

Příloha č. 1: Vzor informovaného souhlasu (text).

Acculturation, Culture Shock and Erasmus Students

Informed consent for participation in research

The research is conducted for the purpose of writing bachelor's thesis at the Charles University in Prague, Faculty of Social Sciences, Institute of Sociological Studies. The aim is to trace the experiences of Erasmus students and put them into context of their life with the assistance of biographical qualitative interview. The analysis of interviews should help to understand the way that students interpret this situation and how they deal with it, with focus on the cultural element.

The interview, its transcription and analysis will be done by Zdena Hofmannová.

The participation in the research is voluntary and you can withdraw from the research at any time or decline to answer any question. It is completely up to you what information will and will not be given. If not specified other way, the interview will be recorded. The recording can be stopped at any time if required. The recorded interview will be transcribed into written form for the needs of the analysis.

Any extracts from the interview quoted in the thesis will be entirely anonymous. The results of the analysis will be presented in my thesis and discussed on a seminar at school. The thesis will be read by my supervisor, consultant and examiner. It might be read by other students or academics from Charles University in Prague as well.

Both sides read this text and fully agree with it.

Date of the interview _____

Name of researcher: Zdena Hofmannová

Signature of the researcher _____

Name of respondent _____

Signature of the respondent _____

Příloha č. 2: Přepisy rozhovorů (zde jako text, v tištěné práci přiloženo CD).

Jméno (pseudonym): Anniken, dále jako A.

Země původu: Norsko

Obor studia: Fyzioterapie

Datum rozhovoru: 3.12.2015

Z: So I have like one very big question and then I have some supplemental questions that we will be talking about after. So the big question is... I am interested in student's personal experiences during their study abroad but it's not just like I am only interested in this period, but I am also interested in your life basically, in your life story, so could you please tell me your life story, just basically anything that occurs to you, it doesn't matter how you will do it. You have as much time as you like, and then I will ask you some more questions after that. If you need some help of course...

A: (laugh) yeah!

Z: Don't worry.

A: Guide me in the right direction.

Z: No worries.

A: I am the youngest of three siblings I have one older sister and one older brother. My brother is two years older than me and my sister is four years older than me and we're really close. Yes, we were kind of our best mates growing up. And we travelled, growing up we travelled a lot, my mum and dad love travelling, so I kind of grow up travelling every time we had the opportunity, so based on that I kind of love travelling. Growing up, I was also very physical. Me and my brother always played very physical or we were very physical growing up...

Z: Like sports?

A: Yeah, we played a lot of sports, that kind of stuff. So when it came to the time to choose a high school I chose a sport high school and I am very interested in the physiological changes while doing exercise and that's why I started studying physiotherapy. Before I did that, I travelled a year with my sister in South America, studying Spanish and completely falling love in everything that has to do with South America. I really, really want to go back. Especially when it's raining like this (laugh).

Z: Yeah, I understand that.

A: So yeah, after getting back from Nicaragua, I started studying physiotherapy and in

Bergen, the city where I study in Norway, it's also very rainy and very cold, so every year I get this intense need to travel and to change my scenery, so... the opportunity to come up for me to come to Ireland, so I decided go to Ireland, to change things a bit. And it's been great so far, I really enjoy it.

Z: And did you... why did you choose Ireland? Did you have a lot of choices or... ? Because you say how weather is nasty here...

A: Yeah, I've been to Ireland once before with my family, with my mother and my brother and my sister and that was during the summer... no I think it was during September or something. And it was so nice, the weather was really nice and there was a street festival on and it there just happened so much, the city was so alive and I decided then that I really want to live in Dublin and when I saw that we can go to Dublin I thought like... oh, that's... and I really, I knew that I wanted to do exchange programme, so I can get two things done - to live in Dublin and do exchange program. And the only opportunity we had except for Dublin was Australia and I really want to go to Australia but when I go there I don't want to study, I just want to travel, I don't want to think about money and... because I don't have a job and to save money, because Australia is really expensive, so I am kind of saving that...

Z: For later.

A: Yeah.

Z: So you said you wanted to do exchange programme, you knew that always or when did that come up to your mind?

A: I get really... especially since... since I got back from South America, I get really restless and in a couple of months, I kind of want to change my scenery, so after studying in Bergen for two years, it's great, I love Bergen, it's a great city but it's the same people, it's the same... and it's small city, so it's the same clubs, the same bars and it's kind of... life is always the same while you go to a bigger city, city you don't know, it's more adventure cause you don't really know what's going to happen, you meet new people, you make new friends.

Z: And could you tell me a little bit more about the travels you do with your... you said your parents travel a lot, so they took you with them? So could you tell me a little bit more about it? How was it? Where were you?

A: In the really early days, we did travelling with car that you live in, I don't know how to say that.

Z: I know what you mean.

A: Yeah, so that was in Norway, and then they did from... when I was under a year, we did some summer trips of course. And then when I got older, when I started remembering things, we went on road trips to Europe and I am sort of impressed because I was maybe two years old, my brother was four and my sister was six and they took us in a car and drove two weeks through Europe every summer and I would kill my kids if they would be acting like we did cause we were crazy. But we really enjoyed it and it was really exciting because we never knew where we're going to go, so each year when we got to a crossroad, they would ask, if we should go to France or Italy and we all took a decision right there and drove there.

Z: That's adventure.

A: Yeah, it was very fun.

Z: So it was always summer breaks when you did this.

A: Yeah.

Z: Except for travelling with your parents, have you travelled alone or with friends?

A: I haven't travelled alone yet, I want to travel alone because it's totally different experience as well because you are kind of forced to meet other people that are not in your group. With friends I haven't travelled for longer trips, only trips for short summer breaks, for a week in Greece and stuff. And then with my sister for one year in South America. And we also met up with... so it was like constantly with my sister and then we met up with some friends and we were with them for a week and then they left and we met another group of friends. Then we were alone and then we met up with friend of hers, who ended up staying with us for three whole months.

Z: And the friends were Norwegian?

A: Yes, they were Norwegian friends who also studied in South America.

Z: Ok. Could you tell me maybe a little bit more about the year in South America? How was it?

A: Yeah! It was... I've decided that the year after high school I was going travel before I started to do anything... with responsibilities. So... and I've always been a big fan of the football team Barcelona, so I've always wanted to learn Spanish and through course in Norway that was called "Kultur Studie" which basically means Culture Studies, we were able to basically go to school in Norway that was placed in Argentina. So we would get our loan and scholarships so that we could study and we can do it abroad and actually speak Spanish every day. So I said that to my sister... cause she just finished her bachelor's degree and she wanted to go as well, so we went and stayed for 4 months

in Argentina and then the next semester, it was 3 months in Nicaragua which is in Central America, so we travelled between the semesters, so basically 4 months, we travelled from Buenos Aires, South America throughout the whole area and then ended up in Nicaragua.

Z: Wow.

A: Yeah, it was really...

Z: And how would you evaluate the year? When you look back?

A: Ten out of ten. Best year of my life.

Z: So you feel like it gave you a lot?

A: Yeah, I really want to do the backpacking again. Cause, you know, I am always happy doing studying, or everything and staying in one place but I always want to be backpacking more. It's like all right, this is great, but I would rather be backpacking in Asia, Australia or South America or whatever. I always have kind of drive to leave everything behind, quit school, say goodbye to everyone and start to working in some hostel in Colombia or something, and gain money and just travel all the time

Z: Adventurous person.

A: Yeah.

Z: That's nice I like it.

A: (laugh).

Z: So... could you tell me a little bit more about your family? You said you are very close with your siblings. Do you live with your siblings at one place or where do you live when you study at home?

A: When I study at home, I live in Bergen, my family is from a place outside of Oslo. And as I said I am the youngest of... in Norway it's usually, when you're 19, you move out of your family's house. So my sister moved out when she was 19, my brother moved out when he was 19 and when I was 19 I also moved out. So we haven't lived in the same place for a long time but my sister lives in Oslo, which is close to my parents' house, so when I go home, I always get to see my sister. My brother moved to the States and he's been living in States for the past four years. So I can't see him that much sadly. And he's not coming home for Christmas either this year. You know, when I get to see him, it's great.

