To fly or not to fly: Analysing interpretive repertoires to negotiate air travel among individuals working for an environmental NGO in Sweden

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Abstract

With the global temperature rising and the fight to stay below a 2-degree global warming, environmentalists, environmental organizations and climate scientists are arguing that there is a need to reduce global carbon emissions to mitigate climate change. However, advocating for sustainable behaviour does not necessarily lead to performing sustainable behaviour. The purpose of this study is to explore how individuals that work for an environmental organization make sense of and negotiate air travel. This research takes a discourse analysis approach using 10 semi-structured interviews with employees working at an environmental organization in Sweden. Six broader interpretive repertoires to talk about and to negotiate air travel are identified: Flying is a norm, lack of alternatives, experience, type of travel, individual responsibility vs structural problem and technological inventions. The findings enhance our understanding of how environmentally aware individuals, even though sometimes in a contradicting manner, make sense of air travel and the maintenance thereof. These findings can be helpful for policy makers and environmental lobbyists to further understand the attitude-behaviour gap as well as for environmental policies targeting sustainable behaviour, specifically to reduce air travel.

Keywords: Attitude-behaviour gap, Air travel, Discursive psychology, Interpretive repertoires, Subject positions, Ecological privilege, Flyers dilemma.

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1. Introduction

Whether to fly or not to fly is a continuous debate among environmentalists (Anderson, 2013; Bendell, 2016; Geiling, 2014; Monbiot, 2006). Whereas some environmentalists argue that flying cannot be justified (Anderson, 2013; Kalmus, 2016), others claim that flying is an essential part of performing the work of an environmentalist (Bendell, 2016). In this research, I explore how individuals that work for an environmental organization make sense of and negotiate air travel. Individuals working with environmental questions are expected to join international conferences and seminars to stay up to date, share information and network. For example, the Paris climate conference in 2015 attracted approximately 50.000 visitors from all over the world, who emitted high amounts of CO_2 by travelling by air to, ironically, discuss how to globally mitigate climate change (Dailymail, 2015; Stockton, 2015). Air travel is the most environmentally detrimental method of transportation since it has the biggest climate impact per passenger kilometre compared to other methods of transportation (Nevins, 2014). Even though aviation currently accounts for only 3% of the greenhouse gasses in Europe, the global international aviation emissions are expected to increase 70% by 2020 compared to 2005 and 300%-700% by 2050 (European Commission, 2016). Worldwide, 34.8 million commercial flights were carried out in 2015 and this number is expected to increase (ATAG, 2016). In the European Union, there is a progressive growth of 4,7% air transport passengers between 2014 and 2015 with a total of 918 million passengers in 2015 (Eurostat, 2016).

With the global temperature rising and the fight to stay below a 2-degree global warming, environmentalists, environmental organizations and climate scientists are demanding a 50% - 85% reduction in global emissions by 2050 compared to 2000 in order to mitigate climate change (IPCC). Given the estimated emission growth from aviation, 'technology and management will not be sufficient to achieve even modest absolute emission reductions' (Gössling et al., 2010, p. 119). Instead, social and behavioural change reflected in sustainable consumption and means of transportation seem to be necessary to achieve the demand for carbon constrains and mitigation measures (Higham et al., 2014; Monbiot, 2006).

However, the problem is that advocating for sustainable behaviour does not necessarily lead to performing sustainable behaviour (Barr, 2004; Caruana et al., 2016). This phenomenon is called the attitude-behaviour gap, in which one's attitude does not correspond with one's behaviour. Research shows that people might have a pro-environmental attitude but nevertheless engage in unsustainable behaviour (Lacasse, 2016; McDonald et al., 2015; Whitmarsh and O'Neill, 2010). The discursive constructions used to deal with this inconsistency, paradox or perhaps friction between one's pro-environmental attitude and behaviour is what I find interesting and what is the focus of my study. Following this, the aim of this research is to explore how individuals working for an environmental organization make sense of and negotiate air travel. Air travel is chosen as a topic in this research because

several seemingly contradicting attitudes, arguments and appeals are likely to occur (Anderson, 2013; Bendell, 2016).

Furthermore, this study sheds light on how individuals who work to protect the environment position themselves in relation to air travel and elicits the discourses used to construct these positions. To study this, I use discursive psychology and its analytical concepts 'interpretative repertoires' and 'subject positions'. Interpretive repertoires are the discursive construction of reality and highlights how individuals talk about air travel. A subject position is conceptualized as the speaker's self-identity, a constructed account of oneself within the interpretive repertoires drawn upon (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Discursive psychology as well as the analytical concepts are discussed in detail in chapter 3.

The following research questions are asked in this research:
RQ 1. Which interpretative repertoires are used by individuals working at an environmental organization to make sense of air travel?
RQ 2. Which subject positions are constructed within the interpretative repertoires drawn upon regarding air travel?

The epistemological and ontological decisions in research determine how the world is viewed and how it is to be studied (Creswell, 2014). This research takes a social constructionist perspective to understand how people make sense of the world and how air travel is socially constructed through discourses. In this research, discourses are understood as situated and continuant social practises that are used as well as produced by people (Edley, 2001). Following this, this research does not provide the single reality of the world but instead, presents just one of the many possible discursive constructions.

Qualitative research on (un)sustainable behaviour has been widely covered but little empirical research has been devoted to take a qualitative perspective to understand inconsistencies in attitude and behaviour. In this research, I take a qualitative approach to create a deeper understanding of the discourses attached to air travel. What makes this research different from previous studies is that this research focuses on people who actively work for the environment in a paid job employed at the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSCN), Sweden's biggest environmental organisation. By analysing the interpretive repertoires used by environmentally conscious individuals, this study contributes to fill the gap in existing literature on (un)sustainable behaviour that primarily focus on (green) consumers and their decision-making process to either consume or to not consume in-store green products (Atkinson and Kim, 2015; Terlau and Hirsch, 2015; Rahbar et al., 2011). The discourse analysis approach applied in this research provides an alternative perspective on the attitude-behaviour gap concerning environmentally conscious individuals in their negotiation whether to fly or not to fly.

2. Literature review

What follows is an overview of previous studies to position my research within the field of (un)sustainable behaviour. The studies referred to in this chapter are not intended to be exhaustive, but instead serve to present important studies connected to this research.

2.1 Attitude-behaviour gap

It is argued that individuals need to be better informed about the consequences of their (in)actions to adopt pro-environmental behaviour (Lorenzoni et al., 2007). Hence, many environmental campaigns focus on creating awareness for environmental issues aiming to overcome the perceived 'information-deficiency' to ultimately enhance sustainable behaviour. However, the argument that people who are informed automatically engage in sustainable behaviour has been proven fallacious in other studies (Barr, 2004; Caruana et al., 2016; Lacasse, 2016). Much of the research conducted in the field of (un)sustainable behaviour study the attitude-behaviour gap to understand the problem that despite pro-environmental knowledge and attitude, individuals nevertheless engage in unsustainable behaviour (Caruana et al., 2016; McDonald et al., 2015; Terlau and Hirsch, 2015). In other words, what people say or believe does not translate to what people do. This inconsistency is referred to as the attitude-behaviour gap. Terlau and Hirsch (2015) argue that the attitude-behaviour gap exists due to the lack of individual environmental responsibility. Individuals feel that their behaviour does not make a difference and that they are not responsible for the health of the environment (Terlau and Hirsch, 2015). The question then is whether environmental mitigation is believed to be the responsibility of the individual or a societal responsibility and viewed as a structural problem (Dahl, 2014). Studies concerning the barriers to adopt pro-environmental behaviours have found that practicalities such as time constrains and income make people feel that they are unable to engage in pro-environmental behaviours or to adopt sustainable alternatives (Barr, 2004; Hibbert et al., 2013; Terlau and Hirsch, 2015).

The existing literature on the attitude-behaviour gap is extensive and focuses particularly on ethical and sustainable consumption to understand the gap between the number of people who claim to purchase eco-labelled products in relation to the actual amount of those products sold (Atkinson and Kim, 2015; Chatzidakis et al., 2007; Terlau and Hirsch, 2015). Most these studies are found in business management journals and aim to develop marketing techniques to promote and influence further green purchase behaviours.

