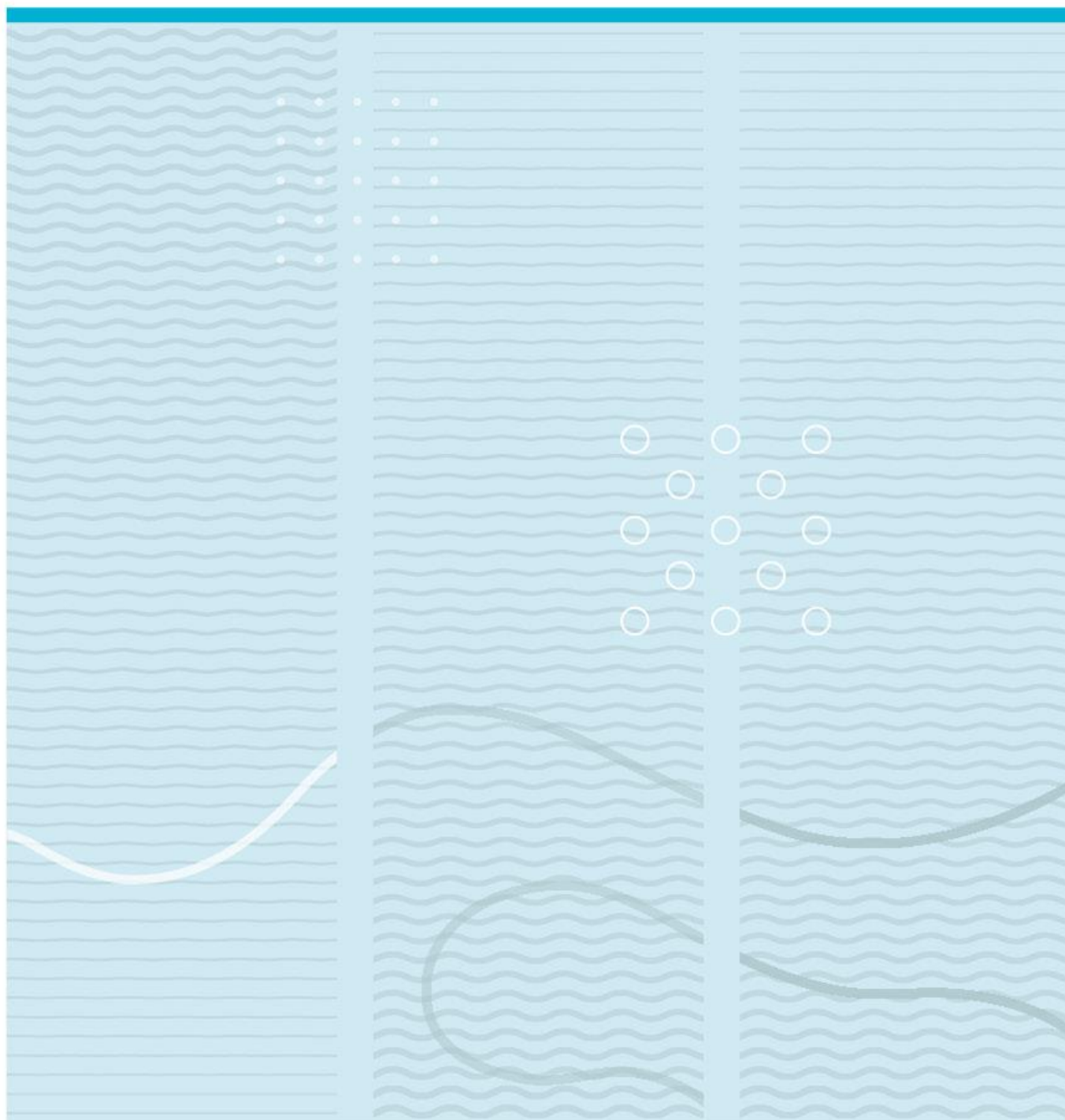


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The Friluftsliv Experience

Combining sociocultural and phenomenological analysis in outdoor research



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This thesis is worth 30 study points

Abstract

As the conclusive thesis of the Nordic Friluftsliv master at the University of South-Eastern Norway, this paper aims at combining two different basic understandings of the friluftsliv experience. Following a group of five international exchange students enrolled in a course titled "Nordic Backcountry Skiing and Outdoor Leadership" I gathered a certain understanding of how and why this experience is unique. Phenomenology and a social constructivist perspective provide the theoretical basis for this research project, with a combination of interviews, observations and diary/journal entries being used as the methods for data gathering. Insights into what participants pay attention to in the outdoors, as well as narratives of lived experiences resulted from the project. Among other results, it has been found out that the intensity and level of challenge of a situation define what participants pay attention to. Also, concepts of social constructivism such as capital and the pursuit of recognition were clearly identified in this context. Overall, the two theoretical standpoints proved to be complementary to a certain extent, facilitating a sufficient analysis of the friluftsliv experience.

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1 Introduction

“No, no! The adventures first, explanations take such a dreadful time.”

(Carroll, 1865, p. 92)

With this statement, the gryphon in the 1865 Children’s book classic “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” encourages the heroine of the book to tell the stories of her adventures on that day, rather than asking questions about why the stories should be told, and what the circumstances are. Quite similarly to this fictional situation the interest in how outdoor students from the most different backgrounds experience and describe their time in the Norwegian winter landscape formed into the basis for this research project. After many discussions and conversations over years of being an eager outdoor-enthusiast, this interest more and more specified and through academic education was filled with theories and philosophies surrounding experiences and practical situations in the outdoors. Finally, looking for a suitable topic to conclude my master’s program of “Nordic Friluftsliv”, said interest has been framed and formulated into this specific research project

Looking for a fitting frame to pursue and satisfy this interest, the international outdoor life program at the University of South-Eastern Norway presented itself as a fitting opportunity for the recruitment of informants. International students seem to be a good choice for this project, since each of the potential participants has a different background in the outdoors, as well as a different point-of-view on experiencing wilderness. Having participated in this program myself several years ago, I started specifying my interest and forming a more precise set of research aims as a basis for this master thesis research.

The overall aim of this project is to identify which aspects of being an international exchange student of outdoor life, participating in several winter excursions define the whole experience for the individuals. Instead of formulating these aspects beforehand and trying to find proof of them in the field, I decided to only define general directions of interest, within which each participant has the chance to expand and report into all directions and aspects of their individual experience. This is why research aims and

questions are less precise and allow me and the participants to find and define more precise aspects “on the go”. Formulating said rather general research questions, special focus was put on investigating several aspects of the experience at hand. “Focus/Attention” was one matter of interest in a sense of “what do participants focus on during different situations on winter excursions?” as well as “what do participants focus on when telling about these situations?”. The reason for choosing this particular part of the experience is that by knowing what participants focus on in different situations gives me as a researcher an overview over what is (consciously and unconsciously) important and valuable to the participants. By attention in this case, I am using the expression in the sense of “*a state or relationship of the whole organism or person. [...] a transient state in which a person’s coordinated, purposeful thought and action can be directed toward, or guided by, the object of attention.*” (Mole et al., 2011, p. 25). On this account, Howe (2019) describes, how the direction of attention in outdoor sports and activities is clearly a product of the situation and its intensity. The author assumes that in intense, difficult situations practitioners divert their attention away from the challenge to find relief and strength by distraction from the worst possible outcomes (Howe, 2019, pp. 96–98), an assumption that is discussed in this thesis as well.

On another account, analyzing the narratives to gain more insight into how similar or how different each individual perceives and experiences seemingly similar situations as well as finding similarities in how participants reproduce these situations when telling stories was one more aim of this project. To have a broader view on each individual, meanings, aims and goals that are sought after in nature were identified and compared. In works presented by Langseth (2011, 2012) and Holland-Smith (2021), theories rooted in social constructivism are used to identify meanings, aims and characteristics of outdoor activities of different kinds. Questions of what outdoor practitioners desire and how they behave accordingly are answered, making this direction of research one of the main influences for this particular thesis.

In order to answer these questions and to approach these aims, a theoretical framework based on two seemingly opposite epistemological standpoints was constructed. Ideas from phenomenology mostly in the lines of Edmund Husserl (1859-1938), Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1905-1961) and David Abram (*1957) constitute the main source of inspiration as well as the base of inquiry, while social (-cultural) constructivist ideas and

Pierre Bourdieu's (1930-2002) concepts of social field and different forms of capital expand the theoretical background for this project. Combining these two philosophical standpoints with their rather opposite meaning-making brought its own set of challenges on both the theoretical as well as the practical methodological level, an issue that is addressed on several occasions in this thesis.

Methodologically, a set of different data collection and analysis methods was used to gather and process information from the participants. Based on observations and diary entries, five individual interviews were conducted, in order to gather narratives as detailed and descriptive as possible. I decided to have this rather small number of participants with just five individuals, and focused solely on two different winter excursions in different landscapes, in order to stay within the small frame of this project. The narratives gained from the interviews, together with descriptions retrieved from diaries of the second excursion were then analyzed from the chosen two different perspectives. Firstly, social constructivist methods were used to identify how the narratives are built up, before a phenomenological analysis was exemplified.

Besides my personal interest within this field, this research project aims at giving educators as well as guides and wayfarers within the outdoor community a good foundation of knowledge to base decisions and programs on. By knowing how individuals experience the outdoors in wintertime, these agents are given a tool to create better programs and to fulfil students' as well as customers' needs more precisely and whole.

2 Framework of Theories

In this chapter I will shortly present and briefly explain the existing theories of relevance for my topic within outdoor research/ecophilosophy. The two key concepts of my work are framed and classified according to their relevance for capturing and analyzing the experience of being in the outdoors during wintertime. In order to get a better understanding of how international students experience, perceive and talk about their experience, Shared information is analyzed and discussed through different methods (see chapter 3). Based on intensive literature reviews and philosophical studies, aspects of phenomenology, more specifically following the writings of Merleau-Ponty and Abram, based on Husserl's primary coining of the term phenomenology, as well as central ideas that sociologists and humanists might call social constructivism, mostly leaning on to theories detailed by French philosopher-sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, are used to construct a certain framework of theory for this project. More precisely: Given the outset of my research project, I have used phenomenological methods of qualitative research (as described in the according methods chapter) for gathering and generating data, while I have used both, social constructivist standpoints and a framework of phenomenological theories to analyze and decipher the collected narratives and observations towards finding meaning and essence, as phenomenologists call it.

2.1 Phenomenology

2.1.1 Background, Husserlian phenomenology

Writing about and working with phenomenology, one inevitably has to mention and discuss Edmund Husserl's initial work on the "phenomenology of logical experiences". Being unsatisfied with the then common scientific ontology, Husserl heavily criticized Galilean sciences, using a cartesian point of view, for ignoring the fact that all we certainly know is what we experience ourselves. With this in mind, Husserl indicates that "traditional" science lacks a certain foundation, since all knowledge gained this way is gained through an incomplete analysis (Romdenh-Romluc, 2010, p. 5). The analysis might be called incomplete at this point, since phenomenologists criticize that traditional science and knowledge making is not based on something that is definitely present, namingly experiences, but that it is based on assumptions and taken-for-granted. From

this criticism, Husserl started to construct the, in his eyes lacking, foundation for a thorough and complete analysis in order to “save” science by applying philosophy. Gaining thorough and valid knowledge from merely describing what is given (one’s own lived experience) requires a set of methodological methods that Husserl called “epoche” and “transcendental reduction” (Romdenh-Romluc, 2010, p. 7; Zahavi, 2017, pp. 52–54). To exclude our natural attitude of basing our knowledge on learned assumptions and traditional scientific knowledge, Husserl suggests suspending its validity. As Zahavi explains this method of reduction, Husserl does not suggest to fully ignore the inclination towards traditional science and our natural inclination towards seeing the things as we have learned to see them, but to not take it for granted, to question its validity (Zahavi, 2017, p. 56). Zahavi clearly emphasizes that Husserl deemed this step necessary in order to uncover the “true significance of consciousness” (p.60), which would otherwise be concealed by naively taking the existence of the world for granted. The suspension of this “naïve” attitude of taking knowledge and experience for granted is what Husserl calls “epoche” in one of his earlier defining works titled “Ideas” (Husserl, 2012). Husserl does not suggest to completely ignore or exclude our, what he calls, “natural attitude” (Husserl, 2012, pp. 48–50) towards the world, since it definitely is a part of our experience. Instead, the phenomenologist suggests to question it, to leave it out (in other words: to bracket it) from the initial analysis of the experience and to later critically add it again to explain our initial experience (Zahavi, 2017, p. 58). Bracketing in this sense is seen as the practical step of analysis, in which these taken-for granted assumptions are identified, and not excluded, but marked and suspended, to be looked at after the analysis again. As Zahavi in this context quotes Husserl from a posthumously published manuscript:

“The world is not lost as a result of the epoche. The epoche is by no means a suspension of the being of the world and every world-oriented judgement: rather it is the path leading to the discovery of the correlational judgements, to the reduction of all unities of being to myself and my meaning-possessing and meaning-giving subjectivity in all its potentialities.” (Husserl, 1929-1935)

A typical example for this step would be to identify and bracket metaphors used in descriptions that relate to something that is not directly experienced. If a participant describes the dynamic in a group walking long distances as “almost automatic, like a well-

oiled machine”, this assumes that the group member as well as the reader exactly know how a well-oiled machine runs, thus it can be seen as a taken-for-granted assumption that is to be suspended.

This aspect of Husserlian phenomenology was often misinterpreted as neglecting the existence of the worldly judgement in phenomenological analysis, especially by philosophers and researchers only referring to Husserl’s main publications, not including manuscripts and primarily unpublished work of Husserl’s later years (Zahavi, 2017, pp. 57–60).

The suspension of what one might call common sense is an essential part of what Husserl calls the transcendental-phenomenological reduction (Romdenh-Romluc, 2010, p. 7). Before analyzing a description of an experience, the practical philosopher has to suspend everything that is connected to the belief in all things natural, e.g. traditional scientific knowledge, social constructs and knowledge and experiences on the researcher’s side. Romdenh-Romluc in her explanatory chapter on Husserl’s phenomenology (2010) continues to explain that this reduction is necessary in order to uncover the structures of “experience in general” (p. 8), enabling the phenomenologist researcher to understand the characteristics of consciousness and moving ahead, one step closer to finding what Husserl called the thing in itself (“Das Ding an Sich”) in a rather complex explanation about the perception of the “thing” in the introductory chapter of his 1928 work “Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins” (Husserl, 2013). In this work, Husserl describes how the thing in itself is hidden behind a veil of social constructs, our natural attitude and subjective experience-description and to uncover it, the researchers have to perform the transcendental-phenomenological reduction.

