

Christine Revsbech

Learning as Social Exchange
in City Year London:

Action towards an image of greatness

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Learning as Social Exchange in City Year London: Action towards an image of greatness

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Graduate School in Lifelong Learning

Department of Psychology and Educational Studies

Roskilde University

Building 30C.2

PO Box 260

DK-4000 Roskilde

Denmark

Tlf: + 45 46 74 26 39

Email: forskorskolen@ruc.dk

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Foreword by the Graduate School in Lifelong Learning

This PhD dissertation is a result of a three year study in the Graduate School in Lifelong Learning at Roskilde University. The research perspective of lifelong learning comprises learning through the whole life course in formal education, everyday life, work life, family life, civil society, etc. Thus research in lifelong learning calls for an interdisciplinary approach to learning as a subjective activity in a social context.

The Graduate School in Lifelong Learning was established in 1999 with support from the Danish Research Academy. Since the PhD-programme was established more than hundred students have achieved the PhD degree and presently around 60 students are enrolled. The Graduate School has an annual enrolment of 10-15 new doctoral students. It is an international research training programme. Academic everyday life comprises frequent visits by international guest professors and visits by foreign PhD students. Both students and supervisors are engaged in international research networks. Also, the Graduate School is part of a national network developing and coordinating educational activities for PhD students.

The Graduate School draws upon theoretical and methodological inspiration from traditions within the arts and humanities as well as the social sciences. Graduate School training addresses issues traditionally ignored by discipline-oriented research and professional knowledge. It particularly focuses on learning as the subjective mediation of objective, societal and cultural processes. Research in Lifelong Learning encompasses a variety of subjects and is equally broad in the perspectives it takes. The topics of the PhD dissertations are often quite far from what is usually associated with pedagogy, but help to co-establish an emerging critical and historically located important area of research. This often demands theoretical and methodological innovation. At the same time the programme aims to establish connections between existing traditions in pedagogical research and associated disciplines. Methodologically the graduate school concentrates on qualitative methods and interpretive

methodology. Within a wide scope each project may choose and adapt quite different methods to the specific research problem.

A PhD dissertation marks the end of an academic apprenticeship. It proves that the author has been “conducting an independent research project under supervision” as stated in the “Ministerial Order on the PhD Course of Study and on the PhD Degree”. It is the culmination of the process that is published here. PhD dissertations are however also part of the development and forming of new areas of research. PhD dissertations are necessary in the continuous creation of new knowledge and reading this dissertation assures that this process is well taken care of.

Christine Revsbech’s thesis *Learning as Social Exchange in City Year London: Action towards an image of greatness* presents an interesting, anthropological study of a social voluntary organisation. The focus is on learning and educational aspects of the exchange between participations in City Year London, a British affiliate of an American charity. In the field study young volunteers were followed in their daily activities working as mentors for public primary school children. Also, the interaction between staff and volunteers in City Year London were observed, and interviews with both volunteers and staff were supplementing the observations. The rich empirical data has led to analysis that draw on and contributes to economic anthropology, learning theories and social entrepreneurship.

The main theoretical inspiration comes from Marcel Mauss and David Graeber’s development of Mauss’ thinking with the core notion of *value*. The thesis explores the empirical findings applying an understanding of learning as social exchange of value. Different learning theories as Piaget’s more cognitive oriented to Jean Lave’s social learning theory are used to develop a nuanced understanding of the development of learning processes as results of the interplay between volunteers and children and volunteers and staff. This double focus on the volunteers’ interaction and learning provides an interesting insight of how organizational logics frame the possibilities of learning in ‘the field’: the volunteers’ lives as volunteers in City Year.

The five month long field work was carried out and is presented in the thesis as a pre-study and main study. The methodological reflections on the field work and the continuous reflections on the researcher’s interaction with the field provide the reader with important reflections of ethics and research standards. Thus, the thesis is an example of the result of an engaged research process and an inspiring multi-theoretical approach.

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Preface

Aside from the theoretical perspectives, ethical reflections and interpretations, I would like to express a heartfelt thank you. First of all, my thanks go to PAES and Professors Linda Lundgaard Andersen and Lars Hulgård from the Center for Social Entrepreneurship for giving me this chance of a lifetime to express my interest in the topic of this thesis. Gaining a title is a privilege for me but has not been the four year long drive and the continuous motivation to get there. Speaking of motivation, a deep felt *thank you* to my supervisor, Niels Warring, whose presence, loyalty, professionalism and sincere interest in this project as well as my wellbeing has made a crucial difference to both process and result. Thank you, Niels. I would also like to thank the City Year London staff and corps of 2011-12; I hope this piece on your fascinating enterprise can somehow reciprocate your warm, unique, professional and absolutely crucial contribution. A particular “tak” to Professor Roger Spear for your interest and support along the way, not least during my half year’s stay in Hackney, London. Thank you to my colleagues at PAES for providing an inspirational, welcoming and very stimulating environment. A particular thank you to the “I-you’s”: my PhD colleagues at EMES and CSE and Agnete Neidel who told me to “fence my tasks” – that advice has echoed through times of much to do. To Thomas Bille for your support. To Henrik Hersom for listening and for the music. To Bjørn Ribers for inspiring and supporting me to follow my intuition no matter what, not least by his example. To Trine Wulf and Kevin Mogensen for exquisite sense of humor and playfulness. To Ditte-Marie From and Monika Fæster for being you: frank, wise, brave and loving. To Vibeke Lihn, Liselotte Gregart and Lene Hansen for always listening, smiling to me and laughing at my jokes. Thank you to my colleagues and not least the students of “Educational Studies”, the open “Master of Social Entrepreneurship” and “Social Entrepreneurship and Management” for keeping me grounded and reflective through practice. Thank you Niels Kryger from IUP (formerly DPU) at Århus University; you have been a great support and motivator both in educational anthropology as well as my theme of interest: gift exchange and education. Thank you to my ex-

tended family in Florida: Liz Hargis who introduced me to voluntary youth programs and unconditionally cheered for and supported me in every way along with Jerry and Todd. I also want to thank my family for never having doubted me, on the contrary, always having had faith in my capacity: Karen (mom), and brothers Rasmus and Andreas who I grew up and exchanged kitchen counter notes with – and an indescribable host of other things. Thank you to Henriette Brix Work Andersen and everybody at Sleipnir Naturridning for invaluable times in the open and a sense of meaning and, most importantly, the Iceys. Thank you to my all my friends who, most of them, just “stay tuned” in on my life: this is what kept me. Finally, thank you Mikael Kokseby for holding my hand and my heart every day: for laughing with me, for having my back and the strength to face the sometimes tough task of making me feel safe, and also for providing cocoa at the right times. Thank you to those who read this for your interest and support!

Also in loving memory of my father and those I’ve lost along these years: Hanne Bjergskov, my grandparents Kristian and Anita Revsbech and my friend Pardus.

1 Introduction

I spent the spring of 2006 in Florida as I happened to ask a close American friend of mine to tell me more about her work at the drug prevention youth program *PRIDE Youth Programs*. She was leading a local team of young people who voluntarily lead peer-to-peer community activities and thus mentored, taught and advised other young people in the community against crime and the use of drugs, both by standing forward as young role models themselves, and by interaction as peers. My friend showed me flyers and federal evaluations of the program, concluding that the efforts of these volunteers were instrumental in bringing down the statistics in the fight against youth crime and drug abuse and also increased social inclusion. We talked. I was in the University, pondering over what my Master's dissertation should be about. I felt that being an educational anthropologist I ought to grab the opportunity: "What if I make this my field study for the dissertation?" We agreed on the idea and within a year I started my first field study in youth driven voluntary organizations.

Exploring youth-to-youth social activity springing from the idea of national service among young people has inevitably snowballed from that life altering moment onward and has carried on into this thesis now almost nine years later. What struck me about this sort of activity among young people was the level of engagement I observed with everyone involved. No one was being paid and yet everyone mutually expressed appreciation and importance, and for this reason the setting was almost like a parallel universe, a place where the market economy was in the background even when it came to cooperating with fund raisers and organizers. The message, the money, and the people seemed to all come together around what then *was* in the foreground: the mission. During my first field work in this type of community, social phenomena like "making a difference", "sense of meaning", "mutual help and advice", "energizers", criminals turning into altruistic enthusiasts and statistics to prove it were all part of the swarming impressions that provided my impetus and sense of wonder. This had a powerful impact on me and awakened

my ongoing curiosity regarding this type of environment and culture as a learning arena.

Contribution to research field and scope

In Denmark, the subject of Educational Anthropology at the School of Education, Århus University, introduced economic anthropology in an educational context suggesting that through the use of both classic and contemporary anthropology, education can be explored in ways that contribute to educational research in an original way. Through an anthropological approach to education this field of study was accredited through its orientation toward educational practices in everyday life, sharpening the focus on “(...) *cultural and social processes such as for example the construction of relations and meaning, identity, socialization, integration and marginalization*”¹ in educational perspectives and contexts (Studieguideredaktionen 2012). Educational anthropology as a science is seen as being formally initiated in Germany in the 1950s. The view of humanity within educational anthropology is much debated, which has primarily led to an emphasis on the importance of this science as a plural science as well as on its historicity. Educational anthropology is thus seen as: “(..) *a pluralistic thought pattern where different disciplines can contribute to e.g. ethnology, aesthetics, and systems theory.*”² (Krejsler, Kryger et al. 2005). Consequently, it is important to refer to the historicity of the theories which are being used in this scientific interest. These interests are influenced by seven scientific tendencies, put forward by the Germans Christoph Wulf and Jörg Zirfa³. The general objective of educational anthropology is thus, through plural theoretical use, to question boundaries, oxymorons and other contradictions in a societal and historical context; the point of educational anthropology as science being its aim to illuminate change. This is done by providing variety and being a form of communication which distinguishes its uniqueness by “*fulfilling a function which otherwise would not have been fulfilled*”⁴ (Krejsler, Kryger et al. 2005). This means that the common factor in educational anthropology is its heterogeneity and

¹ Own translation

² Own translation

³ The integral, the philosophical, the phenomenological, the dialectic-reflexive, the implicit, the textual and the plural-historical.

⁴ Own translation

its complexity of ideas. The educational aspect generally springs from the idea of a *claim* and the anthropological aspect is generally the idea of ethnographic presence and anthropological distance while questioning naturalness form a point of wonder (Hastrup 2003). This sums up to what Mie Buhl calls “*change intending bewilderment*” (Krejsler, Kryger et al. 2005). Finding its way to the Department of Psychology and Educational Studies at RUC, it met the Center for Social Entrepreneurship through us, who graduated as educational anthropologists in Denmark and remained curious in academically exploring the fusion of education and anthropology with a twist of social entrepreneurship; *social change* being the unifying focal point.

The innovation and entrepreneurship wave within social and pedagogical science as well as entrepreneurial education at universities have therefore benefitted from educational anthropology. The contribution of economic anthropology and education in this research frame proves particularly beneficial in terms of discussing social value, interestedness and creativity, the various contexts and their relevance in terms of benefit or profit. This take, in social entrepreneurship, contributes to a defining and overall interest in innovation and education as adding to social value. Mainly thanks to British, French and American social scientists and their efforts to themselves refine and develop as well as to continuously seek to increase the accessibility to French ethnographer Marcel Mauss’ (1872-1950) original material (Hart, James 2014, Fournier 2006, Graeber 2001), have made it possible to apply Mauss’ thoughts to this field of contemporary academic discussions and analysis. Their processing is central to this thesis and in itself a gift to both anthropology and social science today. In educational research, economic anthropology generally addresses more than one ongoing discussion. Critical discussions in educational research are seen to be qualified by the application of economic anthropology when discussing for example the social exchange of education and the implications of money on the educational relationship (Cooper 2004, Schmidt 2006, Kvale 2004, Jørgensen 2005). When discussing general education, civility, and interestedness, the discussions refer to the individual-opportunity nexus (Shane, Eckhardt 2003) innovative and entrepreneurial learning processes in the third sector, including reflections on philanthropy at one end and self-initiated social enterprise at the other. In terms of working in the analytical intersection of anthropology, learning and entrepreneurship, the idea of this research design is to make a relevant contribution to the en-

trepreneurship field but without using, and to refrain from reproducing, theoretical understandings and particularly concept defining discussions within the field. When trying to understand innovation processes, the development of entrepreneurial skills, and the social dynamics of value, classic anthropology is perceived as a primary and valuable tool, yet with an eye to contributing to new discussions in the entrepreneurial theoretical field. Therefore, entrepreneurship is made relevant through the selection of a voluntary organization positioned between private, public and third sector and through considering the learning processes among the volunteers in such an organization, keeping in mind the ongoing discussions on the development of entrepreneurial skills and social entrepreneurial activity. As a consequence of the fusion between economic anthropology and educational research, learning, in this thesis, is seen as a person's continuous development in interaction with his or her social setting and capacity for creative and meaningful expression.

To some extent I have chosen to bring this analysis back to a theoretical point of departure in the midst of a classical sociological span between structure, actor, solidarity, and interestedness originally launched and inspired by European industrialization, the French Revolution and Hegel's philosophy of idealism (Andersen, Kaspersen 2005). The reason is the before mentioned scientific interest in social change, as consequence of my own school of thought. Marx particularly inspired the political sociology and to a great extent the genealogy of 20th century anthropology through ongoing questions of social productivity and the political economy (Jessen 1999, Schmidt 2000, Graeber 2001). Economic anthropology is crystalized in the lineage from Max Weber, Émile Durkheim and Mauss, where Karl Polanyi, which will be further introduced, contributes with conceptualizing a unique non-dichotomized understanding of economy resulting in the formalist-substantivist discussion, which is considered outdated yet unresolved (Graeber 2001). Marxian and Durkheimian traditions are seen as two diverging trails. Marx is usually criticized for his instrumentalization of human action whereas the Durkheimian tradition focuses on the internalization of social and moral motivation (Habermass 1968), the latter echoing throughout Mauss' idea of the gift as well as his successors referred to in this thesis.

Through focusing on learning in the third sector and cross-sectorial partnerships, the best of all these theoretical perspectives, anthropology, education

and social entrepreneurship, basically benefit from and challenge each other and this fusion alone spurs a range of explicit theoretical explorations and elaborations, some of which are suggested throughout this thesis. This is also due to the fact that this cross-field as a “theoretical” field is predominantly unexplored. Revisiting Lave and Wenger’s book regarding *situated learning* and *communities of practice* appeared obvious in attempting to translate this field into a learning arena. However, advised by Jean Lave herself, I chose not to let ‘learning’ be the main search factor empirically nor theoretically, to give priority to the primary anthropological objective: the focus on what can be observed in the empirical field. Nonetheless, basic inspiration has been found in this classical view.

The thesis also provides a methodological example in terms of ethnographic methods and analysis, as it explores and unfolds practical and grounded observations of social rituals such as educating, materiality, everyday sociability, value, in- and exclusion processes in a particular voluntary community, just to mention a few aspects. Therefore the focus, in terms of learning, has not been on accounting for the development of measurable mentoring competences among the volunteers, even though mentoring is the organization’s core activity. Rather, as mentioned, this anthropological approach has provided the perspective that learning is analyzed as the individual’s processes, through the community’s social dynamics, in terms of developing creative and meaningful expression which is put into action in a certain social environment, and thus socially experienced as contributing value. In this process, social rituals are seen as a particular expression of the matching of expectations and adaptive behavior between the individual and the social. These micro-processes are analyzed on the basis of Mauss’ dynamic structural theories of social value exchange and thus learning is understood as continuous processes rather than tangible outcome; this difference also represents the difference between a Maussian and a Marxian approach (Graeber 2001). In anthropology the field site is a main characteristic and direct object of study; and when it comes to the methodological reflections these are comprehensive for the reason of validation (Hastrup 2003). The empirical field site, City Year London, chosen for this thesis, is a charity concept from the US which has been implemented in the European welfare context, London being the first site in the EU. It is a voluntary youth driven organization operating with the educational advantages of peer-to-peer learning as a consequence of being a

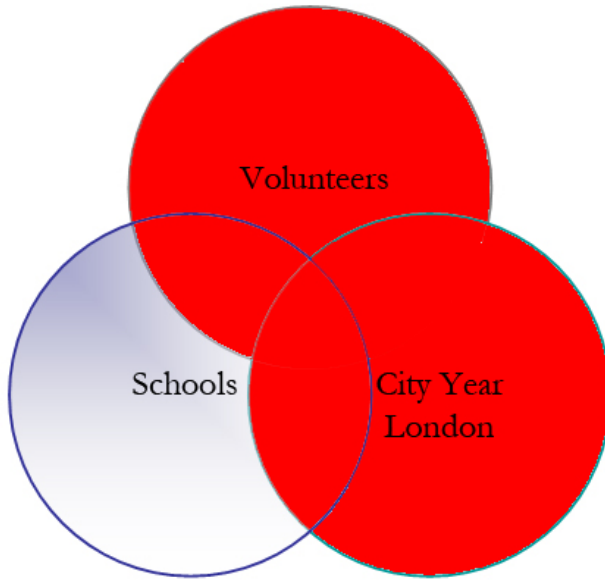


Figure 1: Analytical area

voluntary community. To support the dynamic point above, in this thesis I differentiate between the work or service this organization provides, which is the mentorship, and the community among the volunteers as educating in terms of social participation; it is important to stress that I analyze the latter and not the former. This thesis is therefore not about educational circumstances between mentor-mentee, but is instead focused on value and reciprocity among the volunteers, their interaction with the organizational framework being of important contextual influence, since this is their meeting ground.

During the making of this thesis, many have assumed the focus to be on the mentor-mentee relationship, since it was found that focusing, in a Marxian perspective, on the mentoring service as product would be an obvious choice when analyzing learning and exchange. But the aim was always to dynamically unfold the emergences and social exchanges of *value* as an entry to unfold learning and entrepreneurship in this kind of institution, which understands itself as ‘voluntary’, ‘educating’, ‘mentoring’, and ‘entrepreneurial’. Neither, from a learning perspective, has the mentor-mentee relationship been the focus of the thesis, even though I believe that social value exchange regarding this relationship would beneficially be unfolded as “educational”. When a

learning perspective is emphasized it is the learning among the volunteers as peers, that is: what does the volunteer learn by volunteering along with others, seen as equals, in these specific organizational settings? Another reason for avoiding mentor-mentee as an educational relationship was access to the schools and the school children. This, being a bureaucratic Fort Knox, would not only involve City Year London, it would involve school heads and teachers, parents and the mentee-children, if not whole classrooms of people and their professional and personal relations. Therefore the reason can be summed up as being a combination of analytical interest and access opportunity due to bureaucracy and scientific codes of conduct (Gulløv, Højlund 2003). It would involve school boards and probably local authorities to comply with rules of child safety when letting a “stranger” be part of their everyday lives. Obviously when trying to enter an institutional frame in an attempt to catch learning as it happens between mentor and mentee, one runs into the wall of bureaucracy as well as outcome oriented understandings of ‘learning’, my main interest being in the lives and values of the volunteers as a group of peers. Observing the volunteers’ labor is of course taken into consideration, though not prioritized, when empirically examined. What directed me towards City Year London were the volunteers as peers, framed by the organizational culture, not an evaluation of the mentoring service which they offer as such.

The theoretical choice did result in some limitations which will be elaborated on throughout the thesis. Due to Mauss’ idealistic approach to social life in his work (Graeber 2001), it was found difficult to address what are normally regarded as critical themes, such as “individual resistance” and “organizational exploitation”, as *critical*. From a Maussian perspective, these points of conflict are regarded as universal and important parts of dynamic structural processes which are not least driven by creative destruction, socially as well as materially. Struggles for status and power, seen as an expression of individual resistance and referred to as agonistic or rivalizing exchange, are viewed as part of a catalytic process which involves testing one’s social role as well as triggering one’s creative potential in order to work around what is individually perceived as resistance; conflict is thus an opportunity for development not a sign of paralyzing oppression; the individual is assumed to have the potential to act (Graeber 2001, Mauss 1954). The idea that resistance is not seen as a sign of disabling oppression has challenged the thesis’ critical line of reason-

ing; however, an attempt will be made to counterbalance this through ethical points and a continuous awareness of the strength as well as the inadequacy of this theoretical approach.

Thesis statement

The thesis is empirically based on one year's qualitative multi-sited ethnography around the volunteers in the mentoring youth organization and charity *City Year London*. From August to December 2011 I was in London intensively following the everyday lives of the volunteers who were there full time for the entire school year of 2011-12; the remaining seven months I followed the corps⁵ at a distance and through follow-up visits. I participated as much as I could throughout the second half of their city year and came full circle with them at their graduation ceremony in July 2012. The volunteers were 18-25 year-olds of diverse backgrounds working full time with City Year for one full year, mentoring London school children. Following the volunteers around I had to constantly keep on my toes and the strategy of multi-sited ethnography was found to be very demanding, regarding both time and energy, but very rewarding at the same time; this was my general experience of what City Year life is like. According to the findings in this study the organizational expectations for the volunteers' work are generally high. Compared to traditional volunteering in organizations this can be said to be professionalized volunteering in a charity which is run as a business. The reader will find that the observations on City Year London ultimately lead to a suggestion of a general altering of the idea of volunteering, a redefinition, or maybe a sub-categorization of the term. These tendencies can be seen as a consequence of the current challenges in the welfare state's social services which have been subject to considerable cost-cutting. The role in meeting these challenges which the state asks of voluntary organizations could be one reason why this type of volunteering is growing. Besides professionalizing volunteers, organizationally such volunteering aims to involve flexible and efficient cross-sectorial partnerships, adding the third sector, as a third party, to the public-private partnerships (Hulgård 2007, CYL 2010).

⁵ 'Corps' is City Year's name for the group of volunteers.

The issue is approached from the anthropological perspective of emergence and exchange of cultural value based on the qualitative data material. Finding the main inspiration in Mauss' theory of the gift economy, the central economic idea is primarily non-antagonist and the interpretation of material objects as ascribed and expressing social value (Mauss 1954, Graeber 2001). The objective therefore concerns material as well as immaterial value regarding mainly how the value of the culture is expressed through exchanges involving the inductive analytical themes: *the uniform* and exchange of *stories*. Through discussion the thesis aims to contribute to frame and discuss learning as social exchange from an economic anthropological perspective by asking:

How are volunteers' learning processes connected to the exchange of social value in City Year London and what exchanges characterize the youth driven voluntary organization?

While exploring this question I am guided by the questions:

- How do pre-existing, organizational and individual, values influence social conventions created in a new group of volunteers?
- How does social value relate to skills acquisition and personal development?

Roskilde University provided two-thirds of the funding for this project, while the Danish Ministry of Science, Innovation and Higher Education and the former Danish Ministry of Domestic and Social Affairs together provided one-third. The latter links the thesis to the research unit Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and through this unit it has also formed part of discussions in the research group Social Innovation and Learning. The thesis is generally framed by the aims of the Department of Psychology and Educational Research at Roskilde University and is more specifically aimed at developing knowledge within the combination of education and innovation by using the field of social entrepreneurship and the third sector, in this case represented by a voluntary organization, as its empirical field.

Course of the thesis

The general introduction above contains a description of the initial motivation for this project, an exposition of the scope and research field, which leads up to the research questions. An introduction to the field of research and to the theoretical approach also accounts for the scientific positioning of the project. This chapter is followed by an overview of the empirical field, introducing City Year London and its societal context. Next is a presentation of the conceptual framework of the thesis, which constitutes the analytical field along with the empirically generated themes (Hastrup 2003). The conceptual framework elaborates on the theoretical interest in learning from an economic anthropological perspective and how the interconnection between the learning and anthropology has been arranged. The chapter also accounts for how this constitutes the theoretical approach throughout the project and how the theoretical construction is intended to contribute to an educational anthropological field of research. Besides education and anthropology, the knowledge derived from the thesis contributes to the field of learning in (social) entrepreneurship and voluntary organizations due to the choice of empirical field.

In a larger methodological chapter I examine anthropological reflections on the methodology. To begin with, this chapter presents the scientific theoretical framework as well as the methodological theoretical reflections on observation and participation which were found necessary to elaborate on due to the extensive data material behind the thesis. Reflections on interview forms are presented in an individual paragraph in this chapter revealing my considerations on the choice between semi-structured or unstructured biographical interviewing. After this I move on to discuss at some length the method of multi-sited fieldwork applied. Here I reflect on the consequences of multi-sited ethnography as it turned out during the field work in City Year London, the connection between the sites, and I particularly address the circumstances of the degree of involvement and access. The chapter is rounded off by a consideration of barriers and limitations in the data material through the methods used, readdressing the reflections on capturing the subaltern, as one of George Marcus' concerns (Marcus 1995).

The analysis is in two parts as a consequence of inspiration from Richard Swedberg's argument concerning theorizing in social analysis (Swedberg 2012b). The main reason for this was that by aiming for the analysis through the methodological and theoretical considerations and fusing the various theoretical traditions distracted the research aim to the extent that I found myself caught between the truths of those scientific perspectives rather than extracting knowledge from my empirical findings. Consequently the theories were pushed back into the periphery, and instead of being theory-driven I changed focus back to the rich field of ethnographic study, yet still theoretically informed. There was a need to arrange and to theorize on the empirical findings, before aiming for an analysis of the social exchange and learning perspective. I kept in mind that an empirically periodic division between pre-study and main study in the analysis is deliberate and artificial and the two periods somewhat overlapped in reality. The pre-study mainly takes its point of departure in the beginning of the field work, during the period of entering the field; then follows the main study, which focuses on narrowed and selected informants and analytical themes from a more inclusive period. In the main study the inductive themes in focus are exchanges concerning the uniform followed by the exchanges of stories and myths. Keeping an awareness on the critical potential in the findings, the main study is rounded off by a paragraph on volunteers who left before time and volunteers who advanced within the organization which considers, what I discuss as, the open- and closed-endedness of educational relationships.

The analysis flows into a recapitulative discussion where theoretical and empirical dilemmas seen throughout the thesis are addressed on a meta-level. Here I present my findings on modes of reflection and learning as exchange in this social voluntary organization. The chapter: "*Conclusions: Action towards an image of greatness*", referring to the title of the thesis, is to be seen as an analytical summary elaborating and discussing the concluding points of the thesis, through combining the research questions and the findings. The meta-discussion also leads to section where I relate to, what I find, the most relevant of other research fields which the thesis appeared to overlap.

Positioning

Before moving on to presenting the empirical field, I will visit and account for my own positioning in this field and my prerequisites and pre-understandings in conducting this study. To qualify the knowledge contribution in writing this section I have sought to theoretically and historically disclose influential positions, giving the reader insight in what eye and what beholder lie behind the reasoning of this thesis. I regard doing so as anthropological etiquette. My pre-understandings and prerequisites for doing this project partly came from my own cultural background, having been both an occasional volunteer throughout my childhood as a natural part of everyday life, and a more dedicated one within my hobby of horses. “Communities of practice and learning”, not in the theoretical sense but in its literal meaning, have been an important part of my life, being part of an active family as well as growing up in a small community of approximately 2.000 inhabitants close to nature in the 80s. I was never enrolled in a child care center of any kind. My brothers and I spent our afternoons with a young maid, playing with friends in the neighborhood, mostly outdoors in the nearby forest, or in our large garden. Being the oldest of three I felt somewhat responsible towards my younger siblings, all of us taking the good with the bad throughout our childhoods. Besides playing with each other and our friends we were keen on sports and music. I found playing the piano to be natural and I shifted between sports but stuck a while to swimming, gymnastics and tennis, where I found and spent time with friends. We rode our bicycles to the beach five kilometers from our house or, for my part, helped at the stables during the time when horses had caught my attention. None of us had cell phones, but we had agreed on a fixed time every day, 5:30 pm, to always let each other know where we were (if not at home) by leaving a note on the kitchen counter, and we had memorized mom’s work phone number, just in case.

The reason I steal a page to talk about myself in this way is to let the reader know that my own first-hand memory of childhood, youth, peers and family seems universes away from, but not irrelevant to, discussions of general education, to the “cyber-children and -youths” of today. I understand, and am probably somehow part of, why they are generally met with a backlash demand of participation in and sense of attachment to their bodily and social reality, as opposed to merely mental activity and hand-eye-coordination. Also,

from my time with Danish school children, I have formed the presumption that young people lack punch due to both “risk society”⁶ as well as institutions’ numbing overstimulation of the brain, and cyber space, which ultimately is said to have the same effect. No, my educational environment through 10 years did not miss out on critical theory, even though Mauss does not feed directly into this part of my consciousness. To be fair, my experience and educational tradition, regarding young people and their ways of acting as a contrast to the olden days, call for disclosure in this context. The nostalgic tendency aside, the institutionalized “risks” of acting and the alternative of being placed in front of a screen were really hardly known in my childhood. A natural deduction is that maybe this is the reason that in my generation we were mainly *not* found to be apathetic, lonely, mentally ill, etc. We participated at home, made things work, or put on a plaster and got back up. Probably more cars were stolen and more cigarettes smoked as well but as an adult I must say I am grateful that it was how it was. This contrast between youth now and then has to a small but important degree become part of my curiosity and interest in exploring social action and learning, also from an anthropological angle. Finding a lot of dead ends with critical theory as it developed in the 70s and 80s (Graeber 2001), the Mauss-inspired value theory of the value of everyday sociability offered a unique outlook on alternative but relevant points in critical theory regarding the actor as part of a societal whole as well as ethnographic method. I will return to this in the chapter on the conceptual framework.

Theoretical aspects

Being a teacher through more than a decade and holding a MA in educational anthropology, my theoretical and practical experience with young people and learning is rich as mentioned. Conducting ethnography in learning cultures suffers from the risk of over-interpretation in general pointed out by, among others, the associate professor of education at the University of Southern Denmark, Flemming Mouritsen. The point being that because everybody has a childhood, maybe even an everyday life with children, this means that everybody has preexisting experience with childhood, play and learning. Doing ethnography within that frame therefore means taking the precautions of

⁶ In Ulrick Beck’s sense

conducting field work within one's own or a well-known field (Mouritsen 1996). In the light of this, the way I conduct this study therefore has both strong possibilities of particular insight and rapport, as well as strong risks of reproducing my personal world view and thereby mixing up my own ingrown perceptions of social and individual life in this field. Based on Mouritsen's remark, I would claim that that applies to educational research in general.

An attempt to check this on my part has been to enter learning cultures which I could relate to but which at the same time could be seen as utterly different from the learning environments both of my upbringing, education, as well as my time as a professional teacher. Aiming for international institutions and organizations outside my own country is part of this same strategy. Another attempt to counteract the risks of research in my own field has been an overtness and authenticity emphasizing the difference between me and my informants, both as participant and observer. Complete overtness between me as researcher and the informants was seen to bring a degree of formality to a setting (Hammersley, Atkinson 1995). In this case, due to the general familiarity, I found this beneficial in a setting where informality otherwise would be obvious, due to the social atmosphere of volunteering as well as the small differences in age and professional interests between us. My nationality, age, and objective were always brought out clearly when presenting myself to everyone I have met during this field work. Emphasizing the differences between us, which was beneficial in the balance between stranger and friend, did not stand in the way of participating in suitable collaborative activities. The Norwegian anthropologist Frederik Barth expresses this experience by stating that in gaining inclusion and insight as a participant observer it is enough to let the informants see that you want to participate as much as possible, in spite of the overt position as researcher:

"Mennesker handler ikke spontant og naturlig overfor en passiv observatør, slik de gjør foran et medmenneske; og å spørre folk om deres liv er et dårligt surrogat for å se det, for deres fremstilling av det er på systematiske og vassentlige matter forskjellig fra deres praksis av det... Den som aldri har arbeidet dag etter dag på markene kan vanskeleg forstå hva det vil si å livsnære seg som bonde, den som ikke selv har levd i nomadetelt og vandret med dem vet ikke hva han skal spørre om for å lære det som er essensielt i deres liv. Men aller viktigst: det er bare ved at du prøver å bli deltager at mennesker begynner å behandle deg som et egentlig medmenneske, at de får tillit til deg og åpner seg for deg, og aller viktigst at

*de begynner å lære deg opp i deres egne begreber, kategorier og forestillinger. For det er først som deltager at du trenger å forstå verden på deres måte.*⁷ (Gulløv, Højlund 2003)

Mauss, just like any other anthropologist, would agree that it is only through descriptions of concrete life and through studying the dynamics of societies in their everyday integrity, not least because this involves observations of how social facts connect to experiences and emotions that an understanding of “whole” communities can be approached (Hart 2007, Hastrup 2003, Lave 2011). This fundamental ethnographic conviction has, because of my educational background and thus expertise, defined my methodological approach and co-constituted a pre-understanding that it is by observing everyday life and random social sharing and exchanges that one can capture what is really taking place; this is the basic idea and argument behind anthropological field work. That being said, it can seem quite paradoxical how neither Mauss nor Graeber themselves, in the literature dealing with Mauss’ gift economy, ever refer to their own ethnographic field works (Mauss 1954, Graeber 2001). Also, anthropology has come a long way since Mauss, who in his preliminary remarks in his *“Manual of Ethnography”* (first published in 1926) stated: *“Intuition plays no part whatever in the science of ethnology”* (p.7). Particularly after the linguistic turn in the 1980s anthropologists have come to live with the fact that the representation of a culture and the way this is done cannot but be affected by the eye of the beholder; in fact this is the very precondition of writing ethnography (Hammersley, Atkinson 1995, Lave 2011). In continuation of this as the ethnographer’s terms, it also applies to the informant and thus the data found in the qualitative interviews, which is triangulated against other sources of data: observations and reading of documents. As a consequence, in interpreting the interviews, a choice had to be made as to how far the informants’ statements should be accepted without question. In the methodol-

⁷ ”People do not act spontaneously and naturally before a passive observer, as they do with a fellow human being; and to ask people about their lives is a poor substitute for seeing it because their representation of it is different from their practice in systematic and important ways... One who has never worked day after day in the fields can hardly understand what it is to live off being a farmer; one who has not lived in a nomad’s tent and migrated would not know what to ask about in order to learn what is essential in their lives. But most important: just by trying to become a participant people will start treating you as a real fellow human being and gain trust in you and open up to you, and most importantly they will begin to train you in their own concepts, categories and ideas. Because it is only as a participant that you will need to understand their ways.” (own translation)

ogy section, I describe in more detail the triangulation of qualitative data in this project, while also methodologically discussing this question in presenting the semi-structured interview. Furthermore, it was of course necessary to update Mauss' methods into contemporary ethnographic approaches, with greater awareness of the ethnographer's position in the field and considerable focus on the field worker's intuition and sensory navigation when receiving input, producing knowledge, and in reflections on establishing and dissolving relations in the field (Hammersley, Atkinson 1995).

Working with social phenomena, as Mauss would put it, and as a consequence of drawing on the ethnographer as a "whole being", the result has been not only the observation of exchanges of material value, following Mauss, but also the expansion of the idea of what can be perceived to include immaterial value, in a more phenomenological sense. Though Mauss did not see himself as an ethnographer drawing on his intuition in his field work, probably because he lacked ethnographic experience himself, he still expressed the importance of both material and immaterial value as well as e.g. the analysis of oral exchange.

"The ethnographer must strive for exactness and thoroughness: he or she must have a sense of the facts and of the relations between them, a sense of proportions and articulations."
(Mauss 1967)

In this matter, Mauss was challenged in his own methods between the material and the immaterial when claiming that it was only through careful observations of circulations of the material that the immaterial aspects of social phenomena could be uncovered. This later returned to him in the critique of *"The Gift"* where, though striving for positivistic scientific accuracy in studying the social phenomena, he turned out to be caught in precisely their immaterial aspects, exemplified by the *hau* or the spirit of the gift. This probably also inspired him to explore the roles and practices of religion later on, where an emphasis on e.g. the immaterial meaning of speech as *"the unity of thinking and action"* was increasingly acknowledged throughout his work (Hubert, Mauss 1964, Mauss 1950, Hart 2007).

The empirically informed ways of anthropologists have also formed the basis for generating the analytical themes. Mauss would not have expected his analytical points to be deductively applied to future ethnographic studies to a de-

gree that they would frame any analysis, as if I had named the analytical themes “exchange”, “reciprocity”, “hau”, etc. Rather what have generated the analytical themes are the observations, also through interviews, of the social phenomena in the field which showed a particularly intensified and frequent activity regarding social values and exchanges: rituals and implicit knowledge expressed as verbal and material exchanges. Other than leading back to Mauss, who can still be considered a main inspiration to anthropology today, the inductive generation of analytical themes, based on the field work findings, is of course inspired by general anthropological traditions and methods.

Both Graeber and Mauss can be seen as social activists. In Mauss’ case this had a crucial impact on his social perspective which is considered seriously overlooked in the Anglophone reading of his gift theory, due to lack of access to writings which have not been translated from French (Fournier 2006). Graeber, more than Mauss, dismisses the potential and reciprocal dynamics of hierarchy and precedent, advocating for a stateless society. His argument is that this atmosphere gives rise to one-sided generosity, such as donations, which express a speculative expectation towards the recipient. This, in Graeber’s opinion, comes to define the identity of the recipient and thus places the giver as superior and is to be seen as a strategy of placing the recipient in debt, to state the giver’s superiority, rather than of sharing or equalizing (Graeber 2010). This would, in brief, be Graeber’s expounding of a Maussian concept and problematization of “power”. Returning to Mauss himself, though still a social activist, he cannot be regarded as an anarchist to the same degree. During the analysis, drawing mainly on the combination of Mauss and Graeber, an anarchist approach to City Year London, its organizational structure and societal placement would have subverted a dynamic analysis of volunteers in an organized framework, because of City Year’s definition as cross-sectorial, being involved in collaborations with the political and corporate sectors. Graeber has contributed greatly in interpreting Mauss’ work into an anthropological theory of value, yet Graeber’s political standpoints seem uncompromising. Thus he seems to contradict Mauss’ attempt to form a whole *including* the elements of conflicting interests. One might say that Graeber is less idealistic than Mauss, who has been both criticized and praised for his aspiration to manifest the relationship between society as a whole and the persons in it (Hart 2007, Graeber 2001). In his own somewhat objectionable idealism, Graeber does not contribute to the harmonization which Mauss at-

tempted in this particular aspect. I have chosen to stick to Graeber's elaboration of a value theory and Mauss' overall interest in integrating state and people through a holistic economic interrelation, and to view hierarchy as both subordinating yet also constructively challenging the dynamic and capable individual into progression. Much literature reveals surprise at and problematization of hierarchical structures, which often diverts into restating dichotomous clichés. It appears as an expression of notorious inherited ambivalence towards status on the one hand and authorities on the other. This risks becoming irrelevant for an analysis of the social potential of hierarchies in terms of how to form an integrated society; and is ultimately also the vision behind critical theory. Hierarchies, one must assume according to one interpretation of Mauss, are also a social phenomenon which can be studied in terms of exchange in order to understand society as a whole, not least because there are people who live and experience their everyday lives within them. It is still the contribution of a complex yet more empirically bound understanding of society, following the integration of communistic behavior and the function of the market side by side within hierarchical structures, an economic movement from below on human terms, which *The Gift* has given and preferably should continue to encourage – if that is its spirit.

This reveals the details of another dilemma (besides the immaterial versus material empirical interest) in Mauss' work, where he himself, though not coming forth as an anarchist, agreed that the welfare state when delegated social moral tasks of community life denied the individual its autonomy (Fournier 2006). *The Gift* offered an alternative and holistic understanding of society to replace capitalism. This double-edgedness shows yet again that construction cannot be mentioned without resistance, and that resistance is inevitably part of motivation. However, it also shows how keeping an open and constructive mind, even when driven by resistance and aversion, proves beneficial in terms of providing solutions – even if they appear as ideal visions. Science in general is not only meant to criticize and deconstruct, it is through the insights in and findings of what problems are present that science qualifies in suggesting sustainable solutions. Graeber's combination of Marx' insights into capitalism and Mauss' visions offers a more qualified version of Maussian social theory. That both, or even all three, were motivated by political indignations should of course be considered, but not divert the focus from the fact that their works are very influential and no less pertinent contributions to so-

cial science. However, an attempt has been made throughout this thesis to keep Mauss' holistic vision in the foreground.

In the following chapter I will present the empirical field which, alongside the choice of method, theory and research questions, has formed the basis for the construction of the analytical object of the thesis (Hastrup 2003).

2 Empirical field: City Year London



Figure 2: City Year sites

“There are some bad things that we’ve managed to import from America: surprisingly slow sports cars, Windows spell check; and then there are some fantastic things that we’ve imported from America: from rock ‘n roll to “Krispy Kreme Donuts”. But there’s one fantastic and very, very valuable thing that I don’t think we have had yet to acquire in this country in sufficient quantity and that is the American culture of philanthropy and giving - and we need to get it over here! (...) I hope they [young people] will look at all of you and say to themselves: “This is something original and different and I’m not gonna do a gap year in Tanzania. I’m gonna help young people, and help young people here in my city!” (...) I believe we’re creating a new culture of volunteering here in this city, and about time too. And I’m proud to say that City Year, you guys are playing a pioneering role. Thank you very much!” (Mayor of London Boris Johnson to City Year London volunteers) (Johnson 2010).

The import of the City Year program from America to London was mainly initiated by the Mayor’s Fund for London, which is a founding partner of the program along with the Private Equity Foundation. One thing is to run a national service program for youths in the US with its history of young people

engaging in building communities, another thing is to observe this in the British and European context, which is one of the reasons why City Year London is a pioneering case. In America these types of organizations are naturally well-integrated and expected to be seen in the social landscape (Frumkin, Jastrzab 2010, Goldsmith 1993). There are 28 City Year sites throughout the world, 25 in USA, one in Johannesburg and one in London UK, from which one has branched out and recently started in Birmingham UK (2013); the City Year program can be said to follow the concept of social franchising.

The volunteers in City Year are young people between the age of 18 and 25 volunteering full time for one year. They wear characteristic red bomber jackets, white t-shirts, beige boots and khaki trousers. The uniform is entirely sponsored by the American outdoor gear manufacturer, Timberland. Particularly the red jacket and the Timberland boots are important and symbolic parts of the City Year brand. These youths dedicate one year as full time volunteers at schools, mentoring children there and helping renovate indoor and outdoor areas by occasional painting and gardening. The “Community Action Days” where painting and gardening take place are open to the public for participation but facilitated and arranged by City Year volunteers. The schools can apply for public support to pay for a City Year team of ten volunteers, who work alongside the teachers in classes and play with the children in the playground during the breaks Monday through Thursday every week. In City Year London, Fridays are “leadership training days” where the entire group of 62 volunteers⁸ gathers at the main office in Islington. The training days are scheduled with training sessions facilitated by the staff, board, sponsors and partners such as schools or pedagogical insightful motivational speakers or similar.

City Year London can be seen as an initiative meant to socially benefit and change the urban environment and London as a community. City Year is an American civic engagement initiative founded in Boston in 1988 by Harvard law students Michael Brown and Alan Khazei who wanted to do something other than going into corporate law firms; instead they were interested in making a difference, helping to promote social justice through national service. They were both very well-spoken and fiery idealistic young men; a

⁸ Count from August 2011. The number of volunteers had increased to 108 by August 2012.

founding member of the City Year board in Boston (BM1) remembers how he had a meeting with Khazei and Brown, along with Neil Silverston and Jennifer Eplett Reilly who were working with youth. He himself was a director of youth services for the municipal government at the time.

"So I met with them, the four of them, and I was really impressed with their vision with the.. and frankly with them; their drive, they're winners, they were going to succeed I could tell. And I also thought it was a really positive proactive strategy and not reactive and it was, you know, at the time I was dealing with all kinds of issues of youth violence in the City of Boston; it was, you know, late 80s, 1987/1988. And I saw it was a way to address some of those issues without even talking about violence. Without even talking about dysfunction, but really to treat young people as resources and to give them the ability to act on their convictions and their morals to do something positive in the community. And I knew that if you gave young people a chance to do that, they would. So for me it was simple; just very straightforward. I also realized that the folks who were starting City Year, Michael and Alan particularly, were brilliant, geniuses really, but they hadn't worked with young people; didn't really know how to find them (...)" (Interview with BM1, Dec. 10th 2012)

The idea of social justice through national service in Brown and Khazei's perspective was that it should not just be a feel-good scheme for encouraging volunteerism, but it was meant to *do* good. Khazei wrote a paper in which he argued how national service was the key to reach "*the full promise of American democracy*" (Goldsmith, p. 24):

"The Constitution, he [Khazei] wrote, set up a republican state that was fundamentally flawed. It rested on a compromise between the republican ideal of a state ruled by people who are willing to put aside self-interest in favor of the common good, and a pluralist state in which the common good emerges from the natural balancing of individual interests. Dependence on the second ideal had resulted in a failure to invest in ways of promoting the first. National service could help establish a truly republican state by infusing young citizens with a sense of the common good and teaching them the skills and habits of civic engagement."

National service has a long history in the United States of America: from colonial settlers sharing with Native Americans to Franklin D. Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps and Kennedy's Peace Corps in the 60s. Focus on this way of engaging unemployed youth started in the early 70s and from 1976 youth corps were increasingly seen throughout the US. The political support was random and because it was mainly targeted at youth who were not in schools, the actual categorization of these organizations was discussed: was it

job training, civic education, cheap labor, volunteerism or rehabilitation? By the end of the 80s the youth driven community organizations were no longer for just unemployed people and young people outside the educational system, now even college students, got involved and created opportunities for both older and younger people and their own generations in e.g. education, social recreation and general welfare. When City Year took off in 1988, the pilot program started out as a summer program with the benefit of a \$1000 scholarship at the end of the year, called the Education Award, recruiting people from poor or middle-class families, and somehow they became established as a racially and economically diverse program from the very beginning and not a jobs program for minority youth; City Year was for everybody, it was a citizenship program. In 1992 President Bill Clinton made national service a top priority and in 1991 candidate Clinton had made a visit to City Year headquarters in Boston where he spoke to them for two hours on civic engagement and national service and reciprocally the idealism, diversity and commitment of City Year corps members inspired Clinton to envision what national service could be like. City Year under Clinton in 1993 became part of a larger association of national service programs called the AmeriCorps which is partially funded by federal means and whose corps elements match City Year values exactly: diversity, encouraging responsibility, providing opportunity, building community all through action as in getting things *done*.

Throughout the 1990s City Year expanded to 20 cities throughout the US. President Nelson Mandela invited City Year to Johannesburg in 2005 and the visit resulted in City Year being launched there. Shortly after in 2007 the Private Equity Fund in the United Kingdom began working on bringing City Year to London and three years later, in the summer of 2010, the first group of corps members representing City Year London initiated their city year in the UK (Goldsmith 1993, Frumkin, Jastrzab 2010, CYL 2010). This field work was conducted through following the second year corps in London.

Charity in the UK

City Year in the UK has the legal structure of a private company limited by guarantee. The members elect the directors, who actually govern the company, and at the same time the members and the directors are the same group

of people, as often seen in charities. City Year London is constituted by a memorandum and governed by articles of association, including a not-for-profit clause. The company has been registered as a charity and the board of directors is thus referred to as trustees. To be able to sell branding benefits to sponsors City Year London has created another company, a trading subsidiary limited by guarantee wholly owned by City Year London but which is not a charity; only all profit from this company must go to City Year, the charity. This makes the trading subsidiary a social business (Hulgård 2007). It is a common way for charities to run for example gift shops. Originally City Year London was registered as a charity with the object of the advancement of education for young people. This meant that corps members could not be beneficiaries of the charity and could not be given cash.

However, as a volunteer in City Year London, by the end of the year, one can apply for a grant, “The Citizen Service Award” (CSA) which is equivalent to the US “Education Award”. In the UK the volunteer applies for the CSA in writing by signing a statement of interest in the beginning of the year of service in August and follows up by writing an application after having accomplished a full year of service in July. The CSA in the UK is £1.000 and in the US the Education Award is \$5.000. Furthermore, City Year London has created a hardship fund to help the volunteers if they experience particular financial hardship during the year. This led to a need to add to the company’s objective to include “the relief of poverty”, to enable them to pay out grants to needing corps members as beneficiaries of the company. A corps member can apply for up to £500 every quarter of the academic year, if for example he or she needs to pay for glasses or similar expenses. City Year London as a charity cannot pay the volunteers legally and these are ways of supporting the corps members financially throughout their year of volunteering. City Year also reimburses the volunteers’ out-of-pocket expenses by £100 weekly on presentation of receipts for living expenses, mainly food and transport. In addition, the Mayor of London sponsored bus passes from Transport for London for the entire group of corps members in the year of 2011-12. In practice a corps member in City Year London has £142 per week on average, including the CSA. Taking into account that London is one of the world’s most expensive cities to live in, it can still not be regarded as sufficient pay to cover living expenses. Asking corps members and former corps members

about whether they do it for the money or whether it pays financially to volunteer with City Year London gave me answers like the following:

"We never did it for the money. We didn't.. I didn't even join with a hardship fund. I got £181 a week. Corps Members are now averaging £142 with a CSA. We got the CSA after we graduated because it hadn't come in place yet (...) I think it's because although corps members do get money for their time there's no way that the money we give them is even covering a quarter of what they actually do. So say you cover Monday and Tuesday with £142 a week, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday are not covered, and then there's stuff to do on Saturdays. It's the early starts and the late finishes. I think it's just the fact that you are volunteering a lot more than just a couple of days. It's 11 months, Monday to Friday. We call them corps members because we think volunteering is a bit demeaning, because doing this, all the corps members call it work. It's not two hours here, four hours here. It's not like a service they're doing now where people are literally volunteering their time. This is like a job, they're just not getting paid for it (...) I think I'd call it more of an internship. Level of responsibility is a lot more [than volunteering] We're writing reports, we're meeting funders, we're going to pitches, we're recruiting (...) I'd say intern – someone who's learning the ropes of an organization, especially with my eye on becoming [staff member], so when the goal came I was ready to start." (Interview S3 Nov. 9th 2011, former corps member and member of staff).

The voluntary aspect of the commitment, full time, and sometimes even more, through 11 months is a huge commitment and the drive and energy that naturally has to lie behind each volunteer's engagement is a crucial part of the organization's culture, both its mission and its approach.

"City Year is a very flexible resource for schools and communities, because we harness the energies of young people. And it's very important that we're harnessing energies of the young people who want to be there, who are choosing to be there, who are sometimes giving up jobs or postponing jobs, in order to spend their year doing this, because they feel committed and passionate about it. Because actually, if they just saw it as a job, you wouldn't get the level of energy, the level of going above and beyond that you get through this group of people." (Interview LS2 Nov. 18th 2011, leading member of staff)

Even though the volunteers are seen as the most important people in the organization, in practice the management states that everybody has to have a boss and that the organization has to be able to present an organogram and a hierarchy⁹ to funders and collaborators. The organizational practice can be described as a flat structure and an open door policy where anybody can enter the staff work area and the management is found working among regular

⁹ Appendix 1

staff. The CEO's office is placed on the same floor, centrally, and close to the entrance, reception, kitchen, staff working area, and conference room with transparent glass facades and most often an open door. The CEO reports to the board of trustees and is responsible for the rest of the management team which runs or delegates the daily activities. In practice most of the staff agrees that the pyramid of hierarchy should be inverted to describe how important the corps members really are. But it is also clear to staff and management that the corps members are only in the organization for one year, most of them exhaust themselves and few climb up the ladder and stay within the organization. The vacant staff positions are very limited compared to the number of corps members each year. The rest of the staff need to pace themselves and not burn out (according to LS2). They cannot be expected to commit themselves to service days during weekends.

Even though City Year London is a company limited by guarantee as well as a charity, it is considered important that it is run as a business. The main goal is of course social but to achieve the social goal effectively and to live up to the aim of preparing the corps members for the market dominated work environments properly, and also have them be good role models for the children, it is seen as important to manage the organization in a business-like way that indicates professionalism and efficiency.

"The expectations of the staff are high here because that then filters through. There are too many organizations that are not like that in the charity sector and that is letting people down (...) We owe it to the beneficiaries of the organization to be as efficient as possible. So we do try.. staff are not allowed to wear jeans to work, for example, they have to dress smartly and professionally, or in uniform. It just gives a certain sort of ethos from when people come into the building and down to standard of professionalism when we have agendas or meetings and starting things on time and that sort of thing, that's really important. If you're taking large amounts of money from business, you've got to be able to talk business and to deliver." (Interview LS2, Nov. 18th 2011)

Making sure they stay trustworthy to their funders and clients in appearance as well as efficiency, in words and action, is crucial in keeping the funding coming; a big part of being a charity is the constant chase of money. Making sure the integrity of the entire organization stays intact is also part of the fundraising strategy and fundraising is seen as selling services, it is just selling in a different way (LS2). One pitfall in this reality is the temptation to try and meet funders' beliefs by skewing what the charity does. Because of City

Year's strong brand and model, their experience is that funders have bought into them instead of City Year skewing what they do, but it is something they are very well aware of. Parallel to all of this, City Year London, like all other charities, also continuously has to reassure the Charity Commission that they deserve their place on the charity register and must constantly work to prove that they provide public benefit and that they only use their money for achieving their objectives. They have to make their accounts publicly available and it is not unknown in the UK for the Charity Commission to revoke an organization's charitable status, which would make the charity go back to being an ordinary private company. Unlike some other countries English law does not require that charities only work towards public benefit within the country, that a minimum of the members or director are resident in the UK or that charities take no part in political activity. The guidelines around political activity for charities are such that if the charity campaigns politically it needs to justify that it is doing so to further its objectives and that the public will benefit (England-Wales 2013).

The everyday life of the people in City Year London, the staff and the corps who I was observing, is focused on balancing meeting the expectations of funders and supporters, living up to their name and brand in general, keeping the corps members committed, because it does take strong commitment to effectively live up to what the organization offers, and at the same time keeping the work environment positive, lucid, proactive and worthwhile. This is organized by a competent management team who take their tasks seriously and are aware of how their commitment is needed not only to get everything done professionally and live up to various expectations, but also because their attitude filters down through the organization and ultimately rubs off on the corps members and their commitment throughout the demanding year of volunteering. The high level of enthusiasm, passion and commitment to the cause is something which characterizes the organization wherever one turns; even looking at the statements on the impressions made by the founders of City Year back in the 80s, one finds words like 'drive', 'passion' and 'winning personalities' and still today in London such commitment is one of the secret ingredients in their financial and ideological sustainment as well as in their services. This awareness and commitment in itself is what makes for a unique performance in the services they offer to the community on behalf of the cause and their sponsors.

3 Conceptual frame

The thesis sets out to conceptualize learning as social exchange and thus it seeks to theoretically find an original understanding of learning through refined conceptualization, which is then empirically unfolded in interaction with data from City Year London as its field. The theoretical framework takes its point of departure in Mauss' individualistic communism. In the course of this chapter I will seek to explain the analytical concepts and implications involved. I will mainly be referring to a Maussian anthropological theory of value which has been developed by a Professor of Anthropology, David Graeber, currently at the London School of Economics. One of the main challenges in conveying and applying theories that stem from Mauss' socialist and holistic visions is obviously the dominance of a dichotomous discourse regarding the market economy in society today along with Marx' theory of labor and production. This means that one can hardly use the term 'value' or 'economy' without it being categorically associated with outcome, self-interest, or the social-individualistic dichotomy. One could then present the counter argument that this is because talking about value from a different point of view, particularly inspired by archaic peoples, is no longer relevant. To this I would reply that the gift economy, *total prestations*, is highly relevant to focus on. Firstly, to repeat Mauss' own argument, market economic behavior was found amongst isolated peoples, to a great extent, as an integrated part of solidary, social and individual life. Secondly, when trying to grasp learning, the idea of *total prestations* plays a crucial role in understanding the continuous human creative processes of finding meaning in this perspective, and is explored as the life lived both in the shadow and in the spotlight of production, as part of social life in general, in spite of whether or not these have been institutionalized or formalized.

To simplify a dynamic structuralist theoretical philosophy to its essence, Graeber, in his book *"Toward an Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams"* (Graeber 2001), starts by referring to the dispute between Hera-

clitus and Parmenides and the question of fixed and dynamic patterns. He bases his anthropological theory of value on an argument stating that the dispute was originally won by Parmenides affecting Western thinking in a way which permeates social science to find itself stuck in an unsolved structure-actor dilemma (Graeber 2001). Graeber inspired directly from Mauss focuses on elaborating a contributive alternative and attempts to refrain from deconstruction. In this attempt he starts with the basic Heraclitean idea that everything that seems fixed is really patterns of motion. The notion gives relevance to talking about people's timeliness and historicity as a matter of course, and generating value through intentional action. At the same time it also offers relevance when talking about people's timelessness and the detachability of their creative actions: how value creations endure across time and through social circulation dynamically connect the individual with both the social and experienced exterior forces, or individual emotions and spirituality as well as everyday social interactions and exchanges.

'Learning' – a multi-faceted concept

Charities and community action as innovative factors continue to gain increasing focus around the globe where voluntary work is promoted and encouraged through media and governments. It has become equivalent to and a way of showing social responsibility; one might even state that it has become part of a personal as well as an organizational branding strategy expressing co-responsibility in helping to solve local community matters which in the end often are predicted to reflect on bettering the living conditions for everyone globally. The "only a drop in the ocean" has gone from being *just* one drop to a world where every drop is expressed as pivotal, pointing to a notion of the uniqueness of the individual. This tendency can be connected to what Graeber refers to as "*the first premise of Modernity*", stating that all humans are equal because we are unique individuals, and is seen as creating a common ground of individual uniqueness which on the other hand makes us all incommensurable (Graeber 2001). The conviction, regarding how we all give life to each other through each of us living out our potential in co-responsible action, greatly impacts the focus on and contexts of voluntary work today. At the same time it is generally seen as part of a movement towards meeting social and ecological needs caused by the ecological crisis, which the neo-liberal

financial crisis is seen as having caused (Laville 2011, Hart, Laville et al. 2010). In the latter view co-responsibility exceeds the social and includes an environmental and geographical perspective.

The voluntary organizations seem to possess the drive and room for acting out ideas and coming up with solutions, a quality which also characterizes the entrepreneur (Swedberg 2000, Gibb 2002). For this reason this voluntary organization for young people, in this thesis, is seen from the perspective of encouraging entrepreneurial skills and entrepreneurial behavior without educating for entrepreneurship specifically. However it is important to keep in mind that City Year's main aim is contributing to enhance children's academic and social skills through the volunteers' mentoring, on the service delivery side. In Denmark, social entrepreneurship and voluntary social work are also interwoven mainly through their nature as grass root organizations¹⁰. Furthermore, since innovation, start-up (social) businesses, and the individual opportunity nexus are at the heart of (social) entrepreneurship (Shane, Eckhardt 2003), social entrepreneurship due to its primary social beneficial aim includes an element of altruism which is shared by charities.

