant cultures, and in the case of tourism, between hosts and guests. In these early days, tourism was seen as an imperialistic force impacting on local culture. As acculturation theory was explored in more depth in a tourism context, anthropologists started to understand that to fully comprehend the phenomenon both parties (the tourist and the host) must be examined “within the
situational nature of contact” (Nuñez, 1989, p. 267). This sparked an ongoing interest in exploring the interactions and social exchanges between hosts and guests and the subsequent perceptions and attitudes towards tourism held by residents of host communities (Ap, 1992; King, Pizam, & Milman, 1993; Long & Kayat, 2011; Moyle et al., 2013; Tovar & Lockwood, 2008).

By the mid-1980s a small group of sociologists and anthropologists (which later developed into an international network through the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, CNRS), started to explore international tourism as an agent of social change and a catalyst for the conservation and valorisation of identities and cultures (Lanfant et al., 1995). By proposing the link between identity, change and tourism, these social scientists sought to recognise the often “constructive aspect” of the changes brought about by tourism (Nash & Smith, 1991, p. 15).

These theoretical innovations developed under the wave of political and Marxist critiques which were taking place within the broader social sciences and which were later associated with the postmodern and more specifically, the poststructuralist phase in anthropology (Ortner, 1984). Anthropologists’ overriding concern with the study of pre-capitalist societies as whole and bounded entities was accountable for the visible neglect of wider globalising forces such as tourism (Rapport & Dawson, 1998). At this time there was a conscious realisation that communities and societies are not immune to outside contact and historical processes of change (Canosa, 2014).

Some researchers suggested that communities go through a series of reactions to tourism, which develop in a sequential manner (Doxey, 1975). According to Doxey (1975), the degree of resident irritation would vary from euphoria in the initial stages, when tourists are welcomed to the area, through to apathy and irritation as tourist numbers rise, and finally to antagonism and xenophobia – the intense dislike of outsiders and foreigners. This sequential display of feelings towards tourists coincides, according to Doxey (1975), with an increase in visitation numbers as the destination reaches and surpasses its social carrying capacity.
Others followed in this line, suggesting residents of host communities may display a wide range of behavioural responses to tourism, which can either be positive or negative, and active or passive (R. W. Butler, 1975). According to R. W. Butler’s (1975) model, the combination of responses could occur concurrently and in any direction from positive to negative and vice versa. This model was seen as being more flexible compared to Doxey’s (1975) “irritation index”, which was rather unidirectional and implied a certain degree of homogeneity of attitudes among residents of a host community.

Likewise, Dogan (1989) identified several strategies that residents adopt to cope with the pressures of tourism. According to his model, residents of host communities show resistance when they are essentially against any form of tourism. Boundary maintenance and retreatism are instead strategies employed by residents to set boundaries or avoid contact with foreigners and generally result in the community accepting tourism without resistance or negative feelings. Finally, according to Dogan (1989) revitalisation occurs when tourism encourages communities to revive traditional arts and ceremonies, which makes way to adoption, when community members adopt new attitudes and customs introduced by tourists. Dogan (1989) argued, however, that these forms of adjustment are often not distinct; communities may adopt a variety of different strategies depending in part on social and cultural differences.

In a similar fashion, Boissevain’s (1979, 1996) extended ethnographic research on the Island of Malta explored how host communities actively and creatively respond to the pressures of tourism. He presented five strategies which locals employ to cope with tourism. The first is covert resistance which is a subtle strategy to counteract the unequal relationship between the wealthy and influential tourist and the low paid tourism worker. Examples of this covert, low-key resistance are “the sulking, grumbling, obstruction, gossip, ridicule, and surreptitious insults directed by the weak at the more powerful” (Boissevain, 1996, p. 14).
Hiding and fencing are other strategies to create “insider-only” spaces and exclude tourists from private areas of the community. Finally, Boissevain discussed two other coping strategies which are organised protest and aggression. These strategies are overt attempts to deal with the pressure of tourism and often result in violence against tourists. The coping strategies described by these researchers highlight the creative ways in which host communities respond to the social changes caused by, but not limited to, tourism.

Since these early studies, there has been a substantial shift in anthropological assumptions. Moving from a more pessimistic view of tourism as an exogenous force impacting and disrupting host communities, researchers have embraced a more balanced view of tourism as one among other agents of socio-cultural change. Recent studies have, more or less abandoned the “impact” model of tourism for its simplicity (Boissevain, 1996; Castañeda, 1996; Hollinshead, 2009; Lanfant et al., 1995; Leite & Graburn, 2009; Meethan, 2001; Picard, 2007a; Sampaio et al., 2014). Picard (2007b) argues that:

Indeed, the mere fact of talking about the “impact” of tourism entailed something of a ballistic vision, that led to perceiving the so-called host society as a target struck by a projective, like an inert object passively subjected to external factors of change, which experts were expected to assess by means of a cost-benefit analysis, involving some sort of trade-off between cultural and economic values. (p. 173)

Local communities may respond to change and tourism in a transformative way. In Leite and Graburn’s (2009) words, “rather than being experienced as an external force impinging on otherwise pristine local lifeways…tourists and the tourism industry at large can become an integral part of local culture” (p. 40). Importantly, however, anthropologists have moved away from an impact model of tourism towards a more holistic approach which recognises the active and creative role of locals in shaping their social context (Babb, 2004; Cone, 1995; Doorne, Ateljevic, & Bai, 2003; McGibbon, 1999; Silverman, 2000; Stronza, 2001).
Castañeda’s (1996) anthropological research in Yucatan, Mexico, for example, challenges the notion of “tourism impact” moving towards a new understanding of tourism as “interwoven within the social fabric of the regional and local communities” (p. 77). Castañeda (2012) argues that from a moral view of tourism as essentially either “good” or “bad”, there is a need to realise that “tourism does not create uniform or monolithic consequences” (p. 47) but that the voices of all stakeholders in a host community need to be heard. Likewise Babb’s (2004) research in Nicaragua reveals that often tourism is a vehicle for the refashioning of a country’s image and preservation of its revolutionary past.

Anthropological studies by Long and Kindon (1997) and Weil (1995, 2007) stress the complex patterns of change in the livelihoods of host communities and the active role residents play in these transitioning phases. Long and Kindon (1997), for example, argue that women in several Balinese villages are actively pursuing new avenues of work and increasing their status in society. Rather than changing cultural traditions, however, tourism development “is interacting with systems of gender ideology to strengthen and reinforce the status quo” (p. 112). Likewise Weil’s (1995, 2007) research in Costa Rica’s Nicoya Peninsula shows how locals are actively asserting their distinct heritage through ethnic tourism art and driving changes in local livelihoods. Stronza’s (2005) research on community-based ecotourism in the Peruvian Amazon is a further example of the active participation of locals in tourism development and the resulting economic and social benefits, as well as, conservation and stewardship of the fragile ecosystem in the area.

Yet, despite this move forward in the anthropological tradition, it could be argued that researchers in the field of tourism social impact studies still continue to adopt the tourism impact model. Recent work by Deery et al. (2012) shows that most of the tourism literature on host communities continues to identify and measure the negative (e.g. noise, traffic, crime, alcohol-related behavioural problems etc.) and positive impacts of tourism (e.g. economic benefits, employment, community pride etc.) as perceived by residents, often neglecting to explore these issues at a deeper level. As such, Deery et al. (2012) propose a new research agenda which embraces more interpretive and triangular approaches in order “to fully understand the roots of
concerns regarding tourism” (p. 72) from the residents’ perspective. Consequently, the field of tourism social impact studies is in need of new direction which breaks away from the “myth” that tourism is a structural force impacting on passive host communities (McKercher & Prideaux, 2014). Exploring the views and perceptions of local residents is thus vital in understanding how processes of cultural change and transformation occur (E. Chambers, 2010; Sofield, 2003). Although tourism is deeply embedded in the social and cultural fabric of host communities (Leite & Graburn, 2009), tourism research has often been “strangely devoid of local voices” (Stronza, 2001, p. 269).

This study seeks to fill this important gap by bringing into dialogue a field of research arguably in need of rejuvenation (tourism social impact studies), with wider theoretical debates and approaches which position tourism as a potent “worldmaking force” (Hollinshead, 2009). As Hollinshead (2009) argues tourism is a “worldmaking transformer of local places, yet one that yields important creolized or indigenized forms of change, which are as much the product of local dynamism as they are of global processes” (p. 143). Moreover, the total immersion in the community that is usual practice in ethnographic research, allows for a fuller exploration of the perceptions, attitudes, responses and adaptations that occur among young residents of a host community. Anthropology’s long-standing orientation towards an “emic view” and “multivocality” (Bluebond-Langner & Korbin, 2007, p. 241), provides a useful approach for this research.

**Tracing young residents’ voices in tourism research**

The discussion above has highlighted the ways in which tourism is recognised as a powerful force of change for host communities. Many empirical studies on residents’ perceptions argue that tourism has the ability to transform the lives of locals, generating both positive and negative economic, environmental and socio-cultural changes. Yet the focus of these studies has largely been on the perceptions and experiences of adult residents, resulting in an absence of research that examines how young residents view, perceive and adapt to change in their communities (Canosa et al., 2016). As discussed in Chapter One, children and young people have been
considerably under-researched in tourism, and this is particularly the case from a host community perspective. Furthermore, much of the tourism research on children and young people does not rely on data directly generated from them (Poria & Timothy, 2014).

In order to assess to what extent children and young people have been marginalised in tourism research, it is important to critically analyse the role of young residents in that research. To achieve this objective, an inventory of previous studies that focused on young residents in tourism research was compiled and analysed. In total, 30 studies were identified from a search of tourism and anthropological literature that made explicit reference to young people in the research findings. Following this, building on a critical tourism analysis framework developed by Nielsen and Wilson (2012) in the area of indigenous tourism, articles focused on young people were classified into three distinct categories: silent, acknowledged and youth-focused. The intent of this analysis is to identify the presence, role and voice of young residents in tourism research from a critical and interpretive ontology.

Studies in the tourism and anthropological literature were selected based on the use of the keywords “young people”, “youth” or “child” and “tourism”. The term “young people” thus has multiple meanings according to the study context to which it refers. In some studies “youth” or “young” refers to residents over the age of 18 (between 18 and 30 years of age), and in other studies it refers to individuals under the age of 18 (with 18 years seen by these researchers as a clear threshold into “adulthood”). Table 2.1 provides an overview of these positions but is by no means comprehensive and/or exhaustive; selected studies are used only as examples to best describe each position.
Table 2.1: A Critical Typology of Young Residents’ Voice in Tourism Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Role of Young Residents</th>
<th>Research Focus</th>
<th>Select Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silent</td>
<td>Young people are referred to and often the negative impacts of tourism on their lives are highlighted. Young people remain invisible and their voices are not included.</td>
<td>Early anthropological fieldwork in developing countries; tourism desktop/review research.</td>
<td>Smith, 1977; Swain, 1977; Boissevain, 1978; Cohen, 1982; Matheson &amp; Wall, 1982; Murphy, 1985; Leiper, 1995; Witt, 1991.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledged</td>
<td>Young people are identified but age is only used as a demographic predictor of attitudes and perceptions towards tourism. Young people’s involvement and voice is still not present. Most studies refer to young people aged 18 and over.</td>
<td>Social impacts of tourism studies; studies on residents’ attitudes and perceptions towards tourism.</td>
<td>Haralambopoulos &amp; Pozzoli, 1996; Brunt &amp; Courtney, 1999; Chen, 2000; Cui &amp; Ryan, 2008; Heib &amp; Vogt, 2008; Tøwar &amp; Lockwood, 2008; Ninko &amp; Ramkissoon, 2010; Long and Kayal, 2011.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth-focused</td>
<td>Young people are the focus of the study and their voices are sometimes included but their involvement is still limited. The majority of these studies also refer to 18 year olds and above.</td>
<td>Young people’s attitudes and perceptions towards tourism; identity, place and belonging; citizenship rights and sustainable livelihoods.</td>
<td>Crotts, 1989; Brown, 1992; Giumrelli, 1995; Dahles &amp; Bras, 1999; Canosa, Brown &amp; Bassam, 2001; Goolding et al., 2004; Huberman, 2005; Andreassen, 2008; Facchioli, 2011; Müller, 2012; Wu, 2013; Binuned &amp; Manuel-Navarreres, 2013; Anglin, 2014; Canosa, 2014.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Adapted from Nielsen & Wilson (2012)

The silent phase

The silent position refers to studies that make reference to young people, but their voices are not included and they are not involved in the research process. As shown in Table 2.1 this category primarily includes early anthropological studies in developing nations and tourism desktop and review research. Studies in V. L. Smith’s (1977b) seminal book *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism* are included in this position. These early accounts often discussed the negative impacts of tourism on host communities and the demonstration effects that tourism had on youth.

Both V. L. Smith’s (1977a) study of Eskimo tourism and Swain’s (1977) account of the Kuna women of Panama referred to young members of the community choosing education and formal employment in tourism as an attempt to achieve Western aspirations. Similarly, Boissevain’s (1978) ethnographic study of Maltese culture revealed that young residents were more inclined to emulate tourists’ behaviours, particularly the sexual freedom demonstrated by young foreigners. On the contrary, Cohen’s (1982) study found that tourists’ behaviours (e.g. drug use, naked bathing) infringed upon local customs and offended local residents, particularly young people.
and women in the host community. This resentment often translated into hostility and crime towards tourists.

These early studies stressed the modernising and imperialistic-like forces of tourism on host communities and the subsequent acculturation of young residents (Nash, 1989). A common issue raised in these seminal works was the demonstration effect of modern Western ways of life, leisure and consumption on young indigenous populations. Leiper (2004) defines the demonstration effects of tourism as the display of “foreign cultures, behaviours, attitudes and what is often termed lifestyles” (p. 238) that occurs in front of locals. He further argued that young hosts are particularly susceptible and easily influenced by foreign lifestyles.

These early anthropological accounts were followed by first reviews of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism on host communities (Mathieson & Wall, 1982; P. E. Murphy, 1985). Mathieson and Wall (1982) and P. E. Murphy (1985) argued that young people of traditionally closed societies observed the freedom and material superiority of young travelling Westerners seeking to emulate their lifestyle. As such, research in the silent phase is largely conceptual in nature with the majority of interpretations and conclusions drawn from Western and Eurocentric observations without hearing directly from young people. Moreover, no effort is made to explore issues concerning tourism development from a child perspective.

The acknowledged phase

This category refers to studies that have identified young people as a cohort or subgroup of the population. In such studies, age is generally used as a demographic predictor of attitudes and perceptions towards tourism. The acknowledged position mainly includes empirical and quantitative studies on residents’ perceptions of tourism impacts and although young residents (mainly 18 years of age and older) are identified, their voice and active participation in such studies still remain noticeably absent.

Haralambopoulos and Pizam’s (1996) study on the Greek island of Samos revealed that the increase in job opportunities in the tourism and hospitality industry resulted in a substantial decrease of youth out-migration from the island. This, in turn,
resulted in residents having positive perceptions of tourism development. On the contrary, Brunt and Courtney’s (1999) study on host perceptions of the socio-cultural impacts of tourism in Dawlish (UK), revealed that young, educated people who were not satisfied with the limited employment prospects offered by the tourism industry were choosing to move away.

Studies by Gu and Ryan (2008) in China, and Huh and Vogt (2008) in Alaska, also found that socio-demographic characteristics significantly influenced residents’ perceptions of tourism impacts and their support for tourism development. In these studies, younger residents were more favourably disposed to tourism and supported further tourism development. According to Gu and Ryan (2008) “younger people, being more used to a world of change, may be more tolerant of tourism and its impacts, while those who have been long-term residents might not be” (p. 643).

Chen’s (2000) study in Alaska and Tovar and Lockwood’s (2008) study in Tasmania (Australia) also revealed that young people were more aware and concerned about the effects of tourism on the community’s quality of life. This was due to a perceived increase in the prices of goods, services and rent. Similarly, Nunkoo and Ramkissoon’s (2010) study also found that younger residents in Mauritius were more concerned about the environmental damage of tourism than older residents.

In this phase, referred to by Jafari (2003) as the “knowledge-base” platform, tourism researchers sought to operationalize and measure residents’ perceptions of tourism. There is, however, a notable absence of children and young people under 18 years of age in research samples. Quantitative approaches are also not conducive to the privileging of participants’ voices and young people are not actively involved in the research process.

The youth-focused phase

Research in the youth-focused phase intentionally pursues the views, perceptions and experiences of young people in a tourism context. Young residents are the primary focus of these studies and their voices are often (but not always) included and presented in the findings. Studies of this kind range from anthropological studies to tourism impact studies, and the approach taken is either purely qualitative or mixed
method. An early example of the youth-focused phase is Crick’s (1989) ethnographic study in Sri Lanka. Crick explored how school-aged children growing up in a tourist destination in Sri Lanka perceived the “hippie tourist”, providing an insight into the way tourism was influencing young residents’ lives. Common problems included young people dropping out of school and engaging in activities such as prostitution and drug dealing. In an effort to position the voices of the school-age population more prominently, the author included lengthy quotations that were collected through an essay writing exercise.

Following Crick’s study, N. Brown (1992) in Gambia and Dahles and Bras (1999) in Indonesia both reported on the demonstration effect that Western tourists had on young residents. These authors focused specifically on young male residents exploring their role as “culture brokers” and catalysts for social change in the host community. Young residents working in the informal tourism sector as guides or escorts often deliberately sought romance and entered into sexual relationships with Western female tourists with the intent to improve their financial situation (Dahles & Bras, 1999).

Likewise, Gamradt (1995) and Canosa et al. (2001) explored the developmental/socialisation process of young people living in tourist destinations. Using more child-centred research tools (drawings and open-ended questions) Gamradt’s (1995) study focused on school children’s views and perceptions of tourists in Jamaica, revealing that of the six schools examined, respondents from the schools closer to touristic activities produced more detailed and imaginative drawings of visitors.

Set in an Italian coastal town (Positano), Canosa et al.’s (2001) study found that 16 to 19 year olds were more capable of managing the complex social relations with tourists and adapt to the changes at the beginning of each tourist season compared to younger residents (13-15 years). According to these authors, children and young people may experience a significantly different and unique developmental and socialisation process when growing up in communities where tourism is the main economy.
Although these early studies in the youth-focused typology have focused specifically on young people growing up in host communities, their voice and involvement in the research process is still limited. Recent studies are, however, beginning to delve deeper into the issues faced by young people. These studies often make use of innovative research methods such as the life history approach employed by Möller (2012) in a study on young residents of an international ski destination in Sweden. The study revealed tourism is important for younger residents (20-35 years) both socially and economically.

Likewise, Huberman (2005) employed ethnographic methods to explore how tourism has shaped children’s lives in Banaras, India. Huberman explored the role of children working in the informal tourism service industry, particularly girls between the ages of 8 and 14 years who sell postcards and trinkets to tourists along the riverfront. Although these young people are viewed by adults in the community as embodying the social ills of modern times (consumerism, Westernisation and loss of traditional values), they are actively contributing to the livelihoods of their families and communities. In contrast, Gössling, Schumacher, Morelle, Berger, & Heck’s (2004) study in Madagascar shows that tourists’ monetary donations to street children are potentially detrimental to their livelihoods, placing them in danger of sexual exploitation.

Different theoretical approaches have also been used to explore the issues faced by young people growing up in tourist destinations. Faccioli (2011), for example, employed the concept of “citizenship rights” to prove that young people’s (18-35 years) participation in the decision-making processes of tourism development significantly improved their perceptions of tourism in a mature Alpine destination in Folgaria (Italy). Employing the “sustainable livelihood” approach, Wu and Pearce (2013) argue that young hosts (18 years of age and older) are able to contribute (and in some instances drive) the tourism development process in two villages in China. Based on Lefebvre’s spatial triad, Buzinde and Manuel-Navarrete (2013) made use of child-centred techniques, such as drawing- and writing-based worksheet exercises, to explore how children between 10 and 14 years of age perceive their socio-spatial
surroundings and the boundaries created by enclave resort style accommodation in two Mexican tourist destinations.

The innovative methods and conceptual frameworks used in these youth-focused studies reveal that children and young people are far from passive victims of the modernising impacts of tourism. They are often actively and creatively contributing to community life, and their agency and voice are privileged in the studies discussed in this phase. Similar to the stakeholder position described by Nielsen and Wilson (2012), research in the youth-focused typology still views young residents as objects of investigation rather than collaborators in the research process (Freire, 1970).

Notable exceptions to this include studies that take a collaborative approach to actively engage and include young participants. Through extensive ethnographic fieldwork (Andreassen, 2008), visual ethnography (Canosa, 2014), and photovoice interviews (Anglin, 2014), these studies explore the cultural changes taking place in communities from a child or young person’s perspective. Anglin (2014), for example, argued that creative mediums such as photography provide an opportunity for young people to be actively involved in the research, stimulating in-depth and critical discussion among participants.

As evidenced by the studies discussed, a new phase is in its embryonic stages which will see young people gain increasing agency and control over the research process and presentation of findings. Nevertheless, researchers need to be sensitive to the potential harms and impacts that participating in research may have on children and young people and choose methods that provide opportunities for meaningful outcomes and benefits to the young people involved (Graham, Powell, Taylor, Anderson, & Fitzgerald, 2013; Graham, Powell, & Truscott, 2016; Kellett, 2011).

**A way forward**

This review has traced and critically analysed a range of anthropological and tourism studies where young residents’ presence, role and voice have been classified as *silent, acknowledged* or *youth-focused*. This analysis demonstrates how early studies on host communities focused mainly on the negative impacts of tourism on young
people (e.g. demonstration effects). In the silent phase youth are sometimes mentioned within the broader context of the host community but their role remains marginal and their voices are not included. The main theoretical underpinning of these studies is the “impact model” of tourism (Leite & Graburn, 2009), and although ethnographic methods are employed, the majority of interpretations and conclusions are drawn from Western/Eurocentric observations, and child-centred approaches are seldom used.

The acknowledged stage emerged due to the shift of tourism research into a phase of empirical exploration (knowledge-based platform). During this stage, researchers began measuring residents’ attitudes and perceptions towards tourism and its impacts. In this phase of quantitative investigations, young people are merely referred to as a demographic variable and compared to other age cohorts within the host community to measure and predict support for future tourism development. The impact model of tourism continues to be the main overarching conceptual framework with some studies adopting approaches such as quality of life (Chen, 2000; Tovar & Lockwood, 2008), social exchange theory (Long & Kayat, 2011), and place attachment (Gu & Ryan, 2008). In the acknowledged phase there still exists a noticeable lack of children and young people under the age of 18 years in research samples. In addition, those who are included in research samples (18 years of age and older) are silenced by the standardised modes of knowledge production.

Finally, in the youth-focused phase, young people are the primary focus of investigation. Although their voices often (but not always) emerge in research findings, their involvement in the research process still remains limited. Methodological innovation is evident with studies adopting child-centred approaches such as ethnography, photovoice, drawings, essay writing exercises and collaborative approaches. Theoretical and conceptual advancement is also noticeable with studies adopting identity theories (Andreassen, 2008; Anglin, 2014; Canosa, 2014), spatial theories (Andreassen, 2008; Buzinde & Manuel-Navarrete, 2013), citizenship rights (Faccioli, 2011), and sustainable livelihoods (Wu & Pearce, 2013).
Nevertheless, as demonstrated in Table 2.1, there are only three positions identified. The fourth position, which seems altogether missing in tourism, is what might be called a *youth-driven* phase (see Figure 2.2). This position would see researchers adopt more participatory research methods in order to empower young residents of host communities to conduct and engage in research to effect change in their communities. This current project is located firmly in the *youth-driven* phase since it was designed to be as participatory and inclusive as possible of young people’s perspectives, views and voices.

**Figure 2.2: Transition to a Youth-Driven Approach in Tourism studies**

In locating studies according to the classification provided above, I acknowledge that the process of analysis is always “interpretive, always contingent, always a version or a reading from some theoretical, epistemological or ethical standpoint” (Wetherall, Taylor, & Yates, 2001, p. 384). The way the studies have been classified is thus contingent to my philosophical standpoint. Furthermore, mainly tourism and anthropological studies have been included in this analysis. Taking a broader approach to include studies in the crime and law literature and childhood studies literature would reveal a growing body of knowledge in the area of children’s rights in relation to their exploitation in human trafficking, sex tourism (Ireland, 1993; Miller, 2011; Smolenski, 1995; Walters & Davis, 2011), and orphanage tourism (Carpenter, 2015). As evidenced by the studies discussed, a new phase is emerging. If authentically adopted, the youth-driven phase will see young people actively participating in every stage of the research process. Engaging young residents in participatory and collaborative research has the aim of being an emancipatory process, which ultimately benefits young people and the communities in which they are raised (Kellett, 2004, 2005, 2011).
CHILDHOOD STUDIES

Two key tenets of the childhood studies paradigm on which this study is based are discussed in this section: 1) the social construction of childhood, and 2) the shift towards a child-centred approach which positions children and young people as capable of expressing their own views and experiences. Among the future directions and opportunities for research in the field of childhood studies, Morrow (2011) argues there is a need to “illuminate the interconnectedness of the ‘micro-social’ with the broader socio-political contexts in which the everyday lives of children are played out” (p. 24).

This study thus sets out to bridge the gap between our understanding of the socio-cultural influences of tourism on young people growing up in tourist destinations, and their actual lived experiences. To achieve this, the study draws on socio-cultural theory (Vygotsky, 1978) and the more recent adoption and interpretation by social researchers such as A. B. Smith (A. B. Smith & Ballard, 1998; A. B. Smith & Bjerke, 2009; A. B. Smith et al., 2000), and Rogoff (2003, 2008). The socio-cultural view of children’s development is thus balanced by an understanding of their agentive role in line with the emerging childhood studies paradigm.

Theorising childhood

According to the historian Philippe Ariès, until the fifteenth century children were visibly absent from history (see Clarke, 2004; Morrow, 2011; Valentine, Skelton, & Chambers, 1998). Beyond the period of infancy children were treated as miniature adults, and thus childhood was not considered conceptually different from adulthood. Prout and James (1997) explain that the concept of “childhood” made an appearance when formal education was introduced and the prolonged period of schooling clearly produced boundaries with the adult world, contributing to the formation of the universal notion of childhood.

Morrow (2011) points to the social construction of childhood and the various meanings and ways in which children have been conceptualised throughout history and in different parts of the globe. The term “young people” is often used interchangeably with the term “child”, particularly in policy-related documents. The
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) defines “child” as all those under the age of 18 years, “unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier” (cited in Morrow, 2011, p. 2). This definition acknowledges the social construction and cultural relativity of the term childhood, which may differ according to the particular context, culture or environment.

The study of childhood is a growing field and has been gaining momentum in recent years. Historical approaches to the study suggest that between the late nineteenth century and the beginning of World War I, a growing number of studies concerned with child poverty produced a significant shift in understanding and conceptualising childhood (Clarke, 2004; Kehily, 2008). Working-class children went from being of economic value to families to becoming relatively inactive members of the household (Kehily, 2008). This shift was fertile ground for the growing body of literature on childhood, children’s development and socialisation.

The study of children and childhood was approached in different ways and mirrored the various disciplines (e.g. sociology, anthropology, education, psychology and geography) which had a theoretical interest in this area. Early studies by developmental psychologists, in the main, focused on children as “not-yet-developed” beings or “adults-in-the-making”, fuelling what Woodhead (2008) describes as the developmental paradigm. Following this time, anthropologists such as Hardman (1973) first suggested that children were as worthy of study as any other group in society. Prout and James (1997) define Hardman as one of the “forerunners” of this emergent paradigm. She argued that like women, children were invisible and “muted groups” within society and needed to be the focus of more research in the social sciences.

According to James and Prout (1997), children are not passive subjects of social structures and processes but they play an active role in the construction of their social world. Previous assumptions of childhood as a “subordinate group in need of protection in order to be prepared for adulthood” (Kehily, 2008, p. 5) or discourses surrounding children as “blank slates”, are increasingly been supplanted by an understanding of the agentive and active role that children and young people have in shaping their future. Woodhead (2008) defines this movement as a new “paradigm”: 
Child-centred integrative framework for elaborating a ‘child-centred’ research that is holistic in approach, and built around children’s agency, their rights and their well-being, which is especially sensitive to the relationship between researcher and researched and which is inclusive of diversities related to age, gender, ethnicity, place and time. (p. 25)

Consequently, a wealth of child-centred scholarship has emerged across a wide range of disciplinary fields including education, social sciences and family law (Cahill, 2006; Huberman, 2012; Morton, 1996; Nieuwenhuys, 1994; Powell, Fitzgerald, Taylor, & Graham, 2012; A. B. Smith & Ballard, 1998; Stephens, 1995; Wolseth, 2013; Woolcock, Gleeson, & Randolph, 2010). In addition, the field of critical youth studies has also contributed to advancing young people’s participation rights in research, policy and practice (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Kelly & Kamp, 2015). As a result, discourse has moved well beyond whether and how to involve children in research, to establish well-documented methods for research undertaken with and even by children (Alderson, 2012; Kellett, 2010).

Nevertheless, children and young people still largely remain an invisible group in tourism research. As research on host communities is often grounded in positivist and post-positivist paradigms with an emphasis on quantification and statistical measures, the voices of marginal members of the community are often overlooked. In this study, I argue that children and young people’s voices, perceptions and attitudes are important when assessing their wellbeing in communities where tourism may have important implications for their development and socialisation. In order to explore these issues, I draw on socio-cultural theory within the broader framework of the childhood studies paradigm. A key principle in childhood studies is the “recognition of the centrality of the lived experience of children and young people” (Davis & Edwards, 2004, p. 98), which is the main focus of this research.
Exploring the social and cultural processes of human learning and development is highly consistent with the interests of childhood studies and the notion of childhood as socially constructed, and culturally and historically relative (Woodhead, 2008). The contemporary extension of this theory is now being referred to as “neo-Vygotskian” and it is a fruitful framework to help theorise children’s development (A. B. Smith & Ballard, 1998; Truscott, 2014). The adoption of socio-cultural theory in this study, is centred around the notion that children and young people learn and develop in the socio-cultural context to which they are exposed to, in this case the environment which is created in transient tourism communities such as Byron Bay.

Rogoff (2003) argues that children’s development can only be understood “in light of the cultural practices and circumstances of their communities” (p. 4). She gives examples of children as young as six caring for younger siblings in countries such as Guatemala or toddlers able to skilfully use knives to cut fruit in Congo. In Western countries this is unheard of and would probably be frowned upon by adults who would argue that children are not developmentally ready to take up such responsibilities. Rogoff (2003) argues, however, that an understanding of the cultural context in which the child develops is of primary importance both for an understanding of the process of human development, as well as, for grasping the changing cultural patterns in the community.

Socio-cultural theory was first introduced by Vygotsky (1978), whose views were quite progressive at the time. Vygotsky challenged the emphasis on individual processes of development within the child, proposing a greater focus on social processes and relationships. He believed that learning could not be separated from development, and that children “grow into the intellectual life of those around them” (cited in A. B. Smith & Ballard, 1998, p. 3).

In contrast to dominant approaches such as Piaget’s theories of child development, socio-cultural theory argues that childhood is culturally and historically relative and that children mirror the social context in which they develop (James & Prout, 1997). According to Piaget’s theory “child development has a particular structure, consisting of a series of predetermined stages, which lead towards the eventual

Socio-cultural theory
achievement of logical competence” (cited in James & Prout, 1997, p. 11). This evolutionary perspective of child development has since been critiqued for assuming that all children act in the same way regardless of their cultural background.

Anthropologists, in particular, have disputed the universality of these psychological discourses of childhood, contributing to the idea of childhood as socially and culturally relative (see Mead, 1928). Woodhead (2008) defines this approach as “narrow developmentalism” (p. 27), and argues that the idea that children are in a state of “not-yet-being” or “projects-in-the-making” is essentially flawed. Furthermore, he argues that alternative approaches such as Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theory are more closely aligned to the principles of childhood studies and, in particular, “respecting children’s rights” and particularly their participatory rights (Woodhead, 2008, p. 29).

Vygotsky’s concept of “scaffolding”, for example, has been central to numerous studies on children and young people’s participatory rights in community life (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010b; Graham, Shipway, & Fitzgerald, 2009; Graham, Whelan, & Fitzgerald, 2006; Kirshner, 2007; A. B. Smith & Bjerke, 2009; A. B. Smith et al., 2000). A. B. Smith and Bjerke (2009) argue that children’s ability to be citizens does not emerge with biological maturity but is actually “nurtured by social experiences and interactions with others” (p. 18). Help and support by adults is essential in this phase of learning and development. The term “scaffolding” is used by Vygotsky (1978) to refer to temporary help extended by adults to children when engaging in new activities and whilst learning new tasks. As the child becomes more competent, help is gradually withdrawn. Thus within the broader framework of childhood studies, socio-cultural theory “suggests that children do construct their own understanding, but with assistance from other people” (A. B. Smith et al., 2000, p. 3).

**Young people as social and cultural agents**

The discussion of the influence of structural forces and the environmental context must be balanced with an understanding of their agentive role. Extending a major theoretical debate within the contemporary study of childhood, I take Giddens (1991) view that “agency” and “structure” need to be understood as different sides of the
same coin which actually complement each other and which must be explored in conjunction. Thus children should be viewed as both “constrained by structure and agents acting in and upon structure” (James & Prout, 1997, p. 26). As Wolseth (2013) argues the structural conditions in which we live and the agency we exercise are like “twin threads” (p. 2) which are woven together and form our social reality. It is only recently that social scientists and particularly anthropologists have started to explore the culture of childhood, recognising that children and young people are “co-creators in the dialogue of cultural production” (Wolseth, 2013, p. 7).

This shift in conceptualising children and young people as capable and active agents in our society follows and builds on the adoption of the UNCRC in 1989 (United Nations, 1989). The 54 articles of the Convention set out children’s rights to provision, protection and participation, what is commonly known as the “three Ps” (United Nations, 1989). Rogers (2008, p. 151) explains these as the rights to:

- Provision of appropriate support and services for their healthy development;
- Protection from exploitation and abuse;
- Participation in decisions made about their upbringing and care.

In particular, children’s participation rights highlight this contemporary shift in understanding the active role that children and young people play. In the past, researchers were concerned with studying children as the products of economic and political policies and actions, but increasingly greater attention is being paid to what children and young people themselves have to say (Wolseth, 2013). What has been defined as the children’s “rights discourse” stems directly from their participation rights as set out in the UNCRC.

Extending from the first two Ps (provision and protection), which are usually associated with the “needs discourse”, participation sets out children’s rights to participate in the decisions made about their wellbeing (Rogers, 2008). The “rights discourse” views children as citizens in the present and not just as future citizens or citizens-in-the-making (Rogers, 2008; A. B. Smith & Bjerke, 2009; Woodhead,
In the past, the view that children lacked competence and required protection and nurturance has often been used “to deny them agency and limit their citizenship rights” (A. B. Smith & Bjerke, 2009, p. 18). From the 1990s, however, there has been a considerable interest in children and young people’s active role in the production of cultural knowledge (Wolseth, 2013). For example, Morton (1996) shows how the process of young people’s socialisation is not a passive internalisation of cultural norms and values but an active process which highlights the relationships between the individual as an influenced as well as influencing agent.

These theoretical shifts in childhood studies had important methodological implications as researchers found traditional methods and approaches unable to capture the new ways of thinking (James & James, 2008). Researchers are now acknowledging that children have a unique point of view, which in the past has often been ignored:

> Children are viewed as actors in their own right, who are not simply passive recipients of their environment, but who actively interpret and experience their lives within their own unique culture, family and society. (A. B. Smith & Ballard, 1998, p. 1)

As such, a wealth of scholarship has emerged which focuses on the participation, empowerment, emancipation and voice of children and young people (Barratt Hacking, Cutter-Mackenzie, & Barratt, 2012; Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010b; Hart, 1992; Kehily, 2008; Kellett, 2005; Skelton, 2008; Thomas & O’Kane, 1998).

This study endeavours to balance concerns about the structural forces which influence the life, development and socialisation of young people growing up in a tourist destination, with their lived experiences as reported from their particular viewpoint. Thus, although I suggest that the environmental context in which the child develops shapes identities and worldviews, I also acknowledge the need to understand their lives and experiences as recounted by them. Socialisation is, in this
sense, “an interpersonal activity of ‘becoming’ rather than an unfolding of a biologically based plan or an imprinting of social structure onto the child” (Cook-Gumperz & Corsaro cited in Morton, 1996, p. 10).

IDENTITY AND BELONGING

Issues concerning young people’s identity and sense of belonging are intentionally foregrounded in this study. For young people growing up in communities that experience a continuous flow of people (e.g. temporary workers, migrants and tourists), the “project” or “quest” for a meaningful identity and sense of belonging is fraught with tension (Canosa, 2014; Canosa et al., 2001). The formation of identity among young people is a complex process whereby adolescents attempt to distance themselves from the world of the child but are inevitably denied access to the adult world (Sibley, 1995).

This section introduces the key constructs of this research – identity and belonging – employed to address Research Question One: How do young people perceive that growing up in a tourist destination affects their lives including their sense of identity and belonging? I start by introducing the changing definitions of identity over time, from modern and premodern assumptions of identity as fixed, static and evolutionary, to postmodern and poststructuralist definitions of identity as a “search” where the individual has an active autobiographical involvement (Yuval-Davis, 2010). I then present the various disciplinary approaches to the study of identity, from the psychological tradition to symbolic interactionism, and performativity approaches. Drawing commonalities between these approaches, I set out the underlying premises of the adoption and conceptualisation of identity in this study; the concepts of belonging, connection and community among young people are then explored.
The “identity project”

In order to have a more critical and nuanced understanding of the somewhat ubiquitous concept of identity, it is important to explore how it has been conceptualised and theorised over the years and among the different disciplinary traditions. Globalisation and modernity have challenged some of the traditional views of “culture”, “society” and “identity” (McGibbon, 1999). Notions of a “fragmented and relative selfhood” (Lupton, 1996), “migrants of identity” (Schwartz, 1995), and “possible selves” (Giddens, 1991), show how identity comes to be defined as a search, which is no longer inscribed by locality and rootedness but is actually constructed through movement (Rapport & Dawson, 1998). In the postmodern and poststructuralist tradition, identities are highly changeable, contextual, dynamic and hybrid (Bauman, 2009; S. Hall, 1990; Lash & Friedman, 1992; Olwig, 1997; Poole, 1994; Rapport & Dawson, 1998). According to D. R. Williams (2002) by “unmooring meaning and identities from place, globalisation dilutes traditional/local sources of identity and amplifies the quest of modern people to actively construct a sense of identity” (p. 355). In this sense, identity is a project or a quest which is actively and reflexively achieved.

Performative and feminist theories have also contributed to this idea of identities being relational and contextual rather than fixed (Yuval-Davis, 2010). Butler’s (1990) conceptualisation of gender, for example, has subverted our understanding of seemingly natural subject positions such as “gender/sex”, “race” or “disability” (Holt, 2008, p. 237). The “playing out” of identity is more often than not unconscious or as Holt (2008) explains “the agent does not precede the ‘doing’ of the performative act or event” but rather the actor “becomes, through the event” (p. 237).

In the psychological tradition, identity is usually presented as a staged process with periods of crises that characterise each stage and which are specific to the forms of development taking place. Early conceptualisations of identity, as in Freud and Erikson’s tradition, did not however take into account the role of social relationships and communication in the process of identity formation (cited in Furlong, 2013). The construction and affirmation of identity is thus viewed as a stage in the life-cycle model of development.
On the contrary, the sociological approach to identity which has its roots in Mead’s symbolic interactionism, further developed by Blumer, defines identity as a “social product constructed through interaction and embedded in the various communities we inhabit” (cited in Furlong, 2013, p. 124). Within the symbolic interactionist school of thought, identity is produced “through interacting with significant and generalized others” (Brandth & Haugen, 2011, p. 37). Mead’s framework, suggesting that “society shapes self, shapes social behaviour” (cited in Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 285), implies that society influences the behaviours and social roles of individuals. Mead’s philosophical orientation can be traced back to the social-ecological perspective of the Chicago School. Evolving during the development of the city of Chicago, researchers in the social-ecological tradition used Chicago and its surrounding neighbourhoods as a kind of natural research laboratory (Berg, 2009). Blumer (1969), however, is considered to be the founder of symbolic interactionism having coined the term and suggesting that meanings are socially constructed through interactions between people:

Stryker and Burke (2000) have further developed this line of inquiry, albeit with slightly different approaches, reaching what is now known as theory of identity. Stryker pursued the structural approach exploring how social structures affect the structure of “self” and how, in turn, structure of “self” influences social behaviour, whereas Burke’s approach emphasised the cognitive and internal dynamics of self-processes as these affect social behaviour (see Stryker & Burke, 2000). Stryker and Burke (2000) now agree that both approaches, the structural and the cognitive, actually complement each other and are both integral to a theory of identity.

Another important development comes from the dramaturgical approach. Goffman argued that individuals enact identities for an audience, either another individual or a group within a community (cited in Edensor, 2001). For Goffman, the dramatic nature of social life ensures that we play particular “front-stage” roles in social contexts and only remove our mask in the “backstage” regions (cited in Edensor, 2001, p. 60). Thus Gibbons (2010) argues that “identity has shifted away from being defined solely in relation to traditional social networks such as family, community, and religion and more towards voluntary identity and voluntary networks” (p. 167).
Identity has become one of the key issues of contemporary times and consequently there have been a growing number of studies exploring the concept (Côté, 2006). The field of Identity Studies is as broad as the meanings attached to the term “identity” which have become quite “fuzzy” and abstract (Côté, 2006, p. 7). Nevertheless, identity studies that specifically focus on young people have tended to follow psychological approaches (Klimstra, Hale III, Raaijmakers, Branje, & Meeus, 2010; Kroger, 1989; Kroger, Martinussen, & Marcia, 2010; Marcia, 1966; Vignoles, Chryssochoou, & Breakwell, 2000). Recently identity theories have also been applied to tourism research (Anglin, 2014; Cone, 1995; Desforges, 2000; Doorne et al., 2003; Light, 2001; Palmer, 2005).