For my specific research topic, these rather practical thoughts are most important, as I intended to do practical research and find something close to what Husserl calls the thing in itself, when it comes to analyzing the participants’ narratives. With using phenomenology as a standpoint of explaining experiences, there is also a set of challenges and critical opinions which are accounted for further on.

2.1.2 Perception, Merleau-Ponty

Seeing himself as a follower of Edmund Husserl's philosophical standpoint, Maurice Merleau-Ponty made it a duty to himself to continue the work his late colleague has started. He called our "everyday conceptual framework 'Objective Thought'" (Romdenh-Romluc, 2010, p. 16), claiming, similarly to Husserl, that this conceptual framework lacks a valid foundation, as one only knows for certain what he/she experiences first-hand.

Thus, in the preface and introductory chapter of "Phenomenology of Perception", Merleau-Ponty mainly criticizes the classical psychological analysis of phenomena for lacking the inclusion of perception (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p. 3). We as perceiving human beings are constantly surrounded by countless stimuli and our unconsciousness has to decide which of these stimuli are not just sensed, but perceived. Merleau-Ponty thus identifies the general differentiation between sensation and perception as the main problem of analysis in psychology (p. 4-5). By being perceived, the "perceptual something" (p. 4) moves from the unconscious into our consciousness. Simply expressed, this process of sensing the "something" as a part of its surroundings and valuing it enough to move it into the center of our active attention for a certain amount of time is what Merleau-Ponty calls perception (p. 3-5). Given this explanation/definition of perception, one could argue that what we perceive as such is merely what our consciousness perceives, while our consciousness as well defines the perceived something in the first place. This paradox is what psychologists call "the experience error" (p. 5). In a phenomenological context, finding the "essence" of an experience or a phenomenon is naturally highly dependent on one's individual perception, so including it in the analysis is crucial, according to Merleau-Ponty.

By including perception as a factor of individual experiences, Merleau-Ponty himself notices that a complete objectivity in analysis is essentially impossible (Romdenh-Romluc, 2010, pp. 18–19), based on the fact that even with a well performed reduction, the object and the subject with all their qualities and characteristics can never be completely isolated if their relationship in the form of perception is included in the analysis (p. 22). This circumstance gets even more complex when one includes the fact that the experience itself, the one thing in itself that is subject to the inquiry, is also of the world and of consciousness, thus cannot be isolated (bracketed) completely. This part of the world, where we experience phenomena is what Merleau-Ponty defines as the

“phenomenal field” (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, pp. 51–53; Romdenh-Romluc, 2010, p. 22). Already Husserl encountered the problem of an impossible isolation and Merleau-Ponty for that reason makes it one more task for phenomenology to describe and analyze the phenomenal field of each individual experience, including the process of perception, to “uncover its structures” (Romdenh-Romluc, 2010, p. 23). Once this is achieved, the phenomenologist can suspend aspects of this phenomenal field in order to find the essence, the uniqueness of each experience or encounter.

For this specific research project, Merleau-Ponty’s understanding of perception gets relevant when identifying how and why certain aspects of the experienced phenomenon are pushed into the light of attention and specifically emphasized in the narratives of my participants. The analysis of focus and attention as rather individual conditions requires a sound understanding of how and why the phenomena at hand are perceived in the first place.

Missing in Husserl’s phenomenology is the rather physical aspect of including the experiencing body in the analysis, a field where Merleau-Ponty as well as David Abram take phenomenology a step further.

2.1.3 Embodiment and attention, Abram

Primarily, David Abram takes up Husserl’s and Merleau-Ponty’s philosophical work on phenomenology and extends it by defining and describing what he calls the “more-than-human world” (Abram, 2012, Subtitle). Based on Husserl’s concept of intersubjectivity, where subjects can either live shared experiences or experience purely individual situations (e.g. daydreaming) (Abram, 2012, p. 32), Abram points out that this way of thinking allows us to not only differentiate between the objective and subjective part of experiences, but to also distinguish experiences and their perception within the subjective realm of explanation (pp. 32-33). While Husserl (in Abram’s interpretation) already defines the human body as our tool to move about and experience the phenomenal world, Abram tries solving the general problem of phenomenology’s solipsism (Idea that the only thing that exist for certain is one’s own mind) by including other biological selves (human, animal, plant, etc.) into the analysis of the described experiences as well (p.32). Our perception initially seems individual, we sense our surroundings the unique way we do, but other beings might share parts of our perception

of the situation. The same tree might be seen from very different angles by a human, a bird or an insect, but all of these “bodies/selves” sense the tree’s movement in the wind, the texture of the bark and the branches as well as the general appearance of such tree (example by Abram, 2012, p. 33). As a part of the process of experiencing phenomena, the experiencing body extends, exceeding the limits of one’s own skin and being a part of the immediate surroundings, the “Commonwealth of breath” (Abram, 2019). Developing this inclusion of the more-than-human world, Abram resorts to Merleau-Ponty explicitly defining the experiencing self as the body, continuing to define and classify the embodied self:

“It is as visible, animate bodies that other selves or subjects make themselves evident in my subjective experience, and it is only as a body that I am visible and sensible to others. The body is precisely my insertion in the common, or intersubjective [e.g. more than human] field of experience” (Abram, 2012, p. 37)

Completing his Interpretation of intersubjectivity, Abram not only includes human bodies in his analysis, he considers all living beings as a part of our realm of experiences. In *Becoming Animal* (2011), Abram explains how animals such as birds “think with the whole of their bodies” (Abram, 2011, p. 146). As an ecologist, Abram uses the example of a bird navigating its body through a three-dimensional array of sensations and forces to explain how humans got used to complex mechanical solutions while experiencing the world. Phenomenology, thus is one possible way in the eyes of the author to get our embodied self back into focus, to “bracket” these “made-up”, taken for granted aspects of our experiences in order to find the “real” and pure aspects of the more-than-human realm. Since animals such as said bird are in a constant conversation with their surroundings rather than having a conversation between their minds and bodies, the whole body itself does the thinking in each and every situation (Abram, 2011, pp. 146–148).

This idea of the embodied self, to me, is a great example of applied phenomenology. As I will show later on in this chapter, phenomenology has earned quite an amount of criticism for being impossible to apply or to perform as a practical research/inquiry method. By including and emphasizing the fact that our bodies are our only tool making us experience the world, the phenomenologist researcher can also include the analysis of the body’s position, movement, expression and focus in his/her phenomenal inquiry. As with the analysis of narratives the analysis of the experiencing body will also bear

certain errors caused by the interpretative nature of the process. I will address the incorporation of both these parts of analysis in my methodological planning process.

2.1.4 Challenging phenomenology

In this paragraph I will focus on certain challenges that phenomenology entails, specifically as a method of research and inquiry. Using phenomenological theories and ground theories has been debated by philosophers, sociologists and psychologists alike, originating in Husserl's claim for it to be a solution to the challenges of science that he himself identified (Romdenh-Romluc, 2010, p. 5).

One crucial characteristic of phenomenology that has been named by critics is its identification, definition and gathering of data. The first question to ask at this point has been phrased by Zahavi in 2007: Are the reports of experiences/phenomena the data, or is phenomenology aiming at analyzing the actual experience itself through analyzing and working with the narratives (Zahavi, 2007, p. 23)? If we define the latter as the aim of phenomenology, the gathered data will always be exposed and vulnerable to critique from an empiricist way of evaluating data. Positivist scientists will deem the lack of a defined "intersubjective procedure" (Zahavi, 2007, p. 27) for gathering data as a threat to its validity. Put differently, the method of gathering data by analyzing narratives of subjects is gathering second-hand knowledge and then even interpreting it, which exposes the process to a set of biases. Addressing this challenge, phenomenologist researchers are very much limited to defining the narratives themselves as the data to be analyzed, since only the narratives are possible gathered in a valid way, free of interpretation in the first place (e.g. interviews, diaries, audio-visual recordings).

By defining the narratives as the data that is to be studied, another challenging weakness of phenomenology in practical research arises. As Warwick describes in "Structuralism vs. Phenomenology", an article published in the field of linguistics and rhetoric, the ways of speaking are strongly shaped by experiences and developments that the subject went through throughout their life (Warwick, 1979, 251, 259). Thus, the phenomenologist has to deal with the general split between what Levi-Strauss calls *parole* (speech) and *langue* (language) (Levi-Strauss, 1955, pp. 429–430). A person reporting on a lived experience in their speech obviously makes use of a (learned) language, a certain way of speaking, attributing to social and cultural norms and values (the construction of this framework

will be elaborated on later on). Since the subject of inquiry is this piece of *parole* (speech), the phenomenologist is confronted with the challenge of understanding the used *langue* (language) without misinterpreting or misunderstanding the content at hand. The response that phenomenologist philosophers such as Husserl, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty have to this objection lies in the central aspect of bracketing or reduction as described in the paragraphs above. By performing the eidetic or transcendental-phenomenological reduction, all taken-for-granted aspects of the world and all norms, values and beliefs are suspended (Husserl, 2012; Merleau-Ponty, 2012; Romdenh-Romluc, 2010, p. 7; Zahavi, 2017, pp. 52–54), including *langue* and its construction. In the case of language and rhetorics, this might be seen as a rather naïve ignorance of this data characteristic. Structuralist theorists and social constructivists, notably Pierre Bourdieu, whose ideas will be commented on in the next paragraph, identify this problem/limitation as well, leading to an inclusion of the construction of language and learned ways of speaking into their analysis.

In addition to the problematic data-gathering process and the margin of misunderstanding in the analysis of narratives, language itself as a way of reproducing and explaining narratives already has certain limitations. As Warwick puts it, language might not be fully suitable for expressing experiences (Warwick, 1979, p. 255), which is why phenomenologist analytics have to include the non-spoken aspects of a narrative as well (e.g. body language, facial expressions, eye movements). This is a part of Dennett's (explained by Zahavi) suggestion for an improved way of generating phenomenologist data (Zahavi, 2007). The metaphorical gap between the memory of the experience and the wording in the spoken account of the experience might get even wider in case the narratives are given in any other language than one's own mother tongue (e.g. in English by non-native speakers). Characteristics, dialects and the extent of vocabulary of different languages might also in the best case facilitate or impede the accurate and extensive reproduction of a (bodily) lived experience.

2.2 Bourdieu's perspective on social constructivism

As I pointed out above, the lack of explanation in some fields of knowledge led to several social theorists seeing experiences as forming only a part of our (social) existence and behavior. In this chapter I will take on the challenges presented above by referring to several key concepts of social constructivism, prominently the ideas presented by French social theorist and anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002). The lack of explanations led Bourdieu to abandon the traditional line of philosophy in order to pursue knowledge making as a sociologist (Grenfell, 2014), a path that is worth looking at in this specific context of research.

Analyzing Bourdieu's conception of the "Theory of Practice" (1977), the generation of valid scientific knowledge is basically two-fold: One part of knowledge is generated through purely experiencing phenomena in our lives. As I already explained in the first part of this chapter, Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and phenomenologists in general identify this part of knowledge as the only "right" and "valid" knowledge, since this is the only knowledge that is not prone to the bias of interpretation and transformation. Since this purely subjectivist view ignores the framework of social, cultural and historical circumstances these perceptions take place in, a second, objectivist part of knowledge has to be identified and analyzed, in order to gain a full understanding of what we know. Bourdieu defines his own idea of objectivism, veering away from the rather positivist term of objective (meaning neutral, free of assumptions and subjective opinions) and sees objectification as the process of gaining and classifying knowledge by setting up a frame of sociological ideas and terminology where knowledge is located in different "sections" ("The knowledge we shall term objectivist", Bourdieu, 1977, P. 3). Both levels of knowledge need to be revisited in order to gain a full understanding of our lived experiences and the knowledge generated by and with it (figure 1).

To grasp the concept of objectivist knowledge, Bourdieu took up, redefined and instituted several concepts of which the most prominent and for my case relevant ones are presented and included in my ontological framework in the following paragraphs.

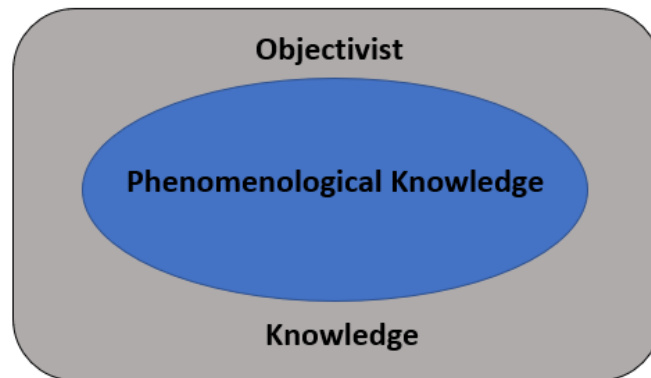


Figure 1: Generating scientific knowledge

2.2.1 Habitus

Identified as “central to Bourdieu’s distinctive sociological approach” (Maton, 2014, p. 49), the concept of Habitus is known to and used by a wide range of disciplines, ranging from anthropology to social sciences and philosophy. In this chapter I will give a brief description of how I grasp the concept of Habitus, mainly as a basic explanation for the way we experience phenomena, as well as for the way we report about such experiences. First of all, habitus is an extremely wide and holistic concept, that is on one hand generally appraised and on the other hand contested and misunderstood (Maton, 2014, pp. 49–50). Inspired by works of Merleau-Ponty, Bourdieu identified a lack of explanation as to where meaning originates from, inspiring him to investigate social phenomena as well (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 27–29). Human (social) beings acting in their environment are defined as agents who are “wittingly or unwittingly, willy nilly, [...] producer[s] and reproducer[s] of objective meaning” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 79). The agent is further defined as an actor performing under a certain *modus operandi*, following a certain set of unwritten, learned rules (Bourdieu, 1977, pp. 79–80; Maton, 2014, pp. 50–51). Abandoning the idea of agents acting free, purely as a reaction to the situated circumstances (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 73), we rather identify “social practices [that] are characterized by regularities” (Maton, 2014, p. 50) as the origin for our seemingly free decisions. These regularities are described by Maton as a non-explicit, but determining characteristic of our habitus which then produces our social self. The perceived situations

and experiences shaping our habitus throughout our lives have “defining principles” (Grenfell, 2014, p. 45), that are, in Bourdieu’s eyes, clearly a reproduction of values, rules and structures. This “phenomenological structural relation”, as Maton calls it (2014, p.45) is what shape our habitus, our *modus operandi* in every given situation. The idea that our habitus is what leads us to experience phenomena and the experienced/perceived phenomena are partly what shapes out habitus gives it a structuring and a structured characteristic (Bourdieu, P., Wacquant, L., 1992, p. 127; Camic et al., 1993, p. 127; Maton, 2014, p. 51).