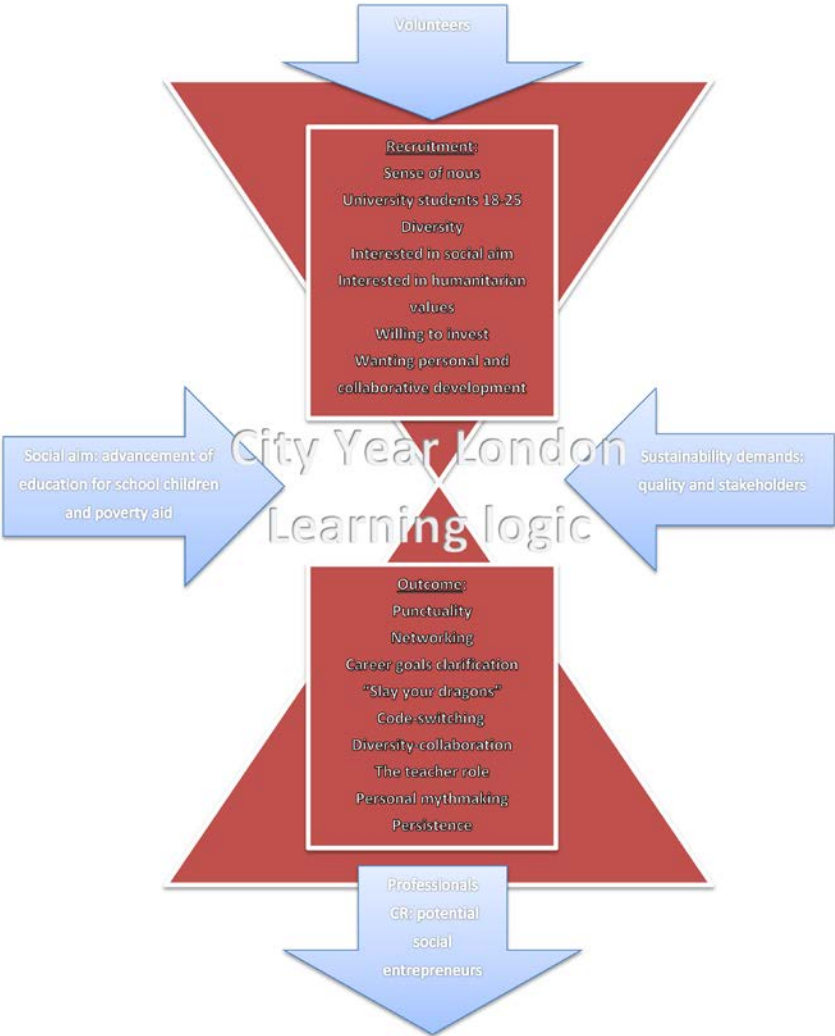
Social entrepreneurship and voluntary organizations share parts of the voluntary element in meeting newly discovered as well as old common social needs through creative innovation. Though not analytically or methodologically used, within entrepreneurship theory it is mainly notions of entrepreneurial skills and learning processes related to entrepreneurial activity which are relevant here. Due to relatively little literature, this applies particularly to the literature on "*societal entrepreneurship*" which is a topic of research in Sweden (Berglund, Johannisson et al. 2012) and Danish educational research on innovation and pedagogics (Darsø 2012, Kromann, Skønstrøm 2010). When discussing general education, civility and interestedness, this perspective leads back to "*the individual-opportunity nexus*" (Shane, Eckhardt 2003), and the defining of entrepreneurial skills (Gibb 2002). Also regarding the question of the development of entrepreneurial skills, the project is inspired by the perspective currently unfolded in e.g. the PACE project at Århus University on entrepreneurship education (Rae, Wang 2015). But in general, in attempts to understand learning as social value exchange in this thesis, economic anthro-

¹⁰ See Hulgård and Andersen for Danish experience (Hulgård, Andersen 2009).

pology has been chosen over other approaches in the entrepreneurial field regarding skills development (above) as well as the social value of relations (Putnam 2007, Granovetter 1973), mainly due to anthropology's strong empirical tradition and sensitivity when addressing this question, but not least with the intention of including other equally relevant perspectives from classic anthropology.

Conversely, for these voluntary organizations, drawing on political and business collaborations and thus running the organization in a professional and enterprising way is an important element in staying sustainable. This is one reason why professionalism in City Year London includes the ability to follow the change and dynamics of the surrounding communities' needs to which they offer their services and solutions. The constant transience demands a certain amount of individual flexibility from the participants for the organization to deliver a quality service. To meet the expectations from their environment and various stakeholders, the learning activities focus on strengths like flexibility, a sense of nous as to meeting the needs of others, awareness of rules and legislation involved, pedagogical techniques and reflections, collaborative skills, self-awareness and presentation, participation in idea generating activities, and creative initiative. Organizationally this positions and constitutes City Year London as a learning arena educating young people in a humanitarian logic with the prospect to be able to contribute in society as social entrepreneurs, innovators and professionals; this also being in line with Khazei's vision mentioned above (p. 31).

Clearly the formal aim of the organization places City Year London in a market, labor and production discourse. Besides delivering the services as the type of labor, the individual’s investment of him- or herself into the delivery, to be blunt, is a must and in mentorship is viewed as an indispensable element of the service. Thus, City Year London on the one hand inscribes itself into a labor and market logic and Figure 3 visualizes the organization’s own learning logic, clearly expressing this self-understanding. All the various elements listed are based on quotations from staff and volunteers in City Year when talking about how the volunteers are recruited and what they are ex-



41Figure 3: Organizational learning logic

pected to learn and what the overall aim of the organization should be.

The blue arrow on the left, pointing to the right, is the formally registered charity aims of City Year London, which co-constructs the learning logic of the organization, along with the other elements in the figure. The opposite blue arrow on the right, pointing left, stresses how the various stakeholders, sponsors and collaborators affect the everyday activities for the volunteers and the expectations regarding their behavior as competent mentors, social role models and community builders living up to the social service objectives of the organization. The upper red box is a brief summary of the recruitment strategy whereas the lower red box is the volunteers' own immediate replies when asking them what they learn in the organization. The upper and lower blue arrows show how the organization sees itself as supporting a general education as well as a social professionalization becoming more personally clarified along with a consciousness of social contribution. However, going beyond the surface of the organization and continuing beyond this model of learning and service delivery into observing the micro-processes of learning from this social exchange perspective opens up a rich world of youth action, myths and collaboration which replaced the initial presentation of the organization as the primary focus of the field work; this is where anthropology becomes highly useful. Having presented City Year's own presentation of their learning model, life behind the scenes is then entered through the notion of exchange, as "learning" in practice has become a very broad term that comes in many forms, enabling "learning" to be viewed both at a distance and up close.

As indicated above, one thing is to ask the organization how and what is learned by way of a quick introduction. This is a typical promotion strategy which perfectly suits the market logic in which the organization is also inscribed; one that we know also from personal presentations when networking towards jobs and handing out our business cards, and which quickly accounts for the concrete contributions. Digging deeper into the understanding of learning and City Year London led to a welter of views, applications, and facilitations of learning perspectives. Again this supports Mouritsen's notion regarding how learning is one of those concepts, like play, that everybody feels competent to have a say about because in our social activity we have all been through both general and specific education and basic child rearing

(Mouritsen 1996). It could be one of the reasons why “learning” has multiplied conceptually the way it has. The Danish professor of education Knud Illeris writes about how “learning” has turned into a buzzword and how this has generally led to a challenging of the application of learning theories (Illeris 2000). As it turned out during the research process, a precondition for writing this thesis is the fact that also in this field there are several ideas of “learning” in play parallel to my attempt of analyzing the very same, which seemed like quite a paradox and called for a clarification of the various ideas of learning perspectives as well as a demarcation of “learning” in an economic anthropological sense.

Empirically probably the expectation of a learning outcome played the greatest role. This too came in variations as to where I expected to find “learning” methodologically; these people were educated and entrepreneurial citizens that City Year had taken on itself to co-produce, the volunteers observing both the formal strategy of the organization which expressed expectations towards *their* learning, as well as the volume and ways of the cultural myths and training sessions which invited the volunteers to a more bottom-up way of engaging. Finally, and in my perspective, there was the lived social life parallel to all these expectations, what Graeber calls *baseline communism* (Graeber 2010), where the micro-processes of a more open-ended social exchange was not least to be found. In the following I will go over the theoretical perspectives which will help to break down the various processes of learning as exchange, as a dynamic movement initially between two individual points, as suggested by Jean Piaget, and through Mauss’ contribution as circulating and value accumulating in social life.

Jean Piaget’s adaptation and equilibrium

Illeris’ broadening of the learning concept, based on Piaget, was found to provide the framework for the epistemology of learning and not least for indicating my method and conceptual starting point with “learning” as a concept. Illeris says that the broadening of “learning” has developed as a consequence of the person-oriented demands of competence from the surrounding society. That it developed into being associated with marketable skills demands like personal adaptability, display of commitment, ability of competi-

tive performance, and preferably a fireball character in regards to participation in organizational innovation processes – something which can be recognized in City Year. Illeris notes that learning no longer only means acquisition and adaptation; the demands on the learner include the ability to reflect on the his or her own learning processes, also referred to as meta-learning, and to accept existential rollercoasters of continuous learning and development throughout life. It includes an acceptance of a personal lifelong developmental aspect. Illeris outlines his broad learning concept as consisting of three elements: socialization, qualification, and personal development (Illeris 2001). Though this trichotomy is useful for a perspective and historical overview of the term, my aim is to anthropologically unfold learning with an empirical base in my observations in City Year London, where individual learning is specifically mirrored in the social cultural dynamics and vice versa (Krejsler, Kryger et al. 2005). A common trait in both traditional cognitive learning theory and Mauss' dynamic structuralism is that all change, and thus learning, is somehow based on social exchange and an active movement between destruction and creation. This notion carries the understanding of "learning" in the theoretical approach of this thesis. A learning theoretical basis which helps us to understand this culturally observed movement is Piaget's theories concerning the construction of experience and equilibrium (Piaget 1959). Piaget's exposition of the natural principle of equilibrium found in learning theory portrays individual learning as socially dependent and a process-related movement between an inner and outer world, between accommodation and assimilation, i.e. the process he calls *adaptation* (Piaget 1959, Jerlang 2002a).

Swiss cognitive psychologist Jean Piaget became epochal in developmental learning theories due to his analysis of developmental stages based on studies of early childhood and youth (age 0-15) (Jerlang 2002a). Piaget was very much inspired by biology and natural science and believed that the laws of nature were to be rediscovered in the individual psyche as well as within social interaction. He was particularly fascinated by the idea of *equilibrium*, which he explains as a permeating natural dynamics at all levels. He also used this to describe behavior as affective functions of regulation, or individual reactions to externally imposed disturbance (Piaget 1959). This interpretation of cognitive structures was taken even further in Gestalt theory and social psychology inspired by topology. In the processes of equilibrium in psychology, in terms of cognitive mechanisms, Piaget claimed that a lack of equilibrium led to pa-

thology and was connected to the basic regulations of motivation and will on an emotional plain. He also described it as an elaboration of the fact that all behavior would strive towards equilibration between inner and outer, or between assimilation and accommodation, not towards equilibrium as a state, but primarily as a part of the learning process. He went so far as to call equilibrium a fourth factor in the line of the key factors of cognition: maturing, physical environment and social environment, binding these three together in a more general way as a causality based on the interdependence between them. Furthermore he claimed that the equilibrium principle would be systematically and socially visible, thus reflecting the inner cognitive processes between pre-logical and logical structures in reversibility and the adaptation process, which Lev Vygotsky referred to as “scaffolding” (Jerlang 2002b, Piaget 1959). Illeris’ attempt to ascribe these subconscious strategies to a social context results in stating a human function of increasing the win or decreasing the risk of any loss in games (Illeris 2000) which places him in line with the traditional and sketchy understanding of the value-maximizing individual, commonly known as the “mini-max” theorem¹¹ – a generalization which this thesis’ theoretical approach expands and clarifies the micro-sociological nuances of. The mini-max philosophy of human nature leads to discussing the dominance in humans of self-interested behavior, which is relevant to the thesis’ objective via the interest in learning and exchange. The discussion is one that parts the waters between the focal points of Mauss and Marx respectively, as well as the points about social value from Mauss and Pierre Bourdieu (Graeber 2001). I have already touched upon the constructive and integrative view of Mauss, which is characterized by an acceptance of mini-max behavior as a natural part of social behavior in certain situations yet not in others. Mauss thus offers a more complex view on individual behavior in social life, which, as will be shown through empirical examples, results in a more dynamic focus on learning overall. I will return to this further during the following introduction to Graeber’s elaboration of Mauss and anthropological social value theory.

¹¹ Elaborated as a solution to zero-sum or non-cooperative games: the individual’s actions towards minimizing the possible loss while maximizing the potential gain (Graeber 2001).

Mauss' social value

French ethnographer and anthropologist Marcel Mauss (1872-1950) wrote his principal work "*Essai sur le Don*" in 1923-24 about gift economy and solidarity behavior among archaic peoples. Mauss was a visionary and engaged socialist active in the socialist political project. His interest lay in the continuation of the social scientific focus of his uncle, Emile Durkheim, on the rise of the individual and the market, the decline of spiritual solidarity, and the social changes this entailed. Inspired by ethnographic studies in Melanesia, Polynesia, the American Northwest and studies of pervasive legal systems, including ancient Roman law, *The Gift* emerged with the purpose of defining the market not as an ultimate organizing point in social life and a value determinant, but as a mere technique for allocating resources, relegating the market to what in Mauss' perspective was its proper function. At the same time this was a statement that *value* was a question of not only individually gaining something, but also of social life, circulation and thus contribution via applied and re-applied perceptions of meaningfulness. The anthropological idea of value was, and still often is, distorted with the market perspective and its connotations of perceptions of self-interested human nature. This deeply concerned Mauss, with his unfulfilled urge to see the realization of institutions based on generosity, giving and hospitality (Hart 2007, Graeber 2001). But he still managed to provide a different and nuanced view on social life and the function of the market.

Gifts and exchange as an anthropological theme have since been elaborated and applied by a great number of other theorists and Mauss' observations and reflections on gift exchange are to be seen as some of the most influential ethnographic work in the history of social science (Eriksen 1998, Lévi-Strauss 1987, Godelier 1996) – maybe even *the* most significant (Graeber 2001). That being said, there are several points, besides those already mentioned, to be made about the theoretical contribution of *The Gift*. Firstly, *The Gift* was based on Mauss' secondary interpretation of the ethnographic works of Bronislaw Malinowski (people of Papua New Guinea in the Trobriands, Melanesia), Franz Boas (the Kwakiutl people, out of "*the Five Nations*" in the American Northwest), and Elsdon Best (the Maori in New Zealand, Polynesia), to mention those referred to in this thesis.

Anthropology at the time was of course influenced by the natural sciences' hypothetical-deductive approach to knowledge production and the aim of ethnography was to test connections and map out the social dynamics in the observed cultures. British imperialism also had a heavy influence on expeditions to foreign countries and regions where anthropologists set out to prepare the locals for a more "civilized" mindset and inform home of what they were to expect from these foreigners (Eriksen 1998). Once arriving in these foreign communities, however, it was a general perception that observing these isolated, archaic, "unspoiled" societies would provide an insight into original and pure forms of social dynamics and coherences, bringing social science closer to a truth about original social life. This knowledge of course was seen to be obtained by isolating and integrating oneself in the environments and experiencing the others firsthand with the aim of somehow documenting social life on the terms of natural science (Mauss 1967). Social constructivist and post-structuralist methodology shivers by the thought of this approach and complete lack of the field worker's self-reflection. The ways of stigmatizing and the political agenda underlying anthropology are of course also strongly criticized to the point of being seen as ridiculous among present-day anthropologists. Yet even today we can hardly avoid political currents.

Besides contemporary anthropology's criticism of its former ways, Mauss' avoidance of taking production into consideration has been greatly criticized by Marxists who claim that without occupying oneself with the modes of production one can hardly say anything about value and social totalities. In continuation of this, Mauss has been criticized from the Marxist angle, and from feminists, for focusing mainly on great men doing dramatic exchanges, overlooking: 1) the crucial and productive, mainly female, life behind the scenes and 2) thus detaching the objects of exchange from their historicity which leads the interpretation of the spirit of the gifts to be completely open to fetishization (Graeber 2001). Graeber argues against this criticism by opening up Mauss' conceptualization of the "total system" where reciprocity in open-ended relationships, in Graeber's version, allows for productive life behind the scenes as well as processes of ascribing meaning to be taken into consideration.

Mauss himself, during his interpretations which led to writing *The Gift*, also made several misinterpretations for which he has been criticized. These misinterpretations do not detract significantly from his general contribution to social science, neither to the points made here, but for the sake of good order I will briefly go through the most relevant. Firstly he has been widely criticized for his misinterpretation of “the spirit of the gift”, which he drew from a letter from Maori chief Tamati Ranaipiri to Elsdon Best (Sahlins 2004, Graeber 2001, Godelier 1996). What he overlooked was that when Ranaipiri referred to *hau* he did it in the context of a hunter’s ritual aimed at returning something to the forest for what humans had been taking when they killed and ate the birds of the forest. Mauss’ point regarding the spirit of the gift may not be precise when based on the Maori *hau*, but the theory of social value which underlies it is still relevant. The problem was that Mauss deduced the bold notion that when objects are exchanged the object integrates part of the giver’s personality. This personification of the object he names *the spirit of the gift*. This is the notion that Graeber, in his value theory, sets out to test. While doing so it also becomes clear that it is more the claim that follows which has been misunderstood: that the spirit of the gift will seek to return to its origin and at the same time cause the recipient to become obligated to produce a counter-gift of equal value – this has broadly been known by the term ‘reciprocity’ when referring to Mauss’ works. As it turns out during Graeber’s comparative analysis between the Maori and Kwakiutl, Maori culture is so little focused on material value that this makes no sense. Turning to Kwakiutl potlatches also reveals that, although the Kwakiutl are excessively focused on material value, for a chief to demand what he had given out to be returned in the way Mauss describes would be dishonorable behavior and was far from social etiquette, neither was it used in rival exchanges.

On that note, leaving behind reciprocity as a social *kind* of obligatory behavior demanding equal material value, particularly in and of potlatches as primarily rival overbidding, I continue along the lines of Mauss’ notions about an alternative social convention to the idea of the market oriented individual. This direction contributes greatly to understanding social value as something generated by individual desire interdependently inscribed in a social whole for meaningfulness. What is found useful concerning *The Gift* is the point that the social dynamics of exchange, as Mauss states, is caused by a spirit of the gift and constitutes a form of *social glue* which binds individuals in a community

together through continuous and complex exchanges of material and spiritual value. This natural mode of a social community causes any community to be that of *total prestations* to some extent. *Total prestations* are open-ended social relationships where gifts do not have to be repaid. This creates permanent social bonds, and in social interaction it stretches out across several social spheres which we in the West have institutionalized as legal, spiritual, moral, political and familial (Mauss 1967). Hart elaborates (Hart 2007):

“(...) *the earliest forms of exchange took place between entire social groups and involved the whole range of things people can do for each other, a stage he [Mauss] called the système des prestations totales*”.

An important point in this is that what we in the West categorize from arbitrary cut off points and institutionalize really springs from, and was originally integrated in, social life, not opposed to social life! The line of reasoning ultimately leads to defining an *individualistic communism* which is the view of human nature taken in this thesis:

“(...) *the idea that specific individuals are bound by open-ended obligations which knit together across society creating a collection of individual positions. These individual positions then constitute a system of total reciprocities which results in a communism as a strictly individual thing.*” (Graeber 2001).

This definition is based on a notion of communism as Louis Blanc phrased it: “*from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs*” (Graeber 2001:218), and is also what Graeber later has named “baseline communism” (Graeber 2010). The adoption of Mauss’ individualistic communism will not be applied to City Year London to see if it fits; it is basically understanding social interaction in this light which is this thesis’ attempt to originally contribute to educational research, because it suggests a certain opportunity for observing learning processes, namely as *individual value expression in a cultural context*, in a voluntary organization where this is part of the agenda.

Elaborated note on “reciprocity”

Before moving further into the links between social value theory and learning, reciprocity needs to be elaborated. Reciprocity as a term will be used throughout the analysis to account for various degrees, but not various

kinds¹², of open- and closedness of social relations, as suggested by Graeber. For that a quick visit to Karl Polanyi's *substantivistic economy* pointing to Marshall Sahlins' forms of reciprocity and notes on kinship are presumed to be useful to the reader.

The repercussions of *The Gift* have, as mentioned, stirred and enthused social science, and continue to do so. In the 1960s, the elaborations of the circulation of goods developed into an economic anthropological school of thought that also challenged the Marxist capitalistic idea which separates human relations and capitalistic economy through notions on production. Economic anthropology viewed human patterns of interaction as the very basis of, and thus inseparable from, the truth about how economy was to be understood. These discussions increased when the Hungarian born economic anthropologist and political economist Karl Polanyi (1886-1964) first published his article "*Anthropology and Economic Theory*". Here he presented a criticism of Marxist economic perception, or what he calls the market principle, as the only form of existing economy. Besides the market economic principle he launched two other principles of exchange and economy, inspired by Mauss¹³: the principles of redistribution and that of reciprocity. *The market economic principle*, in Polanyi's definition, is characterized by supply and demand of goods and services and exchange takes place through pricing. The relation between supplier and demander is contractual, based on calculation of interest. Money plays an important role in this sphere but is not exclusively characteristic of it. *Redistribution* involves delegation of production to a central authority which distributes goods. This calls for regulation of the exchanges. In time, a relationship is developed between the central authority and the actors involved, as the central authority inflicts obligations on the actors through this type of exchange. Polanyi's exposition of redistribution would fit Graeber's notions concerning hierarchy caused by the state which in his opinion is the opposite of reciprocity and results in one-sidedness and abuse (Graeber 2010). Polanyi also notes that this is seen in e.g. representative democracy and welfare systems. *Reciprocity*, according to Polanyi, concerns the relationships developing

¹² A point made by Marshall Sahlins.

¹³ Differentiating between natural and profitable exchange had already been considered by Aristotle, among other Greek philosophers. Later Max Weber introduced another kind of differentiation, though in a more capitalistic and economic thread of thought, with his different forms of rationality.

in groups or among persons through meaningful action, i.e. meaningful in that the action expresses a will to demonstrate a social bond or sense of connectedness between the participants. Reciprocity differs from the market principle by its unquestionable connection to human relations, including the need for acceptance and/or power. It is the latter notion, made by Polanyi and contrary to Graeber, which is followed through this thesis, where hierarchy and power are integrated aspects of reciprocal interaction. Reciprocity differs from redistribution by the fact that the exchange is not administrated by a central power. Nonetheless all three forms are inherently interwoven and inseparable. The gift is regarded as a typical expression of reciprocity (Laville 2011, Polanyi 1968). Part of Polanyi's theoretical manifest is a basic component in a general distinction between two forms of economic thinking, the substantivistic and the formalistic:

"The substantive meaning of economic derives from man's dependence for his livelihood upon nature and his fellows. It refers to the interaction with his natural and social environment insofar as it results in supplying him with the means of material want satisfaction. The formal meaning of economic derives from the logical character of the means-ends relationship, as apparent in such words as 'economical' or 'economizing'. It refers to a definite situation of choice, namely, that between the different uses of means induced by 'insufficiency of the means' (...) the logic of rational action (...)" (Polanyi 1968)

In short, anthropologists' and economists' fusion and mutual interests in each other's fields had taken off. Polanyi's distinction reminds one of the discussions between the concepts of *homo socius* and *homo oeconomicus*, whereas the discussion between substantivists and formalists introduces a broader focus and elaboration on human economic nature including the capitalistic economic aspect (Polanyi 1968, Cook 1968).

Following Polanyi's notions, the American anthropologist from Chicago Marshall Sahlins (born 1930) also spent his career continuing the social criticism of economic rationality. Sahlins elaborates on Polanyi's three economic principles and particularly *reciprocity* related to various kinds of kinship behavior: generalized, balanced and negative reciprocity (Sahlins 2004, Eriksen 1998). What Sahlins refers to as generalized reciprocity corresponds to the type of behavior which Best had observed in Polynesia. In this type of exchange, Sahlins says, everything is shared, not out of generosity but out of social

norms emphasizing solidarity and community. The socially binding activities surpass individual calculation and gain as individual gain is reached through solidarity. The reciprocation is not expected within a certain amount of time or as a certain type of object or material; it can be material or immaterial, service or favor, and timed according to the initial giver's need (Eriksen 1998, Sahlins 2004). This is what is meant by open-ended relations and corresponds to Mauss' individualistic communism (Graeber 2001). Balanced reciprocity, says Sahlins, compares to selling and buying or direct barter of an object exchange. Here the utility value exceeds social relations. As in market exchange, no long term social bonds are necessarily created or maintained as a result of the exchange. Supply and demand lie behind the act of exchange; one pays for what one receives up front or settles an agreement by contract. It is explicit what is expected in return and this way one avoids debts of gratitude and the form and timing of reciprocation (Sahlins 2004, Eriksen 1998).

Sahlins does not call balanced reciprocity market economic behavior as this is still seen as a type of reciprocity, though it certainly fits interactions that we know from the market. I agree with this interpretation of Mauss, which emphasizes reciprocity as a type of behavior which accommodates bartering. Finally, Sahlins conceptualizes negative reciprocity which can be described as an antisocial extreme and includes actions like theft, fraud, and gambling. This is the situation where the individual wants something without being ready to give back or might attempt to gain more than he or she is willing to give. Graeber touches on this type of social behavior, not only seen among enemies, as in the case of the Iroquois "mourning war complex", but among the Kwakiutl, in the exchange of coppers, fraud could be part of the rivalries amongst culturally included members as a reaction to having been outbidded or due to feeling a certain amount of entitlement; thus a statement would be made as to who would be the one to decide material value (Graeber 2001). Sahlins makes a point of distinguishing between the social spheres where these types of behavior are seen. Generalized reciprocity is primarily seen within family and open-ended relations, balanced reciprocity is found in a community that barter and negative reciprocity is primarily and ideally found in relations to strangers, outsiders or enemies who are not seen as a part of "us". However, balanced reciprocity is also seen between groups or individuals seeking to enter into a social relationship and thus Graeber observes how balanced bartering is sometimes used to try out whether a relationship is like-

ly to develop into generalized communism, since bartering sometimes gives rise to the development of trust (Graeber 2001). This supports Graeber's point that because of several overlaps it makes more sense to view reciprocity, including "negative", as a question of degrees of open- and closedness of relations instead of Sahlins' categorization of types of reciprocity. Referring to reciprocity as generalized or balanced is appropriate, but it seems more precise to consider relationships in terms of degrees of being open- or closed-ended in order to better include the dynamics of empirical life when talking about social value, individual desire, action, and learning.

Value and learning – action and realization

A primary uniqueness of Mauss' work is his visualization of an alternative to capitalism, i.e. leaving aside capitalism instead of dissecting it. Marx' own point about creation centered on the ability to go from visualization to actualization and yet his theories of production, even calling upon revolution, landed in a dead end. Mauss looked to other societies for alternatives and though occasionally naïve his suggestions are considered far more proactive than both critical theory and postmodernism (Graeber 2001). Maybe by now he would be considered an archaic positive psychologist. Value and creativity are closely linked in Graeber's anthropological value theory. He points out how we use the word 'value' in the plural or singular in various contexts (Ibid.). The point here is that the use of 'values' in the plural takes place in the social community referring to that which dynamically defines socially meaningful creative action based on individual existential mirroring in a particular setting. Let me elaborate further. First of all value, through the analysis of the cultural meaning of various objects of adornment as well as heirlooms, is linked to actions of visual communication, expression and identification which motivates individual and social action: creativity. This is not always particularly organized in a system of production though much can be, as shown by Marx. In Mauss' individualistic communism this can also refer to random household or voluntary activity, sometimes spontaneous and sometimes ritualized, particularly in the context of establishing or redefining social and spiritual order, which tend to mutually reflect each other and which ultimately can be seen as a group's way of meeting social and individual needs. The outcome, or social value in such a system of exchange, is a mix of being random but also mutually counted on; no one is counting but everybody is counting on it. The to-

tality of this kind of individual and mutual activity sums up to a complex system of actions which makes for social and individual meaningfulness – the culture. It is what Graeber calls “*values in the sociological sense*”. To contextualize the sociological use of ‘value’ it can be useful to see it in contrast with the other two usages which are made note of in singular form:

1. “*values*” in the sociological sense: conceptions of what is ultimately good, proper, or desirable in human life
2. “*value*” in the economic sense: the degree to which objects are desired, particularly, as measured by how much others are willing to give up to get them
3. “*value*” in the linguistic sense, which goes back to the structural linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure (1966), and might be most simply glossed as “*meaningful difference*” (Graeber 2001:1)

To follow up on the visual trait of value mentioned, and this is where ‘value’ can be linked with learning, Graeber makes a point by translating ‘meaning’ into ‘desire’ when talking about how something obtains value for someone. Synthesizing this social theory of value with points concerning individual mirror phases leads to understanding how something obtains value. It does so due to the interactivity between the individual’s dreams and practical potential vis-à-vis a community setting where other individuals contribute to the one. This is something which can be understood with the Iroquois term “*dream guessing*”.

Dream guessing is a process where an individual’s mostly felt but still partly subconscious potential, an inspiration, is processed by revealing the premature parts of it to the community and thus making it socially obtainable. The potential is then processed through joint completion between the community and the member; in this process, the individual reveals the perceived fragmented inspirations or dreams and the community suggests their meaning through interpretation in the cultural context. Graeber points out how this is basically in line with Piaget’s idea that the logical level on which one operates is always at least one level higher than that which one cannot explain or understand. This means that the process of putting into words or action one’s dreams and potential in a social setting is where the learning takes place. This definition of learning processes is equivalent to what Vygotsky named “*the proximal level of development*” (Jerlang 2002b, Graeber 2001). Another classical

pedagogical comparison regarding this point is the form of the conversations between Socrates and Plato which in everyday use are known as “the Socratic dialogue”. The Socratic dialogue as a method example still inspires pedagogy and didactics today as a rule of thumb. To Socrates life and pedagogy were all the same. Though he did inspire Plato’s philosophy of forms, described in the allegory of the cave, his reputation in terms of pedagogy holds stories of a man who naturally related to the big questions of life with random people he met. He therefore had several apprentices, one of whom was Plato. Socrates lived at a time of continuous war between Sparta and Athens. This too was a time when individualism and egocentrism rose above a common sense of community, also encouraged by the teachers at that time, the Sophists. Socrates was a great opponent of the Sophists and challenged their ideas of teaching and learning using his own dialogical method. What was on Socrates’ mind here was to reintroduce the statement that people were made of the same fabric as cosmos which in Socrates’ version had important ethical consequences equivalent to *the first premise of modernity*¹⁴. This represented a universalism which is rediscovered in Mauss, although the bone of contention becomes the question of universals’ degree of fixedness (Socrates), archetypes (Jung 1991, Campbell 1988) or ideas (Plato). Graeber emphasizes the importance of a Heraclitian world view, as referred to earlier, that everything which seems fixed is really patterns of motion, through which he relies on what he calls *dynamic structuralism* (Graeber 2001), keeping the idea of value defined as that between the signified and the signifier though applying it to human holistically dynamic life for analytical advantage. Though Graeber advocates patterns of motion this still points to a structuralist idea of underlying patterns to be discovered. Mauss pointed to the same idea by using the gift as an example of universal human social behavior which is at the core of solidarity.

I want to briefly return to Socrates as an example to supplement psychological-pedagogical points by Piaget with points regarding observable behavior and interaction, mainly because they are thought of as a blueprint for how to connect learning with observable behavior in the analysis later in this thesis;

¹⁴ All human beings are equal because they are all unique individuals. Individuality makes us incommensurable hence effectively equivalent. This creates an initial ground of similarity, “humanity”, which makes the incommensurability take on the meaning it does. (point by Graeber).

this cannot be done by sticking to the abstracts of accommodation and assimilation. This is because realization or learning to Socrates was the road to existential meaning, or God's will, something which is recovered in dream guessing. It is important here to stress how *God* and *the social* as cultural phenomena are often seen as having the same social and individual function (Jensen 1995, Graeber 2001). In Socrates' case the first hindrance between man and God is the lack of realization that we are ignorant, a realization which would lead to *the good* to get hold of man, which is here still thought of as a moral good. The point was that once passion was directed towards realization of the good our will of action would follow. Good is then not something which someone must want to do, because it is *realizing* what is (ethically) good which causes *doing* good to naturally follow. Human knowledge in itself is nothing without striving for good, on the basis of realizing this nexus. The realization would put the individual in touch with his or her true meaning and potential, in correspondence with God or what the social acknowledges as contributing, and this individual consciousness was achieved through dialogue. The dialogue was eventually useful in letting the individual experience the world through his or her own expression and thus become a medium between "cosmos" and everyday social life. Socrates saw himself as helping other people to reach this insight, this truth, which is non-replicable. The particular type of dialogue involves humility and insisting on dialogue rather than lecturing and is named *maieutics*. It is based on the idea that the truth is latent in the mind of every person but needs this sort of midwifery which is the function of the dialogue. Its end result can only be reached by a distinct use of intuition to look dimly into what lies beyond, because although the dialogue is based on language its end result, action and meaning, lies beyond words. Language thus has the function of making the subconscious conscious, the invisible visible, and this can only be done through the dialogue or taking part in social interaction. It is the function of connecting the inner individual with the cultural whole which makes Socrates specifically pedagogically relevant to this project (Reinsholm, Pedersen 2001). This is also what makes pedagogy specifically sensitive to analysis of social value exchange because it concerns patterns and activities of giving, reception, personal appropriation, and re-application or reciprocation between humans.

In the case of Iroquois dream guessing, this activity is a win-win activity between the one and the many and thus a strong example of social value crea-

tion in the dynamics between one and other individuals representing clarification of individually sensed meaning which makes it translatable into individual action and social contribution. Describing learning and value in this way means that by socially integrating his or her dreams the individual experiences how meaning is ascribed to hitherto only felt urges through social processing. This is secured through receiving suggestions as to how this potential can be put into action and real practice. The point about putting one's dreams into action is that the innermost inspirations are translated to something which can be seen by the individual as well as simultaneously recognized by others with whom one feels a meaningful fellowship. During this process it also turns into something detachable from the creator – something which is passed on and circulated. The realization and detachability of potential are defining characteristics of social value (Graeber 2001). Conversely, this process is also a contribution to the community: the community has a member who feels existentially driven to create because his or her actions stem from his or her own innermost call and the fact that at the same time he or she can observe how it benefits other people; this defines it as something good. The experience of doing good, according to Socrates, will naturally bring along a boost of will towards doing more good. The individual thus existentially depends on social meaning and the social on individual inspiration. The two are so interwoven that talking about the “mini-max” individual makes no sense when discussed in its interpretive cultural context.

The value of past and future actions and *crédit*

“In short, this represents an intermingling. Souls are mixed with things; things with souls. Lives are mingled together, and this is how, among persons and things so intermingled, each emerges from their own sphere and mixes together. This is precisely what contract and exchange are.” (Mauss 1967:25)

Returning now to the gift as exchange object Mauss, and his theoretical successors, claim the gift to be a *total social phenomenon*. Whether, how and to what extent a personalization of the object happens somewhere along the line of exchange is examined by Graeber. He supports Mauss' conclusion that the gift and the act of exchange do mirror the nature of both the giver and the gift itself, the two being interwoven by the ascription of meaning, history and potential. This process is a common social feature of creative action: objects

are intermingled with people in the way that they socially represent a person's action or potential for action, and thus mediate otherwise invisible intention and desire into the socially visible. This is an area where Mauss and Marx meet because whether an object or action can be tracked objectively through its history of production or whether it is completely fetishized, it keeps gaining both new meaning in new contexts as well as remaining connected with stories of its former lives and genesis (Graeber 2001). Both are ways of taking the circulated to heart, appropriating it and making it useful in new settings – which again is learning understood as social value and exchange. This also means that various dreams come true and various potentials are realized depending on social contexts. Or conversely, social communities potentially develop through the input and ideas revealed through exploring and socially adopting individual desires, sometimes substantiated in dream guessing, when someone has heard the voice of God or spirits, sometimes substantiated in a person's uniqueness, creative impulse and intuition. Anthropologically this would be the social dynamics of 'innovative value'.

Besides the object-person relationship, Graeber makes a point in elaborating on how the social value of objects is also time-related in the way that value is sometimes measured depending on the manners in which objects are kept, handed out, destroyed, crafted, or are objects of adornment put on display; they always function as a representative of someone's past or potential action and therefore integrate social value. This chiefly involves performances and ceremonial activity. Even money represents this. The relationship between money and objects of adornment is distinctive. Among the Iroquois and Kwakiutl trade media, which can be categorized as money, is often shiny or brightly colored. Even here these types of object are traded into social advantage somewhere along the line: at potlatches coppers are sold for 'seats' which imply a person's social importance and spiritual rank, and the objects are a means for constituting this socially¹⁵. Money is more often hoarded and put away, representing a hidden capacity for action. Keeping money away from others obviously isolates this type of wealth from social value circulation. Graeber observes how leaders do not hide their treasury; they put it on

¹⁵ Potlatches are not an expression of what value measured in material goods one wants in return, as Mauss interpreted, but a display, through destruction, of contempt of the material as having value and of what one is spiritually and socially powerful enough to do without.

display for the crowd to see, a trivial example being to stamp their portrait on coins. The spectators, though “faceless themselves”, reflect their own worth in the coins, basically being the ones who threw them in there in the first place as part of dedication to their leader. This behavior has the spectators add to the treasury in a context of the leaders’ transparency of treasure. In everyday life it is often observed how individually hoarded money is at some point translated into more visual objects of adornment, very often objects of great history: expensive paintings, hand built cars or land (Graeber 2001). Speaking of history as value, this of course links to the discussion regarding degrees of fetishism and actual insight into an object’s historical trajectory which adds or reduces a certain kind of qualitative value, which also adds to the price in a market. Without dwelling further on that, it connects to another important point, which is past and future actions as part of social value negotiations starting with the individual display of more or less creative value, or *prestations*.

It was Max Weber who observed how aristocrats consolidated their social status reflected in their lifestyle through their *being*, and how the lower orders did this by what they were *doing* or aspired to by doing. The dichotomy can be traced back in history in a gender perspective where men did and women were. Man represented potential for action and woman represented how it would be proper to act towards her; men wore anonymous clothing to represent hidden potential and women wore clothes which displayed her and her body as an object of adornment in itself. So here we have action and reflection, spectator and object of admiration, lower and higher social rank also in a gender view. Regarding Weber’s points about social value in relation to time, Graeber writes:

“(...) the distinction between my “action” and “reflection” is really only one between actions to be carried out in the future and ones already carried out in the past. “The promise of power” a man embodies is his potential for acting in the future; at the same time, a “woman’s exemplary treatment of herself” consists of actions she has already undertaken, or at least ones she is still in the process of carrying out. The person could be said to vanish in its orientation to action because action expresses a completion that only can exist in the future. At the same time, one’s visible persona, one’s “being”, is simply the cumulative effects of actions that have been directed towards one in the past – of all those actions that have made one what one is. Being – if it is socially significant – is congealed action, and just as every category is the other side of a set of practices (Turner and Fajans 1988), every unique being is the result of an equally singular history. By engaging in persuasive display,

then, all one is really doing is calling on others to imitate actions that are implicitly being said to have already been carried out in the past." (Graeber 2001:99)

"*Being is congealed action*" and objects of display and adornment express, and call others to repeat, great deeds and stand as examples of how individual realization has led to social contribution. Put this way, learning, in a social value perspective, is the very aim of individual and social life and an ideal which would balance individualistic communism without the need for a redistributive welfare state. It also turns out to be an actual ethical demand. Mauss connects the aspects of time and exchange to ethics in practice. He points to time as having an impact on both the value of the object of exchange as well as being a premise for the overall function of social economy. The act of exchange is shaped by three acts: giving, receiving and reciprocating. In this process, time and the administration of time between the acts is of great importance considering its impact on status and structures. How time is administered as part of the *prestation* affects the general impression of an interaction (Mauss 1954). In practice this is a question of timing, i.e. how much time passes between each of the three acts, between offer, reception and reciprocation. Beside the significance as in the understanding of the value of the object, behavior reflecting exploitation, attention, or lack of attention, when it comes to the element of time, co-regulates social structures and status by the ways of engaging in exchange (Mauss 1954). To a lower status individual this would mean that engaging in an important social exchange would be an opportunity to renegotiate and perhaps rise in status, while to a person of high status this could potentially mean the opposite: the risk of failing to maintain high status.

According to Mauss, time is also uniquely entangled with the object of exchange; one of his main points is made with the Polynesian studies. While this is one of Mauss' most criticized points, with the accusation of over-interpretation, it nonetheless is the foundation from which his further points have been developed. Mauss claimed that objects bind giver and receiver in mutual obligation throughout the object's existence, and that the object will always strive to return to its origin, and that it is this force which secures the circulation between changeable owners. That may be worth discussing, but the point Mauss made about socially accepted rules of timing regarding obligations to give, receive or reciprocate are still very relevant. I use this to ana-

lyze a function of cultural *time ethics*. Theorists have reduced this discussion to concern the difference between qualitative and quantitative exchanges (Parry, Bloch 1989), between market exchange and reciprocity (Polanyi 1968) or between general and balanced reciprocity (Sahlins 2004). However, I wish to discuss this in continuation of Graeber's points through the use of Weber regarding past and future action as social immaterial value. I wish to elaborate on this underlying ethical perspective of timing in a non-marketized form but also not categorically understood as degrees of reciprocity within one particular community.

What Mauss shows us is how acts of exchange are socially either allowed to be postponed or terminated by immediate return or transmission. Whether reciprocation is expected immediately or more time is socially allowed to pass characterizes the nature of both personal status as well as the relationship, along with the nature and promptitude of exchanges. In the Northwest American studies for example, *crédit* is described, being a term concerning timing which can be related to an understanding of trust. *Crédit* is time-related in e.g. a situation when the giver does not require immediate reciprocation, but shows that he or she trusts that reciprocation will take place in time. Among the Indians in the American Northwest being able to show trust is tied to the fact that the recipient publically verbally or non-verbally pledges return payment. On the other hand, in the example from Polynesia the sanctioning social community has been replaced by Nemesis-like spiritual entities as the spirits of the ancestors or forces of nature; this version, however, is a good example of how the social and the spiritual end up having the same function. Mauss points out how *crédit* accumulates over time, and how time is needed in the case of any kind of counter-service for the social value to grow (Mauss 1954:45-6). This denotes another point that there would be a connection between personal investment of time and the quality outcome experienced by the people in the given community, also known as the spectators.

In terms of social behavior the role of the recipient becomes precarious. If the recipient has a poor choice of rejecting due to social expectancy, has no sympathy for the giver, or is unable to requite, the exchange does not live up to its potential for strengthening mutuality and, one might suspect, would be at the risk of turning into agonistic interaction where each fights for one's

honor, so to speak. I choose to use “honor” as a matter of “self-worth” in this context when discussing acts of exchange and community engagement.

Learning in the third sector: a critical note

Seeking to understand the educational relationship in the light of Mauss’ theories on exchange leads to an elaboration on the participants’ individual interests and motives and questions regarding being able to do anything at all with other people’s doings (Schmidt 2006), in particular when their worth is questioned, if they are socially stigmatized as “having less”, as being “vulnerable”, and in danger of dropping out of institutions, jobs, or the welfare system. This is often the case with voluntary activity in social entrepreneurial initiatives. In a charity case where those discursively constructed as resourceful help the vulnerable, hypothetically there would be a tendency to create rivalizing kinship behavior which to the learner or recipient in particular would become a question of struggling to maintain honor, face, and sense of self-worth understood as the ability to make returns. In City Year London the ones constructed as “learners” are the child mentees. The learner’s self-perception as vulnerable and needy seems to contradict the ability of participating in value-accumulating social exchange, such as participatory practice. There is thus a paradox, which is being passed on from the school system, of positioning school children both as able as well as needy. Mauss’ points show us how self-worth in presenting offerings, and thereby seeking solidarity, acceptance and inclusion, is a prerequisite to social participation. To sharpen my attention to this pitfall, I make at least two points in meeting this paradox when analyzing social learning among the volunteers: Firstly, the learner must necessarily draw upon his or her life story, skills, behaviors, offerings, which he or she has experienced as valuable in former social exchange contexts or other social spheres, thereby both bringing something new to the table and at the same presenting him- or herself as a contribution. This is in line with Graeber’s points about social value representing what has been done and the potential of doing, i.e. past and future actions. Seeking to be accepted in a social context would involve the contradictory preconditions of lacking something and offering something else. This means that the learner needs to be able to see himself as possessing *some* sort of worth to enter these learning communities, thereby excluding those who see themselves as having nothing

to offer at all. Secondly, it becomes clear that the relationship between educators and learners in a community of practice does benefit socially from a smaller and therefore more acceptable personal value gap. This is a trait of benefit to community learning.

Along with self-promoting labels there are various mostly positive pre-understandings of what sort of people are active in the field of voluntary organizations. These understandings clearly stand out in the data material. The pre-understanding of “heroes”, “fireballs”, “leaders”, “creative innovators”, and the strongly unified community are naturally worked in to the organizational frames and self-understanding over time. Towards the political and community collaborators it is meant to trigger a certain set of expectations which becomes the basis of negotiation. The expressed values also make it clear to the volunteers what sort of environment they are entering, and once they are accepted, they get to know these frames, habits, and motions more intimately the more included they become according to the amount of time and commitment they put into this particular culture. Becoming part of the culture is in itself a learning process for the volunteers, a process of adaptation and a source of personal development (Lave, Wenger 1991). Some manage to internalize ways of acting and interacting more than others. Some find it thrilling and exciting, some find it provocative and transgressive, and a whole range of emotions towards becoming part of City Year are concurrent in individuals as well as the entire group of volunteers. Negative experiences were renegotiated between the specific volunteer and a member of the leading staff, and most often the conflict was solved as an experience of how to combine personal experience and emotions with the expectations of the organization, and it was done from the starting point of the idealism professed. There were no doubt learning processes, socialization and cognitive and personal development taking place here. What makes learning in this setting somewhat different from other settings is that it is institutionalized in a completely different manner than in traditional learning institutions. The City Year community, outside the schools and mentor role, is a type of learning institution, at the same time as helping youth in becoming personally clarified and to some degree individually upskilled. Participation is meant to also widen career opportunities through the access to career networks. The organization encourages social entrepreneurial behavior, humanitarian service, and of course the academic mentorship for children; the latter is sold by the organi-

zation to the local urban environment for *quid pro quo*s in a substantial economic understanding: access to networks, good will in reputation, formal and distinguished seals of approval, and also money in the form of funding and payment from the schools. It is worth remembering that money and market economy are viewed as a precondition and an integrated social way of interacting which does not undermine the charity aim of helping and mentoring school children.

Coming up with creative solutions to challenges is an individual process of learning and adaptation which certainly has been part of human life since man first used a tool to crack open food surrounded by a hard shell. From a learning perspective, according to Piaget, there are two reasons why people start coming up with creative solutions and thus two reasons why people would start social entrepreneurial activity as a response to a social need, which is also found to be individual. This, as mentioned, concerns the psychological process of adaptation and resistance potential. We either meet something that we feel needs changing in our own life, or we observe other people living incongruous to our basic values and ethics (Illeris 2001). People tend to organize around values, obstacles, and solutions; the role of researchers is to start explaining. People are always puzzled by life and living. Calling oneself “a learner” signals an ideal and social commitment to one’s community. It is a way of life with appropriate experiences and skills. Maybe it is a way to legitimize time taken for emotionally meaningful interaction with other people and become absorbed in humanity, and interestingly enough it also works as personal branding.

The pedagogical perspective, in which the social intervener or innovator does something with his or her doings and makes someone do something they would not have done on their own (Schmidt 2006), denotes the actual directional learning activity and process of inclusion. Regarding the pedagogical relationship between the mentor volunteer and mentee pupil, this too can be specified as a tragic relationship, meant to cease and thus fitting the paradoxical description of this uneven and institutionalized relationship. The difference here is that the student is never physically included into the charity’s physical institutional environment; the institution comes to the student in the form of a volunteer in his or her uniform. Revisiting the old saying: “If the mountain won’t come to Muhammad then Muhammad must go to the

mountain”, this attests to learning as a commodity in the form of mentoring and academic support in an exchange between the volunteer and the student where the learner holds the upper position and is allowed to stay in his or her habitual but institutionalized surroundings.

Although in a critical theoretical tradition money has been sought to be kept far out of educational institutions because of the mentioned money-social relationship paradox (Cooper 2004, Kvale 2004), learning institutions and organizations are widely legitimized, in market logic, through the assurance that some kind of learning goes on either in their processes of producing or in describing what is added or offered socially to society and the community which keeps them afloat. The socially loaded assurance and transparent corporate social responsibility strategies play a key role in making human value marketable and the organization, besides offering production, can openly characterize itself as a learning organization. There is hardly a sustainable business today, whether “social”, “learning”, or not, which has not shown its human, social, ethical face in this manner. Social responsibility as a counter reaction to the giant financial entities behind the neo-liberalistic crisis, community and voluntary engagement are all ways of stressing social solidarity and co-responsibility toward the environment, target groups, supporters and customers. It is a way of expressing that even if we make money, we acknowledge that our customers as human beings are socially dependent. This awakens sympathy and security, but can also be taught, learned and played as a manipulative game in relation to addressees as well as networking and dating strategies. In the pilot phase of empirically exploring learning in social entrepreneurship I came across examples of community centers and voluntary organizations that consciously preferred to discursively construct those who in welfare society are seen as socially or financially challenged participants and volunteers as “learners” rather than “vulnerable”. This choice of naming the participants was made for reasons of greater funding support, and towards the participants to induce greater motivation through creating a language which led to a more positive self- and community identification. People apparently do not want nor probably need to see themselves as permanently lacking the ability to obtain societal inclusion and equality. “Learning” seems to normalize, everyone learns and as long as we talk about learning meaning how everybody learns throughout life, there is always hope and a foundation of belief that one has or can obtain what it takes to be able to give back and

equally take part: as a contribution instead of, or at least as well as, an expenditure to the person's community. Nonetheless, due to this effect and conscious legitimizing use of "learning", my inner red flag notifier flew from the very beginning of this project, setting out to clarify "learning processes in voluntary organizations". As a consequence of the perspective that there is no social interaction without learning (Schmidt 2006), asking questions about learning in organizations strongly involved in social engagement seemed to be a pleonasm and suspicious to me. When describing learning processes in voluntary social organizations from my anthropological and academic background, it seemed more appropriate to explore another attempt to capture the dynamics of cultural interactions instead of teleologically trying to figure out how to make use of the term "learning" in regards to optimizing businesses and earning. In spite of a maximum tax pressure the welfare system is limping and "learning" in social entrepreneurship at quite an early stage turned out to be easily translated into: 1) Public legitimization of voluntary organizations with the interest of obtaining funding. 2) A way for businesses to thrive on people's need for inclusion and categorization as normal, dynamic people. There is a rhetoric which in general society excludes the deficient "vulnerable citizen" and includes the potentially resourceful "learner" which became distinct in regards to learning in social entrepreneurship.

Some of the findings have been how anthropology manages to contribute to educational research by socially broadening a learning concept, wild analysis, participant and non-participant observations. The field work and anthropological views in general have proven to have much to offer not just within a social learning perspective, but also within both a cognitive and a psychodynamic perspective, because some significant inner processes are expressed in the social community and in the one-on-one interviews as a consequence of the field worker entering the field with and engaging with empathy. Observing individual reactions, patterns and spontaneity along with the one-on-one interviews has provided some insight into the internal processes of acquisition and emotional experiences and meaningfulness as well as of course the social learning situations.

A parallel inspiration of this project is the concept of situated learning and legitimate peripheral learning processes (LPP) introduced by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger. By merging situated learning and economic anthropology

and observations of the interpersonal exchange I accommodate the aspect of the general criticism of the situated learning theory which reduces social learning to mere cultural socialization. In William F. Hank's foreword to the book "Situated Learning" he concludes:

"(...) learning is a way of being in the social world, not a way of coming to know about it. Learners, like observers more generally, are engaged both in the contexts of their learning and in the broader social world within which these contexts are produced. Without this engagement, there is no learning, and where the proper engagement is sustained, learning will occur." (Lave, Wenger 1991)

Where LPP rounds off by emphasizing the conclusion that *"learning is a way of being in the social world, not a way of coming to know about it"* along with the emphasis on individual engagement, is where economic anthropology contributes to the further exploration of social learning theory.

Theoretical recapitulation

"The Gift" as well as the literature which has followed, explorations of *ban*, reciprocity, and *prestations*, have been thoroughly examined and discussed by economic anthropologists. Here reference is made to recent ground-breaking books on Mauss (Fournier 2006) and the consequences of Mauss' thoughts in social value theory (Graeber 2001). Furthermore, the academic work regarding "the human economy" is occupied with breaking up a dichotomy between *market* and *reciprocity* and improve an understanding of Polanyi's three economic principles¹⁶ as integrated and by that refuting the opposition between market and reciprocity made by some Anglophone scholars (Hart, James 2014). Secondly, the same group of Mauss-thinkers advocate how an in-depth Maussian and Polanyian insight into economy as a foundation of human exchange benefits contemporary political initiatives, particularly regarding rethinking social institutions in practice (Hart, Laville et al. 2010). In that same line of thinking insights on Mauss have also been significantly informed by contemporary initiatives, e.g. the *"Marcel Mauss Vivant"* conference in 2009, organized by Alain Caillé and Keith Hart in France, which resulted in a special issue of the *"Journal of Classical Sociology"* in 2014 (Hart, James

¹⁶ Market, redistribution, and reciprocity (Polanyi 1968)

2014). Mention must also be made of the ongoing elaborations and discussions on Mauss' thoughts and their relevance to political, social and economic science today in various Anglophone networks open for participation, e.g. "The Human Economy" group, the "Open Anthropology Cooperative" managed by Keith Hart, and the French journal "La Revue du M.A.U.S.S." – the latter being the outcome of a reformist movement led by Alain Caillé centered around viewing Mauss' *gift* as a political principle again separate from the market (www.revuedumauss.com). This thesis continues to insist on Mauss' version of the economy as integrated in the anthropological sense which captures an economic perspective on the social and show that market behavior holds an element of generosity and gift exchange holds an element of interestedness.

The economic anthropological body of theory was taken to heart by the field of social entrepreneurship as a perspective on how to address, organize and conceptualize social value and how to merge social value with financial value legitimizing social businesses as businesses as well as social entities (Hart, Laville et al. 2010). As part of this discussion voluntary organizations are used as an example of organized social value, as places where (social) value turns into visible impact without money being primarily involved in the aim and "only" by eternal fundraising to buy office supplies, visibility, transportation for events, room rentals and the like. This makes voluntary organizations particularly sensitive for studies of social value and its interplay with the market. How this constitutes a certain type of social field also influences voluntary organizations as learning environments. As contexts they contribute to the everyday lives and learning processes of the actors involved by offering certain ways of social interaction as a consequence of the dominant social aim or as a community of interest in a certain activity. The particular activity which the voluntary organization is organized around is decisive for how the individual is expected to express him- or herself, and the voluntary aspect lies in the fact that those involved have chosen to engage in this type of exchange for one intentional reason or another. There is always an individual interest but there is also always the tendency of treating others in the community as if their interests matter as much as one's own. This is a key point of "value" in Mauss' **individualistic communism** (Graeber 2001). The gift then becomes a symbol of such a social system, such social behavior and of open-ended co-dependency – some would say of "friendship"; and the measurable value of

the gift therefore reaches beyond its material, productive, and utility value because of it being an expression of and an entrance to a micro perspective on social value.

Graeber anthropologically elaborates on the nature of the value in the gift and on how the value of people becomes interwoven with the value of things as well as the historicity of individuals, the social aspect and objects, or said in another way: how things turn into expressions of human meaningfulness within a social function. This is done by reanalyzing empirical cases from Mauss' *The Gift* as well as drawing on key literature which has added, elaborated and criticized Mauss' work, up until today. To support recent theorizing in this area, notions from Hart, Fournier and Laville have been considered.

Approaching learning from an anthropological angle means understanding individual learning as mirrored in social dynamics as well as the other way around (Krejsler, Kryger et al. 2005). The aim through this conceptual chapter has been to break down learning as well as social value to clarify where the two meet. Inspired by Piaget as well as Mauss, also as elaborated by Graeber, the chapter has delineated learning to be understood as continuous adaptation of individual expression in interplay and constant exchange with the social environment and social values. *Learning as social value is a process of individual creative intention and expression meaningfully realized in and through interacting in a social context.* This thesis is thus to be understood as part of a dynamic structuralist project based on the Heraclitian notion that structures are to be understood as patterns of motion (Piaget 1959, Graeber 2001, Mauss 1954). The expansion of consciousness, referred to as learning, is understood as a result of a subconscious individual creative intention which is concretized through the interplay with social interpretation. Inspired by the Iroquois phenomenon of dream guessing, I stress what seems to be a crucial element, which is the ability to express intuitive impulse or sensations for others to help individual subconscious potential gain form, expression and possibly individual meaningfulness. This suggests that *learning is dependent on the interplay between one individual's ability to express sensations and other individuals' ability to empathize.* In individualistic communism, as repeated in this paragraph, a strength is the open-ended investigations of attention to each other which would increase the flow of what can thus be characterized as learning processes. In other words, learning runs more smoothly in open-ended interaction where trust and em-

pathy are invested without glancing towards the relationship's termination or having the parties speculate about being cut off from the continuous interchange.

Theoretically, two particular ways of interacting are crucial in this process. Mauss stresses **oral communication** (Hart 2007), which is supported by Graeber's elaborations of the social importance of the *wampum*¹⁷ or "strings of words", also among the Iroquois as an example of socially negotiating requests and peace or solidarity. The importance of oral communication is also seen in the dream guessing activity. The interplay between the individual presenting fragments of a dream to the community whose actors then aid in completing the dream and concretizing it, adds meaningfulness to the individual and creative energy, mutual inspiration and production to the rest of the community.

Another important feature, developed by Graeber, is the **visual representation** of past and future actions, or potentiality, as well as signaling how to be acted towards (Graeber 2001). Connected to the theoretical points regarding past and future action, Mauss' idea of the social dynamics of *crédit* is also found relevant in the analysis in this thesis. Mauss describes *crédit*, or trust, as something which roughly described allows a recipient to postpone a counter-gift. Naturally this is more likely to occur in relationships which are perceived of as open-ended. *Crédit* also draws lines to notions regarding **historicity versus fetishism**. This is due to its dependency on open-ended relationships which include a familiarity and surrounding interest regarding the recipient's history, also reflected in the story of objects and heirlooms. This knowledge about a recipient's history and potential for action is held and circulated among the other individuals in the community and results in a function of social sanction. *Being is congealed action* and this is represented by objects and stories in which current individuals can mirror themselves and their totality as community as part of **finding expression**; the exchange processes of coming to meaningful expression are learning.

¹⁷ Shell beads in white and purple, put on strings in various patterns and used primarily at peace negotiation; later used as money. The Iroquois would speak their intentions and requests onto the wampum and then present it to negotiating parties by laying it in front of them.

4 Method and analytical field

Selection and pre-understandings

In this chapter I turn to the ethnographic method which was used to collect the data material before going into the process of analysis. When I first set out to research learning processes in voluntary organizations the selection criteria for the field were paramount. To answer the research questions I found that a relevant voluntary organization had to think of itself as aiming for someone's learning in a social context and somehow explicitly have learning on the agenda. They would have to *want to do something with the learners' doings*, as defining the educational relationship (Schmidt 2006). Secondly, they had to present themselves as a voluntary organization and the observed actors as regular volunteers, as opposed to the experience of 'users', 'clients' or 'learners' I had had when researching for the right field. Thirdly, this varied naming of the volunteers had awakened my awareness as to what types of actors the different voluntary organizations were driven by and to the fact that the typification or naming of the groups of volunteers affected the type of organization and organizational identity as a whole. I was curious about the type of organization discursively constructing their volunteers as 'resourceful youth' and 'young leaders', mainly because resourceful youths, discursively and obviously, are seen as both having and being of great social value. In terms of what resourceful youths are meant to learn, research suggests that we are facing a new type of problem in general social education. For many years it has been widely accepted, also within youth programs, to focus on drug prevention, material or financial inequality, and groups excluding individuals for various reasons. Young people, socially seen as resourceful, are potentially facing different problems: existential emptiness, not being excluded by a group, but isolating themselves from their community through a sense of meaninglessness (Levine 2006, Nielsen et al. 2010). My consideration of these new types of social vulnerabilities applied to apparently resourceful people, together with my interest in what competences would then be needed in groups of "the resourceful" or "resourceful youths", constituted a third selection criterion.