The above discussion points to the myriad of ways identity has been conceptualised, largely reflecting the expertise and disciplinary provenance of the academics interested in this field. Irrespective of the disciplinary approach, modern ideas about the development of identity in young people share some core assumptions which are outlined by Furlong (2013, p. 125):

- Identity develops in the social context in which the individual grows up and is embedded in the culture of the time and place.
- Identity is a lifetime project.
- Identities are multiple and relational and they often overlap or conflict.
- The protraction of the youth phase and the increased complexity of the socio-economic environment have implications for the development of identity among youth.

Building on these principles, this study embraces identity as “situated, multiple and relational” (Brandth & Haugen, 2011, p. 37); a dynamic process which is explored, negotiated and affirmed throughout the individual’s life span (S. Hall, 1996). In this study, “youth” is understood not as a stage in the life-cycle of the individual but as a “vital conjuncture” or critical period of choices, opportunities and possibilities that
might have important consequences for the individual’s life course and for the formation of identities (Johnson-Hanks, 2002, p. 865).

Thinking of young adults’ “coming of age” at 18 years and their concomitant ability to vote or drive as a clear threshold into adulthood can limit our understanding of young people and our ability to conduct research with them. Adulthood is, rather, a loosely bounded, fluid status which develops much earlier in the form of aspirations (Sibley, 1995; Valentine et al., 1998). As Sibley (1995) argues “the act of drawing the line” in the construction of discrete categories is an arbitrary act which “interrupts what is naturally continuous” and may be felt “as unjust by those who suffer the consequences of the division” (p. 35). Going beyond the life stage model of child development proposed by Erikson (1968), I argue for a new approach which takes into consideration the social construction of childhood and the fluid boundaries between childhood and adulthood which are often culturally and historically relative:

The limits of the category “child” vary between cultures and have changed considerably through history within Western, capitalist societies. The boundaries separating child and adult is a decidedly fuzzy one. Adolescence is an ambiguous zone within which the child/adult boundary can be variously located according to who is doing the categorising. (Sibley, 1995, p. 34)

This research explores the lived experience of young people growing up in a tourist destination with a particular focus on the ways in which identities are formed, negotiated and achieved in such contexts. According to Giddens (1991), as traditions fade individuals are responsible for creating their own identities. Storytelling and the biographical narrative become important means of consolidating a sense of identity (Yuval-Davis, 2010). As the postmodern agent is unable to cling to traditional institutions, which are increasingly fragmented and hollowed of meaning, D. R. Williams (2002) argues that today “the self has to be explored as an active, deliberate and reflexive project” (p. 359). Interpreting the narratives and stories told by young
people is essential in understanding how a sense of identity and belonging is formed (Thomson, 2007b; Yuval-Davis, 2010).

**Sense of belonging, connection and community**

Like identity, a lived sense of belonging is multidimensional (Antonsich, 2010) and often holds contradictory dimensions (Thomson, 2007a). Antonsich (2010) argues that “belonging is a notion both vaguely defined and ill-theorized” (p. 644). He points out that notions of belonging have often been conflated with notions of identity and citizenship. Based on the work of Yuval-Davis (2006), Antonsich (2010) put forward an analytical framework for the study of belonging which is a fruitful starting point for this study.

He posits that among the multiple “modes of belonging” two analytical dimensions should be taken into consideration: “place-belongingness” and “the politics of belonging”. Place-belongingness is described as a “personal, intimate, feeling of being ‘at home’ in a place”, whereas the politics of belonging refer to the social dimension whereby boundary practices shape understandings of social inclusion/exclusion, the “us” versus “them” (Antonsich, 2010, p. 645). Emotional feelings of attachment to place have often been discussed in relation to notions of place attachment, place identity and sense of place (Antonsich, 2010). These are particularly prevalent conceptualisation in the tourism literature (Carter, Dyer, & Sharma, 2007; Cui & Ryan, 2011; D. Dredge, 2010; Dianne Dredge & Jenkins, 2003; Kerstetter & Bricker, 2009; D. R. Williams, 2002). Belonging, as an all-encompassing concept, has rarely been adopted as a theoretical concept in tourism research.

A notable exception is a study by Buzinde and Manuel-Navarrete (2013) where they explore how tourist destinations’ landscapes are marked by socio-spatial polarisation, whereby exclusive resorts become both sites of exclusion of residents and sites of inclusion of affluent tourists. According to Antonsich (2010) it is important to explore both the personal (place-belongingness) and the social (politics of belonging) dimensions of belonging in order to have a more nuanced understanding of this ephemeral but important concept.
Belonging is adopted as a key construct in this research to explore the process of identity formation among young people growing up in tourist destinations where spaces, places and relationships are shared with visitors. In traditional premodern society belonging was a phase which all adolescents experienced, whereas today “the search for belonging becomes a generalised condition” (Thomson, 2007a, p. 152). Belonging is understood as a process of “becoming” rather than a status of “being” (Antonsich, 2010, p. 652), and similar to identity it is often performed, enacted and displayed (V. Bell, 1999).

Belonging and connection thus become matters of choice which are inscribed in the biographical narratives told by young people (Giddens, 1991; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Young people may understand belonging as either “group membership, identity, identification and recognition” or as “dis-identification and exclusion” (Thomson, 2007a, p. 147). Thus identity and belonging are subtly interwoven and define “what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others” (Weeks, 1990, p. 88).

Ultimately, a sense of belonging is an important factor in the wellbeing of young people (Thomson, 2007a). Numerous studies are now documenting the importance of fostering a positive environment for young people to achieve a sense of belonging which is often directly related to their civic participation (Albanesi, Cicognani, & Zani, 2007; Amnå, 2012; Evans, 2007; Graham, 2011; Howard & Gill, 2001). Graham and Fitzgerald (2011) suggest that assisting children and young people to develop a sense of belonging in the community is essential to their social and emotional wellbeing.

Sense of belonging is closely related to sense of connection and community. Robinson (2014) describes connectedness as “the quality and number of connections with people and place” (p. 14). So whereas the interaction between people and place is “critical to feeling supported, safe and secure” (Robinson, 2014, p. 14), if these relationships are threatened young people’s sense of belonging and connection can be damaged or impaired (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2011). In this way, belonging implies a degree of connection to a particular community. Whether this community is defined geographically/territorially (neighbourhoods) or whether it is a “relational
community” (sports clubs etc.) is of less concern compared to the feelings it engenders among young people which are here described by McMillan and Chavis (1986):

Sense of community is a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members’ needs will be met through their commitment to be together. (p. 9)

Connectedness and sense of community have often been theoretically founded on the concept of social capital (Tennent, Tayler, Farrell, & Patterson, 2005). Studies have shown that communities high in social capital have significantly higher levels of community wellbeing (Fabiansson, 2006; Onyx & Leonard, 2010; Tennent et al., 2005). Social capital has been defined as “those features of social organisation, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions” (Putnam, 1993, p. 167). Research suggests that a strong sense of belonging and community among young people decreases incidences of loneliness, reduces criminal behaviour and enhances life satisfaction, happiness and retention rates at school (Chipeur, 2001; Pretty, 2002). Evans (2007) suggests that young people often experience feelings of oppression in community settings where they may feel “invisible” unless they are seen to be “causing trouble” (p. 705).

Trust is one of the essential elements in the creation of social capital and when young people feel marginalised in the community this is often hard to achieve (Fabiansson, 2006). This is a particularly pressing issue in communities with high levels of youth tourism such as Byron Shire, where often the behaviours of young tourists affect the perceptions and attitudes of adult community members towards young people regardless of whether they are tourists or residents. The lack of trusting relationships in the community outside the family network, and the absence of a sense of community and belonging, often engender feelings of alienation, isolation and loneliness among youth (Farrell, Aubry, & Coulombe, 2004; Tennent et al., 2005). Evans (2007) argues that too often young people get excluded from community
matters yet “are expected to behave in ways that are respectful, caring and responsible to community” (p. 697).

There has been a growing awareness in recent years among youth researchers that a sense of civic duty and political participation is not developed as soon as one comes of age and is able to vote (Hoskins, 2003). Sense of community and civic engagement emerge much earlier and play a “significant role in the development of attitudes towards politics and in willingness to be involved in political processes” (Cicognani, Zani, & Albanesi, 2012, p. 123). Evans (2007) argues that sense of belonging and community develop and consolidate precisely when adolescents feel they can make a meaningful contribution to the community and only when they feel “influential” and “powerful” (p. 699).

Acknowledging that young people are co-creators of social capital and that they should be included in community matters is a step forward in developing and fostering an environment where a sense of belonging and community can be achieved among young people (Evans, 2007; Tennent et al., 2005). In this sense parents, carers, educators and the community at large are responsible for creating and supporting an environment where young people can fully develop their sense of identity and sense of belonging, connection and community.

In light of the conceptual nuances presented in this chapter, Figure 2.3 visually presents the study’s guiding theoretical framework. The transdisciplinary approach taken in this study enables movement across and beyond disciplinary boundaries, integrating and building synergies between three areas of scholarship – tourism, anthropology and childhood studies. The study’s focus lies at the nexus of these three areas of scholarship and is guided by socio-cultural theory and the key constructs of identity and belonging (including felt sense of connection and community).
SUMMARY

This chapter critically analysed literature in three areas of scholarship – tourism, anthropology and childhood studies. The chapter discusses the noticeable lack of young residents’ views and voice in tourism community studies. From the first exploratory studies on contact between cultures in the anthropological literature, to more quantitative and empirically driven studies on residents’ perceptions and support for tourism development, children and young people’s voices have been absent.

While the first half of the literature review focused on the global political and economic structures that influence tourism communities, the second half of the discussion highlighted the changing conceptualisations of children and young people as active members of the community. The chapter also discussed the adoption of socio-cultural theory to explore how children and young people play out their agentive role in the community where they grow up. Moving beyond the different disciplinary approaches, identity and belonging are employed as key constructs in this research and are conceptualised as a “search” or “quest” which is actively sought, performed and re-told through young people’s narratives and stories.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

The experiences, perceptions and attitudes of residents living in communities where tourism is the main economy have, to date, mainly been approached with positivist and quantitative methodologies. Nunkoo et al. (2013) argue that this field of research has reached a state of active scholarship, but an obvious gap relates to a lack of more “interpretive and triangular approaches” (p. 18). This chapter commences with an examination of the inherent limitations of previous tourism research on communities. I then argue that cross-fertilisation with other social sciences such as childhood studies and anthropology may contribute to broadening the scope of tourism analysis.

This research is underpinned by a critical and transformative philosophical worldview and adopts a qualitative and interpretive methodological approach. Critical ethnography and child-centred participatory methods are employed to profile the voices of a previously marginalised social group. In this chapter, I introduce and explain how the data was collected and analysed, acknowledging the ethical considerations of doing research with young people. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the study.
BEYOND POSITIVISM: A CRITICAL APPROACH

The exploration of new theoretical grounds in tourism community research has been constrained by an entrenched positivist approach to research (Sharpley, 2014). Positivism is based on scientific investigations where, like the natural world, human behaviours are dissected and analysed in a so-called “objective” manner with the goal of making predictions, generalisations and generating knowledge about social phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011b).

Tourism research has been referred to as “an heir to this positivist tradition” (Pearce 2013, p. 61) and in need of a “new portfolio of concepts and techniques” capable of probing the “hybridities, ambiguities, and transitionalities” inherent in postmodern discourses surrounding tourism, travel and mobility (Jamal & Hollinshead, 2001, p. 65). Pritchard et al. (2011) further argue that the legacy of positivism has resulted in tourism research being left on “the margins of many of the philosophical debates which have energized the social sciences” (p. 947). They contend that tourism researchers continually “eschew social, political and ethical critique in favour of technical, problem-solving research” (p. 949) and that this has impacted significantly on study aims, methods and methodologies.

In a globalising world of increasing interconnectedness between people and places, and in which travel and mobility are actors in the creolisation and hybridisation of identities, cultures and histories (Urry, 2000), scientific modes of inquiry such as those grounded in the positivist and post-positivist tradition no longer suffice (E. Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015). The “mobility” turn, which has permeated most of the social sciences, is transforming the way research is understood and undertaken. Hannam, Sheller, and Urry (2006) argue that both the objects of inquiry and the methodologies for research in the social sciences need to change to keep pace with the mobility, liquidity and fluidity of the postmodern world. Büscher and Urry (2009) call for “mobile methods” or research methods “on the move” which will be able to capture the “fleeting”, “distributed”, “multiple”, “chaotic”, “complex”, “sensory”, “emotional”, “spiritual” and the “kinaesthetic” (p. 103).
Without the theoretical as well as the methodological cross-fertilisation with other disciplines, community-focused tourism research in unlikely to substantially move forward (Cooper, 2003). Drawing on other disciplines may well be the way to progress research into residents’ perceptions and community attitudes towards tourism. Sharpley (2014) argues that the quantitative nature of the research “tends to describe what residents perceive, but does not necessarily explain why” (p. 42).

Community-focused tourism research still seems to be largely embedded in a positivist tradition producing standardised and repetitive case studies which go little beneath the surface level in exploring the lived experiences of residents living in host communities (Deery et al., 2012; Nunkoo et al., 2013; Sharpley, 2014). Nunkoo et al.’s (2013) study shows that among 140 articles on residents’ attitudes to tourism, quantitative methods dominated across all three journals: Annals of Tourism Research (ATR, 68.5%), Tourism Management (TM, 62.8%) and Journal of Travel Research (JTR, 86%). Qualitative articles represented only around 4.7% of articles published in JTR, 13% in ATR, and 20% of articles published in TM.

Based on these arguments, this study attempts to address a gap in existing knowledge by drawing on the theoretical and methodological innovations in the interdisciplinary field of childhood studies. For the past three decades childhood research has been at the forefront in seeking new methodological approaches which privilege the voices of marginalised members in community such as children and young people. Ethnographic and child-centred methodologies have allowed children to have an active role in the production of data as well as allowing their voices to be heard (Cao, 2005; Cheney, 2011; Eder & Corsaro, 1999; Graham et al., 2016; Graham et al., 2006; James, 2001; Kellett, 2010; Morrow, 2011; Warming, 2011).
THE CRITICAL AND TRANSFORMATIVE WORLDVIEW

The overall approach of this study is to present an exploratory, situated and critical analysis of the lived experiences of young people growing up in a tourist destination. A key goal of this research is to create awareness of the issues faced by young people growing up in host communities and profile their voices. Among the approaches identified by Pearce (2013) to stimulate new theoretical and conceptual advancement in tourism research, this study explores “minority interpretations whereby the neglected players in social and tourism worlds are brought to the foreground” and the “hidden or muted voices” (p. 65) are made centre stage.

The approach taken is thus structured around the ontological and epistemological stance of the critical and transformative worldview (Creswell, 2014). I draw on seminal authors such as Freire (1970) and hooks (1994), critical tourism studies (D. Chambers & Rakić, 2015b; Higgins-Desbiolles & Whyte, 2013; Pritchard et al., 2011), and childhood studies literature (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010b; Kellett, 2011; Prout & James, 1997). Critical theory perspectives are concerned “with empowering human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them by race, class, and gender” (Creswell, 2007, p. 27) and, to which I might add, “age”.

The critical and transformative approach can be traced back to the writings of Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and in particular to important representatives of this school of thought such as Jürgen Habermas (cited in Neuman, 2011, p. 108) and Paulo Freire (1970). The critical approach to social science has been defined as “a critical process of inquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves” (Neuman, 2011, p. 108). Critical and transformative research is preoccupied with exploring the lives of marginalised people and “advancing an agenda for change to improve their lives” (Creswell, 2014, p. 10):
It places central importance on the study of lives and experiences of diverse groups that have traditionally been marginalised. Of special interest for these diverse groups is how their lives have been constrained by oppressors and the strategies that they use to resist, challenge, and subvert these constraints. (Creswell, 2014, p. 10)

Critical theory has synergies with social constructivism or the interpretive social sciences paradigm but not with positivism (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011b). On the other hand, critical theory differs from social constructivism as not all points of view are seen to be equal and critical theorists call for action-oriented research which will further the cause of minority groups (Jennings, 2010).

Over the past decade there has been a substantial increase in the number of scholars calling for more critical, theoretical and reflexive approaches to tourism research (Ateljevic, Harris, Wilson, & Collins, 2005; Ateljevic, Pritchard, & Morgan, 2007; D. Chambers & Rakić, 2015b; Feighery, 2006; Franklin & Crang, 2001; Hollinshead, 2004; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004; Pritchard et al., 2011; Tribe, 2008; E. Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015; E. Wilson, Small, & Harris, 2012). A. L. Matthews (2012) argues that tourism scholarship should be “less preoccupied with the practicalities of managerialism and more concerned – or at least equally concerned – with the broader social, cultural and political processes that the management, conduct, experience, research and teaching of tourism occurs within” (p. 1).

The rise of critical approaches in tourism research (or what is often referred to as the “critical turn”) has opened up fresh and unconventional ways of conceptualising the lived experiences of the participants in tourism research and has indeed often facilitated the emergence of the many “missing stories of the diverse, minority and marginalized populations” (Jamal, Taillon, & Dredge, 2011, p. 145).
The absence of children and young residents in tourism research can be traced back to the same factors which excluded women and gender from discussions within the broader social sciences. Ambert (cited in James & Prout, 1997, p. 21) refers to this as a “male-dominated sociology” which neglects to view children as worthy subjects of investigation.

Since the UNCRC in 1989 (United Nations, 1989), the social sciences have come far in conceptualising children and young people as capable and active agents in our society. However, this shift is not yet reflected in tourism studies. Small (2008) has pointed to the absence of children in tourism studies arguing that often research on age has been undertaken within a “positivist paradigm with the emphasis on description rather than social understanding” (p. 772).

This study is based on the assumption that if social understanding and positive transformational change among young residents of tourist destinations is to be achieved, innovative methods that find their roots in non-positivist paradigms need to be employed. As Westwood (2007) argues “tourism research should be embracing innovation and progressive approaches…actively involving participants in various ways and …[adopting] exciting, creative and subjective methods and techniques” (p. 313). Among the areas of inquiry which have been neglected in tourism studies and which Pritchard et al. (2011) include as part of their agenda are, in fact, studies focused on children and young people.

In proposing a greater level of engagement and participation of young people in tourism research, this study aims to contribute to “the creation of a more just and sustainable world” and to promote “human dignity, human rights, and justice in tourism policy and practice” (Pritchard et al., 2011, p. 942). This project is thus a product of its time and fits into the “eighth moment”, described by Denzin and Lincoln (2011a): “The eighth moment asks that the social sciences and the humanities become sites for critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalization, freedom, and community” (p. 3).

Since the interpretive approach employed in this research aims to produce knowledge that is local, contextualised and situated, another aspect of the philosophical
bricolage at the core of this project is the critical orientation named “standpoint” research. Humberstone (2004) argues that standpoint research is concerned with the “lived experience of people within their situations and contexts” (p. 123), thus challenging the ontological and epistemological premises of early research in tourism studies which has focused on producing grand theories via “objectivist, presumptive or pre-calculative” methods (Hollinshead, 2004, p. 67).

Furthermore, a standpoint approach seeks to uncover the experiences and perspectives of disadvantaged and marginalised people in the community. Humberstone (2004) argues that positivistic approaches have often further disadvantaged marginalised groups as “they do not fully recognise the lived experiences and subjective interpretations of local communities” (p. 123). Taking a standpoint perspective, this research seeks to better understand and explore the needs of young people in the environmental context where they grow up and their attitudes and perceptions towards tourism.

In sum, the research adopts a critical, transformative ontology (i.e. the nature of reality), a subjective and collaborative epistemology (i.e. the relationship between researcher and participant), and a qualitative, ethnographic and participatory methodology. This research is thus a collaborative project which begins with a particular critical reading of reality or conscientização (Freire, 1970) from the perspectives and views of young residents of Byron Shire.

**REFLEXIVITY AND THE EMIC RESEARCHER**

The philosophical stance of this research, and the way it influences research outcomes, is better understood if my own subject position is also clarified (Creswell, 2007). Reflexivity is a powerful tool in qualitative research which allows us to reflect “inwards upon ourselves as researchers, and outwards upon those that we research” (Ateljevic et al., 2005, p. 10). In a sense my research interests and philosophical inclinations are entangled with my own autobiography. In this section, I discuss how my childhood and personal journey have influenced the choice of topic and the way the research has been designed. Later in the chapter, I explain how reflexivity
enabled greater ethical mindfulness throughout the duration of the research process (Graham et al., 2013).

Employing reflexivity as an intentional research strategy responds to calls for more reflexively-oriented approaches to tourism research (Ateljevic et al., 2005; E. Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015), as well as research with children and young people (Christensen, 2004; Davis, 1998; Doyle, 2013; Phelan & Kinsella, 2013; Warin, 2011). The impetus for this study arose when undertaking my undergraduate and postgraduate studies in anthropology and has continued to expand over the years building on my previous studies on young people living in my hometown of Positano (Italy) (Canosa, 2014; Canosa et al., 2001).

Positano is a small but world-famous tourist destination situated on the Amalfi Coast in Southern Italy. From a young age I was aware of the flow of tourists that visited every year in the summer months and I was particularly sensitive to the social implications of tourism in my community. I struggled with mixed feelings of excitement (at the arrival of the summer season and the opportunity to socialise with people from different cultures), and anxiety, distress and often anger towards the invasiveness of tourism. I watched as my favourite places in Positano were taken over by tourists and the congested atmosphere during the tourist season made our lives miserable. The problems caused by the unregulated approach to tourism development were something we had to live with year in and year out.

After migrating to Australia with my own family and having lived in the Byron Shire for several years, I have been able to observe the similarities between the mixed feelings which residents of Byron Bay have towards tourism and those held by residents of Positano. While the nature of tourism in these two towns is fundamentally different\(^3\), they share many of the social problems that have been identified in tourism social impact studies: traffic, congestion, alcohol-fuelled violence, noise and lack of affordable housing (Deery et al., 2012; Moyle et al., 2010a). My sensitivity to these issues invariably bring an *emic* perspective to this study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

---

\(^3\) Positano caters for a seasonal mass tourism industry whilst Byron Bay has more of a year-round alternative tourism with youth tourism and backpackers being a major market segment.
Since calling the Byron Shire my home, my project resembles the “native ethnography” discussed by Chang (2008). Native ethnographies are ethnographies conducted by ethnographers about their own people and can be considered as another form of autobiographical involvement in self (Chang, 2008). Hooks (1994) highlights the importance of personal testimony and personal experiences in the production of theory; I thus take my life journey as a starting point to explore these issues and, in conjunction with the lived experiences of the young people who participated in this study, I seek to map our theoretical journeys (hooks, 1994). Freedom, justice and equality come from recognising and valuing each and every individual voice in this study, including my own.

**QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND THE BRICOLEUR**

If we are to explore “wicked problems” (R. J. Lawrence, 2010) – such as the complexity of growing up in a tourist destination – we are in need of a plurality of methods and interpretations. Kincheloe, McLaren, and Steinberg (2011) argue that we need to act as “bricoleurs”, actively constructing research methods rather than passively receiving the ‘correct’, universally applicable methodologies” (p. 168). According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994), a bricolage is a “complex, dense, reflective, collage like creation that represents the researcher’s images, understanding, and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis” (p. 3). I propose that this bricolage can also be co-developed with our research participants. The transdisciplinary approach of this study allowed the freedom to move beyond disciplinary shackles and to co-develop important design and methodological aspects of the research with participants.

Denzin and Lincoln (2011b) refer to qualitative research as a process, an interpretive and naturalistic approach to the world which weaves together three interconnected elements – theory, method and analysis (or ontology, epistemology and methodology). They go on to explain that in qualitative research the personal biography of the researcher is of paramount importance arguing that the researcher speaks from a particular class, gendered, racial, cultural, and ethnic background. The
following statement by Denzin and Lincoln (1994) paints a vivid picture of this process:

The gendered, multiculturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology), that specifies a set of questions (epistemology), which are then examined (methodology, analysis) in specific ways...Every researcher speaks from within a distinct interpretive community, which configures, in its special way, the multicultural, gendered components of the research act. (p. 11)

Talking from a particular autobiographical position, I was committed in this study to a naturalistic perspective and an interpretive understanding of the experiences of these young people (Nelson, Treichler, & Grossberg, 1992). Consistent with ethnographic and qualitative research, I conducted field work in a natural setting (Byron Shire); collected multiple sources of data; engaged in an inductive process of data analysis; paid particular attention to participants’ meanings and voice; used a specific theoretical lens to view the study; and I have strived to give a holistic account of the issues under study (Creswell, 2007). To fulfil this purpose, critical ethnography and participatory methods were employed as essential methodological tools which embody this philosophical stance (see Figure 3.1).

Critical ethnography

The research methodology of the proposed study stems from the traditional anthropological approach of studying a community or culture: ethnography. Ethnography has its origins in the early 20th century, when Western anthropologists ventured to exotic locations and lived with local communities for several years trying to understand the social and cultural dynamics of the community (Montgomery, 2007). Through adopting an ethnographic approach to the study of a particular host community, the researcher seeks to observe the world from the point of view of the subject and becomes embedded in the social life of respondents (Montgomery, 2007).
Today, ethnography enjoys a renewed popularity as a research approach in tourism research (Bandyopadhyay, 2011; E. Chambers, 2010; Frohlick & Harrison, 2008; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2006; Mkono, 2013; Pereiro, 2010; Rakić & Chambers, 2009; Ramsay, 2010; Sørensen, 2003; Tucker, 2010), and in childhood studies as it allows children to have an active role in the production of data (Cao, 2005; Cheney, 2011; Christensen, 2004; Eder & Corsaro, 1999; James, 2001; Morrow, 2011; Shepler, 2005; Teachman & Gibson, 2013; Warming, 2011). James and Prout (1997) argue that ethnographic methods are able to get closer to the lived reality of childhood.

In this project, the young people of the Byron Shire are viewed as a culture-sharing group and critical ethnography is used to identify how the group functions, what views and perceptions they hold and how they are perceived by other adult members of the community. There is thus a subtle difference between an ethnographic project and a case study, which is underscored by Creswell (2007) as follows: “The entire culture-sharing group in ethnography may be considered a case, but the intent in
ethnography is to determine how the culture works rather than to understand an issue or problem using the case as a specific illustration” (p. 73). There are of course many similarities between the two approaches and this project may resemble the “embedded case study” approach discussed by Dredge, Hales, and Jamal (2013) as it involves “embodied, self-reflexive engagement in knowledge production and change, action, and movement” through direct involvement in a research context. The final product of this ethnographic project is a holistic portrait of young people in the Byron Shire which incorporates the views of the participants (emic) as well as my own views (etic) (Creswell, 2007).

Critical ethnography was appropriate and well-fitting as a methodology as it embodies the philosophical values underpinning this study, and aligns with my own ontological and epistemological standpoints. Critical ethnography is an orientation where the researcher advocates the emancipation of marginalised groups in society and has a concern about social inequalities directing his or her efforts towards positive change (Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2007). Critical ethnography is also an orientation towards research which ultimately benefits the population under investigation (Berg, 2009). In this study, the educational and pedagogical elements embedded in the research were directed towards developing knowledge within the young collaborators of the implications of tourism development in their community. The discussions allowed young people to explore ways in which they, as a social group within their community, can benefit from the positive and limit the negative effects of tourism on their lives.

Furthermore, critical ethnography has been chosen to respond to the social inequalities and exclusion of children and young people from tourism community research and as a method which is ideologically grounded. Multiple methods can be employed in critical ethnography allowing for a certain degree of fluidity and making the ethnographic project a true “bricolage” (Kincheloe et al., 2011, p. 172). In this sense, the various methods employed in this study are not merely a way of triangulating the data but are a necessary step to delve deeper into young people’s experiences of growing up in a tourist destination.
**Participatory research with young people**

Critical ethnography and participatory approaches to research are uniquely compatible as they share a similar philosophical stance and ethical commitment to research participants (Hemment, 2007). The key theoretical underpinning of participatory research is the “convergence of two perspectives – that of science and of practice” (Bergold & Thomas, 2012, p. 1). The concept of “praxis” (critical reflection and action) is, according to Freire (1970), fundamental to any claim to transformation or any agenda for change. Reflection or theory cannot be separated from action or practice and vice versa. Although the two are subtly bound together, their separation has often occurred within the social sciences.

Participatory approaches are uniquely suited to bridging this gap between theory and practice. Through collaboration, participatory research seeks to challenge and unsettle existing structures of power and privileges in the research process (Barratt Hacking et al., 2012; Cheney, 2011; Thomas & O’Kane, 1998). Participatory methods are often described as “democratised” as the power relations in the research process are challenged and the academic researcher reinvents “definitions and practices of authority” (Dentith, Measor, & O’Malley, 2012, p. 16). In participatory research, power is decentralised, and through collaboration, the researched becomes the researcher and is given the opportunity to actively participate in the research process (McCartan, Schubotz, & Murphy, 2012). Furthermore, Higgins-Desbiolles and Whyte (2013) argue that “data collected by community members will be better than data collected solely by professors and research assistants” (p. 430).

In the childhood studies literature, participatory approaches to research with and not merely on young people are emerging as important tools of empowerment and pedagogical development (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010a; Hart, 1992; Kehily, 2008; Kellett, 2005; Skelton, 2008). Consequently, these studies offer unique insights into children’s experiences recognising that children have a “right to be properly researched” (Beazley, Bessell, Ennew, & Waterson, 2009, p. 365). As a result, discourse has moved beyond merely involving children in research, to establishing well-documented methods for research undertaken by children (Alderson, 2001; Kellett, 2010).
Within the current childhood studies paradigm, participatory methods have acquired substantial significance and popularity. The impact of participatory approaches to research with children is evident in pioneering methods such as Kellett’s (2004, 2005, 2010, 2011) “child-led” research. According to Kellett (2010), children have a unique insider perspective that makes them experts about their lives and thus uniquely placed to carry out research with the support and encouragement of adult researchers. Actively involving children in research becomes an empowering process which leads to “a virtuous circle of increased confidence and raised self-esteem, resulting in more active participation by children in other aspects affecting their lives” (Kellett, 2010, p. 197).

Powell and Smith (2009) also argue that young people often feel more comfortable talking to someone their own age than adult researchers. In addition, young co-researchers may recruit peers that adult researchers would not thus providing opportunities for those least often heard to share their knowledge (Barratt Hacking et al., 2012). Kellett (2005) situates child-led research in a new paradigm emerging from the important areas of power and emancipation. By elevating children’s status from mere participants to active researchers, they are empowered to effect change in their communities. Further, they are able to benefit from the educational opportunities that being involved in a research project creates.

Numerous studies are now documenting the positive, transformative and pedagogical outcomes a participatory and collaborative approach to research may have for young people (Barratt Hacking et al., 2012; Cahill, 2006; Crivello, Camfield, & Woodhead, 2009; Graham & Fitzgerald, 2011; Hill, 1997; Kellett, 2010; Pahl & Pool, 2011; Thomas & O’Kane, 1998). In each of these projects young people are supported or “scaffolded” by adults and experience in more authentic ways what Cammarota and Fine (2008) define as “a multi-generational collective analysis of power” (p. 2). Since children’s knowledge of the world is fundamentally different (not inferior) to our own, we must create an environment of mutual trust and respect in which they are able to express their feelings and actively contribute to the development of new policies and practices which will ultimately improve their wellbeing (MacNaughton & Smith, 2008).
Conceptualising young people as “legitimate and essential collaborators” is wholly consistent with the childhood studies approach and the intentions of this study (Morrell, 2008, p. 158). In this way, young people become co-researchers in the process of analysing their social worlds as well as co-creators of knowledge. In a sense, participatory research is the methodology par excellence for extending, fostering and nurturing the agentive role of young people in society. A. B. Smith and Bjerke (2009) argue that “for children to learn to speak up and voice their opinions, it is important for adults to create participatory spaces and to provide support and guidance in partnership with children, in order to help them to formulate their views” (p. 18).

Participatory research is an important methodological approach in this study, which seeks and allows for the ethical and active participation of young people in the research. Although there has been a rise in calls for participatory forms of research, its use in tourism research is still limited (Westwood, 2007). In this project, I argue that if we want to uncover the deep set issues concerning tourism for host communities and at the same time challenge the politics of academic research, we must embrace more participatory and collaborative approaches particularly when working with marginalised and unrecognised members of the community such as children and young people.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

The plurality of methods employed in this study is, as Denzin and Lincoln (2011a) argue, “a strategy that adds rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry” (p. 5) These research methods are summarised in Table 3.1 for clarity and explained in more depth in the following section.
Table 3.1 Research Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research methods</th>
<th>Participants/Source</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consultation workshop</td>
<td>Members of Byron Youth Council (young people 12-24 years)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-depth interviews</td>
<td>Key adult informants&lt;br /&gt;Young people (18-24 years)</td>
<td>14/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Young people (10-24 years)</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory filmmaking project</td>
<td>Young co-researchers (10-16 years)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-interview project</td>
<td>Young co-researchers (15-16 years)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer-interviews</td>
<td>Young people (15-18 years)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participatory observation</td>
<td>Community events (e.g. “Protect Byron” rally, Schoolies Hub, “Girl to Woman” event, “Altered States” Byron Youth Theatre performance); Byron Youth Council meetings; group discussions with co-researchers</td>
<td>Fieldwork journal (2013-2015)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consultation with the Byron Youth Council

In line with the transformative and participatory approach of this, initial consultation with young residents of the Byron Shire was sought to define and consolidate the research approach. As participatory research requires “not merely techniques but a participatory process” (Ansell, Robson, Hajdu, & van Blerk, 2012, p. 170),
consultation with the Byron Youth Council was deemed the first essential step in creating a truly participatory research design (Black, Walsh, & Taylor, 2011).

The Byron Youth Council was first established in 2010 to give young people the opportunity to voice their opinions on community matters important to them and develop local youth projects (Byron Shire Council, 2016). Representatives, between the ages of 12 and 24 years, are elected for 12 months and meet six or more times a year. The Byron Youth Council provided access into the field and proved to be an essential step in achieving a collaborative approach to the research. Doing research with children and young people is particularly challenging as multiple layers of adult gatekeepers (e.g. ethics committees, professionals, teachers, parents and caregivers) often control their participation in research (Morrow, 2008; Powell & Smith, 2009).

Expedited ethical clearance (ECN-14-058) was sought to attend one of the Byron Youth Council meetings and consult with its members. Fifteen young people between the ages of 12 and 24 years were engaged in the initial consultation and provided invaluable feedback and suggestions on important aspects of this research. Young people listened to what the study was hoping to do, provided input into the research design, directly contributed to the definition of some of its elements, and, importantly, advised on how to best engage with young people and the topics to be addressed. The process of consulting with the Byron Youth Council drew attention to a range of other key issues and possibilities including:

- Young people felt a project of this nature could raise awareness of the issues faced by young residents growing up in Byron Shire.

- They talked about the most appropriate and engaging way to involve other young people in the research and they liked the idea of co-researching. They thought being actively involved in the research would allow young people to learn new skills and boost their confidence. However, they thought age was an important decisive factor in deciding who would be able to participate. They suggested young people in Year 10 between the ages of 15 and 16 would be more suitable for a project of this kind.
• They provided ideas on how to recruit the young co-researchers and discussed how they should meet and stay in contact during the project (e.g. social media).

• They also identified what could be the potential benefits to them and the community such as more programs and funding in place to educate young people about the negative implications of tourism and to have a say in decisions about tourism development and planning.

This phase represented a way for these young people to have a say in how the research was conducted, positioning them as experts in their own right. The extensive preliminary consultation process also responded to calls for more ethical, participatory and inclusive research with children and young people which goes beyond “tokenistic” gestures and extends true and meaningful participation during the research process (Black et al., 2011; Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010a; Graham et al., 2006; Phelan & Kinsella, 2013; Swartz, 2011; Thomas, 2007; Young & Barrett, 2001). The Byron Youth Council continued providing valuable feedback on various aspects of this project in the capacity of “Advisory Group”.

**Recruiting participants**

Consistent with the interpretive paradigm of this study, qualitative purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants. Purposive or judgment sampling refers to the method whereby the researcher exercises his or her own judgment and intentionally invites those specific perspectives from individuals, groups or organisations which will most appropriately address the research questions (Abrams, 2010; Berg, 2009; Creswell, 2007; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The intent in qualitative purposive sampling is thus not to generalise findings “but to elucidate the particular, the specific” (Creswell, 2007, p. 126). Purposive sampling is a highly relevant tool in this study as young people under the age of 18 years are often a hard-to-reach group within the community (Abrams, 2010).
The initial consultation with the Byron Youth Council provided an opportunity and way into the community of young people. Finding key informants, or “gatekeepers”, is important to access the field in ethnographic research (Creswell, 2007). After talking to these young people it was agreed that the most appropriate way to reach other young people was to employ a snowball sampling approach. Young people were purposively not recruited through schools to challenge the balance of power which is heavily skewed towards adult supervision in such context (Hart, 1992; Kellett, 2004). Hart (1992) argues that most research involving children still occurs within school settings where “expectations from teachers and principals give little real freedom of choice” (p. 15). Young people were thus recruited through youth and community groups, which meant they had freedom of choice and could abstain from participating (see Table 3.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
<th>Peer-interviews</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mullumbimby</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocean Shores</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byron Bay</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brunswick Heads</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangalow</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-14 years</td>
<td>36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-18 years</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-24 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: As the young co-researchers took part in the focus groups before expressing an interest in the participatory projects, they are here included in the total number of focus group participants.
Recruiting young people through youth and community groups however does have its limitations, including the potential bias that may arise as not every young person attends such groups. Nevertheless, qualitative purposive sampling is assumed to be more naturalistic as it provides a chance to study people and their behaviours in their ordinary settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011a; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Purposive sampling was also used to identify knowledgeable adult informants who work with young people in the Byron Shire community, and was employed to establish the teams of co-researchers. An information booklet was created to invite young people to engage in the participatory projects (see Appendix A). These were distributed to young people and adult respondents during the interviews and focus groups.

Finally, as qualitative sampling is rarely predetermined or finite in its numerical size, I remained flexible and took advantage of opportunities for informal conversations with young people in the community (Creswell, 2007). As Abrams (2010) argues qualitative researchers “often do not know when a study will be ‘theoretically saturated’, or when further data collection will stop yielding new theoretical insights” (p. 539).

**In-depth interviews**

In-depth interviews were employed with key adult informants and young people who preferred having one-on-one conversations rather than group discussions. A total of six in-depth interviews were carried out with young people (between the ages of 18 and 24 years) and 14 with adult stakeholders. Knowledgeable adults (e.g. youth workers) were interviewed to gain access to young participants and to achieve a general understanding of the opportunities and challenges faced by young people in the Byron Shire. In addition, the young co-researchers conducted 11 peer-interviews in the participatory stage of the project discussed in more detail later in the chapter. The interviews typically lasted between 30 and 160 minutes and were audio-recorded with participants’ consent.

Interviews with young people covered three main themes: 1) community, including questions on what they liked, what they disliked and what they would like to change in their community; 2) felt sense of belonging, including their views on sharing spaces and places with visitors; and identity and future aspirations, including what
they liked doing for fun and what their plans for the future were. Some young adult participants were also eager to talk about their participation in community decisions and tourism development, so questions pertaining to this topic were included when appropriate. The interview and focus group schedule (see Appendix B) was formulated to address question number one of this study: How do young people perceive that growing up in a tourist destination affects their lives including their sense of identity and belonging?

In addition, interviews with adult stakeholders addressed similar themes including: how adults perceived growing up in a tourist destination shapes young people’s life experiences and their felt sense of belonging; if the issues faced by young people are acknowledged and addressed in the community; and if there should be more involvement of young people in policy and planning issues surrounding tourism development in the Byron Shire (see Appendix C for interview schedule). The interview questions formulated for adult stakeholders were adapted throughout the interviews to reflect participants’ concerns and they address question two of this study: How do adults who work with young people perceive the experience of growing up in the Byron Shire?

Whilst the interview and focus group questions were generally the same, careful consideration was given to the age range of participants in this study. As such, while trying to maintain a certain degree of consistency of focus, the interview and focus group questions were adapted to better engage with participants from the various age groups and to more appropriately reflect their interests and concerns. Reflecting on the relationship that exists between the interviewer and interviewee, and cautious of the inherent asymmetrical power relations (Kvale, 2006; Nunkoosing, 2005; Weis & Fine, 2000), every effort was made to position the young person as an expert in describing his/her experiences and life events. This meant being open to a more organic process during the interviews enabling each distinct group of young people to bring their own experiences, views and questions to bare on the research. The interviews were thus semi-structured with broad and open-ended questions (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Dialogical and dialectic learning was encouraged through flexible wording of questions and inclusion of probes (Berg, 2009). Similarly to
Christensen’s (2004) study, the interviews strived for a “continuing dialogue” which young people felt they had control over.

The intent of the interviews was to open up a “communicative space” where communicative action could take place (Habermas cited in Kemmis, 2008, p. 127). Creating communicative spaces conducive to intersubjective and two-way learning outcomes is consistent with the participatory and critical approach of this study (Kemmis, 2008). This kind of interview is defined by Schwandt (2007) as an “active interview”, as both respondent and interviewer are regarded as “agents active in the co-construction of the content of the interview” (p. 162). This narrative or discursive approach to interviewing assumes that “the subject is always making meaning, regardless of whether he or she is actually being interviewed” (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000, p. 14).