Bourdieu further identifies everybody’s habitus as our way of “acting, feeling, thinking and being” (Maton, 2014, p. 52), and attributes a certain durability and transposability to it, meaning that we present our habitus and act according to it in different situations and circumstances, thus following the same unwritten rules and values whenever we make decisions for our actions and communications.

Conclusively, our habitus thus defines the way of meaning-making in our actions, giving one possible explanation for the way we perceive certain situations and the way we act upon these perceptions. By coining the concept of habitus, Bourdieu in his “Theory of Practice” (1977) delivers one possible solution to the lack of objectivity and structure in the phenomenological analysis, one way to define what to “suspend” and reinclude in the analysis after the transcendental reduction.

For this specific research project, the concept of habitus is mostly of importance when looking at “typical” behavior patterns in the outdoor-community. Knowing how to define and use the concept of habitus, enables the researcher to better explain the participants’ behavior and ways of speaking, as well as categorizing narratives better, using the concepts presented in the next two chapters. Having identified and implemented the common generation of knowledge, as well as our *Modus operandi*, our habitus, I will now continue by focusing on the next key concept in Bourdieu’s pioneering definition of social constructivism, the field in which our habitus is generated and which is structured by the same habitus itself.

2.2.2 Field

In order to fully explain our social behavior, it is not sufficient to barely look at narratives and the actions themselves, we also have to look at the context and “examine the social

space” (Thompson, 2014, p. 67) in which all of that takes place. This inclusion of the social space, defined by Bourdieu as “Field” (1977) is crucial in order to work with a complete sociology, as the author explains in a set of question-answer-like chapters in “Sociology in Question” (Bourdieu, 1993). Thompson by presenting different generally known kinds of “field” gives us an idea of how Pierre Bourdieu divided our (social) life into fields of different areas (Thompson, 2014, pp. 67–74). Defining entities and agents that hold the power in one given field lets us position ourselves or the agent that is to be analyzed within the given field. The concept of habitus and the common shared rules, principles and values shared by all habitus’ help us to perform this definition of the “field of power”. Aspects of power and domination play a big part in Bourdieu’s definition of *field*, as he pointed out in a series of lectures in the mid-1980s (Bourdieu, 2020). With this definition of (fields of) power and recognition, Bourdieu gives us a starting point for analyzing the social field and the recognition within at hand. With looking at which agents have the most *power* in the field of analysis, we can see where unwritten rules and values lie within the given community. By answering the questions “What characterizes the agents in power?” and “How did they get there?” We can try to define the factors that specify and determine the habitus of the agents within the field.

In my specific case, the fields at hand are the outdoor community, higher education and research. Beginning with the outdoor community as an example of a cultural field, we can first look at the agents present in the field, before looking at the distribution of power and the general normative and values. First of all, we have the practitioner themselves, in my case the subject in focus of my investigation. On the next higher level, we have all the practitioners in direct contact with the subject, their co-students/their trip-companions. On the institutional level there are outdoor/tourist associations like local outdoor sports clubs (e.g. skiing clubs) or in a wider sense the “Den Norske Turistforeningen” (DNT) in Norway. On the highest institutional level, we would look at government institutions like the ministries of health, environment or culture. Idolized athletes, expeditioners and celebrities of the field are one more party that holds a certain power in the outdoor community. Identifying these (sub-)fields requires the researchers to look at their interdependence as well (Thompson, 2014, p. 73). In order to investigate the fields power-relations and recognition further, I will present another crucial concept of Bourdieu’s social ontology in the following paragraph.

2.2.3 Capital

In order to distinguish fields and the power relations within and between them, Bourdieu used the economic term of “capital” and suggested that *“It is in fact impossible to account for the structure and functioning of the social world unless one reintroduces capital in all its forms and not solely in the one form recognized by economic theory”* (Bourdieu, 2010, p. 81). By defining and including a set of distinctive forms of capital, Bourdieu built up a system of analyzing power relations and the generation of habitus as a more applicable extension to the concept of social status (Moore, 2014, pp. 115–116). By defining and/or explaining capital as the *“energy that drives the development of a field”* (Moore, 2014, p. 105), it is inevitable to look at capital and its effects on the individuals’ behavior and narratives. Our natural urge to gather capital in the form of , for example, recognition as part of defining our habitus leads us to behave one certain specific way or report on our experiences using a, by the field predefined, specific language (Levi-Strauss, 1955; Warwick, 1979). As a part of performing the phenomenological reduction in research, we have to be aware of this natural urge influencing our behavior and way of reporting, so that we can identify the predispositions of the individuals’ background and the field of playing, to suspend these assumptions and later to include them in our analysis/explanations. These parts of the narratives identified as means to gather capital, or as expressions of the individual or community-shared habitus are what is to be suspended in the step of bracketing and reduction, so not only in the constructivist analysis from Bourdieu’s perspective, but also in phenomenological research is this identification and categorization of advantage.

The forms of capital relevant for this project are the symbolic capitals of culture as well as social capital. In order to utilize the concept of capital to classify/place the subjects within the social fields, we also have to look at the ways of understanding the symbolic capital. While economic capital is defined by mercantile exchange, e.g. money or other valuables/currencies, symbolic capital has three different forms (Moore, 2014, p. 105): objectified capital (materially represented), embodied capital (physical appearance and behavior) and habitus (attitudes and dispositions), making it more complicated to identify and categorize these characteristics within and between the fields of action. Having undergone this distinction, capital can then be used to identify the (social) inequalities within a symbolic field (in this example the outdoor community or the field of higher

[outdoor] education), that according to Moore's conception of Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 1993) is unconsciously reproduced by the agents acting within the field. It will also give us the chance of analyzing the hierarchy between different fields, how power in one field has an influence on other (sub-) fields. In this case, the concept of capital is used to explain why participants

2.2.4 Social constructivism as a solution to phenomenological challenges

As stated in the introduction of this chapter, I utilized the structuralist and objectivist theories presented by Pierre Bourdieu in order to address the challenges named and presented in chapter 1.4.

Starting with the lack of consistency and validity in the process of gathering/generating data, I have described how phenomenologist research, more precisely the analysis of narratives, will always be prone to critique from empiricist scientists for its characteristic as interpretative and third-hand. Frankly, social constructivism and structuralism seem to not solve this problem entirely, since also constructivist methods and analysis are purely based on second- and third-hand knowledge. By finding and including more valuable information about the agents' background, the field of action and the distribution of capital within said field, the researcher can limit the bias of data collection by limiting the spectrum of interpretation, but would not be able to completely address and solve this issue. Even by including named theories, the analysis would still lack the defined "intersubjective procedure" (Zahavi, 2007, p. 27) that would grant the data collection validity. What Zahavi describes when mentioning the lack of a defined procedure is how phenomenological descriptions gained from conversation do not follow the "traditional" scientific process of data extraction and verification.

The next challenge I pointed out earlier on the other hand is where the field of structuralism is of great value for the phenomenologist analysis of this project. The ways of speaking and reporting on experiences are shaped by many external factors named and defined by Bourdieu. When reporting on our experiences, we tend to use the language that is unconsciously deemed appropriate for the field we are talking about. As Bourdieu puts it in "Language and Symbolic Power" (1991).

"The social uses of language owe their specifically social value to the fact that they tend to be organized in systems of differences (between prosodic and articulatory or lexical

and syntactic variants) which reproduce, in the symbolic order of differential deviations, the system of social differences.” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 55)

The social value we attribute to the ways of speaking leads us to adapt our language in a way that seems “decent, appropriate” to us in the social context we are acting in. By analyzing this adaptation and identifying the specific ways of speaking within this given community, we can make use of social theories to get closer to what phenomenologists look after, the essence, the thing in itself, through the bracketing of typical ways of speaking. Instead of merely suspending the construction of language in the analyzed narratives, as phenomenologists suggested (Husserl, 2012; Merleau-Ponty, 2012; Romdenh-Romluc, 2010, p. 7; Zahavi, 2017, pp. 52–54), this knowledge in the field of structuralism allows us to include the aspect of language into our analysis of meaning. While the socially constructed ways of speaking within the outdoor community for instance can be clearly defined and considered by implementing Bourdieu’s theories, the limitation that language itself sets to the correct reproduction of experienced phenomena cannot be addressed in this manner. An attempt to solve this limitation can be found in the choice of participants, as I demonstrate in the methodology chapter of this paper.

3 Methodology

3.1 Framework

In this paragraph I am first explaining how the theoretical ideas described above can be transformed into research methods, before giving a more detailed practical plan for my specific research topic.

Ontological and epistemological standpoints of the researcher responsible for the project generally have a strong influence on the choice of the methodological approach to the research project” (Humberstone & Prince, 2019), p. 2). My choices on research methods are made and limited based upon my “paradigm” of beliefs and experiences (Humberstone & Prince, 2019), p. 2). With the relatively open nature of my ideas for this project, a set of qualitative methods based on phenomenological ideas serves the purpose of data collection and analysis.

3.1.1 Phenomenology as a method

Phenomenology as a theory of seeing the world and ourselves in it is a rather wide concept, as the brief description in the chapter above indicates. In order to take phenomenological ideas and beliefs into the scope of research, the researcher has to narrow it down in order use it as a framework of methodology (Allen-Collinson, 2017). Allen-Collinson (2017) identifies four key ideas of phenomenology, making it an applicable method in outdoor research and a useful tool for certain purposes of data collection and analysis.

Firstly, it is the descriptive part: experiences need to be described as thoroughly and freely as possible, free from any preconceptions, interpretations and assumptions, in order to grasp a wide understanding of how an individual experiences situations and objects (Allen-Collinson, 2017, p. 16). To generate these elaborately detailed descriptions without any of my prior knowledge and ideas influencing them, I had to adapt the data collection methods. Thus, one part of the data consists of diaries and field notes generated by the participants themselves. Giving only instructions on to how detailed the diary entries should describe the experiences and at what time of the day/in which situations these should be made, I ensured to exclude my own preconceptions and experiences. This should eliminate the bias of me being a former student of the same

program in order to get “pure” descriptions, as phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty describes it (Merleau-Ponty & Smith, 1966, p. 9). The method of journaling/diaries will be discussed later on in this chapter.

Secondly, intentionality has to be considered when collecting and analyzing data. Since I as a researcher have a different intention in experiencing the excursions than the participants might have, I had to be careful in how to ask questions and observe the students, as not to let my own intentions influence their experience and the description of said experience. By intentionality I mean intentionality in a phenomenological sense, as the “directedness [of consciousness] towards an object” (Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia, 1998). My consciousness in this sense is fully directed towards my research aims and finding data I can use, whereas the participants intentionality could go into very different directions. Abram (1996) references Edmund Husserl and his definition of the eidetic reduction as crucial to giving a proper phenomenological analysis of practical experiences. The data that is gathered in the process of writing diaries, observing and interviewing has to undergo a certain filtering, bracketing as phenomenologists like Husserl and Merleau-Ponty call it, in order to eliminate prior views and social constructs from the phenomenological descriptions. The transcendental-phenomenological reduction as it is in theory described in the chapter above will later on in this chapter be discussed and its practical implementation adapted to this project.

One step further, Allen-Collinson (2017, p. 16-17) defines the last step of phenomenological research and analysis “finding the essence” of the experiences made by the participants. This stage of the phenomenological description is crucial for my research. To identify what exactly it is, that made the individuals’ experience unique, what substantially defines the experience. In this step of my analysis I also try to find a common essence, the parts of the experience shared by several participants, in order to find out what defines participating in a friluftsliv study as an exchange student as a unique experience, again focusing on attention and direction towards the phenomenon itself.

3.1.2 The role of (social) constructivist theories in research methodology

In addition to phenomenology as the central theoretical framework of research methodology, I will include constructivist theories into the methodology of this research as well. Taylor (2018) describes knowledge in social constructivist theories as a “product

of human interaction” and not as “something to be discovered” (Taylor, 2018, p. 218). Following this idea, the analysis of narratives using a purely phenomenological pursuit of essence seems insufficient for explaining the participants’ experience and behavior. Considering the basic standpoint of social constructivism as argued above, the researcher has to assume that a big portion of the data gathered in journals and interviews would be socially, culturally and historically constructed (Langseth, 2012, p. 56). Furthermore, one has to expect the answers given in interviews to be originating in the subject’s habitus, thus fulfilling (unwritten, maybe even unconscious) certain norms and expectations of the field. This is a key characteristic of the subject-researcher-relationship that Bourdieu described as

“The rationalizations produced from this standpoint, which is no longer that of action, without being that of science, meet and confirm the expectations of the juridical, ethical, or grammatical formalism to which his own situation inclines the observer”

(Bourdieu, 1977, p.20)

Not only does the researcher have to expect an account or a report that is constructed in a certain way, the researcher also has to expect the subject to give their report in a way that assumingly puts them into the “right light” in the eyes of the researcher. In order to identify and interpret these constructions, Bourdieu suggests to have a closer look at the language/dialectics used by the subject during interviews or when telling stories (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 20). Since social constructivists assume that experiences and our reactions to them are socially constructed, as well as reports and accounts of said experiences, the researchers’ analysis/interpretation is an account of things that is constructed on three different levels (Langseth, 2012, pp. 56–57).

While phenomenologists focus on finding the essence of experiences, bracketing “taken-for-granted” assumptions and conditions, according to Bourdieu, they fail to describe how and why subjects take these conditions for granted. This is where Bourdieu suggests a break or an “epistemological rupture”, first introduced into social science by Gaston Bachelard in the 1930s. As McAllister Jones describes it, Bachelard suggests that a complete analysis requires the researcher to not only gather narratives, but to also be critical and fit the gathered representations of practices into a framework of social constructions (McAllister Jones, 1984, p. 8), in order to fully explain where the narratives come from and how they are (known or unknown to the subject) constructed within the

field. Later on in this chapter, I am going more into detail as to how to include this into the analysis process of my project.