The ethnographer's decision to enter the field and take up residence in another culture in order to use herself as a tool to conduct research for a period of time calls for reflection. Already in the process of clarifying the scope and aim of the study the ethnographer should examine her pre-understandings of the culture she is about to enter. This clarification is an honest examination of familiarity and her personal and professional basis of understanding the culture in question. The aim is to prepare the ground for an awareness of unconscious dynamics between the actors in the field and the ethnographer's own personality, which is useful during methodological reflections and presence in the field and in the later analysis (Andersen 2012, Hammersley, Atkinson 1995). This process and awareness is an important part of ethnographic research validation, if one can speak of such, as the ethnographer using her own comprehension, perception, emotions, and physical presence is also entering into a different mental state and position from which the field is at the same time perceived and the data produced. Questions of institutional transference and countertransference (Andersen 2012) and the ethnographer's behavior and relations in the field (Hammersley, Atkinson 1995) have often been examined as the ethnographer's learning process parallel to and influencing on understanding the culture in question (Hasse 2002, Lave 2011) and thus significant for the analysis and research results. This awareness is particularly challenging in educational ethnography when setting out to study more or less institutionalized learning and transfer. The reproduction of the setup for institutionalized learning, schooling or training throughout the Western world forms a paradoxical obstacle to the ethnographer who as a researcher has been schooled to conduct this study, and we often end up with educated and learning educational researchers studying educators in learning and educational settings. So on the one hand the ethnographer will need education to conduct valid research, which will also involve reflecting on her own learning in the process. On the other hand there is the bias of inevitably studying one's own field, allegedly causing both a particular blindness caused by presumptions, and at the same time a particularly potent understanding of learning processes and educational settings.

My point of departure has been accounted for in the paragraph in chapter 1 regarding *positioning*. With a professional BA as a teacher, an MA in educational anthropology and being a PhD fellow at the Department of Psychology

and Educational Studies at Roskilde University, knowledge of education and learning has composed my professional background through nine years of schooling besides my experience of schooling since I was six and of teaching in the Danish municipal primary and lower secondary school through ten years alongside my studies. My parents and grandparents were teachers, and school has been part of my private and professional sphere as long as I can remember. This was something which was taken into consideration and caused reflective precaution in approaching the task of studying learning in a particular setting. Seeking the advice of Jean Lave on how to approach the for me natural educational discourse and theoretical perspective in order to grasp and observe what goes on in the field, Ms. Lave's reply was: *"Each time you meet 'learning' in your data material, or want to write 'learning' in your writings, cross it out, avoid the term, and explain what goes on in practice"* (Revsbech 2012a). Avoiding or embracing the term has continuously been a central methodological question from the day I applied for this project scholarship entitled: *"New learning processes in social voluntary organizations"* and I have felt obliged to alternately decide to do one or the other. Led by Ms. Lave's advice, I ended up critically observing the use of the term in the field. It could not be ignored due to the fact that it was everywhere. Analytically and methodologically, by *not* applying learning theory, I avoided the term as a steering element to refrain from the risk of self-perpetuation. At the same time I pragmatically embraced what the project set out to examine, again by moving *beyond* the term and into the social activities and micro processes of learning as exchange, which is what I am convinced Mauss and (economic) anthropology have to offer to educational research.

Dataset and coding

The dataset was generated through intensive field work accompanying, observing and interviewing staff and volunteers at City Year London, particularly the organization's 62 volunteers, or *corps members*, during their "city year", closely from August to December 2011 and revisiting them briefly in March and July 2012¹⁸. The organization that year consisted of 13 staffs, including

¹⁸ City Year London recruited 20 more volunteers, forming two additional teams, who started in schools in Brixton and Tottenham in January 2012 – "Team Success"

the CEO, seven paid team leaders who are former corps members, and the seven teams of volunteers. Each team of volunteers represents a sponsor by carrying their name; the teams are named:

- The Barclays Capital Team
- The Goldman Sachs Gives Team
- The TowerBrook Team
- The Credit Suisse Team
- The National Grid Team
- The ARAMARK Civic Engagement Team
- The Unity Team – instead of carrying a sponsor name they carry a “power” name.

The seven teams were each assigned to a school: five public primary schools and one private secondary school located in the boroughs of Islington and Hackney in London. Besides the observations, I conducted 17 semi-structured qualitative interviews, 11 of which were of my primarily selected group of volunteers. All informants, the team names and the schools have been anonymized in the analysis. After a pilot study of classroom observation with team “C” of volunteers for a week I was able to plan and negotiate access to other schools through a second gatekeeper staff (“S3”) who had also given me the access to the pilot study school. I ended up following and interviewing one entire strategically selected team, team “A”. The volunteers are named by their anonymized team letter, e.g. ‘A’, followed by a number. Team A’s volunteers are thus indicated by the codes A1 to A9 because the team consisted of nine volunteers¹⁹. I also interviewed five staffs at the City Year offices, gatekeepers, and especially sensitive informants; these included leading staffs and two additional especially sensitive and candid volunteers (Hammersley, Atkinson 1995) and their team leader, from the team “D”. This totaled around 20 hours of conversation with people who were part of City Year London’s everyday life in the corps of 2011-12. Besides the field diary and the individual interviews the data set consists of 16½ hours of audio recordings of leadership development activities including the Red Jacket Ceremony, Idealist Journeys, debate training, presentations from sponsors and other external partners, group activities around Myers Briggs personality typi-

and “The Power Team”. Due to my absence in London throughout most of spring 2012, the 20 new volunteers have neither been interviewed nor closely followed.

¹⁹ See Appendix 3: “List of informants”.

fication, group negotiations of team goals and other task solving activities as well as of unity rallies and community interaction. Finally I took 107 photographs during the field work which have been used in supporting or adjusting analytical themes and points. The City Year London's Internet profile, web and Facebook pages have also been found useful.

The dataset was arranged according to practical generation of experience and anthropological theoretical reflection (Schmidt 2000), where inductive themes from the interviews, legitimized by reoccurrence also through triangulation, were combined with the research interest of the project as well as theoretical inspiration. The combination of reoccurring themes in the data, project objective and theoretical field led to the composition of a search list (Ehn, Löfgren 2006), which was then, by the second reading through, applied to the material for coding. The dataset has thus been coded by the following key words (listed in order of prevalence, most to least):

- "Personal motivation"
- "Learning"
- "Negotiations with organization [City Year London]"
- "Interaction with kids, schools, parents"
- "Friends in City Year/social life/the team"
- "The uniform"
- "Protests"
- "Emotions"
- "Outside pressure/reactions"
- "Going along"
- "Finances"
- "Mentoring"
- "Humor: spontaneous/honesty"
- "The structure of the day"
- "Presentations"
- "Entrepreneurial ideas/actions"
- "Professionalism"

Coding the material provides a translation from empirical data to themes which are sensitive for analysis, and is thus applied as a tool for creating the analytical field (Hastrup 2003). The analytical field makes it possible to unfold

insights into what knowledge is taken for granted or not in City Year London (Schmidt 2000), and thereby elucidate the tangent areas between participants as well as groups of participants unfolding the socially contingent and particular (Hastrup 2003). The coding and analysis process thus arranges knowledge from the empirical field which, in its raw form, is primarily selective, interpretive and situational (Schmidt 2000).

Scientific theoretical frame

Observing value exchange focusing on the volunteer led to observing the volunteer's interactions with the school's institutionalized rules, school staff, pupils, parents, peer interaction with other volunteers, City Year London as organization, City Year London staff, the City Year London board, sponsor representatives, and others including myself. Other interactions which were relevant to the volunteers' City Year life were not all accessible, such as their family life and exchanges in their own time, in or out of uniform. Those were referred to in some of the interviews, mainly when talking about how to finance the year and how the reactions to their being a City Year corps member had been in their private life. A few referred to reactions in the public which made them reflect on their choice. Some of these exchanges and circulations across life spheres are brought into the analysis. Following the volunteers and aiming to keep an eye on value and value exchange and learning activities in their doings and beings created an open and abstract interpretive frame leaving room for the analytical themes to be inductively generated around the methodological theme, as shown above. The concepts of 'value' and 'learning' maintained an academic focus aiming to unfold the organization from an original perspective which was regarded as relevant to the organization, the third sector, and to educational research all at once. Theoretically critical and specific approaches to both 'value' and 'learning' are legitimizing and necessary due to the wide range of interpretive possibilities of these concepts. The traditional method of grounded theory was abandoned on these grounds in spite of its mainly structuralist inspiration. The structuralist-functionalist inspiration from Mauss was not directly applied in its form from the 1930s. Mauss' point of departure, developed into economic anthropology by Graeber, led to the ontological basis being dynamic structuralist (Graeber 2001). "The gift" was, besides its analytical value, methodologically

applied to the notions of multi-sited ethnography as a metaphor and a focus through an awareness for words related to exchanges (Ehn, Löfgren 2006, Marcus 1995); e.g. 'give', 'get', 'owe' etc. This means that following the volunteers had an additional focus on the material and immaterial value exchange in their activities, in terms of establishing meaningfulness, to elaborate on cultural activities which constitute City Year London as a multi-sited arena of learning as exchange. This methodological construct and approach proves beneficial when trying to understand the organization as a social enterprise with a focus on social value. Secondly, in a cross field of sectors, analyzing the data material through an attempt to understand circulation of value, in a holistic sense, clarifies and elaborates the interactions between the multiple types of stakes and the multiple cultures of stakeholders as well as how this influences the specific field as a learning arena. Thirdly, in the organization as the volunteers' learning arena, by following value applications, transference, acceptance and rejections, the circulation of value on a macro level is sought to be re-identified in the informants' micro-exchanges in their everyday lives as volunteers and across life arenas. The volunteers' adaptations, choices and reflections upon the circulation of value are found in the data material and uncover the links between the volunteers' everyday lives, learning processes, and the surrounding society's agenda concerning innovation and entrepreneurial behavior. This leads the analysis to aim to capture how reciprocal behavior is cultivated as well as how the volunteers respond to expectations through applying their own personalities; the fusion of the two generates the specific cultural set of values. Though this point supports social constructivist notions, the aim of this project is still to explore the dynamic structures of both the culture as well as the individual learning processes, or the creation of meaningfulness, expressed as intention, where the individuals are understood as holding a dynamic essence, inspiration and ability for autonomous action. It must be granted that the assumption of individual essence in this project diverts the analytical focus from what in other perspectives is seen as the ruthless subjecting powers of social norms. Always assuming the individual option within the physically possible, this perspective is also a distinctive strength, as it analytically allows full focus to be dedicated to unfolding as its research interest the individual opportunity nexus and learning as value and meaning generation and contribution. Furthermore, practicing the ontological approach methodologically was experienced as empowering in relation to the informants; this point is supported when presenting the choice of the semi-

structured interview below. Mauss has been accused of being too uncritical, too utopian, in his work. The empirical material on exchanges in archaic communities is not uncritical as it bears witness to fights and destruction, even abduction and killings among tribes (Graeber 2001). I seek to keep the critique of Mauss' theory in mind while intending not to praise individual opportunity unconditionally. Believing in individual option and intention also has a ruthless aspect when considering what some people sometimes choose to do to others, and how individuals manage to find social settings where e.g. violence is accepted or even appraised. Thus choosing "The Gift" as a point of departure does not necessarily lead to uncritical analysis. Keeping the critique in mind, it may lead to very critical analysis, not merely of the ways of systems or the consensus of communities; it has a critical strength in that it may lead to individuals being held responsible, as well as being credited, for their intentions and actions.

A final point about the theoretical approach is that in City Year London as a social service provider or provider of tradable social service, the correlation between the volunteers' reciprocal behavior and the service they provide, in an organizational and societal understanding, becomes clear through analyzing the similarities and differences between expected and actual behavior in the volunteers' micro exchanges.

Rapport and exchange

The anthropological frame and ethnographic approach compose a hermeneutical project examining the dynamics of patterns of exchange, and secondly transmissions of culturally acknowledged value, also across life arenas, here-under knowledge and truths (Jensen 2012). The project seeks to unveil learning as part of human economic behavior. It takes into anthropological consideration the basic dynamics of this behavior with an eye to a general understanding of social interactions as being the modeler of value, be it financial or other, and not vice versa: money is not seen as an empowered, disconnected living, or threatening, entity, but the empowerment of money is given by peoples' actions, using or striving for individually meaningful expression and societal position. As part of the micro level in the analysis the thesis operates with the motivating effect of social symbols when accepting or seeking part

of a community. Money is regarded a social symbol of exchange, both material and immaterial, on a level with other social values such as goods, heirlooms, care, time and energy (Mauss 1954, Parry, Bloch 1989, Revsbech 2008). The precondition is that the value of symbols is being actively, in a more or less reflected manner, applied by individuals in multiple life arenas and varies depending on the cultural reflection. This perspective stresses the importance of the fact that the material for both symbols and interpretation is not merely socially constructed. In this matter the study draws on the perception of conscience and sub-conscience understood as a fusion of nature and nurture, combined in a socially habitual, individually intentional, but also neuroscientific acknowledgement (Goleman 2006, Graeber 2001).

With an element of essentialism, authenticity was sought within the observed phenomena and while collecting the data material. In this sense, authenticity is understood as the acknowledgement of and contact with one's own and the acknowledgement of others' and the world's bio-existence as a common precondition of how and what is constructed and found meaningful and useful. The ability of an authentic interaction can be developed as the *sensethics competence*; a school of thought inspired by the American physician and psychotherapist Alexander Lowen's bioenergetic analysis. Authenticity is understood as a contact with the surrounding world through increased contact with the person, one really is, behind social and habitually undertaken and generalized (mis-)understandings of what we are. The sensethics perception of the individual distinguishes between what we are, as being out of our hands, versus what we do, as being within the individual's decisional power when made aware of it (Jensen 2013). Thus this perception bears the traits of the view of humanity in phenomenology and the notion of our embodiment as our social point of departure (Jensen 2012). Therefore I do not refrain from giving social constructions of value high priority as part of the hermeneutic analysis on human economy and learning, but the project in its entire attempt of producing knowledge should not be regarded as social constructivist due to its ultimate understanding of the individual as a possibly dynamic structure according to as well as in spite of social origin and surroundings.

Such a drawing on and accounting for an understanding of the individual as subject accommodates the criticism that the original structuralist ethnographers in a hermeneutical project ultimately lacked this perspective in their

mapping of social structures. Understanding learning as human economic action insists on looking into the individual motivational aspects as a consequence of the educational relationship between the learner and his or her surroundings, assuming the existence of both. The central issue of this project is derived from asking what is offered and received and how exchanges take place in the educational relationship. What is invested in the attempt to affect the learner's doings, how is the learner responding and reciprocating and what are the educators and the learner's conditions for exchange as a consequence of their mutual agonistic or non-agonistic positioning (Mauss 1954, Schmidt 2006, Godelier 1996)? The educator's role is not to be regarded as fixed in one authority or one person, but is variable across time and space, symbols and materials, just like the learner's role. The fusion of Schmidt, Lave/Wenger and Mauss/Graeber therefore brings the educational relationship to a certain way of exchanging value in a community of practice with an eye to an identity development defining the learner. City Year London through its clear agenda as an identity creating arena and personal mythmaking is what constitutes the organization as a learning community of practice with an eye to the volunteers' identity formation in this point of view (Lave, Wenger 1991). The way the volunteers act as mentors, role models, with the charity aim of advancing education for the children is their field of operation does not define the organization as learning per se. The volunteers' identity creation, or altering of their doing, is in direct focus inside the organization and places City Year as a learning organization since: *"Learning and sense of identity are inseparable: they are aspects of the same phenomenon"* (Lave, Wenger 1991).

An understanding of the subject motivation for accepting suggestions and expectations from various educators to the volunteers was found to be elementary and also the focus of the theoretical approach chosen. The volunteer's sincere motivation was found important to unveil both in the analysis as well as in observing reciprocal behavior as intentional interactions, and also in data qualification through methodically creating rapport and seeking authenticity in interviews. The reason was that a trusting response from the volunteer also meant a non-rejecting behavior and openness to receive educational suggestions in other situations. The trusting personalities of the volunteers were important overall. Returning to the sensethics competence, this state of mind in social interaction is defined as a sense that you are being taken seriously (Jensen 2013). Therefore, a sense of being taken seriously which

denoted rapport building, and thus authenticity and openness to exchange, in the ongoing exchange between the volunteer and the exchanging partner was a search criterion along with expressions related to value and exchange (Ehn, Löfgren 2006). This search criterion of authenticity was used to validate the collection and hermeneutical analysis of the data material in being found meaningful to the volunteers as well as to the analysis of exchanges (Føllesdal 1979).

Observing and participating

The field work was carried out as what Mauss would call “intensive field work” (Mauss 1967) and as completely overt research according to Holdaway’s six options I took the approach to: “*Seek the permission of the chief officer to research, giving full details of method and intention*” (Hammersley, Atkinson 1995). My initial gatekeeper discussed my request of conducting field work in City Year London with fellow leading staffs and board members before giving me access. Other staff members were given information of my presence and I was introduced as “an anthropologist from Denmark” to them as well as to the volunteers. As time went by and due to the amount of time I spent with both the corps members and the staff I participated more and more. Natural and practical circumstances such as the fact that I was not between 18 and 25 of age and that I had overtly expressed my reason for being there kept me from participating fully. During the field work I developed a type of “camaraderie” with the corps members and the staff at the main office in Islington, as Russell Bernard exemplifies in his studies of the Kalymnian sponge fishermen (Bernard 1994). This strengthened rapport building and exchange with the informants in spite of my overt presence as researcher, while on the other hand I had to remain aware of the risk of over-rapport on my part, and the ethics of handling vulnerable confessions from the informants, in the data material and during the interviews (Bernard 1994, Hammersley, Atkinson 1995). The elements of deliberate participant observation occurred in accompanying the volunteers on the community service days at schools where regular citizens, friends and collaborators turned up to volunteer in helping with gardening and painting at children’s institutions and community centers. Besides the professional interest in the volunteers, I found myself liking them as human beings. That I participated with them whenever possible and at the

same time had an overt research agenda, inevitably positioned me between the roles of stranger and friend (Hammersley, Atkinson 1995). Before I knew it I was invited along for social intercourse outside City Year time by both staffs and volunteers, who seemed to have no problem that I had a foot in both camps.

Defining when to be participating and when not to was determined by my deliberate and open request and acceptance of taking part in their activities whether I stayed in the background, taking on the role of the fly on the wall, or participated as an observer. There is a methodological discussion concerning whether it is possible to be non-participant when present in a field, particularly in long-term qualitative field work. Where James Spradley operates with the term non-participant observer (Spradley 1980), others inspired by social constructivism such as Bernard and Hammersley/Atkinson both argue that whenever present in the field, even during attempted neutral observation or interview, the ethnographer should always consider his or her role as participating and affecting the field as part of data validity (Hammersley, Atkinson 1995, Bernard 1994). The difference between the two perceptions shows that even in later times, and particularly boosted by “the linguistic turn” in anthropology, there has been a focus on the problem of the ethnographer subconsciously affecting the field by personal ways of acting and communicating as a human being and not just a professional. To get around the bias this represented, the demands for methodological reflections, positioning and presuppositions were increased (Lave 2011, Hammersley, Atkinson 1995), while the aim was basically still to fulfill the criteria of *modus 1* research, ultimately based on a hypothetical-deductive research approach (Føllesdal 1979). Not rejecting the demand for continuous reflection as part of the validation process and the fact that just being in the room creates certain reactivity among the observed, I prefer Spradley’s five types of participation. The reason for this is that there was clearly a difference between when I participated and when I stayed silent in the background just watching, scribbling and was much less staged; this is a difference which I prefer to remain true to in my methodological reflections.

Degree of involvement	Type of participation
High	Complete
	Active
	Moderate
Low	Passive
(No involvement)	Nonparticipation

Figure 4: Spradley's five types of participation

During this field work carried out as multi-sited ethnography the degree of involvement generally varied from site to site, depending on what was possible and productive according to my purpose there. Rapport was easily created and the activities in City Year London included me readily in organizational structures. After going through the interview strategy below, I will present multi-sited ethnography and show how it was used as the framework of the data collection. Here I will revisit the discussion regarding participation as it has proved substantial.

The semi-structured interview

To sum up, method and analytical theory crisscross in this case where the ethnographer has set out to learn about someone's learning. The methodological framework and the target of analysis combined created a methodological awareness on rapport building, reciprocal behavior and learning about the City Year London's culture through studying their ways of reciprocating and creating meaningfulness. As mentioned before, this crisscrossing has become a condition in anthropology and educational anthropology, where the ethnographer's meta-reflective work on the ways of reflecting in the culture of study often leads to the ethnographer accounting for his or her own learning process while studying others' (Lave 2011, Hasse 2002, Madsen 2004). In the pre-studies as well as in the main studies, yet to come, the authenticity of rapport building proved crucial to the findings and has been included in the analysis as a certain type of reciprocation indicating trust and mutuality. Creating rapport, being an establishment of trust in a social relationship between the ethnographer and informant (Hammersley, Atkinson 1995) is not a one-sided and merely conscious methodological activity controlled by the ethnog-

rapher, as indicated by early ethnographers such as James Spradley (Spradley 1980). The way of “building rapport” is often propounded as a certain activity on the part of the ethnographer, who goes out of his or her way to establish a reliable behavior to get as pure and true information out of the informant as possible. Rapport building is here understood as a similar, at least two-sided, activity of mutual exchange to that of any other social relationship. The interviews were particularly useful for rapport building, and methodologically it was a space for sparring and testing of my assumptions from observing during the collective activities; they were a vital contribution to the method and data triangulation.

Following an intense startup period with observations in City Year London, the circumstances of the interviews improved due to the fact that the teams were now implemented in the everyday lives of the schools and the children. The corps members had gotten used to the long hours, the level of challenges, school regulations and activity level, and the habit of having four days in schools and one Leadership Development Day on Friday before weekends with sometimes a Community Action Day on Saturday, Sunday off and starting over again on the following Monday. The corps members had also become accustomed to my presence, being allowed into their worlds randomly by City Year staff, an admission which was out of their hands regardless of the fact that they were the objects of observation and the ones I followed. This had been quietly accepted by the corps members and they seemed to enjoy my visits as part of the City Year terms. A common habit was established. When I returned from a period at home I was greeted with a mix of joy, surprise and interest of how I had been since I was there last time, that it had been a while, and that they missed me and were happy to see me back. To be visited by me had started to seem like a privilege to the teams. They bragged to the other teams that they had been observed by me in their schools, and expressed disappointment if they found out that I was not coming to their school. I had become a sort of liaison to them as they confided in me when they were dissatisfied with the school board and the teachers’ response to them. I had become someone they would share their experiences with, someone who genuinely wanted to hear their stories, which were individual and often quite emotional experiences from their daily interactions with the children. Finally I had become a pleasant interruption in their daily routines, someone they could show off to and discuss their interactions with the chil-

dren with, now that they were most often the only person from City Year in the classroom. The corps members liked to be observed and use me for reflection and sharing of experience after class. Their openness in itself invited interviews and my asking for interviews lead to consent in all cases.

	<i>Field analytical research interview</i>	<i>Life historical/ biographical interviews</i>
<i>Degree of control</i>	Semi-structured Thematic Ongoing interactive interpretation Critically probing for precision and elaboration	Unstructured Narrative vs. argumentative Impromptu with elaborative questions
<i>Interview outlook</i>	Interview as observation The narrative as personal snapshot Breaking the biographical illusion Focus on organizational practices and individual meaningfulness	Self-manifesting Social and historical reality
<i>Similarities</i>	<p>Both interview forms intend to get a narrative response, the semi-structured interview being controlled by themes toward certain areas of knowledge.</p> <p>Both interview forms are qualitative, aware of rapport building, and physical setting.</p> <p>Both interview forms rely on the project's research questions.</p>	

Figure 5: Field analytical and biographical interviews

Based on the project's methodological framework and the analytical object around human economy, observation of what is given, received and reciprocated would be descriptive of the interactions around cultural values. In a

multi-sited ethnographic sense interviews are beneficial for following values and meaning through following the narrative (Maus 1954, Marcus 1995). The field work focuses on various forms of exchange. Besides observing *what* is exchanged, attention is given to the *how*. More specifically attention was directed towards more or less explicit demands as to what was given. Examples are expressions of positivity and negativity discursively ascribed to what is exchanged (verbally and non-verbally), expressions of the area of value of the exchange, paying attention to value categorization, what the exchanged object contributes to or hinders as an expression of usefulness, the interaction between value spheres (material, solidary, individual, short- or long-term value) and the symbolic value of what is exchanged related to the act of giving and receiving itself.

The purpose of the interview here is to function as an access to observe the interviewee's experience of cultural practices in relation to the individual motivation for participating. Ethically it is important to be aware of negative self-manifestation regarding personal stories of emotional agony which can be the pitfall of the biographical, unstructured interview form. The semi-structured interview was found well-suited for flexibility regarding a personal self-manifestation, focusing on the theme as a common third and individual present context.

When I followed the volunteers around there had already been many informal interviews taking place, as I associated with both staff and corps members throughout the introductory period. Formalizing the relations during interviews also needed reflections as to what would be most meaningful and therefore rewarding in an interview with each interviewee. Accompanying the volunteers had resulted in an atmosphere of familiarity, solidarity and sometimes even comradeship and perceptiveness, making a more unstructured form of interview seem more natural. I prepared semi-structured interview guides with open but thematic questions (Bernard 1994), leaving space for reflexive interviewing (Hammersley, Atkinson 1995) through letting the discussions subside and then comparing my questions to what had naturally come up before I posed the next thematic question. Personal narratives, life historical traits, and matters of urgency (Andersen, 2011; Bernard, 1994; Rubow, 2003) became a natural part of the replies without dominating the direction and intention of the interviews. Perceptiveness in talking to the vol-

unteers primarily concerned everyday situations and stories about school activity and interactions with the pupils, whereas talks with staff revolved around organizational matters such as transference of values, strategies in collaborating with the volunteers and historical and organizational development. I was offered interviews with school heads regarding school motivation for requiring a CYL team, which I refused, as I wanted to limit my data collection to the volunteers and not study the school-organizational partnership.

The initial objective of this project was, from an educational-anthropological analysis of social processes of exchange and inclusion in voluntary social organizations, to examine the correlation between social economy and learning processes, and also how this is expressed. The purpose of this is to put forward thoughts on what implications the project's knowledge might have in relation to pedagogical developments within the field of relevance. The objective as such was kept in mind when preparing the interview guides, and besides looking to the thesis statement the research questions for elaboration of the objective were guiding:

- How do pre-existing, organizational and individual, values influence social conventions created in a new group of volunteers?
- How does social value relate to skills acquisition and personal development?

Entering CYL as a specific case in this project, more site specific questions arose, which should form part of the interview questions:

- What makes a typical CYL volunteer and life as a volunteer?
- Motivation and everyday life. How do they like CYL?
- In a peer-to-peer project, what is role-modelling to the volunteers and why is their work necessary? This regards both the volunteers themselves and the school children involved.
- Learning in the organization: what are the educational relationships?

The corps members were very verbal about the fact that they felt they learned much from the children and in the schools. Reflecting upon this bottom-up-learning had me wonder whether there was a similar learning going on between the volunteers and the staff members involved in the organization and how this correlated and functioned with the strong set of values presented by

CYL. What interested me here was whether there were clashes between the volunteer and the organization, and I also wondered about the integration of differences between personal and organizational values among the corps members. This could be related to the uniform, directions and regulations of public behavior, and full or partial identification with the organizational values. The overall interview guide was merely a guideline aiming to maintain a focus in accordance with the objective of the project. It came in two versions: a less structured version intended for interviews with the volunteers, and a more structured version for interviews with specifically LS2 and LS1, the latter being the gatekeeper²⁰. Prior to choosing the semi-structured interview for this field work, I had considered the life historical interview form due to the focus of the latter being the social and historical reality of the interviewee. But besides the ethical reflections regarding an interest in keeping the volunteers empowered by their active “now”, and also the intention of triangulating data and multi-sited “following” of the volunteers on the terms of their busy weekdays, the semi-structured interview was chosen with the advantage of keeping an analytical, though not rigid, track (Bernard 1994, Hammersley, Atkinson 1995).

Multi-site field work: The sites and their interconnectedness

Imperialism was once the very origin of anthropological science and Western ethnographers were sent on excursions to archaic, primarily non-European, societies to scientifically account for lives and conditions among strange peoples in foreign countries. Discovering the different and less privileged cultures, not least acknowledging the vulnerability and land possible to conquer, imperialists ruled by helping. Helping to structuralize, to civilize, to democratize, and in this way inclusion was and still is a double edged sword morally. It has also occasioned resistance from the suppressed and often this resistance from one side is seen as terrorism and from the other as freedom fighting. Besides imperialism, bio-anthropology was the perspective of the travelers with the topis. Discovering foreign peoples and taking up residence among them, keeping diaries, discovering, observing and experiencing completely

²⁰ See Appendix 5: Interview guides

different versions of human lives as they were lived far away from home was the ethnographer's drive. Returning home, if he did not die of foreign diseases during his stay, for he was also a brave soul to risk his health and life for the greater insight, he would bring unique knowledge and exotic stories about how these others lived their everyday lives (Eriksen 1998). Conducting classical ethnographic field work in City Year London undeniably still carries the reminiscence of discovering an otherness as well as the self (Marcus 1995). In the 1980s the ethnographer's positioning of his or her savage informants ultimately backfired and changed the idea of the ethnographer from the superior scientist to a mere human being with the same type of subconscious motives marking the interpretation of "the others". The methodological discussion concerning the field worker's interpretation of and influence on the field she is studying, also known as "the linguistic turn", tends to end in the sort of relativism that concludes that communicating what we know about other cultures is co-produced and always in the eyes of the beholder (Lave 2011). Through the methodological concept of multi-sited ethnography George Marcus introduces an ethnography aiming to break the dichotomies which tend to limit ethnography to one or the other of lifeworld or system, local or global, objectivity or relativism. The field is introduced as multi-sited and the ethnographer consequently as a "circumstantial activist" (Marcus 1995). This theory puts emphasis on interdisciplinary arenas, which was the main motivation for choosing this as the frame for the project's research design.

Conducting multi-sited ethnography in City Year London resulted in accompanying the volunteers around greater London to 22 physical sites in total, not counting virtual interactivity through webpages, four sites on Facebook and e-mailing with six staffs, team A's team leader and the volunteers on team A. The sites were five schools to observe the volunteers interacting with the children, three schools for Community Action Days plus two community centers and a nursery. There were also two sports facilities for a fundraiser and a school activity day related to the preparations for the upcoming Olympics in 2012. Further sites were four cafes for socializing with the volunteers, Westminster Castle, one university for graduation, and the activity center where we spent the night in a tent during the introductory period. Finally there was a day of community mapping, where I followed a group of seven volunteers around the local area looking for potential collaborators and of

course the main office²¹. The sites, my roles and intensity of research varied from site to site, producing various types of data material accordingly. The various forms of observations and interviews were used for mutual validation and correction using the approach of data triangulation (Hammersley, Atkinson 1995). This approach also contributed to point to individual ambivalences and contradictions in the material which supported the generation of analytical themes indicating where something was at stake (Ehn, Löfgren 2006).

The main site, where I spent most of the time, was the head office in Islington. This site was the first one for me to visit and was a continuous physical and social base throughout the field work. I first came across City Year London researching for youth-to-youth voluntary organizations in Europe on the Internet. City Year London is well displayed among such organizations and skimming through their website alone, due to its professional and attractive appearance, the red jackets, the diversity and its urban settings, it caught my interest and I decided to try and arrange a meeting with them in the main office in London, which they accepted after a couple of emails and phone calls. I was forwarded to LS1 and he and I succeeded in arranging a meeting. City Year London is aesthetically pleasing with its streamlined look, signaling

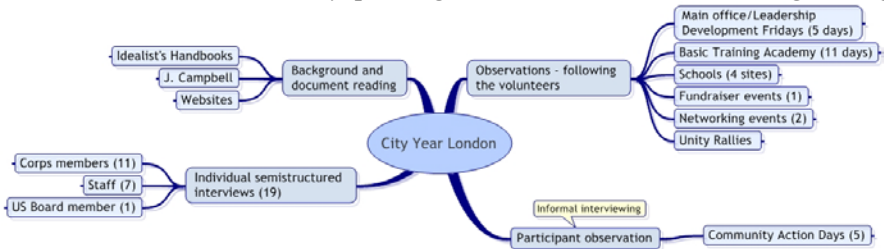


Figure 6: Data triangulation

unity and at the same time appearing as an active, socially constructive, and dynamic up-to-date organization. Visually everything matches, the volunteers' uniforms match the inventory and vice versa. My experience with the interview for access with LS1 was focused and demanding, and at the same time open and interested on their part, resulting in a “yes” and “welcome, we look forward to having you around”. I found myself back on the pavement in front of the building approximately 45 minutes after I had arrived and I felt like I had been spun in a carousel and was on my way back to Denmark.

²¹ See Appendix 2: Data collection overview

There were no demands, no terms but the usual anonymity and informants' insight. The friendly people and the smart and consistent appearance combined with the universalistic value which was posted in the lobby, a Gandhi quote: "*Be the change you wish to see in the world*" were appealing. Everyone in City Year London, staffs and volunteers, were helpful, recognizing, interested, humoristic, and open to every one of my suggestions, questions or requests. The openness of the organization as an empirical field surprised me, as I had come prepared to convince, argue and negotiate. I was let in wholeheartedly and left with a feeling of having pushed on open doors.

Main site: the London head office

"I arrive in a really nice foyer. City Year London's address stretches over four house numbers and is placed in a big 2-3 storey building characterized by gray, metal and glass. The door sign is smart and professional and I am received by a receptionist who asks me to sign into the house. I meet people in City Year clothes – t-shirts and the red jackets – at the door. I fill out the visitor's book with my information, my name, company as well as who I am here to visit, time of arrival (I forgot to write in the time of departure, but I arrived at 9:55 and left at 10:45). After signing the visitor's book, I am asked to take a seat and wait. I take a seat in a nicely designed chair, in City Year red, in the lobby. The room is clean, smart and with a good quality rug and a glass-designed City Year logo hangs on the back wall of the reception. The room is characterized by glass and metal and City Year's logo takes the focus. I take a couple of snapshots with my mobile phone. There is also a board with a detailed description of the symbolism in the logo. Soon I am met by LS1 who comes in limping on crutches. I make a short comment about his accident; he mumbles something with his back to me as a response while hurrying towards the meeting room. In this room there are already two young women, one in City Year London uniform. We take a seat; LS1 excuses himself for not being a good host because of the crutches. He asks if I want some water and starts heading out towards the kitchen to get me a glass. I interrupt him and tell him that I want to go get it myself now that he is on crutches; he points and tells me where the kitchen is. In the kitchen are three people of whom one or two are wearing City Year t-shirts. I ask for some water; one tells me there is mineral water downstairs. I tell them that I just need some tap water if it is drinkable – it is. I ask LS1 if he wants some water, he refuses, and I come back into the room with my water and sit down."
(Field diary entry, May 20th 2011)

In many ethnographic studies access to the field has been problematized and discussed, particularly regarding private, organizational or "closed" settings. With regard to these closed settings, and City Year London can be characterized as such, it is often emphasized how the ethnographer needs to carefully and strategically consider the initial approach and contact. This is a period

which S.J. Ball (1980) stresses as one of the most sensitive regarding possibilities, opportunities and barriers in studying the selected field or getting to study it at all (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995, Bryman 2008). In this case, as in the case of Leidner's studies of a McDonald's (Bryman 2008), polite persistence was initially the key and over a period of half a year I wrote to and rang City Year in London presenting my project, but with no concrete response, just polite answers telling me they would get back to me. I initially contacted LS2 who then after three presentation e-mails passed me on to LS1. I prepared an elevator pitch on my academic background and reason to have chosen City Year London as my case along with my concrete aim with my time there. In City Year London the strategy of the elevator pitch was later rediscovered as the organizational value expressed as "the bio", orally as "stand and present" and in the prolonged version "the testimonial". This strategy as part of City Year's activities was obviously not discovered until later, so the probable acknowledgement of my choosing the elevator pitch for gaining access was what Van Maanen and Kolb would call "dumb luck" (Bryman 2008).

My time at the main office was mainly spent in three spots. The first one to mention was "The Village" which was the volunteers' common room and training area. This was where the sessions were held and the gathering area every Friday for Leadership Development Days. The room was placed downstairs from the main entrance and thus the training of the volunteers could take place isolated from the more visitor-friendly upstairs with the reception, a waiting area, an open kitchen and the lavatories. Time in "The Village" was mainly spent as a fly on the wall, and in time I became moderately participatory as a consequence of my position between insider and outsider (Spradley 1980). I did not participate actively in the sessions and I never answered questions from the presenter to the volunteers. However, I did participate on two occasions. The first was in the ritual "Crossing the Line", due to reasons which I will go into in the pre-study. In the second I represented my profession as a researcher on a panel available for questions from volunteers who were considering this as a career option. In "The Village" I sat in on smaller groups' activities, but I never contributed even though I took part in some individual exercises given by the presenter, but by myself. The main activity I had in that room was with my field diary and recorder. Every day ended with a "spirit break" which I would take part in. The spirit break would be in a big circle, everybody saying a word in unison which would represent something

to remember during the day; staffs, visitors, volunteers, laying their hands on top of each other's. In "The Village" the relationship with any informant was rather formal.

The second room was "The Lighthouse" which is the kitchen upstairs. Though it was mainly meant for staffs and visitors I spent most time with volunteers there. I quite often had lunch with the volunteers, but I was never part of actual food sharing, though I did get a piece of chocolate cake whenever it was somebody's birthday. Birthdays were celebrated there during the lunch break or after the training sessions. In "The Lighthouse", contrary to when I was in "The Village", I was mostly like everybody else and we were all on our breaks there. But going back downstairs to "The Village", we would be back to work and back to our positions as volunteers and observer. "The Lighthouse" became very much an informal room and an important digestion arena where the intensity of impressions was digested with a few of the corps members, staffs, or by myself, depending on which time of the day it was. Meetings in "The Lighthouse" would be out of character and it was a very important room for building the authentic rapport which became crucial to the data in general. The first interview I was offered was in here from D1, off the record and away from the training area. This was where we would ask each other how things were going, and I was asked this as much as I asked anybody else and never took notes while socializing here.

The third room to be mentioned was "The Cathedral" or the staff area where I was invited to leave my bag and valuables. This room was a working area, an open office, with approximately 25 workstations with desktops. Any administrative, practical questions I might have were answered in here. Every job function was gathered here and everybody on the staff always knew where other staff members would be if not in there. There was an open door policy, which meant that occasionally volunteers would come in asking a question, just as I did. Although I was invited to sit there and work, I did not have a workstation there and I never brought my own laptop. The time I spent there was mainly administrative and occasionally waiting to leave somewhere with the rest of the groups when travelling across the city for example to go to opening day. In this room I was often out of my zone. Without the volunteers I was a welcomed visitor but like everybody else in "The Cathedral" I was left to work on my own task in peace. But the work I would

do at the main office was not desk work but was focused on following the volunteers. “The Cathedral” was the first room to enter when I re-entered the field before the volunteers’ sessions started, and this was where I was greeted and I let everyone know that I was back in the building.

Besides my usual trail around the office building between “The Village”, “The Lighthouse”, and “The Cathedral” I spent time there when meeting people for interviews. This would take place in a conference room called “Ubuntu”, the volunteers’ lunch area “Moccasins” and twice in the CEO’s office. Most corps members were interviewed at their schools in a free room. In my interviewing role I clearly stood out as researcher. But with the degree of acceptance and successful rapport building during the everyday activities in those rooms along with the time reserved, the interviews held a certain degree of trust and honesty in spite of the formal setup.

Secondary sites: schooling

Whether I could be allowed to follow the volunteers into schools or not depended on the heads of the schools and I agreed to hand in my certificate of good conduct. The reasons given were rules on child safety and the fact that some of the schools already had researchers running around the hallways, which was found stressful in their everyday activities. LS1 and I agreed that I would write a brief introduction letter which he would edit and send out to the schools as a joint letter requesting my access. There were six schools at the time of our first meeting. Two of these already had evaluators, which meant that also having me was thought to be too many observing visitors. The joint letter was sent out to three of the four possible schools. The replies from the schools were given to me by LS1:

“I am sorry to say that the head teachers of both the schools I approached (the ones you highlighted) have said no to your proposal to come and observe for several weeks—each is going through a number of senior management changes at the moment and fear the potential confusion that further external presence could bring to both staff and pupils. We’re not in a position to push schools, as you can imagine, so we have to accept their view on this. Therefore it looks like we won’t be able to extend the cooperation you need for your study. I am sorry to be the bearer of bad tidings.” (E-mail received June 17th 2011)

The reply was confusing as I had not thought the access to the schools to be crucial to my observations. After clarifying this with City Year London, we decided to proceed with the fieldwork plans, aiming to interview and observe mainly volunteers and staff, and possibly sponsors and collaborative partners. After spending approximately two weeks full time with the new volunteers at the head office in London during their Basic Training Academy period of a total of three weeks, S3 suddenly addressed me in passing and offered me to accompany her to the school whose team she was supervising. I accepted this, seeing it as an unexpected but enriching opportunity. Like so many other arrangements in City Year London, this happened very rapidly. It revealed the importance of physical and mental presence and rapport from the field worker in the field. One key factor in City Year London's organizational life turned out to be personal presence as a precondition for grasping the opportunities thrown at one and the ability to quickly readjust plans. I handed in my certificate of good conduct on my own initiative; it was not requested but still appreciated as part of the overall rapport building. In my methodological revisions I considered my selection priorities because it became obvious that I would not be able to observe and interview every site and every volunteer that had now been made accessible to me. I felt obligated to express myself clearly about my intentions, also taking the staff's logistics planning into account. The transparency in my planning was necessary to the staffs who were also ordering my access passes to enter official buildings and be able to observe the volunteers there. In the end it was neither the organization nor the volunteers that limited my access; it was the amount of hours in a day, energy and consideration of my actual need of data which guided my priorities.

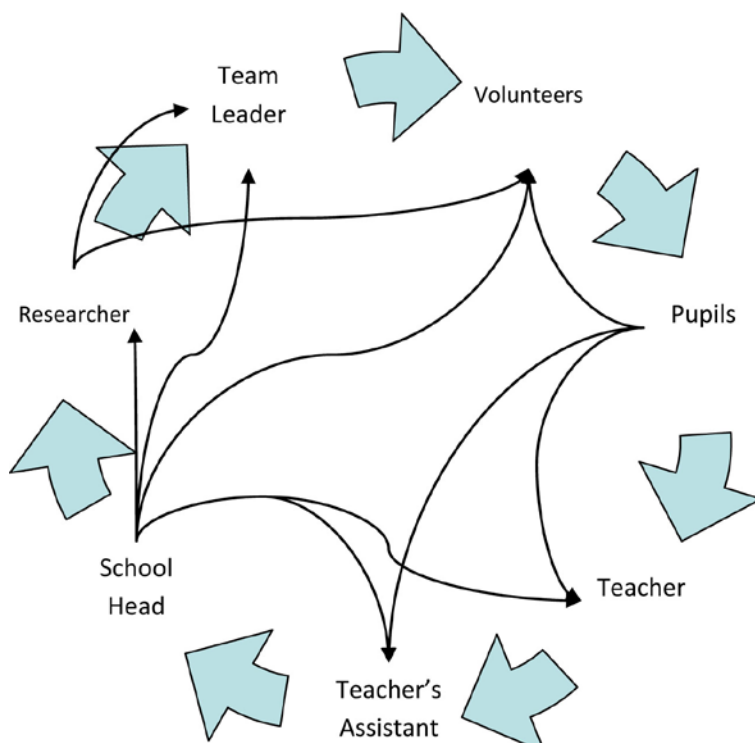
Observations: Double, triple and quadruple learning agendas

Entering the empirical field of social benevolence and City Year London did not make balancing the analytical focus less complicated as here too the educational perspective was expressed as important in everyday actions and identified in various ways. There was a multitude of educational terms at all levels: the *educating* organization, *training* volunteers to *mentor* children in primary *schools* while offering the volunteers unique *learning* opportunities. The educational aspect exists in spite of the methodological precautions mentioned and is a big part of the empirical reality, the identity of the organization, their col-

laborators as well as in and content of activities. Everybody there seemed to have set out to do something with some learners' doings (Schmidt 2006) and has both general and vocational education on the agenda. This became specifically clear to me, not just during the Basic Training Academy the volunteers went through during the first three weeks of the city year, but in the very first week of observing in school C. I was circulating in the classrooms where the volunteers of team C were allocated along with the team leader of team C (TLC):

"The children are working. C2 is walking from one pupil to the next offering her help and asking how it is going. The teacher's assistant (TA) sits by the children while helping one. I ask her if I'm in her chair. She says no and explains to me that she is circulating. She presents correct behavior while acting as a teacher moving from one pupil to the next while they sit and work. The teacher counts to three in French, upon which the children lay down their pencils, cross their arms on the table and look at her. She is the teacher who asked us to be on time, which was not kept. She asked us to be there at 9:30 am and it is now 11:20. Another TA arrives and takes over a pupil from the first TA. A is still circulating among the children, offering her assistance. She quickly whispers to the teacher about some practicality and the teacher replies quickly and denies it, seeming a bit annoyed. C2 puts her hand up along with the children when the teacher wants silence. They are learning to write. TLC yawns. She sits with the pupils. She looks at the pupil's work next to her. C2 whispers something to TLC about how this pupil is writing. The teacher counts in French once again expecting the pupils to react. TLC observes C2, and I am observing both of them. It seems a bit exaggerated. C2 is very attentive of the teacher, present, follows her lead, getting familiarized with the children's tasks. C2 helps out the pupil next to TLC who starts filling out the volunteer's evaluation form. The pupil who is being helped looks tired and wants variety. He starts tilting his chair while still following the teacher's instructions. TLC looks at the children. C2 helps the pupil next to TLC. TLC acts according to the teacher's expectations in terms of directing the attention. She hands stickers to C2 that she can share out to the children as rewards." (Field diary entry, Sep 6th 2011)

Figure 7 is a visualization of the explicit observed relations in the classroom. The model turns out to be quite simple and legitimate. I was allowed in the classrooms to observe City Year, mainly the volunteers and what they were learning. This was the accepted interpretation of my presence. But it did not always correspond to everything that was actually happening. Watching this learning community it became clear to me that I was watching a complex cultural interplay of mainly immaterial exchange of time, attention (seeing, listening, empathy), knowledge, practical guidance (rules, time left), and various kinds of registration (“points”, grades, behavioral and performance notes). Besides the actual practice and immaterial exchanges, I was watching the ways this was done in the “between relations” of reciprocation (Sahlins 2004) (Figure 7). The type of reciprocation during class was always very idealistic, the behavioral code was continuously made clear by the teacher, as well as the right response from the children indirectly being “I know how to behave”, which the people from City Year were acting according to, to strengthen the expected behavior in the children. Humor was only seen as a subtle smile at the children’s actions among the adults or indirectly spoken through the ver-



97 Figure 7: Explicit classroom relations

bal interaction with the pupils. Each individual was mainly performing according to what was expected of them in this given, formal setting.

The observation visualized in Figure 7 indicates the internal structure of an overt sanction system which critics of the mystified perception of *han* point to as the reason for reciprocation: instead of *han* being a mystified force of the thing, what ensures the circulation of the gift in a certain community are the overt social sanctions within a kinship (Mauss 1954, Godbout, Caille 1998). Secondly what this excerpt shows is that the City Year as learning community was not static and in this case it included me, the team leader and the volunteer. The latter two were then merged with the classroom community: the pupils, the teacher and the teacher's assistant. From time to time observation habits of the school's learning community were seen as the school head observing the teacher teaching and the pupils learning. At the same time, when City Year was present, the head would include observing the volunteers interacting with both teacher and pupils and thus "fitting in" to the school's learning community. The more all the observers observed the clearer became the effect of the fact that we were all watching each other observe. Whether a gained self-consciousness or paranoia the awareness of this appeared disturbing to the actual educational agenda of interacting with the pupils also to those in charge of the classroom activities. This learning community's goal activities were spoiled by the spotlight because it made everybody more aware of their performance and took away the complete focus of the actual education tasks.

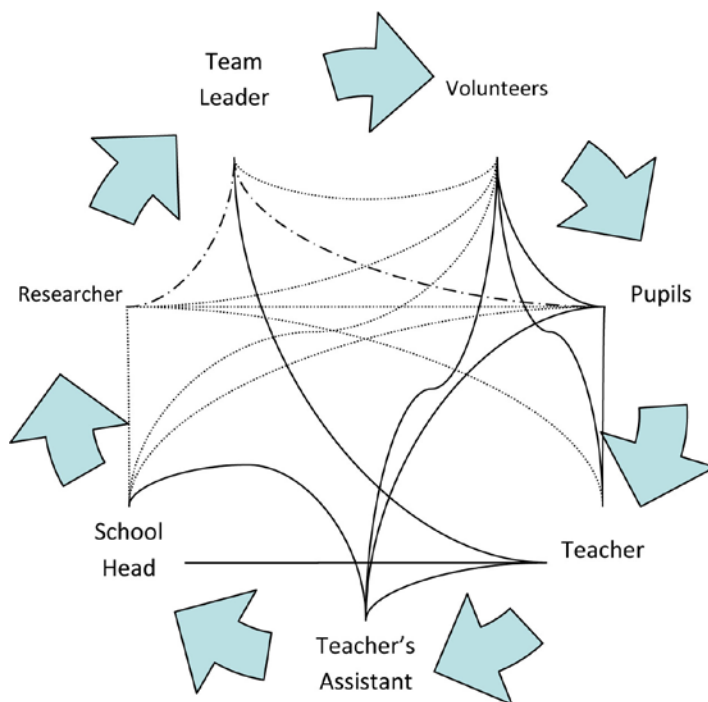


Figure 8: Implicit classroom relations

I saw the volunteers' interaction with the teacher and the pupils. The team leader observed the same but did not focus on my presence and because of that, she thought I was not looking at her working as a team leader either, but I was. Furthermore I was observing the head checking up on the classroom interaction between everybody in the room including myself. But I observed the head checking as well as she observed me observing this. Because of the latter observational relation between the head of the school and myself, the two learning communities were actually tied together to become one: a peacekeeping community with an institutionalized learning agenda concerning everyone at each of their levels. According to Schmidt this mutuality and going out of one's way to see each other is an expression of exchanging care which is a key characterization of the educational relationship along with knowledge (Schmidt 2006). At the same time seeing is an expression of love (Schmidt 1990), which in this degree and institutionalized form had become almost absurd though well meant as a consequence of the intensity of documentation at all levels among the adult participants here. In a governance perspective this behavior clearly has different and more critical connotations re-

garding power and subjectivity (Foucault 1975), though it is not the aim of this thesis to unfold this perspective.

During the time in schools my presence could be characterized as passive participation with a low degree of involvement (Spradley 1980). Due to my positioning as passively observing I came to stand or sit in line with others in this position and I found myself standing or sitting among other adults who, unlike me, had come in and taken a waiting position before their role was activated. This would for example be a TA waiting for an opening in the teacher's talk to take a group she was to work with or the head waiting to give a common message. My physical placement as observer was apparently in the informal and unphysical waiting area. The fact that I was in this area caused the children to react to me as if I wanted something from them, that I was there to pick someone up or waiting for my turn to entertain them somehow. Most of the time the volunteers had let the teacher know that I was coming, and mostly the teacher would then prepare the children for my presence, letting them know that I was with City Year; this message seemed to be enough. During a couple of incidents I would sneak into the classroom and go as far down the back as possible trying to be as invisible as I could, and a child came right down to me and started presenting himself to me with his name, the teacher's name, the class level, the class I was in and what they were to go over during this lesson along with a "welcome" and a handshake. The few times that happened I was very surprised and felt somehow revealed. I asked one of the pupils who did this, after thanking him, if they always did this with visitors, which he confirmed. This made me understand that this greeting and presentation had been ordered from the teacher and was part of the children's general education. I had not in my time as a teacher experienced this procedure in Denmark.

Community Action Days

Active participation with a high level of involvement occurred on City Year London's Community Action Days where I took part in painting and gardening along with my City Year friends. Participating came about as a natural consequence of the volunteers being spread out over a large area and attending to diverse tasks, gardening and painting different areas. The days were arranged by team G, which was one team of volunteers who only did this and

were not in schools. After “first circle” which was the first gathering of the group of volunteers, from City Year as well as people from the public community, tasks were delegated and everybody spread out and started working alone, in twos or threes, whichever was more practical. The goals were articulated as:

“We need to paint this fence, those doors, and those beams in these colors and those walls in this; and we need to trim the bushes and make it nice and neat there, there, there, there, and there. So if you guys will do the painting (pointing to one side of the crowd) and the rest of you take care of the trimming, then we’re good to go. Paintbrushes are over there, and the garden tools over here. Make sure we leave this place better than we found it (PITW)”.
(Field diary entry, Sep 10th 2011)

The working bee atmosphere would be characterized by talk about how to cut down a tree, how to dig out a root, whether this tool would be available after someone used it, where were the gloves, what to do with the garden refuse, someone whistling or singing and someone else joining in the tune; laughing, teasing, complimenting each other’s work and the rest was silent voices and busy bodies. Then it was lunch break, back to work and clearing up. The Community Action Days were the days where I left the field diary and the recorder behind me and just met with the only people I knew in London at a random site. The sense of doing something together and doing something for someone else felt meaningful and right to a degree where words and reflections on how to improve this or that seemed unnecessary. Thoughts, reflections and self-awareness were for once not required. The activity was all about living up to the promise of getting the things done. In the beginning of the day we would all work full thrust, spirits high. After a while, the blood sugar and the motivation would drop, which affected everyone. This showed by everybody getting more silent. I found myself losing and retrieving motivation either by changing work mode or task or joining someone to help. After lunch this would occur more often. By the end of the day I felt as if I had become lazy and demotivated, which made reaching the goal and clearing up very satisfying. Thinking back I do not remember the Community Activity Days as something which lifted my spirit particularly. It was nice to be physical and spend a day working alongside happy young people whom I had come to know. I was not forced to participate methodically more than a couple of times, yet I participated five times. Pondering upon this made me realize it was as much a compensation for not having my usual active outdoor

life accessible. I let myself enjoy it and used the days as an informal contribution to methodical selections, insight and rapport building. Toward the end of the year it became clear that what I had thought was an event for parents to participate in with the children, turned out to also be an effective recruitment strategy. More and more potential volunteers who were considering applying for City Year London showed up during these events. Some of the newcomers knew people who were already volunteers; some had already applied to become a corps member.

Access: the circumstantial activist

Although these activities contributed to my feeling more and more at home with City Year London, going back to becoming something between a stranger and a friend felt natural. Each time I reentered the field I would feel how the solidarity in the schools teams and in the group had grown even though I had not been there. The fact that we were all new at the same time made this gap between my rapport building and their group solidarity and friendships increase over time. The intensity of rapport and familiarity with me peaked in November and already from January, when I was no longer there every day nor during Community Action Days, the interactions were down to acquaintances level when it came to most of the volunteers, whether on team A or not. The fact that everybody was there temporarily made it socially acceptable to come and go more freely. The typical comment that I got from both staffs and volunteers when I had been back in Denmark for a period and I re-entered with a *"hi, I'm back"* was *"feels like you haven't left"*. The reasons for this were several. The fact that I was in such a wide variety of sites led to no consensus for those in City Year as to where I was and when. I had my own schedule, travelling from one school to the next, participating in Community Action Days and other activities from time to time. Nothing was carved in stone, I had been given the freedom to follow volunteers almost where and whenever I wanted, but access was negotiated from site to site. Often when changing site I would confirm with a new contact person who was responsible for managing participants or visitors at that particular site or activity. I travelled around London on my own to join the volunteers here and there. This field work shows that the type of organization as field site and multi-sited ethnography leads to an altering of the idea of access and organizational monitoring of the ethnographer.

Access to various sites was negotiated from situation to situation. The schools I had chosen had allowed me to be there with the volunteers, yet for every school day I would agree with one of the volunteers to go in together and I signed up in the visitor's book to get a badge. Every Community Action Day I would declare my intention of participation to yet another person. The only access which was not renegotiated for every time I entered was to the main office in Islington, but this was not the place to capture the volunteers most of the time. This situation makes Marcus' notion about the field worker as a "*circumstantial activist*" relevant along with a sense of "*doing more than just ethnography*" (Marcus 1995). It demanded flexibility, effective use of my diary, the ability to navigate among post codes, public transport, and addresses in London along with a knowledge of who to ask for access, being on good terms with everyone, also because I never knew who I had to ask for access, and I needed to adapt to the form of quick information and flexibility to changed schedules. The fear of familiarity in the field and going native (Hammersley, Atkinson 1995) was rather a condition to adapt to, in order to stay on the beat on which the volunteers I was following were moving, and adapt to the changes and opportunities along with them. Even in the schools their tasks would change from moment to moment. Having thought I would spend the next hour in one classroom observing a particular volunteer interact with the children, I would find this would change within seconds by the volunteer arranging something different or helping out somewhere else than first planned. This made me feel like I was in a particular London or City Year pace. People seemed to move faster. This was contrasted when I visited my home by how my new pace was up compared to my usual, more "slow" it seemed, surroundings, and when back in London I felt that I was pushing myself to keep up. Spending a lot of energy keeping up with the movements of the volunteers in London left no surplus time or energy to reflect on keeping a professional distance, but on the other hand it did not leave time nor energy to cultivate the relations with the informants in a particularly boundary-crossing and personal manner which would have challenged the professional purpose. Surrendering to the pace and the movements around the city and around the volunteers and getting it to feel as familiar as possible was the only way to make sure of staying focused, updated, and maintaining the energy to keep up with the culture I had chosen to study in order to study it.

Graduation day

City Year's graduation day July 23rd 2012, 14 months after my initial contact and my final day with City Year London, turned out to be a day of confessions regarding access. I was mingling at the graduation reception before saying my last goodbyes when a tall man came up to me and presented himself as a member of the City Year London board and anthropologist. It turned out that what I had seen as my achieving access through strategic planning and a skilled elevator pitch, in truth was due to LS2 and LS1 discussing accepting my presence at City Year London with this member of the board. When I visited them for the first meeting it had already been decided to let me in. Back then this member of the board told me he had expressed his skepticism and advised against it, and he found it amusing to confess this to me at this mingling session. The informality during the conversation grounded the hype which had once been around my access for both of us. On his part he had been worried what this project might reveal about City Year and on my part I had been worried that I would not be allowed access. I decided to get LS1's version of what happened and carried on the informality as I strolled over next to him and told him that the anthropologist member of the board had just revealed this to me. Equally informal and amused, he provided me with another detail: after having been advised against it, LS1 had considered that it was a learning and not an organizational project. Subsequently they had consciously decided to open up and share and put the brakes on the initial skepticism and negative consequences of fearful speculations. Ultimately as it turned out, I gained access to City Year London as a consequence of a mutual recognition of the positive match between my qualitative and theoretical approach, the organizational focus on individual strengths and social aim, combined with a decision maker who put a core value of the organization to work and decided that sharing and opening up was unquestionably for the better.

Team A

A not least important condition for the data collection was selecting the group of volunteers to follow. Having been given access to 62 volunteers working in eight teams in nine schools required a selection of which ones to follow. I considered looking for volunteers who would be particularly critical towards City Year or particularly adaptable to the ideas, values and culture.

Another possibility was to choose a bit of everything, which seemed to randomize according to my research questions, but I did not feel sure that it would embrace the entire diversity of the group after all. I would probably have gotten a bit of everything and ended up stretched trying to follow everyone. After reflecting on the aim to stay inductively open to the field and conferring with S3 who initiated this opening in the first place, I decided to integrate City Year's own selection criteria regarding the volunteers and teaming. I chose to observe the entire group of volunteers at the leadership training Fridays, which was my initial plan, and supplement with my newly gained access and follow one particular team and their team leader in the schools they were assigned to. City Year London formed each team from the principle of "diversity" considering gender, racial and social background, and age. The principle stems from a conviction that a diverse group covers more needs at schools than a homogeneous one. A diverse group of City Year mentors also aims to better break down social and ethnic barriers and prejudice among the children, who naturally will come to interact with young people of various ethnicities and religious backgrounds (CYL 2010). Choosing team A was a combination of opportunity and a representation of the organizational value of "diversity". Team A was divided into two schools, schools A and B, with four volunteers in each school led by one team leader. This team leader, unlike other team leaders, also acted as an extra pair of hands in a class appointed by the school. This was due to the fact that one volunteer, A6, had left City Year even before classroom interaction had started. This team was down to eight before it had started in schools. The head of school B had taken on the task of helping school A "back on its feet" academically and physically. Buying team A and sharing the volunteers between the two schools was part of this plan. School B had a good reputation, whereas school A was known as a school in need of care. School B had had a City Year team the year before and been very satisfied with the volunteers' work and activities with the children. The two schools were not far apart geographically and the team leader was able to move fairly easily between the two during one day.