**Focus groups**

A total of 14 focus groups were organised to create an opportunity for discussion among the young people (n=68). Consistent with the guidelines from previous studies, focus groups were conducted with young people of similar ages and gender (F. Gibson, 2007; Horner, 2000; Roose & John, 2003). F. Gibson (2007) argues that working with older children and young people it is possible to have larger groups of up to eight but it is important to have a low variation in age among participants. The number of participants in each focus group varied from a minimum of three to a maximum of eight participants. Focus groups were mostly organised through the Byron Youth Services, sports clubs and other youth clubs. The relatively homogenous nature of the focus groups and the fact participants new each other, meant that considerable time was saved building rapport among members (Schensul, 1999). In addition, this homogeneity facilitated data analysis and comparisons by gender and age in NVivo, a qualitative computer analysis software (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

Once again “communicative spaces” were encouraged not only to discuss the issues faced by young residents of Byron Shire but also to share ideas about the research project. Krueger (1994) defines a focus group as a “carefully planned discussion, designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-
threatening environment” (p. 6). This is particularly important when researching with children and young people as often they feel more comfortable speaking up in a group situation (Christensen, 2004; Coggan, Patterson, & Fill, 1997; Colucci, 2007; F. Gibson, 2007; Horner, 2000; Schäfer & Yarwood, 2008). F. Gibson (2007) argues that focus groups offer a “valuable, versatile, interactive, fun and developmentally effective method for use with children and young people” (p. 482).

**Participant/participatory observation**

Participant observation is the traditional method used in ethnographic inquiry which originated within the discipline of anthropology but is now used extensively in the social sciences (Berg, 2009; Montgomery, 2007). Ethnographic research involves entering a social context (e.g. community, ethnic group or subculture) and simply watching, observing and listening (Berg, 2009). Participant observation is described by Schwandt (2007) as “a methodology that assumes immersion in a setting (along with observation, reflection, and interpretation) is the best way to develop knowledge of others’ ways of thinking and acting” (p. 219).

The ethnographer thus remains in the field for an extended period of time, taking part in the daily activities of the people and engaging in processes of “inscription”, “transcription” and “description” in field notes (Schwandt, 2007, p. 219). Participant observation has become popular both in tourism studies (Conran, 2011; Mkono, 2013; Pereiro, 2010; Sin, 2009), and youth and childhood studies as integral to the broader ethnographic research agenda (Cheney, 2011; Hastadewi, 2009; Jarrett, 1995; Setyowati & Widiyanto, 2009; Warming, 2011).

Since calling the Byron Shire my home for the past eight years, and having lived in the area at various intervals in the last 20 years, I have developed a keen interest in the issues, problems and opportunities that these youth face growing up in such a popular Australian tourist destination. It could be argued that I have been engaging in participant (or more appropriately “participatory”) observation for several years now. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study I engaged in formal participant/participatory observation for the duration of the project (2012-2015) by attending the Byron Youth Council meetings, group discussions with the young co-researchers and other community meetings and events where tourism and/or youth
issues were discussed. I was also observing, guiding and mentoring the young co-
researchers and overseeing the data collection process.

In order to research the participatory method as well as the findings, I kept a detailed
record of observations and informal conversations in my fieldwork journal (see also
Holland, Renold, Ross, & Hillman, 2010). In this sense, the participant observation I
engaged in was of a participatory nature thus echoing popular postmodern and
feminist critiques of the traditional anthropological method which implied a degree
of distance with the people studied (Schwandt, 2007). Employing
participant/participatory observation gave me the opportunity to form relationships
based on mutual respect and trust and to achieve a research approach with and not
merely on the young people being studied.

**Secondary data analysis**

Secondary data sources were also collected and analysed in order to provide a
contextual background to the research and to triangulate findings (Creswell, 2007).
These included historical documents, tourism strategic documents, newspaper
articles and media releases, and key policies and statistical data (see Table 3.1).

**Participatory film-making project**

During the interviews and focus groups with young people in the community,
expressions of interest were sought to be involved in the participatory phase of the
research. In seeking to engage young people across the age spectrum and in order to
delve deeper into the issues faced by young people growing up in a tourist location,
two participatory projects evolved from this research (see Table 3.1). Findings of the
participatory projects specifically address research question three of this study: How
does participatory research with young people challenge and extend understandings
of their lived experience of growing up in a tourist destination?

The first project involved a group of 14 young people, between the ages of 10 and
16, who participated in a film-making activity as co-researchers. They met once a
week for a period of six weeks to discuss their experiences of growing up in a
tourism community, what they liked, what they disliked and what they would like to
change in their community. The discussions were taped and transcribed, and
content/thematic analysis was used to identify the emerging themes, a process which was facilitated by the use of NVivo10.

On the basis of these discussions, the group of young co-researchers created three short animation movies to express their views and voice their concerns about tourism activity in their community. The young people employed a technique known as "clay-motion" whereby they manipulated plasticine figures and moved the objects in small increments which were individually photographed and created an illusion of movement when played in a sequence. In collaboration with a local film maker and the Byron Youth Services (a not-for-profit youth organisation) the young people actively led the production of the films. They came up with the stories, created the sets, shot the scenes for the films and also produced their own music (see Figure 3.2). Young people thus became co-researchers in the process of analysing their social worlds, as well as co-creators of knowledge. The participatory film-making activity also encouraged the emergence of young people’s voices.

Figure 3.2: Participatory Film Workshop
According to Rakić and Chambers (2009) innovative research methods are still marginal rather than mainstream in tourism research. E. Wilson and Hollinshead (2015) agree, demonstrating the power and potential of different forms of qualitative research in taking tourism studies further:

While qualitative inquiry has made significant advances within tourism studies, scholars can gain richly by continuing to cultivate forms of critical multilogicality, and by embracing some of the methods and approaches on offer elsewhere across the broader (soft) social sciences. (p. 30)

While qualitative approaches in tourism have indeed gained ground and are increasingly employed, studies which make use of visual methods and film-making are still few and far between (D. Chambers & Rakić, 2015a; Rakić & D. Chambers, 2009). Nevertheless, a growing body of literature is now filling this void, and addressing previous omissions of the “visual” in tourism research (Canosa, 2014). Researchers such as Rakić and D. Chambers (2009) and Scarles (2010) have called for more innovative methods such as photography, drawings and film in the collection and interpretation of tourism experiences.

Still missing, however, are opportunities to actively involve research participants as collaborators and co-creators in the research process. Participatory visual research has the potential to generate new forms of knowledge/s which cannot be developed any other way (Packard, 2008), as well as aid the democratisation of the research process (Brosnan, Filep, & Rock, 2015; Haynes & Tanner, 2015). Film and video-making have a long history in disciplines such as sociology and anthropology, where they have been employed to record and document different cultures and ways of life (Parr, 2007). Participatory film-making however differs from traditional documentary film-making as “control over, and responsibility for, the process and product stays with participants rather than with filmmakers from outside the community” (Blazek & Hraňová, 2012, p. 153).
In this project, young people were supported or “scaffolded” by adults and were encouraged to think creatively about how to portray their experiences, in this case through the creation of a stop-motion animation film. Ansell et al. (2012) suggest that non-verbal techniques provide a stimulus for discussion as well as provide data directly in participatory research. In this case, the participatory films produced by the co-researchers were as much a result of their discussions, as a way to portray in a creative way their interpretations.

**Peer-interview project**

The second participatory project was carried out with six young girls between the ages of 15 and 16 over a period of six months. Expressions of interest were sought during the interviews and focus groups, and a group of young girls who attended the “Young Women’s Program” through the Byron Youth Services volunteered as participants. Since the group of young girls all attended the same high school and knew each other, considerable time which would normally be spent developing mutual trust and establishing relationships was redirected towards the training.

The young co-researchers received training in research methods, interviewing, ethical considerations and consent procedures, and data analysis (see Table 3.3). All decisions about the research were taken collaboratively over the duration of the project (Swartz, 2011). A closed Facebook group page was also created to keep in touch and post information about the project. After the initial mentoring and training stage, and when the young co-researchers felt ready to enter the field, they worked in pairs and independently carried out 11 peer-interviews. They made important decisions about how and where to conduct these interviews independently.

The interview questions were co-developed with the group during the first training session and covered some of the main themes that had emerged from the interviews and focus groups with other young people in the community (see Figure 3.3). During the workshop we discussed what parent nodes and child nodes are in the NVivo computer software and what happens to the audio recordings once they are transcribed (see also Holland et al., 2010).
Table 3.3: Co-researchers’ Training Program

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Task</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 2015</td>
<td><strong>What is research and why we need it</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is research?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overview of qualitative and quantitative methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overview of coding and themes which have emerge from the focus groups and interviews with young people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Choose themes/topics to explore and preferred methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2015</td>
<td><strong>How to create an interview guide</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wording of questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Best practice in interviewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Create an interview guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Test smartphones for recording purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Research Ethics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Why ethics?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What is the researcher’s ethical conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overview of Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Informed consent and parental consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2015</td>
<td><strong>Interview techniques</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How to conduct an interview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Best practice in interviewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Practice doing interviews in pairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hand out co-researcher kit with print outs of the interview guide and the consent material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July –August 2015</td>
<td><strong>Data collection</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Individual project work (working in pairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keep in contact via closed Facebook group page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 2015</td>
<td><strong>De-Brief</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• De-brief session – feedback on the participatory project and end of project party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In order to explain what each node meant, I organised a game where various coloured cards (themed to match the node colours) with quotations from interview excerpts were placed in a hat and each girl had to read out the quotes and identify the theme it referred to. We then had a discussion around these issues and the young co-researchers chose topics of interest to them and worked in pairs to develop an interview guide (see Appendix D):

Team One: Drugs, alcohol and safety

Team Two: Overcrowding and tourism attitudes

Team Three: Rise in cost of living and employment
During the training program the co-researchers had time to learn as well as practice interview skills and ethical consent procedures. When they felt ready they independently carried out peer-interviews in their own time. Some observational notes gleaned from the interviews and from the de-briefing session, held with the girls after they had conducted the interviews, are included in the following fieldnotes:

The co-researchers independently decided who would conduct the interviews and who would carry out the informed consent procedures, sharing the roles between each other. They also decided where and with whom to carry out the interviews, however generally they were held in the school playground at lunch time. Probing was difficult for young people and did not come naturally. They tended to jump to the next question very quickly. The co-researchers showed empathy with the interviewees and often made encouraging statements, showing support and respect for respondents and their views and
opinions. Compared to the interviews I carried out, young people interviewed by their peers have a more personal way of talking about their experiences (own language/way of expressing themselves) and their stories are of a more personal nature. (Fieldnotes, September 2015)

I then transcribed and entered the data in NVivo 10. Although I was eager to involve the young co-researchers in the analysis and dissemination of findings, they displayed a desire to end the project. Later in the de-briefing session I realised their perceptions of “participation” in a research project were fundamentally different from my own, an issue which will be discussed in more depth in Chapter Six. At the end of the project the young co-researchers received a clothing voucher as a token of appreciation for their time and commitment to the project.

DATA ANALYSIS

The process of analysing research findings has been described as “the activity of making sense of, interpreting, and theorizing data” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 6). It is both art and science, and it begins with the “process of organizing, reducing, and describing the data and continues through the activity of drawing conclusions or interpretations from the data, and warranting those interpretations” (Schwandt, 2007, p. 6). Floersch, Longhofer, Kranke, and Townsend (2010) define thematic analysis as “a qualitative method to identify, report, and analyse data for the meanings produced in and by people, situations and events” (p. 408). It involves various phases which include organising the data for analysis, reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and finally representing the findings in figures, tables or a discussion (Creswell, 2007; Guest et al., 2006; Neuman, 2011; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Among other qualitative analytic methods, thematic analysis is probably the most popular and it involves searching for themes which emerge from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Tuckett, 2005). Buetow (2010) defines themes as “groups of codes that
recur through being similar or connected to each other in a patterned way” (p. 123). Whilst each phase of the research utilised different methods with different stakeholders, broadly the analysis was the same. The audio-visual material produced during the participatory films, and available via YouTube, is specifically analysed through the eyes of the young co-researchers who produced them and supported by the textual data collected in the workshops and focus groups held with these young people. The richness of the audio-visual data captures young people’s own interpretation of life in a tourist area in ways that other methods would not (Scarles, 2015). Following Creswell (2014), and consistent with ethnographic and interpretive practice, the thematic analysis consisted of the following phases (see also Table 3.4):

1. *Organising and preparing the data for analysis.* In this phase, I transcribed the interviews and entered the transcripts in QSR NVivo 10, a qualitative data management and analysis software (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). I also collected and organised all secondary data sources.

2. *Reflecting on the overall meaning of the data.* I then read and listened to the recordings trying to immerse myself in the data prior to the coding process. In addition, in ethnography multiple sources of data come to bare on the research problem and as such I coded all observational fieldnotes as well as the interview transcripts (Creswell, 2014).

3. *Initial coding.* Coding is the process of organising the data and assigning a word which represents the category. Creswell (2014) defines coding as the process of “taking text data or pictures gathered during data collection, segmenting sentences (or paragraphs) or images into categories, and labelling those categories with a term” (p. 198). This initial stage is called open coding and the text is coded to free nodes in NVivo (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).
4. **Axial Coding.** This phase refers to the “process of relating categories to their subcategories, termed ‘axial’ because coding occurs around the axis of a category, linking categories at the level of properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 123). After having identified the initial codes, I looked at how these crosscut and linked to each other forming broader categories called themes or tree nodes in NVivo (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Creswell (2014) explains that these themes or categories are the ones that appear as major findings in qualitative studies and should thus be supported by a diverse range of quotations and specific evidence.

5. **Reviewing and refining themes.** In this phase, I reviewed major themes and sub-themes giving consideration to how the information related to the study’s research objectives. Because of the richness and depth of information, not all information was included. Although I undertook a process of “winnowing” during the data analysis, I was careful not to disregard any of the information and stories told by my participants (Neuman, 2011). Visual representations such as mind-maps were also useful to organise and refine themes in a way that facilitated the narrative description of findings.

6. **Interpretation or “telling the story”.** In this final stage the ethnographer relates the story and gives meaning to the study. This meaning can take several forms which are related in the following chapters and include: the meaning derived from a comparison of the findings with other literature; my personal interpretation, introspective and reflexive notes; and finally questions that still need to be answered (Creswell, 2014).
Table 3.4 Phases of the Thematic Analysis Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Focus groups</th>
<th>Films</th>
<th>Observation</th>
<th>Secondary data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Transcribing/ importing transcripts in NVivo</td>
<td>Transcribing/ importing transcripts in NVivo</td>
<td>Interpreting films and importing notes in NVivo</td>
<td>Interpreting events and importing notes in NVivo</td>
<td>Organising secondary data sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Listening to recordings</td>
<td>Listening to recordings</td>
<td>Watching the films</td>
<td>Re-reading notes</td>
<td>Re-reading documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Open coding to free nodes</td>
<td>Open coding to free nodes</td>
<td>Open coding to free nodes</td>
<td>Open coding to free nodes</td>
<td>Searching for key text and identifying themes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Axial coding and establishing tree nodes</td>
<td>Axial coding and establishing tree nodes</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Refining themes</td>
<td>Refining themes</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Comparing findings with the literature</td>
<td>Comparing findings with the literature</td>
<td>Relating/ supporting findings of interview data</td>
<td>Relating/ supporting findings of interview data</td>
<td>Supporting findings of interview data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All data was coded to the same nodes in NVivo.

Although thematic analysis was the dominant data analysis tool, the organic nature of the interviews meant that oral narratives of young people’s memories of childhood were often collected, particularly among young adults. These narratives were analysed as expressions of a deeper meaning connected to their ideologies, beliefs and experiences as is practice in narrative inquiry (Floersch et al., 2010). As discussed in Chapter Two, identity is increasingly becoming an “active quest”, thus narratives and stories “play an important role in (re)constructing, (re)defining and consolidating personal and social identities” (Canosa, 2014, p. 184). Interpreting the narratives and stories told by young people becomes an important step in understanding how sense of identity and belonging are created and negotiated (Thomson, 2007a). In addition, since talk is seen as a social interaction, silences and even laughter were included as important features for analysis (Danby & Farrell, 2005).
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research aims to uphold children and young people’s agency and participatory rights by employing child-centred methodologies that challenge the power imbalances inherent in the research process and that promote the safety, dignity and voice of the young collaborators (N. Bell, 2008; Gallagher, 2008; Graham et al., 2013; Holt, 2004; Phelan & Kinsella, 2013; Powell et al., 2012; Powell & Smith, 2009; Sime, 2008; Skelton, 2008; Spyrou, 2011; Swartz, 2011). Ethical considerations are thus not limited to this section of the thesis but are carefully woven into the whole research design. In particular, my choice of research methods should be understood as an ethical strategy towards emancipatory research that seeks to “give back” opportunities for the young collaborators to learn and be involved in community matters that affect them (Swartz, 2011, p. 52).

In this section, I focus on the procedural considerations that ethical and sound research on children and young people entails whereas in Chapter Six I discuss more in depth the “ethics in practice” and critically reflect on some “ethically important moments” in my fieldwork (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Phelan and Kinsella (2013) argue that ethical considerations are better approached as a process versus a single event in the research project. They assert that researcher reflexivity and ethical mindfulness are essential throughout the whole duration of the project when conducting research with children:

Researcher reflexivity on ethically important moments lies at the heart of living ethical practice in qualitative research and….enabling child safety, dignity, and voice serve as useful guides in the quest for ethical practices in research with children.
(Phelan & Kinsella, 2013, p. 81)

Reflexivity refers to the researcher’s “ability to think” and ponder about the positionality of researcher and informant, the relationships that form and how these impact on the knowledge produced (Doyle, 2013). Swartz (2011) argues that we need to employ researcher subjectivity as a conscious ethical strategy and turn “the reflexive gaze” (p. 55) upon our fieldwork practices. Reflexivity has emerged as an
important means of addressing the complexity of qualitative research and has been adopted by feminist and critical ethnographic traditions across a variety of disciplinary backgrounds (Davis, 1998; Doyle, 2013; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Kina, 2012; Pink, 2003; Warin, 2011).

Graham et al. (2016) argue that reflexivity is “critical to ethical validity in social research” (p. 86). According to the authors, reflexivity differs from reflection in that it “moves beyond the descriptive (‘what’) and the analytical (‘why’ and ‘what if’) of ethical dilemmas to the critical ‘now what” (Graham et al., 2016, p. 86). Since all social research involving human participants starts from a position of “ethical tension”, Guillemin and Gillam (2004, p. 271) argue that we must critically reflect on the purpose of our research (is it ethically appropriate?) and on the interpersonal aspects of the research (the interactions between researcher and participants). This sensitivity to self and others makes reflexivity a useful strategy to achieve a higher degree of ethical mindfulness – an awareness of the relational and emotional nature of research (Warin, 2011).

Thus, a critical and reflexive ethical framework guided the research and helped me to negotiate the ethical tensions that arose during fieldwork, which are discussed further in Chapter Six (Dockett, Einarsdóttir, & Perry, 2009; Holland et al., 2010). In this research, I endeavoured to conduct qualitative research which is both reflexive and reflective and which is sensitive to the safety and dignity of research participants (Phelan & Kinsella, 2013; Spyrou, 2011). In order to foster trust, mutual respect and equality with participants I purposely made explicit parts of my own autobiography during the fieldwork. Swartz (2011) argues that conveying researcher subjectivity is a conscious ethical strategy, “an intentional ethics of reciprocation” (p. 56). The approach I took in this research is one of building a bridge between the narratives of my collaborators and my own.

The key ethical principles set out in the ERIC (Ethical Research Involving Children) initiative guided the ethical practices of this research (Graham et al., 2013). ERIC was undertaken in collaboration with over 400 highly respected members of the international child research community (with UNICEF and ChildWatch International playing a key role) and focuses on assisting and guiding researchers and other key
stakeholders in planning and conducting ethical research which respects the human dignity, rights and wellbeing of children and young people (Graham et al., 2013). The key ethical commitments include: access and informed consent; protection of children; anonymity and confidentiality (Gallagher, 2010; Graham et al., 2013; Morrow, 2008; Phelan & Kinsella, 2013; Powell et al., 2012; Sime, 2008).

**Access and informed consent**

Negotiating access and informed consent are probably the most challenging steps in doing research with young people, as multiple layers of adult gatekeepers may prevent their participation (Morrow, 2008; Powell & Smith, 2009; Sime, 2008; Skelton, 2008). Initial expedited ethical clearance was sought to consult with the Byron Youth Council (ECN-14-058). After this initial stage the methodology was refined and a National Ethics Application was lodged for the full study (ECN-15-212). Informed consent was then sought from young people to participate in the research. Informed consent has been defined as the “visible act of evaluating information and making a decision, and the visible act of signifying the decision” (Alderson & Morrow cited in Powell et al., 2012, p. 13). It entails three processes: the provision of information by the researcher; the participant asking questions and understanding the information; and then making a response (Powell et al., 2012). Gallagher (2009) explains that informed consent rests of four core principles:

- Consent involves a verbal or written agreement.
- Consent can only be given after participants are informed about the research.
- Consent must be given voluntarily without coercion.
- Consent can be withdrawn at any stage of the research process if participants want to opt out.

Who provides consent for the participation of children and young people in research is, however, a contentious issue (Powell & Smith, 2009). Most ethical review boards require parental consent for children under the age of 18. However, first and foremost it is important to secure the child’s informed consent both to prove that
deception or coercion did not take place and to uphold children’s participatory rights as enshrined in the UNCRC (N. Bell, 2008).

I actively sought children’s informed consent (see Appendix E), and whenever possible, parental consent as well. However, as young participants were recruited from youth clubs and sports club, I had difficulties identifying and locating parents or guardians. It was thus deemed necessary to adopt an “opt-out” or passive approach to parental consent (see Appendix F), whereby parents were only required to sign and return the consent form if they did not want their child to participate in the research. The opt-out consent form was only employed with young people between the ages of 15 and 24 years. Graham et al. (2013) argue that this is an appropriate approach when dealing with older children over 15 years of age and other hard-to-reach “hidden populations of young people” (p. 77).

In this study, informed consent took place on two levels. Firstly, both informed opt-out parental consent and consent from the young people were sought when interviewing young participants during the interviews and focus groups. At the next level, the consent procedure was employed by the young co-researchers when interviewing their peers during the one-on-one interviews (see Appendix G). The young co-researchers underwent a training program and the ethical considerations of doing research where covered during one of these workshops. In particular, we covered and explored the principles and practices enshrined in the Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) guide (Graham et al., 2013).

**Protection of children**

Until recently, popular assumptions of children as immature, vulnerable and incompetent have created the grounds for the protection and nurturance of children often preventing them from participating in research particularly when sensitive issues are explored (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010b). In this research, I have tried to uphold the ethical principles of beneficence and non-maleficence by protecting participants from the potential risks of being involved in a research project while allowing them to benefit from the results (Graham et al., 2013). Although the issues explored in this project are not of a sensitive nature, all efforts were made to reduce any discomfort felt by the young people as a result of sharing their experiences.
Ultimately, the entire research design has been developed with the intention of providing a safe environment for the young people to share their stories.

**Anonymity and confidentiality**

To protect young people’s privacy and identity, pseudonyms were used which were on some occasions chosen by the respondents themselves in order for them to track their progress in the research (Powell et al., 2012). All information collected during this research was kept confidential and used strictly for academic purposes. Any photographs or film produced during this project was kept in accordance with the child protection policy and only disseminated with both child and parental consent.

**METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS AND REFLECTIONS**

As this is a qualitative and interpretive project, notions of validity, reliability and objectivity are reframed respectively by the goals of trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011a). The multiple methods employed in this study aim to make triangulation not “a tool or a strategy of validation but an alternative to validation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011a, p. 5). Hence in this era of “post-standpoint” approaches (Humberstone, 2004) or “postexperimental moments” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011a), it makes sense to substitute previous positivistic research criteria such as validity with the goals of “trustworthiness, credibility and authenticity” (Humberstone, 2004, p. 132). Nevertheless, this is at times messy and difficult, and the complexity of the methodological approach taken in this study has not been unproblematic.

For a novice researcher like myself, negotiating the difficulties of fieldwork and remaining true to the emancipatory aims of this research has been at times difficult. Although aware of the unpredictable nature of participatory research with children and young people, I was not sufficiently aware or prepared for how the participatory projects evolved. For one, I would never have thought that I would be writing about participatory film-making and plasticine figures! Nor would I have anticipated that at the completion of the peer-interview project my young collaborators seemed to be disinterested in disseminating the findings.
In addition, while this research is underpinned by principles of participation and empowerment, I am not sure I have been able to fully achieve “authentic” participation or what Kellett (2005) defines “child-led” research. As the study is, essentially, a PhD project this meant that my young collaborators were not involved in the choice of topic which was defined at the outset in the form of a research proposal (confirmation of candidature exam), and underwent close scrutiny by a panel of examiners. Nevertheless, the topic (the lived experience of young people growing up in a tourist destination) was purposefully left broad enough to enable young people to critically engage and choose issues of concern to them.

Kellett (2005) argues there needs to be the right balance between supporting and managing children’s research as “too much of one or the other can affect a child’s sense of ownership and risk varying degrees of adult-filtered intervention” (n.p.). Achieving this balance was at times challenging but I have tried throughout the participatory projects to provide as much “scaffolding” needed for the young co-researchers to make independent choices. Thus, while authentic child-led research may not have been fully achieved, participation, emancipation and empowerment were core intents of this research. As Holland et al. (2010) argue, “it is more important to pay close attention to how participation is enacted…than to focus in on how much participation was achieved” (p. 373). In addition, as in any other exploratory and context-specific study, a potential limitation of this research rests in the lack of generalisability of findings. It is expected, however, that the findings will have considerable resonance for young people who grow up in other small communities where the main economy is tourism.
SUMMARY
In many ways, this study is interdisciplinary, in that it integrates and melds disciplinary insights from tourism, anthropology and childhood studies. However, the approach I have taken could be understood as transdisciplinary, in that it aims to transgress the theoretical as well as the methodological boundaries of particular disciplinary knowledge. In particular, this chapter explored how tourism research on communities has been entrenched in its quantitative and positivist tradition and is in need of more interpretive and qualitative methodologies to move forward. I argue that the critical and transformative worldview, which underpins this research, may go some way towards overcoming these limitations by providing an ethical framework to guide the choice of methods. Critical ethnography and participatory methods were chosen precisely because they allowed the flexibility to actively involve my young participants in the research process and they also provided opportunities for educational benefits.
CHAPTER FOUR
GROWING UP IN A TOURIST DESTINATION: Perspectives and Experiences of Children and Young People

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the lived experiences of young people growing up in the tourist destination of Byron Shire. Firstly, I discuss findings from data collected with young participants since a central endeavour of this research is to co-produce knowledge that is authentically grounded in young people’s perspectives. Hence, this chapter seeks to explore how young people perceive that growing up in a tourist destination affects their lives including their sense of identity and belonging (Research Question One).

To reiterate, childhood is socially constructed and young people have an active role in this process; thus, in this chapter I focus on the stories and narratives that the young people shared during one-on-one in-depth interviews and focus groups. Interview excerpts and quotations are included to illustrate themes and this data is discussed in relation to the relevant literature. In addition, observational notes from participation in community events and meetings are included to support the discussion. Although there is no uniform or generalised “young people’s view”, a number of recurring themes have emerged which are detailed below.
CONSTRUCTING IDENTITIES IN A TOURIST DESTINATION

The young people in this research have talked about their experiences of growing up in a popular tourist destination from two unique viewpoints. Their identities fluctuate between an idyllic childhood in a rural and seaside community (Cummins, 2009; H. Matthews, Taylor, Sherwood, Tucker, & Limb, 2000; McCormack, 2000; Panelli, Nairn, & McCormack, 2002; Powell, Smith, & Taylor, 2016; Powell, Taylor, & Smith, 2013; Valentine, 1997), and a childhood fraught with the same issues and tensions that urban youth encounter (Kong, 2000; Malone, 1999; Vanderbeck & Johnson, 2000; White, 1996; Woolcock et al., 2010). As a consequence, the experiences of childhood in a tourist destination are diverse and hybrid, and often disrupt the rural/urban childhoods dichotomy (Nairn, Panelli, & McCormack, 2003).

Firstly, I focus on the stories and narratives of young people connected to the rural idyll which contributes to the growing body of knowledge in this area (Cummins, 2009; H. Matthews et al., 2000; Powell et al., 2016; Valentine, 1997). Among the experiences of rural childhoods, I also highlight some of the main issues that young people in the area have talked about at length, including lack of affordable transport and lack of infrastructure and activities for young people. Secondly, I discuss young people’s experiences connected to the urban aspects of life in the Shire, in particular the multicultural environment and opportunities to socialise with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. I then move on to discuss how young people negotiate belonging in a tourist destination and the associated problems exacerbated by the influx of young tourists, backpackers and “weekendism”.

Children, nature and the rural idyll

It is evident that young people living in the Byron Shire have a strong connection to nature and the natural environment, such as the beaches, parklands and the ocean. For these children, the beauty of the landscape is ingrained in their memories and contributes to their sense of identity and belonging in the Byron community. Children and young people interviewed, particularly the younger ones (10-15 years of age), spoke often about their connection to nature. They also talked about the freedom they experience when walking or bike riding to their favourite places.
Jim and Ploggin talked about their experience of growing up in Brunswick Heads where everything is close and accessible. Likewise Charlie, Lucy and Bils talked about the carefree feeling of growing up in a small rural community such as Mullumbimby:

*Just going to the beach lots - it’s very fun and it’s so efficient in Brunswick, you’ve got the shops down the road, you’ve got the beach down the road, you’ve got the school, the police station and fire station.* (Jim, age 11, focus group BZB)

*There’s lots of trees and plants so it’s like really nice.* (Ploggin, age 11, focus group BZB)

*I like that I can walk to school and walk into town with my friends and not have to worry about anything.* (Charlie, age 11, focus group MG)

*I like that it is country so there is grass to play on and trees to climb. I like that it is not too big so my friends are very close.* (Lucy, age 11, focus group MG)

*You don’t have to wear shoes in this area which makes everything so much easier! And it’s a much friendlier place.* (Bils, age 16, focus group BYSG10)

Young people also have a unique aesthetic sensibility: “*It’s a beautiful area with lots of natural places to explore. The surf is good and the water is beautiful*” (Melanie, age 24, focus group TBL). Matt (age 20) shared his experiences of growing up in such a unique and beautiful place:
I think it’s a really nice place for children to grow up just in general like it’s beautiful, nature… being around so much of that you grow up with I guess, I don’t know it’s just normal for us to have so much access to the beach, rainforest…and when you grow up and you realise that it’s a pretty rare thing to have… It’s such a beautiful part of the world and sometimes you take it for granted but it only takes a few trips overseas to start appreciating it more...

I’ve done a lot of camping around Byron Shire. (Interview)

Young people’s identities are strongly connected to their experiences of nature, outdoor play and freedom (see Powell et al., 2016). They reported enjoying walking, riding, surfing, swimming or just exploring the beautiful coastline and rainforests that make this region so unique. Within the geographical literature on childhood and the interdisciplinary field of childhood studies, there is a growing scholarship focused on the experiences of childhood in rural areas (Cummins, 2009; H. Matthews et al., 2000; Panelli et al., 2002; Powell et al., 2013). Within this literature the most common discourse is the “rural idyll” or the belief that growing up in the countryside provides a safe environment where children can experience healthy childhoods in harmony with nature (Powell et al., 2016).

**Children and the environmentalist identity**

Young people in this study also displayed an acute sensitivity to environmental issues and talked at length about nature conservation issues. They were acutely aware of the risks of uncontrolled tourism development for the natural environment. In many of the interviews and focus group discussions young people expressed concern about the visible effects of tourism on the environment, arguing that often travellers display a lack of respect for the environment. Young boys, in particular, demonstrated negative attitudes towards tourism:
They [tourists] do illegal things because they don’t know they’re illegal like spear fishing. There was this guy on the river the other day and he had a spear to go spear fishing and it’s illegal and right near the sting ray nursery...my dad told him to stop but he just didn’t care. (Jim, age 11, focus group BZB)

It’s disappointing to see people come to supposed paradise, the place where they’re expecting to be clean and beautiful and pristine, then they leave it in such a state. It's just disrespectful”. (Jack, age 21, interview)

I don’t like that Brunswick Heads is becoming more like Byron Bay and heaps of Queenslanders are pouring in. They are taking down our big beautiful pine trees. There is lots of littering everywhere and it’s mostly because a lot of tourists are always everywhere in Brunswick and they have changed how Brunswick is as a community. (Dave, age 14, focus group BYSB9)

The young people’s stories and narratives reveal a strong connection and care for the environment and are evidence of the agentive role that they have in the communities. Betty (age 21), for example, has been part of many beach clean-ups in the area: “I've been a part of a lot of beach clean-ups... When you do a beach clean-up on Main Beach, it's all stuff people has left there...straws, cups and bottles” (interview). Likewise, environmental issues are the focus of heated discussions both at home and among peers. Two young 11 year old boys emphasised the importance of trees in their community and displayed concern for trees that are being cut in their school:
Jim: But the downsize to our school is that the tree services just come and chop down all the native trees

Ploggin: Sometimes the kids love the trees, they might have like really pretty flowers or something

Jim: And just because they say they’re dangerous they chopped them down. It’s very rare that a tree is going to fall on someone

Ploggin: And I reckon they’re really strong the trees

Jim: So it’s like all flat and deserted

Ploggin: And not only the trees at our school, they cut down all these cool trees that people like to climb and sit under all around Brunswick

Jim: Even in people’s gardens....and that just means less oxygen

Ploggin: And sometimes neighbours ...just because a little bit of a tree is going over their fence line they cut it down. (Focus group BZB)

When asked to identify their greatest concern about growing up in a tourist destination, most young people referred to littering and the lack of respect that some tourists display towards the environment. They were eager to identify themselves as environmentally conscious community members and provided their perspectives on this issue:

Everyone from here is so environmentally conscious, but then the tourists don’t care because they’re leaving... I think the locals want to look after their
town whereas tourists just dump rubbish everywhere. (Bils, age 15, focus group BYSG10).

I think that they need signs up at the beaches in every language like about litter because some countries have cleaners that come on the beaches to clean so I think they don’t actually know that it just gets washed into the ocean! So yeah a lot of them come and just trash the place. (Serena, age 17, focus group BYST)

Some of the young women expressed strong feelings about the changes taking place in their community and the effects on the environment. Melanie, for example, identified that a particular kind of tourism has negative impacts on the environment in the Byron Shire:

It sucks for the environment, because there is so much more built and we’re just building more and more concrete jungle everywhere and we’re not leaving any room for the creatures and the environment and it sucks. (Bils, age 15, focus group BYSG10)

They call Byron like a really nice town, but when you go there it’s so packed every day and there’s rubbish and stuff everywhere...like it’s pretty, the beaches and everything and the shops are really good, but it’s actually a pretty gross town ... you don’t go to the public toilets because they’re so disgusting. (Ayla, age 14, focus group BYSG9)

The hippies are really nice or the weekend hippies like the rich people, they’re all nice but I think the Gold Coast muscle men who come to the beach and fight and stuff not so much. The Schoolies not so
much either, they just trash the place and they leave bottles everywhere, even on a weekend the bins get filled. (Melanie, age 24, focus group TBL)

Young people play out their environmentalist identity in a variety of ways, from discussion about environmental issues at home, school and among their peers, to participation in community clean-ups and protests. Young residents of the Byron Shire recently formed a community group called BYRA and initiated a protest in March 2015 against the proposed development of West Byron. Young people’s main concern was the environment and the protection of wildlife such as koalas which live in the area. This is evidence of a strong environmental sensibility and a keen civic involvement for nature conservation purposes (A. B. Smith & Bjerke, 2009).

Traditional anthropocentric views of the environment have been slowly shifting in many contexts to accommodate an ideology where people should live in harmony with nature and be cautious of the limited capacity of the natural environment to absorb growth of human activities (M. Williams, 1994). This is reflected in the experiences and attitudes of young people growing up in Byron Shire. Findings in this research reveal that young people’s positive experiences of nature contribute to the formation of an environmental commitment and sensibility. Similarly to Dockett, Kearney & Perry’s (2012) study, participants in this study showed concern about littering and its impacts on the environment. According to Kahn and Kellert (2002), children’s direct experience of nature is a critical aspect in their emotional, intellectual and moral development. Kashima, Paladino, and Margetts (2014) argue that an environmentalist identity encompasses a series of environmentally significant behaviours which are embedded in people’s worldviews.

**Challenges of living in rural areas**

In contrast to young people’s positive experiences of living in contact with nature and surrounded by aesthetically pleasing environments, other prominent themes which have emerged are the lack of affordable transport and lack of infrastructure and facilities specifically tailored to young locals. Young people argue that often trying to move from one community to the other is challenging due to the lack of public transport and the expensive bus fares. In addition, they often lamented the lack
of infrastructure and things to do in their communities. The following views shed light on some of the challenges of living in rural areas which are comparable to the “rural dull” or “rural deprivation” discussed in the childhood literature (Driscoll, 2014; Lægran, 2002; Powell et al., 2013; Rye, 2006; Tyrrell & Harmer, 2015). Bils, Tammy and Lydia argued that the lack of transport is a challenge for young people growing up in the Byron Shire:

*It’s hard to get around, and there’s no public transport so I think that’s a bit of an issue and people like die because they hitch and stuff. I think what we need is more public transport.* (Bils, age 15, focus group BYSG10)

*There’s a massive lack of public transport. A few years ago, I had three friends die in a car accident. We’ve lost a lot of people! That was really tragic and they all died at the same time and I’d started a petition to get more transport going because there’s just no buses, only school buses. I just thought if people had options, like sure they’re drink driving or whatever but there are no options and everything is so far apart it’s not like you can afford taxis. But that’s not going to happen.* (Tammy, age 24, interview)

*It’s really hard to get anywhere...and there are no buses on weekends and that’s when you need it... and it’s really expensive when you catch the bus into Byron. It’s $6 there and $6 back on a Friday and you only get a dollar off with your student pass.* (Lydia, age 15, focus group BYSG10)
As Tammy argued, the lack of public transport is an important issue which may increase the risk of young people drink driving or hitchhiking. In a focus group (BYSB10), boys aged 15 and 16 talked about their experiences of hitchhiking and the often scary situations they found themselves in. Dom (age 16), for example, shared his experience of hitchhiking and the feelings of being unsafe and afraid: “It was pretty sketchy...I tried not to say anything to piss him [driver] off”.

A transport study conducted by the Northern Rivers Regional Development Council with young residents of Byron Shire reveals that 48% of young people had hitchhiked and 48% were not confident enough to speak up when feeling unsafe in a vehicle (RDA-NR, 2013a). In addition the Northern Rivers Social Development Council indicates in the youth census a strong car dependency among young people, with 40.1% young people driving their own car and 79.1% being a passenger in a car with friends or family (NRSDC, 2012).

The young people in this study also talked about the lack of infrastructure and things to do in their communities. Bils (age 15), for example, talked about the feelings of boredom due to social and physical isolation: “it sucks sometimes because there’s nothing to do. So everyone just gets sloppy. Everyone just kind of turns to drinking and drugs to have fun and I think that’s silly” (focus group BYSG10).

The following discussion between participants (both aged 24) in a focus group shows there is also an underlying assumption among young people growing up in the Byron Shire that resources are mainly targeted at attracting tourists to the area and making the community appealing to visitors rather than taking into account the needs and desires of young residents:

Melanie: I think the youth around here goes under the radar, they don’t really take us seriously or build infrastructure for us. Like they built that thing out there but young people can’t get there, the sporting club...they planned it so poorly they put the flooring down for the basketball courts and had to pull it back up cause they did it wrong. And then for the
running track there’s actually no place for you to stand on the side lines to watch the runners so it just seems like it was a bit of an afterthought

Stuart: It was just put in a really bad spot. It would be used if it was somewhere else...even well Byron doesn’t even have a skate park. I know they struggled for a long time trying to get it. I remember going to rallies with hundreds of local kids wanting a skate park and still we didn’t get one

Melanie: I find since Lennox got the skate park there’s less kids running amuck at night. I remember on a Friday night we used to walk around and like hang out on a corner under the street light and now the guys skate and they’re not drinking

Stuart: Yes for sure it’s helped heaps. It just has so much use like...families can go down and watch the kids. I just don’t understand why they don’t have one. They’ve got one at Suffolk but it’s too far away. Put one here and you’ll even get tourists using it regularly

Melanie: And it’s not going to hurt anyone apart from it’s land that could be built with units. (Focus group TBL)

These findings are consistent with studies focused on children growing up in rural areas, who seem to be continuously trying to reconcile the positive aspects of living in contact with nature and the negative aspects of isolation and boredom (Cummins, 2009; Lægran, 2002; H. Matthews et al., 2000; Powell et al., 2016; Powell et al., 2013; Rye, 2006; Tyrrell & Harmer, 2015). In this particular research, however, another layer of complexity emerges from the lived experiences of young people.
Having a continuous flow of visitors temporarily residing in the Byron Shire also creates tensions over land use. Melanie made reference to this issue in the above quote when she argues that “it’s land that could be built with units”. Land in prime locations such as that close to the beach becomes a particularly “contested” space (Bender, 1993a), and may represent a site of exclusion for children and young locals (Buzinde & Manuel-Navarrete, 2013).