3.2 Research methods within this project/practical application

With this methodological-theoretical basis laid out, in the following paragraph, I am outlining the more practical side of my research plan, adding a practical framework to my project. As stated earlier in this paper, I chose a group of exchange students enrolled in the program “Nordic Backcountry Skiing and Outdoor Leadership” as my subjects. In order to narrow down my research project to a frame that fits with the one-semester schedule of my master thesis I, together with the responsible teacher for the international class, decided to only follow the participants on two skiing excursions in the spring semester of 2022. From my own experience and also from conversations with teachers of the program I gathered that backcountry skiing and winter camping in the forest and the high mountains confront most of the students with a whole new set of challenges and experiences, which for my purpose of investigating the unaltered and “pure” experiences seemed to be particularly fitting. Following these two excursions, broadly speaking, three methods of data collection are applied, namely interviews, field observation and a participant-generated diary, in order to gain a whole understanding of how each participant individually experiences the excursions and time spent outside. Brett Smith and Andrew Sparkes in their Routledge handbook of qualitative research in sport and exercise (2017) offer a good handrail on some of the most important qualitative methods in field research. Even though they specified their handbook for sports and exercise, a wide set of basic rules and procedures can be modified to suit the needs of outdoor field research, using further literature in the field of methodology.

3.2.1 Interview

I decided to use interviewing as the main method of data collection in this case, since it enabled me not to guide the participants into a direction, but to encourage them to go into detail and to elicit thick descriptions of experiences made during the trips. From a phenomenological perspective, this flexible way of generating data in form of broad descriptions is ideal to get closer to the essence of each experience that is described.

For my case, individual unstructured interviews seem to be the best way of gathering data from the participants. Since the one main aim of the interviews is to get the participants into a flow of talking and reporting from their experiences, a set of rather open-ended questions were initiating the conversation. As Smith and Sparkes put it, in this setting the participant “has a much higher degree of control over what is said and how” (Smith & Sparkes, 2017b, p. 104), which is exactly what is needed in order to get thick, pure descriptions, excluding the researcher’s personal experience and pre-assumptions, as phenomenologist like Merleau-Ponty aim for (Merleau-Ponty and Smith 1966, p. 9).

Given the setting of my research with groups of about 10 people, usually divided into “tent-groups” of three to four people, focus group interviews are also an adequate method of data collection. If the situation (weather, group dynamics, progress) would have allowed it, short interviews in evening reflections within the tent groups would have been an optional addition to the data collection, in order to get to know the participants better, as to be prepared better for the individual post-trip-interviews. With having two to three tent groups, this gives the research a wide enough scope of groups, as Smith and Sparkes recommend at least three focus groups (Smith & Sparkes, 2017a). One challenge here might be the nature of the Norwegian winter landscape, being unpredictable and often making camp life hectic. I therefore had to expect to not be able to interview the participants every night, but rather be flexible with my interviewing during the expeditions, which is one reason for adding observation as well as diaries/journaling into my spectrum of data collection for this period.

A more detailed interview guide containing my interview strategy as well as a set of open-ended (follow-up) questions can be found in the appendix. The post-interview period consisting of five individual interviews, each one lasting between 45 and 60 minutes resulted in a total 61 pages of transcribed material to analyze.

3.2.2 Observation

One option of methods to choose from besides interviewing is the method of (field) observation (Smith & Sparkes, 2017a; Thorpe & Olive, 2017). Observations are a suitable method for investigating power relations, group dynamics, tensions and just a general overview of what is happening in practice (Thorpe & Olive, 2017). Field observations,

especially in outdoor studies, are a reasonable supplement to interviews and vice versa (Thorpe & Olive, 2017), which is why both are chosen for this research interest. In my case, observation notes are a good way to prepare myself for conducting the interviews. By going through observation notes, one might find events or moments that can be used to ask interviewees about their perception and feelings during these situations.

I planned to follow along on two excursions and write detailed notes on observations I was making, in order to supplement the data collected in interviews and journal entries. Focusing on single situations and experiences, rather than on general descriptions of what was happening day-by-day, I was hoping to find good starting points for later interviews. Besides this main objective, I was on one hand aiming to connect the narratives I intended to collect with practical coincidences I would have observed and on the other hand note and later eliminate my own perception from what I would have gathered in the process. A further reason for including observations in my research project is to get to know the participants better. Certain behavior in certain situations might be something individuals avoid talking about in an interview situation, while field observation allows the researcher to gather data about every occurring situation.

Due to problems faced in this period, with adaptations described in this chapter later on, the field notes resulting from my observations in the end consist of 12 pages of handwritten notes that were mostly used to initiate and lead the interview questions.

3.2.3 Journal and diary entries

While the observations I undertake as described above are very subjective from my side, this also calls for a subjective observation record from the participants' side. While interviewing, I as a researcher would always have a certain influence on how the participants narrate stories and experiences, whereas writing journals, the participants are only influenced by their direct surroundings which are a part of the experience I wanted to investigate. Hence, I was anticipating to get an overview about what catches the participants' attention, and what they might not deem worthy to state during an interview (Thorpe & Olive, 2017), which is indeed alluring to this specific research interest based in phenomenology. A detailed instruction as well as a "cheat-sheet" on how to journal experiences was handed out to the participants before the trip and can be found in the appendix (7.1).

As an add-on to the method of journaling, I decided to ask the participants (at least the ones taking a phone or a camera on the expedition) to try taking snapshots of specific situations and the center of their attention. This method goes in line with the *photovoice* method described by Plunkett and Leipter (2013). The authors describe this method as a way of enriching existing methods, such as interviews and observation, giving the interviewees the chance to show from a first-hand point of view what the experience was like, what part of the phenomenon caught enough attention for the participants to decide to take a picture right then. While the authors describe photovoice as a whole process of data collection and analysis (Plunkett et al., 2013, pp. 159–160), I merely used it as a supplement for the diaries and as a starting point or point of reference during the post-interviews. I did not rely on the students taking pictures, since it was not my main method of inquiry.

3.2.4 Role as a researcher

When planning a qualitative research in this way, including field research and following the excursions, I as a researcher have to be careful as to where I put myself alongside the group I want to study. To get to the core, the essence of the participants' experiences, the researcher has to find the right level of involvement and stick to it throughout the whole research (Abram, 1996; Smith & Sparkes, 2017a). This required consistency demands for a certain amount of planning and careful positioning before and during the excursions. Smith and Sparkes (2017) suggest that the researcher has to define his or her epistemological and ontological standpoint in relation to the research question, in order to determine one's position in/alongside the subject group. In my specific case, I decided to take up the role as a fellow traveler, in order to get as close as possible to the core of the groups' experience. Nevertheless, when analyzing and interpreting the interview material, it is crucial to always have one's own involvement in mind. My part in the experience might bias the data analysis, if not being careful with my own assumptions. Practically this means that I followed the movement of the group without taking part in the planning processes. I camped at the same sites, was part of evening discussions, but brought my own equipment and food, so that I was not a part of the camping experience I was eager to investigate. This level of involvement of course had to be evaluated and decided together with the group and the responsible teacher(s).

Since I was an observer and partly a participant myself, I categorized myself as an “observer as participant” as Thorpe and Olive (2017) define it, whereas the journal entries put the participants in a role of “participants as observers”. In order to more clearly define how I position myself towards the group, I have to consider my postpositivist/postmodern background of thinking. Operating from a postpositivist paradigm enables the researcher to generate and value data that is set in a more “natural” environment to the participant (Thorpe & Olive, 2017). This basic characteristic of postpositivist research allows me to “include participants’ meanings and purposes, and to ground theories more firmly on participants” (Thorpe & Olive, 2017), which is exactly the field this research project is aiming for.

My decision to participate in the excursions myself, rather than just doing pre- and follow-up interviews is based on the work of different methodologists and outdoor researchers (Finlay, 2009; Mullins, 2019; Mullins & Maher, 2007; Smith & Sparkes, 2017a; Thorpe & Olive, 2017) as well as phenomenologists that strongly influenced the basis for this research (Abram, 1996; Merleau-Ponty & Smith, 1966). Personal experiences have also shown that with being more experienced in the outdoors, people often tend to put themselves in the foreground, trying to forward their knowledge. This phenomenon is not of negative nature at all, but it would surely strongly influence the experiences of the participants with my presence, which is to be avoided in order to collect neutral and useful data.

3.2.5 Necessary adaptations in data gathering

The methodology for this research project had to be adjusted to personal circumstances occurring before and during the period of data gathering. A foot injury prevented me from joining more than one day/night of the first excursion into the winter forest landscape as an observer. This circumstance resulted in a very limited amount of field notes emerging from observations. The aim of gathering data in the given situations thus had to be achieved by instructing the participants to be more thorough in their own journal entries. The appendix contains a written document with said instructions. By asking the subjects to focus on single events rather than writing a “typical” diary with daily events and shallow descriptions, I was aiming to get a deeper insight into the participants’ world of feelings and attention. Given the lack of focus group interviews as

a part of the evening reflections within the tent groups, journaling also aimed at replacing narratives gained from those daily discussion rounds. Asking the participants to write up notes in the lived situations or at least on the same day resulted in more direct representations of the subjects' experiences.

3.3 Choice of participants

The choice of participants for qualitative research differs significantly from selecting participants for quantitative research. While in quantitative research randomizing and standardizing are crucial, qualitative research aims at carefully selecting its subjects by their potential value for the investigation at hand or as Sergeant (2012) puts it:

“subject selection in qualitative research is purposeful; participants are selected who can best inform the research questions and enhance understanding of the phenomenon under study.” (Sargeant, 2012, p. 1)

Since the aim of my data collection is to get detailed and rich descriptions or reproductions of experiences, the choice of participants is one crucial factor in this process. With having an international class with different origins and backgrounds to choose from, I decided to follow and interview five students from different countries of origin. Even though the frame of this thesis limits the amount of people to this number, I nevertheless cover a certain spectrum when it comes to backgrounds and origins.

Furthermore, I chose my subjects according to the language they are most comfortable speaking in, usually their mother tongue. My understanding of German, English and Norwegian/Danish allows me to interview participants of different origins in their mother tongues, which is of advantage when it comes to the aim of “extracting” narratives as detailed as possible. All quotes from interviews or diary entries are translated into English for this paper, while the original language depending on the participants' origin is stated in brackets after each quote. Considering these factors as well as the results from my observations and the journals, I can then choose the subjects according to my research project.

3.4 Methods for data sorting and analysis

After concluding the data collection, sorting and analysis is the next step towards addressing and answering my research questions. Since I use the data extracted from

observations, field notes and diaries mostly for initiating and facilitating the interviews, the main data to be sorted and analyzed is gained during the interviews. Applying and combining the two perspectives of phenomenology and (social) constructivism, the analysis is also be a combination of both perspectives. While I use phenomenological methods for extracting central ideas, shared values and specific perceptions and characteristics, I apply constructivist ideas to identify which parts of the narratives are socially, historically and culturally constructed and thus, in the sense of phenomenological reduction to be suspended. To achieve this progress, I briefly described a step-by-step plan for phenomenologically analyzing the narratives I was expecting to gain from the interviews and including constructivist analysis into this process as well.

1. Sort the interview transcriptions by themes and meanings (color-coding)
2. Identify constructions and set expressions
3. Phenomenological reduction
4. Identifying essences and key factors
5. Comparison

In step one, the interview transcriptions are sorted by themes, topics and meanings stated in the narratives. As Susanne Ravn puts it, this step can be identified as an “explorative analysis of data, [...] transforming descriptions into meanings contained in the expression.” (Ravn, 2017, p. 212). This step gave me an overview and a general idea of possible fields of closer inquiry later on. Since my interview guide had already been developed in a way that the questions asked had been sorted into different fields of interest, I was expecting to identify similar themes in the transcriptions. According to Giorgi (cited by Ravn, 2017), identifying these meaning units helps in gaining such overview.

Step two is focused on applying the concepts of habitus, field and capital, as presented earlier, in order to identify parts and expressions within the narratives as constructs in the sense of being influenced/shaped by former experiences and other factors. Going through the transcriptions, I tried to identify and describe the individuals’ strive for recognition within the field and the different forms of capital (indirectly) referred to during the interviews, as to bracket/suspend these narrative parts in the next step. Part of this is an analysis of dialectics and language, pointing out what Bourdieu (1977) identifies as a central part of analysis: constructed ways of speaking. This step includes

the highest level of speculation, since it is more or less based on my individual interpretation of narratives and the used language.

The third step might be considered the central part in phenomenological practice: The transcendental-phenomenological reduction, in which the essence of each experience is to be found. As described in the theory chapter of this paper, I bracketed what was found in step two of my analysis, in order to be left with only unique, essential and non-interchangeable characteristics of each narrative.

The fourth step continues with describing what is left after bracketing, analyzing the individual meaning of each essence. The focus in this step does not lie on interpretation or attributing meaning to the characteristics, but rather on rendering and describing what I identify as essential and why.

In the fifth and last step of my analysis, I take the results from the four steps before and look for overlaps and similarities between the subjects I chose. Shared experiences might result in shared perceptions, views and opinions which might be of interest within this research framework.

3.5 Ontological problematic

During the process of formulating this methodology based on my theory framework I encountered among other small hindrances one big ontological problem. While phenomenologists such as Husserl and Merleau-Ponty insist on the possibility of finding an essence, one crucial, not interchangeable set of characteristics to each meaningful experience, constructivist theorists such as Bourdieu neglect that there is such a thing as the “essence” to be found in narratives. As I lengthily described in my theory chapter, narratives and the language they are spoken in are a (social, cultural & historical) construct in themselves, according to Levi-Strauss (1955) and Warwick (1979). Learned ways of speaking represent a subject’s background and reflect previous experiences in the narratives given, which is why the phenomenological analysis of such narratives seems absurd from this perspective.

According to the PhD behind Langseth’s “Risk sports – social constraints and cultural imperatives” (2011/2012) the epistemological break presented by McAllister (1984) offers one possible way out of this dilemma. Weaving the narratives resulting from interviews and diary entries into a network of sociological terminology might help us

“neutralize” our own preconceptions of experiences within the outdoors, giving us a chance to more clearly identify the origin and the background of each individual narrative. This “rupture”, according to Bourdieu (1991, pp. 13–16) is necessary in order to fully understand each individual’s way of reproducing experiences, and is thus one step towards understanding the first-hand experiences better.