Z: And your parents... are you close?

A: Yes.

Z: So whole family kind of...

A: Yes, it's nice.

Z: All over the place but close.

A: Yep (laugh).

Z: Ok. Maybe could you tell me little bit more about your... basically about your life back home when you're at university, how is it socially but also academically and so on.

A: Hmm... my first year I lived with two friends from high school and we lived in this really small crappy apartment and it was really close, it was nice but towards the end of the year we were so sick of it, you know, always being, mouldy and the kitchen was horrible and there was no heating. So we kind of ran away from there but still we had a great time, I memorize the days when we used to live together and had loads of fun. They go to different universities, so we don't study the same thing. Which was kind of nice because I could do my thing, my friend could do her thing, and the other friend did her things, without us comparing to each other all the time. Academically the first year was great, because I hadn't studied for a year, so I was on top of everything, ready to get back and excited to know what physio is all about. And then second year, I moved out of the crappy apartment and moved in with childhood friends and her cousin in a bigger very nice apartment, so that was also great. We had loads of fun. That year was a bit tougher academically and it's the toughest year of our studies as well so everyone knew that it's going to be a tough year and we kind of dragged each other down, like: "This is hard". You know, it ended up great. And then... socially in our class, we're not that... we are not a big class we are seventy students in it more or less, so everyone knows everyone but it gets kind of cliquy. So you know you have your group of friends and you know everyone but you don't hang out with that group of friends because that's not your group of friends. But it's nice and it was... I haven't seen them in such a long time and I miss them all, so it's going to be nice to getting to see them after the placement when I get back.

Z: Ok. So... when you found out that you were accepted to Erasmus, how was it from then till you left? Just how was it?

A: Yeah, it was kind of weird, cause we applied, me and my friend K. who I went with, we applied and our teacher told us that there wasn't any Erasmus programme for this semester and we told her that the official website said that there was, and she was like: "No, no, that's wrong". We showed her and she was like: "Oh, let's see what we can do!" And I think it was only two months before we were supposed to leave, we got the message - "ok, you can go, we have arranged a programme", it was... we were in

placement on this (...). So it was kind of... going to the future, called each other up and said: "Oh, you know we can go to Ireland!" And we were like: "Yeah, we can go to Ireland!" and then we didn't think about it anymore because we were working in placement, so we were like up in our own thing and then all of a sudden it was summer break and we were both travelling and a week before we were supposed to leave we were like: "Oh, shit, we're leaving in a week!" And we haven't really sorted out our accommodation or anything, so we had to share a bed, which turned out great and we're still sharing it but you know. So it was kind of a shock leaving because we hadn't really sunk in that we were supposed to go before we sat in the airport and it was like... "Oh, we're going to school in Ireland now".

Z: Oh. That sounds very sudden (laugh).

A: Yeah (laugh).

Z: How did you find the accommodation?

A: It was... because we had one accommodation which was through our teacher here in Ireland, because a girl, who was doing a fourth year physio is on Erasmus exchange to Norway and wanted to rent out the room. So our teacher messaged us and was like: "You're still looking for accommodation? Here's one, it's close to your school, you will be living with four physios who are studying a year above you and it's really cheap." So we just said: "Oh, grand!" We'll take this one. Because we had that one, we didn't really stress that much, we thought that we have one and we can get the other one when we're there. It was just... it is such a nice apartment and the girls that we live with are really nice and they are Irish, so we get a bit of the culture and it's close to school, it's cheap, so we got picky while looking at other accommodations, we're like: "No, this is too far away, and this is shared anyway, so I'd rather share with you if we have to share anyway". And we just ended up staying there and it's been great.

Z: Ok, that's great. And when did you arrive in Ireland, was it like a lot in advance or was it before the school started?

A: We ordered our tickets right after we got the ok to go and we felt we were supposed to begin the 14th of September and we thought ok, it's okay to arrive a little bit in advance, so we booked our tickets for the 8th of the September but then our school year got pushed back, so we didn't start until the 24th of September, so and we didn't change our tickets, we were like: "Ok, we'll go anyway". So we were here quite in an advance so we got to do some traveling and enjoy Ireland for a while before we got to start our semester.

Z: So the time right after you arrived... how was that?

A: It was good, it was sunny.

Z: That's true.

A: And we were excited and we got bikes, so we cycled a lot around the city to get to know it, and we went to a road trip cause we had so much time and we really wanted to see Ireland, so we went to Cork and drove along the coast up to Galway and then back. I think we spent one and a half week on that road trip. So we got to see a bit of Ireland and it was grand, cause when we started school we could ask everyone where they are from and they would say: "I'm from Cork", and we would say like: "Yeah, I've been there!".

Z: And now when the school started? So have you... so you were to Fresher's week, right? So how was it?

A: It was kind of... I don't know because the people that were in our year didn't go to Fresher's Week cause they are in their third year. So it was nice but we only got to know Freshers, so it was like: "Yeah, nice to meet you but we're not going to see you ever again after this week". So... but it was alcohol and themed parties and that's always fun.

Z: And did you manage to get to know some international students as well?

A: Yeah, we met a few but we haven't managed to stay in contact because it's been... I don't know, we're placed in... we're not placed in Trinity, physio and medicine are a bit isolated and we're really in Trinity because we live so close to James', so James' always closer. Yeah... we're hanging out mostly... oh yeah, one guy from Chile. He taken us to some... and introducing us to his friends so we're close with them, but not that many other international students.

Z: Ok. So... most of your friends here... could you tell me about them?

A: I would say... we're closest with the girls we live with because we spend time with them everyday, and our classmates, some more than others of course and it's like... they all know each other for so long, so it's kind of hard getting to know them, cause they have already established group mentality but they're really nice and they include us, so we're hanging out with them. It took some time but now I can call them when I am bored and be like: "Hey, you want to hang out?" And the group of guys from Chile, I can also call them.

Z: So you found also Irish people to hang out with.

A: Yes.

Z: That's great. I find it hard.

A: Yes, it is. It took us a long time, they were like: "You know, you're not really ok to hang out with us", and I go "shit, I'm sorry". And it's... because we're only thirty people in class.

Z: That makes it better. Do you have all the modules together?

A: Yes.

Z: Ok, that's great. That's like high school.

A: Yes, it is and it's like... physical classes, we get undressed and we look at each other, analyse each other, so you know, you get kind of a weird group mentality when you see half of your class basically naked. So it works for getting to know people. And I had just remembered that we have bunch of Brazilian girls in our class as well, and I got really close with them so that's more international students though.

Z: So do you feel like you get more close with Chile, Brazilian people because you...

A: Might be! Because they are obviously excited about talking about their culture and I get all excited because I know what it's like and I really love it.

Z: So how were the first weeks in Trinity?

A: They were great cause in the beginning we didn't have lot of modules cause we only had... I think or classmates have 7 modules and me and K. only go to 4 of them, cause we have done a lot of this before, so we were in school, college, from basically 9 to 11 and then we went home, so we also get to do a lot of travelling, going out and enjoying life, while a bit (...), they finished their modules we weren't having and then we had sustained in school with them from 9 to 6 and we were like: "Oh! That are long days compared to earlier days".

Z: Yeah. And socially? Like the first weeks?

A: I am glad I had K., that we were two, cause you know, it's hard getting into a group that has been already established, cause they've been going to school together for three years and they really know each other... and the Brazilian girls, they were also new, so we were like: "Oh, hi, you don't know what's going on either", they assigned us kind of buddies in the class, so we have 2 people we can go to if we have any questions and that invited us out for social events and that really worked out, so after I would say three weeks, it was like, we could sit and talk to everyone in class,.

Z: Wow, that's great.

A: Yeah.

Z: It's just not how it works in sociology.

A: Well you have way bigger classes, don't you?

Z: We have like huge classes. It's much more complicated I'd say. Ok, so what do you do in your free time here?