2.2 Flyers dilemma

In relation to air travel, Higham et al. (2014) introduce the 'flyers dilemma' which conceptualizes the conflict that exists for individuals who on the one hand are concerned about the climate condition but on the other hand experience personal benefits connected to their air travel. Even though the excessive amount of flying, or 'binge flying' (Cohen et al.,

2011), is in stark contrast to the individual's pro-environmental attitude, people do not seem to change their behaviour (Higham et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2015). The flyers dilemma, it has been argued, is based on the feeling of guilt; an internal and cognitive feeling that is caused by a sense of responsibility for the climate's condition (Hesz and Neophytou, 2012; Higham et al., 2014). Furthermore, Hesz and Neophytou (2012) argue that discourses in society have shifted from fear of the melting Antarctic ice glaciers to feeling guilty about the situation. One precondition of the guilt feeling is that the individual must be aware of the damaging environmental consequences: 'guilt is something we take on ourselves, due to our understanding of a situation and our role in it, and something that can only be removed when we ourselves feel we have justified its removal' (Hesz and Neophytou, 2012, p. xiv).

Whereas some studies conceptualize the flyers dilemma as a self-identity conflict (Higham et al., 2014) or understand frequent flying as an addiction (Cohen et al., 2011), Young et al. (2014) are critical towards these conceptualizations based on individual responsibility. They argue that by doing so, responsibility is moved away from the environmentally destructive aviation industry. Instead, they focus on the structural reproduction of the flyers dilemma. In order to resolve the flyers dilemma, one must focus on 'the structural causes and historical contexts of the flyers' dilemma, rather than its individuals psychological effects' (Young et al., 2014, p. 61).

2.3   Rationalizations: neutralization techniques and cognitive dissonance

Several studies explored the way that environmentally conscious individuals try to reconcile their guilt when engaging in unsustainable behaviour. For example, some studies looked at the use of neutralization techniques to justify unethical consumption (Chatzidakis et al., 2007) or car use (Uba and Chatzidakis, 2016). The central question addressed is how people justify their behaviours while being aware of the negative environmental consequences. Neutralization techniques were originally used to identify justifications of norm-violating and illegal behaviour, often applied within the field of criminology, and therefore argued not to be suitable to be applied in cases concerning legal behaviours (McDonald et al., 2015). Instead, McDonald et al. (2015) looked specifically into air travel behaviour of self-identified green consumers with the use of cognitive dissonance theory to find ways of rationalizing unsustainable behaviour. They studied how individuals compromise and rationalize air travel by looking at the cognitive processes involved assuming, in accordance with cognitive dissonance theory, that individuals will try to dismiss or lower the cognitive inconsistency when dealing with unsustainable behaviour. Changing other behaviours to compensate for flying and justifications related to individual self-image were found in the research (McDonald et al., 2015).

2.4   Identity

The idea that pro-environmental identity serves as a motivator for sustainable behaviour is argued in a quantitative study concentrated on UK residents by Kashima et al. (2014). In this research, environmental identity is divided between mundane environmentalism and environmental striving which can complement each other. Whereas mundane environmentalism is linked to a broad spectrum of environmentally friendly behaviour, environmental striving is based on the intrinsic motivation to act pro-environmentally and is deeply rooted in ones' identity, resulting in more challenging pro-environmental behaviour (Kashima et al., 2014). According to their study, individuals who show environmental striving are likely to behave consistently to their pro-environmentally identity. This notion refutes earlier research by Barr et al. (2009) which focused on how pro-environmentally lifestyles are translated in a holiday context. Whereas Kashima et al. (2014) argue for a certain spill-over effect of environmental behaviour, assuming that engagement in one sustainable behaviour will spill over to other behaviours, Barr et al. (2009) state that this is often not the case when comparing sustainable home-based behaviour and tourism-related behaviour. Therefore, they argue that policy makers must focus on taking a holistic view when framing environmental life-styles including the different practices in various contexts.

Moreover, in a survey about green identity and green living, Whitmarsh and O'Neill (2010) found that well-educated individuals with high income and pro-environmental attitudes are often flying the most and use carbon-offsets to compensate for their emissions. This results in the paradox that people who use carbon offsets are more likely to fly than non-carbon offset users (Whitmarsh and O'Neill, 2010). An explanation can be found in the qualitative study by Randles and Mander (2009) which states that individuals with pro-environmental attitudes compensate or balance their emissions with other sustainable behaviours such as biking to work, buying ecological (vegetarian) food etc. According to Lacasse (2016) this is part of a negative spill-over in which self-identified environmentalists feel like they already 'do good' in other situations. Due to their pro-environmental behaviours in the past, the identity of being an environmentalist becomes stronger which makes other unsustainable behaviour seem less bad and decreases the feelings of guilt (Lacasse, 2016).

According to an online survey conducted in the United States, Attari et al. (2016) found that climate researchers should 'practise what they preach' (p. 337) since a high carbon footprint affects one's credibility and advice to reduce carbon emissions. Carbon emission reduction from energy consumption, air travel and public transportation were measured in the study. As a result, individuals are trusting the advice of climate researchers with a low carbon footprint related to conserving home energy consumption. Air travel on the other hand was found to influence one's credibility less. This can be explained by the fact that air travel is often ignored or not considered part of the climate change problem (Gössling and Peeters, 2007; Lassen, 2010).

2.5   Ecological privilege

Despite the increase of low budget airlines, air travel is still perceived to be enjoyed mainly by higher income social groups (Randles and Mander, 2009; Whitmarsh and O'Neill, 2010). Air travel, ecologically the single most damaging individual consumption, requires unequally available amounts of environmental and human resources (Nevins, 2010, 2014). Therefore, Nevins (2010, 2014) perceives air travel as an ecological privilege. A critical stance is taken by Nevins (2014) towards the participation of individuals in faraway meetings, conferences and seminars and their contribution to climate change and the socioecological injustice of flying there. He argues that, as with many privileges, ecological privilege is invisible to the privileged and therefore the ethical and ecological implications of air travels are rarely discussed. Nevins (2014) focuses on the ecological cost of academic travel by geographers which led to uncomfortable discussions and confrontations with the ecologically privileged. The result of the study shows that participants often highlight the importance of their work to justify their travels. Additionally, whereas many seemed offended, responded defensively or made jokes to change the conversation, only a small number of participants acknowledged the need for their ecological foot print reduction (Nevins, 2014).

My study is built upon, and shaped by, the existing knowledge of the studies presented in this literature review. I critically reflected the developments in the field of (un)sustainable behaviour research and considered different theories. I will now move on to present the theory and the analytical concepts used in this research that helped me interpret the empirical data.

3. A discourse approach

There is no such thing as a single approach to discourse analysis. Instead, discourse analysis can take many forms with different meanings attached (Taylor, 2013). The wide variety of philological and theoretical perspectives within discourse analysis defines what a discourse is and how to analyse discourses (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2011). In this research, discourse is defined as a concept that 'refers to the fact that particular ways of talking make particular descriptions of the world possible and available' (Dahl, 2014b, p. 354). Additionally, discourses are helpful to understand how people make sense of themselves and the way they behave (Taylor, 2013). Taking a discursive approach in my research determines the way I conduct my research and has consequences for the questions asked, the methods and analytical tools used and the conclusions drawn. Going beyond being a tool to analyse language use in interview transcripts, a discourse approach is seen as a complete package in which methodological perspectives are intertwined with theory and method (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2011; Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Therefore, in what follows is a brief description of the standpoints taken in this study.

3.1   Discursive psychology

In this research, discursive psychology is applied as a theory and a method to explore how individuals that work at an environmental organization make sense of air travel. Discursive psychology is a counter reaction to cognitive social psychology and takes a social constructionist perspective in which language plays an active role in creating and altering our world, our identities as well as our social relations (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2011). In other words, discourse and social practises are bound together as language itself is understood as a form of action. Understanding language as social action is in stark contrast to the idea that language is a resource, used like a mirror that neutrally reflects what is going on inside people's minds, as assumed in traditional social psychology (Wetherell and Potter, 1988).