Even though social constructivism essentially assumes that each and every experience is made in a context of place, time, culture and history, thus neglects the existence of the “phenomenological essence”, the two concepts complement each other in two ways: Firstly, after performing the phenomenological reduction, strong and seemingly “original” characteristics of each experience stand out as the “essence”. In identifying this essence, we also identify the concepts and qualities that are the most interesting to locate within the “field”, as Bourdieu calls it. Secondly, locating different peculiarities of each individual’s narratives within the field of “friluftsliv”, one will most likely find common grounds and shared values in the form of capital-accumulation, based on the similarities between the individuals’ backgrounds. Whatever is “left” after establishing this allocation of narratives into the “field” might then be analysed using a phenomenological scope. Characteristics that cannot be clearly identified as a part of the “field” extend the understanding of why this specific experience is unique or special to this specific individual in this specific situation.

I am not proposing that phenomenology and social constructivism are closely related and effectively completely complementing each other. This chain of thought might rather be seen as widening the scope of analysis and meaning-making in each of the two fields by adding single aspects of each other’s methodology and general idea. For this specific research project both methods were exemplified at different stages of analysis to present a practical application of this epistemological framework.

3.6 The qualities of qualitative research and possible biases

To make sure that my qualitative research project is of sufficient quality, some factors or characteristics have to be looked at. Tracy identifies several key characteristics to some of which I will give a short statement as to how they are considered within this project. (Tracy, 2013a, pp. 231–250)

1. Worthy topic

Since this project firstly originates in a strong personal interest, as well as in a general interest on the university's side, I deem it worthy executing this research. The responsible teachers also expressed a certain interest in how and why experiences made in this context are so unique and special, in order to adapt their teaching and leading.

2. Rich Rigor

Using the presented theoretical framework, spending time with observations in the field at hand, as well as using different structured methods of data collection and analysis, the research is using "sufficient, abundant, appropriate and complex" (Tracy, 2013a, p. 231) methods and frameworks in order to be rigorous.

3. Sincerity

By addressing different problems and challenges in the theory framework as well as in the methodological analysis, I am on one hand reflecting on my own role in the data collection as a possible bias, as well as offering the needed transparency about occurring challenges and possible biases (Tracy, 2013a, pp. 232–234).

4. Significance

In order to justify a research project, one has to determine if and to what extend the research project at hand might enhance knowledge in the field. By applying different theoretical backgrounds in my analysis, I aimed at creating a link between those theories, resulting in a further interest of research.

5. Ethics

To deliver an acceptable piece of research, every researcher has to apply certain standards of ethics. In my case, mostly the data collection and data processing have to apply to these rules. The Norwegian Center for Research Data as the responsible institution for data safety and privacy has approved my research project and methodology, meaning that on the ethics side of quality there is nothing to worry about.

6. Coherence

The "novel theoretical juxtapositions [and the inclusion of several] fields, models and assumptions" (Tracy, 2013b, p. 245) in a coherent manner gives the research the last characteristic of qualitative research quality, meaningful coherence. By linking social constructivist as well phenomenological theories and methods, collecting data using

different methods as well as a thorough analysis and comparison, this meaningful coherence is given in my research.

Possible biases

One possible bias that has been referred to earlier in this paper is my personal experience within the field of friluftsliv. By having completed the same study program as the participants chosen, my role as a researcher was very important to be defined ahead of data gathering and getting to know the participants. In order to make use of my experience rather than it being a bias to a certain extent, it was crucial throughout the whole data gathering, sorting and analysis to have my own involvement in mind, as to not influence the research project.

Furthermore, the fact that all participants have different initial backgrounds in outdoor education, but share their experience of being exchange students at the University of South-Eastern Norway might result in the narratives being influenced by what the participants have experienced during this time. In the academic context of friluftsliv, certain expressions, characteristics and values might have been learned and adapted, thus making the choice of this specific cohort a potential bias. I therefore bore this possible institutional influence in mind while analyzing the participants' values, aims and meaning-making in nature, by either suspending or ignoring these characteristics or by emphasizing how they might be learned and shared through the experience of being an international student enrolled in this program. This is also the reason for this research and its results not being completely generalizable to all members of the outdoor community worldwide, but limited to the Nordic context.

4 Analysis

4.1 Core themes

As described in the previous chapter, the first step of analysis in this research project was to identify topics and themes that the participants write and talk about when reporting about the experiences they have lived over this semester. By color-coding the transcripts of my interviews, I identified six recurring core themes, which are presented as follows:

- a) Previous experience
- b) Personal values
- c) Aims and meaning in nature
- d) focus and attention
- e) Descriptions of sensations and feelings
- f) Relation to others and the surroundings

Having identified these themes, I then proceeded to find and identify set expressions and phrases in the three different languages of narration, which are presented later on in this chapter. Given the rather slim framework of this project, the focus in this chapter mostly lies on topics c), d), and e), since these topics gave me the best impression of how experiences in this context might be of special value to the participants.

4.1.1 Aims and meaning in nature

Specifically asking for the participants aims with going on private trips, all participants gave an insight into what being outside means to them, as well as what they are specifically looking for when being outdoors for leisure purposes. According to my informants, joy and fun stand out as the biggest reasons to go out. As one of the subjects puts it: *“it’s always just to have fun [...] and to enjoy your time”* (James, English-speaking). Being asked about what inspires or motivates one to go out and spend time in the outdoors, another participant replied *“Yeah, good times, Yep”* (Max, English-speaking). Since “having fun” is a rather broad description for stating one’s intention or aims in the outdoors, it is important to know what these “good times” entail.

For most of the participants in this cohort (three out of five) the social aspect of outdoor life plays a crucial role in defining the motivation for being outside. Responding to different questions, either specifically inquiring about aims and meaning or in other

contexts, being with others and sharing experiences crystallized in quotes like “[*The main aim*] has to be being with others [...] the social part” (Astrid, Danish-speaking) or

“I always want to go out with at least one or two other people, to be able to share that experience with someone and you know, it gets boring [...] if you’re sitting there by yourself and to really having anyone to talk to. So definitely like the community part”

(James, English-speaking).

Another recurring aspect within the topic of aims and meaning in nature is the possibility for (mental) relaxation and winding down. One participant explained how she prefers “running loops that I already know, so I don’t have to think about anything, can just let my thoughts roam about freely [...] having a free mind” (Anna, German-speaking). This goes hand in hand with the general restorative qualities of outdoor activity presented by Merrit (2017, p.23).

These rather light aspects of why people venture into the outdoors get complemented by the search for challenge and learning opportunities offered within the outdoors. For Lisa, German-speaking, a challenge that is possible to master is what makes an experience perfect (“*I believe, when it is a challenge [that is] somehow solvable*”). Just the right amount of challenge is a central idea of the concept of Flow-Experience presented by Csikszentmihalyi (1990). The concept of *flow* will be explained further and linked to my findings in chapter 4.1.4.

What can be noticed is that all participants at one point express their aims in one way or another according to what one would call “slow adventure” (Varley & Semple, 2015, pp. 78–79). With this I don’t mean the traditional, conservative orientation of slow adventure, neglecting technology and modern activities, it is rather the slow pace, and the search for “*of uncertainty, unpredictability, transience, experiment and the emotional content of human experience*” (Varley & Semple, 2015, p. 78). This becomes clear when looking at quotes like “*It’s just gorgeous to go and sit down [...] watch the world slow down for a second*” or expressions such as “*taking it back to the basics*” (both Max, English-speaking), which go hand in hand with Varley and Semple’s identification of slow adventure in Nordic outdoor life. Only when talking about specific activities such as climbing, running and mountain biking, the participants express a desire for more thrilling, exciting experiences (“*Then equally when pushing myself, and everything might*

be a different group of people, because I've seen them do something amazing and inspires me to want to have a go at the same thing", Max, English-speaking).

Concluding my findings in the regards of aims that the participants have when spending time outdoors, the main characteristics they are looking for are the right amount of challenge, time and space to relax and rejuvenate, social aspects of spending time with others as well as central aspects of "slow adventure".

4.1.2 Focus and attention

As implemented in the interview guide, asking for what the participants focus on in different situations made up for a big part of each interview. In this chapter I am thus giving an outline as to what the students paid attention to in the given situations. Roughly speaking, the hypothetical situations, as seen in the interview guide (see appendix), I presented the interviewees with can be divided into two categories: a) hectic, busy, physically and mentally demanding situations and b) stress-free, relaxed, easy-to-handle situations. In addition to differentiating these characteristics of the situations, also the social context of these experiences was considered.

Starting out with category a) as one might expect the participants generally weren't paying much attention to anything else but solving the challenges ahead. Being asked about their main focus Astrid, Danish without hesitation answered "*I would definitely say to solve the task at hand in the best way*", showing that when the situation demands it, the participant's attention is straight forward directed towards the challenge and a quick solution. Reflecting on the same in situ behaviour, one other interviewee regretted having this rather narrow focus, saying it would've been beneficial to "*not get hung up on the situation [and] how quick everything has to go*" (Anna, German-speaking) also pointing out the learning opportunities in these rather difficult situations afterwards. Being asked about the same situation, another participant expressed regret about his lack of contribution to the group. The participant not only regretted missing out on social aspects of his experience, but also not contributing to solving the shared challenge put on the group by the weather conditions. Reproducing a situation where he was secluded from the group due to struggles with visibility and difficulties communicating due to high winds, he reflects on his role in the group, saying "*I think I probably could have been better of a team member*" and "*[I] found it in those moments really hard to contribute to the*

group” (Max, English-speaking), adding that his mood is strongly affecting and being affected by the situation itself and his behaviour. Out of the five interviewees only one stated that she tried to still contribute to the group, even though the first impulse was to focus on what would help herself: *“I realized that I am in a Tunnel, but when I realized in that situation, I tried to also pay attention to the others, and to somehow turn around more often, while we were walking through the storm”* (Lisa, German-speaking). Since this participant is also the only one having experienced outdoor life on an academic level before, one could assume that widening one’s range of attention is a skill that is learned over time, having lived similar experiences before.

Moving on to situations of category b), we can see a clear difference in what catches the attention of outdoor-life practitioners. Being presented with exemplary situations like a lunch break in good weather, or a period of easy, non-exhausting movement through the landscape, the interviewees offered a wide range of descriptions as to where their focus lies in these situations.

One recurring narrative is that of letting thoughts leave the current situation, and focussing or paying attention to thoughts surrounding topics and questions outside of the current place and time. One interviewee for example stated how she tends to *“think about, I believe, the future”* (Anna, German-speaking), going on to explain how that might be the immediate future on the trip, as well as in a wider, career-oriented sense. One interviewee directly identified this “absence” by explaining how she is *“rather not in the moment anymore, but either try to somehow reflect the day or [is] somewhere completely different with [her] thoughts”* (Lisa, German-speaking).

Opposite to this “wandering of the mind”, other participants explain how they in these situations fully focus on themselves and their immediate surroundings. *“I believe my mind was just like, in the present. It wouldn’t necessarily wander any further than, like, we had gone the past days [...] it’s all about the trip, at least from my experience”* is how James, English-speaking, describes his focus being asked about where his mind goes when there is space and time to let it wander. Generally, being asked about different example-situations within category b), the interviewees consistently either explained how their minds go different places, being wrapped around questions of (everyday) life or explain how they are completely in the moment, either *“enjoying the landscape”* (Astrid, Danish-speaking) or describe themselves as *“fully absorbing [the surroundings]”* (Max, English-

speaking), which leads to the assumption that it is just a matter of personality and individual characteristics, which way each individual focus leads their thoughts.

Conclusively, focus and attention differs significantly according to characteristics of the situation. While the participants are able to let their attention and thoughts wander off in low-intensity, low-challenge situations, big challenges posed by outer circumstances or physical struggles require the participants to fully focus on the situation itself.

4.1.3 Descriptions of sensations and feelings

During interviews as well as in journal entries, the participants partially gave me deep insights into how different experiences and situations made them feel in certain ways. Loosely based on what I have described in chapter 4.1.2 the descriptions of the interviewees' emotions significantly differ between individuals. While some participants openly talk about how they felt in different situations, others gave more detailed insight in their written accounts in the journals. In this chapter, not only the different shades of "positive" and "negative" emotions explained by the interviewees are identified, I also describe how different individuals described these feelings in a different kind of way.

To begin with, the participants describe positive feelings in both, the journals as well as the interviews in different situations. In her diary, Lisa, German-speaking, describes the landscape after leaving the cabin on the first day of the four-day stay, preparing for a five-day excursion, as "*calming [her], after the hectic packing of things in the cabin*" and how "*generally comfortably warm, fresh and curious about the next days*" walking through the quiet winter mountains makes her feel.

Being asked about "perfect" situations and what makes them perfect, James, English-speaking illustrated how everybody, including himself is "*chirpy and happy*", and how an "*instant relief*" after a longer uphill caused a "*complete mood shift*", resulting in "*people smiling, [being] happy*". Looking at descriptions of moods, emotions and feelings, there is a noticeable difference between written accounts in the journals, and the narratives gained from the interviews. While overall, the participants in interviews tend to describe the general mood within the group, the descriptions found in the journals are rather personal and individual. This difference in narratives can be best spotted when directly comparing descriptions of the same situation during the interview and reading the diary of the same person. For instance, Lisa, German-speaking, described first experiencing a

whiteout (circumstance in which fog, snowfall and bad light make it impossible to see any contours, resulting in only seeing white) as „we had the situation on the last trip, and I noticed that I focussed more on myself, and actually tried to do something helpful. But I noticed that I am pretty much in my tunnel”, before analysing her role in the group in the interview, while she goes way more into detail on her own feelings in her diary:

“I feel exposed to nature as rarely before, in addition, I am also fully relying in Niels’ [guide] GPS-device, since I otherwise have no clue where we are. I am cold, my face is partly “frozen”. On one hand I am afraid/scared to lose the rest of the group, on the other hand I feel awake and alive.”

By explaining how awake and alive she feels, Lisa not only expresses unpleasant feelings of fear and concern as she does during the interview, but also points out how part of the experience was still positive. Throughout the whole comparison of diary entries and interviews, there are significantly more accounts of positive experiences and rather romantic descriptions of the surroundings (for example: “today was perfect in every way. I woke up after getting a good night’s rest and the sunrise was beautiful. The sky was covered in a pink and blue blanket and it was the first night I had slept warm since we got here.” James, English-speaking) in diaries than during the interviews, where people mostly focused on fears and challenges.