A: I do a lot of boxing, I go boxing three times a week, so that's fun, that takes up three nights and then I did some swing but you know, as I have boxing... and it starts at 5 and lasts until 8.

Z: Well that's long.

A: Yeah. I don't box all the time, you know. But first we do fitness and then we go to the gym and we do sporting session and paired work, so only one person get to do it at a time, so there's a line waiting, then you go one minute sport, and then waiting. So it's not a full 5 to 8 workout. So I've had to study a lot on the days I am not doing boxing, so it's been busy days. And just chilling out and hanging out in the apartment, catching up with the girls at home.

Z: And if you should... choose some kind of period in your Erasmus that... you would say this is the best kind of time... what would that be?

A: I would say... it's hard.

Z: It doesn't have to be specific moment, it can be some time period you were feeling really good.

A: I would say the middle part. Well no, cause in the beginning, we had a lot of free time from school and it was less stressful, but the... our classmates were stressed and they can't do much after the school, so basically it was me and K. hanging out, which is totally nice but you know it's the same as you know it, the middle part we had a much more social interaction with our classmates and had friends outside of school as well, so that was.. I think that was the best part but now towards the end I got more involved in boxing, so that's also really fun and I had my first match or my first fight and that was a really good experience, so that was good as well, so each kind of period has its perks but I think I must say... like from... after one month when I was kind of settled.

Z: And do you have specific moments that you like to remember?

A: It's hard. When I get home, I think... well my match is obviously going to stand out and you know seeing my coach all happy and so...

Z: So it went well?

A: It went very well, yeah (laugh). And also going out dancing with our Chilean friends that is really fun, they're crazy and... the Brazilian girls bringing us sweets from Brazil which are so good and they have always some with them and they are so cute when they give it to us and... obviously the girls from the apartment, having dinner with them is

really nice because we have dinner together every day. One specific moment. I don't know.

Z: You don't have to force yourself. Do you also have some bad moments?

A: Yes, there's been some lately. But it's mostly exam... related to the exams.

Z: So more stressful than bad?

A: Yeah. And knowing that I have to write the exam in English and knowing that it's kind of... you don't have a lot of time and I think I'm going to spend a lot of time phrasing my sentences rather than scribbling all down and getting as much information as I can, so that's kind of stressing me out, what if I can't pass my exam... then this whole good experience is going to turn into bad experience. Other than that it's been... well sometimes during the weekends, cause all our classmates go home for the weekend, so then it can be like... I really want to do something but no one that I know is here... but you know... nothing really bad.

Z: Ok. In connection with your exams, is it the first time you feel uncomfortable with your English or being not Irish?

A: Yes, it is. I was worried before I went here that I won't be able to pay attention in class but that's been ok, not problem at all but you know writing... we have to do the writing by hand which means that there won't be the auto-correction or something... so it's going to be a lot of spelling mistakes and yeah... just phrasing sentences... cause it's an essay based exam so you know you're also graded on the way you write. If your text has a good flow and such.

Z: But won't there be some toleration?

A: I hope so.

Z: I think so. I am pretty convinced because they have plenty students from different countries here, they are so used to it.

A: Yeah, I think so.

Z: And I think your English is actually awesome.

A: (laugh) Thanks. You haven't seen my writing though.

Z: Will that be such a difference?

A: I hope that's going to be ok.

Z: And if you compare your life here and your life back home? Could you compare that?

A: I live in Bergen... and Dublin and Bergen are really similar but... Dublin is obviously way bigger and there's always stuff going on. You can always go to pub and

there would be live music or you can always... or there's a bunch of societies and there's always something happening in one of them, so there's always something to do while Bergen is a smaller city, so... no, it's not that... if you get the craving of doing something there won't always be something to do.. The people are also really similar, so it's been no cultural shock not so ever, so you know... it's very similar. And you know I had really good friends in Norway that has been my friends for years and years and here I also don't have that, so I won't call up someone for a bottle of wine and we can just have a session of memorizing of old times or whatever and laughing our asses up, so that won't happen here. But it's still more exciting, every day you can just go out of the door and you won't really know what people you're going to meet and where they're going to be from and where will you go and there are always new places to go, because it's a bigger city, so you can always experience something you haven't experienced before, while in Bergen you have four clubs, three pubs and that one café on the corner... yeah. You know it's... pretty.

Z: Do you miss something here? Except for the friends...

A: Yes of course, especially now that it's close... it's December actually... and the abilities to go skiing or snowboarding I really miss or hiking in general. In Norway nature is always very close by, you can... from where I live, you can walk up seven mountains and be in... really in the mountains, where you can see the city from. I miss that.

Z: That sounds awesome.

A: Yes, it is. You just take a day off and go wandering in the mountains for five hours...

Z: But it sounds like you're pretty used to being away from your family?

A: Yeah. But my parents came to visit the weekend before this weekend.

Z: Ok, and whole your family came?

A: My mum and dad came.

Z: Brother I guess not?

A: He didn't come but my mum and dad came one weekend and my sister and her boyfriend were here last weekend.

Z: And how was it?

A: It was fun. Amazing.

Z: You showed them around?

A: Yeah, my mum and dad got the whole Dublin tour, we came to the Guinness house and all that. It was kind of bad weather when my sister and her boyfriend were here, so

we just walked around bars and drank beer.

Z: Sounds like a good sister weekend. Ok, I think that's it.

Jméno (pseudonym): Camille, dále jako C.

Země původu: Francie

Obor studia: Anglický jazyk

Datum rozhovoru: 28.11.2015

Z: So... I have one very big question and then some smaller or supplemental questions. So the big question is, as I already told you, I am interested in student's personal experiences in study abroad but it's not just like I am interested only in what's happening here, I am interested in more general context, the life story basically, so could you please tell me your life story, like literally anything that occurs to you until now? And you have as much time as you like and I will just not ask right now but later I will ask.

C: Ok.

Z: Don't be nervous...

C: Ok (laugh). Well my name is Camille, I am 21 years old and I... first of all I decided to do this year as an Erasmus student because a year ago I wasn't so sure about what I want to do with my life and going away for a year was actually sort of escaping from the pressure of not knowing like what I was going to do with the rest of my life, the rest of my studies. So, I applied to Trinity College, because it was... first of all it was not so far from home and it was something very assuring for me to know that if I am having problems here, I would be able to go back home easily and it's the Euro as well... it's cheaper than going to the UK or to the US or whatever. So yep, I chose Trinity College, it was the... there was actually... there were many other programmes in different schools in Ireland but Trinity College was for me one of the best, so I just went for it, like hoping that it would actually work, and it worked, so I am quite happy about it, let's say. And well... I come from let's say very multicultural family background, you know, my mother is actually Brazilian, my father has a very complicated family tree, as you can see my family name is Polish but when... actually it's Ukrainian but when Ukraine was actually part of Poland, you know, and my grandfather was actually Ukrainian and my grandmother was Bulgarian and Spanish, so...

Z: It's like from your dad's side?

C: Yeah. I am world citizen I would say. I am product of emigration, really. So, yeah, I speak many languages, like Portuguese, at home, my father speaks Portuguese as well because he's been travelling to Brazil as a musician, he was a musician for many years,

so he travelled to Latin and South American and especially Brazil, so that's actually why he speaks Portuguese. I speak Spanish as well, English, French and I would like to add more languages to my... ehm...

Z: And at home you speak Portuguese?

C: Yes, since I was kid, we used to speak French and Portuguese at the same time, so when I was a kid, it was sort of hard to space in which language... I would just use Portuguese word instead of a French words. So at school I remember one time a teacher of mine just called my parents telling them: "Oh, Camille is great but sometimes we can't actually understand what she's talking about". Because I was mixing words. But I think that's why I wasn't so afraid of going here in Ireland, especially since I've been studying English at college for three years, so I was actually pretty confident with my English, so I wasn't worried about not being understood... even though my English is not perfect, I can still survive, so I was just, okay, I will go for it basically.