**Urban childhoods and multicultural identities**

Findings in this study reveal that negotiating the tensions inherent in this “hybrid” experience of childhood – somewhere between rural and urban – is often challenging for young people. These tensions also contribute to reshaping their experiences of identity and belonging. Among the positive aspects which emerged from the findings are the feelings of pride connected to growing up in a famous tourist destination and the multicultural experiences which open up for young people living in this area. Young people often purposely identify themselves as residents of Byron Bay (even though residing in the neighbouring communities) in order to experience a sense of pride and reaffirm their identity as “locals”:

*Guess it’s pretty good, we’re pretty lucky. If we are somewhere ages away I’ll say I’m from near Byron, but if we are close by, I’ll say Bangalow.* (Alex, age 15, focus group BB)

*I think being in a tourist town means that you have something that everyone really desires...I live in Mullumbimby but I say I’m from Byron because nobody really knows Mullum.* (Liz, age 17, focus group BCY).

*Driving in to Mullum, and watching people taking their photo with the sign “the biggest little town in Australia”…it’s pretty cool.* (Leyla, age 14, focus group BYSG9)
It’s pretty good to say you live in Byron, so many people know about it too. We don’t say we are from Mullumbimby we say we’re from near Byron...they just know what Byron and Byron Shire is. (Dave, age 14, focus group BYSB9)

When I go to Blues Fest, or when I go anywhere and people go, oh wow, you’re from Byron Bay, they're sort of just like, oh my goodness, you live in Byron Bay. It sort of does make me feel proud, like yeah, I live in a really beautiful place. (Isabella, age 15, focus group BYT)

It’s pretty cool when you see Byron, it’s like there’s Byron on TV, that’s pretty exciting. (Alice, age 11, focus group EG)

Wherever I went there was always like a positive sense. People were always amazed that I was visiting them instead of staying in one place. I felt really proud. I was just happy that Byron had kind of given off a positive message to anyone that had visited or seen Byron previously. That made me really happy whenever anyone said “Oh my God, I love Byron”. They would get excited, I just could see it in their eyes, they would get excited just recollecting their time here. It made me feel truly appreciative for home. (Jack, age 21, interview)

Young people talked at length about the social and cultural aspects of the Byron Shire, displaying positive attitudes towards the multicultural and eclectic nature of the region. The opportunity to meet new people, socialise and build transnational friendships with the visiting tourists is one of the positive aspects identified by young people. Jack (age 21), for example, argued that “Byron is the nicest place on earth
I’ve now realised. It’s distinctively unique, not just for the environment, but the people as well and the politics and the culture”. Likewise Ploggin, Bils and Milly talked about meeting new people and being open to new cultures and religions:

It’s very multicultural so you learn about different countries’ religions. (Ploggin, age 11, focus group BZB)

You get to meet different people from everywhere. Also the friendliness of people around here, like it’s not say so serious. (Bils, age 15, focus group BYSG10)

I think I like it because you get exposed to lots of multicultural things and it’s like a good place to grow up in because you meet lots of people. (Milly, age 11, focus group EG)

Many of the young people interviewed clearly valued the multicultural environment that has developed as a result of the influx of visitors within Byron Shire. Isaac (age 24) argued that “there is always something happening it’s not sort of stagnant and for me like a positive of it is meeting so many different people and making a lot of friends from different countries, and seeing that whole side of things” (focus group SV). These findings are consistent with studies such as Möller’s (2012) examination of young residents’ experiences in a ski destination in Sweden and Canosa’s (2014) study of young people growing up in Positano, Italy. Like these studies, for young people interviewed in this research tourism is an important social aspect in their journey to adulthood.

Young people’s narratives suggest the vibrant and stimulating lifestyle, typical of urban spaces, coexists with the rural idyll and discourses surrounding the beauty of the natural environment. In contrast to studies where participants dichotomise the relationship between rural and urban childhoods rejecting the negative stereotypes of urban identities and highlighting the positive aspects of a rural, safe and peaceful childhood (Powell et al., 2013; Valentine, 1997), in this research the two seem to
coexist and merge into a new, hybrid and often ambiguous notion of childhood. These findings suggest that young people’s experiences of their environment are extremely eclectic and heterogeneous and their narratives disrupt socially constructed distinctions between the rural and the urban (Nairn et al., 2003). Rural and urban experiences coexist and are played out in the lives of children growing up in tourist destinations.

Nevertheless, just as growing up in a city has its challenges, likewise the experiences of childhood in a tourist destination are often fraught with tension due to the continuous flow of visitors consuming the natural and built environment. According to Tammy (age 24), “it’s still rural…it’s like a rural-metropolitan, it’s weird…in-between! Byron still has a nice feel during the day but it changes at night! It’s crazy…it completely changes! I don’t mind it I just feel like overwhelmed by it” (interview). This “weird…in-between” place that Tammy refers to exemplifies the often ambiguous experiences of growing up in a tourist destination. Young people talked about their experiences as a “sort of love/hate relationship...some of it is good and some of it is a bit annoying” (Fiona, age 18, interview). This is discussed more in depth in the following section where the concept of childhood in complex communities such as tourist destinations is further unpacked.

NEGOTIATING BELONGING IN A TOURIST DESTINATION

Growing up in a tourist destination shapes young people’s lives in many ways, however the dominant theme which has emerged from the findings is how young people’s sense of belonging is challenged and jeopardized by the continuous flow of visitors temporarily living in the communities of the Byron Shire. Young people in this study often have to negotiate the same pressures and tensions that urban youth encounter, such as feelings of alienation and lack of safety.

Feelings of alienation

The concept of belonging was often described by the young people in this research as something ephemeral which is hard to understand and experience when there are so many travellers and temporary residents in the community. Andy, a 21 year old
resident and Schoolies volunteer, for example, argued that having so many people coming and going has really changed the character of Byron Bay:

\[
I \text{ think being such a transient town there are some things that come with people not being grounded like that sort of ... I don’t know what the word is but not a stability and I think that sort of reflects on people’s lives as well and you can sort of see it... I guess a lot of people make some bad decisions and you sort of see that around as well... it’s like Vegas you go there and whatever you do there doesn’t matter. (Interview)}
\]

Young people identified three important issues which challenge their sense of belonging and often create feelings of alienation and social exclusion, these include: crowding; job competition; and rising rental and property prices.

**Crowding**

Young people’s sense of belonging is challenged at peak tourist times when crowded spaces and unfamiliar faces contribute to feelings of alienation and displacement among youth. Serena, a 17 year old resident of Byron Bay, explained that in the past “you could come into town [Byron Bay] and sort of see some of your friends but now you don’t see any faces you know... the beaches are also heaps crowded” (focus group BYST). Young people have talked at length about the shrinking sense of community that is felt in Byron Bay because it “has become too commercial and there are often more tourists than residents” (Stuart, age 24, focus group TBL).

Young people argued that they would rather “hang out” with their friends in the neighbouring communities of Mullumbimby, Brunswick Heads and Bangalow where they can still experience a sense of community and belonging. According to Andy (age 21), for example, Byron Bay has lost its sense of community which is still felt in communities such as Mullumbimby:
I honestly don’t feel like that when I come into Byron. It’s just because there are so many people. I never get that true sense of the community, it feels like a place where people come for money and spend money and it’s not really a community...it’s more like a community that works to provide things for people that come to visit, you know what I mean... Where I live near Mullum, it’s completely different, it’s relaxed, there are a lot of petitions constantly going on to improve things that are happening. It’s definitely a lot more communal down that way”.

(Interview)

The following quotes capture young people’s lived experiences of change in their communities, revealing feelings of alienation and exclusion due to crowding and competition for resources:

I remember going when I was younger with family to the New Year's Eve celebrations [in Byron Bay] and it was like a family night. Now they're still trying but you can't even get in because there's all these 20 year olds trying to get in early just so that when it's not the family hour any more they can go crazy. Christmas Day, you can't spend on the beach, even Australia Day, if you wanted to, which I don't, but you can't even, you can't get in, there's way too much traffic. (Isabella, age 15, focus group BYT)
Byron Bay is starting to become increasingly overcrowded with new residents and tourists, the prices are getting higher for those living here and with a lack of new infrastructure and roads it is becoming more and more overpopulated and unsustainable. (Phil, age 17, focus group BYT).

Crowded spaces and unfamiliar faces are just some of the issues identified by young people which shape their experience of belonging. Boundary discourses and practices speak about the complex “politics of belonging” at play in tourism destinations (Antonsich, 2010). Young people talked about the difficulties accessing the best aspects of living in the area such as the beaches and ocean. In addition, traffic, noise and lack of parking are issues which are felt by those as young as 11 years of age. This shrinking sense of place and ownership of the streets, beaches and ocean in their community can contribute to feelings of frustration:

*I went to South Golden beach store when the festival [Splendour in the Grass] was on and literally you walk up and there’s this massive line out the door, and it’s like can I just go in, I come here every day and now I can’t because of all these people.* (Leyla, age 14, focus group BYSG9)

Job competition

Young people also referred to a lack of meaningful employment opportunities which further contributes to feelings of alienation and social exclusion. Young locals talked about having to compete for jobs with migrant workers and particularly temporary residents such as overseas backpackers with Australian working visas. In their view, temporary residents are often willing to work for low wages or just for board and this places local youth at a disadvantage when seeking employment. This issue emerged in many conversations with the young people interviewed, contributing to feelings of exclusion and lack of self-worth. The following statements from two different focus group discussions exemplify this issue:
Antonia: Do you think tourism creates jobs?
All: No
Jim: I think it overloads!
Ploggin: I think sometimes the tourists come and they get the jobs and it leaves the people who grew up here out. (Boys, age 11, focus group BZB)
Antonia: Do you think tourism creates more opportunities for employment?
Boy: No, because the tourists take them all
Boy: The tourists just take all the employment. They just come and steal our jobs. (Boys, age 15-16, focus group BYSB10)

According to Tammy (age 24) employment opportunities for young people, and particularly girls, living in the area are limited: “It’s kind of limited to retail and hospitality and that’s it. For the boys it’s a bit different there’s always building jobs” (interview). High labour turnover in the tourism and hospitality industry makes finding permanent positions increasingly hard for local young people: “It’s just because there are so many tourists and everything is part-time, it’s pretty much alright if you need a part-time job after school but what do you do once you finish school? Lots of people have to leave the area” (Serena, age 17, focus group BYST). There is a general perception among young people that the fierce competition for jobs is a challenging aspect of their journey to adulthood:

Tourists are always snatching up jobs. I think people like that because it’s off the record and they like the turnover. So they don’t always have to have the same person coming in. That means there’s always people that want your job...I find it quite hard in this area, just because there’s so many tourists taking the jobs. (Andy, age 21, interview)
Most places just hire people and a lot of places also get rid of….if someone’s been there for a long time they get rid of them in the busy periods so they can hire cheaper people. Backpackers are willing to work for nothing, work for rent, work for accommodation or work for nothing! And that’s why people do drugs and stuff because they’re not working, there’s not much work. (Melanie, age 24, focus group TBL)

Young people perceive they are also lacking important skills which may place them at a disadvantage when seeking employment. Backpackers and temporary residents, on the other hand, have more experience in the tourism and hospitality industry. Studies in the tourism literature refer to the temporary and transitory nature of tourism and hospitality jobs pointing to mobility and migration as common factors (Adler & Adler, 2004; Baum, 2007; A. M. Williams & Hall, 2000). Hassan (2014) argues that training and awareness programs for local youth are important to encourage employment and reduce out-migration. Youth unemployment and underemployment are common issues in many regional communities across Australia and are often the primary cause of youth out-migration (Gabriel, 2002). In the Byron Shire, however, the situation is unusual as there is no shortage of jobs thanks to the booming tourism and hospitality industry (Tourism Research Australia, 2015). These issues will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

Rising prices and lack of affordable housing

Young people (particularly those between the ages of 18 and 24 years) also spoke about the rise in prices and lack of affordable housing as an alienating factor associated with growing up in this area. Tammy (age 24) felt insecurity and a lack of prospects for her future: “It kind of scares me because it means that people can’t live here anymore as they can’t afford the rent and things like that! I suppose that’s just tourism, that’s how it works, it’s for the privileged” (interview). Young people’s attitudes towards tourism have so far been flavoured by a degree of negativity and their future aspirations (which will be discussed later in the chapter) are pervaded by
a sense of scepticism towards the actual opportunities that the tourism industry creates for young people living in the area. The following extract, from a focus group with young people aged 24, reveals a real concern about the sustainability of life in the Byron Shire:

Antonia: Do you feel a sense of belonging and connection to the community?

*Melanie:* I don’t think Byron has much of a community not like other places! I don’t think it has much of a...

*Stuart:* I think it’s getting slowly sucked away ...

*Melanie:* I think everything will be owned by Sydney people

*Stuart:* Everything you see is just so growing! like the big brand Katmandu just opened up, there’s another big brand in Byron, it’s never going to end...it was much better when it was just a small town, even just 5 years ago it was a lot better but now it’s getting out of hand and it’s only going to get worst there’s no stopping it.

*Melanie:* I reckon that in Wategoes out of all the houses there maybe four of them have people actually living in them. Like there’s no one there ever and these houses are massive, it’s just ridiculous! All the people just have their holiday houses and then rent is so expensive now cause these rich people own all these big houses. You pretty much can’t live in Byron. No, you couldn’t live with a family no way!
Stuart: Not unless you had a million dollars. (Focus group TBL)

Young people are also concerned about how the increase in prices and rental property is affecting the demographic composition of the communities in the Byron Shire. According to Tammy (age 24), Indigenous people can no longer live in the area as well as young people and families from lower socio-economic backgrounds: “There’s no Indigenous people living around here and ... I think there’s no way they could afford to live here” (interview). Children as young as 11 are aware of the rise in prices and the housing difficulties experienced in the region: “I know someone that was my friend and he finally got a place and when the tourists came they bought that guy’s house for more money and the owner of the house actually gave it to the other guy so he lost his house” (Kimba, age 11, focus group BZB).

Andy and Matt described their perceptions of change in their community and the rise in the cost of living and rents. Matt used to live in Byron Bay but has since moved due to lack of affordable housing. Likewise, Andy noticed that many of his childhood friends have moved away:

The last time I lived in Byron was in 2010 or 2009. But I definitely do notice that prices rise everywhere. In a lot of the shops you definitely get that vibe, that they are just trying to sell to appeal to that sort of...and that just comes with like what I was saying before you travel all over the world to a tourist destination you get that same feeling ...you see shops everywhere that just practically sell junk and you can recognise that pretty fast and that’s what makes it feel similar worldwide, that sort of environment. (Matt, age 20, interview)
It's actually comparable to the cities. Looking at a very very cheap place, it's $300 per week up there [Sydney], and it's similar down here. I think my brother was paying $500 for a house in Mullum, and it wasn't that much...Everyone that I've grown up with, or people that I've gone to school with, the majority have gone to Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne, and not many of them have stayed...you can't necessarily move out and get a house for yourself, and go to Uni, and get a job here. You can't do that. It's very hard. So it is definitely pushing people out.

(Andy, age 21, interview)

Although young people grow up in a seemingly beautiful environment with plenty of opportunities to experience nature, freedom and an idyllic childhood, they often have to contend with the pressures and tensions typical of urban childhoods. To continue in this theme another issue which shapes young people’s sense of belonging is the perceived lack of safety connected to drugs, alcohol and the party image of Byron Shire as a tourist destination.

(Un)Safe spaces in the community

A perceived lack of safety among young people growing up in the area is connected to two main aspects: Overcrowding and the party image of Byron Bay as a tourist destination. The young people, for example, explained that surfing is often dangerous as there are many inexperienced tourists in the ocean. Issues of crowding and traffic are not limited to the streets and beaches but often pose a problem even in the ocean. According to Sexy Rexy, Rob and Melanie, surfing at popular spots in Byron Bay can often be dangerous:
I got hit in the surf today...this weird body surfer knocked me. (Sexy Rexy, age 11, focus group AN).

It gets crowded in the surf and... some people don’t wear leg ropes so it’s really dangerous. (Rob, age 12, focus group BB).

It’s crowded in the surf especially at The Pass cause everyone just wants to surf at The Pass, I always get hit in the head with boards and stuff because people just don’t know how to do it and like a big wave comes and they just throw their board away and it just runs straight into you and dins your board and they just look at you like “don’t speak English” and just keep paddling. They just want to be out there but there’s not even a sign out there telling them not to do things! You just know on the weekend not to go surfing there. (Melanie, age 24, focus group TBL)

Young people like Betty (age 21) often leave in the summer months because they can no longer surf at their favourite spots:

I'm a surfer and getting a park at the main beaches like The Pass and Wategos which is where I love to surf, can be really hard in those times. Then out in the water it can just be really, really busy... it definitely escalates in the peak season and I actually often go away in the summer time. (Interview)
Others like Alex (age 15) wake up very early to surf without the crowds:

It gets crowded in the surf too and it’s pretty annoying so that’s why we wake up at 5 o’clock to go for a surf...Some people aren’t as experienced and they don’t know what they’re doing. Boards fly and hit people and stuff. (focus group BB).

The party image of Byron Bay as a tourist destination also attracts a particular type of tourism (young backpackers) which further exacerbates feelings of danger particularly among girls. According to Stephanie (age 14), there are a lot of “drunk people...strange people...weirdos” at night (focus group BYSG9). Kath (age 14) stated: “I just don’t feel safe...I think that comes with that touristy feeling” (focus group BYT). Drugs and alcohol are deeply embedded in the culture of the place and over the years Byron Shire has earned a reputation as a party town among young travellers. This has had considerable impact on young locals who are exposed to the party culture from a young age. According to Ben (age 15), there are “so many stoners...so many weird people...it’s just the community, the culture of the place...Nimbin is like half an hour away”.

Young people talked about being “scared”, “feeling unsafe” or just “not feeling comfortable” particularly at night. Often young people’s perceptions of danger are amplified with one 14 year old boy arguing that “because of all the tourists it [Byron Bay] can be one of the most dangerous places at night in the world” (focus group BYSB9). What is important here is that young people perceive Byron Bay to be a dangerous place and this perception, in turn, shapes their sense of belonging. Liz, Kath and Isabella’s stories suggest young people’s perceptions of danger can be cause for stress and anxiety:

Often at night at about 10pm the attitude really shifts from being a really happy and chilled place to being a little seedy and dangerous ...I haven’t personally felt intimidated but I just don’t go to places like that. If you go outside Cheeky Monkey at
about 11 pm you wouldn’t be feeling that chilled and happy. (Liz, age 17, focus group BCY)

When I lived in Byron it was great to be next to the beach but I prefer Brunswick way better because you still live next to the beach but you don’t get those drunks saying... “yeah let’s break into this house and sleep here overnight”. Once it was a festival and these people outside our house...I was asleep but they were going to get a brick and smash the window to sleep in our house and my mum got really scared and called the police. (Kath, age 14, focus group BCY)

I don’t feel safe due to intoxicated people. I know that because of the reputation that it's a party town, I'm not allowed to come to Byron at night, which I don’t want to because there are just too many people that are passing through. I feel a lot safer in Bangalow at night time or Brunswick, just because there’s not so many tourists and I feel like I know the people. (Isabella, age 15, focus group BYT)

According to Liz (age 17), the party mentality of the area really impacts on young people’s lives:

I think that Byron as well as it’s touristy it’s also got that party image. It was originally a Bundjalung meeting place, it was a party place, you know hundreds of years ago and it’s still got that now. So people come here to have a good time and then they just leave and that mentality is sort of ingrained in the youth....I think that is one of the problems that we found is that it’s got such a rage party-fast
culture and unfortunately for the people who live here that really impacts them and that’s why there is a lot of violence, a lot of drug use and abuse full stop. I think it stems from that so it’s a mix between partying and tourism and that’s a serious combo.

(Focus group BCY)

The visibility and availability of alcohol and drugs is cause for concern among local young people. While this is an issue in many communities across Australia, it seems to be exacerbated in a tourist destination (Buultjens, Neale, & Lamont, 2013; Salom, Watts, Kinner, & Young, 2005; A. Smith & Rosenthal, 1997; Uriely & Belhassen, 2006). Byron Bay, in particular, has a reputation for its trade in marijuana and other illicit substances (C. Gibson & Connell, 2003). Young people have commented on the visibility of drugs and alcohol consumption in their community and the impact it has on local youth:

*Drugs are quite a large problem in this area I feel like, not just with young people but adults as well, a lot of them are using drugs... I don’t know if that is from the history of the place as it used to be quite a large hippy congregation area... I mean naturally around this sort of environment like the beach and being a tourist destination.* (Matt, age 20, interview)

According to Bils (age 15), because of this culture “if you’re 15 and you haven’t smoked weed you’re a weirdo” (focus group BYSG10). In a separate interview Andy (age 21) talked about his high school days:

*Everyone was taking drugs regularly or they’d tried it, even the teachers! So it’s just the thing that happens here... a lot of people do drugs, it’s not as strict as in a lot of other areas.* (Interview)
According to young people in this study, obtaining alcohol is easy for underage youth who often commission backpackers and travellers to buy it for them. These travellers may not be aware or informed about local laws and drinking regulations. Isabella, a 15 year old girl, said that “it’s a lot easier for young people to buy alcohol, because a lot of tourists are very happy to buy it for you” (focus group BYT). In young people’s view violence in the streets is also a consequence of alcohol and drugs consumption: “So people just get wasted. They just get smashed and be silly and it’s horrible... people get drunk and they have fights” (Bils, age 15, focus group BYSG10). Likewise, Tammy and Isaac explained how growing up in such an environment has a real impact on young people:

*I think we’re exposed to a lot at a really young age and a lot of drugs and alcohol, and it’s really accessible! I can’t really make a comparison with what it would be like in other places but when I’ve moved to the city or elsewhere and I tell people about what it’s like down here they’re shocked! It just can be so extreme.* (Tammy, age 24, interview)

*To be honest it has really upset me the way the youth of this Shire are impacted by a town where a lot of people just sort of come to release and do whatever and there’s an expectation and a culture in this town that you know kids like 14 year olds or whatever expect to be out partying on Friday night and that’s really destructive. I think you find like a lot of kids who wouldn’t necessarily want to be doing those things are being caught up and involved in that and it just goes into a downward spiral and you know you turn 25-30 and you’re still doing it...it becomes a real trap.* (Isaac, age 24, focus group SV)
Young people have talked at length about the type of tourism attracted to the region and the anti-social behaviours on display, particularly during events such as Schoolies and the numerous music festivals. According to Mel (age 14), “everyone thinks it’s like the great piss up party and... many drunk tourists and everyone is really disrespectful on the streets and it’s really gross” (focus group BYSG92). Likewise, Jack (age 21) argued that “it was not conducive to the development of the youth to see violence as a way of expression”. Looking back and remembering her childhood experience, Mia (age 24) argued that growing up in such a party atmosphere really impacts local youth: “it’s really hard when all your peers are choosing to get fake IDs and go out clubbing at the age of 15 or 16, it’s hard to stand against that and to actually say I don’t want to do that” (interview).

These findings reveal the complexity and diversity of young people’s experiences of growing up in a tourist destination. The rural/urban dualism common in childhood studies is thus challenged and destabilised by young people’s own interpretations and social constructions of childhood. In contrast to studies such as Nairn et al.’s (2003), where young people seek out the rural within the urban and the urban within the rural, in this study the two dimensions coexist and young people are continuously having to negotiate the challenges and opportunities of both worlds. A new hybridised and often ambiguous notion of childhood emerges from the young people’s narratives often blending experiences from both rural and urban worlds. Young people thus re-read and re-make their own experiences of childhood challenging the notion of a unitary childhood experience of either the rural or urban. These findings reveal the complexity of the lived experiences of young people growing up in tourist destinations, who may benefit from the positives of both rural and urban worlds but who also have to contend with the challenges and problems of life in this in-between place.

Similarly to early tourism studies on residents’ perceptions of tourism, young people in this study are often irritated by the social problems caused by tourism activity in their communities (Boissevain, 1979; Dogan, 1989; Doxey, 1975). Nevertheless, young people respond to change and tourism in creative ways which problematizes early conceptualisation of tourism as an exogenous force impacting passive local
According to Hil and Bessant (1999), it is “important not to lose sight of young people’s ability to actively resist …and carve out new, meaningful spaces for themselves” (p. 41). In the following section, I explore how local youth actively negotiate and reaffirm their sense of identity and belonging displaying both resilience and agency.

**REAFFIRMING IDENTITY AND BELONGING**

The interviews and focus groups revealed a number of issues and concerns which are important to young people. I now focus on the strategies young people use to negotiate these challenges. Themes which have emerged in this study point to the active and creative role young people play in reaffirming a sense of identity and belonging in their community. In order to preserve these feelings, young people actively seek out “locals-only” spaces; they often oppose the hedonistic tourism party culture adopting a straightedge sensibility; and act out their civic and political identities by participating in community forums and protests.

**Avoidance and “locals-only” spaces**

Young people often talked about avoiding crowded places during the tourist season and “sticking with friends” (Sofia, age 13, focus group BYSG9). In particular, they highlighted the importance of being part of a local sporting club such as the surf club or soccer club. These “micro-communities” fulfil the important needs of connectedness, safety and belonging for young people. In addition, young people seek out locals-only spaces in an attempt to reaffirm their identities as true locals. They often specifically avoid the crowds of tourists by choosing for example to surf early in the morning when there are no tourists. Sofia (age 13) chooses a particular time of day to engage in her favourite activity in order to avoid the crowds and meet her friends: “I go to Byron really early for a surf that way I can surf with my friends without the crowds and I feel safer” (focus group BYSG9). Likewise, Betty (age 21) shops locally:
Maybe it's like the places I go as well. Like I always do my shopping at Santos and that's a very local place. If I went shopping at maybe Woolworth's it might be different ... the places I specifically go to are more sort of like local spots. (Interview)

Stuart (age 24) also commented that often “you just know when it’s time to stay out of town...just cause you know the traffic is going to be a pain, you're going to be squished walking around, it's not enjoyable it’s better when it’s quiet” (focus group TBL).

In addition, young people talked about the need to distinguish themselves from the mundane tourist party identity prevalent in the area, specifically choosing entertainment options that are not mainstream. One of the themes that emerged from the interviews and focus groups is the choice of entertainment, leisure or fun that young people engage in and how these choices shape their experience identity and belonging. Although young people are precluded entry to the nightclubs, they “make their own fun” often congregating at rave parties (see also Panelli et al., 2002). Rave or “doof” parties become an important alternative for these young people who feel excluded from mainstream entertainment. Fiona, for example, recently turned 18 years old but most of her friends are still aged 17 so she attends doof parties instead:

My friends usually hang out near the doof sort of area ... last week I actually went to an open doof sort of DJ party at Clarks Beach and we just turned up and everyone ended up to be there. So that was fun.

Young people who attend doof parties exercise their right to choose a leisure activity which is somewhat subversive and underground in order to identify with a particular doof identity or neo-tribe (Bennett, 1999). Doof membership may be a highly, albeit unconscious, political response to the mainstream tourist party culture of the area. Young people in this study often commented on the “us versus them” mentality that is a consequence of living in a community with a continuous influx of tourists.
According to Debby (age 24), although it is a very multicultural area, “you get very insular in terms of the friendships and the groups that kind of form...because of the constant influx of people, the locals tend to stick together” (interview).

For local young people seeking locals-only spaces such as doof parties is an important identity marker, which distinguishes them on two levels: as a local and as someone who has made a “non-conformist” consumption choice in contrast to dominant/mainstream practices (Goulding & Shankar, 2011). According to Debby, local young people are often not attracted to the crowded venues of mainstream entertainment in Byron Bay but prefer the somewhat subversive entertainment of the doof scene:

> Even when they were of age they [young locals] would much rather have gone to a doof where it was all locals and they knew everybody and all of that kind of thing rather than go to a nightclub in Byron...I think it just goes back to that whole “us and them” thing. (Interview)

Young people’s entertainment choices may thus hold symbolic/political meanings, and are according to Ben (age 16) often an “identity thing”. The non-conformist consumption practices which doof participation engenders (e.g. no entry fees, bring your own drinks/substances) (Goulding & Shankar, 2011) may, in fact, be interpreted as a reaction to the structural forces of the dominant tourism economy. Doof parties function as important landscapes of a shared identity among young locals and may hold a deeper, symbolic meaning associated with counter-hegemonic and political responses of youth to the dominant culture. Riley, Griffin, and Morey (2010), in fact, argue that although often not geared towards social change, youth cultural leisure and consumption practices may still hold political meaning; what they refer to as “politics of survival” (p. 348). Based on Maffesoli’s (1996) every day politics, Riley et al. (2010) argue that neo-liberalism “creates a context in which it makes sense to engage in political participation through consumption practices at the individual or informal group level” (p. 347).
Doof parties are very popular in the area and are often hosted in private homes or in the hinterlands. Debby (age 24) described doof parties as big open air parties:

*Just imagine the bush, literally the bush, private property and state! Just imagine the bush with a massive sound system, psychedelic stuff everywhere, drugs everywhere you look, a big dance floor with hundreds of ravers out of it! It definitely wasn’t only youth... a few local people organising them and then all the local DJs would jump on board and it was kind of ....just word of mouth. A lot of them were free, they may have been a small door charge every second or third party you went to but the majority of them were free. It was a cheap night out and drugs were plentiful and everything you needed to have a good time was there. (Interview)*

Morton (1996) argues that the process of youth socialisation is not a passive internalisation of cultural norms and values but an active process which highlights the relationships between the individual as an influenced as well as influencing agent. Membership to the doof neo-tribe thus takes on a dual meaning: on one of level young residents are trying to differentiate themselves from the dominant tourist party culture of the area and on another level they are seeking out locals-only spaces where they can fulfil their need for belonging and connection. If spaces are construed as “socially constructed” (Lefebvre, 1974), we understand how important it is for young people growing up in communities with a continuous influx of visitors to cut out their own spaces where they can experience connectedness and social inclusion. Doof parties have become popular ways for young people to have fun away from the crowds of the mainstream partying/clubbing scene where young tourists congregate in Byron Bay.

These “liminal spaces” (St John, 2008; Turner, 1982) or “subversive sites” (C. Gibson, 1999) represent important ways for young locals to feel they belong: “every single weekend we would be going to a doof back when I was that age ... it was all
just about getting together and having a good time” (Debbie, age 24, interview). The locals-only spaces that young people create become important landscapes of a shared identity which counteract the feelings of alienation and displacement. Furthermore, the feelings of belonging and connection created during such dance parties are an important way of challenging the mainstream consumer-oriented and heavily regulated nocturnal tourism economy of Byron Bay. Growing up in a tourist destination is a uniquely different experience which creates opportunities as well as challenges particularly for young residents who are still in the process of understanding who they are and where they belong in the community.

Straightedge among young people in Byron Shire

As a consequence of being exposed to the tourism party culture from a young age, some young people in this study argued that they abstain from mainstream partying, drinking and drug taking, which they referred to as living “straightedge”. Living straightedge has, however, various interpretations among local youth. Some identify with the term merely because of their lifestyle choice not to drink or take drugs but are unaware of the ideological and symbolic message of resistance connected to the subcultural straightedge movement. Others specifically and consciously affiliate with the hardcore punk counter-culture. A widespread straightedge sensibility seems to emerge from the interviews with local young people who argue that the visibility of drugs, alcohol and the party culture of Byron Shire function as deterrents. Mia (age 24), for example, decided to go to a high school outside of the Byron Shire precisely to avoid being caught up in the party scene:

I don’t drink and I have chosen not to drink in my teens because I guess I had seen there was a difference ... For me even growing up as a young person in this area I chose to go to a high school outside Byron Shire because I didn’t want to be a part of that scene. So I just chose to remove myself from that friendship group. (Interview)
Likewise, Betty (age 21) also chose not to drink:

*I don't go out much at all and I haven't drunk alcohol for about six years or something, so I'm kind of out of the whole scene but I have seen it and it is scary. Even with locals, it's not just the backpackers who come here and get drunk and whatever. Like, I've seen it with my friends.* (Interview)

The following comment from a 21 year old male participant exemplifies the “self-awareness” that develops among young people who grow up in an environment where anti-social behaviours are often on display. This young man remembers his childhood experiences of roaming the streets of Byron Bay with his friends when he was about 14 years old:

*We were going out to town trying to find some action, see what was going on. It's like the saying of “not being able to look away from a car crash”. You just wanted to see something that was kind of explosive and immediate. Whether it'd be like, like violence down in town which was a regular when I was growing up. It was like kids getting in fights over stupid shit. It was just youth binge drinking that would catalyse all these disgusting grudges and hateful sentiments among the youth. I remember when going out in town, we would be out there just kind of lurking around in the corners, in the shadows, just keeping your eyes on all the peripherals. So this is going to happen over here, you can see this guy is going to act up and start something over there. You learn to develop a sense of self-consciousness and self-awareness very young because you have to be on your toes when you're out in a situation like that. That's a very brush statement*
to make for such a peaceful town but being young in a violent environment you have to learn. Obviously any adversity is a lesson. (Boy, age 21, interview)

In addition to the straightedge sensibility, which has emerged from young people’s stories, there is also a unique straightedge identity which is connected to the subcultural youth movement. Youth subculture is an important theme which emerged during the interviews with adults and young people. Young people referred to the straightedge movement as a subculture or subgenre of hardcore punk characterised by an abstinence from alcohol, tobacco and drugs (see also Haenfler, 2004). Respondents argued that the movement found fertile ground among young people in the Byron community and was fuelled by the local straightedge hardcore band “Parkway Drive” formed in 2002.

According to respondents, the abstinence from alcohol, drugs and promiscuous sex became an ideological and symbolic message of resistance to the mainstream alcohol-fuelled tourism culture so visible in the community of Byron Bay. I have here included Jack’s (age 21) testimony of his experience growing up straightedge to highlight how the subcultural youth movement developed to resist the dominant culture in Byron Shire:

*Byron really adopted the punk subculture as a very early underground movement...Byron had a lot of youth who were sick of hippies, or do nothings, or stoners that the hardcore scene really flourished within Byron because of the Youth Activities Centre (YAC). The YAC would host shows there and as the punk, alternative, metal scene grew in Byron, more information just started to snowball, just grew and grew...I started listening to more and more bands and the straightedge movement became a really big thing throughout the punk subculture. A lot of people around here started subscribing to it. I think it was a good thing at the time...This is roughly when I was*
12 or 13, roughly around that age. I started going to shows at the YAC and I remember seeing that at the YAC there was zero tolerance to drugs and alcohol which I thought was one of the better attitudes of that scene. (Jack, age 21, interview)

Jack mostly talked about the positive experience of being straightedge during his teens. He made reference to “having his wits about him” and “being sober” which earned him considerable respect from his parents and freedom to go out with his friends. On two occasions he saved his friend’s house during a party which “could have possibly been burnt down if not for my sobriety”. According to Jack, it was also a way of being unique and different from the crowds of party revellers who flocked to Byron Bay throughout the year:

> You wear a piece of clothing that is straightedge or you claim a straightedge badge, anything that affiliates you with straightedge, you almost unknowingly or perhaps knowingly subscribe to a lifelong commitment to be straightedge, which I think is incredible. Abstaining from smoking, alcohol, any of those degenerative hobbies that people have is incredible. (Interview)

This is consistent with Haenfler’s (2004) findings that straightedgers experience “a feeling of uniqueness, self-confidence, and sometimes superiority by rejecting the typical teenage life” (p. 417). Jack made reference to wearing a straightedge “piece of clothing” or a “badge” as symbols of his affiliation to this unique and subversive subculture. Similarly to other studies (Nilan, 2006), for Jack being straightedge meant having an advantage on other young people who were choosing to “get smashed” with drugs and alcohol. He felt “brave” and a “winner” in situations where he was the only one able to address a problem as in the house fire situation. These young men claim “power” and “space” (Nilan, 2006, p. 4) in a community which is increasingly undergoing a gentrification process due to tourism development and where young people are feeling increasingly alienated.
Although Jack did not make reference to gender in his interview other young people have argued that the straightedge movement is very much male-dominated. Tammy (age 24), for example, argued that “Byron had a really hardcore straightedge scene...it was completely like male-dominated. There was this whole mentality that went with it and they were really strange, it was like a cult or something” (interview). Similarly, in her study on the straightedge movement in Newcastle (Australia), Nilan (2006) found that it was almost completely male-dominated.

In the Byron Shire, young local boys find unity and comradeship through the hardcore music, dress codes, tattoos and the clean-living ideals they adhere to. This bonding was important to Jack growing up in a community which was increasingly perceived as alienating. In addition, studies show that some of the progressive values of the movement reflect a “new left middle-class radicalism oriented towards issues of moral or humanitarian nature” (Haenfler, 2004, p. 416). Recent events in Byron Shire suggest a rising political activism or “consciousness of resistance” (Haenfler, 2004, p. 426) among local young people.

In March 2015, the first activist demonstration led by young people (Protect Byron) was held in Byron Bay to protest against the proposed West Byron development. Led by BYRA, which was formed in December 2014, young people took to the streets to protest against unsustainable development and tourism in their home town. Although BYRA and its members are not affiliated with the straightedge subculture, they certainly embody the straightedge sensibility previously discussed with many of its members ready to take a political stand against development in their community. Local Arakwal spokesperson Delta Kay describing the event stated: “what was amazing was the number of younger people coming out to stand up for the town – it shows the extent to which they want to protect Byron” (APN reporters, 2015, March 5, p. 3). Interestingly however the spokesperson for the event was the lead singer of the hardcore local band Parkway Drive and former straightedger. Jack also participated in the protest (Fieldnotes, March 2014).
Although the straightedge subculture has emerged as a counter-culture movement to oppose the alcohol-fuelled and hedonistic lifestyle of youth in the Byron Shire (both young tourists and locals alike), young people have diverse understandings and interpretations of what living straightedge means. Growing up in an environment where drugs, alcohol and partying is an everyday occurrence, has triggered a straightedge sensibility among local young people which is however not connected to the homonymous subcultural group; other young people like Jack have adopted a straightedge identity based on a particular set of norms, values and beliefs as internalised through the straightedge subculture of hardcore punk. However, even in Jack’s case, he adopts the straightedge ideology in a distinct and unique way, partially redefining what the authentic straightedge identity is. Similarly, R. T. Wood (1999) argues “straightedge is a socially constructed frame of reference, which individuals both refer to and reconstruct as a means of formulating for themselves a straightedge identity (or some variant thereof)” (p. 146).

“Having a say”: Voice and participation

There is a general perception among the participants in this study that opportunities for meaningful participation in tourism policy and planning are limited. Matt (age 20), for example, argued that:

> It just comes down to money. They’re [young people] not in a position at that age to have control over something that’s that influential. People make a lot of money out of tourism so they’re not going to let a kid have a say in that. (Interview)

This suggests that young people perceive age to be a real barrier when it comes to participation and “having a say” in their community. According to Melanie (age 24), young people under the age of 18 are not really considered citizens:

> They’ve got nothing for people who they’re not going to make money off like the 12 to 18 or whatever...there’s nothing for them cause there’s no reason to be, it’s not like they can give back at all...
When asked if they would like to have a say in how tourism is planned in their community the majority were keen to voice their opinions but were unsure how to do so. Not being able to vote until the age of 18, most young people perceived they would have to wait to participate in community decisions.

Civic and political engagement of youth in community life is a slow process which needs to be facilitated and promoted from a young age (Covell & Howe, 1999; Jonsson & Flanagan, 2000). As A. B. Smith and Bjerke (2009) argue children need to have the opportunity to live and experience “citizenship” well before maturity is legally obtained. In a similar vein, Hoskins (2003) argues that a sense of civic duty and political participation has to be nurtured and developed in the child early on. As young people feel part of the community only when they feel “influential” and “powerful”, a civic and political identity needs to be encouraged from a young age (Evans, 2007, p. 699). Cicognani et al. (2012) go further, arguing that young people’s willingness to be involved in political processes depends on the successful achievement of a sense of community and belonging. It could be argued that the political apathy of young people, which is cause for concern in modern society, is directly related to their disengaged and disempowered status (Côté, 2006; Walsh & Black, 2015).

In this study, young people who were actively involved in community life and had an opportunity to voice their opinions seemed to have developed a sense of community and belonging far greater than the young people who did not have such opportunities. Betty (age 21), for example, was actively involved in her community through BYRA and felt connected and empowered: “I feel like in this town [Byron Bay] we do, there is a real sense of community” (interview). Similarly, the young people who form part of the Byron Youth Council have the opportunity to actively engage in the organisation of community events for young people and are consulted about important decisions that relate to young people’s wellbeing.
Nevertheless, it would seem that young people’s participation is confined to particular “youth-only” spaces such as the Byron Youth Council, which are adult-initiated and managed programs. Bessant (2003) argues that “youth participation in its current policy form excludes democratic participation and is restricted to a narrow definition of participation as involvement in community, cultural, voluntary and educational activities” (p. 91).

Young people in this study also said they are rarely consulted about tourism development and planning. Members of the Byron Youth Council identified only one instance in which they were asked to discuss tourism planning and provide feedback on a proposed new identity for Byron Shire, the “Don’t Spoil Us, We’ll Spoil You” campaign, which was designed to create a family-friendly environment for Byron Shire and reverse the “party/binge drinking” image of the Shire (Fieldnotes, August 2014).