Team A was followed around as I observed them in classroom interactions one by one and I joined them during their breaks and group tasks as well. I also followed and observed them in the playground playing with the children as well as securing proper behavior as the teachers' right-hand people. I interviewed them one by one for approximately an hour and half and most of the

interviews were set up in the school building. This caused a challenge regarding some of my audio recordings as I had technical problems prior to each interview in school A which caused two of the recordings to be ruined and partly lost. On Friday sessions I sat with them during group activities and as I increased my relation with them as researcher, the initial familiarity decreased with this particular team. TLA was my closest contact person in relation to team A and her task as a team leader had been expanded from the management by keeping the ethnographer up to date as to what went on from day to day and where it would be good for me to turn up.

Data material limitations and barriers

As I grew closer to the volunteers I followed they grew increasingly interested in what I was doing probably as a response to the fact that I was often all over their doings. This tendency towards interest in the details of my recordings and notes did not arise until I began to focus on the volunteers' individual whereabouts. Until then I had mainly been watching them as a collective group. The awareness from the individual volunteers that I was shadowing and therefore particularly interacting with caused one volunteer on team A to express a sense of entitlement of insight in my written notes, because he knew I was writing about him. I perceived this as a critical reaction. It caused something of a dilemma and led to awkward situations where I felt that the trust and rapport I had worked hard on establishing was not mutual, and leaving my field diary in the hands of a volunteer pushed my personal boundaries and I did not feel respected. My reflections upon this reminded me that the volunteers themselves had not given me access to observe their interactions with the children, which to this corps member was quite personal:

"A3: And I was just, like, I'm supposed to be working one to one with this child, I don't think that's going to go down too well [because he rejected A3 the first time they were introduced]. But now I feel my and [focus child C]'s relationship is tremendous. He comes up, he says hello to me in the morning, he'll come up and he'll smile at me. I mean, he knows I sit with him a lot in the classroom because he's my focus child, and he'll smile at me. And a lot of what I've noticed is, when he's doing his work he'll look up at me to, sort of, say, am I doing the right thing? And he wants me to, sort of, like... and I feel like such a big brother to him. He'll look at me and be, like, am I doing the right thing? And I'll be, like, yes, well done. And we do one-to-one reading every morning for ten minutes and it's not long, it's quick and he reads the book quickly but his reading has improved so

much already. And considering he's gone from... I mean, I'll tell him off and he'll listen to me, whereas before he wouldn't. I mean, the first time I ever told him off he laughed at me, and now he'll listen to what I say. He'll still give me the attitude but, like I say, it's still early, I'm still growing with him but it's, like, considering he's gone from the child that didn't even say hello to me and I've got gay hair to this child now, that's what I feel like I'm giving. And I feel I can relate to him because the stuff he does, the stuff he says, the way he acts, the way he turns round before he's even doing something and goes, "I can't do this".

He says that and I look at him and I think, that is me when I was a child. And I go home and I tell my Mum about C and she's, like, that is you, that's exactly the way you were. I just sit there and I watch him and I think, I know what you're going to do next. And he does, he does exactly what I think he's going to do. And I just think, "You are a miniature version of me". But I didn't have someone grown up in school to look up to, so that's why I want to be there for C, to improve his education early so that when he does get into senior school he'll be stronger than what I was, so he can have a better outcome than what I did, so... that's why I'm here, I'd say." (Interview Nov. 10th 2011)

The access was given on the volunteers' behalf by their program manager and agreed upon by their team leader, which of course I greatly appreciated. In spite of my general perception that overt field research would be most beneficial, the level of involvement and trust building between the volunteer and the focus child was not free for me to access in relation to the volunteer himself. Though the access had been given on his behalf, the element of privacy and personal emotional involvement had him demand openness on my part, through insight in my field diary, in return for him letting me into something which had become personal to him. The problem was not that it had become personal to him. As a mentor, the personal involvement is what qualifies the particular service of the presence of the volunteer in relation to children who need this type of attention. The problem was rather that my impersonal data collection concerning the level of his personal interaction, which he had trusted me with, brought out a contrast which was found inappropriate by the volunteer. He was asking me to choose between impersonal data collection or personal involvement with his relationship with the mentee and he and I were obviously negotiating the closeness of our relation. The type of insight he had given me had to be equivalent to what I was contributing (Mauss 1954, Parry, Bloch 1989), and what he had offered me was marked by the emotional, qualitative content. I chose my notebook, accepting the conditions of field work, although I experienced an emotional dilemma regarding involvement. The otherwise close relationship with this informant stagnated because of my re-

jection of further emotional involvement in spite of having expressed my interest in what they were doing. This happened in spite of the overtly expressed conditions of my stay: That I was only partaking in the everyday activities for a limited period of time, after which I would return to Denmark fulfilling my own goals which had nothing to do with this meaningful mentor-mentee relationship directly. The level of rapport had reached a limit since I could not participate on a more involved level as a consequence of my limited time in the field and my access not being given to the children but just the volunteers. In this case A3 expressed how he did not find my access to him in this context fully satisfying without my getting more into how he and C mirrored each other. He wanted me to see the whole picture and share the joy which the two of them gave each other.

Marcus talks about the concern about the loss of the subaltern in multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995). Had I had the time and the access to go deeper into A3's relationship with his focus child, I could have discovered much about the mentor-mentee relationship in City Year London. This was not my focus as I knew from the beginning that accessing the school children was not an option. Nonetheless it was the focus of the volunteers and important to them, in this case it was the key motivation. A3 reminded me of a quote: *"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly; what is essential is invisible to the eye"* (de Saint Exupéry 1943) and left me with the realization that I was missing out on something important to the volunteers whom I was following. But I had both met the dilemma of involvement, in spite of what I might have found at the depths to which I had been invited, and I had also now met the limitations of access: the limits were not set by the organization they came from the volunteers' emotional circumstances.

Marcus addresses three problems of data material collected in multi-sited ethnography: *"(...) testing the limits of ethnography, a concern about attenuating the power of field work, and a concern about the loss of the subaltern."* (Marcus 1995). Crossing the boundaries of the local and the global in attempting to capture the reality of interdisciplinary organizations by following calls for *"(...) an emergent dimension of arguing about the connection among sites"*. How to do so has not been elaborated on much. The connections among the sites between which the volunteers in City Year London move were conditioned by the volunteers I had chosen to follow. Marcus' call to stay particularly aware of this connec-

tion can therefore become redundant and seem a parallel activity in terms of methodological meaning if carried out mechanically. In this case I chose to follow the selected team of volunteers rigorously as a first priority, the various sites being a consequence of that first choice. The meaningfulness of the connection between the sites was a consequence of the volunteers' schedule laid down by the organization and the schools they served. The final type of connection, which is the methodological connection between my roles and participation, is what I have focused on in the attempt to fulfill the first validating criteria in this method. An attenuation of "the power of field work" has not been a concern of mine as multi-sited ethnography is a type of ethnography on its own which possesses the power of that model. Along with a fear of losing the subaltern, this bears witness of the structuralist trait of digging deep enough and finding the underlying structure in social life. This thesis fundamentally shares the view of a universal human behavioral dynamic structure which it seeks to unveil in terms of social activity which can be characterized as learning. Staring at the same ball, keeping the same position until the core of it is unveiled might as well be replaced by looking at its trajectory, following it around to expose its social function and behavioral nature, mapping its movements, which has been ethnographic tradition in economic anthropology since Mauss. My point is that following the volunteers to various sites should not give rise to concern of losing essence in an anthropological frame in this thesis' perspective, rather on the contrary.

Losing the subaltern in terms of the mentor-mentee relationship, as reacted against by A3, was not a direct concern of this project. Indirectly it would have been relevant to dig deep into and intensely follow the development of this relationship, for example through more unstructured forms of interview, because of the meaningfulness this relationship meant to the corps member's motivation for volunteering. This was not exactly limited by the method approach, but by the access to the school pupils, out of the hands of City Year London. On the other hand one could argue that this shows that using the approach of multi-sited ethnography is in danger of running into the problem of various degrees of access to each site, leaving the ethnographer to negotiate not just one main access but a second and a third access of importance, which again increases the workload associated with the field work. Furthermore it can be unpredictable which sites to prioritize access to. It was not until three months into the field work that the interviews and following team A

started to reveal how further access to their school relations than I had already been given could be beneficial. At that point I had a month of following left with no opportunity of extending my presence. Having been given access through the efforts of City Year staff was another factor which would have needed revising. In case I had extended my presence in the field to go further into the mentor-mentee relationship, I would have renegotiated access to the schools in collaboration with City Year. One can only speculate as to whether it would have been given to me.

Recruited volunteers

An influential circumstance in this study in terms of generalization is the fact that the volunteers in City Year London have been recruited. The recruitment process is carefully organized. The volunteers apply for City Year in the same way as they would apply for a job. After reviewing the applications, recruitment staffs contact the candidates to initiate several rounds of interviews where the applicant and recruiter match their expectations and get to know each other to some extent. Naturally, in this process some applicants are rejected and I have sought no insight into City Year London's reasons for rejecting specific individuals. My only guess has been that the volunteers *in* City Year London must be seen as resourceful by the organization, which leads to further reflections. The field of voluntary youth programs and peer-learning in such programs seems to trigger reflections on categorizing resourceful and vulnerable youths respectively. There is a common presumption that the youths who sign up for these programs are the 'resourceful' ones and if they help other young people, the latter group holds more vulnerable youths. Over the course of this study resourcefulness among youths has been a theme of discussion, which has led to developing a more nuanced picture of what resourcefulness here means. In City Year London the young volunteers come from very diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Some are motivated to give to children what they rarely experienced themselves, which could be individual support from an adult, socially as well as academically. Some are motivated by the fact that they feel that they had everything they could wish for while growing up and feel an obligation to pass that on to people in need, in this case children who are struggling in school. Resourcefulness in City Year London, given that the volunteers are seen as resourceful since they volunteer and give back to their communities, is therefore not a question of socio-

economic resourcefulness. The label of being resourceful is rather characterized by a mindset, wanting the best for others and acting on it, while at the same time actively co-creating the opportunities they want for themselves. The “vulnerable” category is thus seen in a new light, as consisting of young people who are spoilt, lazy, less visionary, or less dynamic. There is an obvious bias in that the volunteers have been recruited. On the other hand, City Year recruits its volunteers on the basis of “diversity” and “nous”. This dissolves the traditional idea of vulnerability and provides strength in that the volunteers are described as “potentially resourceful no matter who you are”.

Nonetheless, the organization’s recruitment procedure has meant that the group of volunteers consists of a selection of the most enthusiastic and persistent young people who applied for the year program, as there is a waiting list of people who want to become part of City Year UK. Critically aiming at ambivalence and criticism of the organizational structure in the data material has not come naturally. Combining this with the “uncritical” vision of Mauss has positioned the project in what I would call double optimism. This optimism has not just been a characteristic pitfall of the theory, which is a notion which can be turned into criticism of individual action and responsibility as mentioned. It thoroughly affected the atmosphere in City Year London as a whole, leaving the impression of a sort of “high-five culture” which is observed as highly motivational for volunteers, as well as staffs and stakeholders. At the same time, when asking the question *“How can they work so hard and for free?”* it is important to note that the volunteers accept because they are offered if not money then various competences and opportunities which feed into their career plans. Besides input and activities which are equivalent to activities on courses in mid-level management, the volunteers gain a weighty item on their CV, are offered a personal mentor from globally respected businesses, they get time to consider what career or study path to choose, an opportunity to try out the teaching profession, emotionally they get new like-minded friendships, and a chance to be “givers”. Fishing for system critical voices among the volunteers was not productive as the volunteers would not be there if they were likely to sincerely criticize the organization. They had accepted and considered City Year London all worthwhile long before.

The atmosphere of optimism could be critically and psychologically explored as a survival mechanism caused by pressing demands and competition on the

job market for young people; the optimism could be seen as necessary to get by. This stresses the methodological importance of seeking authenticity among the informants. These volunteers are in City Year to *do* something which contributes to society while building their own opportunities along a career path. They are not particularly indignant, though they are aware of their opinions and in many cases their political standpoints, also critical ones. But City Year, generally, is seen as “the right alternative” among the volunteers, and if they are motivated by social indignation it comes from more established parts of society, and the voluntary organization is viewed as the right alternative and a breathing space because of the social peer life and the emotionally meaningful aim. In that manner it does constitute an alternative to the treadmill though one must still work very hard. The fact that it is an all-in engagement for a limited period of time, the idealism, the nature and the flexibility of the ongoing activities, and the investment in terms of career building makes it attractive to these young people who see volunteering as a win-win option.

5 Pre-study: The encounter

Having found inspiration in Richard Swedberg's notions on theorizing in social science (Swedberg 2012b), the reader will find my analysis comes in two parts: analysis of the early more imaginative phase followed by analysis built on the findings in the initial period. During the analysis I will be adopting a modified version of Swedberg's definition of the distinction between the two as theorizing and testing theory and hypothesis. The inspiration is found particularly useful regarding his descriptions of the first phase of presence in the field, where I took on openness to analytical creativity during a period of figuring out where everything was and how the organization functioned in everyday life. This then, without being categorized as "grounded" or as "pilot findings"²², gave insights into social life and individual participation which are preconditions to contextualizing the main analysis; as it was for me so it is for the reader at present. This means that the analysis is demarcated from the scientific tradition of Karl Popper, but concurs with differing between an in-depth analysis of the data material and a more imaginative phase. This is a result of the process of getting to know the field and thus adjusting analytical focal points to this in reciprocal action with impressions and imagination. In this chapter the empirical findings first guide and then examine how the volunteers navigate socially and individually in City Year London. The findings of the pre-study will sketch out the culture among the volunteers which frames values and opportunities as they emerge among a new corps who constitute City Year London culture for one year. This also means that the year after, with an entirely new corps and other sites, will consequently be different on some points but probably appear similar on others. This has not been examined. Though dependent on time and space, the aim of analyzing the processes of culture consensus or divergence and social meaning, using this corps as an example, will hopefully contribute knowledge useful to both City Year as well as other voluntary organizations.

²² Swedberg makes the distinction between prestudy and pilot study: "(...) *its purpose is very different from that of a pilot study, namely to develop creative research ideas through theorizing*". (Swedberg 2012:7)

The first interactions

The day I entered the field of City Year London along with 62 new corps members was August 22nd 2011. The initial period was a period of learning to find my way around physically and socially with all the other people new and old to this field. In that sense I was as “new” as the volunteers and for my part also new to the inside of a London voluntary site. My field diary was a useful prop during periods of frustration and perplexity, as well as of course the important source of data it later held and represented. The confusion and constant process of trial and error at the same time as making the initial observations of the social culture was reflected in my very first entry as I was learning the language of City Year London:

“8:10

I arrive too early as I mistook what time it all started. The volunteers arrive at 8:30. I don't have to guarantee any form of discretion. They don't quite know where to place me and neither do I. Some young staffs arrive in their jackets. Several of them were volunteers last year. They all know each other. We're in the training session room. I've been told 63 volunteers or “corps members” will turn up. At present 12 staffs sit in a circle, talking and waiting for the new volunteers to arrive. (...)

People have started to arrive and every time a new one joins, the others find a chair for this person and make room by expanding the circle they sit in. They present themselves to the people closest to them and more and more join. This has not been organized. (...)

‘Spirit, discipline, purpose, pride’ is on the back of a red sweat shirt. The newly arrived are wearing name tags. The others either wear their uniform jacket or a white t-shirt. The recruiter, [staff], circles the room and talks personally to some of the newly arrived. He's been in contact with all of them and follows up on their arrival. They're not that interested in my presence.²³

8:45: Approximately 30 people in the circle” (Field diary entry Aug. 22nd 2011)

This later turned out to be a typical City Year London impression. When I arrived on this first day, the rooms were bare without any people. After announcing my arrival I was invited to make myself a cup of coffee in the kitch-

²³ 5/9-11: I am told that an email had been sent out to the City Year staffs regarding my presence and project prior to the volunteers' arrival.

en. I observed myself enquiring and testing in this new environment, physically and socially. Mistaking when exactly everybody would meet occurred quite often. Most of the time I was briefed about when the next event would start by a staff in passing and sometimes when the day came, there had been a slight change which I had missed out on. I also had to learn that “half nine” meant half *past* nine and not half past eight. The first couple of weeks were very confusing and along with timing when to catch the right bus along with how long it took me to walk to the bus, added to considerations about arriving at City Year politely early plus a bit of running time had me quite confused and I found myself half and whole hours early during the first period in the field. Once I realized that I tended to be early compared to everybody else, as well as to what was expected of me, I tried aiming a bit more precisely for the times agreed which led to my turning up while everyone else was headed towards the park for their morning PT²⁴ in which case I suddenly caught up with the rearguard. My varying punctuality due to misunderstandings was never reprimanded; I was always welcomed by someone. It was a relief to be met with familiar smiles after rushing through London traffic with my mind racing considering whether I would be late, early, or if I had punched in the right postal code on the route planner on days when I was meeting corps members at other sites. Once the timing of my presence in the field became more deliberate and controlled, my own administration of being present was always fully respected. After a while I realized that an additional reason for my confusion regarding meeting times was that there were virtual communication paths which I was not part of: the Blackberry smartphones and the e-mail list where practical info also regarding changes was shared and that this was taken for granted by everyone but me. The virtual community was something which I never became a big part of. It seemed awkward to request this, also because there were several virtual groups and I did not know which ones would be most relevant, and it was a bit much to ask to become part of all of them: the entire group, in- or excluding the staff, members of one team, team leaders, corps members and senior corps members’ sub-groups. Instead I decided to follow the “City Year London corps of 2011-12” on Facebook, but of course that did not inform me of changes in the schedule. To compensate for not being part of the virtual groups I made a habit of asking the same two to three staffs who were in contact with administering

²⁴ Physical training

the schedule, and later the team leader of team A. The corps members were also very helpful in case I lost my way when travelling to meet them at a site where I had not been before.

Back to the coffee on the first day: after having made coffee people started entering and leaving the kitchen I was in, “The Lighthouse”. It turned out that the rooms were named. Everybody was politely greeting me and then off again. Commencing the big get together in “The Village”, the community room, just before the very first session, was like seeing pieces of the City Year London corps puzzle fitting together and in circles, and during this half hour, from when people started joining the group and until everybody was present and ready to start, the 2011-12 corps was formed for the first time before my eyes. The observation was impressive because it was different from other organizations I had seen. All the chairs were stacked in the back of the room, no tables or chairs had been set up, everybody was free to take a chair and place it where the physical and social room either left them space or invited them to. The staffs were sitting in a circle of chairs waiting for the corps members to arrive and as they did they joined this first circle. At some point another circle was started somewhere else in the room seemingly following the unspoken rule that when the circles grew too big, new circles were started. The volunteers had not done this together before. The room being open left the people in it to work out where to sit by themselves and they did so without it becoming a main discussion point because the verbal focus was on introducing themselves to each other. The newcomers naturally tried to join a circle by grabbing a chair and pushing it in. This would cause those already in the circle to briefly signal to each other to move over and make space. At some point a couple of newcomers arriving at the same time apparently decided that there was no more room in one circle, so they started a new one like the others.

The first day was the first in a two week period of the “Basic Training Academy” (BTA). The volunteers were divided into introductory teams, “crazy teams”, which they were in throughout the BTA and before being delegated to the school teams. On this first day it was still before 11 am when the volunteers were introduced to the first school. After the first PT in the school yard and a welcoming by the school head, the volunteers started painting the indoors. We were told that this event was thought out and planned deliber-

ately in the beginning of the training period because it was central to what City Year is about, which was serving the community and spending time at the schools. It was to give the volunteers an impression of where they were and how they were going to serve and in terms of the corps being new to each other the experience was that painting was one of the best activities to get people to talk to each other (quote: S3). The collaborative spirit was being induced and the day was full of casual getting to know each other through cooperating around various tasks as well as the introduction to the signature event PT and other social “icebreakers and warm-ups”. After lunch everybody returned to the main office in Islington where the first training session called “Intro to City Year – the mission” was led by LS1. During this session the volunteers were introduced to the history of City Year, the philosophy behind it, the idea of national service, the inspiration from Star Trek, the uniform, the fact that they were becoming part of a global family bigger than “Big Society”, and the relevance of the charity’s objectives in view of the Tottenham riots between the 6th and the 10th of August, just prior to City Year London’s startup that year. City Year was introduced as relevant in terms of social integration, individual opportunity and cultural representativeness, and not least how the big idea behind City Year contributing to making a change in the world is the way things are done: *“it is how we do the things that we do that defines how good it is!”* (quote LS1, Aug 22nd 2011).

“How we do things”: Leadership

Becoming aware of *how* you do things is an important aspect of being a City Year corps member. This expresses a popular idea in Anglo-Saxon social voluntary youth work regarding prevention and intervention which is “being a leader” and leadership development (Revsbech 2008, Revsbech 2012b). In this organization, acting like a true leader is a quality in itself and something which most of the organizational sessions are meant to develop and the corps members are meant to represent. It is reflected in for example the name of the Friday gatherings as “Leadership Development Days” (LDD). The terms ‘leadership’ and ‘learning’ are thus multi-faceted and connote a certain qualitative way of being social, stepping into character as an individual, and participating as a citizen. Some of these connotations can be followed back to the roots in the American national service ideology (Frumkin, Jastrzab 2010).

Putting leadership and volunteers in the same sentence leads one naturally to make note of the fact that in Denmark how to lead volunteers is a hot topic in welfare organizations in the implementation of collaborations with volunteers in the public sector (Wulff 2013). When City Year London facilitates leadership development days the sessions do not evolve around how volunteers can collaborate within public welfare logic this way; the volunteers are rather merely introduced to the various sectors and their terms. Leadership development in a voluntary organization like this is to be understood differently. To this culture, leadership is a personal trait which each individual is responsible to represent whilst conducting the task which he or she has taken on voluntarily, and therefore the term concerns social service minded responsibility and civilized self-management (CityYearLondon 2010). The ongoing task of self-management is expressed in believing that acting responsibly towards oneself and others are two sides of one coin, and a value which is more or less taken for granted because it is part of what the organization both offers and demands in the presentational exchange and initial contact with the volunteer. The volunteer striving to act as a true leader is an expectation which the volunteer is considered to live up to and accepts by joining the organization. This social value in practice was reflected in two concepts observed in practice among the volunteers: ‘professional’ behavior with the schools and at the same time learned in interaction with business partners and “*a sense of nous*” which is a key quality sought in the organization’s recruitment process. When I asked LS1 what they look for in the recruitment process, it proved important that the volunteers were able to make decisions by naturally reflecting on emotions and hunches as part of being able to serve others and collaborate with empathy:

“LS1: I think I probably place quite an emphasis personally on kind of nous; like just is the person, do they seem to just kind of get it, you know, be with it, understand what I’m getting at? Which is not particularly related to academic potential, certainly not academic achievement, but is incredibly valuable. You need to be the kind of person who, if a teacher asks you to do something or if a child wants you to join in the game, doesn’t just kind of look blank and kind of have to take a long time to think through and work it out and not really understand what’s going on. So it’s a combination of kind of awareness of others and self-awareness an ability to kind of just engage in it in an immediately easy way.

But also, I try and get from them if they’re being honest with themselves, as much as anybody else (...)” (Interview [LS1] Nov. 30th 2011)

The philosophy behind the organization was greatly focused on adding meaning to the practical activities and was cultivated within the corps through various sessions. An example of this is the sessions called *"Idealist's Journey"* (IJ). The name of the session is strongly characterized by City Year's connection to the Jungian idea of both personal mythmaking and rites of passage. Though the idea originally came from the above mentioned books by Campbell, this corps of London volunteers were not really introduced to these books and not made directly aware of the idea of the sessions as part of a personal symbolic journey. Looking at how the session is practiced, the IJ in London is 14 half hour sessions spread out over the year, the form being under continuous development and adjustment. The facilitator describes the sessions as a chance to reflect and share with corps members from other teams and a structured but self-directed and problem-solving discussion among the volunteers. It is meant to help them be self-reflective and self-aware and discuss school-based issues (letter correspondence with LS1, reply of Aug. 29th, 2013). Particularly important to the organization is the volunteers' process from initial passion to translating this into real action and meeting the obstacles understood as lack of resources, be it lack of knowledge or competences, back to reconnecting with the passion and idealism after the volunteer's adaptation to the school environment.

Exchange activity

As the initial encounter with City Year London took its course, observing the exchanges between the actors, staffs and primarily volunteers grew more complex and at the same time more distinct in my perception. I experimented with developing a model useful to start categorizing the various interactional forms that I found. Inspired at first by focusing on types of knowledge representing various discourses that I found present, I sketched three spheres in which the volunteers were expected to and did manage themselves. The following empirical examples demonstrate how the three aspects appeared. The first one is an excerpt from the field diary of how I observed a group of volunteers' first day at school with the children. It illustrates two organizational layers and a spontaneous layer as they began to appear to me during this observation:

"I arrive at 8:00 AM at [School C]. [Team leader: TLC]'s team (3 until now) has arrived. They sit around and chat with some children having breakfast. I think they are sitting with a teacher's assistant (TA); there are four adults and two children. Breakfast is served from a corner in this room, which is like a minor assembly hall or gym, close to the entrance. A lady seeks me out and hands me a visitor's ID which facilitates my presence. Now five corps members are here. [Volunteer: C6], who has an Indian background, has started playing with three of the children. They have pulled out a box of toys which they examine and talk about, one after another. A female corps member turns up. A male corps member talks to the TA. [TLC] and the female corps member talk to four children who are still eating breakfast. The male corps member, the TA and the children have gone; another corps member joins [TLC]'s chat group. A female volunteer has joined the play group of children and is observing a little just now. The children look at the corps members a lot. They show them their new school bags. They chat and laugh. The boys want to talk to [C6] who is checking his smart phone. The children are between six and eight I think."
(Field diary entry Sep. 6th 2011)

The general atmosphere was a mix of insecurity and excitement. At one level the volunteers were clearly aware of their aim of being there and at another level it had not been completely defined when it came to the miscellaneous interactions with the children in this setting. Clearly the volunteers were ready, wearing their fresh red uniforms, and they were well aware of their aim: to mentor, "to make a difference", to help the children; but what this actually meant in practice was obviously another story. Looking into the excerpt above, the three layers were interpreted as follows: The first sentence which came to my attention is "TL's team (3 until now) has arrived". It was interesting because the sentence around the parentheses regards the behavior of the team as a unit and the sentence is describing the behavior according to the set of both symbolic- and business-organizational values; the former refers to the Jungian inspiration behind City Year, the latter to City Year's organizational front. Knowing there were 8-10 people or "heroes" on one team, "ready to serve", I wondered why only three had arrived on time on this first day of school. The level of behavior of people being late represents the spontaneous layer. It is the person being late because of traffic, or because the person slept in. This layer was not part of a universalistic, a business, or the hero's agenda, yet it was still there. Every ideal person in these various spheres of value is always on time, better yet, even early and far-sighted.

The situation continued by showing a business-organizational behavior. The team leader and the volunteers sat around and chatted to the children, they were there for them, they were not making a huge difference at that moment,

but they were there to help the children and that counts and is expected to make a difference in the long run. They lived up to the organizational task description. Even the lady who passed me the visitor's ID had that type of behavior: polite, conversational, and informative but formal. C6 took it to the next level at an early stage when he started playing with the children, even before the breakfast session was over. The play session continued to be relationship building and negotiating. Setting up a play situation with the children creates the possibility of a different kind of sharing but also of maintaining both rivalry and solidarity. This was emphasized by the hesitant behavior of the female volunteer who, with an observational approach, joined the play group a moment later. At that point a corps member came in late – no cape and not sending the best of signals in accordance with the expectations of self-management. This was simply a person who was late. Interactions and conversations increased. The volunteers had shown interest and the interest was returned by the children: they looked at the volunteers more, they talked more, they shared more, they showed them their new school bags and I started to see and hear people laughing. C6 then checked his smart phone. He apparently started to relax, no one was fighting over the play session he set up, and no one probably seemed to need his heroic assistance right now, so he checked his smart phone even though neither “the hero” nor “the professional” would do this on duty. This was a pause where he could be himself and he stopped giving what was expected and did what he felt like. This whole situation showed exchange and interactions in several forms, and at the same time it showed how, in parallel, there was a more spontaneous reactive type of behavior which appeared more authentic or real due to its indication of emotional reaction at that moment. This authenticity also seemed to build spontaneous trust because of its realness, because it gave a glimpse of what the volunteer would be doing when off duty and checking a smart phone was fairly harmless and recognizable, it was normal.

Being subjected to several sets of values and expected behavior put the volunteers in situations where they constantly switched codes²⁵. As soon as one role had taken hold another seemed to take over. If the volunteer was not reciprocating as the hero, he or she would be behaving as a networker or something else. It was interesting, however, to observe “the gaps” between the intervals of representation, such as when C6 checked his smart phone. This is a methodological point also elaborated by Ehn and Löfgren (2006) among others. It was in these gaps that humor occurred and became an additional indicator of spontaneity, provided it was not deliberately fake. One of the observations supporting this assumption was a day when I had lunch with the volunteers away from the staff:

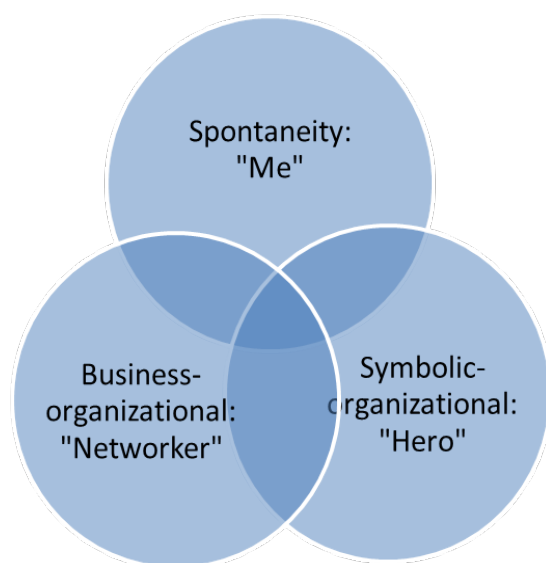


Figure 9: Code switching

“Having lunch with CMs in “Moccasins”. I usually have lunch in the kitchen, “The Lighthouse”, but moved downstairs because I realized most of the CMs have their lunch there. There’s not much room in the kitchen. In “Moccasins” there’s a conversation between maybe six or eight of the CMs regarding the fact that [A3] has been told to speak at the “opening day” next week. He reveals how he finds it a bit corny that he has been given a manuscript which dictates what he’s expected to say down to the last word, including humorous one-liners between his co-speaker and himself. We laugh and another CM chal-

²⁵ The term “code switching” was used by some volunteers during a training session where managing their role towards the children between friend and authority was discussed (audio recording Nov. 4th, 2011).

lenges him to add a particular way of saying one of the words, to make the rest of the group know that he is referring to his opinion about the manuscript being too detailed and invading. He says he might do that, and practices how he will do it if he dares. There are a lot of laughs about this. We all agree that if he does it, we cannot look at each other or we will all burst out laughing in the middle of the very formal session to come. He has been chosen to give this speech also because of his special East London accent, and he didn't want to say no." (Field diary entry Sep. 8th 2011)

When opening day arrived and A3 gave his speech, he stuck to the script, and no one laughed. I later asked him what happened to the detail in the speech he said he would make for the team, and he said he was much too nervous in the first place so he chose to stick to the script and concentrate on just opening his mouth without rambling. This was an example of how the difference between apparently co-existing sets of values became explicit in the group, and how revealing personal emotions and opinions led to a sharing and daring community and familiarity away from the presentational settings. The form of exchange also changed from representing organizational values, whether symbolic or businesslike, to carrying traits of humor and hidden rebellion through honesty; this disclosed the relational awkwardness of a scripted situation where two friends were giving a presentation and casually throwing one-liners back and forth. Methodologically I took this as a positive experience in my attempt to create rapport with the volunteers.

The consolidation of my threefold model continued to develop through details and examples, and as such it seemed to “work”. Examples were added consisting of aspects of how value systems intertwined and personalization of external values could be mistaken for trust and rapport. The following is from an interview with a team leader who apparently felt that he was supposed to perform during this interview; he himself confirmed this at the outset. At this point we had been talking back and forth about the difference between representing City Year and being himself when this came up:

“T: So what has City Year given you personally and professionally or do you differentiate between the two?

TLD: Oh OK. So what City Year has done for me, it has, like I said, made me more professional. Made me think before I speak. Toned down my mistakes, so my weaknesses, it's made me aware of them, and it's made me question how I should act in certain situations. Like, for instance, we're in the room, and because I like to laugh and I like to joke, and it's the very professional, say, in an environment, I make an inappropriate joke. I did

that a lot of last year. They.. because of the individual, they had it, if that was the wrong person, that could've killed the vibe, so I know when to not do that now. I know when to sense situations, and know when to not say anything. So that's helped me professionally.

I: And what about personally?

TLD: Personally? Discipline. It's made me more disciplined now. Because I had to go for around a year of not listening to music on the way to work in my uniform. Now, I once did not put on headphones. I was so tempted to. And I really wanted to break the rules, but it's like, because I committed myself to this thing, if I started something I have to see it through, and that's just my personal belief, I have to see something through, so I wanted just to test me. So it has, it's given me the discipline to not give in to temptation, given me the discipline to not give in to things that are bad for me. So discipline. It's given me pride, because I can wear the uniform, in fact I was reluctant to wear the uniform in the beginning, that red, I don't like red, I don't wear red. I don't like the trousers. The boots, no. But I wear the uniform with pride now, because I know what the uniform means, I know what the logo means. Purpose..

I: You're listing your t-shirt²⁶ (laughs)

TLD: (smiles) Purpose because there's a reason why I'm here and this is my job, this is what I've signed up to do, and good spirit (laughs)! No, seriously: spirit, discipline, purpose and pride are those.. that's what City Year has done for me. Maintain a good spirit, I've become more disciplined. I know why I'm here, what I need to do. Why I'm on this Earth, because I know there's something I need to do, I don't know what it is yet, and yes, I walk with pride. (...) before I used to see myself and say, like, what am I? What am I doing? I've got a degree, what am I doing with myself? I don't know. Now I know that there's a purpose, it's something I need to do, I don't know what it is exactly yet, but..” (Interview Nov. 9th 2011)

This conversation took place half way through an almost two-hour long one-on-one interview. What was striking was when the interviewee listed the power words on the City Year t-shirt as what the organization had given him personally. It made me skeptical and to probe the artificial character of his response I laughed and divulged. He continued the presentation until he reached the last of the four words on the t-shirt, ‘spirit’, and stuck to the argument of his reply, telling me how the organizational symbolic values fitted his personal sense of fate also according to his own personal journey. I was surprised by the continuous sheering away from my attempt at what to me was authentic rapport. The explanation came later in the interview when the interviewee revealed that he had consciously chosen the more heroic everyday

²⁶ The back of the City Year London t-shirt says “Spirit. Discipline. Purpose. Pride”.

actions due to existential confusion in his past. He found a way to discipline and control himself, to not give in to “temptation” by following the organization’s rich moral code and this was more meaningful to him than how he had acted before.

A system-critical view would have emphasized how the community subjected TLD to change, in changing e.g. his spontaneous joking and his acting according to his own nature to adopting the organizational values and beliefs in terms of lifestyle, irrespective of whether TLD felt that he had a choice in terms of toning down “*inappropriate jokes*” and complying with the expected behavior. The other side of that coin is the status he *does* gain, having become a team leader, in taking this authority into account in line with the majority of people there. Maybe TLD verbalizing this change of behavior as partly a personal choice is a survival strategy, in the way that he has to convince himself that this is true to get a job at all. However, it could instead be an example of how he has been subjected to the idealist discourse in the organization – and perhaps an example of how he actively manages to participate in this culture in a beneficial and meaningful, or *valuable*, way to both himself and the culture. The Maussian and the critical ways of verbalizing the individual are fundamentally different in terms of possible interpretations of the individual’s options, the latter being more prone to place confidence in the individual’s autonomy. This also separates Graeber and Mauss as mentioned, where the former has a tendency of falling into the system-critical position when conceptualizing ‘hierarchies’ as pacifying individuals by placing them in debt (Graeber 2010); and thus forgetting to return to unfold the options of the individual and hierarchies as social dynamic phenomena, which an ethnographic exchange theory would insist on. This is in spite of the fact that Graeber himself has been the one to develop the qualified and useful interpretation of Mauss’ points in terms of “individualistic communism” (Graeber 2001). A more detailed discussion can then arise from a more philosophical angle on morals and ethics. Assuming the individual’s autonomy, as proposed by individualistic communism, the discussion between deontology, as represented by I. Kant’s (1724-1804) *categorical imperative*²⁷, and Danish philosopher K.E. Løgstrup’s (1905-1981) *communicative situation ethics* brings out a relevant contrast. Comparing these two moral philosophies leads to the discussion of whether

²⁷ “Act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law.” (Jessen 1999)

to always develop and act from reason (*Vernunft*) or whether to always take a point of departure in the I-you-relationship as Løgstrup would urge. Regarding the City Year volunteers, they do represent a deontological ethics and in this there is a danger of overlooking the vulnerability, as Løgstrup would put it, which occurs when the volunteers surrender to the terms of everyday life at City Year (Jessen 1999). The pre-study thus leads to the finding that this is a point which an analysis should remain aware of.

Returning to the exchange modes, these are related to individual action and thus go beyond conscious sectorial orientation, being placed between the private, public, and third sectors (Hulgård 2007), and besides marketability and organizational sustainability there are a strong universalistic world view and a particular civil tone and atmosphere affecting the culture in general. The co-existent value concepts theoretically challenge each other fundamentally and would be expected to constitute a versatile and antagonistic field followed by a conflicting paradox in social attitudes and ways of ex-changing for the volunteers. To City Year London the oxymoron “a business-run charity” constitutes a unique type of brand where the seemingly opposed business and social charity aims are managed and embraced as accepted reality. The organization needs to deliver the service it offers which is socially beneficial and they need to do it “professionally” to manage in the competition in this field. To the volunteers the market orientation comes naturally as they participate in these activities as part of building a CV. As a supplement to the universal ethics and the demand for competitiveness in the future job market, the volunteers cultivate a strong social layer of generalized kinship behavior where change and progress are seen through their spontaneous behavior in participating in the organizational community. The generalized reciprocal culture of the volunteers seems to counterweigh the strong organizational agendas through humor and spontaneity; much as comedy and satire has been seen to function as a social release in cultures from ancient Greece to contemporary Denmark. The volunteers’ behavior showed how they engaged in several cultures of exchange and adapted by an increasing ability to shift between the different ways of interacting. Whereas City Year London expressed their awareness of the need for this ability in their volunteer recruitment strategy as “a sense of nous”, the volunteers referred to the same ability as “code switching”, a sense of propriety while still having the courage to contribute through authenticity, spontaneity, and individual whims. Thus the data mirrored a reality which

fused accommodating to social rules with the ability, and even the expectation, to provide a personal spontaneous contribution.

Networking

During initial networking sessions, the fusion of “codes” and modes *was* seen to challenge the volunteers.

“Travelling with the staff on the tube to Opening Day. Going through security into the House of Commons. The corps members speak to me a lot. They show a lot of recognition towards me in the crowd of new and important people. The room is filled with the noise of people talking and talking. I went up to a group of volunteers who were standing together by a table and asked them how they felt about this networking event. They said they found it difficult to engage because they did not know who they could benefit from talking to and there were so many people there. The volunteers found it difficult to approach these distinguished people and felt it strange to have to walk up to them now that they knew they were only being approached because the volunteers wanted something from them, their business relation and entry into their professional network. Besides, they said, the sponsors were mostly talking to each other. Some of the corps members are good at networking, but fewer than half. The corps members were generally uncomfortable in the situation. Some of the sponsors only stayed to give a brief speech and rush off.” (Field diary entry, Sep. 13th 2011)

In an exchange perspective, networking is an occasional social market strategy (Hart 2012) and in practice this particular expected behavior, “networking”, was observed to challenge the volunteers’ usual humorous and spontaneous ways. In this arranged sociability everybody knows, but nobody confronts each other with, the fact that people are socializing mainly because the relationships involved are ones they are interested in utilizing, rather than open-ended ones. The hidden and yet not hidden agenda inspired distrust: the social behavior was supposed to be long-term and friendly, but the reason for interacting was known to be mainly impersonal and professional. Some accepted these terms but many found it unacceptable and ultimately it did clash with the organization’s customary promotion of social propriety, honesty and unconditional humanity. The excerpt above is an example of trust evading financial utilization, provoking an atmosphere of insecurity, anxiety and skepticism. The same sense of general kinship in an anxiety provoking setting, causing the volunteers to flock together, was really what, in a comfortable setting, was expressed by spontaneous humor and creativity. By the end of the year when these networking activities had become more familiar to the volunteers as a way of interacting, insecurity and distrust had gradually

been replaced by disinterest in engaging unless it was professionally beneficial. The actual closed-ended interactions were treated for what they were, namely temporary, in spite of the immediate amicable and inviting atmosphere which is typically sought to be established during networking activities.

Observations of the various aspects of interaction included observations of language use and body techniques in relation to the social setting or relevance. They included observations of the aesthetic social collaborative dimension represented by PT, “call responses”²⁸, dancing, and playing, how these increasingly emerged as part of the volunteers’ spontaneous culture and random social interactions, and how they varied in expression. The observations were mainly focused on the volunteers’ interaction, while interaction with City Year staff also became relevant when accompanying the volunteers in action and interaction with the community: leadership training sessions, people at the schools, networking sessions and rituals, whether internal or representing the organization and its aims externally. Looking at the volunteers’ exchange led to a distinction in observed behavior as they seemed to shift between sets of values depending on the purpose of the exchange, as outlined in Figure 9. Sahlins’ theory on the distance of kinship (Sahlins 2004) would suggest that from various settings and situations, a typology regarding degrees of spontaneity could be made to decode the individual’s experience of kinship proximity, and thus level of trust. It was observed how this changed over time and according to habit: how initially a person’s exchange would be oriented in one direction and over time through continuous exchange within the same social sphere, the exchange became increasingly spontaneous within the general community or, in terms of networking, increasingly detached or disinterested, or the motivation changed entirely. High interest correlated with controlled behavior from the volunteers; keeping a high level of interest and commitment, representing organizational values according to organizational standards, at the same time as wanting to be inspired by the spontaneous selves, is an inner paradox which seemed to be embraced in this organization.

The importance of personal historicity, impulse and emotions appeared as something which mattered in what the volunteers brought to the organization and what they were gaining from volunteering. This exchange between the

²⁸ The one who leads the session says a word which is replied to or repeated by the group in unison.

volunteer and the organization seemed to determine the nature of their motivation, interests, and thus willingness to adapt to the organizational culture. The exchanges in the general community, among the volunteers, the familiarity and the personal historicity were needed, and individual impulse played an important part in their participation and contribution. These spontaneous interactions were generally aimless as to concrete output; their value seemed random, symbolic and qualitative. At the same time, they were crucial to the building of an atmosphere of general trust. This can be specifically illustrated through the following analysis of the organizational ritual "Crossing the Line".

The ritual "Crossing the Line"

The BTA took place at the main office every day for two weeks, and besides the lecture-like training sessions, there was one session on day three which aroused particular interest and attention, and that was "Crossing the Line". Prior to the session I was contacted by one of the staff members, S4, and I was explained that this session involved a degree of emotional vulnerability. I was kindly asked not to join in as an observer, and respect that they wanted no observers during this, that it would seem odd and risk compromising the main goal of the group activity. I decided to participate on different terms and meet these people as another human being, without my dissociating notebook, as requested. "*Crossing the Line*" is an interactive session for the entire corps and staffs and a regular part of City Year's volunteer training program when a new corps starts. A trained staff facilitator guides the session which is prepared by physically taping a long line to the floor across the room. On one side of the line all the participants stand next to each other and their task is to listen and respond, without words, but by stepping across the line, in response to the facilitator's directions. Each direction would start with the words: "*if you..*" and end with the words: "*..please cross the line!*" Even writing about when I personally crossed the line feels too personal in this written context. Some of the questions I recall, as I made neither notes nor recordings of this, were: "*if you ever felt loved, please cross the line*"; "*if you lost someone close to you within the past few years, please cross the line*". Each time "*..please cross the line*" was said, people crossed the line according to their stance. We were then instructed to take a moment to seek eye contact with someone standing close to us, both on the same side of the line as ourselves, and on the opposite side,

as well as look down the line to notice how many crossed, after each question. Nobody but the facilitator spoke throughout the entire session, several were crying on and off and afterwards many hugs were given. The session was evaluated in a big circle with no speaking order and people just said what they wanted, when they felt like it, without interrupting each other.

The session was mandatory; the way it had been protected from my observation, and the direct impression participating in the session had made on me, and obviously on the other participants, was that people moved mentally and emotionally closer and that it had led to a strengthened atmosphere of confidentiality and mutual accept. Later, during some of my interviews, staffs and volunteers reflected on “Crossing the Line”. The facilitator who had led the session two times before this first facilitation said:

“T: How did you feel the first time you facilitated it?”

S4: I felt connected to my colleagues. As a whole staff.. I wasn't on the staff, sorry, but as a whole body, as a whole City Year London network. There were only 15 of us as a whole and to see people on one side of the line or the other, and to look up at people, we were close anyway because there was only a small number of us, it felt that a lot of.. it felt that we can all just talk about things. And there was one question about, have you ever felt loved, and everyone crossed the line but one person and I could see everyone think “why doesn't she cross it?” And obviously it's a personal thing. And remembering being at the debrief session at the end and I said to her, I said to her that as a group that we loved her and I could see that had a big effect on her. It made her proud and made her feel special about the group and that's what City Year does and I think that for me sums up what City Year's about, it's that crossing the line exercise followed up by a discussion and a chat about it. It felt really.. for me it was why I did what I did for that first seven months, certainly, was about bringing people together, talking to people. (...)

(...) the importance of it for the team and for the people who were coming together and have not known each other for a long time. I understood the level of depth that it went to, the emotional openness people needed to have with it, as well as the.. I just felt that I completely embraced what it was about and felt that because I came across when people first met me as a very cheeky chappy, almost a little bit carefree and he's the guy I go to if I need cheering up and everything like that, which is great and I am and that's what I want people to see me as and particularly my own corps members to see me as. I also want to get out there and be like, actually I'm also quite serious and I believe in you but also I believe that there is other.. I don't just need to make you smile for you to be able to do your work, I want to be able to motivate people in other ways, and I thought this was a good way to show that because you need to be serious and you need to show compassion during the exercise (...)

I think it really does bring people together, it really does.. I honestly think it really encapsulates what City Year's about. And not necessarily reading everything about it yourself but actually that there's people who have been through similar experiences, that people have got some different experiences but we're all in this together, we're all doing the same thing. And I think that's what connects people and that's what actually goes to the heart, right, this is why I'm here." (Interview Nov. 22nd 2011)

Later when interviewing BM1, who taught the facilitating to S4, the reply when I asked about Crossing the Line was this:

"BM1: So the idea, the goal of that session is that we treat each other as full human beings and that we break down all stereotypes. Because I might look at you and look at your picture and think, you know, "beautiful smile" (...) assumptions that could be made about you, you know, highly educated, never had a problem in her life, you know, has had it easy. But the truth is, nobody has any idea; you have no idea by looking at somebody what they've been through. You have no idea by looking at somebody what their vulnerabilities and what's gone on in their life. And therefore, all of the stereotypes that have been programmed into us through the popular media, through our parents, through our families, through our friends, are, in my opinion, not real enough. And that's what Crossing the Line does is break down all of that and gets us to treat each other and see each other as full human beings. And understand that everybody has been through something hard. Everybody has been through challenging experiences and you should check your assumptions at the door, if you can; it's hard to do, it's easy to say. But Crossing the Line then gets you to, hopefully, and it doesn't necessarily last forever, but treat each other better. Listen more, be gentle, understand that, you know, be kind because everybody has been through something. That's my hope with Cross the Line; it also bonds the community in a very deep way." (Interview Dec. 11th 2012)

Getting people to exchange emotional experiences and personal history through their body language, moving across the line and seeking eye contact with people who stepped over with you and people who did not, and seeing others' recognition of occasionally hidden sides of your personality enabled the volunteers to bond. Not just by conducting a practical task but through being involved in the City Year community emotionally and physically. As I continued, the volunteers talked about it as a special experience as well:

"T: How do you feel about the "icebreakers" and the "power tools" and..?

A7: Now that I differ on: I think they're fantastic. I've got head experience in my previous work with the anti-bullying chair because we ran workshops in schools and I think these icebreakers are fantastic ideas! Because they loosen everybody up. You can, I mean we did a Crossing the Line exercise where you learn a lot about the people around you. Even if it's just: "cross the line if you're a Labour supporter"; "cross the line if you're.." whatever. I

mean we had a great one where it was “cross the line if you’re gay” and hats off to him (...) he was the only person who stepped across the line. I thought that was a wonderful thing, and I said “well done” to him. But that kind of “HUH?!” and you learn a bit more, and you’re not making a judgment on that person. But you’ll learn something and I think that’s very powerful and I’ll get on to the power tools in a second!” (Interview Nov. 29th 2011)

“I: How did you feel about the BTA – the two weeks you went through, do you remember?

A9: Yes, I do because I was telling my friend about it. Because she applied to be a City Year person and I was like, “you’re probably going to cry because everybody cries”.

I: Are you thinking about Crossing the Line?

A9: Yes, that and like, I don’t know, somebody seems to cry. [A4] was saying it’s like a City Year illness or something that every day someone cries. She was like “[A9], you’ve got the City Year blues” but I don’t know.. I enjoyed it. It was really nice getting to know people, really nice, like, you know, being forced to click.. not forced but you had to, you know, so that was really good. But then I did think of the stuff was so heavy, like cross the line, it was a bit too heavy for me personally. Some people really did like that, but to me personally I thought “this isn’t appropriate” – like this day! After the camping thing maybe, but not before, that’s what I personally thought, but they did what they needed to do. I think it worked well.” (Interview Nov. 24th 2011)

“I: So how do you feel about the crossing the line thing with them? I mean, that was revealing stuff about yourself that people didn’t know”²⁹.

A3: I didn’t like that to be honest. It’s not the fact that I didn’t want other people to know, because I will tell anybody, like, obviously if I know them, but I’ll tell anyone my story of, like, growing up and what I’ve been through, I’m not bothered about that. It was bringing back memories that I kind of tried to bury. But that’s the thing with me, like, all my friends say I’ve got a problem that I bottle things up (...)

I: Crossing the Line sort of opened that bottle..?

A3: Yes, yea, I think it was supposed to. I’m not 100% sure but I don’t want to do that again (...)

²⁹ A3 had been referring to revealing things about himself to others.

A3: *The only person I remember crossing was [X] because he was on his own.* (Interview Nov. 10th 2011)

Being a City Year corps member involves emotional engagement and this session was meant to inspire this through seeing others as equal parts of the same human species, also in accordance with the Jungian idea of personal development behind the exercise. This is then practically adopted into a socially inclusive environment of urban diversity, built on the message that it does not matter who you are, where you are from, or how you look. The inclusion of the emotional reality of each individual's everyday life experience and historical background signals an atmosphere of acceptance of the people there, while bringing their strengths as well as their weaknesses to the table.

The pre-study showed that the volunteers either accepted or appreciated the idea behind the session which invited their emotions into the community and the collaboration there. How each corps member received and interacted in this varied and showed a small degree of ambivalence. They all participated, as it was mandatory, and where the staff and facilitator talked about the session as something that "encapsulates what City Year is all about" out of the nine volunteers interviewed, only three spoke directly about the session, and only one brought it up on his own initiative. The three replies point in different directions: The first corps member, A7, speaks of the session in an objective and evaluating way, as a "great team building method" which he has experienced in a former job. He does not mention his personal emotional experience of participating, but praises the method and shows how he understands the way it is used organizationally. The second, A9, is more personal and tells how she and some of the other girls in the group make fun of the commonly seen emotional outbursts and tears by describing this as a particular phenomenon: "the City Year blues". The third corps member, A3 seemed to struggle a little with the fact that emotional expressions were part of the culture. He told how he usually did not have a problem with sharing thoughts about emotions, *if* he knew the people he was sharing them with. His reply corresponds with A9's words that it would maybe have been more appropriate later on in the process of the group getting together socially. At first, the session leaves the individual participants verbally alone with sensing their emotional reactions to people crossing the line as they do not share their experiences with words, only glances, until afterwards. That, and the fact that

they did not feel that they knew people well enough at the time, challenged some of the corps members' habits of social emotional involvement. Still they accepted the session as part of the cultural procedures, although this did not compromise their opinion of it. A3 supported this with the knowledge he had that some of the other corps members liked it, and that he generally agreed with sharing emotions with his friends because his experience was that it had brought him closer to them. He viewed the fact that he did not want to do it again as a personal issue concerning a "bad" habit of "bottling things up", which did not go well with the exercise. The fact that the other corps members liked it, and that socially he agreed that sharing emotions built trust, had him deduce that the reason it did not work well for him was that he had a problem himself. He was then seen to use his experience with Crossing the Line to support personal friends' claims that he had a problem bottling up emotions.

A3's replies show how exchanges during an organizational ritual move beyond the organization in a continuous process of self-reflection, as he compares his experience and the response from inside the organization to the responses he has been given in a close friendship from outside the organization at an earlier point in time. A suspicion that he has a problem bottling up emotions is strengthened into a conviction which becomes more pressing and distinct to him. The example shows the high presence of the self-reflective element and that it is not directly caused by the organization or its sessions. Instead it shows a great degree of connectedness to the individual life story and personal community outside the City Year culture. This means that the learning process in this case, regarding increased consciousness of one's personal emotional nature, is an intercultural and reflexive process across individual time and space and thus primarily open-ended. This personal story about his emotional nature is firstly accumulated in social mirroring. Secondly, his life story contributes to the City Year culture through a learning agenda of self-reflection behind this session and it generally binds his various life spheres together. Methodologically this finding brings out the limitations of organizational studies and supports the method of multi-sited methodology as it is an example of how the object of exchange, the tale and project concerning how the individual manages personal emotional reactions are made into an issue, moving beyond the directly observable and the reach of the community. It avoids being followed further because it is cultivated more

outside the physical field than inside it, but still it is not isolated. On the contrary, it is brought into the organization by the volunteer, through his personal history, where it is co-shaped and taken to heart as an emotional lesson of something which the individual now believes even more that he needs to be aware of. Standing at the borders of City Year, gazing after the individual as he sets out, one can only speculate how the friends outside could be told by A3 that they were right in their assumptions about him and how this will obligate him to take on the responsibility to improve. Finally, experimenting with sketching out the story about A3's "personal issue of bottling up emotions" as a circulated object of exchange brings out an interesting point about the learning process. It shows how there is a culture of emotional self-reflection which overlaps the culture of City Year, brought in by the fact that the individual has received and not rejected this story from his sphere of personal friends. It also stresses how the individual is explicitly held to account for his own actions and behavior by his surroundings, both within and outside City Year, and thus how unassociated social communities suddenly take on an integrated sanctioning function through the individual's interpretation and self-reflection.

Friends

Volunteer

City Year community

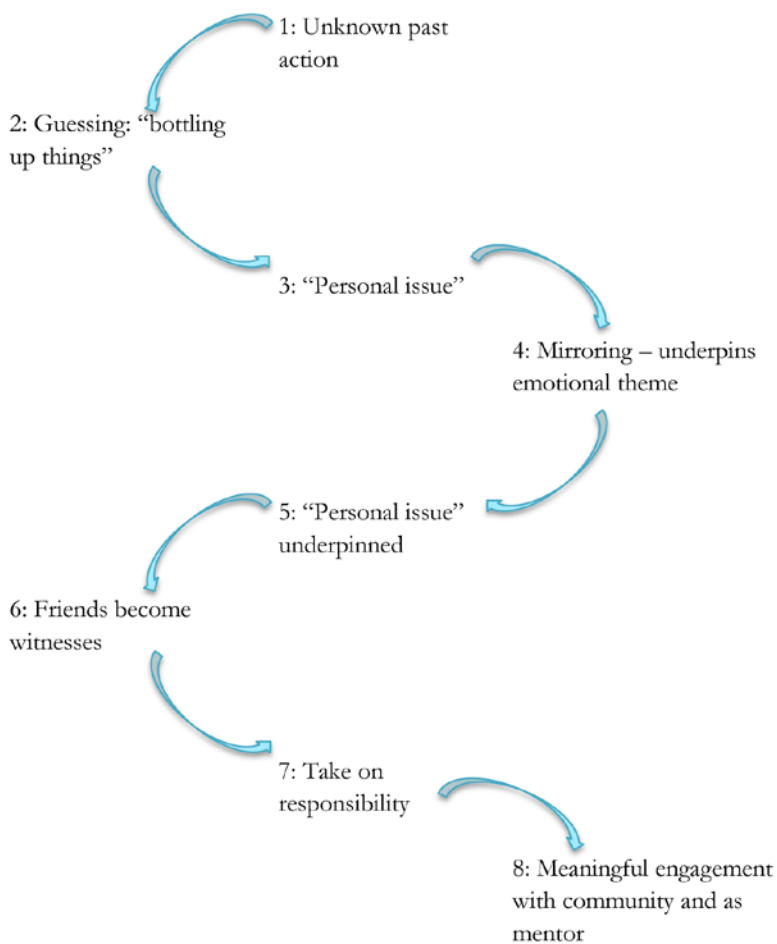


Figure 10: Cross community exchange

Summary of the pre-study: Budding theory

Meaning

Interacting in “Crossing the Line” without words, in a structuralist tradition, is an expansion of the interpretive room due to the lack of signifiers from a structuralist approach (Lévi-Strauss 1987). In *City Year* this type of symbolic activity is part of its Jung-inspired learning strategy and facilitating a wordless session speaks loudly to and of aspects of the inward life in a social setting; this is supported by the volunteers’ replies. It corresponds with the overall idea of personal mythmaking as a process between the individual self-interpretation and the process of the socially unconscious made visible and common through the individual’s participation in and interpretation of rituals (Campbell 1972). Sharing emotional moments and wordlessly expressing individual emotions and what resonates as *truths* fits in with Mauss’ studies where practices and services were central. As mentioned, Mauss was also criticized for focusing on big men and ritual exchange, and leaving out the mostly feminine production behind the scenes, including emotional life (Graeber 2001). As Graeber concludes, meaning and desire play a central role in an anthropological theory of value. My objection to this conclusion is not to disagree, but to his criticism of the term ‘reciprocity’, where he claims that³⁰ “(...) ‘reciprocity’, is really the bluntest instrument of all. As currently used, ‘reciprocity’ can mean almost anything. It is very close to meaningless.” (ibid.:217), and thus it seems somewhat vague to end up with just as open terms for analysis. The strength of anthropology, and something which it cannot do without, continues to be the field study and contextual foundation, yet Graeber does not mirror his conclusions in any current empirical data of his own. I have not set out to compensate for this as both form and content of this study diverge greatly from any formulated theory due to its sites and informants. Nonetheless “meaning” does continue to constitute itself as heavily influential throughout this pre-study in terms of social value in this practical setting. In A3’s example we of course do not know about prior or later actions in other contexts. The example shows us that, in the light of the social importance of what the Kwakiutl call “dream guessing”, the individual’s actions, individually meaningful and

³⁰ Criticizing Lévi-Strauss.

socially responsible, are closely connected and a driving force in the context of where the individual feels drawn to contribute.