Z: Ok. Yeah. So could you tell me a little bit more about... well you told me about your family, so let's talk about... so as it's multicultural, do you have connections strong... do you have some part of family in Brazil?

C: Yes and I've been travelling to Brazil since I was born basically, so every two years we go to Brazil for a between one month and a half and two months, say on a diplomatic basis... just seeing the family, trying to create this strong bonds even though we're away, so... yeah. Yeah, I go to Brazil quite a lot I would say.

Z: And these trips to Brazil how are they for you?

C: I think that there's before and after. You know, when I was a kid I used to see Brazil as this paradise, you know, everything was pretty, people were nice and it was sunny, it was warm, and at the same time it was very close in my head that...it wasn't that far away. I live in a town nearby bigger city called Argenteuil and I remember one day in a car my sister just pointed at some buildings and said: "Oh, that's Brazil, that's where grandma lives", and we were like: "No, Brazil is like thousands of miles away". So we had this impression that it was very close to us, you know, and as I grew up, like I've been aware that it's not such a great place to live... my family is actually getting older and older, so they're getting more and more prone to disease and you know... like life accidents or death, you know like these... it's like normal stuff but that you don't really think about when you're a kid, so yep. Right now I have a more, let's say more realistic vision of what it is to live in Brazil you know, how's the country, corruption and all that stuff, let's say the other side of the coin.

Z: And do you travel to Brazil usually with your family or do you just travel by yourself too?

C: No, it's always a family trip. Yeah, we always take the plane together, we stay there together for two months. It's really the moment in which we are really, really together.

Z: And from the side of your dad, is some part of the family also living somewhere else than France?

C: Probably, I know that my uncle went to the U.S. and that there's our family name in (...), so there's like this family... history that some of my former, former relatives travelled to the U.S. but I have to say that I have absolutely no contact with my father's family. There have been some issues with my mother, my grandmother... she was a tough woman, really. She was really tough but slightly racist, so... (laugh).

Z: (laugh) that's interesting.

C: She had some problems with my mother... and the rest of the family as well. You know, I've been... when I was a kid I used to go and visit my grandmother but my mother never came with us, I have pretty much no connection with them and I don't really want to have any link with them.

Z: So... have you travelled quite a lot before... except for the Brazil thing?

C: I have been travelling quite a lot through Europe. Both my parents are teachers they work for the department of education in France. In France they have like two month holidays during the summer time and yeah, we've been travelling quite a lot through Europe, like UK, Portugal, Spain, Greece, Netherlands, Belgium, Scandinavia, Germany and that's pretty much it.

Z: And it was always with your parents?

C: Most of the time. I've been travelling with my friends also but it wasn't such a great experience, so like yes. Most of the time with my family, yeah.

Z: Ok. So could you tell me a little bit more about what is your life at home like?

C: Well, I am living with my parents, so I had this very, very important family life. It's very important to me, you know, like we take our dinner together, like every time. It's very... family, you know. And I used to go to college in Paris, so public transportation was a huge part of my life...

Z: And you live... in Paris or... ?

C: No, I live nearby. It's sort of the suburbs, but the suburbs have very urban connotation. It's more like a town, with like fifty thousand people but still a town. Smaller than a Paris but still quite a big place. I used to go to college in Paris, used to

work as well, I worked in a high school for a year as a teaching assistant.

Z: Really? So you studied education?

C: Actually, like I've just finished my English degree at home and I've been doing this job just to save money, so I can go here, in Ireland, and it was basically because my only work experience involves teaching kids, you know, like private lessons and stuff like this. So it's actually the only thing I can do, so that's...

Z: I think it's a great thing to do.

C: I think it really depends. I have... my year in the high school was very interesting experience. Because I was twenty, twenty one at that time and most of the students were eighteen, but also twenty. So we had this very, very close age, you know like there wasn't any age gap, it was like a year or something. So with me, they were pretty nice, because I feel they could really picture me as a figure of authority, they would just picture me as this hybrid figure - as a student and member of the staff. They were pretty nice with me (laugh). But here in Dublin I'm actually giving private lessons to two kids in Malahide. And it's different. I don't really like it. Because the kids are very posh, they come from a posh family, and they behave as spoiled kids. So it's... for instance yesterday, I was there and the father gave me the keys from the house because one day we were locked outside, there was nobody, it was raining, I had to call the mother and tell her: "Oh, you actually forgot to give the kids the keys, so we're outside, it's raining, what should I do?". She just left work and opened the door for us, so that we could actually come in, so the father gave me the key, told me that it would be easier for me so I was like, ok, I don't mind, having the key is not like... I just don't care. And one of the kids told the father very seriously: "Are you sure don't you want to give us the keys instead?" He says: "No, no, it's actually safer with her". And the kid said: "No, it's not because she's going to rob us". I was like: "No, I am not going to rob you, you know if I was a thief, I wouldn't spend three hours and a half, three days per week going to Malahide, you know? I am not going to rob you." So I was like really pissed off, really angry. But then, you know, they are kids.

Z: And how old are they?

C: Eight and ten. They are kids, and it was funny because I told that to a friend of mine and she told me: "You know, if they said that, it's because they heard that from their parents". So it's like... yes, it's true, it's not something they came up with they must have heard that somewhere and they were just repeating it basically.

Z: So that doesn't make you feel the best, right?

C: No, not really. But at the same time, I tried just to do my job and I'm not even sure that they can actually learn something. The mother she gives me every time a list of things that we have to do together, like two pages of that book and whatever.

Z: Really?

C: Yeah, like stuff like this. And I am here only to make sure that they actually do it. But still I don't have any power, you know like sort of coercive power, like: "Do it, or you will be punished!". No it doesn't work that way. They don't want to do it, I try to convince them to do it but still if they don't want to, they don't want to, I'm not here to raise them and give them proper education. So I'm like: "Let's do it, wo-ho, you don't want to do it? Ok! Great!"

Z: That's interesting experience. At least you can compare it.

C: Yeah, and it's always interesting to see how people live and for me it's also way of discovering that this actually not the way that I want to raise my kids in the future, there's no way it's going to be like this, no way (laugh). So it's still good, you know.

Z: Ok, and tell me about your university life back in Paris?

C: It wasn't as vibrant as here, because when you're at home, you just basically go to college, meet your friends, go to class and then go home. And eventually from time to time you just go out for a drink or whatever. So... I would say that for a student in Paris it's not really the best place to have the great student life, you know. Like Paris is a huge town, it's a huge city and you can definitely feel that you are just one among thousand students, you know. So, yes, this is pretty much like... yeah, this is very... this is... I have really routine. We can get back this hour, so that I can catch my bus, so that I can catch my train, metro, go to college, have a lunch with my friends going to... I don't know grips and pasta and then go to class and go back home. So this is pretty... I would say boring but I like it that way as well. But it's actually good to have this year abroad, because I can actually have more control on my schedule, on my timetable and I try to do as much as possible, so that I would be able to say: "Hey, it was a great year!" I am actually thinking that I'm quite ready to have a nervous breakdown at the end of the year because I am doing so much, so many things at the same time, I'm quite sure that when I'll be back home, I'll be like: "Ok, I've lived it all, just c'mmon, just, stop!" (laugh).

Z: (laugh) So you are really living to the expectations you've made?

C: Hmm... sort of... because in Europe, you have this very exciting vision of Erasmus, you know. There are these movies like... I don't know even know the name in English, but there is this movie called L'Auberge espagnole, the translation would be the Spanish

Inn, and this is basically the story of Erasmus students.

Z: I think I know that. Is the main guy this...

C: Romain Duris? He's made like... he's quite a famous French actor, so maybe you've heard about this movie.

Z: I think I've seen it.

C: So you see this is the vision of the Erasmus, you're going to go out, get smashed slash drunk or whatever, you'll meet the love of your life and you know... it's this incredible experience while most of the time you're just studying, being in library, printing stuff, doing some grocery shopping, you know, not so exciting things, but it's still part of the deal you have to accept it, so you embrace that side of Erasmus which is not the one that people talk about. They're talking about: "Oh you'll see, you'll have this amazing nightly life, you'll be out, drink a lot." No thanks I actually want to keep my liver in a good state for a day, if I'm doing this, I'm not having a long life, so... I need my liver intact.