Nevertheless, the majority of young people neither felt they have opportunities to have a say in how tourism is planned in their community, nor could they envisage how this kind of participation might occur. According to Betty (age 21), this is precisely the reason why BYRA formed:

*We came up with the name and basically, it was just a group of young residents who were concerned about our town and we saw a lack of voice from young people of the town [Byron Bay] so yeah we kind of just formed and wanted to be a platform where we could have a voice...and encourage other young people to have a voice.* (Interview)

Since its formation in December 2014, BYRA has approximately 1,740 members who keep in contact via social media (Facebook) (Fieldnotes, April, 2014). If, as Graham and Fitzgerald (2010a) argue, recognition is a precondition of children’s participation, vocal groups such as BYRA may be an appropriate platform to ensure that young people are heard in the Byron Shire.
General perceptions among young locals reflect the *incompetent child paradigm* that is sometimes inadvertently drawn from the work of developmental psychologists (Morrow, 2011). The shift to a *rights-based paradigm* which views children as competent and capable of contributing to community life is still very much absent from young people’s attitudes to participation in the Byron Shire.

**FUTURE ASPIRATIONS AND MIGRATION**

Another theme which features prominently in young people’s narratives is “future aspirations” and the desire to travel after finishing high school. Most respondents argued that the limited educational and employment opportunities force young people to migrate, even if sometimes only temporarily, to the city. Tammy (age 24) argued that “it’s limited! that’s why I did finish year 12 but I didn’t go to Uni and I didn’t know what I wanted to do...still don’t really” (interview). Children as young as 11 showed a desire to experience life in the city: “*I would like to experience living somewhere else like maybe in the city*” (Ploggin, age 11, focus group BZB). According to Jack (age 21), young people growing up in this area are exposed to so much “*difference*” and meet people from so many diverse cultural backgrounds that they develop a keep desire to go travelling themselves:

*Any child growing up here will immediately after schools just have the thirst for something different because this is incredible here, Byron is one of the most amazing places in the world. I personally think but after X amount of years, living here, something different is nice... The majority of people from Byron go travelling because we experience at such an early age the difference that there is.* (Interview)

Most young people who have the means and opportunity to move elsewhere do so. Fiona (age 18), for example, argued: “*I don’t want to stay here. The last few weeks I’ve felt a little bit drowned about that. I can’t stay here any longer. Yeah, so many things that I could have had but didn’t have*” (interview). Most young people feel a
strong connection and attachment to place and would stay in the area if there were better employment prospects:

I don't want to live here. I feel like if it wasn't so touristy I would want my kids to grow up here. If I had kids then I think that I would probably move back, but for my aspiring sort of new chapter of life I would want to move somewhere where there are more opportunities. I think that even though it kind of has something to do with here, it also doesn't because if Byron Bay had the opportunity that say Sydney did, or Melbourne did, then I would stay. It's basically, I love living in this area except for the tourists. (Isabella, age 21, interview)

Tourism development is often encouraged in rural areas as a source of local employment and for the economic benefits it brings to the community (Roberts & Hall, 2001). Nevertheless, Richardson (2010) argues that young people’s perceptions of tourism and hospitality jobs are often negative. Similarly, in this study tourism and hospitality jobs featured low on the list of future career choices and aspirations. Young people perceived working in cafes and restaurants as a necessary but temporary step to a better career away from the region. Andy (age 21) argued that: “You can't really live here, and get your education, and there aren’t many jobs around. People generally go to Sydney” (interview).

In contrast to these views, young girls still expressed a desire to come back to the area to start a family. Here the rural idyll discourse re-emerges with young girls feeling that life in a small community is desirable for a young family: “I want to go to University and then come back and live here with my family...I’m gonna come back here because it’s nice for kids to grow up here” (Bils, age 15, focus group BYSG10). Stephanie (age 14) talked about her desire to raise a family in the area so that her children can live in contact with nature: “I want to go away and then maybe come back...and live on a farm so my kids don’t grow up spoilt” (focus group BYSG9).
Another young girl argued that raising a family in a small community is safer than in a big city: “If I had kids and I lived in Ocean Shores, I would trust Ocean because I know Ocean well because that’s where I grew up, and there’s nothing really dangerous to do in Ocean like Sydney or Melbourne” (Sofia, age 13, focus group BYSG9). Lalu (age 11) was also of the same opinion: “I want my kids to be here because it’s such a nice place to grow up” (focus group MG).

For the young people who expressed a desire to stay in the area, creativity and entrepreneurial skills were perceived as essential qualities needed to take advantage of the opportunities that arise when living in a popular tourist destination. In order to secure sustainable and viable employment, young locals often have to think creatively to develop their own business ideas. According to Melanie (age 24), young people learn to be resilient:

\[
I \text{ think it shows that if you want to stay in the area, you have to come up with your own idea because there’s no work for you ... and if you didn’t you have to move to the city if you want to make money or work for like businesses that work for rich and wealthy people around here.} \text{ (Focus group TBL)}
\]

The recent growth in the creative and cultural industries in the region including music, design, film and the visual arts have created several new employment pathways for young locals. Numerous music festivals in the region (Blues Festival, Splendour in the Grass, Mullumbimby Music Festival and Falls Festival) have opened up new opportunities for young locals to be involved in the creative industries. Young people often have the chance to be mentored by internationally renowned musicians and perform at such festivals (Fieldnotes, July 2015). C. Gibson (2008) argues that the creative industries in this region may have a significant role in the retention of young people. In addition, he argues that music, film and the arts may be a means of encouraging a sense of belonging among youth in rural areas (C. Gibson, 2008).
Young people in this study have certainly commented positively about the numerous festivals which take place in the region throughout the year. Liz, Leyla and Charlie talked about their experience of growing up in such a creative region:

*The one thing I love about this area is the festivals… I am a real festival goer and I love music.* (Liz, age 17, focus group BYC)

*It’s good because we have Splendour and Blues Fest and you don’t have to drive so far away to get to the festivals.* (Leyla, age 14, focus group BYSG9)

*I love the festivals such as Mullum Music Festival.*

(Charlie, age 10, Focus group MM)

Nevertheless, C. Gibson (2002a) argues that the benefits of the creative industries are “certainly not enjoyed in an equitable fashion across the region” (p. 11). In this study, for example, young people who attend private Steiner schools were more likely to have developed a creative and musical inclination which predisposes them to a pathway into the creative and cultural industries (Fieldnotes, July 2015). Gabriel and Cecil Brandolini, the brother and sister duo who sang at “The Voice” (Australia, 2014), for example, attended Cape Byron Steiner School where singing and music are integrated in the school curriculum from grade one (Kin, 2014, June 30). Other local bands and former Steiner students such as “The Lovely Days”, “Tora and Potato Potato” have also gained musical success and have played at events such as Splendour in the Grass (Kin, 2014, June 30). In general, the positive attitudes of young residents suggest that music and festivals play an important role in fostering a sense of belonging and deep attachment to place (Derrett, 2003; Hudson, 2006).

**GENDERED PERSPECTIVES**

Gender differences are also explored in this study in the context of identity formation. As a particular identity trait, gender shapes young people’s experiences, views and opinions (Furlong, 2013). Young people’s narratives suggest that the
experience of growing up in a tourist destination is often gendered. Young girls, for example, expressed more positive attitudes towards tourism and tourists compared to boys, with “making new friends” and “socialising” as important aspects of life in a tourist destination. Fiona (age 18), for example, explained how socialising and “hanging out” with newly made friends is an important aspect of growing up in Byron Shire:

*Just hang out with the people who are travelling and just chill out with them… I meet them usually on the beach, it's usually just not me, it's usually just like a group of us and then sometimes we go back to their place and just chill out in the lounge area and stuff like that.* (Interview)

Findings from the interviews and focus groups with male and female participants show some differences. For young boys, for example, overcrowding, littering and safety were the three dominant themes; whereas for young girls alcohol/drugs and safety featured prominently. This suggests that although socialising is an important aspect for young girls, growing up in a tourist destination also provokes feelings of fear and lack of safety. Data from adult participants, discussed in the next chapter, suggests that young girls are often more at risk of sexual assaults and violence.

In contrast to girls, the dominant theme in the interviews and focus groups with young boys was overcrowding, followed by littering and lack of respect for the environment. Whereas for young girls socialising is an important aspect of growing up in a tourist destination and the boundaries between locals and visitors are porous, for boys these boundaries are more concrete, causing them to view tourists in a negative light. There is, in fact, a strong “othering” which emerges from the narratives of young boys with a pronounced “us versus them” mentality.

When asked how he felt about sharing his community and spaces with tourists one 10 year old boy said: “*I feel sad…I just want the people who grew up here…not people who invade*” (Crumb, age 10, focus group AN). Jack a 21 year old resident of Byron Bay argued that the visible animosity between local young boys and tourists
has actually deterred him from socialising with foreigners: “To see them come to our town, tourists and getting into fights with local kids, I just saw that as such a disgusting attitude that it really deterred me from interacting any further with any tourists” (interview).

Literature in this space suggests young masculinities are often embodied in particular bodily practices such as physical “hardness” and the ability to look “cool” (Robb, 2007, p. 140). These gendered practices, and the evidenced attachment to place that has emerged from the interviews with young boys, are cause for considerable tension between local boys and tourists. Walsh and Black (2015) argue that despite growing up in an era of “liquid modernity” and considerable diversity, young Australians often experience racism. In this research, although young people’s childhood experiences are defined by globalisation, migration and tourism, young boys display a world view that is “anything but global” and are concerned with delineating clear boundaries between “who belongs and who does not” (see also Walsh & Black, 2015, p. 82).

Creating boundaries is, however, an important process in the formation of identity (Bauman, 2009; Yuval-Davis, 2006). In this sense, by defining who is local and who is not, young boys are fulfilling important needs for belongingness. It is thus not surprising that “overcrowding” is one of the main concerns for young boys who often feel displaced and alienated by the flow of visiting tourists. Studies on childhood and gender highlight the complex dynamics of children’s gendered experiences through play (Thorne, 1993) and socialisation (Furlong, 2013).

In this research, the focus on young people’s lived experiences has shown gender to be important. The way in which young people play out their femininities and masculinities (J. Butler, 1990) is particularly challenging in communities where flows of migrants and tourists continuously reshape the socio-cultural fabric of the community. As D. Chambers and Rakić (2015a) argue the intersectionality between gender and other positionalities such as age is an important but rarely explored research avenue in tourism studies.
SUMMARY

Findings from this research highlight the multiple constructions and interpretations of childhood in a tourist destination and challenge the dichotomous divide between rural and urban identities. Aspects of both worlds coexist and are internalised by young people who have an active role in negotiating identity and belonging to place. The experiences of childhood in a tourist destination are thus diverse, hybrid and extremely complex. The chapter covers recurring and dominant themes in the data including young people’s narratives about growing up in an idyllic place in contact with nature and surrounded by beautiful landscapes. The strong attachment to nature and place has also developed an environmentalist identity or consciousness among young locals who are concerned about the impacts of tourism on the environment.

The next theme which is described in this chapter is connected to the experiences of an urban childhood. Among the positive aspects discussed are the opportunities for socialising, multiculturalism and a sense of pride connected to growing up in a popular tourist destination. Although rural and urban experiences of childhood coexist in the narratives of respondents, at times negotiating the positives and the negatives of both worlds is challenging. Feelings of alienation and displacement are often felt by young people particularly in the peak tourist season. Tensions and negotiations between young hosts and guests over space are common and recurring themes in the data. In addition, young people have talked about the perceived lack of safety that is typical of urban childhoods.

Young people, however, actively reaffirm identity and belonging through a series of practices such as avoidance and creating locals-only spaces; developing a straitedge identity or sensibility; and having a say in matters that affect them. Young people feel the need to continuously reaffirm their identities as locals by engaging in youth subcultural groups and tribes, and cutting out locals-only spaces and times so their needs for affiliation and belonging can be fulfilled. The chapter concludes by discussing young people’s future aspirations including a desire to move away from the area to pursue a greater variety of employment and educational opportunities. The multiple readings of the experiences of childhood in a tourist destination are also discussed in relation to gender.
CHAPTER FIVE

GROWING UP IN A TOURIST DESTINATION: Perceptions of Adult Stakeholders

INTRODUCTION

Semi-structured interviews with youth workers and other key adult stakeholders were carried out to explore their perceptions of the challenges and opportunities that young people face growing up in the Byron Shire. Some of these adults were interviewed in the initial stages of the research to seek advice, too, on how best to access a wide range of young participants for the study. A total of 14 one-on-one in-depth interviews were carried out which address Research Question Two: How do adults who work with young people perceive the experience of growing up in the Byron Shire? Relevant interview narrative is included to illustrate the emergent themes and discussed in relation to the relevant literature and secondary data sources.

The chapter begins by discussing how adult participants perceive the experience of growing up in a tourist destination with common challenges being alienation, threats and competition for resources. I then discuss adults’ perspectives on young people’s identities, cultures and tribes with a particular focus on straightedge and rave cultures. The chapter concludes by discussing adults’ views about young people’s voice and participation in decision-making. Throughout the chapter, I also draw attention to the similarities and differences between the young people’s perspectives and the adults’ views.
THE POLITICS OF BELONGING

Similarly to findings in the previous chapter, belonging is a recurring theme in the adult interviews. In particular, interview participants argued that growing up in a tourist destination often creates challenges and barriers to achieving a sense of belonging among local young people. Adult participants spoke at length about the sense of hopelessness, resentment and anger that young people often feel towards tourists and tourism. In their view, young people see it as unfair that so much money and effort is directed towards attracting tourists to the Byron Shire, at the expense of their needs. According to Maree (youth worker), for example, there is a perception among local youth that the tourism dollar never really gets back to the community:

*I know from just talking to young people...their perception is that a lot of money is spent in this town to make things great for tourists but not for them... I think there’s a very strong sense of hopelessness among young people.*

Youth workers such as Linda and Olivia also talked about feelings of social exclusion that are often conveyed by young residents who are unable to access all the fun activities aimed at tourists (e.g. kayaking tours, sky diving, snorkel and dive tours), and who are often denied access to certain places within the community. This contributes to feelings of alienation and resentment:

*I think tourism impacts on the lives of young people in the Byron Shire in so many ways...the good things of living here like the snorkel tours and kayaking and things that they can’t really afford to access. So they feel pushed out by tourism and don’t necessarily see the economic benefits directly themselves, they just see tourism as a negative in my experience. Every so often that bubbles up to the surface and we see lots of violence and fighting in Byron as an outlet of that resentment and those built-up tensions.* (Linda, youth worker)
There’s a sense that young people are unproductive and I know that this reflects a broader sociological perception of young people being dangerous, or at risk, or destabilising the economy, or irresponsible. So they are shut out and whether that’s in the actual town centre itself where there is a police policy that says “move on”. I think there’s an element of violence associated with that, whether that’s the police insisting young people move on, and there’s an element of threat. Young people can’t just sit in a doorway or in a café it’s always “move on move on the shops don’t want you hanging around here”. (Olivia, youth worker)

According to adults, young locals feel marginalised, at times in competition for resources, housing, jobs, parking and even just physical space in the community. Maree and Lynn perceived that young people feel a sense of ownership and belonging towards places in their community particularly the natural environments which are often overcrowded during the tourist season and inaccessible to young locals:

I think the competition for resources, housing, jobs, parking, and physical space in the community...during school holidays you can’t find a park, you know they [young people] see it as their place, their beaches... they can’t go surfing. I’m being very general here, there’s no doubt lots of respect for nice tourists but there’s a lot of disrespectful tourists who are rude, aggressive, throw their rubbish everywhere, chuck their cigarette butts everywhere ...that bothers me so of course it bothers young people too. (Maree, youth worker)
I feel for them because they love their place, they love Byron but also at the same time they are dealing with all of this outside influence on a regular basis and more and more people are coming each year...I imagine if it wasn’t such a heavily touristy destination that there may be other places in town that the young people could identify with as theirs. (Lynn, youth worker)

Although adults’ views reinforce findings in the previous chapter, they also foreground the territorial feelings that emerge among young people and which are often cause for violence in the community. Youth workers frequently made reference to the somewhat infamous “Rex Hunt incident” as an example when discussing this issue. In 2005, a well-known Australian fishing television and radio personality, Rex Hunt, was visiting Byron Bay with his family and claimed to have been attacked by local teenagers. Youth workers present at the time argue, however, that the incident was actually triggered by the visitors throwing rubbish on the street. This was followed by abusive language directed at local youth who had asked for the rubbish to be picked up. This triggered a strong reaction among local young people which highlights an underlying attachment to the community and a sense of belonging which is often challenged by the visiting tourists. According to Linda and John, children and young people feel strongly about their community and display anger and frustration towards tourists who do not respect the environment:

These young people were so angry about their position in the community and their sense of belonging was really severed and they were blaming tourism and they were blaming that party culture. (Linda, youth worker)
That’s where their [young people] ground is, that’s where they grow up so they do get annoyed. Whether it fuels anger, that’s probably the big thing I think. Tourists are also an easy target; they’re nobody to you in a sense you don’t know them, they don’t know you, they’re not connected to anyone so they’re just a novelty that you can do whatever you want to. You can pay them off, you can throw something at them from your car, you can give them the finger, you do whatever when you’re a kid because there’s a little bit of “this is my ground stuff you”’ The big one is the surf and they’re [tourists] idiots in the surf and it is annoying. (John, high school teacher)

The Rex Hunt incident is just one example of the many violent outbreaks in Byron Bay which make the headlines in the national and local media. The negative press appears to further exacerbate feelings of alienation and diminishes self-worth as well as negatively impacting on the identity of many young people growing up in the Byron Shire. According to Claudia and Mia, the type of tourism which is attracted to the Byron Shire, and in particular Byron Bay, comes with a lack of respect for the environment and locals:

I think that they [young people] definitely have a feeling of ownership on Byron and I think that they feel put out by the fact that the tourism culture here comes with a lack of respect for Byron. It does upset the belongingness of our local people. (Claudia, Schoolies volunteer)

They [young people] find it quite overwhelming that the major population within the town of Byron Bay is the transient community ...so the travellers, the backpackers, the holiday makers and that their lives really are hugely affected...so from how long it takes
them to get to school with the traffic in the morning, to walking through town particularly in Byron when it’s full of travellers, to seeing people throw rubbish in the streets because it’s not their town. (Mia, youth worker)

Although these feelings may be unique to the young people living in the Byron Shire, there is evidence from previous studies that young people struggle to share their spaces and special places with foreigners (Canosa et al., 2001; Cohen, 1982; Mathieson & Wall, 1982; P. E. Murphy, 1985). Leiper (2004) argues that young residents living in host communities can often become “excessively frustrated, then apathetic or anomic” (p. 239) towards tourism and tourists. Compared to the findings from the interviews and focus groups with young people, adults highlighted the negative impacts of tourism on young locals and, in particular, the “territoriality” that they experience. Similarly to other studies, territorial feelings are often attributed to the local surf culture which fosters a “strong sense of ownership and attachment to the surf break…[and] the need to defend it from outsiders” (Usher & Kerstetter, 2015, p. 290).

Adult participants in this study argued that feelings of belonging among local young people are replaced by feelings of alienation and disengagement from community life as discourses and practices of “socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion” unfold (Antonsich, 2010, p. 649). This structural view of the experience of childhood is further reinforced in the following discussion on the threats and risks that adults perceived young people face.

**Threats to young people**

Similarly to findings in the previous chapter, safety was a dominant theme in the interviews with adults which included discussions about the threats young residents face growing up in a tourist destination. In contrast, however, two new themes emerged from adults’ interviews that were not discussed by the young people in this study: “Sexual health and the over-sexualisation of spaces” and “violence and mental health”. Firstly, I discuss adults’ perceptions of danger in relation to exposure to the “party scene” in Byron Bay.
Alcohol and drugs

There is a general perception among adults that being a tourist destination, alcohol and drugs are more readily available among young people. As discussed, youth tourism, both international and domestic, is a big market segment in this area. Adults argue that young locals are naturally drawn to socialise and “hang out” with young tourists. In addition to this, young residents are exposed to the party scene in Byron Bay from a very young age and thus influenced by the hedonistic and self-indulgent tourism culture which increases the likelihood of risky behaviours such as binge drinking, drug use and unprotected sex. Linda, John and Mia explained how the party culture in the Byron Shire affects young locals:

Young people often want to identify with the party culture of Byron Bay and hence the alcohol and drug problems ... I think they want to identify with what they see is the identity of Byron Bay...this party town and this binge culture and they want-in. (Linda, youth worker)

It’s just that it’s so available, it’s so evident and visible that...how do we change something which is ultimately a societal issue especially in Australia where binge drinking is an Australian cultural issue...you know if you go to Europe I didn’t see in my travels drinking to get drunk specifically, that is an Australian thing and that is what I’ve seen here and that is why I don’t drink and I have chosen not to drink in my teens. (Mia, youth worker)
To be honest I don’t think it’s anything out of the ordinary to any other town. I think if you go to any town in Australia there’s going to be a group of young people that are drinking and binge drinking but in Byron Bay it’s a celebrated thing, or we think it is because there’s other people that come here to do it. (John, high school teacher)

These statements exemplify some of the issues that young people face when growing up in a tourist destination, in particular, the “demonstration effect” of alcohol and drug consumption which is prevalent in the tourism culture of the place. Of particular concern for young people growing up in a tourist destination is the “demonstration of foreign cultures, behaviours, attitudes and what is often termed lifestyles” (Leiper, 2004, p. 238). This is usually felt to a greater degree by vulnerable members of the community and, in particular, by young people who may “assume that a life of leisure, in all its demonstrated forms – idleness, playing, self-indulgent spending- is normal and central in modern societies” (Leiper, 2004, p. 238). Meg (youth worker), for example, made reference to this “confusion” of growing up in a holiday place:

I guess because it is a tourist town so you have the young people growing up here which is their home, it’s their sanctuary, it’s where they go to school and you know go out but they’re encountering a holiday place so I guess in a way that could be quite confusing in a sense. They’re living their day-to-day lives and then they are having all these people around them that are having fun all the time basically. Because it’s also a party town and there’s a lot of buzz and clubs so that I would imagine gives them lack of safety as well because they’re encountering all these strange people in their town.
The demonstration effects of tourism have been explored mainly in studies focused on tourism communities in developing countries, stressing the modernising effects of tourism on local communities (Boissevain, 1979; Cohen, 1982; D. Gibson, 2015; Nash, 1989; V. L. Smith, 1977a; Swain, 1977). Adults in this study, however, argued that the community context in which the child develops exerts considerable influence on young people’s choices and behaviours even in a developed country.

**Sexual health and the over-sexualisation of spaces**

Sexual health and the over-sexualisation of spaces in the community, particularly in Byron Bay, is a new theme which emerged from the interviews with adults in this study. The sensitive nature of the topic may have prevented young people from openly discussing the issue which was, however, addressed during one of the participatory projects. Adults in this study, and particularly youth workers, talked about issues surrounding unprotected and promiscuous sex among young people. According to the youth workers, the consequences of the hedonistic behaviours that tourists engage in whilst on holiday are cause for concern for the younger population of a host community. Whereas drugs, alcohol and violence are recognised and acknowledged issues in the community, sexual health is rarely discussed openly. Mia and Claudia talked about the impact of the transient population of visitors on young locals and the consequences for their sexual health:

*Because we have such a large demographic of transient people coming through they often have a lot of sexual intercourse without protection and then our local young people are hanging out with those groups of travellers and we actually have the highest rates of a range of STDs [sexually transmitted diseases] in the Byron Shire for 15-19 year olds.*

(Mia, youth worker)

*We’ve got the highest rate of STDs in Australia, Chlamydia is extraordinarily high.* (Claudia, Schoolies volunteer)
In addition, youth workers talked about another issue which is rarely acknowledged in the community – the social relations between young local women and tourists and the predatory behaviours of some older men who visit the area. According to Olivia and Mia, the gendered landscapes of childhood are significantly different, with young girls having to face the over-sexualisation of spaces, as well as the dangers connected to the party culture. According to these youth workers, young girls may not realise the risks involved in partaking in the party scene; sexually transmitted diseases being one such risk with others being rape and violence:

Some young women from my observation over the last 10 years are participating in a type of sex work that they may not even identify as sex work. They meet somebody, they say “come up to my penthouse...I’ve got champagne”, it usually involves dinner for a sexual favour at the end of it. The young women may not see that as being sex for favours, they probably see that as a natural consequence of the “party”...it’s not very well acknowledged that young people are being displaced and dispossessed, whether that is the sexualisation of young women or the violence that occurs after midnight when the pubs shut and you’ve got violence perpetrated on young people. I don’t think that’s well acknowledged in the community at all. (Olivia, youth worker)

A lot of young people who I have worked with who are based in Byron township have complained about the complete over-sexualisation of everything ... so they would be in their school uniforms walking down the street and being offered free tickets to go to Cheeky Monkeys that night and they would be saying like “we are obviously 14, why would you be giving us this?” and they are being handed out by
backpackers in basically underpants and bras or swimwear walking around town. The young people going to the high schools in the area who I have worked with have given the feedback that they are disappointed that they can’t even walk down the street after school without being offered free drinks or you know it’s “wet t-shirt” night at Cheeky Monkeys tonight and how upset that makes them that they can’t just be kids walking down the street….. It’s such an over-sexualised, alcohol-oriented tourism basically. (Mia, youth worker)

Studies in the tourism literature highlight the unequal power relations between hosts and guests, as well as the subsequent transgressive behaviours and sexual adventures that unfold in tourist destinations (Carr, 2016; Pritchard & Morgan, 2006). One event which is perceived by many of the adults interviewed to be of particular concern to the health and wellbeing of young people – both tourists and locals – is the celebration of “Schoolies”.

Schoolies

Schoolies is a popular event in the Byron Shire, and specifically in Byron Bay, where school leavers flock to party and celebrate the end of their schooling and the beginning of their independent adult life. This is a time for young people to experiment with adult behaviours and is considered a “rite of passage” (Salom et al., 2005, p. 26). However, according to adults some of these behaviours pose considerable threats to young residents who want to join the celebrations. Lynn (youth worker) explained it is “a big draw for the teenagers to go and meet the Schoolies and party with them and hang out with them”.

In Byron Bay, this is a contentious issue which is addressed through prevention techniques. One way in which Schoolies celebrations has been managed in Byron Bay is through the Schoolies Safety Response Group and The Hub which is a “safe spot”; an alcohol and drugs free space for young people to meet. Other strategies include alcohol-abuse minimisation strategies such as those implemented in March
2013: lockout from clubs at 1.30 a.m.; banning of doubles, shooters and jugs; no cocktails after midnight; and a maximum of four drinks per sale (Dobney, 2013, March 12, p. 1).

Claudia and Sarah, both Schoolies Hub volunteers, explained that there is an average of 10,000 school leavers who attend the Schoolies festivities every year aged between 17 and 18 years and the Hub provides help and support 24 hours a day for 18 days at the end of November. Since there is a lack of activities for underage young people, the Hub functions as a safe haven and gathering spot for young people who are precluded entry to the pubs and clubs. Claudia explained there are DJs until midnight and the Hub is an alcohol and drug free area: “we try to keep them in one spot particularly at night time and because it’s alcohol and glass free they can’t enter the park area with alcohol”.

According to Claudia, Schoolies attracts young locals as well as young people from surrounding areas (e.g. Ballina and Lismore). These young people are often older (between 18 and 25 years) and are referred to as “droolies”, whereas the younger ones aged 14 to 16 are called “toolies”: “We do get a huge mix of local young people and also young people from those feeder towns like Ballina and Lismore”. According to Sarah, the Hub is an invaluable resource to keep young people safe: “The kids were just saying ‘thank you for being here’ it wasn’t really that we were doing anything but just to know that we’re there...sometimes they just come in for some TLC [tender loving care]”. There is often also a big police presence that patrols the area where the Hub is located (Apex Park) in order to enforce the alcohol ban which is often overlooked by young party revellers (Fieldnotes, November 2014).

Violence & mental health

Violence is another recurring theme in the interviews with adults which did not emerge from the interviews and focus groups with young people. Adults argued that it is difficult to assess whether violent acts are most often perpetrated on young residents or by young residents. Non-domestic assaults, including alcohol-fuelled violence, in Byron Bay were double the state average in 2015 (BOCSAR, 2015). Indecent assault, acts of indecency and other sexual offences were also higher than
state average and saw a 50 per cent increase in cases, from 20 in 2014 to 31 in 2015 (BOCSAR, 2015).

The other issue which was also widely discussed by the adult participants, and which is connected to the alcohol and drug taking culture of the area, is mental health. This theme was not discussed by young people in the study. According to adults, young people who start partying, consuming alcohol and drugs at a young age are more likely to suffer from mental health issues, depression, self-harm and suicidal tendencies. John, a young high school teacher, for example, explained how the “demonstration effects” of the party culture in Byron Shire may at times have detrimental impacts on the wellbeing of local young people:

I grew up in Morrison Avenue [Mullumbimby] .... we’ve got the mental health flats down the end of that street. There’s kids I saw in year 7 at high school who have now lost their minds and they live down there and I pick them up hitchhiking and I know who they are, I know their names and I remember them from when they had their minds. I’ve seen them go through the cannabis, through the acid and now end up in a place where they’re 21, they are living on support in these homes and mentally they’re brains are fried ... I can see there’s a desperation in their lives, they’re hopeless.

Linda, a youth worker, argued that often young locals really identify with the party culture of the area: “Young people often want to identify with the party culture of Byron Bay and hence the alcohol and drug problems and repercussions such as depression, self-harm and self-medicating”.
Consuming places and spaces

The other dominant theme which emerged from the interviews with adults, and which is closely linked to the previous discussion on the politics of belonging, is the issue of tourists consuming the natural and built environments. Similarly to findings in the previous chapter, adults perceived young people to be in competition with visitors for a variety of different resources from jobs, to housing, parking and physical space in the community. Adults, however, foregrounded the broader community issues such as housing stress, juvenile homelessness and un(under)employment. According to Olivia (youth worker):

The biggest issue is the disparity between the fact that there are approximately five thousand young people in the Shire and then there are 1.8 million tourists, so the challenge of the built and natural environment being consumed by visitors and also by businesses that disenfranchise young people so that young people don’t have a sense of belonging to their own place.

Lack of affordable housing

According to Linda (youth worker), over the years families have been pushed out of Byron Bay to the neighbouring communities as holiday lettings have become more popular and rents have become increasingly unaffordable. At present, affordable housing is an issue for the whole Byron Shire even the northern parts of the Shire such as Ocean Shore, Brunswick Heads and Mullumbimby. This has been exacerbated by the relocation of major music festivals such as “Splendour in the Grass” and “Falls” at the Yelgun parklands north of Ocean Shores. Linda and Olivia talked about the “gentrification” of the communities and the profound changes taking place in the Byron Shire as a consequence of outside property investments and tourism:
A lot of that links back to affordable housing, in their lifetime they’ve seen kids that they’ve grown up with and started school with having to move away because there’s nowhere to live. Those houses just aren’t on the market anymore. They’ve seen their friends’ families living in sheds and making do with what they can. Even though they were born here and feel a sense of belonging and a sense of entitlement ...they should be able to live here and there should be a place for them in this community... belonging is such a big part of the hierarchy of needs and when you destabilise people’s homes it really affects their sense of belonging... So I think it’s really daunting for a young person going through high school knowing that they are going to have to leave because there is no place for them in the community. (Linda, youth worker)

In response to the gentrification of the community through all this money coming in... we’ve seen a squeezing out of families out of the Bay into Ocean Shores, Mullumbimby, Brunswick Head, Lennox Heads. So there’s even less localism of young people because there’s actually less young people living here, because their families can’t actually afford to... Because of tourism there’s so much property being held by outsiders, there’s very limited opportunity for young people to actually settle and raise children in their own community unless they come home and live with their families. There’s a lot of young people coming back to live in extended family situations. (Olivia, youth worker)
According to these adults, the housing situation in Byron Shire has had a profound impact on the lives of families and young people. The ever-increasing popularity of holiday lettings owned by outside investors has meant that many families can no longer afford to live in the area. As a parent raising children in the Byron Shire, Sandra talked about the loss of community that can occur when there are visitors living in a neighbouring house:

*Sandra* 

> So then you have a guy who lives in Sydney not connected in any way or without any interest in our local community and then we’ve got tourists and strangers in our street and the money is going back to him in Sydney. I’ve just started leaving the boys home alone at night when I go out, previously I would know who is in the street and I know all the neighbours but now you know there might be a carload of blokes from Queensland and sure not everybody is a bad guy but there’s that sense that you sort of don’t know who’s around anymore...so that loss of community. (Sandra, parent)

Respondents talked about the changing demographic composition of the communities in the Byron Shire with many of the long-standing residents and traditional owners moving out of the region or living in precarious housing conditions. Based on 2011 Census data, the Northern Rivers Regional Profile report shows there are higher proportions of households in the Northern Rivers experiencing both rent and mortgage stress compared to NSW as a whole (RDA-NR, 2013a, p. 22). Byron Shire has the highest rate of both rent (41.3%) and mortgage (20.6%) stress than any other community in the Northern Rivers (RDA-NR, 2013a). According to Linda, lack of affordable housing is causing changes in the demographic profile of the communities in the area:
I’ve heard local people say “Oh well, if you can’t afford to live here you can’t afford to live here” but you know we need tradespeople in our community we need people with variation of skills. What sort of community are we if we say you can’t afford to live here...you go over and live in Lismore and then when we need our washing machine fixed we’ll call you to come over here. That is not what a community is like...we’re not living in a resort we are living in a town and a town needs all kinds of people. I think we really need to work at affordable housing and housing options that support people who are in crisis for six months or 12 months until they get back on their feet until they have housing rental references that can help them find their own place in community because I think it would be a really sad day when the Byron Shire is only full of people who can afford to live here. (Linda, youth worker)

Housing stress was a popular theme, with respondents talking about issues connected to homelessness and the strains families face when they are forced to go from one rental property to the next every six months. Short term rental properties are very popular in the area with the summer months being the hardest to find affordable housing for locals.

**Homelessness**

Juvenile homelessness is another theme which emerged from the interviews with the youth workers and which was not discussed by the young people in this study. According to the Byron Shire Council Homelessness Policy (2008), “people are considered homeless when they do not have accommodation that is safe, secure, appropriate and affordable” (p. 1). Peter, remembering his days as a youth worker in the area, talked about the “couch surfing” trend among young residents:
Generally, some [young people] were influenced by their friends to get out ... they do a lot of couch surfing in Byron Bay ... that’s how a lot of the girls survived, the under 16s particularly. They would stay with friends’ parents one month and sleep on the couch. Then, of course, obviously, that has a short lifespan. They ended up in care...Family breakdown was the biggest issue. (Peter, ex-youth worker)

Couch surfing is a significant issue in the Byron Shire, and one which often goes unrecognised as it is substantially different from the homelessness which is experienced on the streets. It is also very difficult to gather accurate data on this type of homelessness. In an article which featured in the media, a Northern Rivers Social Development Council (NRSDC) spokesperson argued that “most youths don’t consider themselves homeless if there is a roof over their head, but without stability and a place where they can keep their things they are homeless and at risk” (cited in Hargraves, 2013, April 11, para. 15). A spokesperson from Youth Connections North Coast (YCNC) also explained that young people are often homeless because they are “fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, untreated mental health or drug and alcohol abuse” (cited in Hargraves, 2013, April 11, para. 11). As Peter suggests in the above quote, juvenile homelessness and couch surfing is often a consequence of family breakdown and dysfunctional family situations.

According to the 2011 Census data there was a significant increase in the proportion of the NSW population that were homeless from 25% (in 2006) to 27% (in 2011) (RDA-NR, 2013a). These estimates indicate that 0.5% of the Northern Rivers population were counted as homeless in the 2011 Census compared to 0.4% for the state overall. In addition, people living in precarious or improvised dwelling (rough sleepers) in the region made up 19.8% of the State’s rough sleeping homeless population (RDA-NR, 2013a). Furthermore, the Northern Rivers Social Profile (RDA-NR, 2013b) described an “acute shortage of options for young people experiencing homelessness in the Northern Rivers, and a long waiting list for
homelessness support” (p. 40). The report stated that official estimates of homeless youth do not match the current experience of service providers.

Employment, unemployment and underemployment

In addition to the competition for housing in the community, young locals also compete for jobs with migrant workers and backpackers. The issue of unemployment and underemployment was the focus of many discussions with youth workers in the area, reinforcing what young people talked about in the previous chapter. Youth workers specifically talked about young locals having to compete for jobs with the transient population of backpackers and travellers who seek employment for short periods of time. This was the most reoccurring theme to emerge following the themes of “safety and threats to young locals” and “alcohol & drugs”. According to Linda (youth worker), for example, the biggest issue for young people is the lack of meaningful employment opportunities:

For me the biggest issue for young people is meaningful employment opportunities so we encourage our young people to stay here and continue to be part of the community and not feel like they have to leave, that they are going to be pushed out...they have to compete with lots of backpackers who will accept less than award wages.

Olivia (youth worker) also explained that backpackers and temporary residents are often willing to work for low wages:

Because we have a lot of tourism we also have a lot of people, who are backpackers who are willing to work for $5 an hour, so jobs that would usually be for our young people are being consumed by travellers who are willing to work for black money under the table, so it’s hard for young people.
According to Peter (ex-youth worker), the oversupply of labour often causes young locals to struggle to find employment particularly because temporary migrants and travellers may be more experienced:

*We all know that the tourism so-called industry is based around backpackers working for rent or 10 bucks an hour cash in hand... young travellers come from overseas and have been in cafes for years, they have wide experience and are probably more exotic in that sense, too.*

Adult respondents in this study argued that job security is an important factor in the retention of young people in the region. Meg (youth worker), for example, said that “if we could offer them the jobs and security I think that would alleviate a lot of our unemployment”. In addition, adults talked about the lack of variety in employment opportunities and the lack of vocational training available to young people to successfully transition into the workforce. Dianne and Sandra, for example, argued there is a need to promote other industries besides tourism if the widespread out-migration of young locals to the cities is to be reduced:

*I have a 17 year old at high school... you know once they finish high school there’s really nothing here for them. Who wants to get out of high school and make coffee or flip hamburgers or you know put up with the drunks at the clubs and pubs! So the kids move away and look for work or study at Uni. We’ve got businesses around here offering our people jobs but it’s only casual work and it’s just not enough. (Dianne, Arakwal community member)*

*I think we should concentrate on other industries because I think the tourism jobs... with tourists they talk about jobs, jobs, jobs but they’re not quality jobs, like being cleaners. So I’d like to see a wider*
view on job creation and maybe if we put some of the effort and energy they put into getting tourists into building other industries our children might have better quality jobs. (Sandra, parent)

According to Beth (civil servant), pathways into employment for young locals are lacking in the area. She argued that Woolworth is “pretty much the only one with the easy employment pathway for youth”. According to Peter (ex-youth worker), the biggest employers of local young people in the past were the Norco dairy industry, the Meat Works Abattoir and to a lesser degree the whaling and fishing industry. With the demise of these industries and the closure of the Meat Works in 1983 there were few employment opportunities left for young locals.

Lack of vocational training and education go hand-in-hand with the high rates of youth unemployment and underemployment. Walsh and Black (2015) argue that often young people who struggle to find employment are from groups or geographic areas with scarce educational opportunities. According to the authors, there has been a steady decrease in full-time job opportunities for young Australians in the last 20 years, with young people having to settle for part-time and casual jobs.

Although Byron Youth Services have in the past supported young people transition into vocational training and work through their programs such as “Links to Learning”, current funding cuts have meant that such programs can no longer continue, further marginalising young people who finish school or leave school early and struggle to find employment (Jeffery, 2014, May 2014). Young people who go unemployed for long periods of time are also more at risk of being disengaged from community life and may in some instances experience long-term unemployment (Walsh & Black, 2015). Adults have also referred to the need to diversify the economy of the region and to open up more employment opportunities for its youth. Similarly, studies by C. Gibson (2002b, 2008) found that the rise of the creative industries in the Byron Shire has the potential to increase youth employment and mitigate the impacts of out-migration to the cities.
Young locals’ reactions to the consumption of place

Connected to the commercialisation of spaces in the community, youth workers also talked about young people’s need to continuously reaffirm their identity as locals through practices such as graffiti and avoidance of overcrowded spaces in the community. Similarly to the discussion in the previous chapter, adults argue that these “locals-only” spaces become important landscapes of a shared identity for young people who may often feel alienated and displaced by the flow of visiting tourists. Common reactions include the practice of graffiti, avoidance, and the adoption of a moral sensibility which condemns and denigrates the behaviours tourists engage in.

Youth workers argued that the practice of graffiti is used by young people to reclaim public spaces and particularly contested spaces (Bender, 1993b); this however, was not discussed by the young people in this study. Olivia (youth worker) talked about the practice of graffiti as a symbolic gesture aimed at reclaiming some of the spaces in the community:

There’s a tradition at The Pass where certain letters or words are written on the rock like “locals only” and then somebody else would come along and graffiti over it “only love – locals only”. So probably over a decade that one rock at The Pass has been graffitied. Other parts of town will be graffitied with something similar, certain letters that represent something only the young people would know, so that’s something around ownership. I guess we saw an emergence of the popularity of 2481, the postcode gangs. So young people wearing 2481 on their clothes in tattooing, in graffiting so that if anyone went “2481 what’s that?” they would identify themselves as “non-locals” if they didn’t know what it was.
Adults also reported that some young people actually avoid engaging with the environments in their community. These young people are connected to the straightedge subculture that emerged in the Byron Shire 10 years ago and which is here described by Olivia (youth worker) and discussed later in the chapter:

_These young people were feeling disenfranchised so that started a culture of hardcore music where young people were dressing in black, listening to really quite provocative music, not using the natural environment at all, feeling very alienated, creating a space where they actually shut everybody out of that counter-culture._

Having been exposed to the alcohol and drug culture of the area, adults argued that young people develop a strong sense of morality and choose not to engage in the destructive behaviours of the mainstream tourist culture. Similarly to the interviews with young people, Lynn and Mia talked about the growing emergence of a “straightedge” sensibility.