Timeliness

Another interesting point here is the question of timeliness regarding how A3 apparently feels that he has to make up for his postulated emotional flaw. The point can be illustrated in terms of *crédit*. *Crédit* includes a timely aspect in the sense that the giver does not require immediate reciprocation but *trusts* the recipient in that he or she will reciprocate in time, and therefore there is no formal type of contract or agreement expressed. In Mauss' analysis, among the Northwestern native Americans the trust expressed is connected to the fact that the recipient receives in public, while in Polynesia this function of this type of communal sanction is replaced by more spiritually loaded entities as for example bugaboos about vengeance of the spirits of the forefathers, natural and spiritual forces. Mauss writes:

"Time is needed to perform any counterservice. Crédit happens over time. Some is exchanged at the same time, other becomes increasingly numerous and valuable over time and the society becomes richer." (Mauss 1954:46)

Time and *crédit* put together make up for what can be understood as trust and are connected to the perceived value of a relation. In its extreme, with plenty of both, this is what is understood by open-ended relations. Time given to A3 is a great advantage both in terms of continuing to enjoy friendships in spite of his "issue" as well as time to make up for his flaws by taking responsibility now that he has been made aware. This example shows how the exchange, and the individual emotional learning process, happens over time in a credited and uncontractual movement between the three actors: the corps member, his friends and City Year London, and how it results in increased motivation to engage in the mentor role to learn more about himself and his way of engaging with others. Bottling up things or not, City Year becomes an opportunity for him to "learn" how to be "a better person". Looking more closely at the motivating criticism from his friends shows that trusting his friends' criticism is what makes him question himself in the first place, enough to look for verifying and falsifying feedback elsewhere. He also expresses how taking the criticism to heart depends on the fact that they have known each other for a long time and thus the expected insight in his regular emotions

and needs becomes decisive in whether he heeds the criticism or not. With regard to both meaning and time, the processes are certainly not limited to, nor particularly initiated within, organizational life, but are highly connected to personal historicity, interconnected with private friendships, and ideas of past and future opportunities of both personal and professional change and progress.

Stories and self-perception

The interviews often revealed techniques of self-representation, possibly partly because of the formal setup with a quiet room, a recorder and my note taking. The observations, on the other hand, particularly between the corps members when only around each other, were characterized by a certain type of 'me'-life recognized through emotional expressions, use of humor and occasionally tears. There always seemed to be a 'me' behind all the representations and it was that 'me' which caught my attention as a significant factor in the overall social exchange culture and which I primarily sought to engage with; I wanted their *real* opinion. This of course took time: Time to reach a level of rapport, to hear people out and catch the details, which is not possible in an elevator speech. When I had managed to create rapport with the spontaneous personalities during interviews or random conversations, I would get stories about how a person grew up and had been used to this or that element of social interaction which was recognized in the organization as a key motivator. I would also sometimes get confessions or frustrations concerning everyday practical collaborative circumstances or emotions affecting the volunteer's wellbeing from his or her personal life. The opportunity for personal mythmaking in practice occasionally comforted the volunteers individually and gave them practical guidance as to how to act as a proper City Year corps member. The code switching could also be seen when they moved between the motivations and towards the meaningfulness of the various layers and roles: if one day the work did not seem meaningful in one way, it would in one of the other accessible versions. The degree of moral support from the community, local politicians, schools, parents, children and each other also led to a re-staging of their personal participation, moving between the aspects of meaning as part of their personal direction in life and thus having a strongly engaging and empowering effect. To be able to represent oneself as a proper human being had a high priority.

The general interest in being a proper human being was a motivating factor in joining the various activities which led to increased self-reflection and self-awareness. As seen in A3's case, this interest combined with what is experienced as open-ended interactions incites trust, and trust is what allows the individual to dare to question his or her own habits and decide whether or not they should and could be changed. This trust also somehow connected A3's unassociated social spheres to form an experienced integrated sanctioning and guiding entity which he then considers important to be led by. Dissecting trust into observable exchange activity in this way brings out its reverse which is what is often addressed and criticized, namely the force or power that the social has over the individual. This study shows that without experienced open-endedness along with a meaningful intention on the individual's part the social loses its power, as was seen in networking activities.

The “Exchange-Meaning Model”

Theorizing, according to Swedberg, means ending up with a model or a theory which then should be tested. Some of the criteria of valid theory are those of application and prediction. A theory or model is supposed to predict something. Swedberg then suggests that after developing a theory, one should test this theory through analysis. On the other hand, social value has been accused of being highly volatile from the perspective of individual interest and measurement of value. Neither is it the interest nor the approach of this thesis to outline a model by which to measure social value or learning, with its underlying market economic and production discourse. Testing a theory to see if it fits is in danger of resulting in an analysis which is just as “theory-driven” as Swedberg warns against. However, his argument is that to the theorizer, testing the theory is merely an elaboration of one's own scrutinizing (Swedberg 2012b).

Through this pre-study I have been wandering about creatively in City Year London, in their cultural life, the lives of the volunteers, orientating myself in their everyday lives, practices and interactional forms. Based on the notion of “code switching” I have ended up with models which show individual reflections of behavior within and across life arenas, the volunteers' navigating between various social spheres with different sets of values or desires and the use of humor which turned out to reveal more authentic layers of opinion

and standpoints and to be connected with an element of spontaneous action. These are the circumstances to which the volunteers adapt and thus learn to conduct several forms of interplay under, while co-constituting a particular sort of **self-reflection**, **code switching**, and **self-expression**. Where the latter is an opportunity for creative space, the first two are outcomes of the organizational culture to adapt to due to its social aim and its market position respectively. The three strategies obviously co-exist and are found to dominate the volunteers' behavior in shifting social situations *and* according to what each person considers right or meaningful, consciously or subconsciously. A person's free choice to engage and also to disengage in exchange and with whom is the "voluntary" aspect, according to Graeber (Graeber 2001). The learning process in a voluntary organization would then indicate learning within an organization with a certain type of acceptance of and openness towards the volunteer's choices of social engagement and the pre-study concludes that these circumstances call for different behavioral strategies characterized by increased changeability. This changeability is what will be further studied throughout the main analysis in terms of individual meaning, reflection and social exchange. The pre-study findings can thus be summed up in this model which is meant as a basis for the analytical elaborations, and also functions to keep the pre-study findings closely in mind, because it is the framework upon which the analysis aims to weave a fuller picture. The Exchange-Meaning Model (EMM) indicates how individual meaning and social exchange are interdependent in practice, how one contributes to the other and vice versa. This voluntary setting results in the EMM being understood in a setting where some modes of exchange are voluntarily either chosen or deselected; on the other hand there are clear expectations to the volunteers in terms of their tasks. Nonetheless, as CYL volunteers themselves stress, it is not what you do, this is fixed: they are mentors in schools! The "freedom" as well as the responsibility lies in *how*. This is somewhat different from Graeber's and a common understanding of voluntariness; still the two understandings can be linked. Here, besides the cross-sectorial circumstances, the circumstances of being free to choose the *how* gives room and even calls for individual will concerning *ways* of interaction, thus increasing the chances that one or more of these will feel individually meaningful spiritually, professionally or socially. This puts the very concept of 'voluntariness' up for discussion, because the *how* is not just where the individual can contribute creatively in voluntary organizations, it also applies to any social or non-social

space, at work or in the private sphere; this is particularly so with today's receptive, pro-active, and co-creative ideas of organizational interaction. The voluntary aspect, in Graeber's understanding, ends with the volunteer deciding to engage in City Year. From then on, the activities remind one of other workplaces, only this is youth driven and the social environment is carried by an atmosphere of humor and lightness. The volunteers even call coming to City Year every day *"going to work"*.

Returning to the volunteers, the individual exchange activity, the mode and the frequency of engagement, calls for reflection on one's ways of engaging socially, also because of the central organizational value stressing everyone's

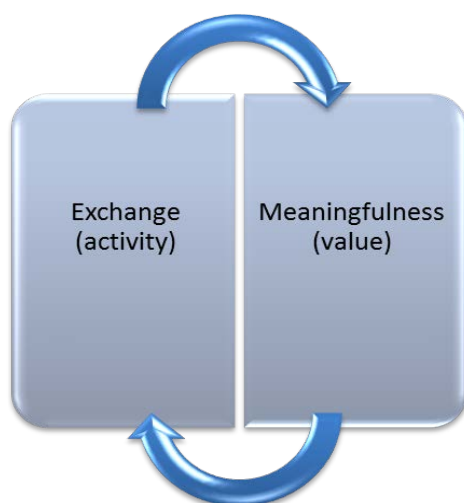


Figure 11: "EMM"

responsibility for oneself and other people. We saw this with A3 as well as TLD. At the same time, understanding oneself as human is achieved through space for seeing oneself with emotions, impulses, personal battles and victories through e.g. the rituals where dreams are guessed, talents spotted, volunteers flattered and finding meaning with what they choose to do because they are this person and not that person. It is a particular way of acknowledging each other's dreams, emotions and histories which is unique for City Year. Applying individual meaningfulness to the social setting, which finds this a useful contribution, seemingly creates a motivating and binding sense of value on both sides. This takes me back to the suggestive points about the func-

tions of timeliness, open- and closed-endedness, and *crédit* in these exchanges between individuals and organizational values which will be elaborated further through the following analysis or main study.

6 Main study: Processes of exchange and learning

In the process of a new type of activity and creation becoming meaningful to someone, from being abstract to becoming concrete, like with the Iroquois, words, stories and even replies by moving across a line, become necessary means of exchange. One receives communication from others (through eye contact in *Crossing the Line*), and somehow this becomes a “guessing” force with regard to one’s dreams and innermost urges which are part of one’s personality and creative drive. In this way, this type of communication conveys personal impulse, unique and driven by each person individually. Like dream guessing gatherings, City Year invites their volunteers to express themselves and thus contribute their personal narratives, ideas, suggestions, and appreciations of each other. These are spread during “circles” or community gatherings, as an example that though there is a clear task and a clear function to live up to towards stakeholders, the cultural life cultivates this type of sharing, which becomes an innovative contribution of personal ideas and acknowledgement. The enthusiasm combined with a sense of familiarity culturally accommodates a co-created, special “City Year energy” which was popular among participants as well as visitors. As I was a field worker in this environment, it meant unconditional hospitality and openness towards my suggestions and requests. In this way, although one could start by arguing that this is not even a voluntary organization in a classical sense, but because it simply feels good to be there, somehow it does not seem to matter to what extent City Year could call itself a voluntary organization, just to parry that discussion as an example. Furthermore, the schools would argue, it works! The volunteers are free to leave the program at any time, though while they are there, the tasks are very clear, and so is the ethics which is represented while wearing the uniform. But this has already been negotiated.

The volunteers putting their energy into the City Year activities and services creates a special life during this one year of full time voluntary work. There are challenges, there are wins; there are choices and there are discoveries throughout the year, and the following will focus on these aspects. The main study will concentrate on the social activities, according to the volunteers. As mentioned in the method chapter, multi-sited ethnography has had the strength of sorting variables from recurrence through observation in various sites. The following is based on a selected excerpt of the full data material, focusing on team A, the main team of volunteers selected. This will be supplemented by interviews with the more forthcoming volunteers from other teams, observations of group activities from the Leadership Development Days, public appearances or “Unity Rallies”, Community Service Days, and staff interviews when relevant. The method can be viewed as a technique triangulation (Hammersley, Atkinson 1995) between the EMM in analytical interplay with the anthropological theoretical concepts, and of course the data material. The first, most obvious and eye-catching analytical physical object was the red jackets; these jackets were also known as “the reds”. That it is an artifact does not make it less interesting. There are several strengths to analyzing the uniform: it is easy to relate to and talk about, as well as individually, socially and symbolically visibly saturated with value, meaning, as well as practice. It is a concrete expression of cultural value which the volunteers interact with.

“The Reds”

Hanging, all red and with a Union Jack on its sleeve, on a coat tree in a staff room at a school, it oozes awareness and greater purpose – (“...spirit, discipline, pride”). It is also integrated on the coat tree with the jackets of the (other)



teachers and teacher's assistants, and what these staffs have in common is they are all there for the children. The City Year volunteers are a natural part of this agenda and everyday school life, except that they wear a uniform like the children but they are part of the staff. The role is "in-between" and demands "code switching". They are young people, one step closer to the children age-wise as well as through their clothing, while from the children's perspective they are closer to the teachers also due to their age, as well as their authority by way of the functions they perform in the classroom. They are playmates and mentors; they are colleagues and helpers; and to both the children and the teachers, they are young.

"The Red Jacket Ceremony" marked the ending of the two weeks' basic training and was where the volunteers received their uniforms, starting with the red bomber jacket. They received the jackets in being assigned to the teams they were to participate in throughout the year. As "Crossing the Line" was emotionally engaging, so was the "Red Jacket Ceremony", since the jacket was to be dedicated to someone or something by each volunteer. The ceremony lasted approximately two hours on the afternoon of Friday September 9th after a day of training sessions in doing "testimonials"³¹ and City Year London's visitor's program³². Each team was called to the front of the room to receive the jacket, one team at a time. Then they had to stand in a line in front of everybody and dedicate the jacket before they were told to zip up their jackets together as a team to mark the end of their dedication and for the next team to get ready. Team A was fourth in line out of eight rounds when they received and dedicated their red jackets, presenting themselves as full blown City Year corps members for the first time:

"LS1: And I'd like to call [A TL, A7, A6, A4, A3, A5, A1, A8, A2, and A9] the very large GS Gives Team.

(All: [applaud])

ATL: My name is [ATL], I proudly serve as a team leader of the [Team A].

(Some: [cheer])

³¹ A brief personal story about where a person is from and why this person wants to be part of City Year.

³² This consists of a volunteer or a staff who shows visitors around the office.

TLA: I'd like to make two dedications to the jacket. Firstly to the team! This is a symbol of my promise to work really hard, to develop with all of you guys, and give support and guidance. Secondly I want to dedicate this to all the leaders in the world, who can pull the change in the world through their productivity and we all can make a difference, and this is for all of you guys.

A7: My name is [A7] and I proudly serve on the [Team A] at [School A]. But I've also got two. The first one is to my dad and my brother, who have always loved me but known when to give me the proper kick up the backside. And also my brother.. Second one is, someone or [HTL] said, to the kids at [School A] and [School B] but also to every kid that City Year has ever helped and will ever help. Because as important as we are, they are why we're here!

A6: I'm [A6], and I proudly serve on the [Team A], and I want to dedicate my jacket to my brother, who's got a condition and he makes me feel proud.

A4: Hello, my name is [A4] and I proudly serve on the [Team A]. Ehm.. I will dedicate my jacket to all who believe we can make a big difference in their lives and that we are the role models that the children will be looking up to. And secondly to my boyfriend, who's been there for the past eleven years he's been there to support me.

(All: Woooooh! [Laugh].)

A3: My name is [A3] and I proudly serve on the [Team A]. I would like to dedicate the jacket to.. a maths teacher of mine who.. As you know, I wasn't the best child in school, but she never ever gave up on me, I had her all through school, she never ever gave up on me. And it didn't matter how bad I was or what I did, she just never ever gave up. She knew I could get the GCSEs which I did. I later found out that – a year later – that all through that she was suffering with cancer and unfortunately she died over the summer, and I just want to dedicate this to her, 'cause this is what I want to remember that: no matter how hard things get, I've always got to be there for them.

A5: Hi my name is [A5] and I serve on the [Team A]. I would like to dedicate this jacket to my dad. He helped me through a lot of things and I hope to make him proud, so..

A1: Hi, I'm [A1], I serve on the [Team A]. I've got two dedications. Firstly to [LS3] and [S3], you both are great great role models. Secondly I dedicate this to J.R.R. Tolkien, 'cause his stories are about.. just show courage and inspire and they're always just about the smallest making the biggest difference, so..

A8: Hi my name is [A8] and I proudly serve on the [Team A]. And I'd like to dedicate my jacket to my parents (unclear) – a couple of months ago I had to spend a couple of months in the hospital and without them I don't know that I had made it through this so this is to them.

A2: My name is [A2] and I proudly serve the [Team A] at [School A]. I'd like to dedicate this to my grandpa. A year and a half ago we had a conversation about what I wanted to do next and I said that's what I wanted to do. And he said he'd support me and he gave me a bit of money. And he now suffers from Alzheimer's so he can't remember who we are [weeps, laughs nervously]. He's got my rent paid so I can come and do this.

A9: Hi my name is [A9] and I also proudly serve on the [Team A]. I'd like to dedicate this jacket to Project Ubuntu 'cause I think it's really really inspirational and it's just so amazing what [S3] is doing. And he's like "don't be something else" and it's been an inspiration for me for so like, you know, we should really get involved in helping out and helping them on their path. I'd also like to dedicate the jacket to my little sister, who.. I don't know, I just want to be there for her in any way I can, she's just always been there for me. I used to be really bad when I was younger and used to get chucked out on a regular basis outside the house. And what she'd do was sneak me back in!

(All: [laugh])

LS1: [Team A], please zip up your jackets.

(All: [cheer, clap and talk])" (Audio recording Sep 9th 2011: Head office)

The jacket is a key part of the uniform which is sponsored by Timberland. The fact that the jacket was passed on by the organization to the volunteer was yet another situation, like Crossing the Line, where an abundance of words was avoided. There were no "here you go"s or "thank you"s. It was kept as a ritual and symbolic act, with its fixed form of sequences and the participants filling out their roles and actions as it went on. The dedications had been asked of the volunteers beforehand, still the *how* and to whom or what had not. The focus of the ritual was aimed at each corps member's dedication followed by the volunteers putting the jacket on and zipping it up. During the session, the jackets were hid, hanging on a hanger rail behind a screen. As the ceremony went on it increasingly amused everybody how we could hear the hangers squeak from time to time when pushed along the rail, and see the bodiless hand that appeared when the jackets were revealed, during the solemn dedications; this was another example of how humor in City Year flared from time to time, unveiling, in this situation, the awkward clash between a ceremonious revealing of the iconic jacket and the not so elegant squeaking from "behind the scenes". Instead of it resulting in the staffs getting embarrassed or annoyed by the giggles, the fact that they smiled along led to a pleasant intimacy which supported the corps members in a vulnerable situation.

The corps members' dedications were seen to be accompanied by expressions of polite gratitude, generosity and responsibility in their way of receiving the jacket. The excerpt above expresses the interplay between the corps members, pieces of individual histories connected to their personal values, the jacket's symbolic expression, and the task ahead of them as mentors. Furthermore the dedications showed their individual valuations, by the varying emphasis on one or more dedications. TLA promised to deliver work, to develop herself, as well as support and guide the team, the jacket being directly connected to her personal process of development. During this she thanked the "leaders in the world" for both inspiration and inducing the belief that everybody can make a difference, change themselves and make a change for others. The team leader focused on taking on the responsibility for her team which was standing in a line right next to her, and secondly she thanked the more remote leaders. The latter took on a more spiritual and collectively symbolic form, representing the leaders' past actions as an argument to support her own future ones. A7 thanked his close family for love and discipline and returned another gratitude to the children to whom the corps members were about to become mentors. Here again one is more distant than the other, and is an expression of faraway past action to inspire and turn into a promise of future actions closer at hand. A6 paid gratitude and immediate generosity to an ill person in her family. Here the dedication seems to be meant to help someone in need because of his illness. It is the jacket which is dedicated, but as a symbol of both what is expected to be hard work, as well as doing good for children, the ultimate good cause, the jacket becomes a clear sign of her future actions and *prestations*. In the same sentence, she mentioned *pride* as something connected to her sense of responsibility. There is a certain correlation between feeling responsible and proud of someone who is also ill, and promising to make an effort to do good deeds; her feeling of pride interconnects the love of her brother with whom she has a history and her own taking action, standing there, as well as her intended actions as a mentor to children. An atmosphere of intensity was increased due to time, past, present and future, as well as actions and emotions being merged in this moment through this one person who verbally conveyed this. The love, the pride and the feeling of doing good and right were expressed as the motivation which drove A6's dedication. Sincerity was sensed by the intensive effect of the merging when she practically swore engagement as mentor on her love

of the ill brother. While some corps members swore on the basis of people having done inspirational “good” in the world, in her case, since her brother was positioned as someone almost holy to her, her dedication was marked by agony and fear of loss through illness. The symbolic-organizational value which the volunteers were given through the jacket had been personalized in a cathartic manner, and this resulted in the dedications being presentations and unveiling of personal motivation. On the other hand one could hardly imagine the jacket being dedicated with values or the promise of future actions which did not fit the organizational humanitarian values, which makes one critically question whether this expressed real motivation or whether the corps members were able to find a grain of motivation that fit and nurtured it for the sake of the situation, which in itself would express adaptation processes. Nonetheless, swearing upon your ill brother must be interpreted as serious. Swearing on something not generally interpreted as solemn was tried out by a corps member from another team:

“D2: Hi, I’m [D2], I proudly serve on the [D Team]. Up until about five minutes ago I was going to dedicate my jacket to the tea, because it kept me going.

All: [laugh]

D2: But I thought: something as meaningless as tea is not maybe the best way to dedicate something. And maybe I’d dedicate it to something that may have inspired me to maybe get that little bit more of “I’m doing something”. So I dedicate this to all the mistakes I’ve made and all the people I’ve upset. So hopefully I can learn from them in the future.” (Ibid.)

D2 *did* appreciate tea. The comment was double-edged because on the one hand he verbalized tea as something which had kept him going. Though innocent, it was expressed as a personal savior of a sort, and in this community any personal savior is inviolable per se. That is not only a City Year value, we know this value from any country and larger community whose basic form of governance is democracy in spite of background, be it religious or racial, and it also comes with modern ideas of preserving the uniqueness of the individual. Here, individual freedom is sophisticatedly questioned by the doubt as to whether D2’s words were a joke. D2 did not laugh while saying this. Everybody already knew him as a great fan of tea; yet he was met with laughter when he said this. It had a hint of truth to it as well as a hint of criticism of the ritual as some cultural machinery, as if he was stating: “What if my dedica-

tion does not reveal deep personal emotions? Could tea be just as important?” Admitting that he was probably pushing it, he then applied to the dedication a general summing up of mistakes he had made and people he had upset, by which the social norm was once again inserted, immediately regenerating an atmosphere of pathos, creating a certain social obligation. Uncovering mistakes made in his social life called for future *learning* to be able to make proper returns: a back payment yet to come from the confessing corps member. This is where the “learning” becomes deeply connected with the promise of a better future and a dedication to work for that, a reinsertion of a belief in the paradise lost and human solidarity if only each person makes an effort. This example bears hints of the conflict between the categorical imperative and Løgstrup’s ethical demand³³. D2’s challenging comment seemed to be meant to test the reactions among those present by implicitly suggesting that the trust with which the volunteers participated, in revealing personal stories, was not reciprocated with the proper empathy by the structure which called for the very ritual. The reactions to this were quite relaxed and even the staffs laughed at the truth it held. Yet the universal ethics also represented by the structure of the organization seemed to make up for the vulnerability, switching the focus to the volunteer’s empowered position of being able to *do* something, as he continued by addressing a present opportunity to change.

Besides the metaphorical use, learning appears as a concept, like *crédit*, which apparently accumulates over time. It is lined up with awareness and making up for prior lack of awareness. D2 acknowledges having received lessons which made him realize things he did not realize before. He predicts this process as accumulative of value which he then, by a process of learning, will become able to reciprocate in the future and reinsert balance (Mauss 1954). As the recipient he is not being concrete about the return, implying that he thinks of himself as part of an open-ended community which implicitly ex-

³³ “Trust is not of our own making; it is given. Our life is so constituted that it cannot be lived except as one person lays him or herself open to another person and puts him or herself into that person’s hands either by showing or claiming trust. By our very attitude to another we help to shape that person’s world. By our attitude to the other person we help to determine the scope and hue of his or her world; we make it large or small, bright or drab, rich or dull, threatening or secure. We help to shape his or her world not by theories and views but by our very attitude towards him or her. Herein lies the unarticulated and one might say anonymous demand that we take care of the life which trust has placed in our hands.” (Løgstrup 1997)

pects him to promise to do his best: “*from each according to his abilities..*”(Graeber 2001, Sahlins 2004). Not wanting to break out of the solidarity and in spite of sometimes underlying criticism of the community, still wanting inclusion in the group, he indirectly asked for time to accumulate return value by learning and transforming his mistakes, his imperfect character, into qualified relational experience with obvious social value. As in the pre-study case of A3, these too are examples of how accumulation of social value circulated back and forth between the organization through the volunteers’ pasts and current life arenas outside of City Year. In this case City Year London became a new opportunity, “a fresh start”, but what was expected to be learned from *within* City Year was not perceived as isolated *from* it. This perception, with reference to Kant’s philosophy during the Age of Enlightenment, generally expresses the conviction that human beings reach freedom and autonomy through enlightenment and development. The philosophy is also connected to a request for the individual to have courage to seek enlightenment and thus operate one’s own *Vernunft* - “sapere aude!³⁴” (Jessen 1999). This view is one that City Year is found to represent, and these empirical examples show that it is largely shared by the individual volunteers.

Returning to Team A, A4 expressed gratitude for the general belief in her, as well her boyfriend’s belief in her through 11 years. A3 expressed gratitude, generosity, and sense of responsibility in an anecdote regarding a former math teacher who recently died. The anecdote started out as an expression of gratitude towards the teacher for the help and belief, and how it had empowered him to succeed, and continued as an expression of mourning over her death. This tale of a great and fallen one in his life then triggered the dedication of the jacket as, through personal motivation, an opportunity to pay back and or pay forward what she had once done for him. Here another trait of Mauss’ individualistic communism is found, where people and things are intermingled and thus a practical example of a system of *total prestations* (Mauss 1954). As his teacher had done, by wearing the jacket he also wants himself to be dedicated to being there for the children no matter what and live up to the mentoring role. At the same time it gives the impression that because he has seen how this is successfully done, he will be successful in repeating the role. The composition of the anecdote is powerful. It indicates how the actions of

³⁴ Latin for “Dare to be wise”

a deceased person move through the volunteer, by having been acted upon by this person, and on to children in need in the schools in present time. The jacket is presented as the activator of his dreams and intentions, but the actual dedication goes for himself and his own actions. Furthermore the success of his mentor is made part of himself to the spectators through sharing the story of this mentor. He thus makes the successful mentoring role from the past into his own in the present and, emphasized by the jacket, it also gives him the strength to put the successful mentoring he received into concrete future action. Like A6, the jacket was dedicated to a person close to him who was ill and in this case died. The jacket thus dedicates *him* because he is dedicated to the person he dedicates it *to*. Through the volunteers' emotions and memories the jacket gains almost human traits of intention as it is integrated as an activating entity in social life. The person who triggers this, the story of the deceased teacher, accumulates the City Year value of "being there come rain or shine" – the social responsibility – through her mentee who is now a mentor himself. With A5 we return to pride; this time gratitude is transformed into hope and a motivation to make her father proud through her coming actions. Here we find that hope and learning go hand in hand toward the aim of making her parent proud, probably in return for what he has given her as his daughter. In both cases of pride, A5 and A6, the pride returned from the younger to the older person and in both cases, from the perspective of both of them, the sense of pride became a motivating factor, and it resulted in dedicating the jacket and thus themselves becoming dedicated. The old circle of reciprocation between the volunteers and those they received from is completed by starting a new one. The volunteers become the "givers" and the children the recipients, and this is reached by the volunteers going through a process to reach meaningful and even creative expression.

A1 expressed feeling "small" and being inspired by J.R.R. Tolkien's stories of ordinary people, who are often overlooked, being those who are able to make the biggest difference, indirectly referring to the corps of volunteers as "the hobbits". The comparison's symbolic content decreases A1's proximity to the others as he talks about all of them as small but with the greatest social potential. *Making a difference* is an opportunity which is brought closer by being active, consistent, determined, and developing personally. By receiving the jacket and acting as a City Year corps member for the coming year, making a difference gets within reach, along with an idea of *becoming* great and wise

enough, by action, to be seen as such, to be seen as respectable adults. A8 had experienced illness herself and thanked her parents, to whom she dedicated her jacket. This, like A5, is another example of gratitude towards parents as a consequence of a realization of how much they have done for her. The corps member has consciously seen this, and it is her parents' efforts for her that motivate her to dedicate the jacket and future actions to them specifically. In D2's case, his own past actions, which he interpreted as being inadequate, were the object of his focus, causing his future ones to come second, worded as more likely to come "someday" when he had learned his lessons. In A5's case, the parents' past giving actions allowed her to fully focus on making the return by acting in a socially responsible manner towards *others* in the future through City Year. Their actions become inspirational to her, whereas with D2 being caught in self-blame from the past, he did not focus on inspirational behavior carried out towards him. It is interesting here to see how the deeds of the forefathers and the volunteers' own deeds are aligned through this activity, as well as how giving back or passing on become an expression of the same, depending on the individual degree of sense of debt.

A2 told another story of a loving mentor and helper, her grandfather, whom she had lost to Alzheimer's. The grandfather's support made her feel grateful and responsible because he made it financially possible for her to help the children and become part of City Year. Mauss writes: "*Alms are the fruits of a moral notion of the gift and of fortune on the one hand, and of a notion of sacrifice, on the other.*" (Mauss 1954: 22-23). Moral notion, fortune and sacrifice are future and past actions in a mix. Mauss would say that it is the spirit of the gift which ensures the moral notion (Mauss 1954). Obviously to have enough to give out alms is a sign of fortune and at the same time of sacrifice. Giving a sum of money to a grandchild is not the same as giving to a good cause, but here the grandchild will be conducting a good cause for "*the poor and the children*" and become a mediator or communicator of the grandfather's message and expression of social responsibility (ibid.). However, at the same time, A2 is seen as also being a "poor child", in a financial sense, since she is given the money as well as this being one of City Year's organizational aims to contribute to "the relief of poverty". The volunteers are thus worded as poor, but only financially, and this only becomes relevant outside the talk of social responsibility where they are seen and see themselves as resourceful. Through A2, the grandfather's investment accumulates into twice or even three times

the cause it was intended for: besides helping A2, she then dedicates herself to both the children whom she mentors, as well as to the organization's societal function as a business. A2's grandfather's choice of donating money to make A2's social activities possible is a good example how money and activity, deeds and materiality, intertwine in this sort of community. It is also a good example of how the market economy dominates, because without the money, the social dedication might have been more difficult or impossible for A2. At the same time both the volunteers themselves and City Year have to talk about the volunteers as being *poor*, to make this sort of activity possible and open to financial donations. One might then ask if that is also the case the other way around: Is accumulation of money dependent on social dedication? – to which even a Marxist would reply: yes. The distinction between money and “social capital” is therefore of no relevance when talking about the nature of social activity value, only when talking about means of circulation.

So, being handed the red jacket caused the volunteer to dedicate *to it* because during the dedication in itself the person and the thing became both separately active as well as integrated with each other. Mauss' notion that even a voluntary organization is not voluntary in the sense that there are no expectations or obligations to reciprocate (Mauss 1954) in a charity is clearly seen here. The Red Jacket Ceremony made it evident to the volunteers that they were expected to contribute and to the volunteers this was not a burden, except financially, rather it was an opportunity to act in a personally meaningful way, give back, and become more autonomous in the deontological sense. These circumstances had the volunteers associate to people who had done something for them, or people in need, be it themselves or someone they cared about, a person or a group of people with whom they sympathized. In all cases the dedication took the form of a merging of past, present and future potential actions, as well as material and non-material emotional value. From the past were primarily mentioned experiences from close relationships that had motivated the corps members in individual ways, shifting between joy and pain, role-models and fear of loss, as inspirational and motivating sources of action. Learning was articulated as a promise that someone would become able, or increase their ability, to return a social relational value and thus enter actively into the world of social exchange on equal grounds to those from whom they had received. This showed learning as a term with a futuristic

trait, a prediction of behavior to compensate for either one's own bad behavior or positive behavior towards oneself. As well as expecting the return, the organization facilitated these opportunities for action. The moral examples were some of the most prominent politicians and philanthropists in the world throughout history: Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Bill Clinton, Boris Johnson and Nelson Mandela. The volunteers were humbled as well as flattered because by becoming part of this community they felt that they were taking part in these icons' life efforts for humanity; the icons' actions rubbed off just a little through this organization (Graeber 2001). The Red Jacket Ceremony showed that the corps members did not always know what to give in return; but this was not a problem as their social activity was still open-ended and *"from each to his ability"*. As part of this dynamics the corps members were observed to promise to dedicate their time and energy, to reveal their personal history and emotional motivation, and to learn more and develop in social interactions. The jacket dedication called for inspiration from both distant and close relationships and as a symbol it was thus seen to actively combine individual aspiration with collective expectation.

Every day City Year, every day London

"The new teams have been formed and they practice call responding regarding their uniform. Some groups play the ninja game, which everybody except [LS1] loves (..) One group stands in a circle while practicing the uniform call response. One leads the sessions by calling and the rest of the group responds:

C (call): Boots! (points to boots with both hands)

R (response): Boots! (Imitate gesticulations)

C: White socks! (Points to socks)

R: White socks! (Imitate gesticulations)

C: Belts! (Lifts up jacket and shows belt)

R: Belts! (Imitate gesticulations)

C: White tucked in! (Touches stomach with both hands)

R: White tucked in! (Imitate gesticulation)

C: Reds! (Pulls jacket collar with both hands)

R: Reds! (Imitate gesticulations)

All: Hearts, smiles, minds, yeah! (Point to heart, mouth and head)

The team leaders have separated from the groups while they play some social games. All of a sudden someone starts to clap and the entire group of volunteers follows suit. Everybody starts clapping and shouting in unison: "Spirit, discipline, purpose, and pride, yeah pride!" over and over again while forming columns led by five team leaders. Before the last repetition of the string of words someone announces: "Last time!" and ends with "...with power!" and the leader shouts "Clap it out City Year!" followed by everyone clapping and cheering. In the columns another call response is practiced:

C: Formation!

R: Hut!

C: City Year, why do we do PT?

R: To demonstrate purpose, spirit, discipline, and pride!

C: Spirit!

R: Voices loud!

C: Discipline!

R: Strong and proud!

C: Purpose!

R: To build a community!

C: Pride!

R: To demonstrate unity!

C: Power!

R: Leadership!

C: Power!

R: Purpose!

C: *Power!*

R: *City Year!*

C: *Clap it out City Year!*

R: *[Clap and cheer]*" (Audio recording, Aug. 30th 2011: Unity Rally in Barnard Park)

The call responses list up the rules about the uniform, how to wear it, how to physically arrange it, and how to behave while wearing it. The first call response is a series of words giving direct instructions in how to physically arrange the uniform and what to remember. During the practicing of this session, a small group of corps members, supported by a staff, talked about and agreed on what piece of clothing came first and compared the rhyme to what they were actually wearing. One noted that he did not wear a belt while glancing in a confessing and questioning manner at the others. Another admitted that he did not know that they were supposed to always wear white socks. And so both the volunteers and staffs took the opportunities to make use of the I-you-relationship in between their duties. Eventually the entire rhyme was gone through and then repeated. No one was told to go and change, just informed that this was the correct constellation of the uniform according to a principle which they should strive for. The teams were then brought in to the one large group of volunteers to practice the second call response, where the first question from the caller was: "Why do we do PT?!" The response worked as a reply to the question, at the same time giving the volunteers the reason why, should they question this in their own individual minds. The reason is "to demonstrate" and then a repetition of the four power words from the t-shirt, representing the expected behavior: "Purpose, spirit, discipline, and pride". Other call responses practiced in the group in this way, in columns, were characterized by mere physical training: bending to one's sides, doing jumping jacks, lunges, and turning while repeating "spirit, discipline, purpose, pride", counting, and clapping. The PT and Unity Rallies would not work without the uniform. The volunteers were very eye-catching lined up in their reds. The auditory experience of the rhythms and determination in their voices, speaking the same words, and the visual experience of the red people performing the same moves simultaneously was attention drawing, emotive

and energizing even to the spectators. It looked fun and organized at the same time, and made one want to join in.

The rhymes and moves to go with the words were learned by heart in time by repetition. The volunteers were introduced to these during the Basic Training Academy, in the case of this corps during the two-day field trip to Stubbers Adventure Centre in Essex for outdoor team building activities. Moving into City Year, social games, so-called ice breakers and energizers, had formed a prominent part of the activities from the very beginning. During the BTA and throughout the year the ice breakers were gradually replaced by the City Year call responses, while at the same time the participants moved from gathering in circles to columns and from plain clothes to the uniform and back again³⁵. The gradual replacement of the social games and energizers seemed to result in transference of the playful and socially informal atmosphere into the call responses at the Unity Rallies. The City Year call responses are seen as the same throughout the organization worldwide and every random City Year corps visiting another would be able to do a unity rally together (interview with S3). During the startup of each community service day, non-uniformed civilians, who participated voluntarily in painting and gardening at schools, were invited to join a PT session led by the team who had organized the day. I, being without a uniform, therefore saw the community service days as a chance for me to get involved as a participant observer in line with public volunteers. The need for a uniform, delegation to a school team, and my age practically excluded me from that possibility on other occasions, and during the time from the red jacket ceremony and the community service days, I was an observer and a professional regarded closer to the staff by the corps members, and closer to the corps members by the staff. I too was an “in-betweenner”. From time to time, this made me feel excluded from closeness to the volunteers and therefore the community service days seemed a legitimate way for me to participate in what had become my community during my time away from home. Besides my professional interest in the group activities the atmosphere alone made me personally want to join the group. Doing PT with City Year London corps members and the community volunteers in the playground on a community service day provided pleasant variety

³⁵ The process of increasing non-uniform days was not part of this field work as they took place over the second half of the year.

and supported my wish for access to a more informal rapport with the corps members.

Emerging people

In the schools the children were very attracted to the uniform due to its red color. The fact that last year's corps also wore the red jackets created a sense of recognition from teachers, parents and children, even though the volunteers were different individuals. As the public got to know City Year, the expectations aroused by the red jacket would vary according to how familiar people were with City Year. But there were also similarities in those expectations, regardless of the level of familiarity. As I was visiting the volunteers at School B one day, I walked past A8 who was struggling with a camera trying to upload pictures of the children to a computer. I stopped to say hallo and asked what she was doing and so she told me. I went to stand next to her to see if I could help and as she was testing the various functions on the camera while I watched, she came across pictures from last year of other corps members from City Year London with some of the kids she knew, and of course at the same school as she was in and with the teachers she knew as well. She then hesitated, wondering if those were the pictures she was looking for, when to her unpleasant surprise she realized that she did not know the corps members in the pictures. After pausing and staring she started to laugh and said: "Weird to think that they were where I am now". This situation revealed the fact that the uniform can be taken off one person and put on someone completely different, while basically representing the same concept, and it clashed with the individual idea of making a unique difference. The question in my head, and maybe A8's, was: Do the children care who is in the jacket? Do the parents or the teachers care or really *know* these people that I felt I was starting to get to know, or did they merely react to the jacket and the positive impact City Year London had managed to create last year as well as their general brand represented by the "happy" jacket? The I-you-relationship proved to be under pressure caused by the deontological construct of City Year volunteers as mentors who had been placed in the schools to "make a difference". How did last year's impression matter to the current corps members' interactions and social exchanges during *their* city year? A8 finding other corps members in her place exposed the uniform as an easy way to replace the corps members inside it, in spite of the unique stories and motivations

each put into the dedication. The tears and emotions at the red jacket ceremony were suddenly put in the background during this experience. It felt awkward, this experience I was going through with a volunteer, that the jacket objectified her and the previous year's volunteers in this manner. Nonetheless it was just as much a truth as her motivation by her own illness and her parents' aid, with which she had dedicated herself to the cause. Again it became clear how the jacket was an active object. The jacket had its own history as a socially symbolic artifact despite being mass produced material. In this case it placed the people second through its consistency; the jacket was repeated but not the people in it and only to some degree the pupils receiving what it represented. The immediate emotional reaction from A8, finding it a weird experience and being somewhat thrown off, stemmed from the fact that the corps members she saw in the pictures were with some of the kids she knew, at *her* school, in *her* uniform, while she herself did not know these volunteers at all; thus the open-ended reciprocation was revealed as an illusion in spite of the investment of individual meaning. To cope with the reaction she returned to a rational acceptance by reminding herself of what she knew was part of the concept of being "a city year", namely that each year was for a new corps. Once again, as in D2's dedication, rationality proved to be a coping strategy in situations of vulnerability.

It became clearer how the volunteers found a degree of emotional detachment necessary in some situations. Being confronted with outside citizens or others who knew City Year by name and aim, the relationship between the volunteer and the jacket was unequal and the jacket was superior in the sense that it was recognized by more people than those who also recognized the people in it. Yet the recognition of the City Year red bomber jacket was unifying and practically necessary in collaboration with the local environment and other sectors, as well as with the global City Year community. Another example of this ambiguity was one Friday morning when A1 came to the office and before the sessions started he, offended, accepting and amused, like A8's response to the pictures, shared an experience he had had on his way there. What had happened was that he had been told to get off the tube, by a random Londoner, arguing that it was A1's duty to make room for other passengers while wearing this uniform. During my one-on-one interview with A1 he explained:

"A1: Oh, they use me as a doormat. Some guy came up to me and said, 'This tube is full, you seemed to be the last person on it, can I take your place and get on?' I was like, 'There'll be a tube along in two minutes, no five minutes.'" "Yes, but I've seen you guys around before, you're role models, you're a good public servant, I think you should live up to it and get out the way." "Yes, but I'm not a doormat so get on the next train, please. I'm sorry, I'm supposed to be a good citizen but you're asking something completely out of order so, no." I just carried on and he wasn't very happy." (interview Nov 25th, 2011)

A1 continues by telling how managing the uniform outside of the City Year context when traveling on the tube can be difficult because of random expectations he meets as well as the energy he puts into navigating in the organizational rules that come with wearing the uniform³⁶, also his own social norms, interpreting these people's expectations of him, and not least what he expects them to expect of him while wearing this uniform. He continued to express the latter reflection during this reply:

"A1: But, I mean, I think the first couple of days I started listening to music, which after a while I realized I wasn't supposed to and I wasn't picked up on that at all. No one seemed to care. I'm reading my books and no one seemed to care. There were moments where there were people actually standing up and I'm sitting down but I can't seem to get them to sit down. It's like, would you like to sit down? No. Would anyone like to sit down? No. And it was also finding it hard to catch their eye. They're always like... all right, fine, I guess you don't want this seat. And then there's the moment where I... If I stand up and it's an old person I'm looking at, there might be a very young person, a sneaky young person comes and grabs it when I wanted to give it to this specific person. There's been people, like, one, this was the first week, I got on a tube, sat down and then this woman came onto the tube. Very old, must have been about 80. I was like, you use the tube? I was like, "Do you want my seat?" She said, "No, I'm quite happy standing up". And then five minutes later she said, "Actually, no, I wouldn't mind it." I really considered saying, "Too late, I already offered it to you but you said no, so no, you can't have it." But I was like, yes, have it, go on.

I: Would you have said no if you were out of uniform?

A1: No, if someone's, as I said, disabled, very old... I've got a hard time with the very old because my grandfather's 85 and I could easily see him running around London rather than getting the tube, so I've got a very distorted view of what's old and what's not. If they're on crutches then yes. If they're got a guide dog, then yes. If they're pregnant then obviously. If they're very young, below the age of ten, then I let them sit down. But, I mean, if I'm sitting down already and they, like... I'm sitting down already and I'm trying to catch... It might involve me actually looking at them the entire time and them getting really

³⁶ Appendices 4 and 7

freaked out by me looking at them. Then I'm like, "Do you want this seat?" And they're like, "Oh, right, no." I guess, it's kind of, me looking for ways of getting out of giving them the seat but it's also, like, to make sure that nobody else actually takes it." (Ibid.)

A1's reply is a good demonstration of the relationship and the struggle between the volunteer and the uniform and how the volunteer deals with this when confronted with people early on the year. This group of people he meets are unaware of what exactly City Year is, and still they see the uniform and start imagining what it implies about the person wearing it. Apparently, strangers' interpretation of the uniform varies depending on their needs in the situation. Travelling on the tube is a non-extreme situation but still an example of the deontological hero's dilemma when placed in the everyday life of commuting workers. A1 himself tells how at first he was not aware that he was supposed to act in a certain way when wearing his uniform in public, so he did not. He recalls how the fact that he did not act according to the code in retrospect did not seem to make a difference at any rate. The difference occurs once he becomes aware of the code of wearing the uniform, which urges him to act as a role model³⁷. This observation supports Løgstrup's points on how the sovereign expressions of life³⁸ contradict external standards, whereas the deontological view would be how this is an example of enlightenment. How this awareness activates his reflections is overwhelming and how it affects his behavior and expression of intentions toward strangers is also indicative. Giving up one's seat for people in need of sitting down is not new to A1, and on a normal day, out of uniform, the process of offering the seat to someone in need would probably be without the fuss he expresses and the result would no doubt have been the same as with it: sometimes people accept the seat they are offered, sometimes they politely reject. The difference implied by the awareness of the prescribed City Year code, which is especially remembered when in uniform, is an extra effort in terms of the deontological view. The extra effort reveals a particular awareness, the code's presence in thought, and the volunteer's attempt to live up to it more consciously. This affects his public social behavior, on which he reflects in this interview. The reflections on his own changed behavior in this reply express:

³⁷ Appendix 7

³⁸ Trust, openness of speech, and mercy (Jessen 1999)

1. That he was already living up to the code even before he wore the uniform in public, in terms of giving up his seat to people in need on public transportation.
2. Changing the habit of listening to music and reading into being ready and more aware of other people on the tube seems to place him in awkward situations.

The situations when people approach A1 with their needs, such as expecting him to give up his own space due to his uniform, are experienced as transgressive to him as a person and trigger an awareness of his boundaries. There is a particular difference between the occasions when he is aware of the code and makes the extra effort of being of service, and those when others interpret the uniform in ways that they expect certain behavior of him. Neither of them can be said to be positive or negative. Being aware of giving up his seat places him in another awkward situation, since making an effort to catch the eyes of a stranger to initiate a negotiation of the seat available, as he expresses it, makes other people express that they feel ill at ease. In this situation, the code that urges him to make this type of extra effort is also experienced as transgressive, because it makes him place himself in a position in public where others become suspicious and uncomfortable around him: this communication mainly takes place through mutual interpretations of body language and facial expressions. A1 tackles these situations by breaking the silence, turning to the I-you-relationship, and telling people what he is implying by looking at them, namely whether they would like his seat.

City Year recruits their volunteers on the basis of a sense of *nous*, as an important trait, and this finding shows that asking the volunteers to do something which they already tended to do, due to their sense of *nous*, creates confusion and insecurity regarding whether or not they are acting with “civic-mindedness”. Becoming aware of public behavior adjusts the volunteer’s habits, through an initial over-awareness of something which he asks himself whether he has always done and whether it therefore is really needed. At the same time, he wants to live up to City Year’s rules and experiments with practicing his civic behavior on the tube in the uniform. There was no follow-up interview with A1 about this, but since there were no more similar anecdotes expressing his surprise, one could assume that he managed to find a balance between “before and after the uniform” in public. Already during the inter-

view he became more relaxed and related how sometimes he felt like living up to the role as public servant and at other times he felt like being left alone and being anonymous. The example above clarifies how being given power by receiving the iconic uniform in City Year and displaying it outside the organization, with non-concurrent perceptions of the value represented by the uniform lead to agitation, curiosity or even diminished worth in a stranger's eye and how the volunteer experienced the objectification sometimes caused by the uniform. The objectification occurred both when he himself tried to subject himself to the jacket as a behavior-directing representation of City Year's values, but also when people from the public found themselves in need of him giving up himself for them – both of which he experienced as transgressive. On the other hand, offering his services to others as he would naturally have done both lived up to the jacket's code as well as being in line with his personal morality which felt natural to him; and one might claim that had it not been so, he probably would not have been accepted into City Year in the first place due to their recruitment guidelines. Whether his acceptance of the expected behavior increased throughout the year is not known. The above shows only that there *was* a struggle to begin with and even though he was recruited, the actual wearing of the uniform did trigger reflections on past, present and future action and thus a process of learning did take place. Personal meaning was added and subtracted by a mirroring process: he mirrored himself in public wearing the red jacket, which caused him to reflect on his own actions versus the actions the jacket signaled that he represented to his surroundings. The behavior in question, being the extra effort and awareness of others, caused the learning to be particularly focused on how to be aware of others without being overly aware and risk being perceived of as “weird” in public. The volunteer used the public space to experiment with this, forced to do so by both the eye-catching jacket and the awareness of the code of wearing it. Conversely, the jacket provided an excuse and an opportunity to expand the volunteer's social experience. In any event, unwanted anonymous behavior was eliminated.

According to City Year, this changed behavior makes the public space more pleasant to others but this is where even multi-sited ethnography can only witness the ripples disappearing into the distance. Examples of this are: What behavior from other passengers on public transportation is pleasant and how and to what degree others might even be aware of this as something more

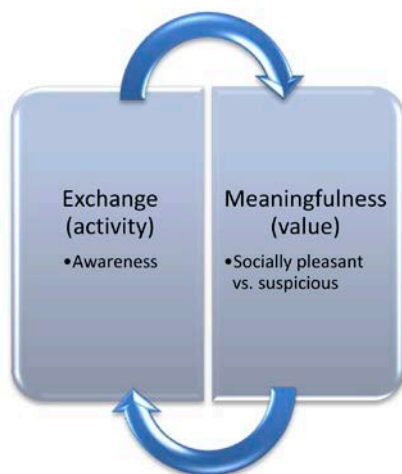


Figure 12: EMM - A1

than “a sense”, i.e. a subconscious registration of being smiled at contributing to just feeling in a good mood from the ride on the tube that day, without knowing exactly why. Whether it would have been different if the person who smiled at you that day had been sitting with his head in a book is difficult to tell. Having a person in a uniform stare inquiringly at you on the tube without you knowing why might have caused another sense, though the intention would have been the same, to show some sort of attention and non-anonymity. The difference is in the detail, in the sense of *nous* which people both within and outside of City Year have from time to time. The volunteers would not be in the uniform if they did not have this in the first place. Only as a City Year corps member one gets a chance to challenge oneself, fine tune one’s manners and translate them into “acting professionally” and probably become more socially agile through this practice. However, during the first half year, this process did typically reveal expressions of resistance, which

were expressed less during the visits at the end of the year. This resistance will be explored further in the following.

Growing in the reds

Most of the volunteers had been accustomed to wearing uniforms during their school years. During a debate training session, facilitated by LS1, on November 11th, wearing uniforms was made a topic. This statement was put forward to be debated: “Everybody should wear a uniform to school”. The exercise was to divide the corps into two groups of positions, arguing for and against the statement respectively. The for and against positions were put forward by a representative panel of three corps members on each side of the room. After having discussed the arguments for and against, these were then presented in turns:

“For: the poor cannot pay for the same stuff as the rich; when everybody wears a uniform, you cannot tell who has more money. Parents who cannot afford cheap uniforms cannot afford nice school clothes either.

Against: Individuality should be promoted. Yes, there is a problem with those who cannot afford the clothes, but everybody wears their own clothes when they are not in school, so they should be able to wear them to school as well.

For: Identity – we define people in uniforms as either something negative or something positive. It is important to be able to see who belongs where during school trips. If children get lost, it is easy to see where they belong. You can tell who people are, or what function they have, because of their uniform, e.g. police and people in service professions. Regarding the City Year uniform, you can relate to the person anyway. We [the volunteers] are recognized by our uniforms and by standards set by people wearing the uniform before us. We get positive reactions because of the uniform and it helps to stay focused on the task and our identity as community servants.

Against: Shows conformity. It teaches children to ignore their own impulses. It is not a question of money, though uniforms are expensive. Bullying is not prevented by using uniforms for everybody and uniqueness should be promoted.

For: [Uses City Year as example] Everybody in this room is unique even though they are wearing their uniform. It teaches you to get along with others. There is a sense of pride connected to it, I [the representative on the panel] am proud to wear it, and I show my pride by displaying where I belong and what values I represent as a person. It is easy for others to see because of the uniform. It makes me able to concentrate better because I do not have to worry about what to wear or feel less worth compared to people who wear smart and expensive clothes.

Against: The school logo is the most important and you can wear that on ordinary clothes. And the uniform is covered by jackets most of the time anyway, as a reply to the argument that it helps children to not get lost. Conformity is important but it is also important to show who you are. Wearing your own clothes is more comfortable, physically as well as mentally.

Summing up of speeches:

Against: Bullying is not prevented by the uniform, it should be the school's responsibility as part of school policy. The reason for bullying can also be because of visible disabilities.

Conformity: The uniform does not necessarily lead to respect. Shoes can become a point of competition as well.

For: (always has the final say) It is easier to tell when someone does something wrong because they are more visible. We do not live in a just society; children should not worry about what to wear at such a young age. Wearing the uniform prepares us for professional life."

(Field diary entry, Nov 11th 2011)

Though the session was facilitated according to a debate training model, it developed into also being an indirect display of the corps members' opinions about wearing the City Year uniform. The discussion showed that though the corps members, most of them coming from an academic environment, were well aware of the prevalent arguments and criticism of the conformity which the uniform represents, they did not feel their identities threatened by the uniform. The counter-argument stuck to the idea of "individualism" and was easily argued against by the statement that you can relate to the person even if he or she is in uniform.

The examples from A1 and A8 show how the uniform started to cause social and emotional trigger points for the individuals. It led to a focus on how interaction with people from other life spheres was expressed as being enhanced if they knew about the values that the jacket represented. This would have made it more likely for the volunteers to gain acceptance and appreciation for their choice of carrying out their good deeds. As the field diary excerpt above shows, the observations *within* the organization did not show the same personal dilemmas which the volunteers would come across while wearing the uniforms around London or even in their homes. In investigating the latter aspect, the one-on-one interviews and the ability to create rapport pro-

vided important insight into the interconnectedness between the informants' life worlds regarding their duty to wear the uniform. During the interviews, it was as the formal tone gradually weakened that stories about the curiosities that came with wearing it emerged. In spite of these conflicts, the volunteers still chose to take part because they found being "a City Year" rewarding in many other aspects. The stories about being part of City Year and how that corresponded with the volunteers' relations outside of City Year varied and talking about it elaborated on the ambiguity of the relationship between personal life and organizational expectations.

"A3: So I mean, these days are going so, so fast, so I'm absolutely loving it.

I: So how does it combine with your life in general?

A3: It doesn't go too well with my outside life. I try to see my friends, and stuff, as much as I can but sometimes it's not as easy. Like last night, for example, they was all going out and I couldn't – I knew I had to be in work, I have to work with the children so I can't be turning up with no sleep (...) So I said to them, I can't go, and as much as they tried to get me out I couldn't. It.. My last relationship probably finished because of work, because I spent so much time here and she was working.. she did, not working sorry, she was dancing and singing in the weekends, so it made life hard to see her, so we decided that was it.

(...)

I: Do you feel like you had to choose between City Year and your relationship basically?

A3: Well I did and I didn't to be honest (..) I'm in a full time job and even if I wasn't doing this I would be doing something different so.. (..) I would never have chosen, I know it sounds bad, but I would never have chosen her over City Year because as much as I did like her, this is going to help me with my future and at the end of the day this is going to shape who I am."

(Interview Nov 10th 2011)

A3's reply shows that although the demands of participation in City Year are intense, in terms of time devotion, they are not seen as particularly intense compared to a normal working life. A3 finishes his reflection by stating that had it been any other job he would have still prioritized it over his ex-girlfriend because both a job and his time at City Year play an important part of his future, his personal autonomy for the benefit of his contribution to society. Again this shows how the one ethical point compensates for the lack of

the other in situations of choices and questions of responsibility. Apparently the logic of securing one's own future is an unshakeable motivation.

Graeber describes how Max Weber observed the time relationship between action and reflection. This was through the fact that reflected action was past or present action whereas a person as intended being could "vanish" in future action. He pointed out how feudal aristocrats justified their status by pointing to what they had done in the past. On the other hand, people who felt that they had yet to become a person of status would focus on future action and personally vanish in future completion (Graeber 2001). Exploring action and reflection as value in City Year London, one can conclude that the uniform is an object which incites to both action and reflection and that the personal reflective element is increased in the volunteer's interplay with people unfamiliar with City Year's aim. Thus the volunteer is mirrored by "future action" within the organization, and more as "past action", or *being* (Graeber 2001), outside of City Year. This means that what the volunteer learns within the organization and outside of it differ; within it this concerns present and future action, which could be referred to as task oriented practice learning and learning by doing, while outside it another type of reflection takes place, with the individual's overall context as a theme, historically and as part of society at large. Being a volunteer contributes to the wider reflections of one's *being* and one's story. It provides an opportunity for a certain form of present and future action, an opportunity when taken leading to a certain process of *becoming* someone to later look back upon, as part of who he or she then is, as the congealed action from their past. Naturally one also has a future, in which this year of volunteering will one day be the past. The value of a past as a City Year volunteer will then become part of one's accomplishment and social identity. It is this project that City Year becomes part of to the individual and in the creation of this past the volunteers spontaneously cope with what obstacles and joys they come across. It is the relationship between creating a past to be proud of, whether it compromises personal relationships or not, which also represents great community value in the larger perspective, and dealing with the challenges that arise, which has the individual go through adaptation processes along the way. In this perspective, the motivation is social inclusion, understood as being seen as worthy of community responsibility by others. In this way one expresses oneself according to what is seen as socially contributive. In this process initially it is the social elements, the "dream

guessers”, who interpret individual desire based on their own frame of reference, which is also socially negotiated, by suggesting certain action to the individual. The individual then takes these suggestions into account. With A1 it was his way of being present on the tube which was called into question by City Year’s code. Having been suggested a new way of behaving, which is worded as socially and individually beneficial, A1 tests this and reflections are triggered. These above-mentioned “trigger points” were influences and experiences which triggered the volunteers to wonder, impacted them emotionally, and caused them to reflect. This became interesting when exploring details in their individual processes of adjusting their social participation, both regarding specific behavior as well as *how* it was carried out. The motivation for adapting in this perspective would be that one’s own desires and creative expression were to be regarded as a social contribution together with the question of how to bring the two together (Graeber 2001). The data shows a particular co-dependence between the volunteers’ past-present and future action where, in A3’s case, the opportunity to create a past which is regarded as socially valuable becomes even more motivating than his relationship with his ex-girlfriend. This is in spite of the fact that his future, where the good deeds in City Year would become the past and integrated in his being, is neither given nor predictable for any of us. In other words: *becoming* is more important than *being*.

Returning to the data, overall the volunteers on team A expressed how City Year conflicted with their other life spheres and how the opportunity for future status seemed to conflict with their personal background, habits, and present social life. Most of this was expressed as something either silly or limiting by the volunteers. Going through statements that express this, one finds two conflict points, one regarding time with friends versus time spent in City Year, while the other concerns how wearing the uniform changes regular social interaction. The latter is explicit in what people in the public space expect from the volunteers due to their uniform and also in comments from friends and family which the volunteers talked about, and there is also a theme around personal space. The following overviews summarize how the significance and character of these dilemmas were expressed in the interviews in team A.

	Public expectance	Teasing and skepticism from friends and family	Space to oneself
	A3 – <i>“people know me because of my uniform – it’s the best chat up line!”</i>	A3 – <i>“friends and family banter about it”</i>	A1 – Misses the opportunity of anonymity in public.
	A8 – Exchanges information about her charity with other “charity muckers”. If people don’t ask what it means it causes prejudice – against that.	A8 – <i>“they say: you look a bit mental, are you seriously into this?”</i> Parents also skeptical at first.	TLA – <i>“Muslims who want to wear the full thing are excluded.”</i> <i>“When you sit on the train you become self-aware”</i>
Uniform	A1 – <i>“they use me as a doormat”</i> versus being ignored or rejected when showing self-sacrificing behavior at own initiative.	TLA – <i>“My friends will be like: that’s great for you. But they don’t understand”</i>	A2 – <i>“very conscious behavior when wearing the uniform”</i> can be stressful. Feels that her unconventional hair style fits badly with the uniform. Tries not to look tired of her job or nod off.
	TLA – <i>“a walking ad-board”</i>		A8 – Uncomfortable with the self-conscious effect it has.

Figure 13: Uniform challenges

Another theme emerged as time was expressed as something which could be hard to manage. When going into the question of “time for what?” the volunteers, independently of each other, revealed three life spheres of importance which were sometimes in conflict with the intense dedication to City Year: other duties, friends or social life, and yet another personal issue, only here expressed as time to oneself, instead of space.

Time	Other jobs/duties	Friends and social life	Oneself
	A3 – second job to help mom with household finances	A3 – Going out and investing time in a personal relationship	A3 – time to think
	A9 – Religious community	A8 – socializing with friends	A9 – time to care for ourselves
	A2 – <i>“My parents think I should get a real job”</i>	A3 – Students’ night out has cheaper drinks. Can’t go out with friends on a school night, so only goes out where students’ night is on a Thursday.	