Z: And you also need not to get a breakdown!

C: Yeah, that is important point of the process... to have a long and happy life.

Z: Ok, good... so could you tell me about the time when you were deciding to go? So you already told me that it was kind of good for you because you didn't know what to do but for example, like more... were there any other reasons you decided to go? And why did you decide for Ireland?

C: Hmm... actually it is a sort of a funny story because I'm... the deadline for the Erasmus application was like... I would say beginning of January and I decided to apply... like beginning of January.

Z: (laugh).

C: So I did my... my application form in a week and I didn't even talk about it with my parents... I just did it, just applied. Eventually I got the answer that I was accepted. So one day we're actually at a lunch, it was Sunday at home and I was like: "Oh by the way I have something to tell you, I applied to the Erasmus programme and I'm actually going to Dublin next September, surprise!" My parents said like: "Really? When did you do that?" "Oh like a few weeks ago." "You didn't even tell us." "Yeah, I was just waiting for the answer". So I am not really proud of that because it's not really nice thing to do but I think it really shows how Erasmus for me was a way of exit, a way to... you know just escape from having to make some important decisions about me, about my life, so... and I was actually the worst with my parents during the summer time, I

was so disagreeable, moody, I was really bad and my mother was actually quite disappointed about this and she told me: "You know I have the impression that you did all you could so that we wouldn't miss you". And it's true I feel that I was actually so disagreeable to them, so that they wouldn't miss me and I wouldn't miss them, you know. So... yeah... it's sort of strange. The beginning... let's say the pre-Erasmus was pretty chaotic I would say, it wasn't really like this really planned thing I can think. Planning on doing that I've been talking about it too much, I just did it. Just like this.

Z: And then the period from the time... like were you preparing somehow?

C: Yeah, sort of but at the same time I was actually pretty lucky because I feel like in Ireland you can't plan before being here. For instance looking for an accommodation... the accommodations that were offered by Trinity College were too expensive, so I knew that I had to look for an accommodation myself through daft or rent or whatever Irish websites. So the thing is that with those websites, you can't really start looking many months in advance, you have to be here, so you can just visit... so I think that the fact that I had to be in Dublin so as to find accommodation helped me not to think about it too much before, because I was like, ok, so the first of September I'll leave, so I'll take care of it later.

Z: So... the first days in Dublin, how was it? Where were you? What were you doing?

C: I was... I rented a room through Airbnb in Rathmines for five days, because my sister went with me to help me to find a place to stay. So the first days were busy, because we were just visiting places, like every single day we would visit 2 to 4 places, we just spent our time on skype, calling people: "Hi, I would like to visit the place... okay I'll see you at one, I see you at two, you know". So we were just visiting the city without really visiting it, just looking for a place to stay. And my sister is actually younger than me but she's really tough, really confident, she would just... she was like: "Ok, we're going to do that, then we go there..." and for instance in the place where I'm living, we visited it on the last day... on her last day and so she was pretty worried about leaving without knowing where I would stay, so she basically told one of my flatmates, the one in charge of the apartment, she said: "Ok, basically, I don't want to be (...) without knowing that my sister has a place to stay, so I hope she'll stay here". She told her that. It was funny because then like, my flatmate told me about it few days ago and I've completely forgotten about it, she was like: "Yeah, your sister, she's quite a tough girl, she was..." I think she scared her a bit but it worked so I was like, okay, never mind.

Z: So you got the place. And... do you think that if you were by yourself, that it would

go smooth or... ?

C: I don't know, I am... I used to be very detached, I used to be that kind of person who would like just follow where the wind would lead me... ok, I'll go, maybe it's gonna work, maybe not. Carpe diem basically, that kind of person. So I think that if my sister... if she hadn't been with me, it would have been more difficult for me to adapt, you know, she forced me to be very active from the beginning.

Z: Yeah, so could you tell me more about the place you live? About your flatmates?

C: So I actually live at Talbot Street. I quite like it because it's very loud, you can hear people talking at night and I like being in a very urban environment, so I quite like it but I know that Talbot has this sort of bad reputation for people in Dublin. Like few days ago, the tenant of one of my friend told me: "Oh you live in Talbot, you know it's quite a dangerous place and I'm worried that this is not the safest environment in Dublin, you know, there are junkies on the streets..."

Z: Are there?

C: Yes, there are. Drunkards, you know. But still, you know, how to avoid them, how this very confident walk like I'm living here, please if you want to, mess with someone else, not me. C'mon I'm living here, I've got keys on my hands, you won't have time to aggress me, so go for someone else... you know, I quite like it, there are loads of supermarkets, stuff like this that so I can just easily find what I'm actually looking for. So it's good. I'm living with... so there's... I'm living with six people. I share my room with two people, G. and another French guy who's twenty one. Very, very nice guy, very excited all the time, very bubbly. And he arrived like a few weeks ago, so he's still pretty new but he really added something more to the life of the apartment because we thought it was very quiet and he's forcing people to talk to each other, to interact more with each other, it's good. When E., the one in charge of the apartment, was actually organizing visits for the G.'s bed, I was actually lucky, I said I want that guy, he's very nice. He's young, so it's good. Let's bring more young people to the place. And so I'm sharing my room with G. and Brazilian woman, O. which... there's been some issues with her, so I don't talk to her, I don't look at her, I have zero contact with her but it's for the better. When I arrived, she was very nice with me because she's Brazilian. We just spoke Portuguese together. Then she did some... yeah... she bring me some very awkward situation, so I felt quite bad about it at first but then I was like, ok, I'm here for year, not looking for trouble, so I just went to her and told her: "Look, I don't appreciate what you did, I don't want this stuff anymore in my life, you are a negative person, I'm

not, so just stay away from me, you don't know me, you don't know where I come from, so I can promise you if you keep on putting me in those kind of situations, I am going to bite, I am not going to be nice anymore", so I told her that in Portuguese, and she was like: "I don't know what you're talking about". I told her "C'mon, you know, you are older than me, you have some issue with alcohol, so I don't want you around me". So now it's actually quote fine, she still tries to kick me out of the place but...

Z: Really?

C: Yeah.

Z: So how do you feel in your place, is it ok?

C: Sometimes I... you know, in the beginning, I wouldn't feel like home and I still don't really feel like at home but for instance at the beginning when I would just go in the room and someone was sleeping, I would just stop breathing, you know try to be as silent as possible, you know. Because she's the kind of person who makes you feel like you actually bother her. If she's sleeping and if you make a... just a little noise, she would just say "tss". Like "you're bothering me". Now I don't care. But... the worst is that from our bedroom, you can actually hear the street, you can actually hear people talking in the street, so it's not me, making the smallest noises, that's going to destroy you. So I'm like who cares. I don't care her sleep is... she's having a great night or not, I don't care. So it's actually better, I'm feeling more and more comfortable, so... that's still no. Let's say it doesn't match the vision of Erasmus in which like you're only with Erasmus students, going out a lot. I'm with adults, E. is 35, L. is 45 or something, I don't know. D. is 27 and he's working as well, so you know, I'm... G. is student just like me, but still, we're all pretty busy, so it's not, we're not the life of the party. We're not going to throw us a party at home but just... I don't know, I would love to have a place in which I could just bring people, it would be nice but the rent is cheap and I'm like 15 minutes away from the college, so I don't mind.

Z: So... when did you arrive?

C: I think it was the second of September.

Z: So you had quite long period before the school started.

C: Yeah.

Z: So what did you do then? Except of course trying to find accommodation?

C: Well I... I tried to visit Dublin as much as I could, also I started my research paper, because I have to do a research paper and I... it was the time when I did a loads of research about it, try to do as much as I could cause now I'm not even touching it

anymore. I'm so busy doing stuff for Trinity College, so I'm just going to keep on writing it during the Christmas break, so I did that basically.