According to Wetherell and Potter (1988) the concepts 'function', 'construction' and 'variation' are interconnected components in discourse analysis since 'the principle tenet of discourse analysis is that function involves construction of version, and is demonstrated by language variation' (p.33). Besides seeing language as action oriented e.g. to justify, to request, to apologize, Wetherell and Potter (1988) also consider the unintentional consequences that arise in speech as part of the performing dimension of language. Specific vocabulary is often used to fulfil each language function and language is used to construct versions of reality. However, depending on the language functions addressed, different constructions are made possible. After all, a variety of accounts can be used to describe the same phenomenon. In other words, the variability of discourses is a consequence of the different language functions (Wetherell and Potter, 1988). Discursive psychology focuses on identifying these language functions that individuals use to construct their social world (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2011). However, identifying language functions is a matter of interpretation from the analysist and an understanding of the context is needed (Wetherell and Potter, 1988).

Other discourse analysis approaches and theories were considered for this study. However, discursive psychology was chosen due to its acknowledgement of the variation in language use and identity. Individuals display their social world in different and sometimes seemly inconsistent ways. Whereas other theories such as cognitivism try to avoid such inconsistencies, discursive psychology treats variability in speech as a research finding in which different language functions are used (Wetherell and Potter, 1988). Cognitive dissonance theory, for example, states that individuals always strive for consistency in their thinking. In this theory, experiencing inconsistency between attitude and behaviour is considered to result in an unpleasant cognitive state that people try to avoid or reduce whereas discursive psychology sees it as natural occurring (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2011). Additionally, both theories: cognitivism and cognitive dissonance theory, are often applied in conjunction with experimental research methods to identify universal cognitive processes to explain social action (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2011) which is not considered to be a suitable method to use to achieve the aim of this research.

Additionally, attitude research based on cognitive social psychology assumes that attitudes determine individual behaviour (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2011). However, discursive psychology critiques the idea that attitudes result from individual cognitive structures and instead argues that attitudes are constructed through social interaction (Wetherell and Potter, 1988). Discursive psychology, as elaborated by Potter and Wetherell (1987), uses interpretive repertoires and subject position as analytical tools to identify discourses and to emphasize the social and political consequences of these discursive constructions in social interaction. I will now turn to briefly describe these analytical tools.

3.2   Interpretive repertoires

The concept of interpretive repertoires was first introduced in a study carried out by Gilbert and Mulkay in 1984 and was later picked up by Potter and Wetherell (1987). In this current study, interpretive repertoires are defined as 'the building blocks speakers use for constructing versions of actions, cognitive processes and other phenomena' (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p.168). According to Potter and Wetherell (1987) interpretive repertoires are used to perform a range of social practises and construct reality. In other words, what is possible to say about a topic and what is not is determined by the possibilities and limitations of interpretive repertoires. For example, when people make sense of air travel and negotiate their behaviour, a number of interpretive repertoires are possible to construct a certain reality (Wetherell and Potter, 1987). In this study, I use interpretive repertoires to explorer the ways individuals talk about air travel and discursively construct a reality that makes sense for them.

Discourse and interpretive repertoires are two concepts that are closely linked but are divided by their methodological and conceptual standpoints within discourse analytical work. In poststructuralist discourse analysis, influenced by the ideas of Foucault, discourses are typically used to present the production of complete institutions and practises e.g. 'medicine' or 'science'. Discourses are often seen as fixed ways of talking that exist 'out there' in society, adopting the view of people being subjected to the hegemonic discourse (Edley, 2001). The concept of interpretative repertoires is used in discursive psychology to emphasise people's agency in language flexibility when engaging in social interaction (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2011). In other words, discourses are constructed and thus can change in social interaction and 'people are, at the same time, both the products and the producers of discourse' (Edley, 2001, p. 190). Moreover, interpretive repertoires are often more fragmented and resolve around smaller distinctive ways of speaking compared to the broad discourses as in the Foucauldian perspective (Edley, 2001). In this research, interpretive repertoires are therefore useful as an analytical tool to identify the (in)consistencies and the variability of accounts in talk about air travel.

3.3   Subject positions

This study uses the concept of subject positions as an analytical tool to position the individual's identity inherent in the interpretive repertoires to make sense of themselves while negotiating air travel. Discursive psychology holds a social constructionist perspective in which 'minds, selves and identities are formed, negotiated and reshaped in social interaction' (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2011, p. 10). In other words, meaning is created through language and it is through the on-going everyday discursive practises that individuals position themselves and identity is constructed (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). Due to the variety in people's talk, multiple, and sometimes incoherent, self-identities can coexist (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2011). This is in stark contrast to the individualized perspective of identity in Western psychology which assumes that an individual has a single and fixed identity (Edley, 2001). According to Western psychology individuals confronted with inconsistencies within the way they think and talk are often defensive or embarrassed or can experience a so called 'identity crisis' (Edley, 2001). Whereas in traditional Western psychology identity is seen as an entity and focus lies on finding the true nature of identity, a language based approach on the other hand is concerned with the question of how identity is constructed in discourses as well as the social implications for the speaker (Potter and Wetherell, 1987).

Discursive psychology, as developed by Potter and Wetherell (1987), combines the idea that self-identity is a result of, and restricted by, a specific discourse with the notion that self-identity is also a resource and created through interaction to fulfil social action. In discourse analysis, the concept of subject position elicits the possibilities and the restrictions for individuals to understand themselves (Potter and Wetherell, 1987). In other words, subject positions are formed in relation to the interpretative repertoire drawn upon. According to Jørgensen and Phillips (2011) a subject position within discursive psychology is 'viewed as an integral part of the processes by which people construct accounts of themselves in interaction with others' (p.110).

Different interpretive repertoires can be drawn upon that maintain a certain subject position whereas others can cause friction in which the subject position is likely to change. To illustrate this, Jørgensen and Phillips (2011) explain that an individual can take a consumerist position within the consumer interpretive repertoire that highlights the importance of individual freedom of choice and low prices. However, a conflict of self-identity is likely to arise when the same individual constructs an environmentalist position and engages in an environmental interpretive repertoire, in which shopping is understood as a waste of scarce resources. This shows that from a discursive psychology point of view, the concept of subject position is important as individuals make certain identities possible connected to the interpretive repertoire drawn upon (Edley, 2001). In this research, identifying subject positions inherent in the interpretive repertoire is of importance to explore how individuals negotiate air travel and which subject positions are available to do so.

4. Method

A discourse analysis based on interview transcripts is applied in this research. In this chapter, a description of the research method and data analysis is presented. Furthermore, the role of the researcher in conducting this study is discussed as well as the ethical implications involved.

4.1 Interviews

Ten semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were conducted with individuals working at the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC). The semi-structured nature of the interview allowed the individuals to talk freely about their view on air travel and with the aim to create the opportunity for other issues to arise which I as a researcher had not thought about beforehand (Silverman, 2015). Interviews were carried out during January 2017 – March 2017.

All interviews were held in English. Even though all participants could express themselves in English, I do acknowledge that conducting interviews in another language than the mother tongue can affect the interviewees' responses. In a few cases, interviewees were encouraged to say certain words or expressions in their mother tongue to continue the flow of the interview. These were translated to English when transcribing the interview. From the ten interviews, three interviews were conducted online via a Skype video call. The other seven interviews were conducted face to face, of which six at the SSNC office in Stockholm and one in Gothenburg.

In this research, I acknowledge that respondents can have multiple interpretations of air travel which can co-exist and which are context-bound. Discourses are socially constructed in interaction with others and are negotiable and able to change (Cruickshank, 2012; Potter and Wetherell, 1987). In this light, conducting focus groups might seem a suitable research method to explore how discourses around flying are constructed in discussion with others (Silverman, 2015). However, I agree with Cruickshank (2012) who argues that a focus group can be a disadvantage when dealing with potentially socially uncomfortable issues. Due to the potential risk of peer pressure occurring in focus group, individuals might exaggerate their environmentally friendly behaviour or follow a certain socially favorable opinion within the group (Cruickshank, 2012). Therefore, individual in-depth interviews are chosen in this research as an appropriate research method. Nevertheless, despite creating a save environment for the interviewee to speak freely, I am aware that conducting interviews does not rule out the possibility that the individual can feel uncomfortable talking about sensitive topics which might influence the answers given (Silverman, 2015).

4.2 Participants

A purposive sampling was used to select interview participants based on the research interest. First contacts were established by contacting SSNC employees via their publicly available work email. The initial email included a brief description of the researcher's background, the topic of the research study and a request for an interview. In line with the snowball sampling technique, participants were asked to recruit colleagues that might be interested to participate in an interview (Creswell, 2014). A disadvantage of using a snowball sampling is that the first contact has an influence to select the other participants in the research (Silverman, 2015). To avoid such a community bias, several employees from the SSNC office in Stockholm as well as from the office in Gothenburg were selected and contacted by the researcher.