_I think it’s quite fascinating because it’s such a beautiful, wonderful, exquisite place that also fosters for quite a few young people a really beautiful sense of ....I don’t know they have a quality about them that is really quite unique ...there are a lot of young people here who have an emotional maturity and intellectual maturity that I think is quite different to other areas. Like I said before, maybe it’s because they’ve had to deal with this kind of transient population that’s enabled them to be flexible, to be adaptable, to retain a strong sense of self and identity._ (Lynn, youth worker)
There is this whole straigthed movement, they don’t take drugs, don’t do alcohol ... because they think it doesn’t make it as fun and that’s really good to see young people choosing that for themselves.

(Mia, youth worker)

Generally, there is a sense that young locals are environmentally switched on and care about their community and the environment. However childhood, and specifically the transition into adulthood, is particularly challenging for young people in the area. According to the adults in this study, young people challenge their social exclusion from public spaces in subtle ways (see also Nairn et al., 2003). The consumption of places and spaces in the community, including the lack of affordable housing and lack of employment opportunities, is an important theme which emerged from the interviews with adults. Adult participants also argued that for young people to successfully negotiate a sense of identity and belonging in an environment which poses considerable threats and challenges, it is essential that service providers continue offering ongoing and meaningful support to young locals.

YOUTH IDENTITIES, CULTURES AND TRIBES

As discussed in the previous chapter, the diversity and eclecticism of the Byron Shire means there have been and are several different youth subcultures or tribes connected to the diverse lifestyles and patterns of consumption of young people in the area. This diversity is an important theme which emerged from the adult interviews. Having worked in the same position for several years, youth workers, in particular, have a longitudinal perspective of the changing fashions, music and entertainment trends of young locals.

Based on the premises that identities are flexible, relational and constructed in the socio-cultural context in which the individual is embedded, adults identified that young people’s patterns of consumption and the ways in which they express their identity are reflected in some of the youth subcultures or tribes in the area. Furlong (2013) argues that within the literature on youth there is a long and fruitful research
tradition in the area of youth cultures, lifestyles and tribes; these have however been confusing and often conflicting concepts. Early terms such as youth cultures and subcultures have clear links to social class and often political ideologies with youth seen as a “sub-set of broader class cultures” but distinct from the “cultural orientations, interests and affiliations” of adults (Furlong, 2013, p. 155). More recently terms such as “lifestyle”, “post-subculture” and “tribe” have been used to highlight “shared patterns of consumption” (Furlong, 2013, p. 155), and the fluid and unstable nature of youth affiliations (Bennett, 2011).

Although in this study young people’s lifestyles seem not to be connected to class-based distinctions as it may have been in the 60s and 70s with the “hippies” and the “ punks” (Furlong, 2013), I will use the term subculture when referring to the straightedge movement in Byron Shire as there seems to be a very unique use of music, fashion and politics to subvert the views of an older generation, in particular the alcohol and drug ridden lifestyle of a past generation and the contemporary tourist party culture.

Elsewhere I will use the term “neo-tribe” to avoid the rigidity of the term subculture and its links to class, while “highlighting the importance of agency and a more fluid relationship between identity work and stylistic choices” (Furlong, 2013, p. 156). Thus although youth literature has moved away from the use of the term “subculture” to embrace more fluid and flexible terms such as “tribes” and “lifestyles” (Bennett, 1999, 2011; Robards & Bennett, 2011), these concepts are not mutually exclusive but can be used in conjunction to analyse the full gamut of youth cultural affiliations (Bennett, 2011).

Similarly to the interviews with young people, adults in this study argued that the varied patterns of consumption – including entertainment choices, music, fashion and sport – are highly symbolic and define as well as signal affiliation with various youth tribes in the Byron Shire. John, a high school teacher, argued that every young person is looking for something to do or to be known for, a label, an identity:
Everyone is looking for something to be! You either be a “skater”, a “surfer dude”, I was the “doof guy”...everyone is looking for something to be labelled.... so generally you’ve got groups who surf, who do the sport (football or soccer), and then you’ve got groups who... skate ... and then you’ve got the hills, parties and doofers.

John also explained how there are two main youth subcultures in Byron Shire which are split geographically and gravitate around the two high schools, Mullumbimby High School (attended by young people from Ocean Shores, Brunswick Heads, South Golden Beach, Main Arm, Myocum and the hinterlands) and Byron Bay High School (attended by young people from Suffolk Park, Ewingsdale, Bangalow and Broken Head). Within these two youth groups, young people differentiate themselves through the sport they engage in (e.g. surfing, soccer, football, skateboarding), the type of entertainment they choose (nightclubs in Byron Bay, rave parties or hardcore shows), and through music and clothing.

Whether these consumption patterns are shaped by the resources offered by the cultural industries in the area or are actively driven by youth is a contentious issue (see also Furlong, 2013). From the conversations with youth workers it certainly seems that youth subcultures and tribes are influenced by the socio-cultural environment in which young people grow up in. Nevertheless, findings in the previous chapter reveal that young people actively express their identities and do so in relation to the dominant culture. Young people discussed two creative cultural expressions: the straightedge sensibility/identity and the doof identity. Adults also talked about these cultural affiliations albeit from a structural viewpoint, stressing the environmental and societal forces which have shaped these subcultures in the region.

Findings from the adult interviews, for example, suggest that the straightedge subculture symbolises a form of resistance to consumerism and to tourists consuming the natural and built environments discussed earlier in the chapter. According to Olivia (youth worker), feelings of alienation and social exclusion from the
community due to the influx of foreigners and tourists actually triggered a straightedge response:

Ten years ago there was the emergence of the hard core music scene... the hard core music scene is straightedge so no consumption of drugs and alcohol. Straightedge means no gratuitous sex, no drugs or alcohol and basically a response to the fact that people are coming here to actually binge drink, to consume...so young people went “well we actually need to shut out drugs and alcohol and the whole party scene”...you know they had their own party scene, they were coming here and playing their music here at the Youth Centre but they were not participating in the community as such. I think that generation of young people has now matured into adulthood, so we’re probably seeing less of that straightedge hard core response.

Having grown up in the area, John (high school teacher) talked about how the straightedge subculture started: “Everyone started tattooing XXX on their legs and the guys of Parkway Drive where real instigators of that ... that’s when me and my friends were about 14 or 15”. The X is historically connected to the symbol that some clubs would mark on the hands of underage youth at hardcore shows to warn the staff not to serve them alcohol (Haenfler, 2004). The stigma of being underage was subverted by straightedge and turned into a source of pride, “proud to be sober” (Parkes, 2014, p. 59). The mark which then evolved into XXX and the practice of tattooing symbolised this new and unique form of rebellion where members not only rebelled against mainstream society but also against other youth subcultural groups (Atkinson, 2003). In Byron Shire, adult participants described the straightedge identity as a form of resistance to the alcohol-fuelled, hedonistic party culture of the tourism industry.
Whereas adults in the study highlighted the structural forces that caused the emergence of a straightedge subculture, young people focused more on the varying interpretations and subjective understandings of “living straightedge”. According to the findings in the previous chapter, abstinence from alcohol, drugs and promiscuous sex are as much a subjective lifestyle choice as an ideological and symbolic message of resistance. Young people, in fact, often adopted this term to signify whoever abstains from alcohol and drugs notwithstanding the original subcultural meaning of the term.

Adults also foregrounded the structural influences that have contributed to the development of another youth subculture, rave or “doof” neo-tribes. According to these adults, the emergence of a rave culture in Byron Shire was triggered by the migration of “yuppies” (short for “young urban professional” or “young upwardly-mobile professional”), well-educated and financially independent young people from the city who invested in real estate in the Byron Shire around the 1980s and 1990s and particularly in the hinterlands where rave parties were often held. According to adult respondents, this tradition has been passed on to new generations of young locals and is still popular today. In contrast to straightedge, John, a 28 year old high school teacher, argued that the doof identity is a legacy from previous generations:

*I think the big thing in this area, the doof scene is endorsed and supported by the older generation, the 30-60s there’s a huge population of them in the Shire who are in that scene. So I know for me, there were friends of mine whose parents were putting them on and providing the substances to have a good time. That’s a big one, you’ve got a group of kids growing up who think … “Yeah this is an ok scene”.

According to John, there is a generation of older residents in the Byron Shire who are quite permissive parents, fostering and endorsing drugs and alcohol consumption among the younger generations. Likewise, Rob (civil servant) argued that young people are “growing up in an overly permissive area, compared to many others; it's
an alternative area so a lot of parents are a lot more, if not permissive, certainly a bit more open”. This study is based on the premises that children and young people learn from the social relationships with adults in their lives and in the social environment in which they grow up. Nevertheless, in this case these relationships may pose considerable risks to the wellbeing of young people. Linda (youth worker) discussed the potential origins of doof tribes in the Byron Shire:

Mullumbimby has more of an illicit drug culture, intergenerational illicit drug culture and that was due to the different waves of settlers coming...there were a lot of rave parties and those kinds of underground parties in the 90s and people would come from Sydney and Melbourne on holidays to attend those parties and a lot of those people stayed here and have affected the community that way.

Whereas “Byron young people are exposed to lots of binge drinking and high-end festivals, partying and that kind of binge and hedonistic culture”, Linda argued that young people in other parts of the Shire are also impacted by the “intergenerational illicit drug culture” of the doof parties.

Although adult respondents have drawn our attention to the structural and socio-cultural forces that have shaped rave neo-tribes in the area, findings in the previous chapter reveal that young people are making a conscious, strategic and “non-mainstream” consumption choice to differentiate themselves from the dominant party culture prevalent in Byron Bay. In this way, they are also fulfilling their needs for belonging and affiliation in the face of ever-changing transnational flows of tourists and temporary migrants in the community.
BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

There is a general sense among youth workers that young people in the Byron Shire are incredibly creative, adaptive and sensitive to the issues in their community. Voice and participation was another dominant theme in the findings, with adult respondents often highlighting the current barriers to the participation of young people in community decisions. According to Lynn and Dianne, while young people are faced with many challenges whilst growing up in a tourist destination like the Byron Shire, they also develop resilience:

*I think they are dealing with the impact of a transient population because it’s a tourist destination, it’s extremely popular and it’s all year round. The fact now that we have major festivals that occur throughout the year which has increased the intake of people coming during those times to party and have fun has a big impact on them. I think they do incredibly well considering...you know if you think it makes the place quite different.* (Lynn, youth worker)

*I find Byron Bay’s young people are environmentally switched on, they really really care about their town and they know what they want.*

(Dianne, Arakwal community member)

Nevertheless, according to the adults in this study, not all community members have positive attitudes and perceptions of the young people who live in the area. Some community members view young people as a problem that needs to be dealt with. Linda (youth worker) argued that often “*people who are making money out of the town see young people, Aboriginal people and anyone who is out on the streets, as a problem as an issue that needs to be dealt with*”. Findings further suggest that negative community perceptions of the party culture in the area have a profound impact on local youth. Claudia and Mia argued that often the anti-social behaviours
of young tourists who visit the area negatively influence the attitudes of adult residents towards all youth, locals included:

I think there would be a bit of confusion as to how to pick out what is local and what isn’t! I think the older residents don’t have a very good view of the young people in Byron and it’s not necessarily the local young people but it’s just young people in general. There’s some very visible things that are left behind in the mornings...you know glass smashed around the street and spots of blood here and there. There are residents, older ones who say they don’t go out after dark. (Claudia, Schoolies volunteer)

There is a big difference between the behaviour of young backpackers in Byron Shire and the behaviour of our local young people. Most of the issues that are being faced by our community due to the “younger demographic” ...that’s the transient community, our local young people are generally quite engaged and do care about the community and the environment and are active citizens doing what they do even if it’s just surfing. (Mia, youth worker)

The negative perceptions that adults often have may impact young people’s ability to actively participate in the community, voice their opinions and exercise their citizenship rights. Childhood literature points to the need for a nurturing and empowering community environment which fosters positive civic participation and social wellbeing among young residents (Cicognani et al., 2008; Cicognani et al., 2012; Evans, 2007; Graham & Fitzgerald, 2011; Howard & Gill, 2001). Research suggests that developing a strong sense of community decreases loneliness, reduces criminal behaviour and enhances life satisfaction, happiness and retention rates at school among young people (Chipeur, 2001; Pretty, 2002; Tennent et al., 2005).
Some participants identified that young people who are actively engaged in local initiatives develop a strong sense of identity and belonging. Lynn (youth worker), for example, argued that young people who are involved in programs such as the Byron Youth Theatre and Byron Youth Council have “a platform to be able to express their views and to be able to be heard by adults”.

Voice and participation are identified by respondents as being important elements that need to be encouraged in order to foster a sense of community and belonging for young people. There are, however, multiple barriers that prevent youth participation which have been identified by adult respondents. Linda (youth worker), for example, argued that lack of funding is one of the biggest barriers to youth’s participation in community forums:

> Young people should be involved and in a meaningful way but they need to be supported to engage ...you can’t just say we have this forum for you young people to come and have a say, but young people need to be supported to participate.

According to Linda, a common problem to participation is also youth out-migration:

> In this community that age demographic [young adults] is not here...so making sure that we’ve got young people engaging in tourism discussions and different forms of policy not just around tourism is really tricky... As soon as a young person finishes high school they’re gone.

Finally, respondents talked about “tokenistic” participation as another barrier to the meaningful participation of youth in the community. According to Maree (youth worker), often age is a real barrier to participation:

> I don’t think enough worth is given to what young people think, it’s too easy to dismiss them as young people so what would they know. I know young
people can come up with some really great ideas, so they just need somehow to be involved more on every level not in a tokenistic way, so maybe they have to define you know how they do that rather than adults defining it.

Furthermore, Maree argued that young people should be allowed to have a voice in matters that affect them:

Anything to do with young people - adults decide how that’s going to happen and what it’s going to look like...well, no! If you want it to work you ask them what will work and what it’ll look like. I’ve never got it; they’re the next generation, they’re the ones who are going to take over all the mess we’ve left, and yet I don’t think anyone listens to them very much.

There is also a general perception that the community at large has little say in how tourism has developed and is developing in the Byron Shire. Claudia and Sandra argued that there is little community consultation and the consultation which does take place is governed by the ideas and visions of the business sector:

I don’t think the community at large has had a lot of say in anything to do with tourism here really. I mean we’ve got a local tourism board; Destination Byron. We do have a few associations such as the Backpackers Association, the Holiday Letting Organisation and a few others of course Byron United which is the local Chamber of Commerce. They’re more so involved in those discussions on the direction of tourism in Byron. (Claudia, youth worker and Schoolies volunteer)
I went to a community meeting about the Rail Trail, it was supposed to be a meeting about the community and all they could talk about was the business it would bring in and how many tourists it would bring and the B&Bs it would bring which I think probably means holiday-lets. They are very cagy when you actually ask them for details; they just reassure you that everything will be alright without too much detail. When people ask them whether the community would be using this, they didn’t have the answer so hadn’t even thought about it as a community...It’s just sad that we can’t get anything for the community unless we get it through tourists. (Sandra, parent)

Adult respondents also identified education as an important element to support young locals in the community and foster wellbeing. Brian, a retiree from a local employment agency, argued: “I think a big part of it is education and getting the youth involved in generating the sort of educational programs they want to have... It seems peer education ‘for youth by youth’ is the answer really”. In order to explore this issue further, adults were asked to identify specific programs they could think of that helped young residents understand and manage the social problems which are often caused by the popularity of a tourist destination and the influx of visitors to the region. The majority of adults thought there were no specific educational programs for young locals mentioning only a few local initiatives:

Antonia: Are there any programs or initiatives in place through schools or elsewhere to help young people understand and manage the social problems caused by (but not limited to) tourism?

In our local community I don’t personally know of any. They might do something in “Study of Society” built into the curriculum but I don’t know of a
program as such... I think it would be really beneficial for young people to understand the benefits that tourism brings as well, so that they can feel a bit more balanced about it all. I think it’s really important to bring young people into the conversation. (Linda, youth worker)

There are programs running that address these kinds of things such as the STEER [Support, Training, Education, Encouragement and Rewards to reduce the risk of road-related youth death and/or injuries] program which is addressing not just road safety but even things like who you should get into a car with. There is a lot of hitchhiking so over the years there have been programs on hitchhiking in schools... there are programs like PASH [Positive Adolescent Sexual Health]...These things are also in a way related to tourism. (Claudia, Schoolies volunteer)

I know Byron Youth Theatre are actively engaged continually, their Director applies for grants for them to develop pieces of social theatre...they do pieces around drink driving, binge drinking, mental health, sexual health...I don’t think there is anything in schools specifically aimed at how to survive living in tourist destinations and I think it’s a really good idea. Even awareness of you know backpackers and other transient travellers in the township; great make friends with them hang out with them but be aware that they are often choosing a different lifestyle to you, they are here to party and if you are living here you can just party continually with these
people but they also have lives they go home to, they have jobs. So I think it would be really good to have something like that. (Mia, youth worker)

I don’t know of anything... Byron Youth Services run projects with young people such as “Introduction to Adventure Tourism” and taking young people to actually try out different adventure tourism - so doing activities-based stuff to familiarise them to tourism. Actually assisting young people to respond [to tourism] not so much but more in assisting young people to understand the opportunities that exist. (Olivia, youth worker)

Programs aimed at educating young residents about the negative impacts of tourism whilst also helping them to see the potential benefits and opportunities that tourism brings, was one of the proposed community changes and strategies that adults identified as possibly contributing to young people’s wellbeing. According to the youth workers, educational programs need to be structured in an engaging and creative way possibly through peer-facilitated workshops and social theatre (see also Cahill, 2002; Cahill, 2010).

A growing number of local initiatives are emerging, mainly from the community sector, to address the wellbeing of young residents in the Byron Shire (see Table 5.1). The existence of vocal community groups and local political activism may suggest that children and young people’s wellbeing is indeed being pushed forward as a public issue; this process is often the precursor to policy change (Wray, 2009, 2011). Pinkerton (2004) argues that we need a bottom up approach to policy development that places children and young people alongside other important stakeholders in our communities. Nevertheless, Tisdall and Davis (2004) argue that it is often challenging to include children and young people in policy networks as they often ignore “the rules of the game” (p. 136). Thus in their view they must be supported to do so.
### Table 5.1: Political Activism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Chronology of Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 2012</td>
<td>Cringe the Binge launch in Byron Bay – aimed at reversing the binge drinking culture of young people in Byron Shire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2013</td>
<td>Public forum “Strange Bedfellows” at the Byron Bay Community Centre - to address Byron Bay’s challenges as a troubled tourist destination and the public outrage at the influx of drunken and destructive visitors over the New Year period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2013</td>
<td>“Building a Better Community” public Forum at the Byron Bay Community Centre in view of creating a Byron Residents Community Group. First steps to create a Victims of Holiday Letting (VOHL) community group which aims to lobby for the removal of holiday letting from residential zones in Byron Bay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2013</td>
<td>YOUthSpeak Byron at the Byron Spirit Festival – initiative to give young people aged 14-24 a safe place to talk about what is important to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2013</td>
<td>“Things are getting Dire, Have your Say About the Shire” youth forums organised by Byron Youth Services aimed at giving a voice to young people about important issues that affect them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2013</td>
<td>Newly formed “Last drinks at 12” community group hosts a public forum on “Alcohol-related violence”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2013</td>
<td>Proposition for a Byron Bay liquor accord precinct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2013</td>
<td>Parliamentary committee hearing exploring alcohol minimisation strategies targeted at young people to reduce alcohol-related violence and injuries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2013</td>
<td>Sunrise Residents Group lobby for safe New Year’s Eve celebrations and reduced illegal campers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2014</td>
<td>Residents’ show concern over a proposed housing development of West Byron Bay and the newly introduced Fall Festival at the Yelgun parklands in North Byron Shire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2014</td>
<td>Voluntary visitor contribution or bed tax being trialled by the council in its two caravan parks to deal with the impacts of tourism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2014</td>
<td>Following increasing pressures from community groups, Byron Shire Council introduces heavy fines for illegal campers in the area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2015</td>
<td>BYRA leads “Protect Byron” rally to protest against unsustainable development in West Byron. Community Meeting in Mullumbimby to address the issue of drugs among local young people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2015</td>
<td>Sunrise Residents Group protest against proposed diesel train to be implemented by the new resort Elements of Byron.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progressing the youth participation agenda

There has been a concerted effort over the past five years to challenge dominant assumptions and deficit images of young people living in the communities of Byron Shire. This signals important recognition of the complex challenges young people face growing up in a tourist area and the need for supportive adults to be actively involved in collaborating with young people in ways that open up opportunities for development and empowerment. Byron Youth Services, a local not-for-profit community association, has been at the forefront of working in such a collaborative capacity with local young people. Byron Youth Services is the primary provider of youth services in Byron Shire since 1987 and their “services are based on a sound understanding of young peoples’ needs and experiences” (Byron Youth Services, n.d.-b). Initiatives include the “Cringe the Binge” campaign launched by Byron Youth Services in October 2012 aimed at reversing the binge drinking culture of young people in the Byron Shire (Fieldnotes, October 2012).

In addition, Byron Youth Services is actively seeking opportunities to include young people in public forums and give them a voice in matters that affect them. One such initiative took place in April 2013 in the form of a two-day forum which was named by a group of Mullumbimby High school students “Things Are Getting Dire, Have Your Say About The Shire” (Fieldnotes, April 2013). The forums sought to address young residents’ lack of voice and participation in community and provided an opportunity for local high school students to share their experiences and opinions about growing up in the Byron Shire. The ideas generated by the forums where then fed into a larger community consultation (Building a Better Byron Bay).

The Byron Shire Council has also recently played a greater role in promoting young people’s participation. In 2011, the Byron Shire Youth Strategy was developed which led to the appointment of a youth officer and the formation of the Byron Shire Youth Council. The Youth Council was formed to give young people an opportunity to voice their opinions on matters and issues that are important to them (Byron Shire Council, 2011b). Young people between the ages of 12 and 24 years who permanently reside in the Byron Shire are eligible to apply and are appointed as Youth Council members for 12 months. In their position, they develop and organise
local projects for young people. Byron Shire Council also introduced in 2012 a funding scheme called “Small Change Grants” consisting of five individual grants of up to $1,000 aimed at supporting projects and events organised “by young people for young people”. These grants have been very popular and past successful applications have included drama, singing and fashion workshops, girl’s circles, intergenerational music groups, tree planting environmental awareness days and community celebrations (Fieldnotes, September 2015). The grants were established to improve young people’s wellbeing and promote positive attitudes and images of young residents in the Byron Shire.

In addition to the work of the Byron Shire Youth Council, Byron Youth Theatre has also been at the forefront of providing opportunities for young people to voice their opinions and share their concerns in a creative and caring environment. Byron Youth Theatre is a performing arts company formed in 2010 which “engages young people from the local community in researching, writing, producing and performing educational shows and workshops on a range of youth issues” (Byron Youth Services, n.d.-a). The company’s main objective is to “empower young people through performing arts” and “foster a dedication in young people towards solving challenges they face in the world around them” (Byron Youth Services, n.d.-a).

Successfully gaining funding from a variety of sources such as the Northern Rivers Community Foundation, Country Arts Support Program (Regional Arts NSW) and Nortex Employment and Training, Byron Youth Theatre has been working with local youth to produce engaging and educational performing arts pieces which have over the years gained popularity among local high school students and the community at large. These are made even more powerful and significant because they are chosen, researched and delivered by young people for young people. According to adult respondents, the initiatives of the Byron Youth Services, Byron Youth Council and Byron Youth Theatre are all directed at addressing and promoting young people’s wellbeing through meaningful participation in community. As a result, it would appear the participation agenda for young people is gradually taking a more prominent role in policy development.
SUMMARY
To summarise, findings from the adult data covered three main themes: how young people negotiate a sense of belonging; how they create and affirm a sense of identity; and how they voice their opinions and participate in community life. Within these three broad themes, I discussed some of the reoccurring sub-themes from the findings including the threats experienced by young people living in the Byron Shire (connected to alcohol/drugs, sexual health and violence); the consumption of places by non-locals (lack of affordable housing and employment, and young locals’ responses); youth identities, cultures and tribes; and finally voice and participation.

As flagged earlier, although there are many similarities with the findings from the young people’s interviews/focus groups, this chapter highlighted how adults in the community have a structural view of the experience of childhood in a tourist destination. Whereas the interviews and focus groups with young people in the community revealed the active and agentive role they play in negotiating identity and belonging, adults foregrounded the socio-cultural forces which shape the experience of childhood. In the next chapter, I will explore how young people’s agency is enacted when they are given the opportunity to actively engage in the research process through participatory and child-centred methodologies.
CHAPTER SIX
GOING DEEPER:
The Participatory Projects

INTRODUCTION
The underlying philosophical stance of this research builds on the assumption that children and young people have the right to “have a say” and participate in research that affects them. Yet it is not sufficient to just hear from children and young people, we need to actively engage them in the research process (Kellett, 2010). In the previous two chapters, I discussed findings from the interviews and focus groups with young people and adults in the community. The two participatory projects discussed in this chapter build on these findings by actively engaging young people as co-researchers in helping to elicit the voices of other young people. Through collaboration, the young people were able to go from being “researched” to being “researchers” and delve deeper in their experience of childhood in a tourist destination. Findings in this chapter address Research Question Three: How does participatory research with young people challenge and extend understandings of their lived experience of growing up in a tourist destination?

The first project involved younger participants between the ages of 10 and 16 who used the creative medium of film-making to discuss their views and perspectives on tourism development in their community. In the second project, I worked collaboratively with a group of six co-researchers between the ages of 15 and 16 for a period of six months. They underwent a training program in research methods and independently undertook 11 peer-interviews with other young people. This chapter explores findings from these projects and discusses the complexities and opportunities of co-researching with children.
PARTICIPATORY FILM-MAKING PROJECT

In the participatory film-making project young people were actively engaged in the production of three short animation movies which represent their views on tourism and their concerns about living in a tourist destination. In this project, the film-making process was more significant than the final product or the animations-as-product (Blazek & Hraňová, 2012; Parr, 2007). The experience of participating as active researchers in the creation of the films was intended to be an empowering process (Kellett, 2010). In addition, the film-making process can be viewed as text which holds valuable data about the lived experiences of children and young people growing up in a tourist destination (Parr, 2007).

The stop-motion animations created were based on young people’s experiences of “community”. During the focus groups and discussions, co-researchers were asked to think about the meaning of community, what they liked, what they disliked and what they would like to change in their community. The films are a reflection of their views and experiences of growing up in a tourist destination. The production of the animations was facilitated and funded by the Byron Youth Services. The young co-researchers were also mentored by a local artist and film maker who shared his passion for film with them. The films can be viewed online and are explained in more detail below.

Rubbish Run

The five young co-researchers involved in the creation of the film Rubbish Run were aged between 10 and 13 and were all boys. In the initial brainstorming session they expressed concern particularly for the natural environment in their community. Subsequent discussions revealed the strong connection to the natural environment such as the beaches and the ocean. Their experiences of growing up in the Byron Shire include surfing, walking and exploring the beaches and parklands. When they were asked to think about what it meant to grow up in a tourist destination, they all expressed concern for the rubbish that is often left carelessly on the beaches and in the parks.

---

4 “Rubbish Run” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d29kconTYII&feature=em-share_video_user
“Just One Piece” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0wdsLdrj7ds&feature=em-share_video_user
“Alpacas versus Bus” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wp_ZhhPV9oQ&feature=em-share_video_user
One young boy argued that when visitors litter in Byron Bay it makes him feel “like a barbeque, sizzling angry” (Crumb, age 10). They also felt that growing up in a famous tourist destination like Byron Bay had its challenges such as “popularity...businesses...crowdedness” (Timmy Dude, age 10). Their sense of belonging and connection to the community is thus challenged by tourists who often show little respect for the town and locals.

As the animation Rubbish Run reveals, young people feel strongly about their community, particularly the natural environment for which they experience a special connection. In the film, the young co-researchers decided to focus on the issue of visitors not respecting their community by creating a story board for the animation titled Rubbish Run (see Figure 6.1). The scene was set in Byron Bay 20 years into the future where rising numbers of tourists are littering the beaches and streets of the town. The boys came up with a solution to this problem by creating imaginary laws which see “litterers” facing up to two weeks in jail for throwing rubbish on the beautiful beaches and streets of Byron Bay. The young co-researchers also wrote a newsflash headline warning visitors of the sanctions that have been put in place in order to keep Byron Bay clean.

**Just One Piece**

The Just One Piece movie was created and produced by a group of young girls. The brainstorming session and group discussions were held with three participants aged 10-12 while three younger girls, all aged 7 years, helped with the production of the film, including presenting the newsflash and performing a song. Again, in this animation, the young co-researchers expressed their concerns about the environment and particularly the wildlife in their community. They were very aware of the beauty of the natural environment surrounding them, however they also saw the potential for it to be spoilt particularly in the busy tourist season when littering seems to increase. One young girl explained that “tourists and locals need to look after Byron...small actions can make a big difference” (Eden, age 12).
Figure 6.1: Rubbish Run

Just One Piece opens with a tourist throwing rubbish on the beach and thinking “it’s just one piece” (see Figure 6.2). The effect of everyone thinking in the same way is then seen on the marine wildlife with turtles dying as a consequence. The central theme of this film is the need to respect the environment and that simple actions, such as placing litter in the rubbish bins, do make a difference. In a similar fashion, young girls’ sense of belonging to their community is expressed in terms of their concern for the natural environment and wildlife of the area. Their views of tourists are associated with people who are “lazy”, “drunk” and “don’t really care” (Lilly, age 11). They expressed concern about the type of tourism that comes to Byron such as young backpackers and Schoolies. Lilly says there is a “partying and then leaving
mentality in this community”. The young co-researchers expressed their feelings through the creative medium of a stop-motion animation for which they also presented a newsflash and performed a theme song.

Figure 6.2: Just One Piece
**Alpaca versus Bus**

This movie was created by a group of four co-researchers aged between 14 and 16 years (three girls and one boy). The theme seems to shift in this animation from a concern for the environment and wildlife to a concern about the lack of transport in the area. The co-researchers argued that buses are really expensive and getting around is hard particularly on the weekend when there are fewer buses. One young girl said that “*buses are expensive and I don’t have any money….my parents refuse to drive me places*” (Lisa, age 14). Although these young people attend the local high school, they live in the surrounding areas and are thus often precluded from accessing the Central Business District in Byron Bay due to the expensive bus fares.

Traffic was also another issue which emerged through conversation with these young locals, particularly the unwillingness of parents to drive them to Byron Bay because of the traffic conditions in the busy tourist season. According to Lisa, “*if you miss the bus in the morning you’ve basically screwed up your whole day*”. Evelyn (age 14) seemed to think “*you have to be rich to live here*”. The animation Alpaca versus Bus is according to Evelyn a “*creative alternative for transportation that is both cheap and adorable*”.

In their animation, the young co-researchers narrate the story of Bob who gets off a bus and is broke after paying for the bus fare. He does, however, have $2 in his pocket so he decides to buy an Alpaca and creates his own Alpaca riding business (see Figure 6.3). This animation also portrays a theme which has come up in conversation with other young people in the area, namely the creative and entrepreneurial nature of local youth. Although tourism creates opportunity for employment, often young people have to compete for jobs with migrant and temporary workers. In order to secure sustainable and viable employment, young locals have to think creatively to develop their own business ideas. Employment and lack of transport are the main issues presented in this film.
Figure 6.3: Alpacas versus Bus

[Diagram of alpacas and buses with annotations]
PEER-INTERVIEW PROJECT

The second participatory project involved six young girls between the ages of 15 and 16 years over a period of six months. Although the topic of the research was not chosen directly by the young co-researchers, as discussed in Chapter Three it was left purposefully broad to encourage them to choose issues of concern to them. In contrast to the participatory film project, where no new themes emerged, the peer-interviews revealed an important finding which has implications for the study of childhood and which is further discussed in the following section. Although this participatory project was of a small scale, with only 11 peer-interviews completed, the stories which emerged reveal some important new themes.

Drugs, alcohol and safety

Team One wanted to explore whether young people in the Byron Shire are affected by the availability of drugs and alcohol being a popular tourist destination. Specifically, they wished to explore the negative experiences that young people face growing up in this area. In answer to the question “Have you ever had a bad experience involving drugs and alcohol in the Byron Shire?” The majority of respondents shared personal stories and talked about their feelings of vulnerability particularly at night in Byron Bay:

Yeah, one night I got really drunk at Top Park [Byron Bay] and I went swimming. I thought it would be a good idea, only to almost drown and an older man had to come and pull me out of the water then he tried to sexually assault me...it really wasn't the best night of my life, but luckily I got away and I learned never to do that again and just respect my body. (Lara, age 15)

Likewise, another young girl talked about her experience in Byron Bay on New Year’s Eve: “A couple of years ago, New Year's Eve, got pissed at Top Park [Byron Bay], someone slipped a tab in my drink, I don't remember that night after that”
(Andrey, age 15). Although safety is an issue which has emerged as being more important for young girls in this study, one young boy also shared his story:

One time I was at some party and there was a fuck-load of people just on ice, just bashing people, and that was really fucked up, because I was sitting next to some guy who was just quivering in a corner, he was like, "All my friends are getting bashed, they're just bashing us because of the way we dress, and we're from Byron," and then some guy just came up and kicked him in the face, like right next to me...that was pretty hectic. (John, age 18)

The young respondents stressed the importance of being surrounded by friends in order to feel safe:

Well, I've never really felt vulnerable because I surround myself with good people, like, I've never been in a situation where I'm just by myself and I have no one around me. I've always had good help when I'm like too drunk or vomiting... I've never been peer pressured into anything, so it's good. (Camilla, age 15)

Likewise, Lara (age 15) argued that having a group of trusted friends to go out with is really important to a young person’s safety:

If you're out in Byron on like a late Friday night everyone's on it or pissed, you don't really have any safety, so you just have to make sure you're around a good group of friends who know you well and know what you can handle and what you can't...there's always going to be times when you're uncomfortable...there's just a lot of risks out there.
Young people’s perceptions of risk and vulnerability dominated the interviews conducted by the young co-researchers. The stories they shared were substantially different from the narratives collected by myself. Safety was a recurring theme in the interviews and focus groups I conducted but they were always explained in general terms with no reference to personal experiences. This demonstrates that there are substantial benefits in young people being interviewed by their peers rather than an adult researcher (Barratt Hacking et al., 2012; Kellett, 2005; Powell & Smith, 2009). The notion that children are insiders in their social and cultural worlds and thus uniquely placed to carry out research with the support of adult researchers, is certainly supported by the findings in this study (Kellett, 2005, 2010).

**Message to tourists**

The co-researchers were also eager to explore young people’s attitudes towards tourists. A popular question which was put forward to other young people during the interviews and focus groups was: “If you could send a message out to tourists that visit this area, what would it be?” For the purpose of a more holistic analysis, I start by discussing findings from the peer-interviews which are then supported by quotes from the interview and focus group findings (see Table 6.1).

The main focus of young people’s attitudes to tourists was a concern for the environment. Pauline (age 16), for example, said: “Be more respectful of the environment”. Likewise, Simba (age 16) said: “take care of this environment and be respectful to everyone around you. Don’t litter and stuff like that”. Young girls were also more likely to have positive attitudes towards tourists: “I guess it’s good to come to Byron Bay just don’t mess up the place” (Tamara, age 16); “You’re welcome but just clean up your rubbish and stay out of our way” (Molly, age 16).

In addition, young people interviewed by the co-researchers also expressed concerns about the impact of the party image of the town on young locals. According to Lara (age 15), “tourists getting on drugs and just encouraging it sends a message to the youth of our Shire. They think that they can do what the tourists do, and that just makes everything more serious”. Camilla (age 16), for example, encouraged tourists to take care of young people: “If you’re ever out in Byron at night…if you see anyone in trouble, take care of the kid. Don’t let them drink in the first place, if you see
anyone underage drinking”. Young people, particularly boys, displayed negative attitudes towards tourists: “Get back to the valley, you kooks” (John, age 16).

Table 6.1: Young People’s Message to Tourists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Stop throwing rubbish...Get out of here...Stop the traffic...Go away and don’t come back”. (Boys, age 10, focus group AN)</td>
<td>“Take your crap home with you...Respect our community...They should just respect us more”. (Girls, age 15-16, focus group BYSG10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Get some surf experience before you come”. (Alex, age 15, focus Group BB)</td>
<td>“Pick up your rubbish after yourself...Go away...don’t litter... respect it... take a chill pill, but then sometimes the locals can be really rude to the tourists so the locals have to be respectful as well ...if it was their home town they wouldn’t want people coming and doing that stuff”. (Girls, age 14-15, focus group BYSG9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Watch out for sharks”. (Rob, age 12, focus Group BB)</td>
<td>“Just to stop littering. Just use all the bins, so many bins have been put out for the tourists. Just don’t throw your beer bottles everywhere and don’t behave like that”. (Isabella, age 15, focus group BYT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Go to Byron Bay!... (laughter) ...come it’s a nice place but don’t litter, don’t smoke because there’s lots of children around... And don’t wreck it for other people...Stop buying more buildings (and houses) and polluting everything”. (Boys, age 10-11, focus group BZB)</td>
<td>“I think I would say be respectful, responsible and fair, that’s our school core values. If you are fair everyone can enjoy it, and if you’re responsible than you won’t go out drinking at clubs and if you’re respectful then no one gets hurt”. (Milly, age 11, focus group EG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Respect the place and no one would care if you just respected the place....Don’t go to Byron at night you would probably get killed, I’m not joking....Just clean up the place....respect it and don’t destroy it, don’t litter....get off our beach...get out of town...clean up after yourself”. (Boys, age 15-16, focus group BYSB10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Don’t litter...Pick up the rubbish...Respect the local’...Put a shirt on...Don’t wear speedos...Wear leg ropes when you surf, that’s a big one because you can get hit on the head by a board, my friend got two stitches the other day”. (Boys, age 14-15, focus group BYSB9).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IN SITU ETHICAL DILEMMAS

The importance of reflexivity to the qualitative research project was discussed previously, as was the ethical validity of social research (Doyle, 2013). Here, I attempt to describe the ethically sensitive moments and dilemmas that I encountered in my fieldwork for which a reflexive approach was essential in making important in-situ decisions to uphold the safety, dignity and voice of my young collaborators (Dockett et al., 2009; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Thus in this project, I conceptualise ethics as “more than merely a principle of conduct in relation to the potential harm and benefit of research” but as “an intersubjective and reflexive dialogue”, a conversation between myself and my research participants (Meloni, Vanthuyne, & Rousseau, 2015, p. 108). I reflect on the opportunities and complexities of doing research with children and young people questioning my own research practices and the ethical challenges that I faced during my fieldwork.

The long-term nature of the ethnographic fieldwork gave me the opportunity to immerse myself in the community, meet important stakeholders and respond to opportunities for collaboration. This resulted in the participation of two very different demographics of young people during two unique participatory projects. The first project was carried out with a younger demographic of young people residing in the south of Byron Shire (Byron Bay and Broken Head) recruited through the Byron Youth Services. The group of co-researchers that formed was highly committed to the project and worked intensively over a period of six weeks, meeting every Saturday. The second project was carried out with a group of six 15 and 16 year old girls residing in the north of the Shire (Mullumbimby and Ocean Shores) who attended a youth program at the Byron Youth Services in Mullumbimby. The participatory project was thus incorporated in the existing program with weekly meetings (whenever possible) over a period of six months.

Reflecting on the research process, I think the different opportunities that arose to engage with young people in the community had significant impacts on research outcomes. Although working for a period of six months was conducive to building rapport and creating opportunities for mutual trust and respect, the first project ran more smoothly with all co-researchers eager to complete the project and disseminate
findings. Where for the first group the final product or films were the main aim of the project, for the second group it was more about the process and the skills they were developing during the training program. At times, the young girls in the second project were busy with other activities which were planned for them as part of the “Young Women’s Program”, so often we could not meet on a weekly basis, which made it hard when trying to achieve a certain degree of continuity and chronological progression to the training program. In addition, the length of the project (six months) may have affected their willingness to complete the project and disseminate findings. I will discuss this further in relation to the complexities of doing participatory research with children.

Positive aspects of co-researching with children

The participatory projects in this study were designed to provide an opportunity for agency, voice and empowerment which is consistent with the critical orientation of the study. Collaborative and youth-driven approaches have enormous potential for growth in tourism research particularly when analysing young people and the issues they face growing up in host communities. Participatory approaches to research with and not merely on young people are emerging as important tools of empowerment and pedagogical development among young people (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010a; Kehily, 2008; Kellett, 2005; Skelton, 2008).

Findings from the de-briefing sessions suggest that participating as active researchers was a learning experience. The group of co-researchers who carried out the peer-interviews learned how to conduct qualitative research and expressed positive feedback during the end of project de-briefing session. The girls argued that it was nice to feel part of a project and felt their communication skills had improved as a result of participating in the research: “We felt very helpful….it feels good to be part of something…we learned speaking skills and how to interpret body language during the interviews”. In addition, they thought the project provided an opportunity to learn about the issues in their community and enhanced their critical/analytical thinking: “We learned more about the Byron Shire…it’s a nice way to learn that”.

196
The young people involved in the participatory film-making activity also featured in the local press and received positive media attention (see Appendix H). There was a public screening of the films in the local community, which created a space for their voices to be heard as well as being a way of acknowledging and celebrating their creativity, commitment and dedication to the project.