All participants openly talk and write about fears, concerns and uneasiness of different sorts. One specific situation causing these feelings among the participants is an exercise simulating being caught by an avalanche. Each participant dug a rectangular “grave” in the snow, whereafter they lied down in it to slowly get covered with snow.

Even in this very controlled and safe situation, one interviewee described the feeling of being buried under the snow as “being completely locked inside my body” and the experience in general as “something I actually don’t want to go through” (Astrid, Danish-speaking). She even went as far as to describe how “If they would have covered my head too, [she] might have gotten a panic attack or something”. Another participant describes her fears in this situation in her diary as: “It feels as if the air becomes thinner and the thoughts change from every-day-thoughts to [...] thoughts about fear and the bare survival outdoors” before reporting how digging herself out of the situation fuelled the feelings of fear even more.

Notably, just by reading and listening to these narratives of fear, it seems like the participants deem it more exciting or interesting to reproduce situations of negative feelings or mental hardship and challenge. This also becomes clear when analysing narratives of weather-induced physical and mental challenges. Vividly describing a moment during a whiteout as *“the worst 15 to 20 minutes of [his] life”*, going on to express the fear of getting frostbite or running out of reserves, the interviewee (James, English-speaking) seemed to be eager to share these demanding and partly painful experiences. This example only reflects the participants’ general eagerness to reproduce these difficult situations as well as reflecting on their behaviour aiming at solving the issues at hand.

4.2 A try at the phenomenological analysis

For this chapter, one particular narrative gained through the interviews is used as an example for performing the steps of phenomenological analysis as presented in chapters 3.1.1 and 3.4. Different from the analysis in chapter 4.1, the analysis in this chapter is more thorough, following the five steps presented in chapter 3.4. By picking only one specific narrative of one specific situation, these five steps should allow me to be more precise in my analysis and the search for the “essence”.

To exemplify the application of this methodology, I picked one specific narrative given by James, English-speaking, describing one challenging situation skiing through rough weather and a whiteout. I chose this specific narrative for several reasons: Firstly, the narrative given in the interview was very focussed and detailed, with James not only describing the situation but also his physical, mental and emotional situation as well. Secondly, the situation itself seems to be crucial for the whole experience of being outdoors in the winter mountains, since all participants talk or write about the same or similar experiences. Thirdly, I chose this part of the interview, since James also used his diary to describe this situation in written form. The process of phenomenological analysis can be found in the appendix.

First of all, three general themes were identified and expressions were assigned to the following categories: a) descriptions of sensations and feelings, b) focus and attention and c) behavior in situ, in order to later identify the essential characteristics in each category.

The second step is essentially a continuation of what has been presented in 4.2.2. Identifying constructions, set expressions and metaphors, as well as the “taken-for-granted-assumptions” (Husserl, 2012) used by James is a pre-stage to the phenomenological reduction performed in step three. As mentioned above, this step is a tight rope walk, since it requires a high level of interpretation from the researcher’s side. Identifying metaphors and concepts from other areas such as “almost automatically” or “And if you've ever played Assassin's Creed, there's that loading screen where you're kind of just running off and it's completely white you're just running, running, running, running, until you finally end up in a loading screen or whatever” as a reference to a video game are easily identified, while it is rather problematic to identify taken for granted assumptions or specific ways of speaking from the point of a bystanding researcher. Step three in the phenomenological analysis is what Husserl and other phenomenologists called the transcendental or phenomenological reduction (Romdenh-Romluc, 2010, p. 7; Zahavi, 2017, pp. 52–54). Not only everything identified in step two is bracketed or suspended, but also all details of the narrative description that are not crucial to the experience are marked and excluded. For instance, the description of how the body heat melts the snow hitting James’ face, while the wind and cold freezes it again (“*I remember I had a face mask over my face and the wind was coming from my right side, which is bringing all the snow and my body heat was melting that snow and then outside cold was freezing it again.*”) is only partly essential to the experience. Describing the reasons for his sensations, James takes for granted that it is in fact his body heat melting, and the wind/the outside cold freezing the snow on to his face again. Since this is nothing that can be directly sensed or experienced, it has to be seen as an assumption, and thus suspended for the phenomenological reduction. The same goes for his description of feeling clicks on the back of his skis. The only part of that experience that is directly sensed are the clicks themselves. It is only assumed that the clicks come from group members walking behind James, bumping into him. Using this scope, I bracketed every single part of the experience that is not a first hand-experience, as well as all expressions that are not defining for the actual experience, leaving me with what phenomenologists would call the essence of the experience. I identified the following characteristics of the situation as essential to James’ experience:

Bodily sensations & outer circumstances	Emotional/mental characteristics
Really wet, small pieces of snow hitting his face	Being annoyed and mad
Snow freezing and clumping up on his face/cheek, numbing his cheek	Unknown feeling of perception, seeing his own body from the outside
Windy, cold circumstances	Fear
Pain when being hit by pieces of ice	Sensing a negative mood in the group
Clicks against the back of the skis	
Only seeing white, no matter how the head is turned	
Tired legs	
Dizziness and nausea	

Table 2: Essence of James' experience

In the sense of phenomenology, these points are what makes this specific situation and James' perception of it unique. If any of the essential characteristics were to be changed, James' experience as a whole might change as well. For instance, taking away the bodily sensation of feeling clumps of snow and ice melting and freezing on his face might change the overall perception of the situation described.

A critical view on this analysis will be given in the next chapter, when Problems and obstacles are presented.

4.3 Placing narratives in the "field"

In this chapter I am presenting a construct of values within the friluftsliv community based on personal experiences, conversations with members of the community as well as literature within the field. This network is based on Bourdieu's concepts of field and capital within said field, as it is described more in detail in chapter 2.2. The aim of this construction is to have a try at the epistemological break presented by McAllister (1984), in order to gain a better understanding of the narratives' origins. Having constructed the framework itself, I then proceeded to place single phrases and expressions used by the participants within this framework.

4.3.1 Assigning quotes to the field

Firstly, forms of capital within the outdoor adventure community were identified as the following (based on (Holland-Smith, 2021, pp. 3–4):

- Self-discipline
- Self-reliance
- Delayed gratification
- Willingness and ability to set own well-being and pleasure aside to help others
- Willingness to face risks
- Personal development
- Hard skills/practical experience

Even though Holland-Smith bases his work and ideas on studies made in the context of British university outdoor studies, the identified forms of capital seem to be transferrable to the Nordic context of friluftsliv, especially regarding the similar academic context of outdoor studies in this project.

The author goes on to identify that within the outdoor adventure community or “field” the “masculine gender habitus” (p.4) of “strength, independence, freedom and control” is predominant. Opposed to that, Holland-Smith identifies balance, aesthetics and grace as the feminine gender habitus coming more and more into play within the field of outdoor adventure sports (p.9). Based on Bourdieu’s concept and use of recognition, the interview transcripts, as well as my own experience, I then identified forms of symbolic capital exceeding personal and social qualities and focused on presenting oneself in the “right light” to gain the sought after “*acts of recognition*” that Bourdieu in “The Logic of Practice” names as “*both the precondition and the product of the functioning of the field*” (Bourdieu, 1990, p. 68)

To further structure this framework, I then proceeded to categorize and organize these attributes as shown in figure 2. Marked with letters, quotes (table 1) were then woven into this framework of sociological terminology, in order to achieve the epistemological break. To not exceed the framework of this thesis, all participants and their narratives were put into the same scheme.

As put forward in chapter 2.2.3, social constructivism based on the works of Bourdieu assumes that all of our actions and narratives aim at gathering the most possible (symbolic) capital. In this analysis, the narratives determine the structure of the

presented framework, meaning that the framework in figure 2 was built around the data collected in this project, rather than “pressing” the findings into a framework that is created beforehand. By assigning quotes to the different forms of symbolic capital, I merely considered how interviewees through their way of speaking and telling about certain experiences (un-)consciously aimed at “ticking the boxes” of symbolic capital, thus adapting their habitus into what they believe or have (un-)consciously learned to be valuable by being a member in the outdoor community over the span of their lives. In the following, only a few examples of this classification are presented.

Often times different attributes or forms of capital can be found in single expressions used by the participants. By saying *“So yeah, I think I can lift the group [...] and still give that support, because it makes you feel better for helping somebody else as well”* Max, English-speaking, not only expresses his willingness to set aside own aims and satisfaction in order to help others, he also presents himself as a valuable member of the group and indirectly points out his general surplus of resources in certain situation, without specifically saying so. The general desire for recognition shines through when looking at quotes like: *“Trying to kind of survive”* or *“And like, I’m super glad that it’s been that challenge because it’s kind of pushed me to my limits and made me understand that I can do more than you know, I expected myself to and [...] I’ve learned so much like how to prepare for stuff”* (both James, English-speaking) that are clearly elaborating on how risky the situations were, and how willing the individual was to take those risks. Not only expressions of how tough and willing to take risks a person is are utilized in the pursuit of recognition of the participants. By expressing how aesthetics in nature are perceived (*“That was just so beautiful in that sense, because the colors were totally different in the sunset. Charming. [...] it was just the nature and the colors”*, Astrid, Danish-speaking) as well as aesthetics in performing different actions and tasks (*“we just went through so much like this uphill is completely fine. And it’s not hard because it’s, I wouldn’t say it’s like steep uphill”* James, English-speaking), the participants gather symbolic capital in forms that Holland-Smith (2021) identifies as the feminine gender habitus. Quotes and descriptions aiming at presenting aspects of balance (*“You knew what each individual wanted out of the trip”*, Max, English-speaking) and grace (*“I think it was a perfect day, because we didn’t really know what to do in the start, but in the end, we arrived on an*

island and had a beautiful lunch”, Lisa, German-speaking) fall into the same category of habitus.

One characteristic of *Habitus* in the sense of Bourdieu is identified by Maton. James, English-speaking, describes a specific situation while travelling through a whiteout using a reference from *Assassin’s Creed*, an action-adventure videogame (“*And if you've ever played Assassin's Creed, there's that loading screen where you're kind of just running off and it's completely white you're just running, running, running, running, until you finally end up in a loading screen or whatever*”). Referencing a video game while describing an outdoor experience is a grand example of how the habitus, as identified by Bourdieu, is transferrable between different social fields, and characteristics or narratives are as well transferrable. Arguably, playing video games can be seen as an activity far away from outdoor experiences, but still the participant chose to use this reference, which proves Bourdieu’s point of how habitus is overarching different fields (Maton, 2015, p. 52).

This analysis is just an example of how the social-constructivist theory developed by sociologists such as Bourdieu can be put into practice by scrutinizing narratives gained from interviews. Being a rather simple version of structuring the narratives within a network of sociologist terminology, this already gives the researcher a glimpse of what a full-scale analysis would look like. Each individual’s set of narratives would be classified within the constructed network, thus positioning the individual within the socio-cultural field of outdoor life.

Even in this narrow framework, one can clearly see how each individual formulates their narratives in a way that is directed towards gathering symbolic capital within the presented framework of figure 2. Several quotes for each identified form of capital represent this desire for recognition among other members of the social field. Successfully identifying and arranging these different forms of symbolic capital within the social field of friluftsliv shows how this methodology functions and can be seen as one overarching result gained from this project.

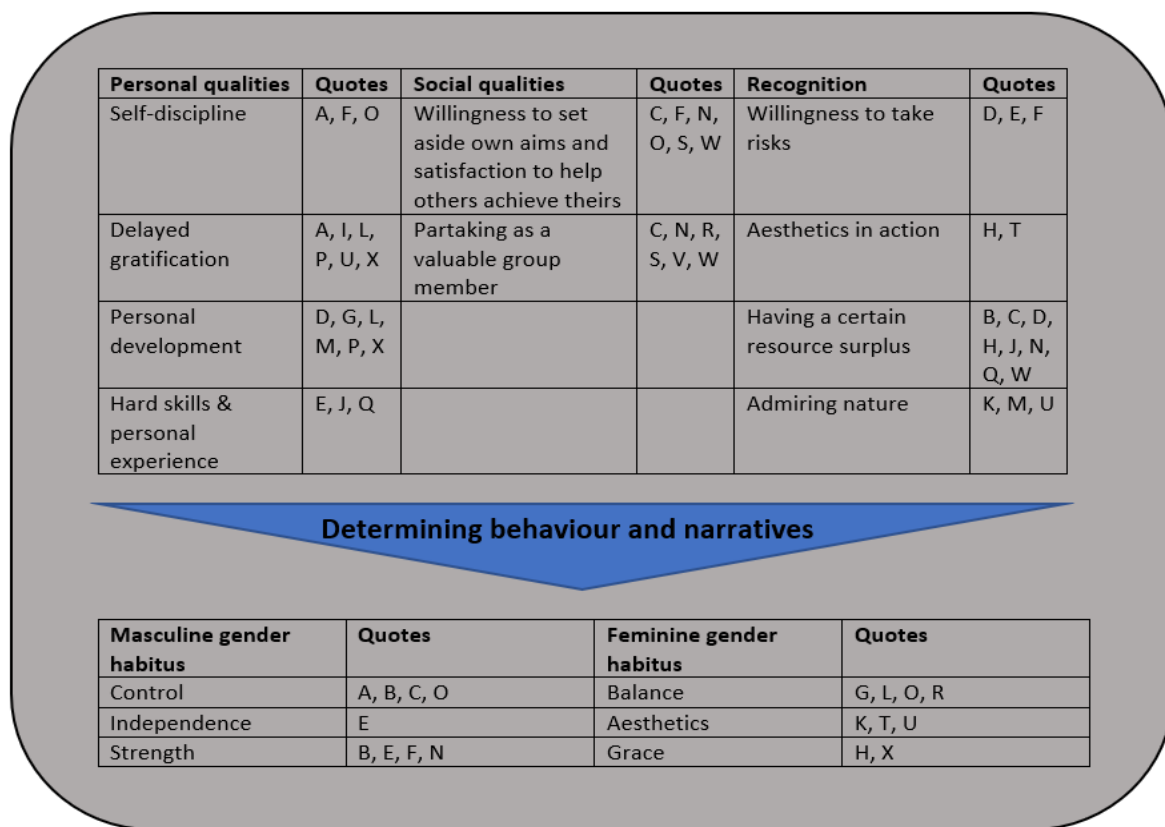


Figure 2: Social Field of friluftsliv

	Quote	Participant
A	<i>And then when you're going through, like on the last day, you kind of have to not think about that as the last day or else you're not going to do as great as you do. Or you're not going to like kind of take it seriously, you kind of goof around</i>	James
B	<i>I was surprised that neither myself or any of the others were feeling unsafe</i>	Astrid
C	<i>Then it was just "work-mode"</i>	Astrid
D	<i>And like, I'm super glad that it's been that challenge because it's kind of pushed me to my limits and made me understand that I can do more than you know, I expected myself to and I can I've learned so much like how to prepare for stuff</i>	James
E	<i>Trying to kind of survive</i>	James
F	<i>Suffer through the whole thing</i>	James
G	<i>And it was so unenjoyable, but you still would do it again</i>	James
H	<i>we just went through so much like this uphill is completely fine. And it's not hard because it's, I wouldn't say it's like steep uphill</i>	James
I	<i>And you get to the top of the peak you're into and it's almost like a breath of like instant relief throughout your whole body</i>	James
J	<i>One girl, who tried this before, seemed rather cool [...] then said it was really unpleasant, so I got a bit nervous again</i>	Astrid