Z: So when the school started... how was the first... Fresher's week and then the first time when the real school started?

C: Well... the thing was that at home my Erasmus coordinator sent me a list of names and it was basically the people who would go to Trinity College just like me. So we talked a lot through e-mails and you know just helping each other out... like about accommodation and so on. So I met C. during... the first day of... no it wasn't the first day of Fresher's week, it was that we had to go to Trinity College to get our student card and I met her that day and then I met other girls from my home university as well. But so I wasn't alone during the Fresher's week I was with these people, so I was within a group so it wasn't that scary, even though Trinity college can be freaking scary (laugh) you know, it's huge, lots of people, you can definitely feel that this is the best university in Ireland, you feel like that... like the spirit, posh people... so I wasn't alone, I wasn't really scared and I just tried to be as open as possible, talk to people, try to be like... hey I'm friendly!

Z: You are!

C: Hey, I'm here, be my friends! So I tried to talk to people as much as I can. It was good. I wasn't scared or anything, I was pretty excited because I've been waiting for the Fresher's week for quite a long time since I arrived on the second September, been waiting for like three weeks, so I was pretty excited. And the Fresher's week was great, I mean like... it was good.

Z: And then when the classes started?

C: When the classes started, I wasn't alone as well because I've met some French students and even like other students, Erasmus students basically, so I wasn't alone, you know, I would just... there were always some familiar faces in the classes and even my tutorials... so I... yeah... I felt like surrounded by people, I wasn't completely alone like: "Uuu, nobody to talk", it was like ok, c'mon, you're here for year so just open your mouth and say what you want just say, even though this is not extremely relevant, just a thought. It was good, honestly, I like staying here, I like it.

Z: Ok. That's great. Could you also tell me about just basically how has it been... about your Trinity experience from the beginning we were now talking about it, but then, what has been happening, how... how was it? The social time, academic...?

C: Yeah, I'm just trying to make the most of it. Like using as much the accommodations

as I can, like going to the swimming pool, going to dance class, using library, having lunch at the buttry, you know, whatever, being in Trinity as much as I can because... staying at home is not the best, you just stay in there doing nothing, so I prefer to go to Trinity just to be surrounded by students is always good to see new people. For the academic parts... I've never studied sociology before but it's not something... I don't feel scared by studying sociology, I don't feel that I don't have the background or whatever, so I feel that I'm doing quite well and I like it because for three years I've only been studying English... linguistics, grammar, English history... very theoretical stuff, you know and now it's actually good to study actual human beings, to study things that you could see in your everyday life, like social media, (...) social movements, it's always good to see that what you're studying has a real impact on the world, you know, on the everyday life, so yeah, I'm actually quite happy about the choice of modules that I've made. So... I'm quite good. It requires a lot of readings... a lot but still I like reading so I don't mind and it's not the end of the world if I don't read the entire text, if I just read like ten pages out of the thirty pages that I have to read. And I'm like c'mon I'm an Erasmus student, they don't expect that from me, so this is just much their low expectations.

Z: So you already said that you're school kind of matched you with some French people. So have you also met other people in school?

C: Yeah, I felt that I've... you know at the beginning, I was really trying to talk to just as many people as I could and I was like... one of my closest friend here - C. - she was actually pretty... she really wanted to avoid talking to French people at the beginning. She wanted to talk to Irish people. And it's actually not that easy because one day she was talking to this Irish girl and she told her that for them, we're just here for a year, so it's actually putting a lot of effort into building a friendship that is not going to last. So that's... they were friendly, helpful but still we don't know... this is just a small talk, you know, so you're not building a strong bond. So I feel that I connect more with Erasmus students. And still... I am not looking for making like lots of friends... I am not that kind of person, I prefer to have small group of friends around me but at least people that I actually really care about that I really know... people that if I am not feeling good one day, they would just text me "hi, are you ok?" or... if I need to move out, they would just help me, you know... so yes, I'm always trying to be open to meeting new people then at the same time, I am not putting much pressure on myself, like I absolutely have to make 10 friends per week, what's the point (laugh).

Z: (laugh) So at least there are these friends that you really made here. Do you feel like they will last... I know it's hard when you're far but...

C: Yes, I really feel that at least this is going to last, that's what's good about it, I try to establish connection you know.

Z: So tell me about your boyfriend.

C: Yes, I was pretty sure you're going to ask. (laugh).

Z: (laugh) It's important. If you don't mind.

C: I don't mind at all. Actually it's funny because it's one of my roommates, not my roommate but flatmate. His name is D., he's from Mexico, he's 27, he works as a music producer and it's funny because... this is an Erasmus year, so... this is like... you're doing so many stuff in a short period of time, so it's very intense and actually this is the same thing with that. I met him like... not at my first day when I moved to the apartment, but a few days after, so for a few months, I didn't even consider him as a potential love interest but I have had some rough time because of what happened with the Brazilian woman, I wasn't feeling at home, I was pretty lonely and he was pretty supportive, he was there for me. I remember one night I just... I broke down basically, I cried and cried and couldn't stop and he just stayed with me two hours, just listening to me, he was showing me like "c'mon, it's going to be ok", so it was funny because at the beginning he was the ghost of the apartment, he was never really there, working a lot and as we came more and more intimate, he would just be in the apartment little bit more and I would meet him more and it was good so... Yeah, we started dating like a month ago. On the first of the December, it's going to be our first month. So it's still pretty new, so this is still the cool phase, the phase when you see butterflies and rainbows and unicorns (...) so this is still the good phase but this is at the same time awkward because we're living together and there are still some people in the apartment that don't know about it... like E., the one in charge, because she has problems with couples in the apartment and it's... we're not even hiding but I think she's not paying attention to the evidence that she has in front of her eyes, so... yes, it's still like very... silly stuff like kissing in the kitchen than pretending nothing's happen. You are like: "Oh yes, it's a great movie, I like it!", just pretending you're not couple when you are and it's... but yeah... and I think he's actually making my year here better.

Z: That's what I was going to ask. How it changed the stay?

C: I think it changed it because he's not a student, so it's more that adapting because like... I... it's going to sound very cocky, but that's the only way I can actually say it...

right now my schedule's pretty busy, college and just working because I work in Malahide, so I have to take the trains, go to Malahide, three days per week, so like, try to make the most of it, going to the swimming pool, going to the dance class, going to climbing class or whatever crazy activities I've been involved in, and then boyfriend, so most of the time I'm just really tired but it's worth it so I don't really mind but... It's actually good that he's away for few weeks, that I can just sleep, do what I have to do, like studying, but I miss him.

Z: And then you went home during the reading week. And you said you had some troubles with your parents, so how was it actually to go back home?

C: I wouldn't say troubles you know, because they never... yeah, it's really not trouble, it's more that... how can I say it, like I talk to them a lot, through skype, I skype them every week. And it's actually funny because I have the impression that most of the time they actually forget that I'm away. Because I would just skype them while they're eating, so they would just talk to each other, completely forgetting that for me it's not the best for sound, I would just hear some mumbling there and mumbling there, so I'm like: "C'mon guys can you try to talk in the direction of the computer, so I can actually hear you?" So I still feel like I am the part of family life, you know, because when I skype them we talk for one or two hours, you know just talking about important stuff but at the same time a lot of small talk which is good because then I have the feeling that I'm not missing something important. So for instance I've heard that my sister had this very important exam, so I sent her a card, like saying "You're going to do great, don't worry, you're the best" and gave her gift, so I really don't want to miss something, you know, I still try to be as much involved in my family life as I would be while being at home. So when I went back for the week, it was funny because I felt different because now I have more control over my time table, I do whatever I want, I just go for grocery shopping, you know. Silly stuff but still that actually changed the sort of person you are. And I'm more active right now that I was before. So I felt at home but at the same time I felt different and my mother noticed that, that I was different in the way I talk, the way I behave, even the way I am, and she told me: "Yeah, you're changed but in a good way, so...". But the worst is that week is quite a long time, so when I was actually getting used to being in Paris, I had to go back here. So it was like... sort of bittersweet experience. But it's... I know that I'm going back for Christmas, I'm not really missing them a lot, because I know that in three weeks I'll be back and Christmas time is very important for me, it's the best time of the year. Christmas, my birthday,

New Year's Eve, great time, so I'm quite happy I'll be able to go back to Paris for Christmas. And D. is actually going to Paris too.