From the participants, 6 are employed at the office in Stockholm and 4 participants are working in the office in Gothenburg. The age of the participants range from 24 to 49 and working experience at SSNC ranging from 6 months up to 22 years. All interviews were audio recorded with approval of the interviewee and ranged from 30 minutes up to an hour. Furthermore, anonymity was granted to all participants by the researcher (see 4.5 Ethical implication). Therefore, participants are numbered according to the number of interviews conducted e.g. participant 1, participant 2, etc.

4.3 Data analysis

Taking a social constructionist perspective in my study, the interview is understood as a process in which reality is constructed by the interviewee and the interviewer (Silverman, 2015). To stress the importance of the role of the interviewer, interviews were fully transcribed including the questions asked and comments given by the interviewer. All the interview transcriptions were checked with the original recording to enhance the quality of the transcriptions. Discursive psychology was used to analyse and interpret the empirical data. The data analysis was an on-going process throughout the research project. The data analysis and data collection were done simultaneously. First, a few interviews were conducted, fully transcribed and coded inclusively, meaning that everything related to unsustainable behaviour and air travel was included in the analysis. After re-reading the interview transcripts, codes where placed in categories that formed emerging themes. Then, more interviews were conducted and analyzed, going back and forth between different interview transcripts until a pattern was found in the identified themes and no new themes were expected to occur (data saturation).

During the analysis, the concept of interpretive repertoires and subject positions were used as analytical tools in line with a discursive psychological approach that emphasizes the role of language to construct social reality. Seeking for regular patterns to identify interpretive repertoires and subject positions does not follow a strict and fixed set of rules. Instead, this process is a craft skill based on the researcher's intuition and interpretation to connect or remove certain speech acts (Wetherell and Potter, 1988). Being familiar with the data is

recommended to help identify interpretive repertoires (Edley, 2001). For example, the interpretative repertoire 'flying as an experience' was identified through iterative reading of the interview transcripts while focusing on the variability in people's account when talking about air travel. Whereas air travel was often connected to unsustainable behaviour, a variation was found when people talked positively about air travel due to the connected personal travel experience. The 'flying as an experience' interpretive repertoire consists of different facets e.g. flying to see friends and family and/or to learn about new cultures.

The multiple self-identities that become apparent when people talk about themselves in different roles e.g. as an employee at SSNC, as a parent, as an environmentalist etc. are not seen as a problem. Instead, the construction of different and often inconsistent interpretations and identities involved in discourses concerning air travel are presented as research findings (Wetherell and Potter, 1988). Whereas in a realist approach the aim is to look for consistency (Silverman, 2015) in this research, consistency in the responses might indicate a lack of diverse interpretive repertoires and subject positions (Cruickshank, 2012; Potter and Wetherell, 1987). This has implications for the way interview data is analysed, since I am interested in the variability of interpretive repertoires used through which respondents construct their social practises.

4.4 Reflexivity

The way I see the world and by the epistemological and ontological perspectives I take, is a characteristic of qualitative research and is present throughout the entire research process (Creswell, 2014). Besides defining the research problem, as a researcher I also decided upon the method appropriate to collect data, how I analysed and interpreted the data and subsequently drew conclusions. Throughout this process, my personal values, ideas, background, education and previous experiences played a role (Creswell, 2014; Mauthner & Doucet; 1998). Whom (not) to contact, which questions (not) to ask, which issues (not) to focus on etc. are all decisions made, even though sometimes unconsciously, by the researcher and consequently shaped this research.

Therefore, a brief introduction of the researcher seems fit. This research is conducted by a student of the master program Environmental Communication and Management in Uppsala, Sweden. Identifying myself as an environmentalist, I continually think about the environmental impact of the choices I make. Air travel is just one of them. I have studied, worked and lived in 5 different countries, flew back and forth to see friends and family while knowing the environmental impact of aviation and yet, I still call myself an environmentalist. Due to my personal interest in this subject and the struggle I find myself in when I fly, communication with the respondents about what seems a sensitive topic, became informal. Experiences and dilemmas were shared by the respondents as well as by myself. Furthermore, data collection and data analysis were performed by myself, the researcher.

4.5 Ethical implications

The attitude-behaviour gap involves a certain friction between on the one hand what people believe and on the other hand what people do. In my opinion, this friction can be experienced as uncomfortable and unpleasant to discuss. It is therefore important to keep in mind that people might not want to admit certain behaviours that are contradicting their attitude and/or the organization's values. With this ethical consideration in mind, the interviewees are anonymised. Additionally, securing anonymity of the interviewees can help to create trust between the individuals and the researcher which benefits the validity of the research (Silverman, 2015). Even though some interviewees were indifferent towards the need to secure their identity, anonymity for all interviewees was decided by the researcher for the sake of coherence and to limit the ways in which this research can cause any unintentional harm to the participants.

5. Results

In this chapter I present the empirical findings of this research. This chapter starts by presenting the identified interpretive repertoires and calls attention to deviant cases to answer RQ 1: *Which interpretative repertoires are used by individuals working at an environmental organization to make sense of air travel?* The analysis shows that certain subject positions were available to the respondents to construct their self-identity as well as to make sense of air travel in conjunction with the interpretive repertoire(s). In the second part of this chapter the identified subject positions inherent to the interpretive repertoires are presented responding to RQ 2: *Which subject positions are constructed within the interpretative repertoires drawn upon regarding air travel?*

5.1 Interpretive repertoires

Throughout the interview transcripts, 6 interpretive repertoires emerged when talking about air travel: Flying is a norm, lack of alternatives, experience, type of travel, individual responsibility vs structural problem and technological inventions. In what follows is a presentation of the interpretive repertoires identified in my analysis.

5.1.1 Flying is the norm

One of the repertoires found across the empirical data is the notion that flying is a norm in current Western societies. Flying is something that is normalized as it has become an easy and cheap mode of transportation to travel from one place to another. Respondents reported that short-haul flights, providing the possibility for weekend city trips abroad, as well as national in-bound flights, are common in Sweden and other Western societies. A distinctive way that the respondents talked about air travel resembles a norm whereby air travel is hardly talked about or questioned in daily life: *'This is the first time I have this conversation. I haven't sat down and properly spoken about my flying with anyone (...) I think, I don't know*

about others but if this is such an unusual conversation for me then we maybe we talk too little about this in society.' (Respondent 8). Furthermore, the repertoire of flying as a norm was found when respondents talked about holidays and the reaction they received from people when going abroad: *'I went to Tenerife. No one would say 'oh did you fly?'. No one would actually do that and that's maybe scary too'* (respondent 7). To say that it is 'maybe a bit scary too' indicates a certain critical perspective to the construction of air travel as something normal and that consequently people do not think about or even ignore air travel as an unsustainable behaviour.

The critique to the 'flying is the norm' repertoire was shared by respondent 9 who questioned the current situation in which the experience of working and/or living abroad counts as something positive: *'Even environmentalist, environmental organization would give you a job because you have the experience and wouldn't even question you, why you flew, isn't that strange? [laughs].'* The empirical data shows that questions around reasons to fly instead of choosing other modes of transportation often remained uncalled for within this repertoire. However, as highlighted previously, respondent 9 found the common way of talking about flying as a norm 'strange' and believed that especially environmental organizations should question or criticise this norm.

Other individual unsustainable behaviours such as eating meat or driving a petrol engine car were mentioned by the respondents to compare or contrast air travel with other unsustainable life style behaviours. According to some respondents, flying was perceived to be more of a norm than meat consumption among environmentally concerned individuals. Three respondents gave the situation in their office as an example where colleagues feel free to share their travelling stories involving air travel but would not feel comfortable to bring a meat containing lunchbox to work. It can be understood as if eating meat is criticized among environmentally conscious individuals who are aware about the unsustainability of the current meat industry and therefore question the consumption of meat. Air travel on the other hand was talked about as the only way to travel long distances and the respondents, even though they are aware of the environmental damaging consequences, nevertheless continue travelling by air. To illustrate this, respondent 7 explained that when talking to colleagues about her/his recent holiday, the mode of transportation was ignored. Whereas it can be assumed that the respondent flew to Tenerife, it is not what was brought to attention nor questioned by his/her colleagues. Instead the holiday itself and the days spent abroad were topic of conversation.