Figure 14: Time challenges

The conflicts regarding time investment and wearing the uniform resulted in changes in the volunteers’ life which were expressed as “having to make a choice” and “making it clear to their friends and family” and thus being held explicitly responsible for one’s basic values. A8 told about how this had led to a renewal of her social circle and how friends who were more prone to talk in discontented terms regarding societal or political involvement, rather than take action, were actively opted out. A1 compared his new friends in City Year with the friends he grew up with, and described his City Year friends as “less cynical” than the friends he had before. He then substantiated that with the idea of how clarifying your general values and acting on them seemed to be more satisfying and enhance general optimism and life quality. At the same time as getting more pro-active friends he had cut back on smoking, having much less time to hang around and smoke and not perceiving it as consistent with his task as a role model for the children, since he did not like to smell of smoke. The difficulty regarding individual decisions to resist certain aspects of social life in private proved inevitable. A3’s reflection about his relationship ending due to a conflict of how much time he could spend with his girl-

friend because of City Year led to the conclusion: “(..) *I’m in a full time job and even if I wasn’t doing this I would be doing something different so..*”, thus acknowledging a common conflict between private and professional life in maintaining personal relationships. Having entered into City Year and wearing the red jacket, mostly due to lack of public knowledge of what the jacket represented, the volunteers continued to find themselves in uncommon situations with people with whom they were regularly in contact. This made an impression on them and had them wonder. Most of them concluded that being part of City Year somehow did lead to bringing matters to a head in their personal lives and for many of them old social relationships were replaced by new ones. In that way, talking about the uniform provided a more neutral opening to talk about the individual challenges and joys of being a City Year corps member, sheltered by discussing this object. Being given an opportunity to create a future past to be proud of, due to City Year’s strong socially beneficial activities and values, was motivating enough to be prioritized over existing semi- or malfunctioning relationships in the private sphere, and the opened behavior seemed to shift to the City Year community, at least for some time; this may have been, in Løgstrup’s perspective, due to the lack of time to practice empathy in habitual private life.

When handing out the uniform, the City Year staff makes it very clear that there are certain behavioral obligations regarding wearing the uniform in public. The rules are presented in a session, and are also found in the handbook³⁹. When ascribed these values as intentions, the volunteer is reminded by the uniform to make a particular effort to serve other people. Mauss claimed that when objects are exchanged they are ascribed the intention of the giver, in this case City Year, and in the passing to a recipient the object takes on individual character and carries with it the giver’s will. This is Mauss’ idea of the *hau*, or the spirit of the gift (Mauss 1954). Even though, as previously described, Mauss’ claim of objects gaining individual will has been thoroughly criticized (Graeber 2001, Godelier 1996, Sahlins 2004), it is an interesting analysis when contemplating the City Year uniform. Mauss’ point in describing the *hau* is that it is this spirit that ensures the passing on of gifts, the social circulation of value, and in this case, it is certainly correct that the organizational value ascription to the uniform affects the recipients’ ways of

³⁹ Appendices 4+7

reaching out to others. Staying with that thought for a moment, of course one reason is that it is obligatory code when wearing the uniform to give up one's seat and attend to the needs of others. But as previously mentioned, the volunteers are used to doing so even without wearing the uniform, so it cannot be the uniform or the code which triggers this socially attentive behavior. What it does do however is to decrease the volunteer's refuge in anonymity, and leads to strain in that it increasingly triggers the volunteer's self-reflection during social interaction. But this is mainly among people who do not know what to expect from a person who wears the jacket; within the community, or among people who know, the triggered conscious self-reflection is not as intense. For the *han* to "work" as social glue thus calls for knowledge of the value ascribed to the gift or the uniform to be familiar to the spectators in terms of what they are to expect from these uniformed young people. The common idea of how to behave when travelling on the London Underground is radically different from the idea of a hero ready and willing to serve; people do not expect someone to step out of anonymity and start offering this and that. Rather it is quite annoying when someone does so because usually people doing so in the streets expect money, and it can be associated with forms of begging or even express a pathologic *lack* of sense of propriety. A1 tells how trying to catch someone's eye to offer his seat becomes challenging and is on the verge of getting him into trouble. One can speculate what would have happened had he looked insistently at a person suffering from paranoia. His reflections have him caught in a dilemma between acting out the idealism represented by the uniform, the *han* of the uniform, and acting according to the implicit social urban code by abstaining from making people scared of him by *not* giving them his special attention; so he is caught between his own habits of acting out a regular level of politeness and making the extra effort. Traveling on the tube in London seen in the light of the British being generally known for their politeness (as I too experienced compared to other cities I have visited), the question is to what extent going out of one's way to signal general consideration is needed in this city. A1's habitual level of politeness is expressed in what he tells and this reveals that his natural social sense of dos and don'ts in or out of uniform in the public space is quite clear: acting selfishly by asking people to get off the tube particularly during rush hour is rude, you offer your seat to people in need of it if you can and you do not break social etiquette by asking for money when people make rude requests.

Post-modernist studies show that avoiding other people's looks and sticking to glancing at most are considered polite and an expression of respecting others' private spheres. The big cities do not leave much bodily space for each individual, and because of forced proximity, not claiming or stealing other people's visual space is regarded as polite compensation for physically consuming common space (Bauman 1998). That being said, there are also positive responses to the uniform in public. A3 is positively surprised that people act as if they know him when approaching him in his uniform, expressing that they feel safe and at ease. A8 relates how she talks to "charity muckers", which tells us that apparently City Year is just one of many charitable organizations in London and that there is a sense of connectedness among people working for these types of organizations. Spreading the message about City Year happens naturally by displaying the uniform and some foreign people even take it as an invitation to connect and curiously ask what the organization is all about. The data gives examples of both positive and problematic public feedback. So in one way wearing the uniform can be a strain, and in other ways it encourages contact and the volunteers are approached by others who appreciate this type of dedication, and the uniform thus becomes a social gathering point in the midst of the anonymous city. This is also true for friends and family, who are mostly skeptical at first, when their friend or daughter slips into the red uniform and dedicates all of his or her time for free. An explanation is called for and most often the explanations lead to positive responses. To afford to be a volunteer full time for one year, many live at home but at the same time family members comment on a lack of "real" contribution. It gives rise to teasing or direct resistance from the family and adds to the everyday pressure on the volunteer. Both A2 and A3 told how they usually contribute to the household finances by working. A3 said that even though he now only received £100 to cover expenses he still gave "*some money*" to his mother to help pay for the food and the rent. It is interesting to observe how even in families the idea of contribution can be direct production. This goes against the idea that open-ended reciprocity is the dominating form of exchange within households (Sahlins 2004), and reflects the family also as a unit of strong productive function with an explicit sense of hierarchy and expectations of contribution. Having scaled the first capitalist resistance from the families, the volunteers primarily gain emotional and loving support in spite of the financial consequences. Of significance here are the aims of City Year and the fact that the time there will probably improve future career

possibilities. This reveals how time and energy are expended in working life and money taken away from the families. The young person becoming a volunteer while still living at home, in this perspective, breaks the flow of exchange between the family household and working society, giving financial priority to the latter. But at the same time the implementation of voluntary work in the social welfare system revolutionizes the financial flow as it moves value from the capitalist system, where time equals money, driven by the individual urge of functioning creatively and meaningfully in a universalistic social community, now and in the future.

Following the thread of the uniform and approaching the informants through talking about the uniform resulted in critical, amusing, praising and neutral responses. The range of answers showed that it was not seen as problematic to wear the uniform although it is an important attribute in many aspects: visually, in relation to brand, in relation to interaction with the school children and in relation to creating a sense of community within the organization. It had been clear from the beginning that wearing it was part of volunteering for City Year. The volunteers seemed to be at a point past accepting it and relating to it in an accepting manner, yet somehow challenged by a need for the exchange of personal empathy and I-you communication. Resistance and indifference towards the uniform were seen from people in other life spheres: from the public and from family and friends. Most of the volunteers found a need to explain what the uniform represented in order to legitimize it to those around them, and that after the explanation people would become more accommodating. With no room to explain to strangers, no clear communication, the combination of wearing the uniform and the volunteer's self-awareness concerning how to behave when in uniform would become stressful, according to most of the informants. So, the individual wearing the uniform in various life spheres can in itself be challenging in new ways: the volunteers reflect, deal with it and move on, adjusting to being seen more. The interviews for this study were conducted in the beginning of the year when these types of challenges were still being digested. Later in the year, the volunteers moved back out of the uniform by having "out-of-uniform" days at school and in other activities. By the end of the year the individuals reappeared more used to being seen and held responsible for their values and thus more groomed for professional stamina and negotiations in professional networks and with an increased social sphere of likeminded humanistic peers

as well as new friendships or relationships. They were also mostly more aware of which direction to move in their career or future studies and would have a year of experience as voluntary mentors to write on their CV. How to be seen more, be confronted as to what values drive one to what actions and the reasons for those actions, to present oneself, take the initiative and express one's ideas in different contexts are the challenges involved in learning how to contribute to any social community. The combination of social and creative expression has probably become more complicated as the individual and the social are sometimes even understood as mutually exclusive. In this way, when the uniform makes the individual socially visible, it fires the individual project of becoming successful back into a social setting. This micro-analysis shows that it does this by forcing the individual to consider how to present him or herself in a community in which people expect to gain socially from individual meaningful expression.

The uniform as object

Attempting to explore the uniform as a mere object understood beyond or without ascribed immaterial value was an interesting dimension for data triangulation. Among other themes, the various ways of considering the uniform also deepen the discussion regarding the spirit of the gift or object, for which Mauss is so criticized. The process of accepting the practical wearing of the uniform was expressed in a pragmatic manner. Always ending an interview by asking a very direct closing question: "So how do you feel about your uniform" deliberately switched focus to the uniform as a present object in the room, mostly on the interviewee's body. In every case this made the volunteers smile or laugh and give up whatever straight face was left, and the speaking mode shifted remarkably: the more or less fixed eye contact between us shifted from looking at each other to us both looking down at the uniform clothes; there were no presumptions about the reply on my part, as I had no idea how they felt about wearing it every day since it was not something I was able to participate in doing myself. Very rarely the answer was what I expected: stories of pride or importance or the symbolic and emotional value attached to it. Rather the answers primarily listed practical observations about the material, as well as practical advantages or disadvantages of wearing it. When they reflected on the social effects, their replies were based on considerations of visibility.

Informant	Practical individual reflections	Social reflections
A1 (Nov. 25 th 2011)	<p>Does not know how to wash it.</p> <p>The Tims [Timberland boots] are heavy and the plimsolls have fallen apart.</p> <p>The pants go beyond the shoes so you walk on the pants.</p> <p>Had holes in the black socks and wore white (no one noticed).</p> <p>Marks on everything, and it falls apart after a while.</p> <p>Used to work as a gardener and would wear clothes like these.</p>	<p>Very symbolic – very important.</p> <p><i>“It’s like City Year: relaxed and unrelaxed at the same time”</i></p> <p>Visually impressive in a group.</p>
A2 (Nov 21 st 2011)	<p>Comfortable and practical.</p> <p>Does not have to iron or choose what to wear.</p>	<p>The self-awareness is uncomfortable – no breathing space.</p>
A3 (Nov 10 th 2011)	<p>Not the best uniform, feels like an astronaut.</p> <p>Likes out of uniform days – like back in school.</p>	<p>Feels part of a team [“good”]</p> <p>Seeing everyone out of their uniform was a bit weird at first.</p>
A4 (Nov 7 th 2011)	<p>Pants are too big.</p> <p>Does not like it because uniform was worn throughout school life – not cool.</p> <p>Does not have to worry what to wear.</p>	<p>Makes you understand what you are doing and represent.</p>
A5	<p>Strange to wear at first.</p>	<p>Nice that everyone wears the same</p>

(Nov 29 th 2011)	<p>Good that you do not have to think about what to wear.</p> <p>Likes that it is outdoorsy: <i>"(...) you look professional but you can still have fun."</i></p>	<p>uniform.</p> <p>Good for building relationship with the kids.</p>
A6	[left the program]	
A7	[interview recording partly unclear]	
A8 (Nov 7 th 2011)	Felt uncomfortable with trousers' fit.	<p><i>"Love it, it's a great equalizer"</i></p> <p>New association: unity, good cause and enjoyment, helping kids.</p> <p><i>"We're loud and proud!"</i></p> <p>Creates a "tick": looks at every red jacket she sees.</p> <p>Uncomfortable with self-conscious effect: <i>"I look like an idiot without the others"</i>.</p> <p>Good that you don't have to strain your eyes to see it.</p>
A9 (Nov 24 th 2011)	Trousers were too big, got others.	<p>Good that you can spot the others at the train station.</p> <p>Did not like it at first: <i>"(...) hate people staring"</i>.</p> <p>Makes the kids feel good: <i>"(...) they see us out the corner of their eye, and just know you're there"</i>.</p>
TLA (Dec 1 st 2011)	<p>Did not like it at first.</p> <p>Sizes are always too big.</p>	<p><i>"You put on this uniform and this is what you have to be. You're doing it because you're all doing it."</i></p>

		<p>Boots gain history: <i>"the boots I spent six months in"</i>.</p> <p><i>"The kids they don't see us, they see the uniform. It makes us bigger somehow"</i>.</p> <p>Something to hide behind.</p> <p>A strong template to be a strong person.</p>
LS2 (Nov 18th 2011)	Not particularly attractive.	<p><i>Feels proud to wear the City Year uniform and the collective impact that it makes.</i></p> <p><i>Feels like wearing the jacket to school because the children will know that it's someone from City Year and what it means.</i></p> <p><i>Want people around the city to know the uniform.</i></p> <p><i>Love when people say they saw one of the volunteers on the bus.</i></p>
LS1 (Nov 30th 2011)	The jacket looks cool; the trousers are hideous; don't like the fit.	<p><i>"It works really well."</i></p> <p><i>Loves to see the uniform on display at Unity Rally.</i></p>
S3 (Nov 9th 2011)	<p>Likes not having to think about what to wear every day.</p> <p>Wants to dress appropriately but does not own a lot of smart clothes because of what it costs.</p>	<p><i>Neat to see the unity of it.</i></p> <p><i>Coming from different backgrounds and ideas but all working for the same cause, the uniform representing that, is great.</i></p> <p><i>Wearing the uniform helps connect with the others and helps them feel supported.</i></p> <p><i>Kids connect to the uniform, enables sus-</i></p>

		<p><i>tainable impact, everybody trusts you when you're in the uniform.</i></p> <p><i>15,000 people per year wear the uniform as volunteers.</i></p>
<p>S4 (Nov 22nd 2011)</p>	<p>Not flattering, not fashionable.</p> <p>It's bright, it's young, it's fresh.</p>	<p><i>Makes a huge difference: Gives identity and sense of unity to the corps members.</i></p> <p><i>Invokes trust from the children.</i></p> <p><i>Represents continuity to the children irrespective of the faces.</i></p> <p><i>"I see it as a superhero uniform (..) and I think that's a great thing to be able to have"</i></p>
<p>BM1 (Dec 11th 2012)</p>		<p><i>"If we expect the corps to be in uniform every day, why can't we be? – so I am, every day."</i></p> <p><i>"The uniform represents something beyond me as a person and it's a very important part of our culture."</i></p> <p><i>"The uniform makes me a better person in some ways because I'm not just representing me, I'm representing all of us."</i></p>
<p>TLD (Nov 9th 2011)</p>	<p>Hated it the first time he put it on (<i>"They always said it suited me, but I never liked it."</i>)</p> <p>Hasn't worn uniform since secondary school.</p> <p>The colors, the fit, not fashionable: <i>"It's not a stab at the organization, it's personal preference"</i>. Within a month it was</p>	<p><i>Reluctant to wear it until he saw the children's response to it – the uniform is very powerful.</i></p> <p><i>"It's not that ugly, it's comfortable, it's clean, the kids know who you are, win-win."</i></p>

Figure 15: Uniform as object

From this data emerged a theme regarding the wearers' aesthetically liking the uniform as well as being spontaneously occupied with the physical comfort or lack of it. This aspect of individual response to the uniform varied, yet in London everyone wearing it, including staffs, added such remarks about it. The only interviewee who did not reply to the closing question with remarks about this, merely sticking to its communal and symbolic value, was the US board member who thus chose to keep to a deontological representation. The actual individual "liking" of a uniform is hardly touched upon in the literature reviewed for this thesis, yet it provided an interesting contrast in the findings. As mentioned, the famous philosopher Michel Foucault talked about bodily subjectification in institutions through being imposed to wear a uniform (Foucault 1976, Foucault 1975). As Foucault wrote very little about the Heraclitian or observed processes of individual value, and furthermore comes from an entirely different academic tradition, the attempt here will be to keep to the anthropological theory about value as reflection of meaning and action through the analytical elaboration. In her book: *"Apprenticeship in Critical Ethnographic Practice"* from 2011, writing about learning in apprenticeships, Jean Lave has a chapter about apprentice tailors' uniforms. Here the apprentices actually sew the uniforms in question, and it is this process which has Lave's focus. Her findings are that the production of different parts of the uniform are entrusted to apprentices with varying experience. Thus sewing the shirts demanded most experience and was taught last (Lave 2011). About the uniform's social meaning, Lave writes:

"Think of clothes as social skin, as socially prescribed markings of social locations and identities and relations among them. Indeed, clothing has quite special abilities "to mediate both individual and collective identities and desires (Hansen 2000, 3). The garment inventory actually reflected many of these identities and desires (...) for it defined the work of the tailors in relation to the world in which they labored." (Lave 2011)

The various parts of the City Year uniform do not represent such a parallel to the volunteers' learning processes or identity, since there is no connection with the actual production of the clothes. The Marxist point about fetishism in consumption society, each consumer being out of touch with the production value of the things he or she consumes, radiates through here (Graeber

2001). Lave's brief summary of the social function of the uniform or of clothes in general is also found in anthropological and sociological writings. The form of the unity, *"the shared nature of culture"* (Lave 2011), is thus reflected in the uniform. Yet what Lave and Graeber agree on when fusing their otherwise independent points and what has to be anthropologically interesting when discussing learning as well as value are the processes of the individual interaction with the material in terms of expression of desires and future potential action. The City Year London volunteers were able to understand the uniform as a key, as potential action, through the social and the ritual activities concerning the uniform. Behind the deontological aim, there were also a number of comments about what the uniform emotionally symbolized to those wearing it and how this helped them find personal meaning. Those expressions tended to build up or pass on the atmosphere of pathos which typified talking about the uniform in this manner. What was surprising during the interviews was that this pathos immediately disappeared from the conversation with the question: *"What do you think about your uniform?"* This finding reveals how the pathos and the idea of uniforms as a social symbol tend to be echoed in anthropological findings about uniforms in various cultures. Rarely has attention been given to how it actually felt to wear it, the comfort, i.e. other perspectives than a disciplining and uniforming of bodies.

The intentions behind the design of the uniform are compounds of an inspiration from Star Trek: *"a group of young diverse idealistic people set out to do common good."* (quote LS1, field diary Aug 22nd 2011), the idea that the volunteers should not have to wear out their own clothes while working at City Year which includes gardening and painting, the idea of a uniformed culture representing the deontological ethical values of significance and the visual advantages both when being seen in local public as well as when interacting in the global network. Timberland especially has had a say in this, branding themselves with producing hard-wearing work clothes for "active comfort" to "make a difference"; from the year 1989 they have provided City Year uniforms, which were worth USD 10 million that year in the US alone (Timberland 2014). It is clear to everyone considering the uniform that there are a wide variety of aims behind it connected to various meaningful intentions or values. This is where the history of production and the history of integration of the uniform are not concealed and thus should limit the space for interpretation and individual ascription of meaning and intention. These past and ex-

ternal intentions are explained to everyone at City Year. At the same time, through the Red Jacket Ritual they are urged to ascribe their own past actions to it as well, as a motivator for creating future opportunities for themselves. Questions about the personal meaning and intentions each interviewee connects to the uniform emotionally evoked replies which were individual patchworks of the volunteers' own versions of various external and internal, past and future intentions. The social reflections mirrored the intentions with the uniform in various ways (frequency in descending order):

- The visual effect on relationships
- Creating unity
- Creating self-awareness
- Affecting self-image
- Expressing credibility through continuity
- Equal were: Relaxedness; creating a "tick"; the super hero; the role model.

In spite of the uniform's deontological theme it is remarkable how the most frequent remarks from those wearing the uniform concern how it visually affects I-you-interactions. The remarks show that the confusion sometimes caused by the wearer, in open-ended spheres or immediate encounters, is often verbally clarified before, or can even be part of, an encounter in empathic conversation, as an "icebreaker" or "conversation maker". In studies of volunteers "the hero" has been made a theme on several occasions. Volunteering and ways of organizing it have changed in terms of method and societal status due to the increasing tendency of including social voluntary organizations in the public social welfare system. The idea that voluntary organizations are saviors of the financial crisis due to savings in public welfare and are filled with heroes to save the day can seem quite illusory. This is another reason why bringing attention to life and culture in these organizations is important for interested collaborators and participants to tone down their expectations. The idealism which flourishes around these organizations is powerful and important and creates strong positive narratives for people to identify with and find meaning through. These replies show that in City Year London this is more of an idea of how the volunteers see themselves than it is real in their own identity view. In line with Graeber, this shows that the visual effect is indeed connected to the social value and that the uniform comes to function as a shortcut in communicating and exchanging this; it is

an explicit networking object, with the individual consequences outlined in the previous paragraph.

The material side of the uniform, the bodily and everyday experience of the practical wearing of the uniform, did as mentioned cause more spontaneous and blunt replies. In their individual reflections on the practical aspects, the City Year volunteers and staffs emphasized (frequency in descending order):

- The bad fit
- Aesthetically liking it or not
- Practical work clothes
- Reminds one of school
- Getting used to it in time
- Equal were: practical to wash; boots' weight; cheating with some parts; having worn it out or ruined it; professional identity; professional and fun at the same time; not a strain on finances.

Compared to the replies about the social effect, these replies reveal current situational experiences of the uniform in the City Year volunteers' and staffs' lives. In the social reflections there was a tendency that the longer someone had been involved with City Year, the more emphasis they would put on the social effect in their replies. This can be understood as social integration into a community and an increasing identification with City Year, naturally due to the time and effort spent there as well as both the internally socializing aspect and the increasing role and responsibility as a public image, representing a more permanent resource in City Year. But from Løgstrup's perspective it can also reflect how the demands of wearing the uniform become more and more significant for the experienced social relationships as a consequence of wearing it over a longer period of time and with less time, and thus less immediate social encounters, without it. In the latter perspective one could say that the dominance of the deontological project represses the individual's immediate need to be met with empathy. Team A's team leader was the only one on Team A to give an elaborated response regarding the uniform with an emphasis on the social reflections. Interviewing staffs, another team leader, and one corps member at the end of the year, who became a team leader the following year, showed that the longer one had been in the organization and had become accustomed to the physical features and fits of the uniform, the more one focused on the social value. Yet everyone seemed to remember not

liking the uniform at some point, either because of the fit, how it looked, or because of associating it with one's school life, keeping in mind that a significant difference between City Year in the UK and in the US is the mandatory school uniform in the UK; this demonstrated fragments of underlying resistance towards it which had been overcome. The data shows that wearing the uniform aroused bad memories of always having had to wear a uniform in school, but also feeling bigger as well as legitimate and even proud towards the kids and therefore unambiguous conclusions cannot be drawn about the uniform limiting or promoting the volunteers' motivations. Further analysis shows that as one became more used to wearing the uniform, replacing practical annoyance with increasing identification with the idealism and value the uniform represents, the emotional ascription to and thus motivation associated with the uniform would also increase.

Reciprocity: The sharing of human condition and opportunity

The volunteers' everyday experiences bear witness to the nature and routines of the communal life where the uniform suddenly stands out as something the people involved with City Year express themselves *through* when "representing" a set of social values which interact with their emotional and existential sense of meaning, as well as express themselves *about*, when directly asked about their everyday lives as a volunteer in a uniform. When talking about the uniform, what matters is the bodily experience, the practical moving about in the morning and figuring out what to put on, the sense of the material and the visual impression of the colors and fitting on their individual bodies. How to wash it, how much the boots weigh, etc. are practical considerations which go beyond an image of the social brand and ethics. These are human physical preconditions they all have in common no matter how different people they may be on the inside. Where the versions of the ethical values are patchworks of preferences and stories, the pragmatic pros and cons of wearing a uniform were a stronger common denominator. Besides the ethical discussion throughout this analysis, an economic anthropological perspective or ethics concerning this can be elucidated through Polanyi's point about the difference between formal and substantive economy, particularly when discussing the concept of reciprocity with an eye to *interest*. Polanyi quotes Aristotle:

"To every kind of community (koinónia) there belonged amongst its members a corresponding kind of good will (philia) which expressed itself in reciprocity (antipeponthos)" (Polanyi 1968)

The quote refutes the distinction between interest and non-interest, as the point taken in this perspective underpins that there is always an interest, but there is just as much an interest in others' as well as one's own wellbeing; this is the nature of reciprocity. Graeber criticizes Lévi-Strauss for having focused on the term because, as he claims, it is too vague to really explain much about exchange and social value. Nonetheless, Graeber uses it repeatedly as he does not come up with an alternative concept for the purpose (Graeber 2001). At the same time he acknowledges Mauss for applying reciprocity as a notion to serve to explore "*the common moral basis of all human societies*" (ibid.:217), even though it did not serve well for the comparative analysis which Mauss set out to perform. Though Lévi-Strauss is criticized for his analysis of reciprocity, it is relevant to distinguish between the various ideas of this concept at this point. Firstly, Mauss' argument concerning reciprocity and the obligation to make a return gift was the spirit of the gift, the *hau*, which has been accounted for and analytically applied previously in this thesis. Lévi-Strauss defined reciprocity as being an unconscious structure of the human mind, which we all have in common, and Graeber's main criticism is that this conclusion is drawn from the research of one particular culture (ibid.). Returning now to Polanyi, he presents three traits in his classification of reciprocity: that it can be described as a multiple symmetry in human behavior, that it is kinship proximity dependent (this is supported by Sahlins (Sahlins 2004)) and that both the principles of market economy and redistribution are prone to be subordinate to that of reciprocity (Polanyi 1968). Graeber's elaboration of *hau* results in the point that the gift *can* well be said to be ascribed "human spirit", but only in the sense that objects visually represent past, present and future action, which is adopted socially by others as motivation for their own expression, action and contribution in an individual communistic sense. The misunderstanding regarding *hau*, Graeber says, is that an object is actually possessed by spirit, and that the spirit is expressed socially in terms of desirable action (Graeber 2001). What they all agree on, however, is that reciprocal behavior is a common human trait. What the studies of City Year London have contributed with in that sense is to suggest that this common human trait is connected to our physical circumstances which we all have in common. Though different in sizes and shapes, we share having to consider what

“social skin” to carry in which social settings, how this feels on our bodies and how it promotes or obstructs our physical and practical intentions and meaningful expressions. The freedom to change outfit when we get home and the individual reflecting on and choosing these changes form part of a reciprocal “we” beyond our images and colors. In this way, the uniform does not always undermine the subject but can support the state of being a powerful individual, able to meet others on equal and uniformed terms. Without it, we know we would all be either wearing something else of infinite combinations or would be naked in skins which are fixed and not interchangeable, which is our common ground. In a structuralist view, the uniform as an object of value thus has a double function. It visualizes a common intention by its appearance and actual wearing, and not least it implies the absence of nudity or the possibility of wearing anything else (Kjørup 1996). This common awareness was observed among people at City Year London and constitutes an interpretive void where positive assumptions about each other’s resources as human beings, probably due to the fact that everybody signed up for a humanitarian purpose as volunteers, create respect and good will towards each other, and thus a strong reciprocal community.

Summary of the uniform: The underlying reciprocity

The ambiguity of managing a double bottom line, or code switching, was clear both in organizational terms and to the volunteer. But what was also clear was a personal acceptance of these conditions and the adaptation to managing the multiple agendas concurrently. Exploiting the volunteers’ manpower for the business agenda was not seen as a problem either by the volunteers or the organization because it was clearly equally linked to the social aim. It was expressed openly that the volunteers’ working hours were sometimes unreasonable and that they were the main driving force of the organization in terms of delivering social services and receiving financial means. In City Year London the corps members are seen as more important than anyone else.

“LS2: ‘We have to have a hierarchy (...) But at the same time it’s flat, in the sense that anybody can come in and have a chat with me (...) but we have to have a chain of command (...) and then the corps members underneath, but a lot of people say, actually it’s.. you should do it inverted, so you have the corps members on top, which is true. I mean this

is you know, you use it to show trustees, or what have you, but in reality, it should go that way [forms an inverted pyramid with her hands]

I: Yes, I see why. Because they're.. not the most important, but they're very important.

LS2: Yes. They are. Well, I think they're the most important people, but at the same time, they're only here for a year, and you have to really look after the staff team that has, potentially some of them come up from the corps members, but they'll be here year on year."

(Interview Nov 18th 2011)

Once more it can be observed how the deontological ethics, and in this case also "the open door policy" compensates for what may have been lost according to Løgstrup's ethical demand. Attending to the natural vulnerability in human encounters through empathy takes time, and thus indicates the strength of the open-ended relationship. The hierarchical and organizational structure not only brings this out but challenges the individuals who are around each other every day to find a way to do without it, even though empathy is part of the service which they provide. This makes those involved cope with it as seen for example in "code-switching" which then occurs as a valued trait in the community. The volunteers are only there for one year to return to "their own" lives and clothes afterwards and even already during the year. But how the explicitly deontological effort affects those in uniforms for years would probably better explain the underlying and sometimes forgotten resistance towards them in terms of the visual social effect.

When asked about the hierarchy, a leading staff replied that while the organization has to have a hierarchy and a line of command, the charity is run like a business limited by guarantee, which is a direct indicator of the fact that the organization is both social and financial. These observations lead to support Polanyi's third trait in his classification of reciprocity mentioned above (Polanyi 1968). Financial economy was one way of exchanging among many and as social as anything else, and money was integrated in the overall social exchange as: a) *one* of many, and b) a means of exchange. The reciprocation, when not merely material trade, but including the social, collective and symbolic, knitted together the various economic principles of market, redistribution and reciprocity, which mere exchange of money did not. Services or acts of politeness were seen as general reciprocations to money as well as to favors and were means of reciprocal exchange. This was found characteristic of

the process where money was translated back into the original social value of exchange, for example A2 receiving money from her grandfather to be able to become part of City Year. The point is that social exchange was able to stand alone without money, but not the other way around: money always ended up being reintegrated into social exchange by being processed through symbolic dynamic meanings and common grounds, expressed in individual forms of social value which also tended to be commonly understood as value. In this study, social economy was not subordinate to financial economy but the origin to which money continuously returned. Observing the informants' responses about the uniform showed that this also applied to the uniform's archetypical symbolic value. Both money and the uniform, representing the hero, had archetypical symbolic functions.

During the interviews, when I asked the informants to relate to the uniform, by asking "*How do you feel about your uniform?*", the first reaction was surprisingly always about its pragmatic use. Second was the aesthetic individual expression, and third the symbolic organizational value. As I expected the answers to be in the opposite order, having experienced the overwhelming degree of organizational integration of symbols and idols in the field, the replies when analyzed revealed the underlying reciprocity.

Besides mentioning the uniform's symbolic value as an ethical and mythological reminder, and the business collaborator and sponsor Timberland, the informants emphasized the uniform's communal practicality: the visibility on the train station and as a "great chat up line" both for children and interested strangers. This pointed to the fact that physically the uniform was exchanged between the organization and the volunteers but visually it was exchanged between the school children, as well as teachers and parents, the public, and the volunteer. In the former case, the organization offered the uniform to the volunteer after having negotiated the conditions of how to wear it, which were then accepted by the volunteer. Putting on the uniform gave the volunteer something to visually circulate and by doing so, the uniform bound the city community in practice. People started to show interest caused by the uniform and ask what it represented. As a unifier it had people talking about helping each other, helping children, and serving the community with commitment. To complete the visual exchange with the public, the recipient had the choice of either supporting the cause, and thus "joining" City Year by

quickly assessing an individual interpretation of themselves in the visual presentation of the organization, or rejecting inclusion. Some other time, this could be interesting in a perspective of chaos theory where one may speculate how the positive impression might travel on and support the energy to pass on a smile to another stranger and how that infinitely affects various events happening, a theme which is sometimes played with in Hollywood movies⁴⁰. In City Year this is expressed as “the ripple effect”⁴¹. Perhaps it changed the mood of a random person, who decided to make an extra effort to please someone. The idea of the mere possibility of this happening was a key motivator to everyone involved.

The uniform visually echoed throughout the entire City Year culture and activities and was the central object of exchange. Not only was it exchanged physically between the organization and the volunteer, but also the value it

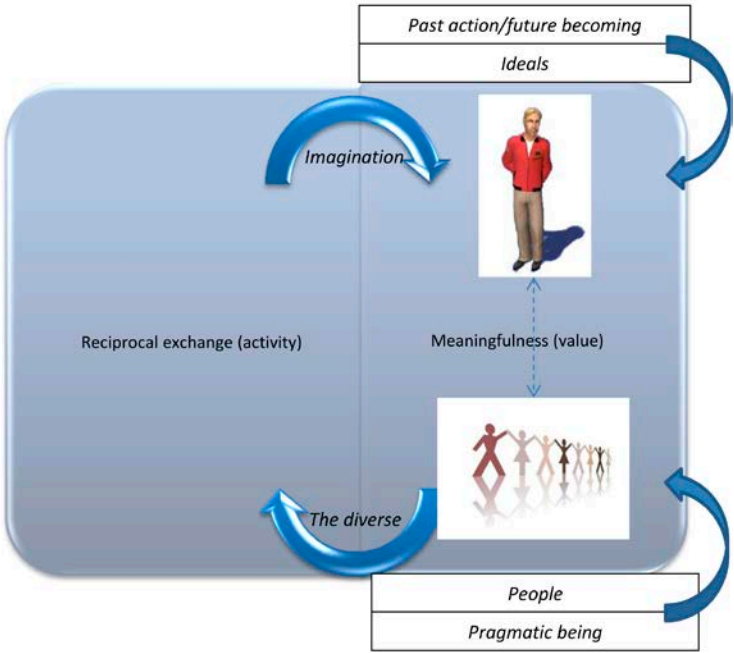


Figure 16: EMM exchange

represents, or its myths and stories, circulated visually wherever it was seen

⁴⁰ E.g. the movies “Pay it Forward” and “The Butterfly Effect”.

⁴¹ See Appendix 8.

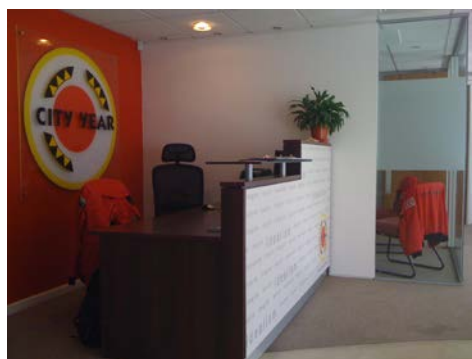
and through whomever saw it. It held a number of meanings which largely contained dichotomies: a collective unifier, an individual reminder, representing a mindset, representing a culture, signaling commitment to the urban environment, signaling commitment to a global organization, signaling commitment to a universal humanistic conviction, a practical outfit, a branding eye catcher, signaling a part of the school teachers, signaling a part of the children's playtime, equality as well as individual leadership and service as well as community. The uniform was praised as a symbolic artifact as well as being made fun of, liked or not liked, as a practical or impractical working outfit. First and last to be seen is the City Year uniform. Nonetheless, everybody knows it can be changed for a different outfit, and that the uniform can be put on someone else's body. It is this space of opportunity and experience of human physical life combined with the positive idea of others' potential that supported a reciprocal community.

Stories and myths

The rooms

There were testimonials, biographies, starfish stories⁴², PITW's⁴³, dedications and people telling stories by physically walking across a line. There were myths, idols, heroes and "words to live by".

Besides the physical uniform, the circulation of



⁴² A starfish story is an anecdote, typically about when something succeeds, regarding the mentees at school.

⁴³ "Putting idealism into work".

stories was continuously central in discovering City Year London. Once explored as an immaterial object of exchange, various types of stories seemed to accumulate and interact throughout the study creating an important body of common reference to the group, loaded with internalized value and pointing in the direction of a greater good, individual responsibility as well as ability. The discovery of stories as an exchange object, in hindsight, emerged strongly during my very first visit to the main office in Islington, where waiting for LS1 in the reception area gave me time to look at what was posted on the walls. The detailed elaboration of the parts of the logo⁴⁴ was striking and came across as unusually saturated. During the introductory weeks almost four and a half months later, the rooms were presented by name. Each name given to a room was inspired by a myth, a proverb, or a universalistic principle connected to the use or purpose of the room.

"People are very polite and excuse themselves a lot. When given the permission to speak, people say thank you. The rooms are named after some of the founding stories of City Year. The Village is the name of the big assembly room downstairs – it is a training area. "People can grow here". We are shown the fire exit. It is important to leave the room better than you found it (PITW #) because the corps members are to spend most of their time in here. There's a board for messages and appreciations of other corps members or staffs. "Use this room as much as possible, including the adjacent office "Moccasins". Clean up after yourselves if you drop something."

Downstairs is another office mainly for staffs – it is called "Ripples" and is symbolically represented by a founding story with the moral that an idea starts with one person who shares it with others and connections are made. The corps members are told to remember the fact that it is a workroom. The staff is to be informed if anyone wishes to use it for hanging up posters or the like.

"The Lighthouse" is the kitchen. The story is that two lights meet on the ocean and when the one ship says: "You need to move, because I am more important" the response is: "But I'm a lighthouse"; the moral being to stay modest (heard in the crowd: "too awesome – too modest"). The corps members are told that they have access to anything in this room and to clean up after themselves. They are allowed to use the tea and coffee in the cupboards and need to inform a staff if they are running out of anything. There is a depot. This area is a café area and the room warms up quickly. It is possible to turn on the AC and open the fire exit. There is a news wall with press cuttings about City Year London and pictures of corps members and staffs with celebrities.

⁴⁴ See Appendix 8.

The conference room is “Ubuntu” – an African proverb with the message that you should treat others the way you want to be treated yourself because “I am a person through other people – my humanity is tied to yours”.

The CEO’s office is called “The Bridge Builder”, the message being that people are linked through your contribution. The room is placed between the kitchen, the conference room and the reception.

The main staff office is placed on the other side of the reception and is named “The Cathedral”. The story has been learned by heart, the moral being that everybody has to join in, participate, and work together. The corps members are told that although they are just here for one year, and the staffs for a limited number of years as well, everybody is part of a goal which is larger than anyone there. There is an open door policy.” (Field diary Aug. 23rd 2011)

In following stories and myths, what is analytically interesting is following the morals and narratives of the stories and contextualizing this in relation to the surrounding reality of everyday life (Marcus 1995). Most of the stories are from the collection of City Year *Founding Stories* collected in “*The Idealist’s Handbook 2011-2012*”. The founding stories along with the PITW’s have been categorized under the chapter “*A culture of idealism*” which also explains the importance and the intention of idealism as a “*set of skills to make a real change in the world*” along with the imperatives: *imagine, recruit, transform* and *inspire* (CityYearLondon 2011). My being given “*The Idealist’s Handbook*” almost ten days into the “Basic Training Academy” helped clarify to me the structure of the organization, the common set of rules, the Jungian idealism concerning the individual mythmaking, and how these three approaches were fused into the organizational model. The stories and myths were always used to make a point regarding cultural or social behavior, and most often also in regards to how to handle the children that the corps members would later be allocated to as mentors. The excerpt above is of notes from the volunteers’ collective tour around the office where each room was presented by a staff. The example shows how the presentation is always linked to a practical instruction and request. Presenting *The Village* was initiated with a presentation of the room’s name; next that it was used as a training area connected with the moral point of the written founding story of the village with the moral that “*it takes a whole village to raise a child*”, only when presented to the volunteers the message is that “*people grow here*”. The founding story reveals that the point is that no one grows up in isolation but is formed through his or her society and needs to interact with people with diverse backgrounds to grow up as a whole person

(CityYearLondon 2011). After the not quite corresponding allegory, the story's actual point being about the children, not the volunteers, next in the presentation there are several practical requests regarding civilized behavior. The educative content cannot be said to be linked only to City Year; it is a matter of general good manners to say that you should always leave the room better than you found it. The presentation of *The Village* as a physical space is thus given the function of addressing social and practical behavior. First is the request to support *human development*, that of the volunteers and the school children. *The Village*, being a large spacious room, along with its myth, signals that human development takes place in physical surroundings which hold a lot of people, and that these actively and consciously contribute to each other's learning. Secondly the myth holds a practical instruction in civil behavior, i.e. actively helping to keep the room nice and tidy, which is a practical circumstance needed in order not to interfere with the intended social activity.

Moving on to the office named *Ripples*, straight after the name presentation its symbolic meaning is presented, which concerns mutual inspiration and how ideas spread in communities through the value of *sharing* and *connecting* like ripples on water. This request falls in line with the points made by Mauss and other solidarity economists that sharing, giving, receiving and reciprocating are the nature of human economy and that through these activities social value accumulates (Mauss 1954, Hart 2012, Laville 2007). After the moral point the room's practical function and the instructions in relation to these are conveyed. The kitchen is presented as "*The Lighthouse*" with the moral request to stay modest. One of the volunteers associates the request with a slang sentence regarding modesty, where modesty is positively and spontaneously linked to being "awesome". The moral message again is followed by requests regarding pragmatic use of the room, to help keep it tidy, and the fire exit is pointed out according to safety regulations. While listening to the presentation of the lighthouse my eyes fell on a wall with press cuttings and pictures of a corps member receiving a prize from the mayor of London. In retrospect, this notion of modesty could be seen as a contrast to this "wall of fame", where successful achievements are on public display. The contrast bears witness again to the cross field in which City Year London functions. From the mythological perspective, which is a primary drive behind the learning aim of the organization, the moral introduction to this room is what is brought to the front of this presentation. The room is also where external vis-

itors and potential collaborators take breaks, and for this, the wall of fame is a way to visually convey the successes and worth of the organization. To the internals, who are already a part of City Year, this wall can be said to be a visualization of their own wealth. Efforts have been made that accumulated into the accomplishments of past action which the pictures perpetuate. A co-existence of both past and future action becomes very clear in this empirical example, and if as Graeber states "*being is congealed action*" (Graeber 2001), this wall presenting acknowledged past action is significant to City Year London identity. The visual transmission of these impressions from the past carries with it invitations and moral requests to the volunteer spectators regarding how to act now and in the future. These values as good examples co-constitute behavioral suggestions along with the myths of the rooms and the quotes, the words to live by, from Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and other idols. The directive content of City Year was elaborate and symbolic-emotional, just as the direct communication was rich.

The CEO's office is named "*The Bridge Builder*", which was meant to imply the idea that everybody's contribution is what makes the path usable. The CEO supported this presentation by stressing the open door policy urging everyone to feel free to come in and have a chat about anything. Physically the room is placed in the center of the upper floor which is a busy area, particularly with regard to visitors who could not miss it and were always interested in greeting the CEO. When I looked up the story in the handbook about *The Bridge Builder*, I found the point to be somewhat different, being that of an old man who secures the path he has overcome so that younger people are able to walk the same road with less struggle; here the old man is a symbol of advice, experience and generosity (CityYearLondon 2011). The main staff office was presented as "*The Cathedral*". The presenter had learned the story by heart and told it to the volunteers while everyone gazed into the room, the moral of the story being that when everyone contributes they could build a cathedral or, in a symbolic sense, something which is greater than all of them individually. This is created collectively through each individual's hard work, while at the same time bringing together the community by representing all of the co-builders: Participation, collectivity, and hard work. The story was continued with a general point that in spite of everyone's temporary stay at City Year the cause that they all work for reaches beyond those present and continues to be built even after they leave. Also here the openness of the organization was

stressed, with an invitation to anyone to just enter if they needed anyone or anything found in the room.

The conference room was called *Ubuntu*. Again the founding story in the book was somewhat different from how it was presented. The City Year founding story's moral was "*I am a person through other people. My humanity is tied to yours*". The room is presented as a conference room for collaboration, which is well suitable for this African proverb, which is also a politically integrated value in South Africa, and at the same time the span between humanity and democracy both could and could not be far from diverse types of collaboration in practice. This shows how the linking in practice to the term's origin aims to legitimize the current physical room and its function. In this process the original use of the *ubuntu* is adjusted to better present contextual practical and social directions for future behavior in a way that fuses democratic and humanitarian aims. The observations concerning the presentations of the physical rooms come into discussion with Annette Weiner's points about inalienable objects as an argument regarding Mauss' *hau* and accumulation of value through circulation (Graeber 2001). *Ubuntu*, observed as an immaterial object of circulation in this case, was in my view so identified with the origin that when the City Year adjustment was presented as a sort of myth linked to the practical function of the physical room, the intended accumulation of value and motivation to support this ascribed value stagnated by the consciousness of this fact's origin. These findings, at first glance, contradict the previous chapter's observations about how the volunteers' personal history distinctly added to the accumulation of social value through social reflection. Thus there seems to be a difference between adding the volunteers' personal histories to the social community aim, and adding the value as past action and political ideals to give the physical surroundings "spirit". Weiner says that an object's value lies in its history (Graeber 2001), but these studies show that history itself is a question of application, which may succeed or fail, and that the process of this application is significant for the communal idea and thus the value of an object. They also show how history and the value effect of the application are not fixed but depend on the mediation as well as the receiver's prior knowledge. In the case of explaining *ubuntu*, my factual knowledge about the origin of the phenomenon was fixed and thus I rejected the adjusted version while it was being presented. This was in contrast to the volunteers' personal stories, which were exclusive and not previously available to

most, because very few knew each other beforehand. This was the difference in the processes of applying history for accumulating social value. Whether the ascription of history motivates the receiver's engagement and support thus depends on the individual reflection during the reception process.

Graeber makes a distinction between *power* and *value*, stating that power is the power to act upon others where value is rooted in past actions, and furthermore that objects of display have the power to inspire others in the future (Graeber 2001). This concurs with the conclusion of the observations made at City Year, that the value aspect was being expressed mostly when talking about the volunteers' application of their own histories into the organizational aim, as analyzed in the previous chapter. But with regard to the objects of display, the rooms and the "wall of fame"⁴⁵, how power and social value interact thus depends on each person's own value and his or her past actions, which challenges Foucault's construction of power as overriding and decisive for individual worth (Foucault 1976). How the individual perceives his or her own history, and what facts have been stored in the more or less conscious mind, is uncontrollable. It is a mix of random as well as fixed experiences, yet decisive to the degree to which power can have its embracing influence. Thus one cannot talk about power without taking the individual interpretation of a person into account. Following up on these processes, in an economic anthropological perspective, staying with individuals mirroring action in visual representations created by themselves or others, takes one further.

⁴⁵ My interpretation

Words to live by

Analyzing this aspect, which could be called a *narrative* aspect of City Year revealed a particular distinction in the transitions between sites, where I saw it as a quick way to match expectations or remind each other of matched expectations. This way of applying quick history to people and objects to increase an attracting sense of credibility and unity across a complex multitude of lives was seen widely spread throughout the city, the internal effect being educative. From the Gandhi quote in the reception and all the way into the WCs there were words to live by to look at and ponder. Moving about in the office, one saw people in red uniforms with the idealistic words: *spirit, discipline, purpose, pride* printed on their backs. Joining the sessions and accompanying the volunteers out to the schools, one would be met by billboards in the playground and all the way into the classrooms with practical and social rules wrapped up in colors, drawings and brief universal anecdotes and imperatives to remember such as: “*be healthy*”, “*achieve economic well-being*”, “*stay safe*” along with more elaborate messages like: “*it takes more skill to solve an argument without fighting*” and many more. This proved that deontological power was indeed seeking to influence individual future past action and thus value. Moving from City Year London and into the schools the powerfully idealistic surroundings did not change much. The children too were in uni-



forms though theirs were more humdrum to them and the colors were more toned down. The humdrum tendency was clear when listening to parents talking to school staffs about how to get a new uniform or an additional sweat shirt as well as when watching the children while travelling on the bus with them in the morning. The uniform was nowhere near the same type of topic of conversation or conscious part of an organizational culture as the City Year uniform was. Social idealism was a consistent trait throughout my following the volunteers from one arena to another despite the differences in



detail: where City Year London's focus was a general point urging the volunteer to put a universalistic stance of human solidarity into action, the schools were urging the pupils to remember the practical and social rules of the institution.

Symbols and learning

The theme of symbols functioning as social unifiers is also found in Joseph Campbell's work describing and typifying the social function of heroes and myths (Campbell 2004, Campbell 1972). Campbell's work on personal myth-making and storytelling underpins the universalistic view that human beings communicate via symbols, also stated by Mauss, substantialists and economic anthropologists. Lévi-Strauss analyzed the circulation of symbols in cultures and said that in a semiotic sense and culturally symbols can be characterized as *floating signifiers* which are: "*in [themselves] devoid of meaning and thus susceptible of receiving any meaning at all*" (Lévi-Strauss 1987). He suggested that the use of symbols has an including effect, naturally leaving space for the spectating individual's interpretations and application of personal meaning without the general message losing its effect to others reading it. This relationship between the text and receiver has also been dealt with in the literature on reader-reception theory (Marcuse 2013). In the context of City Year's own inspiration for this translation of messages into myths, Campbell works with symbols from a psychological theoretical view and discusses both Freud and Jung's views on symbols in human life. He points to the fact that even though God's existence may not be scientifically proven, neither the coherence between rituals and human control of external conditions nor altered behavior during the performance of magic can be rejected. Even if magical rationalization does not make sense scientifically, it is true that to human behavior, socially as well as individually, the magical effect of symbols is of great

existential importance. The use of symbols, magic and religions, or other pursuits of or preoccupation with archetypes is an existential tool that has various functions. Campbell points to the Freudian argument that this type of behavior serves as what he calls a public neurosis, i.e. the oedipal drama of infantile incest wishes. “*Myths (...) are public dreams; dreams are private myths*” (Campbell 1972). The difference between religion and neurosis is that religion is more public than private, and serves as a legitimized visible release for what would become a source of shame, isolation and loneliness to the individual without a symbolic fellowship. But Campbell disagrees with Freud’s negative focus on the function of symbols and religion as repressed and primarily sexual pathologies and takes the more Jungian view that symbols and archetypes have the function of getting us in touch with the entire body – organs with both controlling and non-controlling motives – through imagery. This is communication in a language which has always been common to the human spirit and it is from this source that human beings can obtain a deep and sound contact to themselves and each other (Campbell 1972). According to Jung the contact to this stream of resources deep within all human beings can be reached through getting our consciousness used to internalizing and recognizing our dreams and inner symbolic life, and at the same time participating in arenas in which social symbolic communication is natural and acknowledged. The cultivation of the symbolic part of our existence is anxiety reducing and thereby has the potential of dissolving personal barriers to social participation, and providing a sense of connectedness rather than disconnect-edness, and creativity – to bring us back in touch with the deepest in ourselves (Jung 1991).

This is in line with a Socratic learning philosophy that the world is unconsciously pre-discovered to us, we are *not* born as a *tabula rasa*, on the contrary, we are all prone to live an insightful life free of the barriers of anxiety if we are willing to *learn* through life, that is: to continuously rediscover what we already know through the Socratic dialogue within us or through social interaction with mentors; Kant as well as Løgstrup would agree to this point (Jessen 1999). What we already know is everything which has deep meaning to a human being and therefore is worth knowing. Jung’s theories are supplemented with a bodily and physical perspective, that getting back in touch with the universal human symbolic language will also put us in touch with our organs and our bodily functions and make us able to live according to our

true needs and potentials (Campbell 1972). These potentials, Campbell says, can never be rediscovered by science, thus science focuses on the outer world rather than the inside, where symbolic life is to be found. Though Campbell underlines a recognition of scientific discoveries as being crucial to human beings' orientation in the physical world throughout history, he also stresses the social and behavioral function of the innate human source of symbolic life and existential information to be established from within. Campbell warns about leaving this aspect out of general education (Campbell 1972):

“And so what happens to the children of a society that has refused any such interplay to develop [the continuous interaction between the symbolic forms of the unconscious recognized by the conscious] but, clinging to its inherited dream as to a fixture of absolute truth, rejects the novelties of consciousness, of reason, science, and new facts?”

To Campbell, this essential view of the human being is not to be understood as an original and fixed natural core which humans have to go back to or reveal and live purely by. He harshly criticizes Rousseau's influence on the development of civilization in having introduced the back-to-nature concept as a great mistake and as counteracting societal progression. He calls it a “ridiculous nature-boy sentimentalism” which disregards the ritual forms that once helped society advance and instead prefers ritual and educational forms that in an artificial and reactionary way bring us back to the noble savage within. Campbell points out that it is within the arts that creative progression can be brought back through the interplay between the symbolic unconscious and the conscious, but certainly not through artificially adopting marketable techniques. He refers to an example of a distinction in these creative powers made by Friedrich Nietzsche in that there are two types of art: the one that shatters contemporary forms and creates new forms, and the one that is unable to take any form at all and instead smashes out of resentment. These are the art that can play with already established forms easily and at will, and the art that clings to established forms, cold and authoritarian. The point here is that the same dynamics goes for progressing in the structuring of all kinds of civilization, that the emergence of *form* is the vehicle and the medium through which human and animal life can be structured. Furthermore, it is the character of the invented form which decides whether the given civilization is shattered or enhanced (Campbell 1972). This has been a factor in discussions of education, entrepreneurship and innovation.

“That City Year energy”

Following on from the above, concurrent with the appearance of City Year London as a cathedral, a village, the world as an ocean, a mass of people, including us, interlinked in a responsibility of solidarity and of being the change one wanted to see in the world, my notes witnessed an awareness of spontaneous life in the midst of the intended power. The corps members playfully expressed humorous one-liners, which were different from the discrete and also present silent consents. The parallel appearing culture gave me the association of popping popcorn in a pan: quick jaunty remarks, randomly occurring, seeming to jump out of an illusion of a controlled frame when I stood in the middle listening to the voices coming from here and there and above them, the presenter. Sometimes I recognized the voice and knew who had spoken from our short acquaintance, sometimes I did not. The social popcorns sometimes triggered other similar remarks, or random laughing. Sometimes they triggered a comment by the staff presenter and sometimes they were ignored or deliberately and politely rejected by head shaking from someone who heard the remark. The popcorn remarks were never rude or negative; together they supplemented each other in lifting the energy. A smile replaced a chuckle which replaced a laugh, the voice being the bearer of the individual imagination's contribution to the accumulating social energy. Accent was no barrier because there was a multitude of accents among the diverse voices. The sense of humor and the impulses to throw out associations was a contagious, confidence-inspiring and uplifting part of the social culture springing from but detached from the powerful organizational intentions. During the interviews, particularly with the staffs, there was a unanimous stance that this was the main thing that made City Year an attractive workplace and it even had a name: “*that City Year energy*”. This leads back to support Graeber's notion of the Heraclitian idea of *constant flux* and the dynamic structuralism which is the understanding behind this analysis. It also explains how the City Year energy kept interrupting the powerful yet stagnant intentions through directing behavior which would be ever changing. It attests to how a critical or humoristic remark is possible even in a strong organizational structure and how these remarks are creative expressions contributing to the social aspect while being part of the individual meaning and intentional process. The voluntary element leaves space for contributing with a *how* and at the same time sometimes questioning or challenging the organizational *how* with a *why*, not least because the organization depends on these inputs and

sees them as opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurial behavior on the part of the volunteers. This space also has the individual volunteer reflect on his or her meaning creation and contextualize it as part of an individual adaptation and learning process. An elaborating point here, however, is that this space is not only seen in voluntary organizations but in any organization with a leadership form interested in the co-workers' contributions to organizational innovation. So wherein lies the voluntary aspect? Here, it is in the fact that the volunteers work without being paid and instead, for what they give, they receive an opportunity for personal meaning formation and creative expression in line with a strong organizational ethos in which they mirror themselves as part of a larger human society, entering into a certain kind of potential and reality reflection. Graeber refers to Lacan's notion on the mirror phase in child development where "*Acting self and imaginary unity never cease to stand opposed*" (Graeber 2001) in the individual process of constructing a self.

"(...) action and reflection as different aspects or moments of the self, so that experience becomes a continual swinging back and forth between them".

Graeber ends this point by saying that if not universal, then this is a very common observation regarding learning understood as action and reflection. Observing mainly immaterial or invisible objects of exchange then puts an emphasis on this study in a learning perspective, as the invisible denotes the hidden potential which can be brought out through individual reflection in personal meaning on the one hand and reflection in the social context on the other. The organization's presentation of invisible, primarily symbolic and interpretively open, objects of exchange is released into a broad invitation to creative development with the volunteers. The organization provides a training ground for personal meaningful expression and social contribution where *value* is determined in the intersection between personal intention and social contribution.

The Testimonial

There is no doubt that framing an organization with myths and idols opens the interpretive space as a textual entity, or con-text, and creates the opportunity for the volunteers to participate through mirroring their personal experience and histories. This is a way of organizing a charity which is inclusive

and opens the possibility of participating to young people who like “a good story”, as we all do. The attractive potential for development is supported by the mythmaking theme, implying people still being directed forwards and upwards, the future changing and becoming, through the “good” stories, including the archetypical heroes’ metaphor of doing “right”. This shows how learning most often refers to future actions, an idea of becoming, and Weber would say a way in which lower orders would define themselves from what they did, created or aspired to (Graeber 2001). As has been demonstrated, City Year provides an organizational frame in which the volunteers do this by linking reflection over their past to a self-visualization in the present and future. Thus Weber’s dichotomy between lower orders and aristocrats’ tendencies of defining themselves from future and past actions respectively becomes inadequate yet a useful analytical perspective in a discussion of value and individual reflection. By analyzing the intentionality in the myths and stories in City Year as seen above, a clear educative communication is revealed. Asking the volunteers to express their backgrounds, activities, and future plans in prose teaches them to set personal goals in the same reflective manner. Through training in their personal testimonials and the starfish stories, the volunteers adapt to this way of externalizing images of themselves, and speaking their personal narratives out loud and in public creates the opportunity of mirroring their images in their selves. The prose form creates an “*open text*”⁴⁶ or “*empty spaces*”⁴⁷ and thus the opportunity for the listeners, even if the listener is the speaker, to add meaning to the text and thereby enter into co- or re-creating the con-text (Weinreich 1999). The process of interpreting oneself into the con-text in this manner is the volunteer’s way of seizing control of the con-text, which can also be seen as a process of inclusion. Every volunteer is given a personal testimonial training session by a City Year London staff, where the volunteers tell the story of where they are from, what they feel they can contribute to the organization, and why. The staff’s notes from this conversation are then converted into the genre of “the testimonial”. The story is focused on accentuating personal background, trials, big decisions, how their city year is motivated by these, and how it helps them towards the future they see for themselves. The volunteers usually present their testimonial orally for networking purposes.

⁴⁶ As discussed by Umberto Eco

⁴⁷ As discussed by Wolfgang Iser

The only testimonial given directly to me was recorded in an interview with a corps member at the end of the year, in June 2012. She gave me a summary of what City Year life had been like during the time I had not been present in London. I had not interviewed her before even though she was the first one to offer an interview before I had selected the team I was to follow. I did not take up her offer back then, and also because of my own interest in maintaining the good relationship between us, I now accepted the offer, since I needed one of the volunteers to talk to about how things had developed. Mauss would have categorized our interaction here as proof of open-ended trust between us, which I would agree to and I am sure that I could turn to her even today and she would gladly answer my questions. She was still there and one of the people who had been there from the beginning who was most often around when I had been. She had applied to become a leader of a team in the corps of 2012-13 and had just been given the position when I returned to round off my fieldwork in City Year London.

"I: I used to have this thing with the microphone.

D1: Yes, I remember you setting it up and it taking forever.