Z: With you?

C: Yeah, so that will be actually the official introduction to my friends stuff like this. So I'm actually preparing him: "You'll meet my friends, get ready", you know.

Z: Yes, so could you tell me... but I guess you already mentioned it quite... life different from your life back home? You already said that it's more social here, more busy, I mean you're here by yourself... so are there any other things that you perceive?

C: Hmm... I would say that before I used to be very afraid of being alone, I hated being alone, it was something really scary and frightening for me. For instance I never have gone to the movies by myself. It was something like... for me it was really awkward to do that. It was very social activity for me, so you wouldn't go by yourself, whereas now like if I want to go and see movie, I am just not going to wait for someone and tell me: "Hey Camille what about going to movie?" I'll just go by myself, it's not a big deal. So, yeah, I think I'm less afraid of being by myself. Being alone. Relying only on me and not someone else. So I think that's the main difference.

Z: So what moments do you consider the hardest and the best?

C: The hardest would definitely be facing adversity at home in my apartment because basically my parents have always tried to protect me from negativity, from adversity you know, so... and at home I had to face it and still I don't want to leave that place, it's cheap it's close to Trinity College, I'm only here for a year, you know, I may not feel the best, now it's actually getting better but... no I would just stay and try to face it. So yes, so I think I've been through some very hard times... for instance like... on second day at the apartment, the Brazilian woman invited a friend over, it was older than me, like thirty something. And during the entire night, she kept on telling him, because she was obviously drunk, she kept on telling him like: "You can go... Caroline's available". She told him that and she didn't even know if I was interested, she never asked me if I was actually homosexual, heterosexual, you know, we've never had that conversation. So I was in that situation in which I had to play it tough, because he tried to test me, like touching me, sort of not in the most appropriate way and I was like... trying to be like... I'm not impressed, you're not scaring me, so just keep on going but don't be surprised if I'll punch you, I was trying to play it tough, it worked because he left me... he left me alone but at the same time you know I was... it wasn't like, c'mon I'm twenty one, I told her: "I'm twenty one, you're forty five, you're supposed to know better, you don't push

me into the lion's den". And the worst is that next morning she was like: "Caroline, I didn't like your attitude, this is not what you do to a friend". I was like: " Wait a minute, I've known you for a day, we're not friends, you know, we're just sharing the room, so first of all there's just... I'm not your friend first of all and second, if you keep on saying to guy that I don't know that I'm actually available, this is... of course this is going to end badly, this is not something you do, especially to a girl, who is actually younger than you, older person should know better, you are supposed to be the grown up here, you know". So yes, this was pretty... disagreeable experience. I've had another one with a guy that I considered as a sort of a friend. I went to his place to have dinner and he's the kind of guy who smokes a lot weed, so we smoked some and I was completely, completely high. And the thing is that I didn't like the state in which I was, I was feeling really vulnerable and it wasn't safe for me, so then when I talked about it the day after with C., she was just like: "You put yourself in potentially a very dangerous situation, you don't know the guy, ok, he's friendly, he's studying sociology just like you, in Trinity College but that doesn't mean that he's a good person, you know". So... yes, I had some let's say bad experiences, but nothing dramatic, you know. So I'm ok. And some of my best memories so far are just so far being with... friends... boyfriend. You know just like stuff like this, having dinner, going to the movies or even being in the apartment but with a very good atmosphere, you know. Like G. would just play ukulele, it's good, it's light. No pressure, just silly stuff and... yes, so those are really my best memories for now.

Z: Yeah, so what do you miss here? Do you feel like you miss something or someone?

C: Hmm... it's not that I really miss someone here, but it's more that I'm actually afraid of going back home and realizing that I've been away for a year. That the interactions within my group of friends changed, that they are not so close anymore, then I would just go back be like: "Hi, nothing happened, so let's just go back to where we were", but it's just not going to be like this, they would have changed, they would be different from the persons that I've left year ago, so I'm pretty afraid of that. Coming back, being different and realizing that my environment is different as well, things are not like they were when I left, so that's something that I'm actually a little scared about.

Z: And how do you feel about having the Michaelmas term almost over and having one more in front of you? Are you looking forward to that or...?

C: For me, I don't see that the two semesters are completely different, for me it's just continuity, I still have many months here ahead of me, so I'm not like... thinking of the

end, because then like some evident problems will arise like what will I do with my boyfriend, so you know, I'm don't think about I'm just trying to seize the day, I would say. I'll think about it later, when I will be confronted to the problem like what are we going to do. So yeah, not thinking about it so much.

Z: Ok, I think that's it.

Jméno (pseudonym): Cloé, dále jako C.

Země původu: Francie

Obor studia: Sociologie

Datum rozhovoru: 4.12.2015

Z: I have one big, main question. And then I have other questions. And people have usually trouble talking on their own, so I will help you if you need... so no worries. So I am interested in student's personal experiences in their study abroad but it's not just like I want to hear only about your stay here, I am also interested in the broader context, so basically in the life story, so could you please tell me your life story? Anything that occurs to you and then I will ask you some questions later.

C: Ok, sure. So I am 22 years old, I am studying at Le Sorbonne, it's my final year of master. And I always wanted to do Erasmus year actually, since like high school and it was actually never the right time to do that because I've my friends, because I've lack of money, because I was anxious finishing my license first and it was the last chance I had to go somewhere so I also wanted to improve English because it was not good enough for academic readings and like if I want to go further in my degree. And thesis for example or teaching I need a way better English, so I was thinking about going in United Kingdom, and actually in Sociology in Le Sorbonne, you don't have a lot of choices in countries, so it was London which is expensive or Dublin, so I picked up Dublin. And yeah... my parents encouraged me to do that because they thought it was important too. Yeah, friend of mine went to Poland three years ago for an Erasmus trip, it was one of his best experiences... so why not to do that?

Z: And you said that you wanted to do it ever since high school, so was there a particular moment that you feel like encouraged you?

C: It's like it was even before high school, it was middle school and they had this programme with Germany when you could go for six months, but I was not good enough in German to go away in Germany. But it's... yeah it started to really interest me at this point. And yeah, I think that was the very beginning and then at high school it wasn't possible for me. I had a friend in the 2nd year of high school who was coming back from United States, so she spent a year in the United States and it looked really, really nice, she had perfect English, American accent, so I was really impressed and I thought it would be very, very cool to do that once in your life.

Z: Ok. And could you tell me a little bit more about maybe your life back home? For

example do you live with parents...

C: Yeah, sure. So I live with my parents, it's in the suburbs of Paris and I studying in Paris since I was 16, so it was the second year of high school. I had a part time job for the last four years since I started uni, so yeah... I am middle class, my parents are from middle class and yeah... I started university right after high school always been (...). Anything else?

Z: So for example could you tell me what your life at the university is? How is it like socially, academically... and in comparison with Dublin for example.

C: It's quite different I guess. At the first year, I had a very unsociable year, I don't know why but I didn't feel well the first year at uni. But then it started to get really better. But the guys which I chilled with are not uni people, I don't stay a lot in touch with the uni, I go to listen to the course and then I go back home because I spent an hour in the train, so that's two hours a day in the transport which is a lot to me, so I don't like to stay in the university if I can stay at home and avoid two hours in transport and... I have... I hang out more with my old friends which are not from the university, so... my childhood friends, high school friends, stuff like this, so I am not really sociable at the uni but I have couple of friends which are really great. We don't hang out that much in the uni also because we don't have a lot to do there in the small building outside from the main buildings, so we don't have social spaces, we don't have café, we don't have that kind of stuff, so if you want to do something, it's outside of the uni. And yeah, that's it.