Respondents also drew upon the 'flying is the norm' repertoire when talking about other people who do not fly and the option of living without air travel. Respondents 2 and 4 were currently not flying, a conscious decision made due to the aviation's environmental impact. A reoccurring issue talked they talked about was that people around them are often surprised about their decision not to fly. Both respondents 2 and 4 drew on the repertoire

acknowledging that flying is currently the norm. *'The norm must be changed, today it is the norm that it is ok to fly abroad, it is ok to, it is not ok to buy non-ecological bananas [laughs]. That is strange, so there is something has to change'* (respondent 4). Respondent 4 questioned the current air travel norm in the previous quote in contrast to other norms related to sustainable behavior, such as buying ecological food.

Additionally, during the interviews, the researcher asked about the respondents' opinion concerning Leonardo DiCaprio who is criticized for the extensive amount of flying while advocating for sustainable behaviour in his recent environmental movie 'Before the Flood'. The following quote represents how flying is a norm but that choosing not to fly, and thus go against the norm, is perceived as something positive: *If you could do that without flying of course, that would be, ah! Again, that would be really cool but it is like outside our way of thinking'* (respondent 8). Saying that not flying is 'outside our way of thinking' is part of the 'flying is the norm' repertoire. The possibility of travelling by other means was discussed but the option of not flying was not mentioned since not flying in this repertoire is connected to not being able to travel.

5.1.2   Lack of alternatives

A common explanation found across the interview transcripts for the reason why people fly instead of choosing other modes of transportation is due to the perceived lack of suitable alternatives. Air travel in this repertoire was talked about as a mode of transportation which is practical, reliable and low-priced in relation to other alternatives such as the train or bus. The economic discourse employed by the respondents included air travel being cheap but also touched upon the alternative mode of transportation being expensive which was clearly expressed by respondent 1: *'Well, but it costs a lot to go sometimes by the long distance trains and then I know people uhm maybe choose planes if it is cheaper or the car (...) sometimes the train ticket can cost 1000 Kronor one single way so, of course'*. Driven by the economic discourse, ending the sentence with 'so, of course' indicates that the respondent found it logic and self-explanatory that people choose air travel when alternative modes of transportation are more expensive.

Sweden, being the 3rd largest country by area in the European Union, has several in-bound flights that connect the south with the north. Additionally, there are train and bus connections that make it possible to travel from the north to the south and vice versa but these were commonly perceived to be very time consuming by the respondents. This notion is part of the practical discourse in which free time is valued because it is limited due to e.g. work or study. In my analysis, I found a difference within the discourse of practicality between talk related to travelling for business purpose and personal travels. When it comes to travelling related to holidays, a sub-repertoire of time constrain was used which determined the mode of transportation. Respondents claimed that having a job means that they cannot spend much time travelling by alternative modes of transportation such as the train or the bus due to

specific holiday time schedules: *'I went during the summer as well and there are trains but then I was writing my thesis and started working and didn't have that many days to go and actually spend there so then I booked a flight.'* (respondent 3). And *'I don't want to take the train because maybe I have 2 weeks or 1 week because I work too much and then I don't want to spend 48 hours in the train'* (respondent 10). Air travel was talked about as a way to save time which enables people to go on holiday. The time saving aspect of using airplanes to travel lies within the broader 'lack of alternatives' repertoire when negotiating air travel. However, when talking about business trips within Sweden, the train was highlighted by most respondents as a suitable way of transportation which can be explained due to the absence of time constrains. The travelling itself was then seen as part of the job.

Additionally, respondents drew upon a reliability discourse in which the railway company was negatively talked about which resulted in the perception that, in the current situation, trains are incompatible and unreliable compared to planes: *'There is a big need for investment in railway system in Sweden, it is really uh, it is not working very well (...) so you have a lot of failures of all kinds and people are not really trusting the railways'* (respondent 2). Discourses about the need of investment and the poor condition of the railway system suggest a support of the 'lack of alternatives' repertoire when negotiating air travel: *'I think many of my colleagues at least we want to be able to travel but we would be glad to travel by train if it is ok transport by train'* (respondent 1).

In addition to the rationales around time, convenience and costs for air travel, the need for policy change to address and to create transportation alternatives was stressed by respondent 6: '*Of course we need a policy change to make it easier for everyone to consume. I mean that is why it is difficult in Sweden not to fly because it is so cheap and yeah cheaper and more easy and everything'*. Policies to make trains more accessible were also addressed suggesting that the current situation provides a lack of alternatives and respondents see no other way than to take the plane: *'For instance me and my husband we, I think three or four times we went to Berlin by night train but we haven't done that for the last six or seven years because there isn't any night train anymore. Or maybe there is but just one or two months a year so now we have to fly'* (respondent 1). Additionally, respondent 2 pointed out the inconvenience of booking international train tickets in comparison with the ease of buying flight tickets: '*I mean, if I want to take a flight then I can go to random flight booking service and they will compare prices and give me the best route and it's done in [clicks fingers] five minutes. But booking the train takes a full day. It's so complicated'*. But even when the possibility was there to go by train, air travel was talked about as the preferred mode of transportation by most of the respondents due to the short journey time and low costs, as outlined earlier.

The demand for policy makers to provide proper alternatives for flying is part of the 'lack of alternatives' repertoires but overlaps with the interpretive repertoire which puts the responsibility of flying in the hands of the structure and the way society is build. In the latter

repertoire, flying is talked about as a structural problem instead of an individual responsibility. Even though the structural problem is connected to the demand for policy change, the repertoires are divided due to the difference in language functions. Whereas the policy demands discourse draws on the current lack of alternatives repertoire and focuses upon creating relevant alternatives for air travel, the repertoire presented in the next section connects policy change and the structures in society to argue that policy makers have the responsibility to create a change.

5.1.3 Individual responsibility vs structural problem

The question whether mitigating climate change is an individual or institutional and political responsibility varied among the respondents. The analysis shows that in several cases, these contradicting understandings were brought forward by the same respondent in different stages of the interview. Due to the specific way of talking about each notion, responsibility related to air travel is divided into separate interpretive repertoires. In the next section, the discursive construction of air travel as an individual responsibility is discussed which includes 2 sub-repertoires: 'guilt' and 'compensation and balancing carbon footprint' followed by the repertoire of flying constructed as a structural problem, and thus the responsibility of institutions and politicians.

Individual responsibility: guilt

The respondents talked about themselves as a consumer who has the choice to fly or not to fly. Within this interpretive repertoire, the respondents commonly talked about the internal struggle they experienced when flying and the psychological consequences involved such as feeling bad or guilty: *'Yes, for me it is a punishment to feel guilty. I feel horrible when I do take the flight. Instead of staying at home and looking at something in Sweden, take the train or something. I feel bad.'* (respondent 7). A degree of discomfort and guilt reoccurred in the empirical data when respondents negotiated air travel. As highlighted in the previous quote, respondents commonly blamed themselves and held themselves accountable for the flight emissions and the impact it has on the environment.

Within this repertoire, air travel was talked about as a personal decision to engage in unsustainable behaviour. Respondent 7 blamed her/himself and talked about forgiveness when discussing a recent trip: '*What is an important thing for people is to think before and forgive themselves. To think what I am actually doing, what is this flight going to lead in the environment? And then ok, I am prepared to take that punishment from the environment and forgive myself for doing it'*. Moreover, respondent 2 who deliberately chose not to fly also drew upon this repertoire when explaining his/her decision to stop flying*: 'Well, since the emissions from flying are unsustainably high, I mean if, if everyone would be flying, we would never ever be able to reach any climate target. We need to reduce flying and I can't really see how I could do it and feel good about it'*. The data analysis suggests that it is common

for the respondents to experience a certain bad conscience when flying due to their contradicting believes about protecting the environment. For respondent 2 this resulted into stop flying. However, for the respondents who continue flying, flying was seen as a dilemma. For example, respondent 6 works at the international office and therefor flying was talked about as being part of the job: *'We have to have some kind of control what they are doing is actually correct so we have to really have to have some kind of control to see to see in reality what's there. But that's a dilemma of course.'* The dilemma for respondent 6 described here can be understood as a friction between working for an environmental organization and support sustainable consumption while regularly engaging in unsustainable travels by air for business purposes.