I: I know. So this is really quite so... all right, great. Yes, well, okay, you should just start by just telling me your personal data, like name, position with City Year, yes.

D1: So, my name's [D1]. I'm a core member in City Year, and I currently serve in [D school] in Hackney. And my age and my background?

I: Yes, sure.

D1: Or should I give you my full testimonial?

I: Yes, sure. Yes, I'd love that.

D1: Okay. So I'm 22 years old. I recently graduated from University of Westminster studying business management with business law. After finishing university I kind of didn't... wasn't sure what to do, found out about City Year, it sounded interesting, and because I've always been interested in working with charities, kind of giving back to the community I live in, I tried joining a couple of charities when I was at university and it seemed to me like all they were doing was just talking and trying to get people's money, and then no evidence of where the money goes.

When I heard about City Year I thought this is something a lot more tangible, even though I'm giving up time it seems like I can actually see the result of what I give in the kids at the

end of the year. And after the graduation, I attended the graduation for last year's corps, after graduation it was kind of like a goose bumps moment, I have to join, no matter what happened. I kind of went back to remembering what happened in graduation and the kids and how excited they were about City Year, and watching the video it was just absolutely amazing and that kind of kept me going."

(Interview July 18th 2012)

This testimonial was very casual compared to when testimonials were initially introduced to the corps. The first testimonial given as an example to all the new corps members back then during the basic training period on September 9th was given by a team leader, TLC, who was also the leader of the team in my pilot study. Her testimonial is 2,383 words long in my transcript, as opposed to D1's 212 above, for comparison, which shows how no two testimonials are alike. Comparing the two, TLC's testimonial takes the listener through how she moved around a lot when she was a child, her religious background, her school days, stories highlighting her personal strengths and weaknesses in obtaining what she wanted, her breaking with her parents' expectations, travelling and how she came across City Year by accident and how it changed her life by making sense of things which have always made her struggle in other settings; there were also two or three starfish stories and she finished off by making the point:

"And I began to realize that what my history past was I could get it to fit in the next generation and I really feel this because, I know how it feels to the one no one was there for; even when things went hot. So this is why I'm still here! But this time it's more for my benefit. I might have told you this before but the staffs here were really encouraging, my self-esteem was not there. When we did that 'crossing-the-line'-game I was the person who sided that 'do you believe that no one loves me'. I was the only one on that side. And from that moment on, I'm quite private, so the only reason I'm talking about it is I'm a little bit screechy is I know what it is, but they kept supporting me, kept encouraging me and were like 'you'd be a great team leader [TLC], go on apply for it!' And I was more like 'I don't think so, I'm alright but..' you know. I think for me, it was them, the staff encouraging me. See I'm just being myself and who ever saw it and backed me up in college was Miss Yates in college. So for that encouragement and perseverance I got to just try and I got the position.

I feel this way is more convenient. I want them to look at me and say I am a leader and a leader in myself, so even though I really want to get back to those that I'm gonna serve, I really want to see it in myself. I believe I can be more than I can be as a teacher: inspire and to give people encouragement, and so I thought, here.. and next I want to kind of grow in City Year. I really believe in what it does, I really believe in the cultural aspect, the

ethos, the mission, I think it's great and powerful tool. So I want to kind of grow in the company. So I'd really like to stay, if I can I'd like to live here forever and ever, amen! (listeners laughing) In the meantime I really want to kind of tap in to what I can do here, not just for City Year, for the volunteers (unclear). I want to get in to counseling, the teacher thing. I don't want to go back to university to be honest. In the aspects of helping people, I want to do it kind of on a ground level and up. So yeah that's my testimonial, thanks for listening! (applause)."

(Audio recording Sep 9th 2011: Head office)

Even just this summary is longer than D1's testimonial in the interview where the deontological aim was esoteric and the encountering in mutual interest was in the foreground. The difference between the two types of testimonials is also to be seen in their contexts of use. TLC had been asked to give her testimonial by the testimonial trainer in the staff as an example, followed by the joint group reflection questions: "*Why was it effective? Why was it inspirational?*" Secondly, time had been set aside for this testimonial. Thirdly, a team leader was telling her testimonial to new corps members who had only been there for two weeks and were just learning about testimonials and the culture in general, being very receptive and interested in all the new cultural features they were exploring. Of course I, by myself, was a different audience: I am older than D1 and was present in the field as researcher. To university students that has high status. Furthermore, D1 knew that I knew the testimonial was a City Year sales pitch, and that she did not really have to convince me that the organization was worth my attention. I had become part of the organization to her and many of the staffs that year, which they expressed each time I came for a visit. Had I been representing a business where she was being interviewed for a job the testimonial probably would have been far more oriented towards presenting herself as able to contribute to a new environment. But she was not there to teach me anything or present herself to me as interviewer, only for the record and a talk about how things had been, which made the interview rather informal. Reading through the excerpt of the interview with D1, this being the introduction, shows how having created rapport leads to a different and more casual way of communicating. I took the initiative in trying to bring formality into the interview, which was as much a probe as anything else, to see whether she felt more comfortable with less informality. She did not. She expressed insecurity regarding how to present herself to me, who already knew her, upon which she shortened her testimonial remarkably. After this formality probe, I decided to return to a more

familiar and natural conversation between us, asking her how things had been since I had been there last. This led to her confiding how interacting with the newcomers from January had been, telling me things she had found to be critical of in her team leader and problems in collaborating with school staff, among other things.

In D1's testimonial emphasis was put on motivations from other work experiences that she had had with volunteering and how City Year fitted in well with those. In TLC's testimonial her entire journey through the educational system and growing up as a "good girl" trying to find her own feet in choosing her career path had been a trial which she had overcome by entering City Year. The direct references she made to everyday life in the organization were that the rest of the staff had been very supportive and that she wanted to keep advancing within the organization. D1's testimonial is quickly done and her talk about what life is like for her in City Year seems more pressing. She does not want to talk about ethos or testimonials and giving me the testimonial during an interview session seemed a bit abnormal in a situation where rapport had already been established. The different situations show how the testimonial is better suited for an introductory presentation, opening up for the potential of more personal conversation afterwards. This observation supports Mauss' findings as expressed in Graeber's elaborations about how market exchange, which networking behavior can be regarded as (Hart 2012), is not to be seen as impersonal but as a potential initiation to more open-ended reciprocal relations. Once reciprocal exchange has been accepted between the interacting parties, the view is that it cannot be removed without negatively affecting the more superficial interactions. This means that market and redistributive relations can exist without a reciprocal element for a period of time, though a rejection of allowing the relationship to grow deeper could be seen as a rejection of the entire person initiating this (Mauss 1954). Today's market-trade relations are not necessarily personally bound, one person can serve you one day and another the next, neither do we buy our commodities at the same place; we buy them at supermarkets, on the Internet and wherever we find what we want. But services and networking are different. They are forms of interactions which can be characterized as market behavior, due to the explicit means-ends orientation, and which *are* personalized. Thus, according to Mauss, it is natural to test whether the relationship is prone to develop into a more open-ended reciprocal relation over time. The

point here is that there is a risk that once the interacting parties reject this, which would be seen as a natural course of development, the rejection will not only prevent the open-ended relationship from occurring but at the same time will even harm or dissolve the market, or networking, relational bond. But also important to stress is the point that market and redistribution are not seen as impersonal opposites to reciprocation, as these terms are most often dichotomized; market behavior is regarded as positive relational invitations, potential beginnings and opportunities for developing reciprocal open-ended exchange and friendships. The situation where D1 gave me her testimonial as if it was something to be over with quickly so we could talk about what was prioritized as more meaningful to her is a clear example of how she regarded our relationship as already established and having developed beyond the point of testing and inviting interaction. A more trusting and confidential relationship had been developed, and rapport had been built.

In TLC's case, the relationships in the room were different and more premature. A social process started, which can be elaborated through comparison to the Iroquois dream guessing. After the presentation of her testimonial, the listeners started asking questions and responded to TLC's testimonial by expressing identification with parts of the string of situations she presented there. They started acknowledging her experiences in turns by revealing fragments of their own similar experiences, declaring directly or indirectly: "I know what you mean", and in this forum this functioned by pointing to human likenesses among those present in stating to each other that what she had experienced was part of being human and that they as humans were similar to each other. The expressions of resonance put TLC in the focus of each listener's personal empathy and awareness and social accordance was generated through this communal session. As a consequence, TLC's presence in the City Year culture was confirmed as *meaningful*, as the responses she got stated this several times and in diverse manners from various individuals and fellow City Years. This stresses how the self-presentation in itself is crucial for the individual to be able to experience personal meaning in social settings. Secondly, a confirming feedback from the listeners is of equally great importance. When exchange is referred to as "social glue", this is an example of what that means when observed. It also reveals what elements in the movement are crucial: the presentation, the listening, the social feedback in individual versions, applying the feedback to personal meaningfulness in the con-

text. Mauss stressed giving, receiving, and reciprocating (Mauss 1954) when elaborating on gift exchange. The exchange is always initiated by presenting one's values (being compared to for example presenting *wampum*, i.e. "strings of words" used for when inviting strangers, or, in the case of dream guessing, one's personal concerns or existential questions to friends – both cases are examples from the Iroquois culture). To the outside observer it looks as if the exchange is initiated by a presentation, where it might as well be reciprocating a former gift. How the circulation of the individual giving of material or immaterial value in a social setting started is impossible to say. Thus giving may as well be reciprocating, and vice versa. In terms of learning, what is added to the equation and description of the exchange process here is how "the gift", when reciprocated and when it returns to the individual from social circulation, contributes, confirms or undermines, his or her perception of their social situatedness and how the feedback is adapted to an understanding and sense of the pursued individual contextual meaningfulness (this has been treated more closely in the one-on-one interviews). Nonetheless, this shows how learning presupposes social exchange, which is why it will hardly make sense to study the two separately.

Looking into the testimonials as objects of exchange, the *what*, showed how the observations as well as my interaction with the volunteers varied in terms of exchange behavior, the *how exchange*. When talking to me one-on-one, D1 had to be "herself" which was not a problem, but had not been specifically taught to her in the organizational environment as the testimonial had. Doing well in a close-up interview was something she had to be good at to become a volunteer in City Year London in the first place, throughout the recruitment process. Returning to Figure 9 ("Code-switching") the "me" was brought more to the foreground in D1's case, and both the symbolic- and the business-organizational modes become more the frame of the conversation instead of informing the exchange behavior during the interview. During uniform time and in the group activities the symbolic-organizational aspect was dominant, as is seen in TLC's testimonial presentation. Everybody seemed to live up to their respective roles and to what was expected of them and whether showing interest and expressing resonance was out of courtesy or heartfelt is difficult to say without the individual confiding in me. Nonetheless even "just" courtesy potentially led to more heartfelt social bonds and friendships later on. How friendships developed in City Year London was not followed

closely, yet it is known that lasting friendships, even romantic involvements, arose and still exist between some of the corps members in this group.

Those who left

Two volunteers left the A team before the year had been completed: A6 and A7. A6 stopped because she had to contribute financially to her family household by working. A7 left the program half way through it. Along the way I had been informed by A2 that the collaboration between the school and A7 was not working optimally and that this was beginning to affect the rest of the team. A7 had been asked to follow A2 in her classroom interactions to observe and learn how to supplement the teaching better in the classroom. This altered A2's situation and confused her, as she had been given two diverging reasons for this. On the one hand A7 himself had told her that he had been told to help out in A2's classroom because there were too many adults in the classroom he had first been assigned to. Others told A2 that A7 was put in her classroom to shadow her because he misunderstood the way of helping out the teachers on his own. When I talked to A2 about this as it came up during her interview, she told me how she felt the lack of trust among the teachers towards A7 had unfortunately rubbed off on her trust towards him. Secondly she felt caught between the teacher and A7, between the perspectives of the school representative and A7 himself. She wanted to see her team mate as an equal, but due to him having been ordered to shadow her *maybe* because of lack of ability, she suddenly felt that he was *not* an equal; this had been bad for their team relationship and she wanted somebody to tell him that he no longer had to shadow her. The diverging reasons given were confusing A2 (interviews on November 21st). On November 29th I interviewed A7. The recording was unfortunately ruined but with some technological support I was able to have some of it restored and supplemented this with my notes and memory. In the restored and transcribed part of the interview he expressed feeling "fed up" with the everyday life at the school. Later in the interview when talking about his allocation he stated that he had been moved to A2's classroom due to too many adults in the first classroom he was in, and that he was very satisfied with the classroom he was in now with A7. As I initiated the interview by asking him to "tell me about his City Year

life”, what came forth was a criticism of the generally educative agenda in the organization:

“A7: I often feel that there are elements of City Year that are quite.. infantilizing if you know, we’re being treated as if we’re children; as if we need something explained to us with small words, very outspoken, very slowly. Whereas we’re adults! If you tell us that we need to get up off our seat on a bus if an old lady with a walker gets on, we’re gonna do it! If you tell us we shouldn’t smoke while we’re wearing our uniform, we get it, we’re not gonna do it! You having a pretty little story that illustrates why we should do this.. for me.. I love stories, it’s a very good thing, but I don’t need a little fable or moral play to tell me how I should live my life. (...) I think it’s a great way to explain to children what City Year is about. I’m probably biased by the fact that I am 24 and kind of quite mature 24 year-old or at least I feel quite mature. (...) They could cut through all the City Year culture that has obviously been imported from America, because it’s a very American thing. The nation that gave us cheer leaders and all that sort of stuff, which in itself isn’t bad, but it’s kind of I personally having my own way of living, my own style, think it would be far more interesting if you just cut that and tell us.. just talk to us like human beings for a second, you know!”

I: Do you think that’s a British or European thing?

A7: I think it may be. I think it may be! And I also think I as a person I think I probably am quite a self-conscious person so I don’t like jumping around and looping and you know – because it makes me feel silly! It makes me feel like I’m being held up almost as a kid of figure of ridicule almost. Doing all the PT and stuff in public; well I do it because there’s 60 of us and it’s kind of a bit of a lark, but at the same time I still don’t really like the idea that there are people walking past us seeing me, maybe somebody recognizes me and I feel like I’m acting like a complete idiot. (...) I think it has to be dialed right down. The big thing that we noticed in our team is there are all things like ‘morning circles’ and ‘spirit break’ and all that. We don’t do any of that here. The only time we ever do anything City Yearish other than maybe doing a bit of PT with the kids, it’s a bit of fun.. is on Friday when we’re with the whole corps, because it’s required. You know, we don’t do ANY of it off our own bat. (...) the fact that we break after the committee meeting is always, without fail, everybody’s got up, they’ve put their stuff away and we’re about to leave and then somebody goes, “Oh, we’ve gotta break!” It’s not in our brains!”

(Interview Nov 21st 2011)

After he has unloaded frustration about the very explicit frame of the organization along with the fixed expectation of commitment, it is only fair to mention how he moves on to tell that his experience in general has been “*very good!*”, how he enjoys and feels responsible towards the children who give him so much, how he experiences the team leader as flexible and helpful and not least how everyone at City Year are “*fantastic people*”.

The situation between A2 and A7 points to two things in the school-volunteer-organization interplay, the cross field of sectors in practice. Firstly there is the situation construed by A2. She is affected by her experience of two factors: her situation in practice and stories she heard about why she is in the particular situation with her fellow team member, and she is caught between the ethical demand of meeting A7 with empathy and unfortunate exclusion processes with unclear reasons. The two stories she had been told were A7's story that there were too many adults in his classroom and the City Year staff's story that the collaboration in the classroom was not working optimally and therefore she was to act as an example to A7. Over time this causes her to feel irritated, against her will; this annoyance is then accompanied by distrust and distances her from A7. A7 shadowing her leads to her discomfort and wanting "someone" to tell him that he does not have to shadow her anymore, addressing the collective entity due to the breach of trust it created. My talk with A7 reveals that he is unaware of this drama in A2's life where stories and practice have collided and created confusion; the interview shows that he is in good faith and at the same time how he has a strong counter-reaction to the lack of communicative situations. The two ethical positions in this situation compensate each other to an extreme degree where they become irreconcilable opposites, at least at the time the interviews were conducted. When I talked to A7 about the collaborations at school, he expressed how the classroom collaboration was working out for everybody without reservations, whereas A2 expressed dissatisfaction with the situation. Out of the two volunteers, she has been entrusted with how the situation is perceived from the institutionalized outside, with what has been discussed between the school and City Year, and this knowledge puts her in a solidary dilemma. City Year's role in supplying the schools with volunteers, who must be seen as useful contributors, clashes with the strong internal values of abstaining from objectification and stressing diversity among the volunteers, in the relation between City Year and the volunteers. But what caught my focus was how it negatively affected the relationship between the two volunteers. Had the trust between them been stronger, they would have probably talked about it between themselves, but the dependence of being seen as a credible person from the school and stay on the City Year program had A2 pressured to take sides. What could be critically noted is that City Year's attempt to practically induce the principle of diversity in a greatly institutionalized arena,

the school, was rejected. A question should be posed: Is the school buying extra hands and not buying into the set of values which the organization represents? In which case, the schools would be objectifying the people these extra hands are attached to, which is consciously sought to be counteracted in the voluntary organizational form. But this shows how, as in many other market relations, the customer often has to be right for the supplier to survive, and how, outside the voluntary organizational values in the “real world”, the human value of “diversity” is sometimes an ideal which is certainly individually appreciated but not always institutionally integrated. If there were too many adults in a classroom, could any of the employees have felt their position threatened by the volunteer? Studies from Denmark show that this is one of the problems in public-voluntary partnerships (Wulff 2013). The facts are:

- The situation reflects a conflict at the school organizational level which City Year sought to accommodate by suggesting to relocate the volunteer.
- This conflict affects the trust between at least two of the volunteers on the team.
- The lack of trust is experienced as a problem by only the informed volunteer, and only when they are together at the school.
- A7 left the program a month after the interview.

Interviewing A7 mostly brought forward his frustration with City Year’s cultural life. He felt that his time at the school with the children and the other volunteers was more rewarding. He was relieved that the City Year performances, which the volunteers are instructed to bring with them into the schools, are avoided in the team’s school routines. He wanted to be seen, act, and talked to as an adult. He liked the stories and myths when it came to the children, but he himself wanted to be addressed directly when instructed as to how he was to behave as a City Year volunteer. He suggested that this was probably due to his age, as he was in the higher end of the age group, and a question of maturity and serenity when it came to his own personal way of being. The same self-awareness which City Year trains for here seemed to be what came in the way of predominantly meaningful participation. He felt silly and the sense of community with the other volunteers did not outweigh jumping star jumps in public, whereas several of the other corps members explained that this was what made them go along and have fun doing that.

A7's ambiguity between feeling silly and having fun with the rest of the group had over time developed into him mostly feeling just silly. A7 is an example of how the person he felt to be did not match the volunteer who was mirrored when among the other volunteers as a group, mostly due to the eye-catching elements of the organization: the special moves, call responses, and the mythology as a way of communicating moral points. He felt more comfortable at school, where he saw himself helping out real school children. This feeling of an unpleasant self-awareness is expressed by the other volunteers when they travel alone in their uniform, slipping in and out of an awareness of their City Year role, while relaxing on the tube. They tell how this unpleasantness disappears when they rejoin the group, whereas to A7 the self-consciousness is increased when he joins the big group. The interviews show a significant difference between the symbolic-organizational interaction and the independent me-interactions. A7 praises City Year's activities when he talks about his one-on-one interactions with the children, the other volunteers, and the City Year staff. He refers to them as

"(...) fantastic people! S4 is very authoritative. If you met him and you didn't know, you would NOT know the age he is. He's incredibly capable, he's incredibly.. kind, generous, and a gentleman to work with. He doesn't throw his weight around in any way, shape or form, and I don't think that anybody really, to my experience, of City Year does!" (Interview Nov 21st 2011)

This example supplements the finding of how the volunteers constantly have to navigate between the 'me' and the 'we' or organizational behavior (be it businesslike or symbolic). The volunteers are recruited for their sense of nous, their individuality, their leadership abilities, and their ability to act upon their own well developed common sense and do it quickly. At the same time this is made to fit within an organizational capacity of a strong social framework where their skill development is sheltered by collective myths and symbolic identification work. A7's "growing out of the uniform" is the purpose of the city year; it is one year and then one moves on to adult life for which one should be better prepared. This finding and the educational point support Logstrup's argument that ethics is only necessary until moral responsibility is practiced; from then on the individual should be able to practice both deontology and communicative situational ethics. From an educational relational perspective, a volunteer who expresses his rebellion towards these "infantilizing activities" and leaves the educating entity is a sign of success on

both parts (Schmidt 2006). The question left to be answered is whether the schools are prepared for some of their red volunteers to be urged to diversity in these strong institutions and furthermore become even increasingly self-willed during the year. A paradox emerges as the schools do not see themselves as educating the volunteers, whereas they actually *are* participating in the volunteers' year of personal development, but more as users of their pedagogical assistance with the aim and focus on the children's learning processes. Nonetheless, it might be advisable for the schools to recognize themselves not only as learning environments for the children, but also for the learning processes of everyone who finds meaning in investing and interpreting themselves there.

Educational relations: open and closed ends of exchange

This finding brings up the need to discuss open- and closed-endedness in educational relationships. As pointed out above, Mauss advocated open-endedness (Mauss 1954), which is what Graeber calls Mauss' individual communism (Graeber 2001). Mauss himself did not address this type of ideal social environment as a learning environment; Graeber, in his anthropological theory of value, does, when referring to Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget. Both Piaget and Vygotsky refer to the individual processes of learning as individual internalization and adaptation as reactions to surroundings with a particular focus on the development of language – on which they had different views regarding egocentric and social language respectively (Piaget 1959, Jerlang, Ringsted 2002). This thesis, which as mentioned bears an interest in the learning processes as relational, has found inspiration in Lave and Wenger's social learning theory, known under the terms of *situated learning* and *legitimate, peripheral learning* built on observations of the relationship between masters and apprentices. What Lave and Wenger contribute with in this context is focusing on the learning process as relational, yet as relational primarily in craftsman workplaces⁴⁸ (Lave, Wenger 1991, Lave 2011), which City Year cannot be defined as; neither has the psychological discussion of language use and development been the focus of this work. Rather it has been on social interaction

⁴⁸ With the exception of identity processes and relations in Alcoholics Anonymous.

and the exchange of something which has value to the individual through personal meaning and intention and which also gains meaning in the social setting. Further, exploring learning as social exchange has led to a focus on the process of individual mirroring, through the verbal *and* the visual, and what is perceived of as a social contribution from both contributor and spectators. The case of TLC's testimonial also bears witness to how one's contribution feeds into and triggers the spectators' own individual mirroring processes and thus affects the learning environment through a ripple effect, observed as responses characterized by individual feedback as verbal expressions of resonance. In returning to the educational relationship from the perspective of Mauss' teachings based on studies of social exchange of value, I wish to return to Schmidt's philosophy regarding the educational relationship. Schmidt indirectly approaches this with an interest in what the learner and the educator invest in each other when concentrating on what the two *want* from each other, and how time, knowledge and care are exchanged between the two in the educational process (Schmidt 1990, Schmidt 2006, Revsbech 2008). This can be said to be mainly seen from the educator's point of view in terms of influencing the learner's doings as a consequence of the educator's educative intention. The difference between the social and the educational relationship, according to Schmidt, is that the educational relationship is meant to cease. The apprentice is meant to rise above his master in competence, just as the child is meant to live beyond his or her parents (Schmidt 2006). Considerations of open- and closed-endedness in the educational relationship, as in the relationship between mentor and mentee, prevail among those engaged in City Year London. S2 says about his mentor at City Year London (interview, Nov. 22nd 2011):

"Probably the most important thing about him (...) is that he believes two things that I really think are vital. One, he believes that as a leader or as a manager, your first priority needs to be: Do the people working for me have what they need?... a servant leader, right. That's a concept I think is lost a lot in the professional world because people are always looking upward, but you really shouldn't be doing that. You should invert the pyramid. Everybody should be constantly trying to support the people who support them. The second thing about him is, he genuinely wants the people he's leading to rise above him. You know, his ideal result would be for whoever he's leading to, you know, become even more whatever... stronger, better leader, more effective. And that's true with his children as much as with me, so that means that his heart is in the right place, you know." (Interview Nov 22nd 2011)

The general idea of the mentor in City Year is that the mentor is supposed to support his mentee to “*rise above him*” [the mentor]. In the classical institutionalized version of the learner and the educator, which is the one referred to by Schmidt, the roles are fixed along with certain competence goals. Within the voluntary organization as a learning arena, however, as we have seen, learning aims are negotiated indirectly; they are more individualized, and skills and competences are connected to the learner’s personal development on an emotional and existential plain. The educator-learner relationship is dissolved into informal and dynamic master-apprentice relationships⁴⁹ (Lave, Wenger 1991), alongside the more formalized mentor-mentee relationships found in the data material. The main differences in the institutionalized (Schmidt) and organizational (City Year) definitions of educational relationships are found to be the importance of age and the degree of explication of learning aims: the more explicit the relationship is, the more closed-ended it becomes in its educational aspect. Comparing City Year London’s educational relationships between peers and mentor-mentees with Schmidt’s definition, Mauss would state that the latter, the closed-ended, bears the traits of social market behavior, as a fixed “price” or product of exchange has been agreed and bargaining, on those grounds, initiated (Polanyi 1968, Mauss 1954). Yet Polanyi’s division between market behavior, redistribution, and reciprocity unfortunately theoretically has resulted in an inexpedient interpretation and separation between the three economic principles; this has sneaked into political economy’s application of “human economy” and “solidarity economy” (Laville 2007, Laville 2011, Hart, Laville et al. 2010). Graeber’s theoretical “dynamic structuralism” construct is epistemologically more true to Mauss’ detached socialist intentions in terms of anthropologically illustrating the social processes of actual value appearance. Graeber’s approach leaves out the pitfall of applying Mauss to contemporary political life, which attempts to fuse two fundamentally different epistemologies: one which discursively feeds the void between capitalism and socialism, between individual and social interests and another, Mauss’ vision, which *highlights* individual interest as the source of social value, and focuses on observations of the relational expression and *its* impact on the interplay between social value creation (dynamic) and community (structure). Returning to the educational relationship, according to Mauss, market interaction, which the institutionalized educational relationship can be seen as, has

⁴⁹ When referring to identity processes in AA.

the potential of socially functioning as invitations to friendships. These findings show that the actual social function of this type of relationship is more likely to bear fruit in the peer-to-peer and mentoring learning environments within an organization such as City Year. Here, the common humanitarian aim is in focus and connects the people, instead of some people being directly verbalized and institutionally placed in the organization as less able from the beginning. In Mauss' perspective, a difference in behavior is represented, which can be divided into agonistic and non-agonistic exchange. The institutionalized explicitly unequal relationship between educator and learner is more prone to lead to rivalry, stressing the inequality through age, status, knowledge and closed ends. This situation supports the described paradox suggested above regarding the volunteers' placement in the schools. Although a greater awareness of the volunteers as being in a process would be constructive, the pitfall is that if the volunteers are directly focused on as "learners" when present in the schools, certain less innovative behavior would be expected, while at the same time they are taken into the schools to bring something new to the environment and act in an entrepreneurial manner.

In the mentor-mentee relationship in City Year London as well as the informal peer-to-peer learning, open-ended relationships or reciprocal friendships are kept open as potentials. This is one characteristic of the educational relationships in the voluntary environment where the common denominator is a humanitarian and ethical aim; it lets the volunteers interact using their emotional and personal sides. The space for sharing of emotions and personal existential wonder feeds into not setting a definitive objective for the relationship, and thus a milestone to be reached after which the relationship is implicitly understood to end, and vice versa. At the same time it is stressed that each must be recognized for his or her personal or professional strengths, which urges people there to regard themselves and the others as possible resources. One might ask the question: What then makes these relationships educational, and are all social relations then educational? This leads back to the theoretical considerations. Schmidt would dissociate from calling the educational relationship economic, stating that money seriously harms the potential between the learner and the educator, while at the same time differentiating between the social and the educational relationship (Schmidt 2006). As mentioned, Mauss would say that every social relationship is economic, which rebuts Schmidt's view. Again, the two are epistemologically differently orient-

ed and Mauss' dynamic structuralism is far more ethnographically and empirically based, while most of Schmidt's writings are philosophical. Both, however, address the question of how the outlook for a relationship to cease affects social life, which is the point elaborated on here. Schmidt calls this outlook, which is explicit in the educational relationship, *tragic*. I presume that Mauss would agree, due to his open-ended idealism, and that he would probably add that the tragic outlook to ending the educational relationship is such because it precludes trust and open-ended reciprocation in the same way as capitalism does and that because the perceived scarcity of time as well as money implies market exchange with a predefined ending. The lack of open-endedness and timelessness inhibits social emotional engagement, which plays a strong role in finding personal meaning, motivation in various contexts and thus learning and social value.

In learning institutions the open- and closed-ended relationships are most often divided between teachers and friends. Within City Year London as a voluntary organization the starting point is different in that the open- and closed-ended relationships have not been pre-defined. The volunteers start off by mostly seeing themselves as equal individuals headed towards the same humanitarian aim and the relationships are primarily implicitly negotiated to develop, or not, as friends, mentors, or temporary colleagues, as a year span of time passes concurrently. Finally, to return to those who left the program, it is notable that one volunteer approached it as someone who needed to be taught something explicit which he felt he had already learned, by the school and by City Year London, and "friends" became "teachers", which was experienced as "*infantilizing*" and unsuitable. This theme of how to understand oneself as an adult was repeated among those who moved up within the organization.

Those who moved up

D2

Among the volunteers and team leaders that I interviewed (on team C, team A and the "more willing" interviewees D1 and D2), four people moved up. D1, D2, and C3 became team leaders, and the team leader from team C,

TLC, is on the regular staff two years later. No one from team A moved on to team leader or staff the following year. A2 became team leader for half a year, after half a year as a volunteer, of a new team starting in January when City Year London expanded their group of volunteers who graduated in June 2012. The two more willing interviewees, D1 and D2, were both team leaders in the corps the following year. The team leader for team D, TLD, applied to get on the staff but did not get the position. C3 was not in school the days I observed every volunteer in turn and TLC replaced her, back during the pre-studies. D2 stuck out as a character. After “Crossing the line” he had shared how he used to be a manager, but had found himself to have a drinking problem; he had seen joining City Year as a way to start doing something different with his life which made more sense to him. My pre-understanding that this was proof of emotional engagement on his part was dismissed during his interview, which showed me that emotion during this exchange had come as a reaction and also that it seemed to be on my part.

“D2: (...) So that’s how I, and being emotionally invested in something, it really does jeopardize that, so I just don’t get emotionally invested in anything. Probably not that healthy that.”

I: No? Because it the impression that day, when you said, that you had had a drinking problem, and you said something about how many days you hadn’t been drinking, and so, how come you chose to state that openly?

D2: Because it was true, firstly.

I: Right. If you don’t mind me asking.

D2: (...) But I thought, “You know what, I don’t care about sharing this information, because I’ve never cared really, what someone thought of me”. For me, I’m just like, “I try my best, if you don’t like that, fine, I just constantly try my best anyway. You know, I still won’t be rude to you, but I have no problem, if you don’t like that, it’s fine.” So for me, I thought sharing this knowledge, “If they hate me for it, or if some people don’t like it, fine, but other people are sharing their information. And other people seem to be enjoying the fact that people share their information, and it makes them a close knit bunch, so I can do this too, because it might make some people be more comfortable within a situation.”

I: Are you happy you did that?

D2: It’s neither here nor there, I mean, there’s no way to measure as to what effect it had, but I’d like to believe it had some sort of positive influence, or at least one person was like, okay, cool, I understand that.” (Interview Nov 21st 2011)

In this example the data showed how through these personal anecdotes the emotional ascriptions, which were part of creating individual contextual meaningfulness and thus value, in the anecdotes came from the giver in one version which triggered the receivers' emotional interpretations and in that process different versions of the same story were created, which made sense to the receiver. That meant that it might be the same story being referred to in the social context, but individual interpretations and internalized meaningfulness varied. When I then confronted D2 with my interpretation of his story, and he responded by adjusting my interpretation in correspondence with how he himself had thought it, the story was reestablished as his instead of my conception of it. This removed the story from me as potentially fetishized, and instead it provided a clearer picture of D2 which required me to be a respectful listener. But I could have chosen not to and kept his story in my own version. The stories were known to the storytellers, sometimes to an extent that they had become tired of it themselves; this statement in itself seemed less attractive than my fetishized interpretation. D2 says about his testimonial:

"D2: (...) to me, a testimonial kind of is a sob story. I don't like people knowing about me unless, if for example, if it's a client or someone I've got to relate to and speak to, fine, absolutely fine. But, beyond that, I know when I was young, when people told me, I just didn't care." (Ibid.)

The emotional impact was made on the listener (me) where it had novelty value. From the author's point of view the emotional side to it was already known and processed. But to the listener, the content would potentially trigger an emotional reaction creating a sense of intimacy and connectedness to the person and the community, though the connecting story had possibly been interpreted beyond the originator's recognition. The reciprocation, the return of the story to the originator, seemed to be a choice made by the listener, namely whether to keep the story in the interpreted version or to return the interpreted version to the originator by telling him that the interpretation was a choice made out of interest in creating rapport, establishing or maintaining a relation with him. Reciprocating my interpretation to D2 enriched our acquaintance and gave him the chance of verbalizing a fuller picture of himself and who he was. Had the story not been returned, it could have lived on as a distorted superficial perception of D2, giving a temporary emotional

experience of having reached a depth which was only really potentially reached when followed up through reciprocation and communication.

Another point here comes full circle with the methodological reflections on the selection criteria for the field, which is the criterion of trying to avoid the ‘vulnerability’ discourse when dealing with the volunteers⁵⁰. This volunteer could be categorized as a vulnerable person if that type of division was what one was seeking. The interview showed how he had been hit by a car at the age of 13 and how he remembered nothing before that. He had been at risk of developing alcoholism, and commonly experienced racing thoughts. All of this, in his own interpretation, was the “*sob story*” version of who he was as a person and something which he sometimes wanted to dissociate himself from. He stated how he would never tell it to the children he worked with, but probably to a “*client*” if he was to develop a relationship where they would “*speak to*” each other if relevant; this statement supported points made regarding code switching, the function of networking as well as the testimonial as a networking strategy through being filled with stories of personal histories, meanings and motivations. Though in one version “vulnerable”, D2 was recruited as a resourceful volunteer with a strong character and a strong sense of nous, and he loved being there. He found the activities there meaningful in terms of his own general, philosophical and idealistic interests. The interview reflected how he had thought long and hard, too hard sometimes for his own liking, about how to approach life and what made sense to him regarding ways of behavior. Whether to see himself as vulnerable or resourceful, conscious and aware of himself was a choice he had made, he explained. This personal choice, from an outside view, was something which City Year supported through thematizing personal mythmaking whereby regular people turning obstacles into strengths were the very core of becoming a “hero”. The testimonial, though a sob story, was still constructed as a story about a person who in spite of having gone through “*a bad patch*”, like every person in the world, was actively and voluntarily dedicated to making other people’s lives easier, because that was the type of person he himself respected and because he found personal strength in doing so. D2’s personal myth lived up to this, as he told the story about having become stronger due to, and in spite of, his trials. This interview showed that it was a matter of perspective and

⁵⁰ See the methodology section: “Selection and pre-understandings”.

ways of articulating one's story; secondly, the version one would tell was a choice which varied depending on context, social role, and one's own intention. Either way, to me, D2 told the story about himself as a responsible, authentic and dynamic being in accordance with his own basic values. At the same time it fit City Year's idea of the volunteer hero; the archetypal symbol of the "hero" surrounding the environment at City Year most likely informed his behavior and vice versa: A young person in development and transition, with an experience of freedom to choose how to construct his life with regard to work, education and his person would probably naturally look to the past and turn obstacles into constructive points of orientation in visualizations of the future. This would be part of the adaptation process which both Vygotsky and Piaget describe. The interview took place on November 22nd and it was not until late spring the following year that it was decided that D2 would continue as a team leader; this shows how the willingness to adapt personally, in accordance with both one's own history as well as City Year's mythology and moral values, was seen organizationally as a sustained match.

What is taken into consideration here in terms of learning and adaptation is the strong effect of visualizations of oneself in the future and how surrounding social values co-construct this. Analyzing stories as objects of exchange, and understanding social exchanges as individually meaning-generating, starts to reveal how self-reflection gives rise to self-construction, and how the responsibility of constructing oneself is necessarily connected to the freedom of doing so. Actively taking on the consequence of seeing oneself as free, taking on the responsibility of attempting to co-construct one's future within the possibilities created by the context, is what makes one a "learner". In this view, regarding oneself as free but not responsible or responsible but not free would both lead to stagnation in terms of personal as well as social development. By contrast, a strong orientation towards taking this responsibility, acting as a "learner", according to Weber as referred by Graeber, could leave the volunteer at risk of *vanishing in action* as the status or personal value can only be realized in the future (Graeber 2001). The data from City Year London does show a certain focus from the volunteers on the future and on developing in certain directions according to visualizations on their own behalf, yet this focus does not obliterate the visible persona, as Weber states, neither in terms of their own histories (own past actions) nor in terms of the uniform (past actions based on the ideals). The required self-awareness of the past is

enforced by both the uniform and the self-presentations as well as used as orientation towards one's own and others' futures and it thus simply precludes the risk of vanishing due to the constant awareness of others and selves, past, present, and future. City Year London, as a voluntary social organization and being an ambitious learning environment, prevents the risk of unawareness which could lead to a slippery slope in the volunteers' development. Combined with fairly mature volunteers who are even university students or graduates, this results in the combination of the organization and the volunteers constituting a constructive collaboration where both parties benefit from each other and it seems that this cumulative effect overflows into the local community and the schools. As such, the immaterial *gift*, the good synergy, circulates both among the red jackets and as it grows it multiplies and is carried as a basic, socially good intention and individual sense of meaning into the external collaborations to be observed as social value.

In continuation of this, returning to D2, he maintained an empowering story of development, of having moved on, and of consciously turning his general vulnerability into a driving force and a reason for volunteering. He was a true "learner". At the same time the driving force for doing this enhanced the legitimization of his individually characteristic ways of being part of City Year London to an even greater extent. My probing his possible self-victimizing position resulted in an intensification of the opposite story, the story of an empowered person in spite of trials that he played down by comments like *"that's life"*. Exploring this further, it turned out that my suggesting that emotional challenges would end up leaving him in a needing position was something he associated with being a *"taker"* which was the same as being *a child*. Developing away from the taker position and becoming a giver was motivating to him. His idea of what qualifications a giver would possess were, to be precise, authenticity, presence, open-ended reciprocity based on trust, not claiming anything in return, giving for one's own pleasure of observing the joy in the faces of those you gave to, and giving to children who were natural less-haves and not adults positioned as such:

"D2: I remember when I was young, about 14, 15, he [his father] came home once, and it was like a favor he was doing for one of his mates, he said he'd go fix this thing round this woman's house, and he would get 200 quid for it. He went round there, she was like a 70 year old woman, you know, he said, she had a nice house, and he fixed it, and said, just make me a cup of tea, and just left, because he can't, you know [take money off people]."

And like, they [the parents] will always be giving money to people. Like there were these few kids running round when we went out to eat, and my granddad just pulled out a fiver and gave it to them. And it's just so like, just give people things, because it makes you feel good. I mean, that's what it is really, in their minds probably, whether they go about it in such a cynical way, give people things, because their reaction makes you feel good, and how that family has always operated, it's just, give give give give give. And with me, because I've been brought up with it, it's been like, "take take take take, but wait a second, I'm in a situation where I can give!" So maybe that's why I try and do what I can. But yes, so...

I: What do you mean that you've been brought up with "take"?

D2: Well, because they've always been giving, and if you're a child, you're aren't necessarily, I'm the one that's receiving things, so, and I'm sure they were probably the same when they were young, or not necessarily, because they were quite poor when they were young, they were like different poor than poor now. But yes, so, whether it's the right way to be, I don't know, but it works for me." (Interview Nov 21st 2011)

To revisit communism, this has more connotations when referred to by Mauss, calling *total prestations* a type of legal theft which means that someone has the right to take what he or she needs without direct reciprocation. This idea of Mauss of *total prestations*, or total reciprocation, was equivalent to a communistic world view, and defined by Louis Blanc's phrase, referred to by Graeber, that stated: "*from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs*"; however, Mauss saw this as a purely individualistic matter, which unfortunately left the term of *reciprocity* vaguely defined. Nonetheless, opposing individual interest with communism was rebutted by Mauss (Graeber 2001, Mauss 1954). This excerpt shows how within a community of *total prestations*, being a "taker" is a role which this volunteer wishes to leave because it is associated with being a child, which is experienced as neither empowering nor age appropriate. Within the community of *total prestations*, although D2 refers to his family and not the City Year core, the talk is not about individual interests at the expense of others, between selfishness and generosity, but the division is rather that of a capability to give being associated with size, from small to larger, from undeveloped to developed and grown up, from having nothing to having something to share or give out. In D2's process of moving from a giver to a taker, City Year London plays the part of a training ground and an initial opportunity to make this transition. Becoming aware of having something to give through this space for self-reflection in interaction with a social community is valuable to the volunteer. It is strongly motivating, because it gives him the experience of moving from an unwanted or no longer

suitable “taking” self-image towards a self-image of authority which places him in a position where socially expressing individually meaningful intentions is expected of him. I asked what it was that he wanted to give, if he was to mention one thing, and the answer was straight away: *“My ideas. But then that’s all I ever want to give to people, my ideas, just so they can take them into consideration”*. Being an idealist and personally interested in philosophy, D2’s wish was to pass on his ideal value of making life easier for the people around him and thereby making his own life as happy as life can be in spite of its natural ups and downs. Being able to be a giver would gradually make him more aware of what he had to give and was expressed as the very core of the meaningfulness he had found at City Year and he wanted to quickly pass on this insight. City Year as an organization was not the deliverer of this meaningfulness, as had been clear to him before he entered the organization. But the organization suited and supported this sense of calling which he experienced, and gave him an opportunity to act it out and have his inner and outer world be consistent, which was what made him feel happy there.

Comparing the two ideas of communism (the traditional idea and Mauss’ idea), the exercise of adding self-images as children and adults, as egocentric takers and socially aware givers respectively, shows how the indomitable ideal of individualistic communism paints a picture of the adult as having preserved desire and intention instead of resigning as a fulfilled and unconditional servant. By insisting on individuality, it subtly paints a picture of “adults” and “givers” who practice creative intention by continuing to investigate their own inner lives and dreams in interaction with an open-ended community. Even further, it demands expressed adult creative intention as an important drive, inspiration and aspiration, in the circulation of communal value. Gifts, expressions of ideas and impressions of inspiration, need to keep circulating and feed into other people’s creative processes as something to intentionally strive for. Mauss’ socialistic ideal thus emerges as an implicit request upon which his analysis and conclusions seem to be built. With D2, the adult was depicted as a fulfilled servant who just gave without seeking return from his community, like the disinterested hero one never hears about once the dragon has been slain and the princess has been won. This picture of the adult, the generous ‘chief’, is the same as Graeber stresses in his points about the Kwakiutl potlatch. A common denominator is how the Kwakiutls’ identities were so entangled with the possessions they exchanged, which in their case

were material and a jumble of ascribed meaning, histories, emotions and projections of valuable action – past and future potential.

The studies at City Year London show that the very statement of ascriptions of meaning to the means of exchange in rituals, whether it be material objects (the uniform) or immaterial objects (the stories), represents expressions of individual intention which, mirrored by the spectators, strengthen the social aspect. This takes place by standardizing the framework of individual intentions and suggesting the desirable, always sought after by the young as well as adults. A general misinterpretation of the potlatch is that it was mainly a *display of wealth*, but as Graeber points out, it was more about transference of wealth than display: the rights to boastful speeches, the passing down of possessions as well as names and titles (Graeber 2001). In this way points which usually tend to stagnate at dichotomies such as interestedness versus disinterestedness and agonistic versus non-agonistic gift exchange are dissolved by an interestedness in the other, the philanthropy, and are emphasized as an adult feature. The honorable adult's, or the chief's, creative intention takes the form of an interest in the younger or those of less means and a feeling of obligation to pass down valuables, be they knowledge, care, titles or rights, or material value. Graeber quotes Mauss as stating how the rich were considered "*the treasures of their community*", expected to reinvest their valuables in for example civic projects (Graeber 2001). The educational intention is conclusively an individual process of firstly accumulating and secondly passing down individual interpretations of what is considered socially beneficial. One who succeeds in doing so can consider him or herself an honorable adult and a successful learner, socially ready to mentor and be a role model; a process which moves one, in D2's words, from being "a taker" to becoming "a giver".

D1

D1 and D2 were on the same team under the same team leader, TLD. The organizational idealism of TLD and D2 seemed very consistent with their self-images, although in the representations it had been adapted through their own life experiences and values, hopes and expectations to fit their own existential awareness and future ambitions. This shows how the symbolic openness of the obtainable values found in the organization is displayed in such a manner that there is room for personal interpretation reproduction as indi-

vidual representations, which also encourages learning processes in a social value perspective. The common articulation of the volunteer is also as a wholehearted giver, by being a mentor, with particular personal traits. These traits are actively reflected through stories in private as well as famous role models, from one's own grandfather to Mahatma Gandhi. From the interviews with the volunteers, a giver's personal traits are for example "authenticity", "lack of prejudice", "generosity", "empathy", "self-awareness" and the "sense of propriety" or "sense of nous". It is a lifestyle which is chosen and considered responsible, or a way of being which feels right to them. City Year thus facilitates a platform where young people have a chance of experimenting with constructing themselves as givers, sometimes as an alternative, sometimes as a contribution, to finding individual as well as social meaningfulness. To be or become a giver is realized by being considered as such by the rest of the corps, as well as by expressing yourself as such; this is an opportunity which is actively received in return for a year of full time volunteering one's manpower, through the means of the schools.

Another factor was D1's reason for staying in City Year as team leader, which was strategic and determined; it was an adjustment to the reality and circumstances, other than part of an identity process. I asked her in June 2012 a couple of days before graduation how it occurred to her that she wanted to become a team leader or whether she had been asked to; she then told me the story of how she had been wanting to become a team leader ever since she joined City Year. Thinking back about how she was the very first corps member to offer me an interview on her own initiative this made good sense. Generally the ones who moved up in City Year London the following year proved in retrospect to be the more willing informants from the beginning. I asked D1 to walk me through the half year that had passed since I had been in with them every day. She did so in a notably structured manner, without having been prepared for my questions. She started off by giving me a brief testimonial⁵¹ and we came to talk about what it had been like to work with the roughly 25 new corps members who started in January. We also talked about how the dreaded "*dark months*"⁵², January and February, had gone. She pointed out how time to talk and laugh together in the team had been essential for them to find support in each other, and linked this to not having ex-

⁵¹ Previously cited

⁵² Considered the toughest period of the year for the volunteers to go through.

perienced dropouts or crises in the school team worth mentioning. Laughing together, agreeing on high work ethics, and setting a team goal in the beginning, stating that everyone would graduate as a team in June, in her opinion had been the common benchmark that kept everyone going. In considering applying to be a team leader already in January the sense of loyalty to the rest of the team and the children had been of vital importance:

"D1: I spoke to [S4 – the team's program manager]. [S4] thought I was ready, she told me to apply, but I decided against it at the last minute, but I had the application form, I started filling it out, and then I thought, you know, no, I'm going to leave that till next year

I: So was that sort of an intuitive decision or..?

D1: It was more.. yes it did feel wrong, but it was more out of loyalty for the team. One of the team goals that we made was for everybody to graduate at the end of the year as part of the [team D]. That was one of the things, but I also felt if I break off I'd be letting the team down, and I didn't want to do that, I didn't want to be the person to do that. When we were coming up with team goals we all really came up with the issue of everybody graduating from the team. I was trying so hard to make them change it without letting on that I'm thinking about January applications. But they didn't get it – (giggles) it didn't happen." (Interview July 18th 2011)

Negotiating and reaching an agreement on the team, having set out team goals, overruled the immediate individual interest which had been set as a personal goal from the beginning. Living up to a promise of being a trustworthy team player and honoring the trust which had been generated and which was essential in the team's cohesiveness outweighed taking the individual opportunity though visible, reachable and even encouraged by City Year staff. This brings forth an aspect to the value arenas in the pre-study⁵³, which is one of peer generated values and expectations. The peer values, however, overlap the business- and the symbolic-organizational values with D1. Her personal interpretation of the symbolic values, being that of loyalty, which can be linked to the organizational value of delivering a service of quality and consistency, meant that she decided that postponing the consideration of her individual status was not a high price to pay, now that she was firmly dedicated and an obvious candidate half a year later anyway. Trusting that the individual opportunity would turn up once again and sticking to the team con-

⁵³ Figure 9.

tract won her over to following through as a volunteer. The interview shows how her reflections on how she came across to her team, the status of her own self-development, and a realistic view of how these new conditions would suit her, were all articulations of details that affected her decision. Her individual considerations and choice were then effectuated in spite of a superior staff advising her to apply and a potential fear of *what if* the opportunity would not come around a second time. The ambivalence in her reflections, for and against the decision to stay on the team, indicates that there would have been justifying reasons either way. Her reflections also show how she attaches importance to consciously choosing the team as a part of the socially valued trait of *loyalty*. In this way, the heroic theme where loyalty is a strong value gives her a good reason not to put herself under the practical and emotional pressure of changing teams and becoming team leader before she felt ready. The team sticking to the goal out of mutual loyalty, the correspondence with her own personal appreciation of this value, and the organizational ethos spares her any rushing expectations of the strain of acting in an entrepreneurial manner and making use of the individual opportunity then and there. The team's common adoption of the organizational values of consistency and loyalty has her follow through in accordance with loyalty before opportunistic advancement. The symbolic-organizational values potentially work as a neutralizer in terms of pace and expectations regarding goals of development. One might speculate whether this works the other way around: that the business-organizational values, keeping the performance pragmatic and measurable, potentially prevent the symbolic-organizational values from driving the individual to chase after entirely abstract and myth-like self-images. It might be interesting to discover the balance between the two motivations. This study however shows how the co-existence of value arenas not only calls for individual flexibility but also potentially shelters the individual from expectations and even provides the space to individually construct social contributions with greater chances of being considered valuable. Secondly, being given more value arenas to draw on when individually constructing one's contribution to the community creates a space to meaningfully and creatively form *what* and *how* exchanges are done.

7 Conclusions: Action towards an image of greatness

Summary of the thesis

This thesis set out to theorize learning as social exchange through exploring City Year London as a social voluntary organization between sectors, in an educational anthropological perspective. With its pluralistic approach it aims to contribute to the research fields of education, anthropology, and also the field of social entrepreneurship and the third sector regarding learning processes in voluntary organizations. It has thus been concerned with the educational relationship as *a claim* through the method of ethnographic presence and observation of what and how social exchanges occur in a specific empirical field. The analytical field was demarcated through focusing on learning processes between volunteers as peers in interplay with City Year London as a voluntary organization. By asking the question: “*How are volunteers’ learning processes connected to the exchange of social value in City Year London and what exchanges characterize the youth driven voluntary organization?*”, the thesis has focused on its particular interest in value creation inside the organization, as well as how the circulation of value between sites contributes to skills and personal development.

Methodologically the project has found inspiration in Richard Swedberg’s points on theorizing in social sciences (Swedberg 2012a, Swedberg 2012b). This has resulted in the analysis being divided into a pre-study of the discovery and arrangement of the analytical course followed by a main study of further elaboration and justification thereof. Swedberg’s advice about not reading too much secondary literature beforehand (ibid.) was found crucial to the project’s hermeneutic interest and inductive openness to the field. Thus, theoretical literature within social entrepreneurship as a research field has been

broadly avoided from the presumption that to scientifically contribute to the field the application of grand anthropological theory would be beneficial. The “Exchange-Meaning Model” (EMM) was developed and elaborated throughout the analysis to support the theorizing purpose. Throughout the main study, it has been continually revisited for heuristic purposes and to reveal new relationships specific to this project (ibid. Weber referred to by Swedberg). The EMM is not to be confused with models that account for finite deductions. During the intensive field work in City Year London, multi-sited ethnography was conducted with inspiration from George Marcus (Marcus 1995). The various volunteers were followed around 22 sites in total, but most consistent were the primary site, which was the head office, and the secondary sites, the schools. At these sites my participation varied from none to complete participation, and my positioning from formal to informal, which provided a diversity and richness of interpretational angles in the data material. Methodological themes concerning access and supervision were treated. The latter was a consequence of the schools’ additional involvement in external evaluation projects as well as the comprehensive policy on child safety which is implemented in the vast majority of children’s institutions all over the world. The former point, concerning access, showed that once the access was given to the primary site, City Year, it was given almost unconditionally. It also revealed that access in multi-sited field work is unique due to the constant moving around various sites which meant that new access negotiations kept occurring. This was a demanding circumstance which influenced the ethnographic experience significantly. It also resulted in a completely different perspective on the pitfall of “going native”, as quick, easy and familiar communication with “the other City Years” became an important asset in order to keep up with what went on and travel correctly through the city. There was no time to confirm rapport each time new information was given; with both a large number of people and geographical sites involved we had to be on the same page for logistic purposes. During the data collection process, rapport building proved crucial both as method and later as contribution to the analytical findings, particularly mentioned in the pre-study. The interviews set the concrete scene for exchanges between me as interviewer and the volunteers as interviewees and became a tangible example of the importance of trust building in one-on-one exchanges. The interviews gave access to a more spontaneous and autonomous layer of conversation, revealing the volunteer’s

interplay with other life arenas besides City Year and their interconnectedness was significant for the learning processes.

Clarifying the conceptual frame concerning “learning” was sometimes seen necessary and sometimes limiting. In the literary and particularly in the empirical research process, “learning” was found empirically used, abused and diluted compared to classical and more theoretical understandings of the concept. Though learning theory is not the main approach in this thesis, educational research was included to acknowledge “learning” as thoroughly theorized. An anthropological approach was adopted to explore *learning as social value exchange*, and so positions this project as educational-anthropological. In this thesis, learning theory was drawn on through Jean Piaget, Jean Lave, Etienne Wenger, Joseph Campbell, Lars-Henrik Schmidt and Lev Vygotsky, to mention the most influential scholars. Within the literary research in learning theory for learning as exchange, Piaget’s exposition of equilibration as characteristic of the process of adaptation was found beneficial. This was seen as a solid point of departure due to its basic idea of learning processes conditioned by *a movement* between two points: introspection and expression, the individual and the social (Piaget 1959). Although Illeris and others identify Piaget with the psychological learning aspect of *personal development* as being juxtaposed with *socialization* as another aspect (and *qualification* as a third) (Illeris 2001), one of the consequences of the analytical approach of this thesis has necessarily been an integration and elaboration of the dependency of personal development on social exchange, giving and receiving. The analytical approach resulted in an emphasis that finding personal meaning and action intention is contextual and a process which depends on and reflects the social meaning and intention of the community. In this way, it was found analytically useful to use Mauss’ points about the spirit of the gift (*hau*), the processes of value application, hereunder *crédit* treated as trust; also visual and oral display of value, and finally individual communism, hereunder behavioral modes of exchange, mainly reciprocity and market behavior including points about closed- and open-endedness. Furthermore, Graeber’s thorough investigation of anthropology from a *value* perspective based directly on Mauss’ work has contributed greatly through providing a qualified epistemology as well as contextualizing Mauss’ thoughts as contemporary economic anthropology. Yet this project contributes to the field and takes a step further by applying a Maussian anthropological theory of value to a contemporary field work and

secondly explores educational relationships as economic, in this theoretical understanding. Graeber's work in particular helped to elaborate the project's inductive themes, generating points regarding contextual meaning, creative expression and the significance of oral and visual representations and communication. Finally, Mauss' and Graeber's theoretical points about timeliness in value and exchange processes, past and future action, have led to contributive theorizing on learning as social exchange; these perspectives will be summed up in the following.

The contemporary use of a Maussian approach was made possible through the development of Mauss' work into an anthropological theory of value by Graeber. The Maussian approach was in some ways found inadequate in addressing possible critical findings such as "individual resistance" and "exploitation". Although a critical academic perspective was anticipated due to the genre of these writings it was also found important to remain true to the empirical field and inductive themes, and not impose critical themes to meet these expectations. Yet it was found to be natural to add a critical ethical discussion. The Maussian point of treating status and hierarchy as social phenomena has led to the stance that expressions of social systems have been regarded in terms of dynamic and exchanging individuals participating from the ontological perspective of individualistic communism. Thus structural limitations are seen to challenge the acting and autonomous individual as opposed to pacifying or crushing and thus play an important part in both the individual's opportunities to contribute socially as well as to adaptation processes. The fact that both Mauss and Graeber can be considered social activists led to a clarification of how to regard particularly exchanges within hierarchies. Graeber's problematization of hierarchy and opposing it to reciprocity was rejected in favor of Mauss' holistic aspiration which mainly treats status and authority as two sides of the same coin and a social fact to be beneficially explored from the perspective of social exchange: structural-dynamically and also taking into consideration activities of creative destruction. This is also in line with Piaget's points on how the adaptation processes of equilibrium are individual regulations in consequence of reactions to externally imposed disturbances. The basis for theorizing is unfolded as observations of mainly dialogical learning processes and verbal exchanges.

During the pre-study there was a strong focus on staying empirically open to the field as well as staying analytically open and imaginative. The preliminary observations and interviews revealed how what has been named “code-switching” was a dominant cultural feature of the external collaborational conditions for the organization, the everyday conditions for the volunteers at the schools, and the internal social culture in City Year London. The volunteers “code-switched” between the business-organizational “networker”, the symbolic-organizational “hero”, and their spontaneous selves; each of these had the potential to give the volunteer career prospective, emotional, and spontaneous forms of meaning. The very circumstance of switching between these behaviors turned out to provide opportunities for learning, as being active according to one mode of exchange gave a natural pause for reflection for the inactive aspects. In this way, the reflection process was sheltered by the volunteer’s active substitution of social codes, resulting in other modes of exchange behavior and morals. Furthermore, code-switching became an opportunity in terms of motivation, since it fitted in well with the normal reality of having good and bad days as well as shifting desires. If one day it did not seem individually meaningful to act according to one code, the volunteer would have the opportunity to switch to another and thus more likely maintain motivation. The pre-study also revealed how there was a high degree of self-reflection among the volunteers, and unfolded how personal self-images circulated between life arenas in an individual mirroring process which connected personal meaning and reflection with theoretical points regarding timeliness. This resulted in the EMM which served to visualize a theorizing track of thought ahead of the main study about how reflection, code-switching, and *prestations* or self-presentations had formed analytical focal points. This also led to touching upon the question of “voluntariness” which was found between questions of *when* to engage and disengage and with *whom* (Graeber 2001) on the one hand, and how the circumstance of changeableness⁵⁴ created a unique space for the execution of social contribution, the *how*, on the other. This leaves open a discussion of what constitutes a voluntary organization, pointing to the fact that some workplaces under the circumstances of today’s management structures can be said to have elements of voluntariness, given that volunteering is based on the *how* to engage.

⁵⁴ See the points about “code-switching”.

Analytical points

The main study involves three analytical themes; two are generated around observed material and immaterial objects of exchange respectively, and one concerns volunteers who either left City Year London or advanced within the organization. Analyzing the “Red Jacket Ceremony” involved theoretical concepts of *prestations* along with points regarding being as congealed action mirrored in the social as past, present and future potential action. In this process, “learning” appeared discursively as the volunteers’ promise of contributing to a better future in return for having received something important in the past in other life arenas which reminded them of City Year London. It was a reciprocation which added clear emotional engagement to an open-ended human community. Through recurring critical ethical points, a discussion between Immanuel Kant’s categorical imperative representing a deontological ethics and K.E. Løgstrup’s ethical demand was added to the analysis. This pointed to deontological aspects represented by the ethos and aim of the organization co-existing with a community where emotional interactions created trust which supported the individual’s courage to develop qualities in accordance with Kant’s urge to *sapere aude!* The thesis shows how the two ethical stances are present in both the organizational structure and community micro-exchanges and that in practice they are used to cope with unforeseen dilemmas by the one compensating for the lack of the other; e.g. when criticism can be addressed due to lack of empathy, a deontological argument or when action is made to legitimize this lack. This is a commonly used exchange strategy.