K	<i>That was just so beautiful in that sense, because the colors were totally different in the sunset. Charming. [...] it was just the nature and the colors</i>	Astrid
L	<i>So I was also a bit nervous before sleeping in the snow cave, but yes, that went fine without problems [...] so that was actually a really good experience.</i>	Astrid
M	<i>Mainly to experience the nature, to relax and to shut down</i>	Anna
N	<i>When one is already challenged, and then you also have to somehow... Somehow the group still has to work</i>	Anna
O	<i>I haven't thought that much around myself, that would have been better, thinking about it afterwards</i>	Anna
P	<i>And that one has learned something as well, knowing how to do it much better or different next time</i>	Anna
Q	<i>I'd say I'm a fairly competent outdoors person and very high spirited, very positive. So it takes quite a bit to get me down I think, especially when being on a trip</i>	Max
R	<i>You knew what each individual wanted out of the trip</i>	Max
S	<i>So yeah, I think I can lift the group [...] and still give that support, because it makes you feel better for helping somebody else as well</i>	Max
T	<i>And taken a beautiful kind of cruise back down towards the lake and at a really nice camp spot</i>	Max
U	<i>just highlight the good parts and the kind of things where everything's going well, because then they can see the appeal of it</i>	Max
V	<i>To spend as much time outdoors as possible and [...] to get to know other people better through that</i>	Lisa
W	<i>I am pretty much in my tunnel, but when I realized [that], I tried to also watch out for the others, and to turn around more often, while walking through the storm</i>	Lisa
X	<i>I think it was a perfect day, because we didn't really know what to do in the start, but in the end, we arrived on an island and had a beautiful lunch</i>	Lisa

Table 1: Quotes assigned to the attributes of the social field of friluftsliv

4.3.2 A note on phrases and set expressions

As presented earlier on, language itself plays a big role in positioning narratives within a social field such as the outdoor community. In step two of my planned analysis (presented in chapter 3.4), the aim was to identify set expressions and phrases that are obviously learned by being a part of this community for a certain amount of time. This step turned out to be a methodological tightrope walk. While Levi-Strauss (1955) already pointed out in the 1950s how learned patterns of language represent one's "desired" role or position in a society, it is rather difficult to point which parts of the narratives are learned and

adapted ways of speaking and which are original to the individual, if there are any. With the researchers position as the “interpreter and analyst” of narratives, it is almost impossible to judge how to classify spoken language. In this example, one would have to dig deep into the sociology of outdoor adventure communities, in order to identify and precisely describe the shared (learned) ways of speaking. In this small-scale research, this part of the analysis is limited to finding phrases and set expressions that several participants repeatedly use in their accounts of friluftsliv experiences. These set expressions can be classified within the same social field of friluftsliv as presented in figure 2, based on the work of Holland-Smith (2021).

One prime example of learned expressions are concepts known to members of the outdoor community. “Friluftsliv” as the Nordic concept of being and living outdoors (Gurholt & Haukeland, 2019), with all its characteristics is used during the interviews a total of 23 times, without giving any definition of it. Me as a researcher, as well as the participants as students of outdoor life seem to have a clear idea of what this broad concept entails, so the expression “friluftsliv” is just used as a set expression within the field. The fact that “friluftsliv” is a Scandinavian word doesn’t stop the non-Scandinavian speakers in this cohort from using it when talking about their experiences. German and English-speaking participants use it as much as the Danish-speaking participant.

With “friluftsliv” as a concept known to all participants, there is also concepts that are only known and used by participants of a certain origin. “Hygge” as the Danish concept of feeling homely or creating a cosy atmosphere (Wiking, 2016) is used several times by Astrid, 24, Danish-speaking, during the interview, as well as in her diary. When asked about previous experiences, Lisa, 22, German-speaking, talks about a period of work in a “Skitourenhütte”, a specific type of cabin in the alps, almost solely frequented by ski-mountaineers during wintertime. Having grown up in the German-speaking part of the outdoor-community, one has a clear vision of what a “Skitourenhütte” looks like, while people within the international community or people outside of the sociocultural field of outdoor life might not have that image.

Furthermore, several expressions that are directly translatable to all languages used for this research such as “clearing one’s head”, “mother nature”, “letting thoughts wander” or “big (beautiful) landscapes” are repeatedly used by two or more participants on several occasions.

The identification and classification of these expressions are purely based on the data gathered within this research, as well as personal experiences and conversations. A full sociological analysis of narratives would require a deeper look into the given social field through methods of ethnography. “Social actors’ ways of being, doing, and knowing are intimately tied to and indeed constructed by their ways of communicating” (Hornberger et al., 2018, p. 157), so by analysing the field from within, as one would practice ethnography, the researcher would get an overview over the language learned and used by participants/community members.

4.4 Conclusion of findings

With having an extensive background and personal interest in friluftsliv, the results in regards to the research aims and questions are not extraordinarily surprising to me as a practitioner and researcher.

Discussing mental benefits of spending time outdoors, Merritt describes how time spent in nature is highly restorative in high-attention environments such as science and university (Merritt, 2017, p. 23). The reason for this is assumed by Merritt to be the fact that in nature and “free” activities without any specific tasks, individuals (in Merritt’s cases as well as for this project: students) can choose their focus and what they pay attention to themselves, rather than having to focus on one specific issue. This assumption is supported by my findings, since almost all participants describe how their minds are simply “wandering” between thoughts of daily life and the future as well as just letting their attention be drawn to what surrounds them. This can of course mostly be found in situations where there is no clear task at hand other than just travelling through the landscape. In situations that require the focus to be on one specific task, especially in challenging weather conditions, the attention capacities are not restored in the same way. Merritt describes how in these situations the required focus doesn’t allow any space for the mind to have a “free” focus (Merritt, 2017, pp. 23–24), which is congruent with my results in that regard.

Besides rejuvenation and mental restoration, according to Crossley, cited by Langseth (2011, p. 638) desire itself plays a central role in defining what humans are looking for in nature. As described extensively in chapter 2.2, this desire according to Pierre Bourdieu lies within gathering capital of different forms, in this case symbolic capital (Bourdieu,

2010, p. 81; Moore 2014), in order to gain recognition from other members of the community and the field. From the performed epistemological rupture and categorizing of quotes in chapter 4.2.1 one can see that all participants either in their diaries or in interviews delivered quotes, expressions and narratives fitting into the forms and categories of capital named by Holland-Smith (2021, p. 3-4), specifically self-discipline, self-reliance, delayed gratification, willingness and ability to set own well-being and pleasure aside to help others, as well as the willingness to face risks. The results from this performed rupture mirror what the participants focus on (consciously or unconsciously) when narrating what they experienced.

Another part of my research aims was to get an overview over what caught their attention *while* experiences were lived. The split between a) hectic, busy, physically and mentally demanding situations and b) stress-free, relaxed, easy-to-handle situations presented in chapter 4.1.2 is a split that is to a certain extent also presented by Howe (2019), although the author focuses on the intensity of situations rather than the degree of physical and mental challenge. According to Howe, during, especially mentally, challenging or painful situations humans tend to seek relief by diverting their attention, by focusing on something else rather than the situation itself. In (nature) sports situations, this distraction strategy would be highly unproductive, since it would heavily influence the performance needed to solve the challenge ahead (Howe, 2019, pp. 96–97). This characteristic can be confirmed when looking at the students' behaviour in challenging situations. Rather than trying to find distraction, the participants are without exceptions fully focused on the task ahead, when deemed necessary. As described in my analysis, the more challenging and straight forward the situation was, the more "in the present" the participants were. Howe goes on to assume that reflection in these situations "*is used to prevent a reflective dwelling on undesirable outcomes*" (p. 97), which in my understanding would presuppose that the participants "reformulate" the challenge or intensity of the situation into something easily manageable that can't possibly have a bad outcome. This is a strategy that I wasn't able to find in the descriptions given by the participants in this research project. The focus was arguably directed towards the opposite, towards possible bad outcomes and necessary precautions to avoid said outcomes ("*And so my mindset in that was very stressed and thinking of the worst possible outcomes.*", Max, English-speaking, when asked about his focus in a challenging

situation). This might be a purely circumstantial difference, since Howe focusses on nature sports-related situation rather than educational or recreational excursions into nature, where consequences of failure within a challenging situation might be more severe.

Discussing how the intensity and level of challenge affect the participants' attention, Csikszentmihalyi coined the term "peak experience" or "flow experience" in the early 1990s. The author identified the exact right amount of challenge in a task or activity as one of the five central characteristics (the other four being clarity, centering, choice and commitment) making the practitioner experience a state of "flow", a state which is generally pursued by actors in this field (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, pp. 3–4). With regards to the research aim of finding out what might make the participants' experiences unique or valuable, I found that this right amount of challenge in a situation is crucial to the participants' expectations and their fulfilment, with one participant even directly stating this circumstance (*"I think if it is a challenge, but in the end it turns out to be manageable"*, Lisa, German-speaking, when asked about what makes an outdoor-experience perfect). In conclusion, besides this pursuit of flow through the right amount of challenge the main findings consist of identifying that participants tend to have a broad focus in "easy", low-intensity and low-challenge situations, letting their thoughts "wander, whereas the focus lies pretty much directly on the situation, when tasks have to be solved in difficult circumstances, as opposed to what Howe (2019) assumes.

5 Discussion

In this chapter, problems and obstacles during the whole process of preparation, data collection and analysis are mentioned. Possible solutions are presented, before a general discussion including an outlook into possible further research in this field is presented, while potential questions for further research are formulated.

5.1 Problems and obstacles

Generally speaking, there is a rather scarce body of scientific evidence and empiricism in social sciences occupied with experiences and phenomena within outdoor educational or recreational contexts, making it quite difficult to present an adequate body of research. Having very little to no research projects to draw information from, I had to fully rely on my framework of theories presented in chapter two. This resulted in having to dig deep into the philosophical ideas and worldviews presented within the two chosen epistemological standpoints. Having only few examples of methodological application of phenomenology and constructivism in outdoor education research required reforming and adapting methods from other fields of social sciences, such as sports research (Howe, 2019; Ravn, 2017; Smith & Sparkes, 2017a; Thorpe & Olive, 2017) or education science (Holland-Smith, 2021; Merritt, 2017; Sargeant, 2012), in order to answer my research questions.

Another challenge I came across while performing a literature review and the framing of different theories was the fact that in my understanding and knowledge both, phenomenology as well as Bourdieu's constructivist perspective, fail to fully understand and explain (social) life and experience in general. As extensively laid out in chapter 3.5, constructivist theories question the existence of the "essence", claiming that after performing the phenomenological reduction there would be nothing left, whereas phenomenologists disagree with the idea that all and everything we experience is purely based on a network of social constructions and learned behaviours. In order to fully understand an experience, a closer look into both theories would be necessary, requiring a way broader analysis of the social field of friluftsliv, as well as more extensive interviews and narrative analysis. This is where the rather narrow framework of this research project shows its downsides. With not having time and resources to conduct data collection and

sociological and phenomenological analysis on more than five participants, the chances of gathering an all-round understanding of how experiences are made and perceived in the given context were rather limited, thus leading to fairly superficial results with regards to the research aims. With this problematic at hand, my project might rather be seen as an example of application for this theoretical framework and this specific Nordic outdoor education context.

5.2 Outlook

As mentioned on several occasions before, the main challenge for this project was the narrow frame of time and resources. Generally, methodologists in social sciences are sharing the same opinion on this matter: As with all qualitative scientific research, the number of participants and the time spent on data collection of different sorts is one determining factor for the quality and the innovative success of a project (Humberstone et al., 2015; Humberstone & Prince, 2019; Padilla-Díaz, 2015; Sargeant, 2012; Smith & Sparkes, 2017b).

Even though this research project does not show a wide range of results in respect to the stated research aims, the few results found partly in line with earlier research, as well as certain aspects contradicting such, give a glimpse of what a thorough research project using the presented theoretical and methodological framework could achieve when applied comprehensively.

As presented earlier on, the right amount of challenge, intensity and difficulty in a situation is what makes the situation exciting and memorable, with interviewees generally confirming Csikszentmihalyi's flow theory (1990) and Howe's assumptions and findings about intensity (2019). Building on my findings in that regard, further research projects might investigate in exactly what parts of these friluftsliv experiences constitute this ideal level of challenge and intensity. Going further from there, future research might also have a deeper look into what role focus and attention plays in that regard. How does the participants' attention and directedness of focus interact with challenges and difficulties? How can a guide or teacher help achieving the right amount of challenge by directing or nudging the students or customers focus towards or from the challenge? My findings regarding the construction of narratives and the analysis of how participants report about perception and experiences could also be taken one step forward and might

be helpful in creating an easier understanding of how to create and evaluate memorable experiences in the given environment.

Understanding and being able to describe the origin and the perception of experiences made in the context of Nordic outdoor education and friluftsliv might be fruitful not only in planning and adapting education programs, but might also help making decisions on a more institutional level, when it comes to planning outdoor recreational programmes, for instance.

With a growing international interest in the Nordic way of practicing outdoor activity, determining which aspects of the friluftsliv concept are crucial would give social scientists a basis and a general framework to base further outdoor research upon, helping to further understand what a healthy, balanced and experiential life is all about. Performing in-field research as exemplified in this thesis might help researchers as well as the general public to not only rely on stories and myths around the Nordic friluftsliv culture but have an insight from a more direct, experiential perspective, unravelling the often idolized Nordic perspective on outdoor experiences, that is Friluftsliv.