However, a deviant case was found in which the amount of personal emissions or the carbon footprint that one causes by flying was not translated in a feeling of guilt. In the following case, respondent 9 also works for the international office of the organization and is required to fly to partner organizations abroad. Instead, irony was used by respondent 9 to avoid such a feeling of guilt when flying and stated that: *'I mean, it becomes a bit of a joke to see how many tons you released (...) I mean it is funny, and it is irony that we are supposed to be such great people but we fly.'* Even though the respondent was not having a bad conscious when flying, the possibility to have such feelings was implicitly addressed by claiming that 'great people don't fly', drawing upon the interpretive repertoire of individual responsibility. Implicitly employing the repertoire of individual responsibility and guilt was also expressed by respondent 10 who stated that '*You CAN fly. It is ok, you will not be a thief by flying. You will not be horrible person'*. By doing so, the respondent drew upon the notion that it is common among environmentalists and environmentally conscious individuals to feel bad or that people will judge you as a bad person when you do fly. This interpretive repertoire differs from the repertoire that was presented earlier in which air travel is discursively constructed as a norm but both are found to be often used in conjunction. In some cases, the 'flying is the norm' repertoire was used in an attempt to reduce one's bad conscience and guilt by distancing oneself from the individual responsibility for the environment's health.

Individual responsibility: compensation and balancing carbon footprint
The dilemma of flying was negotiated by many respondents with a comparison of other low carbon emission impact in one's lifestyle. Respondents that drew upon this repertoire of individual responsibility balanced their unsustainable behaviour like air travel with their sustainable daily life behaviour such as recycling, eating vegetarian/vegan, buying second hand clothes and/or using public transportation. It can be argued that these examples show that the respondents feel responsible to do the best they can for the environment. For example, respondent 3 said *'Then on the one hand I know that my other life choices; not eating meat, not consuming very much, biking to work, working at this organization that tries to make a difference, it could be seen as a way to, to tip the scale to some sort of balance and then I am*

not saying that that's how I defend it but that is something that I like could explain or make it easier for me to actually fly.'

Additionally, not only the personal carbon emissions were pointed out, comparisons of other people's emissions are made to negotiate flying: *'Then I, my emissions level are still lower than the average Swede I mean, even though I fly, 5 times a year'* (respondent 3) suggesting that the respondent lives a sustainable life when not considering the air travel. The level of one's carbon footprint seemed an important measurement for dividing individual unsustainable behaviour and sustainable behaviour. When looking at one's personal carbon emission in daily life compared to others in society, both respondent 7 and 8 allowed themselves to fly since they rarely fly and therefore, compared to frequent flyers, do not need to feel responsible for the small amount of carbon emission they emit. They further talked about people who frequently fly are more responsible for climate change than people who live a sustainable life and only fly rarely, in the case of respondent 8 this means once a year.

However, respondent 9 criticised people who try to balance their sustainable behaviour by saying that*: 'people they separate the garbage, they do all these small choices to, to prove the world and they feel good about themselves but then they go on, you know, on one day trip to the other side of the world, Thailand and you know they ruined all their garbage separation process for 100 years to come. They might as well not separate the garbage for 100 years and not go on that trip. I mean, we do a lot of silly, absurd things'.* By using 'you know' respondent 9 is referring to a repertoire that people are likely to understand, that of personal responsibility which is criticized. Moreover, respondent 9 also drew upon the guilt repertoire when saying that by doing rather small sustainable actions people feel good about themselves. The same criticism was given by respondent 6 regarding carbon off-set schemes in which the individual can pay off some amount of the carbon emissions that the flight emits. This scheme was not perceived by the respondent as a mean to balance one's personal carbon emission but instead it was interpreted as an easy way out to justify air travel and a risk for individuals to continue flying.

Structural problem
'You cannot say, 'no, no, no, you cannot do that' because everywhere our government, eh commercials, companies they are always doing commercials 'fly there, discover this'. If our governments are telling us to fly, spending money and people thinking like that, how can we go in and be like 'no no no', against the government? It's pretty hard because the actual responsibility is the government saying it's bad to fly or we have to have more expensive tickets or I don't know, some kind of tax or whatever.' (respondent 10). This example indicates a separate interpretive repertoire which was found across the empirical data in which the respondents interpret air travel part of a structural problem. In this repertoire, the respondents claim that people travelling by air should not be held personally accountable for the damaging effect on the environment. Constructing air travel as a structural problem elicits

talk about the need to change the structure to solve the current problem of increasing aviation and pollution. Within this repertoire, the respondents made sense of their flying by implying that the decision to fly is beyond their control. Instead, it is the structure and policies that need to change in order to mitigate climate change. This repertoire was also used by respondent 3 to make sense of why it is difficult not to fly by constructing unsustainable behaviours, such as air travel, as a structural problem: *'We are just humans and living in a structure, it maybe makes it too difficult to be perfect in every sense'*.

Connected to the financial discourse within the 'lack of alternative' repertoire, policy changes such as a tax increase on flights were brought forward by most of the respondents as an example of how the structure must change in order to act sustainably. For example: *'I do not understand at all why we don't have tax on everything. I mean (…) the only way to do this is to put more tax, it should be more expensive to buy things that are bad for the environment'* (respondent 6).

There is an inconsistency among the respondents' answers regarding air travel as an individual responsibility or a structural problem. Seemingly contradicting repertoires were often used in conjunction. For example, respondent 2, despite consciously not flying due to the environmental impact stated that '*Yeah, I don't think we will solve anything really by personal choice. But, but there has been a combination because we will not have political change unless we have the public pressure to do it so*'. This could suggest a sub-repertoire in which one looks at both the individual responsibility and the structural problem. The first one is needed to affect the latter. Nevertheless, the repertoires are divided by the researcher due to the specific way of talking about flying inherent in each repertoire. As previously mentioned, and exemplified above, diverse interpretive repertoires can be applied by a single respondent, depending on the context

5.1.4   Experience

A distinct interpretive repertoire emerging from the empirical data is that air travel is connected to gaining experiences. It is the purpose to fly and the personal benefits attached e.g. to attend seminar, meet friends and family abroad or discover new cultures, that creates the experience. In this repertoire, talking about flying as an experience does not focus on the experience of being on an airplane but instead gathers specific ways of talking about air travel concerning the purpose for air travel and the experience attached when negotiating air travel.

The notion that flying makes it possible to discover new cultures was spread across the empirical data. Respondent 4 for example currently does not want to fly due to the negative feelings attached to flying and the damaging environmental consequences but draws upon the experience repertoire when talking about travel experiences in the past and how this helped him/her develop to be the person he/she is today: *'I think those trips that have affected me the most, like going to Nepal (…) those were very important for me and how I developed*

as a person.' This repertoire connects the personal benefits and symbolic meaning attached to the experiences that are made possible when flying. This suggests that the experience repertoire creates a conflict when trying to reduce air travel: *We try to reduce but still, we do fly because we don't want to totally say no to that experience with the kids. We want them to go to, you know, Berlin, Amsterdam, London yeah'* (respondent 1).

The 'experience' interpretive repertoire conflicts with the 'individual responsibility' repertoire. Drawing upon the experience repertoire as well as the 'individual responsibility' repertoire to negotiate air travel created a certain dilemma for respondent 3: *'Although all of those trips were not very hard to motivate on an individual level because I feel that they have so much value for me, eh but then on the other hand I also know that I can't really defend them so there is this clash.'* The interpretation of flying as an experience is problematized and a clash is apparent in this statement as the respondent values the personal benefits attached to the travelling but on the other hand feels responsible and feels the need to defend her/himself. The dilemma can be analyzed as part of the friction between the 'experience' repertoire and the 'personal responsibility' repertoire.