Like *crédit*, or trust, “learning” was verbalized in this ritual as something connected with time. Where *crédit* buys the recipient time to make a proper reciprocation, this given *time* was expressed as being assigned to “learning” in order to become able to contribute or reciprocate to the community. In this process the local and the global were united. The volunteers’ promise of “learning” has a function of buying time to accumulate value to make a proper reciprocation in their own estimation, and thus enter into the social circulation of value and solidarity – society. This means that “learning” is objectified in a specific request, a commodity, and this perception of “learning” expresses closed-endedness. This approach to “learning” is thus part of what Sahlin calls *balanced reciprocity* (Sahlin 2004), which would place accepting or promis-

ing to learn back in the direction of market behavior. It signals that once something has been learned, the relationship will be terminated and it establishes, in accordance with Schmidt, the educational relationship as *tragic* in the sense that it is meant to cease. “Learning” in City Year London was thus not a characteristic of the open-ended community, rather of the organizational as well as individual market inscription and conditions. Although inter-generational care and circulation of value in a learning aspect are associated with family roles, which again are traditionally linked to close relationships and love, this study shows that “family” behavior and inter-generational value circulation *is* related to learning, but that the idea of the family as typically open-ended is romanticized. This ultimately classifies learning as social exchange as fundamentally different depending on whether it is institutionalized and explicitly reflects livelihood interdependency, or whether it is community learning where the livelihood interdependency is indirect, universalized, and thus anonymized.

The volunteer’s perception that something needed reciprocation was supported with belief in his or her potentials, typically from former teachers or older family members, who had provided care, material support, discipline, persistence, attention and vision on the volunteer’s behalf. Another side to this motivation was expressions of feeling responsible to care for the younger siblings or children in need such as their mentees. These promises became physically represented by the uniform, as the volunteers were stating their sense of obligation to reciprocate while putting on their red jackets. These promises constituted at the same time the individual hope of “making a difference” as well as the social moral notion for which voluntary organizations in general are iconic. The jacket itself, by having been worn by social icons such as Gandhi and Mandela, had become so value laden that it seemed to have accumulated its own intention. This revisited Mauss’ points about *hau*, the spirit of the gift, though keeping the critical points in mind. Applying Mauss’ *hau* to the analysis led to the conclusion that the spirit of the gift can be observed as effective as principle, but drawing on the multi-sited orientation showed that this was only within communities who had some sort of consensus as to what to expect of each other. Outside City Year the visual and solidarity engaging effect of the uniform diminished.

While the uniform provided the volunteers with the benefits of strutting in borrowed plumes, with a jacket which represented great people's past actions, it did seem to obligate equal reciprocations and call forth a collective expectation among the spectators as well as an individual sense of obligation which affected the volunteers' actions by supporting the definition and adaptation of personal intention. Besides the solemnity during the rituals, the uniform was attributed a sense of playfulness, through PT, which combined with its bright colors attracted the children at the schools. It also created a direct response of continuity and familiarity from school staff, parents and children because the City Year volunteers from previous years had worn a similar outfit. Thus the uniform branded City Year as well as calling for positive action, which was provided by the volunteers working as role-models and mentors. This was observed to objectify the individual volunteer to some extent, yet the fact that the volunteers were conscious of being there for just one year because it had been negotiated from the beginning had the corps members cope with the emotional dilemmas of engagement by turning to code-switching, and active acceptance of the emotional paradox of entering into children's lives and moving back out of this meaningful relationship had already been placed in the horizon. The outlook for emotional loss was accepted as a fundamental condition and as part of life. Away from the other volunteers and people who knew who they were, outside of schools and outside of City Year London head office, wearing the uniform to and from "work" was another example of how reflection and adaptation were observed. Here they would meet the Londoners' expectations as responses to their wearing uniforms. The expectations could imply an extra effort, spotting other people's needs, sacrificing for them and giving up their own rights for others. However, the volunteer's idea that sacrifice was expected of him or her in other situations could also create awkwardness and break city anonymity, causing inconvenience to others. The process of trial and error in public social behavior led to the conclusion that the City Year volunteers' social etiquette was not in particular need of adjustment, yet the process of finding out did raise the volunteer's own awareness of this fact.

Scraping the surface of the uniform and the everyday life it called for led to analytically addressing how "the city year" was inscribed in the volunteer's overall personal history and "personal mythmaking". This was observed by paying attention to the volunteer's *being*, constituted and altered by past, pre-

sent, and future potential action, as well as how City Year triggered the volunteer's reflections on and awareness of personal direction and intentions. In this process, what particularly challenged the volunteers was a degree of self-awareness caused by wearing the uniform, and the fact that being a City Year volunteer naturally took up considerable time from other life arenas and activities. These challenges placed the volunteers between becoming better at structuring and prioritizing their private time as well as standing up for what they believed in, stated through their engagement with City Year and verbalized as their personal values. This, in some cases, led to a shift in their private social sphere and was expressed as better suited to who they were and as being a normal consequence of strong involvement in one's "work life". Moving analytically back from "beneath the surface" where psychological processes of personal narratives were certainly seen, all the interviews included a specific probe by approaching the uniform as strictly material. This caused yet another perspective which has been rarely touched upon. It gave rise to blunt replies about the sensory experience of the uniform and the wearer's aesthetic "liking". This probe surprisingly generated a distinction of the uniform's significance which distinguished between the social reflections of intention, visually represented by the uniform, and the individual material and bodily experience of it.

The analysis showed that with time and familiarity the interviewee moved from focusing on the uniform's physical fit and appearance to referring to its social and cultural challenges and advantages. Nonetheless the stronger and more immediate response concerned the physical bodily experience, seen as a mere consequence of basically *having* a body along with how what we put on it feels against it, and the universal necessity of reflecting on what "social skin" to wear and when. This biological condition is in City Year London absolutely linked to the starting point of Mauss' visions and human universalism, where reciprocity is a total social phenomenon. It is a common denominator which was observed to lead to mutual understanding very quickly and form an immediate meeting ground, recognition, and with it followed spontaneous good will, and the initiation of an exchange of personal experiences. This finding is in interesting resonance with, and a contemporary example of, some of Polanyi's theoretical principles when describing the substantive meaning of economy, as deriving from fact and natural laws like gravity and

material want satisfaction (Polanyi 1968). It bears witness of the material and early structuralist origin of the theoretical body.

The volunteers' testimonials, *prestations* of their contributions as mentors, were part of a general culture of moral exchange through anecdotal stories. This thesis has taken the liberty of staging the very *prestations* as immaterial objects of exchange. That Mauss did not do so could be due to the fact that in (archaic) communities with more social continuity and less renewal everyone would have an idea about each other's strengths and weaknesses with regard to how to socially benefit from each other's personalities. *Prestations* with Mauss concerned negotiating with strangers, primarily observed as peace negotiations between tribes or rulers. In today's society, in work life, and in City Year London, everyone can be replaced. This is not necessarily a "modern" phenomenon. Among the Iroquois, referring to what is known as "the mourning complex", warriors were known to steal enemy individuals, in cases where one of their own had been killed, and install them directly in the deceased's social function and practical life (Graeber 2001). Though "the mourning complex" behavior regarding exchange is directly rivalizing, general organizational life today, as we have seen through analyzing the uniform, is still focused on getting the job done to a larger or smaller degree; this also applies to communities. This leads to the point and the main difference which is today's internalized exchange of services in the form of social tasks and even favors. Mentoring and learning were not formally regarded a trade object back then, but they are now. The City Year London volunteer's testimonial is a construction, a materialization through verbalization, of the mentoring which is offered, a combination of ascribed historicity and personal intention. This is a process of value application and objectification of individual services, creating valuable objects of display which are tradable. It is the volunteers' individually associating with, while contextually constructing, their possible contributions, expressing themselves as a "good mentors" and "valuable team mates"; this is in interaction with the organizational frame, which calls for both action and reflection. This makes up learning processes as social exchange in City Year London. Yet again, this "product" was found to be divested from an autonomous, creative and spontaneous self. The testimonial was used market strategically for networking as well as invitations for more spontaneous and open-ended everyday relations which thrived off "that City Year energy" – ups, downs, and having each other's backs – which also

formed a forum for innovative ideas in spe, setting the scene for collective entrepreneurial behavior.

By turning to the volunteers who left and those who moved up, the end of the analysis generated a focus on the volunteers' self-reflections, mainly on their understandings of acting as adults. Verbalized as moving from being a "taker" to a "giver" and thus signaling a surplus of mental resources for the City Year volunteers in terms of energy and ideas, this was the way to become an adult "treasure to the community". To *grow* in one's personality alongside one's physical age behavioral development proved to be the commendable ideal of becoming an adult. This reveals an ideal among the 18-25 year-olds of adults who stay active and contributive, do not resign, and keep expressing themselves in their community. This idea of adulthood expresses an expectation of social exchange which is characterized by greater harmonization between the adult's contribution, expected to become more focused on others' needs, and gratitude from the young who embrace the obligation to reciprocate by wanting to learn and increasingly become givers themselves.

Closing discussion

City Year London as an organizational context and a learning arena can be unfolded by considering its social mirrors. The mirrors are the means for reflection of visual representations, objectifications of congealed and intentional action and each volunteer's being (Graeber 2001). Viewing these processes as learning processes, it is thus relevant to ask, from perhaps a more psychological angle, what is potentially reflected in the volunteers as individuals and as a group. Culturally, I hope the reader finds this has been accounted for. From the inside of the organization it is clear that City Year London is a case of the good example. At all levels, from volunteers to board members and sponsors, the response is simply: "it works". Its everyday variations and routines have been treated in the analysis. A critical perspective would ask: are the volunteers being used? How is the recruitment process excluding? How can a charity claim to be run as a business when the two are normally seen as contradictory? Some of these questions fall outside the objective of the thesis and others fall outside its scientific tradition due to their configuration. Maybe City Year London is somewhat too professionalized for some people

working in the third sector and with more traditional voluntary communities; but then again “it works”. Nonetheless a critical ethical perspective was found useful to elucidate the relationship between the collective and the individual with both entities seen as empowered and dynamic. The project’s attempt to explore peer learning in City Year London was found difficult in the classroom and mentoring situation, since the volunteers were mostly away from the rest of the team, being allocated to the classes individually. In general the relationships and interactions between the volunteers came forward as energizing breathing spaces due to their informal and open-ended nature. It was not until the team dynamics in terms of e.g. moving up or people leaving the program appeared that getting closer to peer learning in the teams became possible. At that time most of the data collection was completed and the intensive presence in the field was coming to an end. Nonetheless the exchanges between the individual and the volunteer group as a collective entity, also sometimes including the staffs in London, were strongly focused on in this research. The deontological perspective thoroughly legitimizes the aim and activities of City Year, while this has been challenged by adding *the ethical demand*. The perspective inspired by Løgstrup brought out aspects of human need to be met with empathy, which were not always attended to in the everyday bustle. The volunteers showed signs of exhaustion due to the work load, they showed signs of nervousness in public speaking situations, they showed signs of stress due to increased self-reflection as part of their development processes induced by activities in the organization, and they showed signs of more or less passive resistance from time to time by cutting remarks, sarcastic humor, and absence or lateness. Kant, Piaget, Mauss as well as City Year’s values can all be used to argue that high demands are necessary for opportunities to grow. Even the volunteers appreciated these opportunities and challenges most of the time, keeping the role of recruitment in mind; yet in conflict situations it was the demand for empathy and I-you-relations which was expressed directly in some form.

Defining discussions of *trust* automatically became an underlying theme throughout the thesis. Pivotal points regarding learning as social exchange have included mentioning how trust played a role. The data revealed how trusting friends and open-ended relations combined with the individual’s own sense of meaningfulness in development in an unknown direction was what caused intentions, activated through action and reflection, to change. This

meaningfully bound together the individual's social spheres, though they were unassociated with each other. In spite of this, the individual's intention constituted and empowered these unassociated communities as one trusted collective within which he sought status by developing according to their common and fused values. The data showed how the development of trust and the subsequent individual process of change depended on exchange and reflection of emotions, whether conveyed directly or symbolically represented. This observation stresses the need for time for these exchanges, also across communities through the individual, to experience open-endedness as well as to make the decision to follow personal advice. As such, time and trust as objects of exchange become mutually dependent in terms of development and change. This point combines the ethical perspectives presented in this thesis: where the categorical imperative urges the learner to *sapere aude*, and the value perspective demands meaningful intention, the ethical demand urges the educator to invest time to practice empathy in I-you-encounters, and thus it turns out that the answer, in terms of learning, is the relational offerings and exchanges of both. Without the individual's investment of courage and intention the collective loses its powers. Likewise, collective unanimity, whether caused by universalism or not, and open-ended communities seem to be what cause the individual to experience meaningfulness and to dare change as well as expression. This point stresses the necessity for the individual's active giving based on both courage and empathy, as part of the reciprocation.

The recruitment process, while also having an excluding function, proved to benefit the organization as well as the volunteers through an early matching of expectations. The one volunteer who left the program due to conflict had no objections to the people at City Year, but he did not need the organization in an educational perspective, as he felt he had progressed past its methods, so he simply stopped. This voluntary organization is thus very difficult to criticize in terms of classic capitalism. Applying an anthropological value theory and that of Mauss, integrating market behavior and reciprocity as part of basic social behavior, makes this close to impossible. The nuances of exchange, the objectification of inner potential and the processes of value application in interaction with the social aspect represent something different, as I have addressed along the way. However, an economic anthropological examination of these processes leaves out important aspects, which educational psychology is better qualified to address. Within psychology this thesis' find-

ings are seen to contribute mainly to educational psychological discussions on studies of meaning and motivation in work life (Kamp 2011) and not least biographical learning (Andersen, Trojaborg 2005, Olesen 1996, Schütze 2005), though among young adults and in the third sector. The strength of this perspective is in exploring learning processes as social exchange of value, in which value is recognized and applied in the movement between the individual and the social, treating the two as integrated, and focusing on the dynamic community culture as the main object of study.

During the research process, some have expressed their concern about its almost cultic ways with its strong rituals, uniforms and its neuropsychological and Jungian inspiration towards me. There are two replies to make to that. One is that there is no culture or community which does not have its particular ways and explicitly or implicitly calls for its individuals to conduct certain behavior for inclusion in one way or the other. Secondly, I have met no one who expressed a feeling of being forced to take part in any activities. The organization, as has been accounted for, has a strong integration of humanitarian ethics; they practice what they preach and during needs for I-you-communication this is prioritized and personally recognized. This thesis shows that, like the schools, City Year London could pay more attention to the volunteers' informal learning processes which are triggered by the verbalization of themselves as meaningful societal participants as well as their increased reflections in interaction with the uniform. The schools as well as City Year London have a tendency to focus on the mentoring task and overlook certain aspects of the volunteers' City Year emotional development through their learning processes, although this is what the volunteers' peer relations compensate for to a large extent. However, a moral point would be that staging people's actions in any organizational or institutional framework, particularly one which calls for the volunteers' emotional engagement, gives rise to an ethical demand and consciousness regarding "wanting something with other's doings", as an educating community for the volunteers.

The various opportunities of reflections and modes of exchange, the many "mirrors", in City Year London are there due to its cross-sectorial terms and come from the many forms of exchanges and of various values: individual reflection in action, in groups, with the children, spontaneously and socially, philosophically and symbolically, professionally, in teams, with business part-

ners, organization staff, board members, corporate mentors, and political representatives. The nous and the willingness to switch codes enhance the ability to do so, and thus the organization contributes to value circulation, impressively effortless, across sectors and this has a uniting and solidarity building effect on otherwise diverse sectors and fields. The flexibility and a pragmatic interest in getting things to work optimally by thinking outside the box but also through self-development calls for what can be said to be entrepreneurial behavior. These volunteers are not educated as entrepreneurs in City Year London, but what they themselves say they learn there is consistent with the idea of entrepreneurial skills⁵⁵ (Gibb 2002, Shane, Venkatarman 2000, Becherer, Maurer 1999); and thus these volunteers can be viewed as “early social entrepreneurs” (Revsbech 2014). While indirectly giving them experience with the professional field of social entrepreneurship, the fact that the aim is social is also generally educating in terms of life skills: self-management and collaborative skills in a societally meaningful perspective. These qualities are those of a good citizen, civilized on the one hand and participating and contributing in terms of social value on the other. The skills listed in Appendix 10 are a summing up of what the volunteers say they learned, when asked directly. Though I have criticized a superficial utilization of “learning” from an anthropological point of view, their replies immediately fit the skills of the ideal entrepreneur almost to the point. The general idea among the volunteers and the City Year staff is that these behavioral traits are an expression of possessing *resilience* and that having this strengthens general solidarity in consistency with their humanitarian purpose.

⁵⁵ Appendix 10.



Figure 17: Societal feedback

Figure 17 sketches the idea of how what is learned in City Year London feeds back into general society based upon the finding of various exchange aspects in the organization among the volunteers. Finally, there is a recent trend arising from the discovery that the entrepreneurial learning arena is said to be particularly potent for triggering emotional engagement due to a learning theme regarding personal and creative contributions (Gibb 2002). Educators in entrepreneurship are discussing how to facilitate or take this fact into consideration when creating the optimal entrepreneurial learning space (Knudsen, Robinson et al. 2013, Jones, Underwood 2013). This is intended to be targeted at the individual entrepreneurial student. The critical point which can be drawn from this thesis is whereas “the story” from the giver, the educator, can be somewhat controlled and constructed, the emotional response in the receivers is unpredictable and volatile. Facilitating an emotional learning space, implementing reflections on which of the students’ emotions to support, in the process of developing entrepreneurial skills is likely to be over-ambitious. The individual symbolic co-reading of the context varies from person to person, as each person would read themselves into the story in various ways depending on their own background and predispositions. This study shows that emotions and reactions cannot be predicted, nor should they, firstly because innovative action comes from individual and mainly uncontrolled impulses, and secondly for ethical reasons. There is always a fine line

between education and manipulation which is always the educators' professional affair.

Finally, it is noticeable how in City Year London the symbolic aspect is clearly defined and was found to play a big part in what makes the organization a strong survivor as a cross-sectorial organization, in the negotiations with both partners and volunteers. In an exchange perspective the strong definition gives the organization a clear position in communicating and collaborating, signaling what they offer to whom and how. It emphasizes the organizational identity and at the same time allows them to keep to their philanthropic values because that is what makes them special. This clear definition of symbolic identity was seen to enable the integration of a business dimension and ensure market sustainability without jeopardizing the social aim. Organizationally this shows that a condition for the social voluntary organization to avoid isomorphism is to strengthen the trait which *distinguishes* them from their partner organizations. Due to the societal need for the various sectors to supplement each other and collaborate, this conclusion urges social voluntary organizations to find, cultivate and express their community values as a key part of their *prestations* in cross-sectorial collaborations.

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Abstract

This thesis set out to theorize learning as social exchange through exploring a social voluntary organization between sectors, in an educational anthropological perspective. It is based on a five month intensive anthropological field study in a British affiliate of the American charity, City Year in London. There, primarily 62 volunteers between the ages of 18-25 were observed in order to gain an insight into their social exchange activities and learning processes. Out of the 62 volunteers, a team of 10 were followed in their daily activities as mentors and role models for public primary school children and community servers, dedicating one year of full time volunteering to their city, London. During the intensive field work in City Year London, multi-sited ethnography was conducted with inspiration from George Marcus (Marcus 1995). The various volunteers were followed around 22 sites in total, but most consistent were the primary site, which was the head office, and the secondary sites, the schools. At these sites my participation varied from none to complete participation, and my positioning from formal to informal, which provided a diversity and richness of interpretational angles in the data material.

With its economic pluralistic approach, analytically applying economic anthropology, it aims to contribute to the research fields of education, anthropology, and also the field of social entrepreneurship and the third sector regarding learning processes in voluntary organizations. It has thus been empirically concerned with the educational relationship as *a claim* through the method of ethnographic presence and observation of what and how social exchanges occur in a specific empirical field. The analytical field was demarcated through focusing on learning processes between volunteers as peers in interplay with City Year London as a voluntary organization. By asking the question: “*How are volunteers’ learning processes connected to the exchange of social value in City Year London and what exchanges characterize the youth driven voluntary organization?*”, the thesis has focused on its particular interest in value circulation

inside the organization, as well as how the circulation of value between sites contributes to skills and personal development.

Methodologically the project has found inspiration in Richard Swedberg's points on theorizing in social sciences (Swedberg 2012a, Swedberg 2012b). This has resulted in the analysis being divided into a pre-study of the discovery and arrangement of the analytical course followed by a main study of further elaboration and justification thereof. Methodological themes concerning access and supervision were treated. The project revealed that access in multi-sited field work is unique due to the constant moving around various sites which meant that new access negotiations kept occurring. This was a demanding circumstance which influenced the ethnographic experience significantly. It also resulted in a completely different perspective on the pitfall of "going native", as quick, easy and familiar communication with "the other City Years" proved an important asset in order to keep up with what went on and travel correctly through the city. During the data collection process, rapport building proved crucial both as method and later as contribution to the analytical findings, particularly mentioned in the pre-study. The interviews gave access to a more spontaneous and autonomous layer of conversation, revealing findings regarding the volunteer's interplay with other life arenas besides City Year and their interconnectedness was significant for the learning processes.

Clarifying the conceptual frame concerning "learning" was sometimes seen necessary and sometimes limiting. In the literary and particularly in the empirical research process, "learning" was found empirically used, abused and diluted compared to classical and more theoretical understandings of the concept. Though learning theory is not the main approach in this thesis, educational research was included to acknowledge "learning" as thoroughly theorized. An anthropological approach was adopted to explore *learning as social value exchange*, and so positions this project as educational-anthropological. In this thesis, learning theory was drawn on through Jean Piaget, Jean Lave, Etienne Wenger, Joseph Campbell, Lars-Henrik Schmidt and Lev Vygotsky, to mention the most influential scholars. Within the literary research in learning theory for learning as exchange, Piaget's exposition of equilibration as characteristic of the process of adaptation was found beneficial. This was seen as a solid point of departure due to its basic idea of learning processes

conditioned by *a movement* between two points: introspection and expression, the individual and the social (Piaget 1959). The analytical design resulted in showing that finding personal meaning and action intention is contextual and a process which depends on and reflects the social meaning and intention of the community. In this way, it was found analytically useful to use Marcel Mauss' points about the spirit of the gift (*hau*), the processes of value application, hereunder *crédit* treated as trust; also visual and oral display of value, and finally individual communism, hereunder behavioral modes of exchange, mainly reciprocity and market behavior including points about closed- and open-endedness. Furthermore, David Graeber's thorough investigation of anthropology from a *value* perspective based directly on Mauss' work has contributed greatly through providing a qualified epistemology as well as contextualizing Mauss' thoughts as contemporary economic anthropology. Yet this project contributes to the field and takes a step further by applying a Maussian anthropological theory of value to a contemporary field work and secondly explores educational relationships as economic, in this theoretical understanding. Mauss' and Graeber's theoretical points about timeliness in value and exchange processes, past and future action, have led to contributive theorizing on learning as social exchange.

The thesis findings indicated and discussed in the analysis can be listed as follows:

Methodological points

1: The thesis reveals how observation in schools has become overrun and thus difficult to enter. This has changed the conditions of ethnographic observational work by placing the ethnographer in situations where she is being observed by other observers as well as being surrounded by observers who observe the same as she does.

2: Conducting multi-sited ethnography has the ethnographer constantly negotiate for new access in different settings. In this situation, the traditional warning against "going native" was revised. Establishing to some degree a knowing interaction with the volunteers proved to be an asset on the empirical terms of logistical coordination where changes in times and locations often took place during the process, and the ethnographer's co-participation was needed in order to keep up and not be a burden.

3: Reflecting on creating rapport as a method was quickly seen to be significant to the analysis due to the theoretical focus on interaction and exchange.

Points of theory and analysis

4: “Code-switching” was found to be a condition as well as an opportunity and focusing on exchange connected findings regarding ethics and behavior. It is a condition due to the organization’s cross-sectorial positioning and mentoring task which demanded flexibility in modes of exchange with the many and diverse collaborative partners. It was an opportunity in that it was seen to shelter and give time for reflection in the learning processes in certain behavioral areas not activated during the activation of other areas. Code-switching also held the potential for sustained motivation, as the opportunity for and even expectations of the volunteer’s shift between symbolic, business and personal creative meaning expression matched everyday experiences of changes in mood and intention.

5: Self-images occurred and were modified through the exchange between City Year London and other life arenas.

6: The concept of voluntariness is discussed in two forms which define two different categories of voluntary organizations: 1) those where it is voluntary when and with whom to engage and 2) those where it is voluntary how to make one’s contribution. Voluntary organizations might find themselves better externally defined by internally taking their voluntary element into consideration.

7: In the individual evaluation of past action in City Year London was seen by the volunteer as an opportunity to make past “wrong” action “right” as well as to give back by engaging in the organization in his or her present and future. This characterized the volunteer’s year at City Year as a particular part of his or her self-narrative.

8: Mauss’ concept of *crédit* was observed as time for reflection and acquisition.

9: Expressions of open-ended human community were observed in emotional presentations of intention where the boundaries between the local and the global were dissolved.

10: In the learning processes social value was seen to be generated through the verbalization of potential, after which it entered into closed-ended exchange. This suggested a difference between 1) institutionalized learning, where livelihood interdependency and inequality are an explicit part of the framework and 2) community learning, where livelihood interdependency is implicit and anonymous; a typical example of this is the proverb “Ubuntu – my humanity is tied to yours.”

11: Value circulates from the family unit to the idea of the above-mentioned united and open-ended human community.

12: Mauss’ concept of *hau*, the spirit of the gift, was only observed in closed communities. There is a general discourse regarding a human oneness, but in practical exchanges, between for example the volunteer and the random Londoner, exchange of individual expectations and perceptions proved to need verbalization.

13: *Hau* was observed, in the closed community, when past great actions of humanitarian role models installed a sense of obligation for similar reciprocity through receiving the uniform. Furthermore this process was observed to strengthen the belief in a universal community.

14: The uniform installed a sense of trust and credibility to outsiders and at the same time it had an objectifying impact on the volunteer, who accepted this as part of the arrangement.

15: Another part of the arrangement and an emotional strain which was accepted was the volunteer’s emotional loss as a consequence of the social service as mentor for just one year.

16: The City Year volunteers were not in particular need of general education for social etiquette. This was generally a natural part of their behavior, since they had been accepted as resourceful and with a sense of nous. Yet being

made aware that they were expected to live up to social etiquette made them conscious of this and thus supported their sense of self.

17: The volunteers were seen to adopt City Year London's set of values. This gave them a greater sense of defined self in relation to family and friends outside the organization. Occasionally, in cases of too much resistance from friends, this encouraged a tidying up in the volunteer's social sphere.

18: The universalist idea, along with open-ended reciprocity, takes its point of departure in our common physical and biological basis, as also suggested by Polanyi.

19: By their presence in the organization, the volunteers are supported in the process of converting elements of personal history and creative intention into valuable objects of display which are tradable.

20: In this process, their potential as, for example, mentors is objectified and divested, detached from a spontaneous open-ended community where ideas flourish and are treated through processes of humor and other sorts of spontaneous informal feedback.

21: The volunteers' intentions and considerations regarding becoming proper adults is a motivator for them to engage in City Year London. Thus, they seem to have chosen their own positive role models by seeking enrolment in the program.

22: Both the schools and the organization have the potential of defining themselves as learning arenas and educators for volunteers. Increased attention to this role would further qualify this responsibility.

23: City Year London as an educational arena and voluntary organization can potentially be defined as "(social) entrepreneurial".

24: Further legitimization of voluntary social organizations as learning arenas will benefit from supplementary perspectives from educational psychology and work life research.

25: The process of recruiting the volunteers, although the exclusion processes were omitted as an analytical focus in this thesis, seemed a valuable contributor to City Year London as a constructive and internally well integrated community where collaboration between the volunteers and staffs was effective.

26: Voluntary organizations intending to enter into cross-sectorial collaborations can benefit from cultivating and clearly expressing their community values as part of their *prestations* or self-presentations.

Dansk resume

Denne afhandling skulle, fra et pædagogisk-antropologisk perspektiv, teoretisere læring som social udveksling gennem feltarbejde i en tværsektoriel frivillig social organisation. Afhandlingen er baseret på et fem måneders intensivt antropologisk feltstudie i det britiske datterselskab af den amerikanske velgørenhedsorganisation City Year i London. Der blev primært 62 frivillige i alderen 18-25 observeret og interviewet for at få et indblik i deres sociale udvekslingsaktiviteter og læreprocesser. Ud af de 62 frivillige på fuld tid i et år, blev et hold på 10 fulgt i deres daglige aktiviteter som mentorer og rollemodeller for skolebørn og som lokalsamfundstjenere. Under det intensive feltarbejde i City Year London, blev multisite etnografi udført med inspiration fra George Marcus. De frivillige blev fulgt til omkring 22 lokaliteter i alt, men mest kontinuerligt var det primære site, som var hovedkontoret i Islington, og de sekundære sites, skolerne. På disse sites varierede den etnografiske deltagelse fra ikke-deltagende til fuld deltagelse, og positioneringen fra formel til uformel, hvilket gav en bred vifte af fortolkningsmæssige vinkler i datamaterialet.

Med et pluralistisk økonomiske perspektiv, anvendtes analytisk økonomisk antropologi med det formål at bidrage til forsknings inden for uddannelse, antropologi, og også til viden om socialt iværksætteri og den tredje sektor. Afhandlingen har således været empirisk optaget af det pædagogiske forhold som et mellemværende undersøgt gennem etnografiske tilstedeværelse samt observation af hvad og hvordan sociale udvekslinger forekommer i en konkret empirisk felt. Det analytiske felt blev afgrænset gennem fokus på læreprocesser mellem jævnaldrende frivillige i samspil med City Year London som et frivilligt organisation. Ved at stille spørgsmålet: *"Hvordan er frivilliges læreprocesser forbundet med udveksling af social værdi i City Year London, og hvilke udvekslinger karakteriserer denne frivillige organisation for unge?"*, har afhandlingen fokuseret på den særlige interesse i cirkulation af værdi i organisation samt mellem lokaliteter og dettes betydning for de frivilliges færdigheder og personlige udvikling.

Metodisk har projektet fundet inspiration i Richard Swedberg pointer om teoretisering i samfundsvidenskab. Dette har resulteret i analysen er opdelt i en forundersøgelse der afdækker og arrangerer den analytiske kursus efterfulgt af en hovedundersøgelse indeholdende en mere nuanceret analyse. Metodologiske temaer vedrørende adgang og overvågning blev behandlet. Projektet viste, at spørgsmålet om adgang i multisite etnografi er særlig som følge af den konstante mobilitet, hvilket betød, at nye forhandlinger om adgang blev ved at være påkrævet. Dette var en krævende omstændighed, som påvirkede det etnografiske arbejde betydeligt. Det resulterede også i et helt andet perspektiv på det antropologiske spørgsmål omkring "*going native*", idet en hurtig, nem og fortrolig kommunikation med "de andre City Years" viste sig at være et vigtigt element for at holde trit med ændringer i forhold til aktiviteter men også f.eks. det at rejse korrekt gennem byen. Under indsamlingen af data, viste til-lidsopbygning, eller rapport, sig afgørende både som metode og senere som bidrag til de analytiske resultater, særligt nævnt i forundersøgelsen. Interviewene gav adgang til spontane og uafhængige lag af informanternes liv der afslørede indblik i de frivilliges samspil med andre livsarenaer ud over City Year, og livsarenaernes indbyrdes forbundethed viste sig signifikant for forståelsen af udviklingsprocesser.

Afklaring af den konceptuelle ramme om "læring" blev ofte set nødvendig og til tider begrænsende. I den litterære og især den empiriske forskning proces sås "læring" brugt, misbrugt og udvandet i forhold til klassiske og mere teoretiske forståelser af begrebet. Selvom læringsteori ikke er primært i denne afhandling blev læringsteorier inkluderet ikke mindst for at anerkende "læring" som et grundigt teoretiseret forskningsfelt. Der blev inddraget teoretiske perspektiver fremsat af Jean Piaget, Jean Lave, Etienne Wenger, Joseph Campbell, Lars-Henrik Schmidt og Lev Vygotsky. I den litterære afsøgning af i læringsteori vedørende læring som udveksling, blev Piagets fremstilling af ligevægtsbegrebet som karakteristisk for adaptationsprocesser fundet gavnlig. Det betragtes som et solidt udgangspunkt på grund af den grundlæggende idé om læreprocesser betinget af en bevægelse mellem to punkter: introspektion og udtryk, det individuelle og det sociale. Det analytiske design resulterede i at udfolde hvordan det at finde personlig mening samt intentionel handling er kontekstuel og en proces der er afhængig af og afspejler social mening og hensigt med det givne fællesskab. På denne måde blev det konstateret analytisk nyttigt at bruge Marcel Mauss' pointer om *gavens ånd* (hau), processer ved-

rørende værditilskrivelse, herunder *crédit* forstået som udtryk for tillid; også visuel og verbal fremstilling af værdi, og endelig "*individuel kommunisme*", herunder adfærdsformer i forbindelse med udveksling, hovedsageligt gensidighed og markedsadfærd, samt pointer om "endelige og uendelige relationsforståelser"⁵⁶. David Graebers grundige undersøgelse af værdi i en antropologisk forstand, direkte baseret på Mauss' arbejde, har i høj grad bidraget til kvalificeret at redegøre for afhandlingens epistemologi og samtidig kontekstualisere Mauss' tanker i nutidig økonomisk-antropologisk forstand. Projektet tager et skridt videre ved at anvende en Mauss'k antropologisk teori om værdi i analysen af et moderne feltarbejde og desuden konkret udforske pædagogiske relationer som økonomiske. Mauss' og Graebers teoretiske pointer om rettidighed i værdiudveksling, overførsel af fortidig og fremtidig handling, har yderligere bidraget til denne teoretisering af læring som social udveksling.

Afhandlingens fund som udfoldes og diskuteres i analysen kan opsummeres som følger:

Metodologiske pointer:

1: Afhandlingen viser, hvordan observation i skolerne er taget til, og det kan derfor være svært at komme ind som forsker. Det har ændret betingelserne for etnografisk arbejde ved at placere etnografen i situationer, hvor hun selv bliver observeret af andre observatører samt være omgivet af observatører, der observerer det samme som hun gør.

2: Udførelsen af multisite etnografi betyder at etnografen konstant må forhandle ny adgang i forskellige situationer. I dette tilfælde blev håndteringen af faren for "going native", hvilket der traditionelt advares imod, revideret. Etablering af en vis grad af uformel fortrolighed med de frivillige viste sig at være en fordel i forbindelse med logistisk koordinering og etnografens meddeltagelse var nødvendig for at følge med i tempo og ikke være en byrde for de observerede.

3: At reflektere over det at skabe rapport som en metode hurtigt blev anset for også at være vigtigt for analysen på grund af det teoretiske fokus på interaktion og udveksling.

⁵⁶ Oversat fra: Open- and closedendedness

Teoretiske og analytiske pointer:

4: "Code-switching" viste sig at være en betingelse såvel som en mulighed og et fokus på udveksling forbandt resultater vedrørende etik og adfærd. Det er et krav til den frivillige qua organisationens tværsektorielle positionering og mentoring opgave, som kræver fleksibilitet i udvekslingsformer med de mange og forskelligartede samarbejdspartnere. Det var en mulighed idet det gav tid til refleksion omkring nogle måder at interagere på, mens man interagerede aktivt på andre måder. Code-switching gav også potentialet for vedvarende motivation, idet mulighederne og forventningerne til de frivilliges skift mellem symbolsk, professionel og personlig kreative meningsudtryk stemte overens med individets dagligdags erfaringer med ændringer i humør og hensigt.

5: Selvbilleder opstod og ændredes gennem udveksling mellem City Year London og andre livsarenaer.

6: Begrebet frivillighed diskuteres i to former, som definerer to forskellige kategorier af frivillige organisationer: 1) dem, hvor det er frivilligt hvornår og med hvem man engagerer sig; og 2) dem, hvor det er frivilligt, hvordan man gør sin indsats. Frivillige organisationer kan finde sig selv tydeligere defineret udadtil ved indadtil at tage deres udbud af frivillighed i betragtning, hvilket vil lette samarbejder med sektorer og interessenter.

7: Den individuelle vurdering af fortidige handlinger i City Year London blev af den frivillige set som en mulighed for at gøre "forkerte" handlinger "rigtige" samt at give noget tilbage ved nutidigt og fremtidigt at engagere sig i organisationen. Dette karakteriserede den frivilliges år i City Year som en særlig del af hans eller hendes selvfortælling.

8: Mauss' begreb *crédit* blev observeret som tid til refleksion og tilegnelse.

9: Udtryk for et "uendeligt" menneskeligt fællesskab blev observeret i følelsesmæssige præsentationer af intention, hvor grænserne mellem forståelsen af lokale og globale fællesskaber opløstes.

10: I læreprocesserne blev social værdi set genereret gennem verbalisering af potentialer, hvorefter dette indtrådte i ”endelige” udvekslinger, anskuet som bytteværdi. Dette viste en forskel mellem 1) institutionaliseret læring, hvor levevilkåret som indbyrdes afhængige og ulighed er en afgørende del af rammen og 2) fællesskabelig læring, hvor levevilkåret som indbyrdes afhængige er implicit og anonymt; et typisk empirisk eksempel på dette er ordsproget "Ubuntu - min menneskelighed er bundet til din."

11: Værdi cirkulerer fra familie-enheder til tanken om ovennævnte forbundethed og ”uendlige” menneskelige fællesskab.

12: Mauss' begreb *hau*, gavens ånd, blev kun observeret i lukkede fællesskaber. Der er en generel diskurs om menneskelig forbundethed, men i praktiske udvekslinger, mellem for eksempel den frivillige og den tilfældige Londoner, viste udveksling af individuelle forventninger og opfattelser sig nødvendige at verbalisere.

13: *Hau* blev observeret, i det lukkede fællesskab, når humanitære rollemodellers tidligere store gerninger installerede en følelse af forpligtelse til lignende gengældelse⁵⁷ når den frivillige modtog uniformen. Desuden viste denne proces sig at styrke troen på et universelt samfund.

14: Uniformen gav en følelse af tillid og tryghed hos udenforstående og på samme tid havde den en objektiverende indvirkning på den frivillige, der accepterede dette som en del af organiseringen.

15: En anden del af organiseringen og en følelsesmæssig belastning, som blev accepteret, var den frivilliges følelse af relations-tab over for sine mentees som konsekvens af, at den sociale service som mentor var for blot et år.

16: City Year Londons frivillige havde ikke et særligt behov for generel dannelse til social etikette. Det var generelt en naturlig del af deres adfærd, eftersom de var blevet rekrutterede som ressourcestærke og med god situationsfornemmelse. Når de alligevel blev gjort opmærksom på, at de forventedes at leve op til social etikette, støttede dette deres selvfølelse.

⁵⁷ Reciprocation

17: De frivillige observeredes at overtage City Year Londons værdisæt. Det gav dem en større følelse af et defineret selv i forhold til familie og venner uden for organisationen. Lejlighedsvis, i tilfælde af for megen modstand fra venner, tilskyndte dette til den frivilliges personlige refleksion over og aktive oprydning i hans eller hendes venskabskredse.

18: Den universalistiske idé, sammen med ”uendelig” reciprocitet, tager sit udgangspunkt i vores fælles fysiske og biologiske grundlag, som også foreslået af Polanyi.

19: Med deres tilstedeværelse i organisationen, støttedes de frivillige i processen at konvertere elementer af personlig historie og kreativ intention til værdifulde og synlige genstande, som blev omsættelige.

20: I denne proces, blev deres potentiale som for eksempel mentorer objektiverede og afhændet, løsrevet fra et spontan åbent fællesskab, hvor ideer dyrkedes og behandledes gennem humor og andre former for spontan uformel social feedback.

21: De frivilliges intentioner og overvejelser om at blive rigtig voksne var en motivationsfaktor for dem i forhold til at engagere sig i City Year London. Således syntes de aktivt at have valgt deres egne positive rollemodeller ved at søge optagelse i programmet.

22: Både de involverede skoler og organisationen havde potentiale til at definere sig selv tydeligere som læringsarenaer for de frivillige. Øget opmærksomhed på denne rolle vil yderligere kvalificere det medfølgende ansvar.

23: City Year London som et pædagogisk arena og frivillig organisation kan forstås som fremmende socialt iværksætteri.

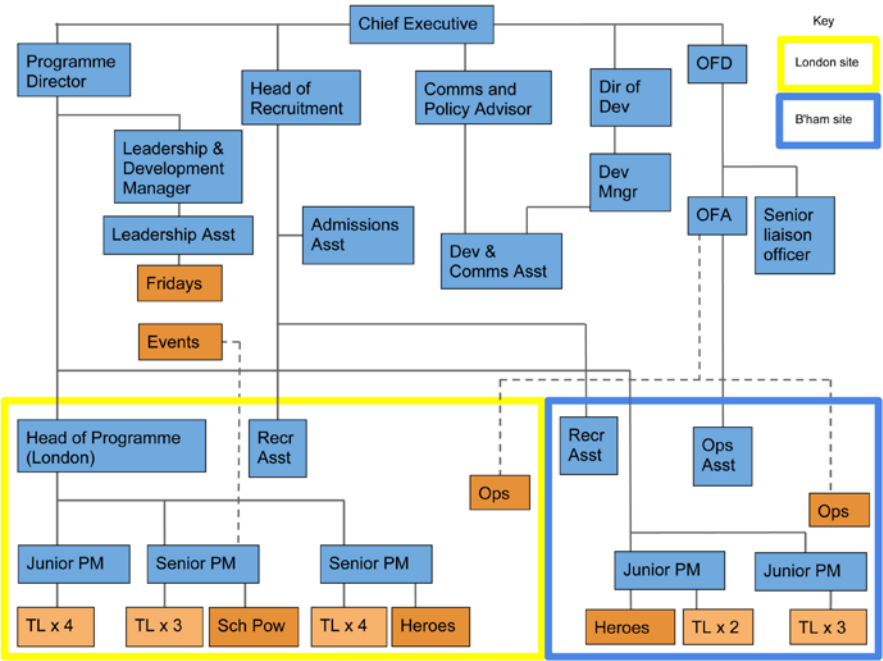
24: Yderligere legitimering af frivillige sociale organisationer som læringsarenaer vil drage fordel af supplerende perspektiver fra for eksempel pædagogisk psykologi og arbejdslivsforskning.

25: Processen med at rekruttere frivillige, selv om eksklusionsprocesser er udeladt som analytisk fokus i denne afhandling, syntes værdifuld til City Year London som et konstruktivt og velintegreret fællesskab, hvor samarbejdet mellem de frivillige og ansatte var effektivt.

26: Frivillige organisationer der har til hensigt at indgå i tværsektorielle samarbejder kan drage fordel af at dyrke og tydeligt udtrykke deres værdier som en del af deres synliggørelsesprocesser.

Appendix section

1: City Year London organogram



2: Data collection overview

Date/place	Activity	Content and method	Data
29/3-11: RUC	CR presents project via email to LS2.		
11/4-11	CR emails a reminder of email previously sent.		
12/4-11	LS1 emails apology and reply.		
13/4-11	CR calls LS1 to arrange meeting.		
12/5-11	CR confirms appointment on May 20 th 10AM by email.		
20/5-11: Is- lington, Lon- don	Meeting with LS1	Conversation and clarification of collaboration	Field notes
27/5-11: RUC	CR mails draft of planned field work in City Year London to SL1.		
3/6-11	Receives email from LS1 that the schools have received the plan and reply is awaited.		
17/6-11	Receives email from LS1 informing her that the schools have denied access to her presence. Further help is offered.		
21/6-11	Phone conversation with LS1	Re-negotiation of field work	Field notes
22/6-11	Mail from LS1 with activity calendar 2011-12. A remark that the schools might be approachable after all.		
27/6-11	CR mails revised field work plan to LS1.		
28/6-11	Receives email from LS1 that the schools are increasingly approachable along with an invitation to join a two-day volunteer training session at an activity and adventure centre in Essex near London called "Stubbers". Offer to follow the volunteers in their period of work shadowing their mentors.		
22/8-11: CYL office and school A	Welcome, physical service (school A), crazy teams allocation/Icebreakers, CY mission, expectations and guides.	First day in the field. Observation	Field notes
23/8-11: CYL	CEO welcome, meet the staff, expenses, office introduction, inspirational standards,	Observation	Field notes

	PITW intro.		
24/8-11:	Power and idealism, skitting, American corps members visiting, “Crossing the line”, corps members travel to “Stubbers”.	Observation/participant (Crossing the line)	Field notes
25-26/8-11: “Stubbers Activity and Adventure Center”, Upminster Essex, Greater London.	Team building course, Idealist Journey #1, Leadership Compassing, physical training practice, quizzes.	Observation/participant (leadership compass)	Field notes, photographs
30/8-11: Barnard Park, CYL office	Unity Rally in Barnard Park, writing bios, “Will you be the one?”, uniforms given out.	Observation	Field notes, PowerPoint slides
31/8-11:	Unity Rally in Barnard Park, writing bios, starfish showcase, presentation of board member, community mapping.	Observation	Field notes
1/9-11:	Unity Rally in Barnard Park, school teams and committees, education policies.	Observation	Field notes
2/9-11:	“Safeguarding and classroom training”, mentoring possibilities/“The Anatomy of Peace”, IJ #2.	Observation	Field notes, audio recording
6/9-11: School C	Volunteers’ first day with the children and	Observations	Field notes

	in classrooms.		
7/9-11: School C	Volunteers in classrooms, staff meeting.	Observations	Field notes
8/9-11: Barnard Park, CYL office.	Unity Rally in Barnard Park, classroom training, team goals, fundraising, Burberry: “presenting yourself”.	Observations	Field notes, audio recording
9/9-11: Barnard Park, CYL office	Unity Rally in Barnard Park, fundraising, testimonial training, what sponsors want, red jacket ceremony.	Observations	Field notes, audio recording
10/9-11: London primary school 1 (anonymized)	Community Action Day, painting and gardening.	Observation/participant	Field notes, photographs
12/9-11: School C	Volunteers in classrooms.	Observation	Field notes
13/9-11: House of Commons, Westminster Palace.	City Year London official opening day: networking.	Observation	Field notes, photographs
Leaving and re-entering the field			
7/10-11: CYL office	Finance and budgets, career exploration.	Observation/participant (panelist in career exploration)	Field notes, photographs
10/10-11: CYL, Clissold Leisure Centre	Meeting with S3 regarding selection of team A and CYL accessible activities, Hackney Schools Paralympic Championships	Clarifying meeting with staff, observation	Field notes
11/10-11:	Physical training with	Observation	Field notes

School D	children in play-ground.		
12/10-11: London primary school 2 (anonymized)	Community Action Day, painting and gardening	Observation/participant	Field notes, photographs
13/10-11: School B	Volunteers in classrooms, Starfish Club (after school activity by volunteers)	Observation	Field notes
14/10-11: CYL office	Follow-up meeting with LS3, how to debate, IJ#3, Aramark Olympic jobs presentation	Observation	Field notes, audio recording
19/10-11: Soc-cerdome Greenwich	PEF football tournament (fundraiser)	Observation	Field notes, photographs
20/10-11: School E	Following volunteer E6	Observation Interview (10 min)	Field notes, audio recording
Leaving and re-entering the field			
4/11-11: Barnard Park, CYL office	Place2B, "Luke's World", building resilience.	Observation	Field notes, audio recording
7/11-11: School A	Volunteers in classrooms, interviews: A4+A8	Observations, interviews	Field notes, audio recordings
9/11-11: CYL office	Interviews: SL3+TLD	Interviews	Audio recordings
10/11-11: School B	Volunteers in classrooms, interviews: A3+TLA	Observations, interviews	Field notes, audio recordings
11/11-11: CYL office	Debating, supporting children's reading	Observations, interviews	Field notes
Leaving and re-entering the field			
18/11-11: CYL	Myers Briggs person-	Observation/participant	Field notes,

office	ality typification, interview: LS2	(Myers Briggs personality typification), interview	audio recording
21/11-11: School A	Volunteers in classrooms, interview: A2+A7	Observation, interviews	Field notes, audio recordings
22/11-11: CYL office	Interviews: S2+S4+D2	Interviews	Audio recordings
23/11-11: London community center 1 (anonymized)	Community Action Day, painting and gardening	Observations/participant	Field notes
24/11-11: School B	Interview: A9	Interview	Audio recording
25/11-11: CYL office	Entrepreneurship, interview: A1	Observations, interview	Field notes, photographs, audio recording
29/11-11: School A	Volunteers in classrooms, interview: A5	Observations, interview	Field notes, audio recording
30/11-11: CYL office	Interview: LS1	Interview	Audio recording
1/12-11: School B	In school training session for volunteers by consultant, interview TLA	Observations, interview	Field notes, audio recording
2/12-11: Children's activity center 1 (anonymized)	Team G prepares for Community Action Day	Observations/participant	Field notes
3/12-11: Children's activity center 1 (anonymized)	Community Action Day, painting and gardening	Observations/participant	Field notes, photographs
23/3-12: Barnard Park,	Unity Rally, American board members visit-	Observations	Field notes

CYL office	ing		
14/7-11: London primary school 1 (anonymized)	Summer Festival arranged by CYL	Observations, informal interviews	Field notes
18/7-12: CYL office	Interview: D1	Interview	Audio recording
23/7-12: CYL office, graduation venue.	Nominations of the year, goodbyes, graduation ceremony, networking	Observations	Field notes

3: List of informants

Leading staff:

LS1; LS2; LS3

Staff:

S2; S3; S4

Board members:

BM1 (US); BM2

Volunteers, team leader and schools

Team A; team leader A (TLA); volunteers A1-A9; schools A+B

Team C: team leader C (TLC); volunteers C1-C10; school C

Team D: team leader D (TLD); volunteers D1-D3; school D

Team E: team leader E (TLE); volunteer E6; school E

Team F

Team G

Team H: team leader H (TLH); school H.

4: Corps member standards – Uniform

(CityYearLondon 2011): Uniforms make a powerful statement, of identity, responsibility, power, duty and accountability. A uniform transforms one young person out to change the world for a year into a part of a movement that is bigger than them and affects the lives of children and the community year after year. A uniform transforms an idealistic individual into a full-time member of a team, working together and pooling their strengths towards shared goals. A uniform transforms an anonymous citizen into an identifiable ambassador for active citizenship and makes them responsible and accountable for their conduct as a role model. A uniform helps amplify actions into symbols that inspire others to action.

At City Year we wear our uniform to convey an impression of professionalism, and to be visible in our community, and the uniform standards are designed to reflect that.

The 2011-12 uniform

Teams based in primary schools

One red all-weather jacket with detachable black fleece liner

One red bomber jacket

One red cotton sweatshirt with quarter-length neck zip

Four white crew neck team t-shirts

Two white short sleeved polo shirts

One pair of professional khaki trousers

One pair of physical service khaki trousers

One pair of Timberland boots

One pair of plain black plimsolls

One plain brown belt

Two name badges, one with magnetic fixing, one with pin fixing

One plain black rucksack

Teams based in secondary schools

One red all-weather jacket with detachable black fleece liner

One red bomber jacket
One red cotton sweatshirt with quarter-length neck zip
Two crew neck team t-shirts
Four white collared shirts

Uniform standards

To maintain a smart appearance there are four simple standards we always abide by when wearing the uniform:

1. *All or nothing.* The uniform brings with it a responsibility to live up to inspirational standards of behavior laid out in the next section, so a clear line needs to be drawn between times when we are recognisable as representatives of City Year, and when we are private citizens and able to make different choices. For that reason, we always wear either a whole uniform (uniform shoes, trousers and at least one layer of top) or entirely our own clothes – we never mix uniform and non-uniform parts.
2. *No accessories.* The uniform creates a visually impressive sight when corps members are together and when worn smartly leaves no doubt about our professionalism and seriousness about our mission. For that reason, when bad weather requires accessories of the corps member's own (gloves, hats, or scarves) they must be plain black and must not be worn indoors or at unity rally. No other accessories may be worn, and the City Year rucksack is the only acceptable bag to carry with uniform.
3. *Name on top.* The uniform makes us approachable, trustworthy and accountable people, and makes it easy for other people to work with us. For that reason, the name badge is worn at all times and must be worn on the outmost layer of clothing – that means moving it from jacket to sweatshirt, sweat to t-shirt, and back again, as we remove or add layers.
4. *Neat and tidy.* The way we wear and look after the uniform is a visual guide to the way we feel about ourselves and our service, and doing things properly, even the small things, is at the heart of City Year's philosophy. When we're in the uniform the way we dress expresses our respect for others and our self-respect. For that reason we make sure our clothing is clean and free of stains; we wash whites separately to keep them bright; keep our trousers relatively free of creases;

lace our shoes and zip up our tops; and keep our name badge straight.

Consequences

Wearing the uniform correctly is an essential part of the way City Year changes the world, and consequently an essential part of our service. Consistent failure by a corps member to meet the expected standards of dress will lead to City Year asking him or her to leave the programme.

5: Interview guides

Interview guide (Volunteers - corps members, senior corps members and team leaders)

[Personal data: name, age, team – confirm bio information]

Where did you first hear about CYL and why did you become involved?

Tell me about your CYL life. Examples: stories.

What do you want to give to CYL? To your community? (Whichever matters more).

Do you feel like you're living up to your expectations? CYL's expectations?

What do you feel like you've gained from volunteering with CYL so far? Professionally? Personally?

What do you think you're getting from CYL? Examples

What do you think about the statements: "Be the change you wish to see in the world" and "Give a year, change the world"?

Are you "Putting idealism into work"?

Do you have a personal 'motto' or value that you strive to live your life after?

How do you feel about your uniform? Examples

What do you think children need in society today? How do you deal with that?

If you were to give CYL a piece of good advice, what would it be?

Keywords for attention and probing:

Exchange-words: (action) give, take, receive/get, give back, value, present, ('objects'/concepts) worth, trust, time, effort, commitment.

Learning words: learn, teach, role model

Specific interviewee questions: TLA + TLD: (“successful volunteers”) life from volunteer to team leader, connection with everyday life, life before and after CYL?

Organizational interview guide (LS1+LS2)

What makes CYL a voluntary organization? What is your mission?

How is CYL organized? (organogram) – strengths and weaknesses?

What is it that CYL has to offer which is different from other (voluntary) organizations? Define.

What are the pros and cons of running an organization like this and how is that balanced?

Funding

How is CYL funded?

What would the ideal funding look like, what are you working towards?

Pros and cons with various sources of funding?

How does loss and profit affect the organization?

The volunteers/ target group

Tell me about the volunteers

Leadership and democracy

What sort of influence do board, staff and volunteers have and how is this practiced?

When making changes, how is this decided?

Is there a group or person who is especially important?

Value – economically (social)

Describe the values in CYL and how this is important.

What does it mean to the social environment in CYL?

Innovation

How do you implement new ideas in CYL? Why, why not? Examples: resources, time, facilitation, barriers, creativity.

Evaluation

How is CYL evaluated - what do you do and who do you report to? Externally or internally evaluated?

Personal

When did you first hear about City Year London and how did you become involved?

Tell me about your CYL life. Examples: stories.

What do you want to give to CYL? To your community? (Whichever matters more).

Do you feel like you're living up to your expectations? CYL's expectations?

What do you feel like you've gained from CYL so far? Professionally? Personally?

What do you think about the statements: "Be the change you wish to see in the world" and "Give a year, change the world"?

Are you "Putting idealism into work" and how?

Do you have a personal 'motto' or value that you strive to live your life after?

How do you feel about your uniform?

Your after CYL-life?

What is 'professionalism' to you?

6: Corps member standards

City Year corps members are role models in all aspects of their appearance and behavior. Children look up to them, and wider perceptions of the organisation, and of young people, are shaped by them.

In addition to being expected to live up to the standards of the uniform and attendance listed above, all corps members, when they join City Year, sign up to promise to inspire others through professionalism, consideration and civic mindedness throughout their year of service.

Corps members behave in ways that we would wish children and members of the public to behave, and in ways that project an image to potential employers of professionalism and readiness for the world of work. This takes the form of the following ten ‘do’s’ and ‘don’ts’ when in uniform or serving with City Year.

Do

- Always write in full sentences, using clear standard English, correctly spelled, capitalised and punctuated: and always speak clearly and grammatically without using slang.
- Maintain a high standard of personal hygiene, regularly trim nails and facial hair, brush hair, clean teeth, and apply deodorant.
- Cross the road carefully, using designated places. Whenever there are children nearby, or if there is moving traffic on the road, corps members must wait until signals indicate it is safe to cross.
- Give up your seat on crowded public transport, and quicken the flow of people out of situations by walking up the left-hand side of the escalator.
- Be ready and willing to help other people if they look like they need a hand.

Don’t

- Visibly chew gum, as it looks slovenly and, if not properly disposed of, creates litter.

- Buy or drink alcohol, as it encourages children to try it for themselves, impairing their development and potentially creating serious problems in the future.
- Buy or smoke cigarettes or visibly use any nicotine product, as it encourages children to try it themselves, at serious risk to their health.
- Swear or use sexually explicit words or images in public or around children, as children will copy you often without understanding the meaning of the words, and may use them in inappropriate ways.
- Wear headphones, dark glasses, a hood or other items that cut us off from others or make us anonymous in public areas where we may reasonably need to hear or see announcements, requests, or the needs of others – being in our own world makes public space less pleasant for others and makes us unresponsive and sometimes obstructive. (CityYearLondon 2010)

7: Ripples and joys

What is it?

A ripple is a brief, inspiring anecdote about an act of idealism (see founding story “Ripples” on page 67); a joy is the sharing of happy news or information.

How do you use it?

Sharing ripples and joys puts us in an inspired, positive frame of mind before tackling difficult work, helps us make a direct connection between our work and positive outcomes, and reminds us that small acts of idealism can have a powerful cumulative effect. They should be the very first agenda item of every meeting or gathering. (CityYearLondon 2011)

Founding stories – Ripples

Few will have the greatness to bend history; but each of us can work to change a small portion of the events, and in the total of all these acts will be written the history of this generation... It is from numberless diverse acts of courage... [and]... belief that human history is shaped. Each time a person stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centres of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

Robert F. Kennedy, Day of Affirmation address, University of Cape Town

Robert Kennedy’s words proved to be prophetic, and the ripples he and countless others created did in fact form a mighty current of change when white minority rule in South Africa finally ended in 1994. Our idealistic actions are not isolated. The cumulative effect of the work of many committed people and institutions can have a dramatic impact. (CityYearLondon 2011)

8: The Logo

THE LOGO

City Year

THE NAME represents the idea that a year of service should be part of every young person's life experience.



CY

THE LETTERING STYLE is a reference to the United States Civilian Conservation Corps of the 1930's, a historic predecessor of the modern American national service movement.



THE SUNBURST symbolises the release of energy, idealism, and human potential, with young people as the catalyst.



THE CIRCLES symbolise community and equality, as well as the strong circle structure teams use for communication. The openings in the outer circle symbolise an inclusive and welcoming community.



THE INNER RED CIRCLE symbolises energy, idealism and a warming force.



THE COMPASS POINTS showing the four cardinal directions—North, East, South and West—reflect the Native American belief that the meeting point of the four directions is a gathering place.



THE FOUR SEGMENTS represent the four seasons.



THE GROUPINGS OF SEVEN TRIANGLES in each segment represent the days of the week and the Native American belief that with every major decision, we should consider the impact on the next seven generations.



THE TWELVE YELLOW TRIANGLES represent the months of the year.



THE COLOURS symbolise the rainbow of backgrounds, cultures and experiences that come together at City Year to work for the common good.

9: What the volunteers thought they learned at City Year London

- Code-switching between roles and expectations
- Attention to lacks and needs – the heroic readiness
- Collaboration on the idea that diversity forms a whole
- “Slay your dragons” – get out of your shell
- Taking on the teacher’s role - adaptability
- Enthusiasm and extroversion – humor
- Personal mythmaking – self-awareness
- Persistence and punctuality – trust creating accountability
- Networking