As discussed earlier, data collected by children provides more detail on “children’s emotional and corporeal experiences” (Robson, Porter, Hampshire, & Bourdillon, 2009, p. 475). The stories collected are more vivid and personal as young researchers share “common personal experiences” and “positional spaces” with their participants (Robson et al., 2009, p. 477). This innovative and voice-generative approach proved to be useful in extending, fostering and nurturing the agentive role of a previously silenced group in tourism studies (Canosa et al., 2017). Nevertheless, I must acknowledge the “messiness” of participatory research with children (Beazley et al., 2009; Holland et al., 2010).

**Complexities of co-researching with children**

Among the complexities of co-researching with children and young people, entering the field and engaging young people in the participatory process was probably one of the most challenging aspects. When I envisaged carrying out participatory research with young people, it never occurred to me that I may have difficulty finding young people who were willing – and had the time – to commit to a project of this nature. I purposefully did not approach young people through schools given traditional adult-child relations in that context and associated power differentials that would likely have positioned me in a role of authority (Hart, 1992; Kellett, 2004). Recruiting young people through community groups meant they were not obliged to participate in the research project. This, however, proved to be a challenging strategy as young people today are increasingly pressured by multiple out-of-school activities which leave little spare time.

The other dilemma was how to make the project appealing to young people and create opportunities that facilitate empowerment whilst carrying out doctoral research which is essentially an opportunistic endeavour (borne out of my research interests and my goal of ultimately obtaining a PhD degree) (Guillemin & Gillam,
This is where the collaboration with the Byron Shire Youth Council and the Byron Youth Services was crucial in successfully engaging young people in this project. Without the contacts made with young people, as well as adult youth workers, through these organisations this research would not have been possible.

Reflections on the ethical dilemmas that arose during my fieldwork are clustered around five important areas which contribute to the growing scholarship on ethics in childhood research: positionality (Christensen, 2004; Kina, 2012); conceptualising participation (Holland et al., 2010); harms and benefits (Graham et al., 2013); informed consent (Dockett et al., 2009; Phelan & Kinsella, 2013); privacy and confidentiality (Morrow, 2008); payment and compensation (Robson et al., 2009).

**Positionality**

Collaboration with community groups was fundamental in gaining access and engaging young people in a meaningful way in the research process. Nevertheless, I must acknowledge the complexity of negotiating the multiple roles I took on as the relationships with participants and other stakeholders formed and which inevitably got entangled during the projects. As Meloni et al. (2015) argue, in the context of fieldwork ethical concerns emerge “as reflexive collaborations and negotiations within a resonance network” (p. 119). Trying to reconcile my position as a researcher, resident, mother of children growing up in the Byron Shire and collaborator in the participatory projects was extremely challenging. In both participatory projects the opportunity to collaborate emerged from the initial interviews I held with youth workers at the Byron Youth Services. Once the youth workers were aware of my intention to work collaboratively on a youth empowerment project, they were able to direct me to relevant programs that were taking place in the community.

The participatory approach taken in this project meant I actively sought to work with young people “on their own terms” (Ansell et al., 2012, p. 171). This, however, turned out to be more challenging than expected. As I quickly found out, I had to continuously reconcile multiple adult agendas borne out of the relationships with the network of adult stakeholders that formed during the participatory projects (Christensen, 2004). Often I had to negotiate the expectations of the adults who
facilitated the collaboration with the young co-researchers, with my own aims and objectives. In my meetings with the co-researchers I was interested in creating a space for dialogical encounters, a “communicative space” which was conducing to young people’s active communication and participation (Habermas citen in Kemmis, 2008, p. 127). I strived to be the “adult friend” or the “other adult” that was interested in their views and opinions (Christensen, 2004). However, I was often reminded that I needed to be the “adult in control” and assert my position of authority during our training sessions.

So throughout the research I had to continuously balance the expectations that adult stakeholders had of my role as a facilitator in the participatory projects, with my own research interests and agendas and of course the interests and needs of my young collaborators. As Christensen (2004) argues my status as an “other” or a “different type of adult” had to be continuously “negotiated and renegotiated with both children and adults” during the entire process of the study and proved to be a rather challenging balancing act between “being recognised as an ‘adult’ and at the same time avoiding the preconceived ideas, practices and connotations associated with ‘adulthood’ or specific adult roles such as a teacher, member of staff or a parent” (p. 174). In addition, my ethnicity, gender and cultural background (my Italian accent) had important implications for my positionality in the field (Beazley et al., 2009).

For the sake of transparency and reflexive practice, I purposefully made explicit parts of my own life and background. I hoped to foster trust, mutual respect and equality with participants. This practice proved to be an important research strategy which elicited great interest from my participants. The young co-researchers were eager to know about my childhood in Italy, see pictures of my hometown and discuss some of the challenges and opportunities that I had growing up in a well-known tourist destination. Often I felt like the research process was being turned on its head and our positions subverted, with my young collaborators asking me all the questions instead of the other way round. This is often the case in participatory research where dialogical encounters with participants are encouraged (Meloni et al., 2015; Pinter & Zandian, 2015). This was an important starting point for the young co-researchers to think critically about their own childhood in the Byron Shire. My identity as a
mother was another aspect that proved to be of great interest to my young collaborators; I discuss this later in the chapter when I reflect on “being a mother in the field”.

**Conceptualising participation**

Another dilemma I had to face throughout the research was my *a priori* conceptualisation of what participatory research is versus what my young collaborators had in mind. As such, my project often got steered into different directions and it was not until I shed my academic preconceptions (Davis, 1998) concerning participatory research, that my project actually “took off”. The first project came about when I approached a youth worker who was organising a series of creative workshops for young residents in the south of Byron Shire. After meeting with her and explaining the aims and scope of my research she seemed enthusiastic about the research topic and invited me to collaborate. As young participants were recruited to participate in a film-making activity and not to participate in a research project, I was faced with the dilemma of whether this way of recruiting participants was indeed ethical. In my fieldnotes I wrote:

> Today I am meeting with a group of young people who are participating in a film-making project with the Byron Youth Services. I feel a little nervous as they signed up to learn about stop-motion animation and not to participate in a research project. Is this ethical? Is this way of engaging young people appropriate? Is this participatory research? Does this fit in with my methodological approach? I feel as though participants in a participatory project should be able to choose their own methodologies rather than be limited by my preconceived ideas of what participatory research is. (Fieldnotes, October 2014)
This dilemma stayed with me for the duration of my fieldwork. I was torn between what I had read about participatory research and what actually eventuated. I quickly realised that I had to shed my preconceived ideas and be guided by my participants; hence my reference to co-researchers as they actually took on an active role in guiding the research. Their likes, dislikes and opinions about participating in research very soon began to guide my research – rather than my predefined methodological approach prescribing how participation should occur. I often felt I was not just facilitating the emergence of young people’s voices in an area scarcely researched, but actually empowering them to steer my project in the direction they felt most comfortable with.

My research was very much a process of “muddling through, sometimes feeling lost and out of place, asking stupid questions, being corrected and having our [my] preconceptions destroyed” (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008, p. 512). I often felt I was being led by my young collaborators in transgressing predefined methodological boundaries and experimenting, adapting and improvising with new co-created techniques (see also Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). The knowledge was thus co-produced and born from the active collaboration of my research participants who challenged my ideas of “correct” and “universally applicable methodologies” handed down to me by my disciplinary background to create what Kincheloe et al. (2011) refer to as methodological “bricolage” (p. 168).

When I first met with the group of young people I made it clear that participation in the film-making activity did not mean they had to participate in my PhD research as well. The young people however liked the topic of my research and were eager to participate. The active participation of the young co-researchers facilitated the opening up of those channels of communication or as Christensen (2004) defines “cultures of communication” (p. 166), which too often remain impenetrable. This created opportunities for a relational and dialogical encounter with children, who as a result felt valued and comfortable voicing their opinions (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010b).

Similarly to the first project, in the second participatory project I discovered that the young co-researchers’ perceptions of participation was fundamentally different from
my own (formed mainly by academic literature in this space). As such, the core tenet of empowering young people to lead the research and participate in every aspect of the research process from research planning, to data collection, analysis and dissemination (Cammarota & Fine, 2008; Gallagher, 2008; Kehily, 2008; Kellett, 2005), was messier than expected. In my project young people certainly exercised their agency well beyond the help and aid provided to them by the adults involved including myself – often acting in “ways beyond the limits prescribed by ‘participatory’ techniques” (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008, p. 507). Graham and Fitzgerald (2010b) have talked about the “messiness of listening, reflecting, interpreting and engaging in conversation and dialogue” (p. 352) with young people during participatory and collaborative projects.

In the second participatory project young co-researchers went through a formal training process (previously described in Chapter Three) which allowed them to make informed decisions about the course of action to take in collaboration with myself. However, after having completed the peer-interviews they expressed a desire to terminate the project. Their conceptualisation of participation did not include the analysis phase and dissemination, which the young co-researchers argued was my job! While they seemed uninterested in learning about data analysis and how to tell the story, they were also content with the way the participatory project evolved and felt satisfied they had fulfilled their requirements and duties as co-researchers. In my fieldnotes I wrote:

*I have worked with these girls for six months and now that they have completed the peer-interviews and we are really getting into the interesting part of the project they seem disinterested in analysing and disseminating the findings. I was hoping we could create an interesting summary of the findings to showcase in the community, maybe a fact sheet or poster and potentially even a co-authored paper. Nevertheless they are happy with how the project unfolded and so am I.* (Fieldnotes, September 2015)
Similar to the participatory film project, the young co-researchers involved in this project really challenged my preconceived ideas of what participatory research is. In prescribing and defining what participation is, I had to “un-know” what I had previously learned and, as Graham and Fitzgerald (2010b) also argue, question my own biases, perceptions and ideas of what child-inclusive research means. I had to re-learn how to encourage young people to participate “on their own terms” (Ansell et al., 2012, p. 171) and “reimagine” participation based on children’s own understandings (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010b, p. 343). So in order to respect and recognise children’s status and voice I made an effort to conceptualise participation from their perspective, from a child perspective. Graham and Fitzgerald (2010b) argue we must pursue a dialogical approach to participation “capable of recognising, respecting and integrating the rich and complex understandings that emerge through our conversations with children” (p. 344).

If I had not approached participation from a reflexive and dialogical standpoint, I would have been blind to the needs and desires of my young collaborators, even when they expressed a desire to end the project or “opt-out” (Beazley et al., 2009). This ensued that the ethical commitment of benevolence was respected, avoiding the subliminal and often dangerous practice of imposing adult research agendas (Graham et al., 2013; Warin, 2011). As Phelan and Kinsella (2013) argue researcher reflexivity and ethical mindfulness are essential throughout the whole duration of the project when conducting research with children and young people.

Based on these principles, all the decisions taken in the participatory projects were the product of a careful – although at times provisional and messy – process of listening, reflecting on and interpreting the dialogues and conversations held with the young co-researchers over the duration of the projects. Kellett (2005) argues it is important to strive for a balance between supporting and managing children’s research in participatory projects. Throughout the projects, I had to force myself to keep reflecting on how participation was enacted rather than focus on “how much participation was achieved” (Holland et al., 2010, p. 373).
In addition, during the projects the young co-researchers demonstrated a desire to work collaboratively with me in a “democratic process of decision-making” (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010b, p. 347) rather than work autonomously as in the research projects described by Kellett (2005, 2010, 2011). Carrying out the interviews on their own was really challenging and it took a lot of reminding and guiding on my behalf for them to do that. They often needed clear guidance in making important choices about the research. This is supported by Ansell et al. (2012) who argue that often “participants might not desire full participation” (p. 171). As Graham and Fitzgerald (2010b) suggest “their [participants’] competence, determination, dependency or vulnerability does not determine their inclusion or exclusion from participatory processes, but rather informs the way in which their participation takes place” (p. 352).

**Harms and benefits**

Another aspect which created considerable ethical anguish was the underlying purpose of my research and the “harms versus benefits” dilemma. Although the whole research was designed to be child-centred, rights-based and empowering, I was conscious that participatory methods do not necessarily eliminate harms and “ensure ethical practice per se” (Holland et al., 2010, p. 5). As Graham et al. (2016) argue “while ‘child-centred’ participatory approaches aim to reduce inherent adult-child power imbalances, such dynamics can still cause harm if children’s ‘voices’ or ‘perspectives’ are rendered inauthentic or meaningless” (p. 83).

As discussed, all social research involving humans (and particularly involving children) starts from a position of ethical tension or what Guillemin and Gillam (2004) refer to as the “violation of the Kantian maxim” (p. 271) – the use of people merely as means to an end. Only when participants take up the goals of the research project as their own, is social research of significance to both participant and researcher (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

When I first started thinking about how I would approach my PhD project, I was well aware that doing conventional research (entering the field, collecting data and disappearing) would not be of value in a project of this nature. I had to think through my own motivations for carrying out research with children and anticipate what the
potential benefits for my participants would be. I had to make sure my research was rights-respecting (Alderson, 2012) and rights-based (Beazley et al., 2009), and recognise that children’s agency is not an “outcome of academic theory but rather …recognition that they are subjects of rights” (Beazley et al., 2009, p. 369). Children’s right to be properly researched meant I had to find a way not only to protect participants from the potential risks of engaging in research but also to provide opportunities for benefits.

The innovative and participatory methodologies here employed have gone some way towards overcoming inherent ethical tensions and have provided opportunities for educational benefits and empowerment (Graham et al., 2016; Holland et al., 2010; Mayes, 2016). The end of project de-briefing sessions held with the young co-researchers revealed that enjoyment, education and sense of empowerment were important benefits of participation in the projects (see also Robson et al., 2009). Nevertheless, avoiding harm to participants is often not as easy as it sounds. Inevitably, as Guillemin and Gillam (2004) argue, there will always be situations when sensitive issues are disclosed and ethical mindfulness is thus essential.

As much as I carefully planned the underlying “procedural ethics” of the study, I was not prepared for the “everyday ethical issues” which arise in situ and which necessitate careful ethical sensitivity and a reflexive approach (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, pp. 261-262). When issues of safety and violence were disclosed during the peer-interviews I worried that my co-researchers were not sufficiently equipped to respond to such ethically critical moments. I faced the uncomfortable truth that I may have put my co-researchers at risk of emotional harm during the peer-interviews. To overcome my concerns, I extensively discussed these issues with the co-researchers and kept detailed notes about their perceptions of the interviews (see also Warin, 2011). In one of my journal entries I wrote:

_In the de-briefing session today I approached the girls in Team One to discuss the sensitive data they collected. I was fearful that I may have caused them some kind of emotional harm by allowing them to explore the issue of drugs and alcohol more in-depth. In fact I recall when we first created the interview_
guide back in May 2015, I specifically suggested not to ask personal questions but they were really keen to explore how young people experience the “party” atmosphere of Byron Bay. The girls, however, revealed that they often share stories of this nature among themselves. Young people continuously talk about their personal experiences, whether negative or positive, so they did not feel as though they had uncovered anything special. (Fieldnotes, September 2015)

This reveals another important element of participatory research with young people that being the issue of the contradicting conceptualisations that adults and young people often have of “harms and benefits”. What I thought was potentially harmful revealed itself to be a known and widely acknowledged characteristic of youth sociality.

Informed consent and dissent

In Chapter Three, the procedural steps taken in obtaining informed consent from participants in this study were discussed. I would now like to discuss what actually eventuated during my fieldwork. When recruiting participants through community groups, gaining access to young people as well as parents is “likely to be problematic” (Beazley et al., 2009, p. 374). Powell and Smith (2009) argue that the “biggest barrier to children’s participation is the need in every case for an adult to consent to their participation” (p. 136). This was a considerable barrier both during the interviews/focus groups I conducted with young people as well as during the peer-interviews organised by the co-researchers.

In my original research proposal and ethical clearance form I had endeavoured to seek both informed individual consent and parental consent for all participants under the age of 18 years. This kind of active parental consent (opt in) proved to be extremely problematic. In the first focus groups and interviews, I often had to approach young people on two occasions: in the first instance to ask for expressions of interest to participate in my research and to hand out individual and parental
consent forms; and in the second to collect parental consent forms and carry out the interview.

Unfortunately, the signed parental consent forms often did not make their way back to me (parents often forgot to sign the form and/or it was left at home). In these instances, I was faced with the ethical dilemma of whether to let the child participate because they really wanted to or exclude them from the interview/focus group. This resulted in considerable anguish for me and for the young person who could not understand why I was being so “restrictive”. I was effectively denying them “the right to participate” and the “right to decide for themselves” (Kina, 2012; Powell et al., 2012, p. 16).

Thus I decided to submit a change of ethics and request passive parental consent (opt-out) whereby parents are informed of the research but only required to respond if they do not wish their child to participate. This strategy significantly enhanced the fieldwork and made sure sampling was dependant on the “child’s active engagement” rather than parents’ (Powell et al., 2012, p. 16). Opt-out parental consent was also employed by the young co-researchers during the peer-interviews.

Another ethical dilemma I faced during my fieldwork was the young co-researchers’ desire to opt out of the second participatory project before its completion. This, I think, was due primarily to our different conceptualisations of participation as previously discussed. An important ethical principle is the right to dissent – refuse to take part or stop participation at any time without negative consequences (Beazley et al., 2009; Dockett et al., 2009; Dockett, Einarsdóttir, & Perry, 2012; Warin, 2011). In participatory research with children (particularly if it involves children over a period of time) the desire to opt out is often hard to glean (Warin, 2011).

My involvement and commitment in the participatory project and its outcomes could have made me blind to signals of dissent. I really had to step back and reflect on my involvement in the project in order to allow my collaborators to voice their opinions and steer the project in the direction they felt was most appropriate and useful to them. Instead of viewing their actions negatively as expressions of “non-compliance” (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008, p. 508), I tried to remain flexible and open to my
young collaborators’ needs and desires. My reflexive engagement in the field helped me to be attuned to young people’s dissent even when it had a significant impact on the research outcomes (Dockett, Einarsdóttir, et al., 2012; Warin, 2011). This reminded me that consent is “provisional and open to renegotiations each time data are contributed” - a process defined as “process consent” (Dockett, Einarsdóttir, et al., 2012, p. 248). Ultimately it is children themselves who are the “final gatekeepers” (Powell et al., 2012, p. 21).

**Privacy and confidentiality**

Generally pseudonyms were chosen by participants in order to protect their privacy and ensure anonymity and confidentiality. However, participants were sometimes not concerned with privacy and, in fact, expressed a desire to keep their real name. This created another *ethically important moment* which made me reflect on why children’s first names cannot be included in the dissemination of findings. Clearly, when the study has a large sample of participants, using first names would not matter – identity and anonymity would be ensured nevertheless. In addition, drawbacks from allowing children to select their own pseudonyms may result in non-gender-specific nicknames which are hard to analyse (Gallagher, 2009). Regardless, I decided not to include children’s first names and assign pseudonyms they had made up themselves or ones I made up for them. Only on one occasion a young adult participant (age 24) specifically requested to have her real name included in findings. The young co-researchers also made up pseudonyms for their participants.

**Payment and compensation**

At the onset of this research project I had anticipated donating a small gift to the co-researchers involved in the peer-interview project as a token of appreciation for their time and commitment (Graham et al., 2016; Robson, 2009). However, I wanted to avoid letting participants know in advance as this may have coerced them into participating (Powell et al., 2012). Graham et al. (2016) describe four approaches to payment: reimbursement, compensation, appreciation and incentive. I envisaged my approach would resemble the “appreciation approach”, whereby the gifts would be given to the young co-researchers at the end of the project. However, in one of the
first meetings I had with the young girls in the second project, they specifically asked about payment.

Powell et al. (2012) argue that incentive payments are the subject of debate in scholarly childhood literature as they may compromise the ethical principle of respect. They also point out that there is scarce research about best practice for payment of child researchers. Robson et al. (2009), for example, argue that consideration about payment for child researchers often raises “considerable debate” (p. 472). In order to avoid exploitative practices and remunerate the children for the work they carried out, Robson et al. (2009) paid the young researchers involved in a research project in Malawi and this was communicated to them at the onset of the research. Likewise, I decided to tell the young co-researchers in the second project they would receive a clothing voucher as a token of appreciation for their work. This proved to be a welcomed strategy particularly as the clothing voucher was from a popular and “trendy” local fashion store (Afends). In the next section, I return to the issue of positionality and describe my experience of being a “mother in the field”.

**BEING A MOTHER IN THE FIELD**

My experience of carrying out doctoral research was gendered and uniquely female, as I grappled with the same issues that other female academics encounter (Drozdzewski & Robinson, 2015). From the very start I made decisions about what to research, how and where to carry out my fieldwork based on my role as a mother of three young children. Although in hindsight these decisions where subconsciously taken, reflecting back on them I can now see how the topic I chose to research and the choice of field site were guided by my gendered subjectivity (Dombroski, 2011).

In late 2012, after a long break as a “stay-at-home” mum, I decided it was time to return to academia. At the time my children were seven, five and three and my need to “be there” for my family (Farrelly, Stewart-Withers, & Dombroski, 2014, p. 33) influenced both the topic I chose to research and where I carried out fieldwork. As a mother of children who are growing up in the Byron Bay region – and having grown up in a popular holiday destination myself (Canosa, 2014) – I was drawn to this area
of research. I soon discovered there was a lack of research focused on children and young people growing up in host communities, and their perceptions and attitudes towards tourism (Canosa et al., 2016); hence my interest in exploring how children and young people negotiate a sense of identity and belonging amidst the continuous flow of visitors to their community (Canosa et al., 2017).

Living in the popular tourist destination of Byron Shire, I decided that doing research “at home” would be an ideal way of combining fieldwork and care-work (Drozdzewski & Robinson, 2015). In addition, I felt the same feelings of “guilt” that other researchers have written about when making decisions about how to carry out meaningful fieldwork and still fulfil my role as a mother (Farrelly et al., 2014; Frohlick, 2002). Having completed 12 months of ethnographic fieldwork I can now relate some of the effects of femininity in the field, and the subsequent opportunities and challenges of negotiating motherhood and fieldwork.

**Advantages of researching with accompanying family members**

Researchers are usually reticent about disclosing how personal/family decisions impact and shape field experiences. In my experience, fieldwork was a deeply emotional process which involved juggling day-to-day family activities (e.g. sport, homework, household duties etc.) with typical fieldwork activities such as organising interviews and focus groups; attending community events; facilitating participatory projects with young people in the community; and generally establishing the relationships and networks essential for meaningful ethnographic research. Although at first I struggled to combine fieldwork and care-work and often felt overwhelmed by the intensity of both activities, I now realise how having my children with me positively shaped the research process and enhanced my opportunities for meaningful engagement in the field, which would not have been possible otherwise (see also Dombroski, 2011; Farrelly et al., 2014; Flinn, 1998).

My research strategy involved recruiting participants outside school which meant I often had to organise interviews and focus groups in the afternoon with my own children with me. At first I tried to organise these interviews when my partner was at home so that I could go alone, however I soon realised that my participants felt more at ease when I had my children with me. My role as a *mother* and not just a
researcher actually made me more “accessible” to them by “dismantling power relations” (Farrelly et al., 2014, p. 26). Rather than concealing my identity as a mother my gendered subjectivity actually created the grounds for a more embodied and relational engagement in the field.

My status as an adult and a foreigner (my Italian accent being a defining factor!) often had an “othering” effect which was at odds with the kind of relationship I wanted to establish with my participants. I soon realised that my role as a mother created considerable interest among the children I was interviewing. When I talked about being a mother of three children who attend a local primary school, my participants were much more at ease. Likewise, when I had my children with me (and had to attend to their needs) participants would often relax and be more talkative. My identity as a mother thus rendered relationships with my participants more equal and facilitated the kind of relational and dialogical approach so important when doing ethnographic fieldwork. As Farrelly et al. (2014) argue “children in the field can help establish the identity of the fieldworker…[they] enable the fieldworker to occupy a role which community members can relate to” (p. 26).

In addition, having the children with me facilitated access to participants and resulted in the collection of valuable data. Having to care for my own children whilst doing fieldwork meant I had access to young people in the community who would have otherwise remained inaccessible (e.g. at sporting events, youth groups etc). I often took advantage of the time spent, for example, watching my children play sport to talk to other young people about my research and organise to meet for formal interviews/focus groups.

I soon understood that embracing my role and identity as a mother – and the “embodied entanglements” (Frohlick, 2002, p. 50) that resulted – made my fieldwork experience more meaningful and improved my chances of producing interesting and innovative research. In a sense, my children kept me grounded and created the basis for a (peculiar) balance to my fieldwork days. Having to collect my children from school also gave me a clear deadline; come three o’clock I knew all desk-based work had to end. This I think, although frustrating at the time, gave me focus and increased my productivity in those morning hours. In addition, manual jobs such as meal
preparation and household chores resulted in crucial thinking time which I would have otherwise spent in the field or at my desk had my children not been with me during fieldwork. This would have left me feeling drained and unable to make important connections between raw data and theory.

For my children it was also fun to be involved in “mummy’s work”. As the following statement suggests, they often positively commented on being involved even though at first they had no idea what fieldwork entailed:

It was really good, it was really fun...at first I thought it meant going into the sugarcane fields to chop down some sugarcane...but then I realised it meant going to do interviews and all that...it meant doing your PhD. (Eldest, age 10)

For me personally, ethnography as a methodology involved an “embodied, relational engagement with a site” (Dombroski, 2011, p. 26), the boundaries of which extended to my personal life and involved blending and merging my identity as a researcher with my identity as a mother. Viewing fieldwork as an embodied space highlights the effect of our femininity on the research process and the inherent gender biases that unfold in the field. This, in turn, challenges the common misperceptions of the “disembodied researcher” who erases traces of accompanying family members from his/her research accounts (Dombroski, 2011; Frohlick, 2002). Combining fieldwork and care-work does however create considerable challenges.

Complexities of negotiating fieldwork and care-work

Choosing to do fieldwork “at home” has the obvious advantage of not having to travel elsewhere for data collection; my children did not miss school, they were not uprooted from their network of friends and my partner did not need to take time off work. Nevertheless, I struggled throughout my PhD (but particularly during fieldwork) to legitimise my work with family and friends. Often my family could not grasp the importance of being in the field – talking to people, attending community events and generally doing what an ethnographer does, being embedded in the community. At times, the fieldwork also produced considerable disruption to family
routines as I tried to juggle after-school activities with fieldwork activities. I often had to pack voice recorders, ethics paperwork as well as snacks and games to entertain my own children. As Boyer (cited in Drozdzewski & Robinson, 2015) contends combining care-work and wage-work necessitates “high levels of corporeal and temporal discipline” (p. 376). Mothers in the field often have to overcome considerable “physical, emotional and time-management challenges” (Drozdzewski & Robinson, 2015, p. 375).

In addition, prior to having children my ethnographic field experiences consisted of long periods of uninterrupted time to immerse myself in the community, meet people, ask questions and participate in community events (see Canosa, 2014). After having children, fieldwork has meant combining care-work with fieldwork limiting my full participation in the ethnographic site. My interview recordings are evidence of the many interruptions I experienced during the interviews when attending to the needs of my children (e.g. toilet trips; providing snacks or just the usual “mummy look at me”!). Although this was annoying at the time, I soon realised that my participants were amused by these interruptions and were often more open and forthcoming in their discussion as a consequence.

As Farrelly et al. (2014) argue mothering is a highly “sensory” and “tactile” experience, and my ability to “see, touch, feel, hear and breathe” (p. 44) my children provided that emotional balance that would have been impossible if I had been worrying about the children left at home. Although my “embodied vulnerability” as a mother caused certain limitations, “becoming aware of, and surrendering to, this vulnerability led to different possibilities for a particular ethnographic engagement that could only happen under these vulnerable circumstances” (Dombroski, 2011, p. 27).

The gendered role of researchers is rarely acknowledged, as is the effect of femininity in the field and the biases specific to women researchers. The physical and emotional challenges that women in the field encounter are also often neglected in research (Flinn, 1998). Little has been written about how gender impacts on our fieldwork experiences in tourism research (Frohlick, 2002; A. L. Matthews, 2012; Mura, 2015). This is more widely acknowledged in the broader social sciences
(Dombroski, 2011; Drozdzowski & Robinson, 2015; Farrelly et al., 2014). Hopefully with the propagation of a critical/feminist and reflexive scholarship we can promote dialogue across disciplinary boundaries to address common issues and biases encountered by “women in the field” (Ateljevic et al., 2005; Flinn, 1998; Frohlick, 2002; Fullagar & Wilson, 2012; Gilbert, 1994; Pritchard et al., 2011).

**SUMMARY**

Findings from the two participatory projects, carried out with children and young people in the Byron Shire, reveal how the knowledge co-produced represents both valuable data and a platform to profile the voices of a previously marginalised group in the community. The participatory and voice-generative approach taken has enabled some of the nuance and complexity of growing up in a tourist destination to be explicitly identified and has attempted to address Research Question Three: How does participatory research with young people challenge and extend understandings of their lived experience of growing up in a tourist destination? This chapter shows how meaningful participation is essential if we want to uncover the deep-seated concerns of young people regarding tourism in their community.

The chapter also discussed the “messiness” and “provisionality” of participatory research with children. Using reflexivity as an intentional research strategy, I demonstrate how participatory research may be successful if we are willing to challenge our all-important role of adult researchers and be guided by our participants/collaborators. Being reflexive made me realise that defining or prescribing how participation should occur goes, in fact, against the very principles of participatory and inclusive research. Only when I let go of my preconceived ideas of what participatory research is, was I able to truly engage with the young people and reap the benefits of intersubjective and two-way learning. Participation was thus viewed as a dialogical encounter which in turn facilitated ethically sound research. The collaborative way in which the research is produced is also consistent with the socio-cultural approach of this project and the principle of “scaffolding”.
CHAPTER SEVEN

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

If what makes communities strong are collections of people who feel connected, responsible, supported, and influential, then we should make considerable effort to create environments for and with young people that promote the development of these characteristics. (Evans, 2007, p. 697)

This thesis started with the proposition that an important function of communities is to guide, educate and nurture its young residents. Further, it was posited that this can only happen if young people are encouraged and supported to actively voice their opinions and to contribute in an authentic and meaningful way to community decisions, policies and plans. The research reported in the previous chapters explored the lived experiences of young people growing up in a tourist destination. In doing so, it aimed to provide a forum for their voices to be heard concerning tourism in their community.

Prevalent assumptions over many years have framed children as immature, vulnerable, incompetent, and hence in need of being “gate-kept” out of research (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010a). However, such assumptions reflect a narrow, developmentally-determined approach to understanding children’s capability and agency that is rarely justified within or across any social or cultural context, since children of the same age can demonstrate remarkably divergent skills, responsibilities, and social and emotional abilities (Canosa & Graham, 2016).

Over the past 25 years, the field of childhood studies has challenged such entrenched assumptions about the ways in which children and childhood are constructed. In doing so, it has drawn international attention to children’s rights, not only in relation to their protection from harm, provision of care and resources, but also to their participation in matters that affect them, such as research about their lives (James &
James, 2008; James & Prout, 1997). This study contributes to the growing scholarship in this space and offers a unique insight into young people’s lives, experiences and their personal interpretations of events – an opportunity to hear from “natives” within the culture of childhood (Canosa & Graham, 2016). Little is known about young people’s experiences of childhood in complex communities such as tourist destinations. The review of the literature revealed there is a lack of research on young people’s experiences of tourism, particularly when the tourist destination is also the place where they live.

The ethnographic and participatory approach taken in this study allowed me to be in the field for an extended period of time and to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of young people’s lived experiences. Researchers working with children and young people are often confronted with the common dilemma of how to interpret what young people are saying and do justice to their perspectives and views. Sinclair (2004) argues we need to employ several methods of data collection and involve our participants in the research process:

All this points to the need to involve children at all stages of the process, of constant checking back with children, of getting to know them sufficiently, of spending time with them, of observation and where possible gaining information from several points of reference. (p. 113)

This approach has gone some way in illuminating and addressing the challenges of doing research with children and young people. In this final chapter, I reflect on the study’s most significant findings and discuss the theoretical, methodological and practical contribution of the research. Finally, I discuss new opportunities for future research in this space.
TOURIST DESTINATIONS AS COMPLEX COMMUNITIES

The socio-cultural approach of this study brings to light the many environmental aspects that influence the community context in which a child develops. In the Introductory Chapter I explored how the historical evolution of the Byron Shire, from rural seaside villages to iconic international tourism destination, has had an impact on the socio-cultural fabric of the communities in this area. Tourism, in this sense, was (and still is) a potent force of social change for the communities in the Byron Shire. The flows of migrants and tourists to the area have, in fact, shaped local practices and values, and are deeply ingrained in the local identity. This holistic anthropological analysis provides a contextual background to better understand young people’s lived experiences.

The complexity of communities that are also tourist destinations poses considerable challenges for residents and, in particular, children and young people. Wray (2011) argues that the divergent priorities of different stakeholders (e.g. tourists, residents, investors, businesses, and government and non-government organisations), and the complex relationships that occur between these groups, create enormous challenges. In order to implement sustainable tourism practices and policies, these conflicting goals and priorities need to be reconciled through dialogue and learning (Wray, 2011). In this thesis, I suggest that all views and opinions need to be the focus of attention, including the marginalised and often less heard voices of children and young people.

Findings suggest that we need to engage young people in tourism planning and policy decisions to ensure they are recognised and heard as important members of the community. In order to achieve this, young people need to be invited into an ongoing dialogue, acknowledging their agentive role and capability to express their own views and opinions (Rogers, 2008; A. B. Smith & Ballard, 1998; A. B. Smith & Bjerke, 2009; Wolseth, 2013; Woodhead, 2008). Beeton (2006, p. 210) argues that with careful planning, tourism may support a type of community (“authoritative communities”) which is conducive to the development of social capital and the passing down of local beliefs and knowledge to younger generations.
Adult respondents stressed the structural view of young people’s experience of childhood highlighting how they are often *constrained* by environmental factors, including the economic and political structures of the adult world. Findings from the young people’s interviews and focus groups, however, reveal that they are also *acting* in and upon structure to achieve a meaningful sense of identity and belonging (James & Prout, 1997; Valentine et al., 1998). Thus, findings in this study suggest that the “agentive” view of childhood actually complements the “structural” one (James & Prout, 1997).

The shift away from the impact model of tourism discussed in the opening chapters creates an opportunity for a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between tourism and residents’ experiences of living/engaging with it. Young people in this study respond to tourism and change in creative ways which dispels the notion that tourism is an exogenous force impacting on passive host communities (Hollinshead, 2009; Leite & Graburn, 2009). Hence tourism is a potent “worldmaking force” that yields important “indigenized forms of change” which are a product of local dynamism as well as global processes (Hollinshead, 2009, p. 143).

By profiling the voices, views and experiences of young residents, this study problematizes the notion of “tourism impacts” and contributes to a new research agenda which privileges more interpretive, qualitative and reflexive approaches to the study of tourism in host communities (Deery et al., 2012). At the onset, the study sought to bring into dialogue a field of research arguably in need of rejuvenation (tourism social impact studies), with wider theoretical debates and approaches which position tourism as a potent “worldmaking force” (Hollinshead, 2009). Similarly to Panelli, Nairn and McCormack’s (2002, p. 123) study, findings in this research suggest young people employ subtle “strategic actions” to negotiate their place in community and construct their own notions of “community”.

218
YOUTH, IDENTITY AND BELONGING

By exploring the lived experiences of young participants in this study, the multiple constructions and interpretations of childhood in a tourist destination emerge. The stories and narratives told by the young people depict the complexity and diversity of their experiences of identity and belonging in such a context. Chapter Four explored the findings from the interviews and focus groups held with 74 young people aged between 10 and 24 years residing in the Byron Shire. With the findings from the adult participants discussed in Chapter Five, the two chapters shed light on how identity and belonging are perceived and experienced by young people. In so doing, they address Research Question One and Two:

1. How do young people perceive that growing up in a tourist destination affects their lives including their sense of identity and belonging?

2. How do adults, who work with young people, perceive the experience of growing up in the Byron Shire?

As identity is an ongoing project which is shaped by experiences in a multitude of social and cultural contexts (Furlong, 2013; Rattansi & Phoenix, 1997; Sennett, 2011), the stories and experiences told by young people in this research are interpreted as important elements of the reflexive project of “self” (Thomson, 2007b; Yuval-Davis, 2010). They also shed light on young people’s sense of belonging and their understanding of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion (Antonsich, 2010; Spyrou & Christou, 2015; B. E. Wood, 2015, 2016; Yuval-Davis, 2006). In this study, young people’s narratives of identity are primarily about boundaries, about “us” versus “them”, the “me” and “not me” (Yuval-Davis, 2010). These boundaries are often contested, subjective and more or less politicized (B. E. Wood, 2015; Yuval-Davis, 2010).

Belonging has been defined as “an act of self-identification or identification by others, in a stable, contested or transient way” (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 199). It is a dynamic process that encompasses both the personal and intimate feeling of being “at home” (place-belongingness), as well as, the creation, maintenance and
reproduction of imaginary boundaries of the community of belonging (politics of belonging) (Antonsich, 2010). Young people’s identity narratives in this study are often about the politics of belonging, about defining those imaginary boundaries between “insiders” and “outsiders”, “locals” and “non-locals” and about who belongs and who does not.

**Young people’s lived experience of childhood in a tourist destination**

Young people’s experience of childhood is intertwined with the places and environments in the community where they grow up. Rural and urban experiences blend, disrupting socially constructed distinctions between the two worlds (Nairn et al., 2003) and suggesting young people’s experiences of their environment are extremely eclectic and heterogeneous. Young people talked at length about the importance of the natural environments in the community such as the beaches, parklands and especially the ocean. Their identities are undoubtedly connected to such environments and are ingrained in their memories. They display a strong concern for the environment and play out their environmentalist identity particularly when tourism development is involved. Environmental issues are often the focus of heated discussions among young people who display a genuine concern for their community. Their stories are also evidence of the agentive role they play in the community, with participation in beach clean-ups and community protests popular among young locals.

Nevertheless, negotiating the positive and negative aspects of both worlds (rural and urban) is perceived as a challenge. Although young people enjoy the multicultural environment and the opportunity to socialise with visitors (see also Canosa, 2014; Möller, 2012), they also experience feelings of alienation and lack of safety. Adults in particular have been forthcoming in describing the dangers experienced by young people including the overcrowded surf and threats connected to the “party” image of Byron Bay (e.g. alcohol and drug abuse, mental health and violence, over-sexualisation of spaces).

This hybrid and often ambiguous experience of childhood – growing up in an “in-between” place – pervades the narratives and stories told by participants in this research. In particular, young people talked about having to negotiate the same
pressures and tensions that urban youth encounter such as the feelings of alienation connected to overcrowding, job competition, lack of affordable housing, and lack of safety. Adults in this research talked at length about tourists consuming the natural and built environments in the community, often jeopardizing young people’s sense of belonging and community.

The findings suggest that the environment in which the child develops and the wider socio-cultural forces (e.g. tourism) are indeed influencing factors, however children also display agency and are able to shape their own experiences of childhood. The discourse of the *competent* child as constructor and co-creator of knowledge presented in Chapter Two is supported by the findings in this study. Exploring how this agency is enacted is vital in understanding how processes of cultural change and transformation occur (E. Chambers, 2010; Sofield, 2003). Tourism research, however, has been strangely devoid of the voices of children and young people (Bakas, 2015; Canosa et al., 2016; Carr & Schänzel, 2015; Monterrubio, Rodríguez-Muñoz, & Durán-Barrios, 2016).

Consistent with the literature in this space, young people in this study adopted a variety of strategies to adapt and cope with the pressures of tourism development (Boissevain, 1996; Picard, 2007a). Similar to Boissevain’s (1996) study in Malta, young residents in this study employ subtle strategies to negotiate life in a tourist destination including avoidance and creating locals-only spaces. In addition, young people counteract the dominant culture through subcultural youth groups and perform their civic and political identities through community forums and protests.

The boundary discourses and practices that young people adopt point to the complex “politics of belonging” at play in tourism destinations (Antonsich, 2010; Yuval-Davis, 2006). In negotiating a sense of identity and belonging, it is common practice for young people in this study to create boundaries between insiders and outsiders. Although young people feel strongly attached to the places in their community, boundaries they erect cannot be place-bound as the natural and built environments have increasingly become consumable products. Young people thus politicize belonging by creating imaginary boundaries around their communities of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Creating *locals-only* spaces in the community and reaffirming
their identities as true *locals*, takes on new meaning in such a context. The struggle to be *authentic* may be viewed as a “means to recover oneself from the *alienation* [emphasis added] involved in allowing one’s own life to be dictated by the world” (Xue, Manuel-Navarrete, & Buzinde, 2014, p. 190).

The multiplicity of experiences of inclusion and exclusion show how young people are more than capable of negotiating and actively constructing a meaningful sense of identity and belonging in a community context which is increasingly perceived as alienating. Similarly, Panelli et al. (2002) argue that powerful “politics of negotiation” are employed by young people to challenge the constraints of the adult world. Through youth subcultural groups and tribes, young people in this study form their own “imagined communities” (Anderson, 1991) or “micro-communities” which fulfil their needs for connectedness, safety and belonging. Literature in this space points to the importance of “non-place-based” notions of community among young people who actively create their own interpretations of “community” (Panelli et al., 2002; Skelton & Valentine, 1998).

Findings in Chapter Four reveal that young people display a degree of agency and sovereignty in choosing their leisure activities. These choices define who they are but also differentiate them from others in the community (particularly young tourists). Subcultural groups and tribes are thus born from a need to belong as well as to be different (Bennett, 1999). In the Byron Shire, young people talked about belonging to such groups (e.g. skaties, straightedge, doofers, surfers) as a real “identity thing”.