When talking about not flying, all of the respondents drew upon the notion that air travel provides a great access to experiences. For example, respondent 3 considered to stop travelling by air and described a conversation with her/his parents who asked: *'You don't want to go Amsterdam, because you don't want to fly? But you know how much you love that place and isn't it worth it? Still? I mean are you, do you realize how much you give up for the greater good?* (respondent 3). The question 'isn't it worth it?' points out the balance between the individual benefit and the environmental cost when flying. The quote suggests that people who do not fly miss out on this experience and sacrifice for 'the greater good'. This notion was found across the empirical data. The sacrifice and being afraid to miss out on things are both part of the 'experience' repertoire. As an example, respondent 3 argued: *'Flying has a lot of CO2 emissions, the individual, I mean, the connection between those two things is not clear enough for me to take the stand and give up that much of my individual freedom or well-being'.*

Additionally, respondent 2 who consciously made the decision not to fly drew upon the experience repertoire *'Yeah, yeah, not flying of, absolutely is a limitation, it is. But if I would fly I would feel very guilty about it. But, absolutely it is a sacrifice, for sure'.* With the ease of going abroad and spending short weekend trips in other countries, the data suggest that the sacrifice goes beyond the individual experience. Respondent 2 discussed that not flying creates a certain social pressure from others who are disappointed or judgmental about the decision not to fly which makes him/her unable to join for example family trips or with a group of friends.

In two cases, going abroad to faraway destinations was talked about as a prestige in which the travels you make and the places you have been determine your status. Respondent 10 discussed the personal prestige received when telling others about experiences abroad. The data suggests that going abroad holds a certain positive symbolic connotation and is constructed as part of the 'good life'. For example, going on holiday to Finland was talked about as 'not being exotic' by respondent 9. Additionally, respondent 9 questioned this discourse around travels and criticized people who travel by air twice a year to a far destination such as Thailand for leisure purposes when instead people could go to Spain. However, the option to not go was not mentioned by the respondent.

5.1.5   Type of travel

The fifth repertoire that appeared in the interview transcripts concerns the type of air travel. Depending on the reason(s) to travel, certain travels were justified whereas others were criticized. Whereas flying to Thailand to enjoy holiday was used by respondent 4, 6 and 9 to exemplify the type of air travel that is criticized by environmentally aware individuals, travelling by air to discover and learn about new countries and its culture were accepted. Thailand was connected to travels where people are *'just interested at being at the beach, they don't see anything'* (respondent 6). This notion was clearly supported by respondent 4 who expressed the idea that people in Nordic countries travel to warm places to compensate for the lack of sun in their home country: *'I do understand it! You can get the sun, but if you go just to this big complex [laughs] this big hotel complex and you stay there just for two weeks to see nothing else, you don't learn anything new about the world at all. At least I think, at least you learn some more of the world when you go there. Then at least you can justify it a little bit more! Than just going for the sun. You can do both [laughs]'*. The data implies that in certain cases, the respondents drew upon the 'type of travel' repertoire to negotiate flying as responsible air travel to compensate or even reject the guilt repertoire.

Furthermore, the data indicates a connection between the 'type of travel' repertoire and the 'individual responsibility' repertoire whereby unsustainable behaviours are balanced with the personal sustainable behaviour. This is apparent in the following statement: *'The way I am doing something has to weight against the impact of doing something, so I think of, because if you have to fly to make this movie then go ahead because this movie has made a great impact.'* (respondent 5). In other words, one should travel responsibly and outweighs flights that are necessary and avoid travels that are not.

The greater good discourse was also applied in the context of business travels. Flying to attend important meetings or seminars was accepted but only to a certain extend. The notion that people nowadays are commuting by plane daily was criticized and ridiculed by the respondents. The current situation concerning flights between Gothenburg and Stockholm was taken as an example by respondents 1, 3 and 4 to criticize air travels related to business travels. A variation of accounts about this issue were found in the empirical data. Whereas

respondent 1 and 4 claimed that this is unacceptable and argued that it is possible to take the train from Gothenburg to Stockholm, respondent 3 drew upon the structure repertoire questioning the existence of such a flight and discussed whether such a flight should be an option at all.

However, there was a thin line between air travels that were accepted and the ones that were criticized by the respondents. Flying for the greater good were flights that were perceived to be necessary and had a benefit that goes beyond the personal gain: *'I think there are different kind of travelling that are more, like that make more good and that are necessary. I mean that has a big benefit but there are a lot of trips you can skip I think.'* (respondent 4). This repertoire was also touched upon by respondent 6 who is working at the global department and due to work must fly to meetings and partner organization: '*We are promoting not to fly and then we have this global department and we fly a lot and, but in the end of course we, we hope that it will make the world better in the end'*. This implies that flying is talked about as something needed in order to achieve a better world. Most of the respondents justified air travels due to the context of the travel and the underlying purpose, for the greater good.

5.1.6   Technological inventions

In connection to the interpretive repertoires presented above, another interpretive repertoire referring to technological inventions was elicited in my analysis. For example, respondents expressed the hope for technological inventions in the aviation industry when talking about 'a lack of alternative' repertoire. In this way, technological advantages were conceptualized to find a sustainable alternative or to improvement the current unsustainable aviation industry. Additionally, technological inventions were addressed when drawing on the 'guilt' repertoire in which a future with sustainable and environmentally friendly way of transportation was wished for: *'The best thing would be if we would find environmentally ways so we can continue flying because it is wonderful, you know.'* (respondent 8). Technological inventions were talked about as a possible solution in the hope to continue travelling without causing environmental damages and thus avoid the need to stop travelling by air. Additionally, the technological inventions repertoire was found in connection to the 'experience' repertoire: *'Hopefully this technologically modernization of the fuel and ability to of the emissions to decrease eh so that we don't have to change our comfortable ways of the freedom'* (respondent 3).

5.2   Subject positions

Wetherell and Potter (1988) argue that individuals hold several, sometimes contradicting, positions to make sense of themselves and the world around them. From a discursive psychology point of view, several subject positions inherent in the 6 interpretive repertoires were identified in my analysis. Important to note is that all the respondents were aware and acknowledged the human activities as a contribution to climate change and the damaging

impact caused by aviation. Additionally, all respondents positioned themselves as environmentally concerned individuals and in most cases called themselves environmentalists and felt that taking care of the environment is important. An overall position of the respondents in this research was that adopting pro-environmental behaviour is a moral thing to do, to take care of oneself as well as the environment. However, 4 other subject positions were found: Purist, Constrained Environmentalist, Traveller and Role model. Respondents seem to vary between them depending on the repertoire drawn upon. In principle, these subject positions are available to all respondents but to exemplify how a single person constructs a variety of subject positions to make sense of him / herself when negotiating air travel, interview quotes from respondent 3 are used as an example.

5.2.1   Purist

Firstly, the position of being an 'extreme' environmentalist or 'purist' was identified. This subject position was constructed by several respondents when arguing for individual actions against climate change and to stop flying. The subject position of being an extreme environmentalist was often applied in a negative context stating that one is not an 'extreme' environmentalist because one cannot compare oneself with such an image of being 'perfect'. Positioning oneself as 'purist' was constructed as someone that goes far in making personal choices to live a sustainable life and thus does not fly. Within the 'experience' repertoire these decisions were talked about as personal compromises or sacrifices and being very strict. Someone that cannot agree to these compromises, due to various reasons, was not viewed as a purist. For example, respondent 3 claimed that '*I know that I am not there yet. I can't take, yes, put that image on myself and go that far*'.

5.2.2   Constrained environmentalist

The second subject position concerns respondents who positioned themselves as environmentally conscious individuals but who feel constrained by the structure and policies. This position was often connected to make sense of the notion that *'no one can be perfect because that is too much to ask of an individual'* (respondent 3) in which 'to be perfect' is interpreted as a reference to the first subject position: being a 'Purist'. Some environmentally friendly lifestyles were talked about as being too difficult to carry out while emphasizing the circumstances structuring individuals' lives. In my analysis, I found that respondents discussed their sustainable behaviour to reinforce their identity as environmental conscious individuals. The respondents were aware of their personal carbon emissions and experienced a certain clash when engaging in unsustainable behaviour such as air travel. Sustainable behaviours that are easier to carry out were adopted whereas others were ignored. For example, respondent 3 talked about the decision to stop eating meat which was *'the easiest choice (...) I didn't feel giving up too much of my individual well-being or freedom at all but something that I feel is quite important'*. Furthermore, the data shows that this subject position was in most cases constructed when talking about the friction between air travel and

the individual moral responsibility for the condition of the environment. The data analysis suggests that discursively constructing oneself as an environmentalist restricted by the structure helps the respondents to make sense of themselves and the friction between their environmental moral responsibility and their behaviour when negotiating air travel.