6 Appendix

6.1 Instructions for journaling

On your winter mountain trip, I would like you to generate some diary/journal entries as a part of the data collection process of my master thesis. The entries themselves will be used directly in my thesis, as well as a basis for Interviews, along with my observations conducted during the trip.

What to write about

Since the main focus of my research will be on the “experience” side of things, you should focus on single experiences in your diary entries as well. The entries should not be a recap of the day, or a general description of what you do/did on the trips. Rather, I would like you to focus on single incidents and situations that you experienced in a certain way. I would like you to give a quick description of the situation itself, who/what was part of it, and what you were doing in this specific moment. After that, I would like you to write a detailed description of every single aspect of the experience, how you perceived it, what you focused on, what drew your attention during the experience, how the experience made you feel, and so on. Use the language you feel most comfortable writing in (can be your mother tongue, but can also be another language), and don’t spare a single detail of your experience. It is also possible that more than one of you write about the same situation, since your experience in this situation might differ quite a lot from your classmate’s

To sum up, I would rather have only one single very detailed entry than many short, superficial ones, quality over quantity ;).

When to write

You choose yourself when you want to write the entries. I know that times can be quite hectic and chaotic in the winter mountains, so you just decide yourselves when it makes sense to take some time for journaling. This could be in the situation itself, if there is time and space for it, it might as well be in the evening when lying in the sleeping bag already. If you are in a situation you want to write about, but there is not enough time to do so, a quick note in your notebook as a reminder for later reflection might be helpful (“13.40, while walking we saw a wild reindeer herd → write up an entry tonight”)

After returning from the trip, you can add thoughts and reflections to the experiences you noted, to make the descriptions fuller and more detailed, if you like.

How to write

To give you an idea of how these entries can look like, I have some general information, key ideas/questions that could help you with it.

- What did I perceive? (vision, smell, sound [or no sound], feeling on the skin, taste ...)
- What was I doing before, what or who led me into this situation?
- How did I feel in this situation?
- What did this experience remind me of?
- What were the circumstances in which I made this experience? (Building camp, walking a steep uphill, Having a break, ...)
- What meaning do I take out of the experience/what does this experience mean to me?
- What was the role of my body in this experience? (active, perceiving, creating the experience, ...)
- What made the experience? (Who was there, What items/objects were included, what surrounding?)
- What made me notice the experience enough to write an entry about it?

Additional Pictures

To add more depth/another dimension to your diary entries, you might also take a single picture in the situation you write about. This might also help you remember/zoom back into the situation in case you want to write/make your entry more detailed later on. The same goes here: A single picture taken in the situation without much adjusting/finding the “right” perspective and making it look nice is more useful than several “perfect shots”, since it is a more honest representation of what detail drew your attention in this specific situation.

If there are any questions open after reading this, you can contact me before/after the trip.

6.2 Interview guide

General Questions

Have you been practicing Friluftsliv before enrolling in this program?

How did you spend your time in nature before this semester?

What is your favourite friluftsliv activity?

What made you choose this program?

The Semester so far

(What were your expectations before starting this semester?)

- Learning objectives
- Social aspects (what did you expect from your class?)
- Personal expectations

Were you missing something during this semester?

In what sense did you experience something new?

- Surprises?

Background/Framework

What's your aim with going outdoors, going on trips?

Before your experiences on the last trips here, who did you spend the most time with in the outdoors?

- Family
- Friends
- Alone

Is there anybody who you would call an inspiration in the outdoors

- If so, why is that person/group inspirational?
- How do you know them?

Focus, Attention

What would you usually focus on in different situations on a trip?

- Preparation of the trip
- Food breaks, lunch/snacks
- Hectic Situations
- Walking on a path, without stress
- Being in camp at night (Fire vs. tent)

When you have time to let your thoughts wander a bit, what do you think about, where is your attention?

Were you surprised about what caught your attention at one point? (shift?)

- Elaborate (What, When, How, Why)

Comparing the first and the last day of the last trip, did you feel any changes in your focus or attitude?

- Did the way you enter/perceive similar situations change?

Experiences, specific situations

Can you briefly describe how you experienced the last two winter trips?

- Expected?
- Positive/negative surprises?

What senses would you use to perceive different situations?

- Are there specific situations where different senses are central/more important?

Have you had specific moments that stuck out?

- While traveling/moving
- In camps

Can you elaborate on this specific situation?

- What led to this situation, what and who was involved?
- What was your intention?
- How did you act, what did you do?
- What did you focus on in this situation, how did your focus change?
- What did the situation make you think, how did it make you feel?
- How was this situation special, what made it so unique that you mentioned it now?

Was there any situation that you would call “a perfect experience”?

- What made it perfect?
- How was it different from the rest of the trip?

Can you describe another perfect experience that you’ve had before?

How would you describe this/these experience(s) to somebody that is not a friluftsliv-enthusiast? (family/friends/colleagues)

That sounded different to how you told me about your experiences, where do you think that difference comes from?

Follow-up questions

Where do you think this (attitude, perception, focus, attention, behaviour) comes from?

Could you go more into detail on this particular (argument, experience, situation, behaviour)?

How did you feel about this (situation, behaviour [of somebody else], change)

What made you (re-)act in this way?

Did this change while being on the trip (s)?

Can you define this (expression, thought) to me? What does it include for you?

6.3 Phenomenological analysis

Interview question:

Then a bit more specific, because that was the overall experience that you would explain, of course, a bit more specific. I read through your diary. And on the second day, you describe the situation where you got cold, like where you had the cold lunch break and everything cold, wet and cold. And you describe how you have never been that cold as you were in that situation. All you could see around yourself was white and just blank. And then you describe word by word, it felt as if I was walking through my own mind. Can you explain that a bit more? What do you mean by that?

Step 1: Color coding for identifying themes:

Descriptions of sensations and feelings

Focus and attention

Behaviour in situ

Interview

Yeah, I can. So it was I think it was like I don't know how the like the distance or the mph to compared to kilometers per hour when works or meters per hour sorry, but it was we'll just say it's really fast when with really wet small, like pieces of snow. So it would feel like you're kind of getting like tiny little bugs are flying into your face constantly. And if you don't have a face covering, it's, it's if you have mustache or if you have hair outside, everything starts to freeze over it clumps up. I remember I had a face mask over my face and the wind was coming from my right side, which is bringing all the snow and my body heat was melting that snow and then outside cold was freezing it again. So I had this giant clump of ice on the side of my cheek. And I just remember I pulled my face down and I was like trying to move my mouth around in my cheek was completely numb. And I had to flip my face mask around to where the ice clump was in the back. Yep, yeah, this isn't the back of my neck and it was just dude what is going on here. And so you're walking in weather like that, where it's windy, it's cold, it hurts to get hit with ice pellets and then you come up to the front of the line. You literally cannot walk straight. It's impossible.

You veer to the right if you're on the left. And just because like your depth perception is completely opposite the person behind you is trying to keep you on line using the compass. So they're walking with their head down, you know, you'll get clicks against the back of your skis when they kind of bumped into you. And you start to get really irritated with that kind of stuff, because it's just so much happening at once. And these little things make you as mad as you probably could be, but you don't want to say anything, everybody else has gone through the exact same thing. And then you look up, but it doesn't really feel like you look up, you can move your head around in any direction, and it feels like you're kind of in the same place. And you kinda have to tell yourself that like, you know, one step one step one step, almost automatically, and it kind of gets to your head, where the reason I said I felt like I was walking through my mind, because it almost felt like I was going through a third person's perspective, like, my body was just kind of doing what it does. And I was able to think about, like, every worst possible situation at the same time, like, what if I take one step forward, and I fall down a hill or, you know, kind of fall into a lake or whatever. And if you've ever played Assassin's Creed, there's that loading screen where you kind of just running off and it's completely white you're just running, running, running, running, until you finally end up in a loading screen or whatever. And that's probably the best way I could explain it. Like, you're looking at yourself, outside of your body, it almost felt like just kind of moving forward, and you're like, Okay, come on, get back into my head, that like, I'm freezing cold, I wanted to stay warm. You got all these negative thoughts running through your mind. And it's, it's just not a positive experience while it's happening. And I guess that's why I would say would be like you're kind of in your own head. And walking through mind, because it's literally not one positive thought it's so hard to think positive during something like that. Especially when you're kind of with a group of people who are having like the same negative thoughts. It just creates this negative aura. Yep. And kind of puts everyone in the mood down. And then, you know, we're stopping for lunch. And, like, it just goes downhill from there as well. Because you know, the weather doesn't get any better, you can't eat, your hands are cold, you're freezing, you're scared, you're gonna get frostbite. So you kind of have to suffer through the whole thing. Which sounds horrible. And it sounds like no one would ever want to do this. And that's until you kind of get back to like a place where you can kind of think about, what just happened. And you get like the

thought, like, I don't think I've ever been that pessimistic in my life. I don't think like I've ever had those negative thoughts like you do. Like, you don't ever want to just like punch someone for talking, Like don't talk to me. I'm trying to get through this. And it's but coming to the end of it, you're like, what just happened? And you want to, you know, take it, kind of do it again, to figure out if you can do better the next time then you're like, why would I ever want to do something like that again? It was horrible during the time. That's probably the best way I could explain it like something so bad happened. And it was like so unenjoyable. But you still would do it again.

Diary entry:

I don't think that I've ever been as cold as I have today. There was a white out while we were on our route and it's hard to explain the things it did to my head. The constant wind and snow blowing against half of my body felt like pins and needles. My face cover froze and caused the right side of my face to go numb. My gloves got wet and I was scared I would get frostbite in my fingers. My legs were tired and I had to constantly remind myself to take another step forward. Being in the front of the line came with its own set of feelings. All I could see around me was white. I didn't know if my next step would be off a cliff or hill. It felt as if I was walking through my own mind. It was impossible to walk in a straight line and the longer I walked, the dizzier and more nauseous I felt. But even so, I'm glad that I got to experience something like that. Something that so little people will ever get to experience. It makes me feel a little less small in this huge world because I've gone through something like that.

Step two: Identifying constructions, set expressions and metaphors

Interview

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Diary entry:

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Step 3&4: Phenomenological reduction / bracketing & identifying possible essences

Bracketing non-essential parts

Possible essences

Yeah, I can. So it was I think it was like I don't know how the like the distance or the mph to compared to kilometers per hour when works or meters per hour sorry, but it was we'll just say it's really fast when with really wet small, like pieces of snow. So it would feel like you're kind of getting like tiny little bugs are flying into your face constantly. And if you don't have a face covering, it's, it's if you have mustache or if you have hair outside, everything starts to freeze over it clumps up. I remember I had a face mask over my face and the wind was coming from my right side, which is bringing all the snow and my body heat was melting that snow and then outside cold was freezing it again. So I had this giant clump of ice on the side of my cheek. And I just remember I pulled my face down and I was like trying to move my mouth around in my cheek was completely numb. And I had to flip my face mask around to where the ice clump was in the back. Yep, yeah, this isn't the back of my neck and it was just dude what is going on here. And so you're walking in weather like that, where it's windy, it's cold, it hurts to get hit with ice pellets and then you come up to the front of the line. You literally cannot walk straight. It's impossible. You veer to the right if you're on the left. And just because like your depth perception is completely opposite the person behind you is trying to keep you on line using the compass. So they're walking with their head down, you know, you'll get clicks against the back of your skis when they kind of bumped into you. And you start to get really irritated with that kind of stuff, because it's just so much happening at once. And these little things make you as mad as you probably could be, but you don't want to say anything, everybody else has gone through the exact same thing. And then you look up, but it doesn't really feel like you look up, you can move your head around in any direction, and it feels like you're kind of in the same place. And you kinda have to tell yourself that like, you know, one step one step one step, almost automatically, and it kind of gets to your head, where the reason I said I felt like I was walking through my mind, because it almost felt like I was going through a third person's perspective, like, my body was just kind of doing what it does. And I was able to think about, like, every worst possible situation at the same time, like, what if I take one step forward, and I fall down a hill or, you know,

kind of fall into a lake or whatever. And if you've ever played Assassin's Creed, there's that loading screen where you kind of just running off and it's completely white you're just running, running, running, running, until you finally end up in a loading screen or whatever. And that's probably the best way I could explain it. Like, you're looking at yourself, outside of your body, it almost felt like just kind of moving forward, and you're like, Okay, come on, get back into my head, that like, I'm freezing cold, I wanted to stay warm. You got all these negative thoughts running through your mind. And it's, it's just not a positive experience while it's happening. And I guess that's why I would say would be like you're kind of in your own head. And walking through mind, because it's literally not one positive thought it's so hard to think positive during something like that. Especially when you're kind of with a group of people who are having like the same negative thoughts. It just creates this negative aura. Yep. And kind of puts everyone in the mood down. And then, you know, we're stopping for lunch. And, like, it just goes downhill from there as well. Because you know, the weather doesn't get any better, you can't eat, your hands are cold, you're freezing, you're scared, you're gonna get frostbite. So you kind of have to suffer through the whole thing. Which sounds horrible. And it sounds like no one would ever want to do this. And that's until you kind of get back to like a place where you can kind of think about, what just happened. And you get like the thought, like, I don't think I've ever been that pessimistic in my life. I don't think like I've ever had those negative thoughts like you do. Like, you don't ever want to just like punch someone for talking, Like don't talk to me. I'm trying to get through this. And it's but coming to the end of it, you're like, what just happened? And you want to, you know, take it, kind of do it again, to figure out if you can do better the next time then you're like, why would I ever want to do something like that again? It was horrible during the time. That's probably the best way I could explain it like something so bad happened. And it was like so unenjoyable. But you still would do it again.

Diary entry:

I don't think that I've ever been as cold as I have today. There was a white out while we were on our route and it's hard to explain the things it did to my head. The constant wind and snow blowing against half of my body felt like pins and needles. My face cover froze and caused the right side of my face to go numb. My gloves got wet and I was scared I

would get frostbite in my fingers. My legs were tired and I had to constantly remind myself to take another step forward. Being in the front of the line came with its own set of feelings. All I could see around me was white. I didn't know if my next step would be off a cliff or hill. It felt as if I was walking through my own mind. It was impossible to walk in a straight line and the longer I walked, the dizzier and more nauseous I felt. But even so, I'm glad that I got to experience something like that. Something That so little people will ever get to experience. It makes me feel a little less small in this huge world because I've gone through something like that.

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