**Youth subcultures and neo-tribes**

The ethnographic approach taken in this study facilitated the exploration of young people’s lived experiences in all their idiosyncratic, multifaceted and eclectic aspects. In this process, it became apparent how important youth cultural affiliations are in explaining and understanding the peculiarities of young people’s social practices and behaviours (Bennett, 2011; Maffesoli, 1996). Two examples of these cultural affiliations are explored more in depth in this study: the doof identity and the straightedge identity.
As previously discussed, when young people share the same musical interests, clothing style and leisure activities they either form a subculture (if this is in stark contrast to the dominant culture) or a neo-tribe (which is a more fragile, ephemeral and fluid form of social engagement) (Robards & Bennett, 2011). Findings in this study suggest that both subcultural and post-subcultural readings are necessary to understand the full gamut of youth cultural affiliations (Bennett, 2011). The “doof identity” displays marked neo-tribal elements (i.e. the temporary nature of dance and musical events; shared group identity; and sense of belonging and communitas that forms among young doofers) which are better interpreted with the use of post-subcultural/neo-tribal theory (Bennett, 1999, 2011; Goulding & Shankar, 2011; Robards & Bennett, 2011).

The straightedge identity is, however, more suitably read through a subcultural lens due to the relatively cohesive nature of the movement and counter-cultural, lifelong ideological commitment of its members (Haenfler, 2004). Notwithstanding the marked differences between the doof identity and the straightedge identity (discussed in detail in Chapters Four and Five), important commonalities emerge which shed light on the complex, hybrid and ambiguous experiences of childhood in a tourist destination.

Whether ephemeral and fluid (doof identity), or more uniform and openly rebellious (straightedge), youth cultural affiliations in the Byron Shire are to be read as an active and agentive response to the structural forces of the dominant tourism economy. In the case of doof neo-tribes, I have discussed how attending doof parties in secluded areas, away from the mainstream tourism party scene, often holds deeper symbolic meaning (Goulding & Shankar, 2011; Riley et al., 2010). The non-conformist consumption practices of doof parties (in contrast to the heavily regulated nocturnal tourism economy of Byron Bay) point to the complex “politics of survival” employed by young locals to negotiate a place in an increasingly alienating community context (Maffesoli, 1996; Riley et al., 2010).
Likewise, the clean-living ideology of the straightedge sensibility/identity also reveals an underlying symbolic message of youth resistance to the mainstream alcohol-fuelled culture which is so visible in the community of Byron Bay (Haenfler, 2004; Muggleton, 2002; Nilan, 2006; Simon, 1997; Turner, 1969). Numerous studies both in Australia and overseas have explored the negative impacts of the anti-social behaviours of tourists (and particularly young tourists) on local populations (Lawton & Weaver, 2015; Salom et al., 2005; A. Smith & Rosenthal, 1997). In the Byron Shire, the visibility of these behaviours has pushed some young people to adhere to subcultural groups such as straightedge. Although straightedge has various interpretations among young locals – some more closely aligned to the homonymous subculture than others – it is evidence of a rising political activism, or “consciousness of resistance”, among young locals (Haenfler, 2004, p. 426).

This consciousness of resistance speaks of the creative, adaptive and agentive qualities of young locals which have been referred to often by adults in this study. Affiliation with these diverse subcultural groups and tribes is important for some young locals to negotiate and consolidate a meaningful sense of identity and belonging. Another important way is for young people to have a say in matters that affect them and participate in community forums and decision-making.

**EXPERIENCING CITIZENSHIP**

Given that children and young people’s lives are profoundly shaped by the social environment in which they grow up (A. B. Smith & Ballard, 1998), it is essential their views and experiences inform the policy decisions that impact them within local communities. While this can be achieved through creative, meaningful and inclusive participation in policy-related matters, too often such opportunities are absent or experienced as “tokenistic” (Neale, 2004; A. B. Smith & Bjerke, 2009). This is particularly evident in tourist destinations where there are multiple and often conflicting interests which are mostly played out in the adult sphere.
Nevertheless, the prerequisites for the meaningful inclusion of young people’s voices in tourism policy and planning already exist in the Byron Shire. The strong local political activist tradition and the vocal community pressure groups and initiatives are progressing the agenda around the meaningful inclusion of children and young people in key policy decisions about tourism development. Wray (2009) suggests that this process is often the precursor to policy change.

It is against this backdrop that the concept of youth “participation” is extended in this study to include “participation in research”. In Chapter Six, I discussed how young people’s agency is enacted when they are given the opportunity to actively engage in the research process. Through visual and participatory methodologies, Chapter Six attempts to address Research Question Three: How does participatory research with young people challenge and extend understandings of their lived experience of growing up in a tourist destination?

The two participatory projects were important means of exploring the cultures of childhood (Alderson, 2001, 2012; Christensen, 2004; Kellett, 2010), as well as fulfilling the emancipatory aim of the research. Hart (1992) argues that children’s participation is not just “an approach to developing more socially responsible and cooperative youth; it is the route to the development of a psychologically healthy person” (p. 35). According to A. B. Smith and Bjerke (2009), extending an opportunity to actively participate in research about their lives, is an important way to facilitate an experience of citizenship. The dialogical and relational approach adopted in this study was essential in “creating the conditions for recognizing children, including facilitating and supporting the development of children’s agency, their capacity to understand themselves and to define their identity” (Graham & Fitzgerald, 2010b, p. 350).

The benefits of participation, whether in research, policy or practice, are not limited to the individual but extend to improving the “organization and functioning of communities” (Hart, 1992, p. 34). Hart (1992) suggests there is a clear link between failure to create a social and political environment in which children can participate and the boredom and delinquency of young people; “if they [young people] do not find opportunities to develop their competence in ways that are responsible they will
find others that are irresponsible” (p. 34). In human-rights terms “children’s participation belongs in discussions of citizenship” (Beazley et al., 2009, p. 376).

Key components of citizenship for children and young people include: “entitlement to respect and recognition; opportunities for belonging and meaningful participation within groups and communities; the right to have their voices heard and express their agency; and the fulfilment of obligations and duties to others” (A. B. Smith & Bjerke, 2009, p. 21). The most important aspect, however, is that citizenship is a “dynamic learning process in which adults and children are social partners and interdependent” (A. B. Smith & Bjerke, 2009, p. 21). The creation of a civic and political identity among young people needs to happen both in the microenvironment such as the family and the school as well as at a macro level in the community (Albanesi et al., 2007; Cicognani et al., 2008; Evans, 2007; Tennent et al., 2005). Children need to have the opportunity to live and experience “citizenship” from a young age (Covell & Howe, 1999; Jonsson & Flanagan, 2000; A. B. Smith & Bjerke, 2009).

Through the participatory projects, this study explored how we can go deeper in challenging and extending our understandings of their lived experience of growing up in a tourist destination. Providing both valuable data for this study and educational benefits to the young co-researchers, the participatory projects may possibly have also facilitated an experience of civic engagement and citizenship. It is hoped that the findings of this research will provide a useful starting point to acknowledge young people’s agentive role in society and to advance dialogue around the meaningful participation and inclusion of youth in policy decisions about tourism development in the Byron Shire. As (Hart, 1992) argues the “productive collaboration between young and old should be the core of any democratic society wishing to improve itself, while providing continuity between the past, present and the future” (p. 37).
IMPLICATIONS AND FINAL REFLECTIONS

Clearly children and young people’s perceptions and experiences are still under-researched in tourism research. This study has shed light on some of these gaps and silences while extending our knowledge of young people’s experiences of growing up in a tourist destination. At a theoretical level, I have attempted to contribute to two very different areas of scholarship: tourism studies – identifying the evident silence of young people and the need to place child-centred research on the agenda; and childhood studies – identifying the need to explore more in-depth the experiences of children growing up in complex communities such as tourist destinations beyond the rural/urban dichotomy prevalent in the literature. The study also contributes to the theoretical developments in youth subcultural studies in Australia through an analysis of the straightredge subculture and doof neo-tribes (Bennett, 1999; Buttigieg, Robards, & Baker, 2015; Robards & Bennett, 2011; R. White, 1993, 1999).

At a methodological level, the study contributes to the growing evidence that actively engaging children and young people in the research process has substantial benefits. The study thus extends and builds on the scholarship around children’s participation in research, policy and practice in childhood studies. The methodological approach taken in this study also contributes to addressing the limiting positivist tradition in tourism studies focused on communities and residents’ perceptions of tourism. Qualitative, visual and participatory approaches open up new ways of exploring the lived experiences of residents of host communities and possibly better capture the nuances and intricacies of residents’ attitudes towards tourism – uncovering the “why” as opposed to just the “what” (Deery et al., 2012).

The study also has important implications for government policy and planning. Young people’s silence is not limited to participation in research but is also evident in policy development. This thesis argues that children and young people need to be involved in key policy decisions shaping their lives including tourism policy and planning, and that their competence – or perceptions surrounding their competence – should never hinder their participation in policy development (Hart, 1992). Meaningful opportunities need to be created for young people to participate beyond
tokenistic gestures. Young people should be actively involved in the “public sphere” or “adult spaces” if their citizenship rights are to be upheld (Evans, 2007).

WORKING BEYOND DISCIPLINARY BOUNDARIES

In addition to the contributions highlighted above, I would like to add some concluding reflections which may direct future research. The thesis suggests that working with “universally applicable methodologies” (Kincheloe et al., 2011, p. 168), within confined disciplinary boundaries may not be sufficient when exploring complex or “wicked” problems (R. J. Lawrence, 2010). From the start of this project, I was aware that actively engaging young people in researching their lives required a creative approach which would overcome the limitations of single discipline inquiry.

Working across disciplines and fields of research has, however, been a challenging endeavour throughout this study. My PhD journey is evidence of the tensions that I experienced, what I have come to think of as the “disciplinary tug-of-war”. Reconciling two interdisciplinary fields of research such as tourism studies and childhood studies within my broader disciplinary background of anthropology was by no means an easy task. However, the transdisciplinary approach taken in this study allowed the kind of methodological flexibility necessary in privileging children’s voices. In this study, I tried to steer away from just “mixing” theories from different disciplinary backgrounds to transgress those boundaries and move beyond disciplinary silos to explore new ways of thinking about how young people view tourism (Canosa et al., 2017).

Since I have attempted in this thesis to “remove knowledge production and its benefits from the control of elite groups” (Kincheloe et al., 2011, pp. 169), this project may contribute to a “postdisciplinary” agenda (Canosa et al., 2017). According to Coles et al. (2006), “in comparison with interdisciplinarity, postdisciplinarity develops (even) more flexible and creative approaches to investigating and defining objects through its insistence on overcoming the intellectual inhibitions associated with disciplinary parochialism” (p. 295). Pernecky, Munar, and Feighery (2016) go further, arguing that “postdisciplinarity is not
ontologically, epistemologically, and methodological prescriptive – it is an ‘open’, critical, and imaginative attitude towards research and the researched” (p. 434). Working in a trans- or postdisciplinary space often means privileging local/host/emic knowledges and employing collaborative and participatory methods (Hollinshead, 2010).

However, I am not suggesting a rejection of disciplinarity in favour of an “a-disciplinary” approach (D. Chambers & Rakić, 2015b). In my view, postdisciplinarity is not the negation of disciplinary theory and practice but the extension of knowledge production beyond the confined boundaries of disciplinarity (see also Pernecky et al., 2016). What a trans/postdisciplinary approach provides compared to inter/cross/multidisciplinarity is a degree of flexibility which allows researchers to recognise the legitimacy of other views and co-create knowledge with the very people we seek to study (Hollinshead, 2016). In this sense, trans/postdisciplinary research does allow for a “decolonization of knowledge” (D. Chambers & Rakić, 2015a, p. 168) and can contribute to a transformative agenda for research.

Nevertheless, as we move within, across and beyond disciplinary boundaries – including theoretical and conceptual approaches – we should also question and challenge our methodological approaches (Canosa et al., 2017). As a final reflection on the process of conducting trans/postdisciplinary research, I here tentatively propose the concept of “postmethodology” (Canosa et al., 2017) which is not just a combining, mixing and drawing upon multiple methods but a repositioning of control from the centre (researchers) to the periphery (participants). Building on Kincheloe et al. (2011) concept of “bricolage”, a postmethodological approach would see researchers actively constructing research methods or even co-constructing these methods with research participants/collaborators rather than employing “universally applicable methodologies” (p. 168), defined by the purview of one’s discipline.
A postmethodologist would attempt to integrate, question, challenge and change methodological approaches, embracing playfulness and messiness, such as that offered by visual and participatory approaches:

The postmethodologist sees that there is no “one” right way, ontologically, epistemologically or methodologically. If multidisciplinarity is placing disciplines “side by side” and multi- or mixed methods is (similarly) placing methods side by side, then a postmethodological intent would transgress methodological as well as disciplinary boundaries. (Canosa et al., 2017, p. 904)

Such postmethodological efforts may, in turn, help to address the gap that is evident methodologically in tourism studies, where “there is still a strong proliferation of traditional research methods and an apparent apprehension by many to explore more innovative approaches” (D. Chambers & Rakić, 2015a; Rakić & Chambers, 2010, p. 379).

Carrying out research beyond disciplinary boundaries has its challenges. However, in this thesis the trans – or even postdisciplinary approach allowed for greater flexibility in achieving the emancipatory aims of the research. The co-created methodological approach – which was a result of shedding my own disciplinary preconceptions – contributed to privileging children’s agency and voice. The way knowledge was produced in a collaborative and dialogical way, makes this approach particularly useful when working with marginalised, silenced and unrecognised members of the community. While not devoid of challenges, a considerable opportunity exists for tourism researchers to join the growing band of “disciplinary trespassers” (Hollinshead 2010, p. 12) in pursuit of other worldviews that might strengthen and enrich the field.
FUTURE RESEARCH

Beyond the immediate contribution to theory, it is hoped that this study will provide a starting point for the exciting new opportunities that arise to do research at the intersection of childhood studies and tourism. In addition to a postdisciplinary and postmethodological agenda for future research in this space, I would like to suggest other research avenues including: A “voice agenda” whereby the voices of marginalised members of the community such as children and young people are profiled in research; an “ethics agenda” which aims to expand our understanding of the ethical dimensions of doing research with children and young people in tourism research; a “political agenda” where young people’s leisure and consumption patterns (and in particular the cultural affiliations that form as a consequence) are read as new forms of political participations; and finally a “gender agenda” which opens up opportunities to explore gender embodiment and the role gender plays in the production of knowledge.

Voice agenda

Clearly children are influenced by and involved in tourism, often being the most significant influence in family tourism choices and major consumers of volunteer and adventure experiences during later teenage years. It makes sense then that interest in undertaking research with those under the age of 18 years is increasing within tourism studies (Schänzel & Carr, 2016). However, whilst children’s participation in research is developing as a new area for tourism, it is now quite routine in other fields and disciplines. Not only does this offer tourism researchers the opportunity to build on existing knowledge about why and how to involve children in research, it also potentially positions tourism researchers at the cutting edge of advancing ethically sound research in this space (Canosa & Graham, 2016).

We urgently need to access the views of children and young people living in host communities and involved in the tourism industry through, for example, child labour, sexual exploitation and orphanage tourism. These are all neglected areas in tourism research which may, in turn, challenge and expand current theorising within the sociology and anthropology of childhood. As Small (2008) argues, involving children in tourism research should go “beyond the commercial incentive” (p. 773).
This is to say that, along with the perceived methodological and ethical complexities, another possible reason why children’s voices have been neglected is the view that they are not contributing stakeholders in the business/managerial milieu of tourism.

Although tourism studies has been relatively slow to engage with the theoretical developments which frame children as “competent” and “capable” of actively participating in research about them, child-centred scholarship is gradually emerging in tourism research. Interest in the study of children and childhood has mainly focused on children within the family unit (Schänzel, 2010; Schänzel & Yeoman, 2015; Yeoman, Schänzel & Backer, 2012), and more so in the leisure literature (Carr, 2011; Carr & Schänzel, 2015; Rhoden et al., 2016). Very little attention, however, has been afforded children per se (Carpenter, 2015), and even more scarce is research about children growing up in host communities (Canosa et al., 2016).

What appears to be lacking in tourism research is a coherent theoretical framework and paradigmatic stance to guide research. There is a need to position tourism research involving children and young people within the already well-established sociology of childhood or childhood studies paradigm (James & James, 2008; Prout & James, 1997). A key underlying principle of this paradigm is the need to acknowledge children’s agency and competence, and their right to “have a say” in matters affecting them, including in research about their lives.

Hence, the need to actively engage children in the research process by employing creative methods (e.g. visual and participatory techniques) which are sensitive to children’s competence. Such creative approaches also go some way in addressing the methodological challenge of eliciting children’s voices while reconciling ethical tensions around harms and benefits, which may include identifying positive wellbeing and/or educational outcomes for children involved (Graham et al., 2016).
It is important to steer clear of conceptualising participatory research as “unquestionably good, even better than other forms of research” (Holland et al., 2010, p. 36), but the flexible approach taken in this study did undoubtedly facilitate mutual learning and benefits to all participants (me included!). As Gallacher and Gallagher (2008) argue, if we remain flexible enough and work from a “relational epistemology” or position of “methodological immaturity” there is a potential to facilitate actual educational, social and emotional benefits to participants. Future research in this space should strive to actively engage children and young people through participatory projects which empower them to have a say in issues concerning tourism development. These creative approaches can also be employed when researching other areas such as the influence of children and young people in family tourism decisions and the experiences of family holidays and youth tourism.

**Ethics agenda**

Another area which is in need of expansion – more so in tourism research than in childhood studies – is the “ethics” of doing research with children and young people. As the range of creative methods and approaches to involving children in research in the wider social science fields have burgeoned, there has been increased recognition of the ongoing nature of ethics (Phelan & Kinsella, 2013; Spyrou, 2011). Within child-centred scholarship, ethics has come to encompass much more than clearance by ethics review boards. It is now increasingly recognised that ethical dilemmas arise and persist long after an ethics approval number has been granted, with at least some of these dilemmas linked to unacknowledged power dynamics between adult researchers and child participants (Spyrou, 2011).

There is now substantial evidence suggesting that this “messy” reality of ethics has created considerable anguish for researchers who involve children (Gildersleeve, 2010). Messiness refers to the difficulties of putting ethical principles in place during our fieldwork and staying true to the important ethical commitments which should guide all research involving children, including: maximising benefits for children during, and as a consequence of, the research process; preventing potential risks of harm; and obtaining children’s informed and ongoing consent alongside parental consent where appropriate (Graham et al., 2013). This has led to a major focus.
internationally on engaging more deeply with the ethical dimensions of research involving children and on improving ethical guidance provided to researchers and other key stakeholders, such as that generated through the Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) initiative which is now available in four languages and accessed in over 170 countries (Canosa & Graham, 2016; Graham et al., 2013).

While the absence of children in tourism studies may be attributable to the methodological challenges faced by researchers (Khoo-Lattimore, 2015), often assumptions about children’s competency, along with perceptions about the ethical complexity of involving them, likely pose greater barriers and deterrents (Canosa & Graham, 2016). Perhaps the time has come for tourism research to embrace the kind of shared vision, moral standard, common language, and evidence-based guidance that ERIC offers as we work collaboratively to expand opportunities to involve children and young people in research that is safe, respectful, and a ‘lighthouse’ within and beyond the discipline. If conducted in an authentically ethical way, such research offers scope to generate robust and valuable knowledge about children’s lives and experiences that can assist substantially in tourism planning, policy and practice (Canosa & Graham, 2016).

**Political agenda**

An interesting new research avenue in tourism – which is well established in youth cultural studies – is the area of subcultures and tribes, and the important ways in which they often hold deeper and unrecognised political significance. Through an exploration of the doof and straightedge cultures, findings in this study shed light on how leisure becomes a site for new forms of political participation among young people. By choosing non-conformist leisure activities, young people in this study enact a kind of “politics of survival” in the face of an increasingly alienating community context (Maffesoli, 1996; Riley et al., 2010). Young people thus engage in a covert and subversive kind of civic and political participation.

Exploring how leisure and consumption are being appropriated by young people as new expressions of political action (Goulding & Shankar, 2011; Maffesoli, 1996; Riley, Morey, & Griffin, 2010) is an interesting avenue for future research. Further studies would help to grasp the complexities of youth cultural affiliations in the
Byron Shire; such research would contribute to the theoretical developments in the field of youth and subcultural studies in Australia (Buttigieg et al., 2015; R. White, 1993, 1999). This kind of analysis may also extend the “frontiers” of tourism research by further unpacking the relationship between tourism, culture and politics (D. Chambers & Rakić, 2015b, p. 8).

**Gender agenda**

This study has made reference to the differences between the experiences of young boys and young girls and the way their gendered identities influence their views and opinions about growing up in a tourist destination. Further research is needed to explore more in-depth how gender is an embodied experience and how it shapes young people’s attitudes and perceptions to tourism in the community where they grow up. The intersectionality between gender and other subject positions such as age is a scarcely researched area in tourism research (D. Chambers & Rakić, 2015a).

In addition, it would be interesting to further explore how the researcher’s gendered subjectivity influences the production of knowledge during the research process. I have touched on this in Chapter Six when I explored how my position as a “mother in the field” created both challenges and opportunities during my fieldwork. However, since the call for more reflexively-oriented approaches to tourism research (Ateljevic et al., 2005; Feighery, 2006; Franklin & Crang, 2001; Phillimore & Goodson, 2004; Pritchard et al., 2011; E. Wilson & Hollinshead, 2015; E. Wilson et al., 2012), little has been written about how gender impacts on our fieldwork experiences. Reflective accounts of our gendered experiences are few and far between in tourism studies (Frohlick, 2002; A. L. Matthews, 2012; Mura, 2015). These are more widespread in the social sciences (Dombroski, 2011; Drozdzewski & Robinson, 2015; Farrelly et al., 2014; Flinn, 1998; Gilbert, 1994; Staeheli & Lawson, 1994).

Turning the reflexive gaze upon ourselves and collaboratively exploring how our gendered subjectivities create biases (both positive and negative) during our fieldwork practices can be a powerful tool in understanding how gender impacts the production of knowledge (see also D. Chambers & Rakić, 2015a). This kind of research may also shed light on why research on families and children in tourism has
to date mainly come from women rather than men (Schänzel & Carr, 2016). According to Schänzel and Carr (2016) this may point to a “continued gender-biased discrimination” in academia where families and children are seen as predominantly a “women’s” research topic.

In conclusion, the future research avenues here described open up new and exciting opportunities to further the theoretical and methodological development of the field of tourism studies and at the same time also significantly contribute to advancing the field of youth and childhood studies. Taking a particular critical reading of reality or conscientização (Freire, 1970), a new and seldom recognised angle of vision is uncovered, “the world as seen, understood and experienced by youth” (Canosa et al., 2016, p. 335). A trans or postdisciplinary approach may ultimately be more applicable for carrying out the kind of child-centred research which respects and values children and young people as individuals in their own rights and which “accords to them, not only rights as children but full human rights, equal with all others” (Sinclair, 2004, p. 116).
REFERENCES


Brown, G. (1992). *Community attitudes toward tourism in Byron Shire*. Study conducted for Byron Shire Council: Centre for Tourism, University of New England - Northern Rivers, Lismore NSW.


Howard, S., & Gill, J. (2001). 'It's like we're a normal way and everyone else is different': Australian children's constructions of citizenship and national identity. Educational Studies, 27(1), 87-103.


Lawrence, R.J. (2010). Beyond disciplinary confinement to imaginative transdisciplinarity. In V. Brown, J. A. Harris & J. Y. Russell (Eds.), Tackling wicked problems through the transdisciplinary imagination (pp. 16-30). London: Earthscan.


Morrow, V. (2008). Ethical dilemmas in research with children and young people about their social environments. *Children's Geographies, 6*(1), 49-61.


Pinter, A., & Zandian, S. (2015). ‘I thought it would be tiny little one phrase that we said, in a huge big pile of papers’: Children’s reflections on their involvement in participatory research. *Qualitative Research, 15*(2), 235-250.


Ramsay, N. (2010). Rematerializing tourism research through visual ethnography. In P. M. Burns, C. Lester & L. Bibbings (Eds.), *Tourism and visual culture: Methods and cases* (pp. 181-191). Wallingford: CABI.


How would your information be used?

The information you share in the interviews and workshops will be collected into a report. We will also have a seminar to talk about the research at the end. We will tell government, services and other researchers what we find out about young people’s experiences of growing up in a tourist destination like Byron Shire.

How to get started?

If you would like to be involved in this research, please email me or give me a call. I will then send you further information.

You don’t have to be in the research – I understand that you are very busy!

Please Contact Me!

Antonia Canosa
Phone: 0401 859773
Email: antonia.canosa@scu.edu.au
http://works.hepresh.com/antonia_canosa/

Young People and Tourism
Be part of a research project
Being part of a research project is fun!

- Are you between the ages of 10 and 24?
- Have you lived in the Byron Shire for at least 5 years?
- Would you like to be a researcher?

If your answer is yes, you might like to be part of this project!

Who is doing the Project?

My name is Antonia Canosa. I am a PhD student at Southern Cross Uni and I am working on a project about young people and tourism in the Byron Shire. I have several years of experience working with and researching children and young people and would be very interested in knowing your views about life in Byron Shire!

What would YOU need to do?

You would need to:

- Talk to me about your thoughts on tourism, your experiences of growing up in the Byron Shire and your future hopes and aspirations.
- Have a workshop together with other young people. The workshop will be to learn about being a co-researcher.
- Do a research project together. This means you will learn how to collect data, interpret the findings and share the results with your community.

About this project...

This project is about learning what it’s like to grow up in a tourist destination like the Byron Shire. We want to know what you enjoy, what you find difficult and what you’d like to change.

Not many young people have a say in how tourism is planned in their communities. The aim of the project is to hear your views regarding issues which are important to you.
APPENDIX B – Interview/focus group schedule for young people

Give an overview of the project and extend an opportunity to ask questions. Re-confirm consent to record the interview and clarify that no individual will be identified. Also remind participants that they may choose not to answer questions, leave at any stage during the interview, ask questions of their own or talk about issues of interest to them.

Turn recorder on…

Firstly, I would like to talk about your experience of growing up in this area…

1. Can you tell me a little about what it’s like to live in a tourist area like Byron Shire?

2. What do you like about your community?

3. What do you dislike?

4. What do you do for fun?

5. What are some of the issues that young people have growing up here?

I would also like to know what you think of tourism…

6. What are your thoughts on tourists/tourism?

7. What are the opportunities available to young people growing up in the area?

8. What are the disadvantages?

9. What do you think of the ‘party’ image of Byron Bay?

I am also interested in exploring this notion of belonging…

10. Could you tell me a little about what you think belonging means?

11. Do you feel you belong in the community where you live?

12. How would you describe that feeling of a sense of belonging and community?
13. How do you feel about sharing your places/spaces with tourists?

Growing up in a community which is also a tourist attraction is a very unique experience which may shape who you are and your future aspirations…

14. What are your plans for the future?

15. Would you like to stay in the area or move away?

16. What do you think about hospitality jobs?

Research suggests that young people are often not consulted or involved in the development of tourism planning and policies in their community…

17. Do you feel you have a say in how tourism is planned in your community? If yes how/if not why?

18. Would you like to have a say in how tourism is planned in your community?

19. What would you like to change in your community?

20. If you could send a message out to tourists that visit this area what would it be?

Conclude by asking for additional comments and/or questions. Explain the next stage of the research and extend an opportunity to participate as co-researchers in the participatory phase of the research. Thank them for their time and explain that a summary of findings will be sent to all participants at the completion of the interviews.
APPENDIX C – Interview schedule for adult stakeholders

Give an overview of the project and extend an opportunity to ask questions. Re-confirm consent to record interview and clarify that no individual will be identified. Also remind participants that they may choose not to answer questions, leave at any stage during the interview, ask questions of their own or talk about issues of interest to them.

Turn recorder on...

Icebreaker: Can you tell me a little about yourself? Your position, number of years in position and how long you have lived in the area.

1. What do you think are the most important issues faced by young people growing up in the Byron Shire?

2. Do you think tourism shapes their life experiences? How?

3. Do you think tourism shapes their experience of belonging? How?

4. Is this being acknowledged or addressed within the community?

5. How are young residents of the Byron Shire perceived by adults in the community?

6. What do you think influences such perceptions?

7. Should there be more involvement of young people in policy and planning issues around tourism development in the Byron Shire? How could this happen?

8. Are there any programs or initiatives in place through the schools or elsewhere to help young people understand and manage the social problems caused by (but not limited to) tourism?

9. What one thing/change do you think would make a very positive difference in the lives of the young people living in the Byron Shire?

Conclude by asking for suggestions on other possible adult participants for the study. Extend an opportunity to ask questions and make any additional comments. Explain the next stage of the research (interviews/focus groups with young people and the participatory projects). Thank them for their time and explain that a summary of findings will be sent to all participants at the completion of the interviews.
APPENDIX D – Peer-interview schedule

Co-researcher Team One: Young people’s opinions on the issues of drugs, alcohol & safety in the Byron Shire

| Introduction | • Overview of the project  
• Research is focusing on young people’s experiences of growing up in a tourist area like Byron Shire  
• In particular we are interested in your opinion on the issues of drugs, alcohol & safety among young locals  
• Ask for consent to record the interview and collect signature on the consent form. Also give out parental consent form for those under the age of 18.  

*Turn recorder on...*

Icebreaker: Can you tell me a little about what it’s like to live in a tourist area like Byron Shire? Good/bad aspects

| Questions | 1. What is your opinion on the use of drugs and alcohol among young people in the Byron Shire?  
2. Have you ever had a bad experience involving drugs or alcohol within the Byron Shire? Can you explain?  
3. Do you ever feel vulnerable, uncomfortable or not safe in your community? Can you explain? Give examples?  
4. What do you think contributes to Byron’s reputation as a party town?  
5. What changes could be made in your community to improve the safety of young people?  

| Closing | We’ve covered a lot of territory and you’ve provided some very rich insights – thank you! One last question:  
1. If you could send a message out to tourists who visit this area what would it be?  

*Conclude by explaining we will be analysing the data from the interviews and a summary of findings will be sent to all participants.*
Co-researcher Team Two: Young people’s attitudes to tourism and overcrowding in the Byron Shire

| Introduction | • Overview of the project  
|             | • Research is focusing on young people’s experiences of growing up in a tourist area like Byron Shire  
|             | • In particular we are interested in your thoughts on tourists/tourism and the issue of overcrowding in the Byron Shire  
|             | • Ask for consent to record the interview and collect signature on the consent form. Also give out parental consent form for those under the age of 18.  
|             | Turn recorder on…

| Questions | 1. What are your views on tourists/tourism?  
|           | 2. What are some of the positive and negative aspects of tourism in the Byron Shire?  
|           | 3. How does overcrowding affect you (e.g. traffic, noise, crowded beaches, surf and streets)? Can you explain? Give examples?  
|           | 4. What are some ways to improve overcrowding in the community?  

| Closing | We’ve covered a lot of territory and you’ve provided some very rich insights – thank you! One last question:  
|         | 2. If you could send a message out to tourists who visit this area what would it be?  

Conclude by explaining we will be analysing the data from the interviews and a summary of findings will be sent to all participants.
**Co-researcher Team Three: Young people’s opinions on employment & the cost of living in the Byron Shire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Overview of the project  
- Research is focusing on young people’s experiences of growing up in a tourist area like Byron Shire  
- In particular we are interested in your thoughts on employment and the cost of living in the Byron Shire  
- Ask for consent to record the interview and collect signature on the consent form. Also give out parental consent form for those under the age of 18.  |

*Turn recorder on…*

Icebreaker: Can you tell me a little about what it’s like to live in a tourist area like Byron Shire? Good/bad aspects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. What employment opportunities are available to youth in the Byron Shire?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is it easy or hard for young people to find a job? Can you explain? Give examples?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What is your opinion on the cost of living in the Byron Shire?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you plan on staying in the area in the future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. What changes should be made in your community to improve Byron Shire for local youth?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Closing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We’ve covered a lot of territory and you’ve provided some very rich insights – thank you! One last question:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. If you could send a message out to tourists who visit this area what would it be?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Conclude by explaining we will be analysing the data from the interviews and a summary of findings will be sent to all participants.*
APPENDIX E – Consent form for young people

What is it like to grow up in the Byron Shire??
Would you like to be involved in some research to help us find this out?

About this project...
This project is about learning what is important to you growing up in a tourist destination like the Byron Shire. More specifically it aims to understand what you like, what you dislike and what you would like to change in your community.

Why is the study important?
This project is important as it explores some of the issues that you may have growing up in the Byron Shire. Not many young people have a say in how tourism is planned in their communities. The aim of the project is to understand your views regarding issues which you consider important.

Who is doing the project?
My name is Antonia Canosa I am a PhD student with the Centre for Children and Young People (CCYP) at Southern Cross University. I have a team of supervisors working closely with me (Professor Anne Graham, Dr Erica Wilson and Dr Meredith Wray).

What would YOU need to do?
I would like to organise an interview with you or if you like you can choose to be interviewed with your friends. This is an informal chat and there are no right or wrong answers. I will use a voice recorder so I can listen to the interviews at home but I will keep all the information confidential. No one will be able to identify you because I will you a pseudonym (or nickname) which you can choose if you wish.

What else do I need to know?
If you change your mind about participating in the research that is okay or if you would like to skip a question or talk about something else that’s fine too. After participating in the interview you will also have the opportunity to take part in the next phase of the research which involves learning how to be a co-researcher and help me with the research!

How to get started?
If you would like to be part of this project please fill out the attached form. If you have any questions at all, please don’t hesitate to call me. I’m very happy to talk about the research at any time.
Being part of a research project

Consent Form

Remember if you don't understand something below, please ask before ticking the box!

✓ I have read the information about being in the project and I know the researchers want to talk to me about my experiences of growing up in the Byron Shire.
✓ I understand there are no right or wrong answers to the questions and I can stop our talk at any time.
✓ If I change my mind about anything that I have said, they won’t use it in the project.
✓ I understand the interview will be audio-recorder but my real name won’t be used.
✓ I will have a chance to read the findings.
✓ I say it’s ok for the researchers to listen to the recordings.
✓ I understand the researchers will keep all the notes and recordings in a safe, locked place.
✓ I know that I or my family can call the principal researcher Antonia on 0401815975 if we have any questions.

☐ YES, I would like to be part of this project

Or

☐ No, I don’t want to be part of this project

My name: ........................................................................................................................................

Age: ........................................... Place of residence: ...........................................................................

My signature: ......................................................................................................................................

Email (to receive a copy of the report): ..............................................................................................

Date: ....................................................................................................................................................

Remember if you change your mind about being in this project after signing, it's ok...just let me know.

Thanks ☺

Antonia Canosa
Centre for Children and Young People
Southern Cross University PO Box 157 Lismore NSW 2480
Phone 0401815975   Fax (02) 6620 3243   Email antonia.canosa@scu.edu.au
www.ccyp.scu.edu.au
What is it like to grow up in the Byron Shire?
A research project
Information for parents and carers

Dear parent or carer,
Your child (or the child you care for) has expressed an interest in participating in this research project being carried out by a team of researchers at the Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University. The research is focused on understanding what it’s like to grow up in a tourist destination like Byron Shire. To collect this information we are organising interviews and small focus groups with young people living in the Byron Shire in order to capture their ideas and experiences—what they like and don’t like and things they’d like to change.

Why is the study important?
This research is important as it explores some of the issues that young people may have growing up in a tourist destination. Not many young people have a say in how tourism is planned in their communities. The aim of the project is to understand their views and opinions.

Who is doing the research?
My name is Antonia Canosa I am a PhD student with the Centre for Children and Young People (CCYP) at Southern Cross University. I have a team of supervisors working closely with me (Professor Anne Graham, Dr Erica Wilson and Dr Meredith Wray).

How will the young people’s information be used?
The discussions with the young people will be audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed. The results will be summarised into a report (which will be made available to all participants). The researchers will also write up the findings for policy makers and for academic journals. No young person will be identified in any publication as pseudonyms will be used. All information will be stored securely at Southern Cross University in password-protected computer files.

What else do I need to know?
The ethical aspects and evaluation of this study have been approved by the Southern Cross University Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number: ECN-15-212). Any complaints about the ethical conduct of this research should be addressed in writing to the...
What should I do now?

If you **do not want** your child to take part in the research, please complete the form below and return to Byron Youth Services. Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you have any questions at all, please don’t hesitate to call me on the number below. I’m very happy to talk about the research at any time.

---

**Youth and Tourism Research Project**

If you **do not want** your child to participate in the research, please sign this form and return to Byron Youth Services.

I *(print name)* ........................................................................................................ DO NOT give consent

for my child/children *(print name/s)* ........................................................................

to participate in the *Youth and Tourism Research Project*.

Signed ............................................................................................................ Date..............................
APPENDIX G – Consent forms employed by the co-researchers

What is it like to grow up in the Byron Shire??
Would you like to be involved in some research to help us find this out?

Who is doing the project?
We are working on a research project with the Centre for Children and Young People at Southern Cross University. We are co-researchers on this project and would like to explore what it’s like for young people to grow up in a famous tourist destination like Byron Shire.

Why is this project important?
Not many young people have a say in how tourism is planned in their community. We want to know what you enjoy, what you find difficult and what you’d like to change.

What would YOU need to do?
We would like to interview you about your experiences of growing up in the Byron Shire, your thoughts on tourism, future hopes and aspirations. The interview will be audio-recorder but we will not use your real name!

How will your information be used?
The information you share in the interviews will be collected into a report. We will tell government, services and other researchers about what everyone in the project thinks is important.

How to get started?
If you would like to be in this research, please sign the consent form on the next page. You don’t have to be in the research if you don’t want to!
Being part of a research project

Consent Form

Remember if you don’t understand something below, please ask before ticking the box!

✓ I have read the information about being in the project and I know the researchers want to talk to me about my experiences of growing up in the Byron Shire.
✓ I understand there are no right or wrong answers to the questions and I can stop our talk at any time.
✓ If I change my mind about anything that I have said, they won’t use it in the project.
✓ I understand the interview will be audio-recorded but my real name won’t be used.
✓ I will have a chance to read the findings.
✓ I say it’s ok for the researchers to listen to the recordings.
✓ I understand the researchers will keep all the notes and recordings in a safe, locked place.
✓ I know that I or my family can call the principal researcher Antonia on 0401815975 if we have any questions.

☐ YES, I would like to be part of this project

Or

☐ No, I don’t want to be part of this project

My name: .................................................................................................................................

Age: .................................. Town where I live: .................................................................

My signature: ...........................................................................................................................

Email (to receive a copy of the report): ..................................................................................

Date: ........................................................................................................................................

Remember if you change your mind about being in this project after signing, it’s ok...just let me know.

Thanks 😊

Antonia Canosa
Centre for Children and Young People
Southern Cross University PO Box 157 Lismore NSW 2480
Phone 0401815975  Fax (02) 6620 3243  Email antonia.canosa@scu.edu.au
www.ccyp.scu.edu.au
What is it like to grow up in the Byron Shire?
A research project
Information for parents and carers

Dear parent or carer,

Your child (or the child you care for) has expressed an interest in participating in this research project being carried out by a team of young co-researchers in collaboration with the Centre for Children and Young People, Southern Cross University. The research is focused on understanding what it’s like to grow up in a tourist destination like Byron Shire. To collect this information the young co-researchers are interviewing other young people living in the Byron Shire in order to capture their ideas and experiences—what they like and don’t like and things they’d like to change.

Why is the study important?

This research is important as it explores some of the issues that young people may have growing up in a tourist destination. Not many young people have a say in how tourism is planned in their communities. The aim of the project is to understand their views and opinions.

Who is doing the research?

My name is Antonia Canosa I am a PhD student with the Centre for Children and Young People (CCYP) at Southern Cross University and I am collaborating with a team of young co-researchers recruited from the Byron Youth Services. We also have a team of supervisors working closely with us (Professor Anne Graham, Dr Erica Wilson and Dr Meredith Wray).

How will the young people’s information be used?

The discussions with the young people will be audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed. The results will be summarised into a report (which will be made available to all participants). The researchers will also write up the findings for policy makers and for academic journals. No young person will be identified in any publication as pseudonyms will be used. All information will be stored securely at Southern Cross University - in password-protected computer files.

What else do I need to know?

The ethical aspects and evaluation of this study have been approved by the Southern Cross University Human Research Ethics Committee (approval number: ECN-15-212). Any complaints about the ethical conduct of this research should be addressed in writing to the Ethics Complaints Officer, Human Research Ethics Committee, Southern Cross University,
PO Box 157 Lismore, NSW, 2480 Email: ethics.lismore@scu.edu.au. All complaints are investigated fully and according to due process under the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and this University. Any complaint you make will be treated in confidence and you will be informed of the outcome.

What should I do now?

If you do not want your child to take part in the research, please complete the form below and return to Byron Youth Services. Thank you for taking the time to read this. If you have any questions at all, please don’t hesitate to call me on the number below. I’m very happy to talk about the research at any time.

------------------------------------------------------------------------

Youth and Tourism Research Project

If you do not want your child to participate in the research, please sign this form and return to Byron Youth Services.

I (print name)..............................................................................................DO NOT give consent for my child/children (print name/s)........................................................................................................................................

to participate in the Youth and Tourism Research Project.

Signed ...........................................................................................................Date........................................

Antonia Canosa
Centre for Children and Young People
Southern Cross University PO Box 157 Lismore NSW 2480
Phone 0401815975 Fax (02) 6620 3243 Email antonia.canosa@scu.edu.au
www.ccyp.scu.edu.au
Local youth get their say on tourism’s impact

Tourism study focuses on Byron’s youth