5.2.3 Traveller

Thirdly, the subject position as someone who wants to travel was identified in the analysis, especially inherent in the 'experience' repertoire. Flying creates a certain possibility to discover the world and to go to places which the respondents do not want to miss out on: *'because I am in a time in my life right now where I feel like I have both the possibility and the need or the want to travel quite a lot'* (respondent 3). In my analysis, I found that the position of traveler helped the respondents to make sense of flying as an experience. However, a friction appeared when talking about the environmentally damaging consequences of air travel in which respondent 3 took an environmentally conscious position.

5.2.4 Role model

Lastly, the empirical data suggest that a specific subject position was available in which the respondents feel the need to defend one's position to colleagues and the outside world. Through my analysis I found that respondents were often in conflict with the subject positions of 'purist', 'constrained environmentalist' and 'traveler' due to the need to proof themselves and to live according to the expectations of working for an environmental organization. A reoccurring subject position taken by most of the respondents is the idea that as an individual they serve as a role model to live sustainably and to show others that it is possible to live a sustainable life. Respondent 3 positioned herself/himself as a representative of the environmental organization working for. However, this position was problematized when respondents talked about their own air travels. Respondent 3 expressed this conflict in the following way*: 'It becomes something that you have to [sights] in some way yeah, you always going to be put in front of this problem and have to take a stand'.* This quote suggests that respondent 3 feels an obligation to explain and defend the air travels. Taking a stand in order to support the decision to fly is what most respondents felt as a conflict of their credibility.

During the interview, the variation of subject positions seemed normal to respondent 3 due to the different contexts in which air travel was discussed. Additionally, it is not to say that one subject position is truer than the other. All subject's positions are equally relevant and part of the respondent's sense making (Potter and Wetherell, 1987).

6. Discussion

This research applied a discourse analysis approach to provide a different perspective to understand how environmentally conscious individuals negotiate whether to fly or not to fly. In order to do this, the first research question in this study sought to explore *'which interpretative repertoires are used by individuals working at an environmental organization to make sense of air travel?'* Throughout the discourse analysis, broader interpretive repertoires emerged by identifying language variation and the inconsistencies in the way people talk (Wetherell and Potter, 1988). The findings show that when individuals working for an environmental NGO negotiate air travel, six interpretive repertoires emerged to make sense of air travel.

The interpretive repertoires that emerged from the empirical data were drawn upon by the respondents to complete different language functions (Wetherell and Potter, 1988). To illustrate, discursively constructing air travel as an experience shines away from the moral imperative to act sustainable and was drawn upon by the respondents to justify their air travel. In addition, justification and thus maintenance of flying was found in the 'lack of alternatives' repertoire and 'structural problem' repertoire. Furthermore, ignoring air travel as an unsustainable behaviour was part of the 'flying is the norm' repertoire. Consequently, the implication of the interpretive repertoires drawn upon is that by justifying air travel and/or ignoring the environmental impact on climate change, individuals working for an environmental organization maintain travelling by air.

For some respondents, a pro-environmental life style was interpreted as a sacrifice of one's freedom and not flying would mean to miss out on experiences. These findings resonate with what Nevins (2010, 2014) calls ecological privilege: privileged individuals who travel by air consequently influence the unprivileged individuals, who are the most vulnerable to the consequences of climate change. The finding in this current study that air travelling is discursively constructed as an experience, as freedom or as a right, supports the idea of ecological privilege discussed by Nevins (2010, 2014). Additionally, I would argue that the 'flying is a norm' interpretive repertoire inexplicitly contributes to the privilege since the privilege itself is often uncovered by the ones privileged (Nevins, 2010, 2014). The findings suggest that air travel is interpreted as a normalized practice and consequently often ignored as an unsustainable behaviour.

Furthermore, the 'technological invention' repertoire focuses on technologies that will reduce the harmful air travel emissions to enable individuals to continue to fly without feeling bad about the environmental consequences. However, this repertoire does not focus on reducing air travels but merely provides an argument to legitimize air travel with lower carbon emissions. Whereas there is currently a conflict between attitude (environmentally friendly) and behaviour (air travels), 'technological inventions' repertoire provides the possibility to

position oneself as environmentally responsible while continue flying. In addition, it can be argued that this interpretive repertoire paves the way for ecological modernizations: to continue 'business as usual' and the modern way of life while caring for the environment.

This current study shows that the condition of the environment was of importance when negotiating air travel. However, the variety of interpretive repertoires imply that respondents are able to draw upon different repertoires concerning air travel to create a reality that makes sense for them. For example, to make compromises, such as contrasting air travel with other pro-environmental behaviours or discursively constructing air travel as a structural problem and move the responsibility from the individual to the structure and policies.

The second research question concerned the production of identities and explored '*which subject positions are constructed within the interpretative repertoires drawn upon regarding air travel?* With respect to the second research question, the findings in this study present various, and sometimes contradicting, subject positions inherent in the interpretive repertoires. This highlights the discursive possibilities and restrictions to make sense of themselves when talking about air travel (Wetherell and Potter, 1988). Whereas all the respondents were environmentally conscious and identified themselves as environmentalists, the data analysis suggests that the 'constrained environmentalist' position was available to all the respondents. The findings show that some respondents discursively constructed the responsibility concerning the damaging cost of air travel as a structural problem. However, the 'purist' subject position is a conflicting self-identity found in the empirical data in which the individual takes the responsibility and hence stopped travelling by air. Subject positions are able to change (Wetherell and Potter, 1988) and therefore do not serve as a determent to predict spill-over effects in pro-environmental behaviours as argued by Kashima et al. (2014) but merely serve to make sense of oneself within the interpretive repertoires (Wetherell and Potter, 1988).

Additionally, within the experience interpretive repertoire, respondents discursively positioned themselves as travellers having a wanderlust and enjoying the advantages air travel makes possible. The data implies that the symbolic aspects of air travel are relevant for the construction of identity e.g. achieving prestige by going on holiday to faraway destinations. However, the analysis shows that identifying oneself as a traveller clashed with positioning oneself as an environmentalist, which is connected to the competing discourse of air travel as an individual responsibility. This inconsistency resulted in a dilemma in which feelings of guilt were experienced or other pro-environmental behaviours were contrasted to air travel. Hesz and Neophytou (2012) explain that the feeling of guilt is not a surprising finding when discussing unsustainable behaviour since individuals feel personally responsible for the environment's condition. Higham et al. (2014) describe this as the flyers dilemma in which the responsibility for the environment is personalized and one feels obligated to take care of the environment but nevertheless continues to travels by air.

7. Conclusion

The aim of this research was to explore how individuals working for an environmental organization make sense of and negotiate air travel. Different than in other research, this study included individuals that were all fully aware of climate change and acknowledged the contribution of human activities to climate change. Despite the understanding that air travel has damaging consequences for the environment, to completely stop travelling by air is not advocated by the SSNC nor performed in the private lives of most of the respondents. Instead, a reduction of air travel is promoted and urged for by both the organization and the respondents. The empirical data show that certain air travels were justified by the respondents whereas others were perceived unnecessary. The results suggest that justified flights concerns travels in which the perceived personal benefits or 'the greater good' outweighs the negative environmental consequences.

This study supports the claim made in previous research studies that a pro-environmental attitude does not serve as determinant to adopt pro-environmental behaviour. This study focused on the role language plays in social practices. In my analysis, I found that individuals use a set of interpretive repertoires to negotiate their air travels. The findings suggest that the construction of air travel as a 'lack of alternatives' as well as a 'structural problem' were the main interpretive repertoires drawn upon to continue travelling by air. On the other hand, the 'individual responsibility' repertoire including the sub repertoire of 'guilt' problematized air travels, resulting two respondents to stop travelling by air. Most of the respondents distanced themselves from the 'purist' position in which the individual does not fly and is perceived to 'sacrifice' in order to live a sustainable life. The results of this study indicate that the 'purist' position was often used to oppose the image of being 'perfect' and consequently allowed the respondents to continue travelling by air.

To conclude, this study identified ways that individuals talk about air travel and negotiate their unsustainable behaviour despite their pro-environmental attitude. The findings enhance our understanding of why environmentally aware individuals continue or stop travelling by air. The findings of this research can therefore be helpful for policy makers and environmental lobbyists to further understand the attitude-behaviour gap. By looking at the various interpretive repertoires used and the subject positions constructed to make sense of air travel, the findings of this study can be beneficial for environmental policies with the aim to reduce air travel.

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