Z: And... have you travelled in your life a lot?

C: Not at all. I never went to foreign country with my parents. I spent three weeks with my best friend in Italy when I was 14. I went to London for couple of days with my sister for my 18th birthday and... no I never travelled a lot, I always wanted to but I don't have the money actually to do that, neither my parents have, so... like in France yes, but not outside of France.

Z: When did you find out that you will go to Erasmus to Dublin, so how were the preparations or the time before you left?

C: So... It was in a rush actually for the lot of stuff, for the money first, it was a long time (...), so I put money away, not specially for Erasmus but for something I wanted to do, like having a car, travel or something. So when I started working when I was 18, I put money in a bank account, so I had the money, and my parents helped me, we had to think how they are going to give me money every month to help me and they don't have to but they do it anyway. And I started planning like practical stuff, going to visit all the

doctors I needed to visit before I leave, like dentists, generalist's blah, blah, blah. Then I started to... I take it really easy actually because I was working till July, so I couldn't think about it till July and then in August I tried to apply for the Trinity Hall, it didn't work, so I started stressing a lot because I had no home and... so we took the (...) with my parents, they were obviously really stressed for me and then I received e-mail from the girl from Le Sorbonne who proposed me to go together in Dublin to find an accommodation together, so we did that and she's now my roommate so... and I started pack two days before I was leaving. I had that... I didn't really plan... how do you say that...

Z: Accurately?

C: Yeah, it was all in a rush, all three weeks before I left and I just had that little moment of stress and when I didn't find an accommodation I was thinking: "Ok, I don't want to leave anymore, it will be easier if I stay in France and stay with my friends, stay with my uni, stay with my parents blah, blah, blah". Yeah... when I found the accommodation everything was better. Just need to set all the... some problem with my inscription and my home university which was also part of stress but I did that before I left so everything was ok.

Z: So you already had accommodation when you arrived?

C: Yeah, I did that before I... actually I was thinking of going a week before the beginning of the courses and when G. who is my roommate sent me the message, I was really relaxed and she started to say to me... like to realize how hard it is to find an accommodation in Dublin, I was like: "No, I didn't think about that, I thought it was really easy". And when I realized it was really hard and really expensive to find something here, I would rather... I wanted to go before just to start looking. Because I was too stressed by being homeless for the whole year.

Z: I was homeless too, so... only three days though.

C: Yeah, but it was so... main source of stress.

Z: Ok, so how long before the school have you arrived.

C: Just two days before... we arrived on Saturday and the courses started on Monday... it was not the courses, it was the Fresher's week. So yeah, just two days.

Z: So you were already coming with your friend.

C: Yeah, but she caught up then early in the morning and I came late in the afternoon, so we just... we just met Saturday evening and yeah...

Z: Ok, so how was the Fresher's week for you?

C: It was really interesting, really different from France. It was really good and really a stress relief, to meet guys from actually... Irish student, the Irish people, the S2S system were really nice at the beginning also, to understand some expressions as "grand" or "craig", so it's been good for practical things and also... yeah I don't know... they really took care of us at the beginning, explaining everything, so it was quite... yeah... quite nice.

Z: Was there anything else important happening, or like generally something else what you did during the first week?

C: Oh yeah, first we started to buy stuff for the house because the house totally empty, so we didn't even have bedsheets, so we started with that together. One of my... we are all foreign in the apartment and one of the girls, was there two weeks before us, so she started to buy small stuff like pen, few glasses but we had to buy more of course. We did everything with my roommates the first week because we wanted to do the same thing, such as bus card so we were trying to figure out how to get bus card which was quite easy and... Irish phone number and that was not working really well with my French one, internet also. Yes... we started to discover the costs, place to buy a food, really all the practical things, for there occurred quite many. And also picking the courses which was really hard because we had to calculate the number of credits for each course, which was interesting for us... this was quite a disappointing to see that we didn't have as many courses as we hoped we could take, that it was really limited. Yes.

Z: So could you actually tell me more about the place you live and with whom you live?

C: Ok. So when we came here in August we directly went to the student's office centre, to ask them what we could do to have an accommodation, so they told us to look at daft, which we were already doing, so it wasn't really helpful. They had this accommodation which is in Dublin 9 - it's in Marino Institutes of Education and it was quite as far as Trinity Hall, it was quite the same price which was really higher than we wanted to pay at the beginning but anyway... so it's twenty minutes by bus if there is no trouble. Like you should take it at 8 in the morning, it's more like 1 hour, so it really depends. It's a very calm area, really small houses for couples with small children, so that's like this. It's a little bit far from everything but I think it's ok, the only problem is you have to take the bus if you want to come, so it's 20 Euros per week which is a lot. Anyway, I live with G., which is the girl with whom I came here in August, who is also from Le Sorbonne studying history. I live with C., who is another French girl we didn't know at all before we were coming here, she is in business and she is 33, G. is 31 soon and there

is also K. who is from Los Angeles and she studies math I think, she's only here for semester such as C., and G. and I are here for the year. And it's... yeah, it's international accommodation but I think... we discovered in a bar talking with a guy who actually studied in the Marino institute of Education and it's working with Trinity, so it's a degree for people who want to become teachers but it's actually a degree from Trinity so that's why we get this accommodation and... so yeah, there's (...) and there's Erasmus students so I am with a lot of strangers from... foreigners.

Z: So it's fine? The accommodation is good? You feel good in there and everything?

C: Yeah, it's... it's cheap, like everything looks really cheap like the tables, furniture, stuff like this, our sink isn't working I think, it was (...) water every time but I feel really great with my roommates which is not the case of everyone in the residence from what I know, like some really have invisible roommates, they're messy or quite like that, who haven't wash the dishes, who haven't take out the trash but the girls with who I am are really nice, so it's doing a lot in how I feel good there. So I think it's really more about the people I am with than about the accommodation. Otherwise it has really small bathroom, there are Irish students in the other blocks who make lot of noise but it's really ok.

Z: So... could you tell me a little but more about your time here basically on Trinity... since you came here, what was happening, how was it and so on?

C: Ehm... Now, the two weeks from the essays, I don't do as much as I did, I'm never went out like... it's not really an Erasmus cliché... like you party all the time and you have sex with whoever you want and you're just basically drunk every day, so it was really not like this, which I was afraid of, being with people who only want to party and drinking cause I can do that at home with my friends from France, so it was really not the point but basically I have university three days per week, so two days off, so I try to go to library, I don't do as much as I should, ehm... we try to discover a bit of Ireland, so that was the main important thing for us, to like discover Dublin, so I we would just walk through the market, stuff like this, so we went twice with the DUIS association to trips, so we did that and otherwise I don't know it's a hard question I try to remember everything I did but... yeah basically I hang out a lot with my roommates and we try to do stuff but in small groups, it's really not like the whole residence throwing party all the time but yeah we went to cinema, go to the some nice restaurants from time to time but currently we don't do a lot because of the essays and all the stuff we have to do.

Z: Ok. So could you tell me about your friends more? I mean we already talked about

the ones that you live with but have you found any other?

C: Ok, it was the second disappointing thing here. We didn't like... I met a lot of French people who are really nice, I am not really close to them yes... because we don't have class every time together, so I saw them in one or two cases but we didn't meet a lot of Irish people, it's really hard to make real links with people who actually live here and know each other for a year or something... I think it's quite hard to for me because I'm not really sociable, I am a little bit shy, so it's really hard to talk to people... that's... I think Irish people are really nice but it's quite difficult to have Irish friends, it's not as easy as with other Erasmus students cause we are in the same boat, so we know how hard it is and I am less afraid to speak English with other foreigners because they won't really judge and... so yeah, I think more Erasmus students and more French, obviously, people because there is a big French community here, so it's really easy to meet other French people even if it was not what I was hoping for before I came, so I thought it was easier to meet Irish... like to Irish guys but it's such a (...) and there are so many people in my class, so I think it's really hard actually, so...

Z: So with the internationals it went quite well?

C: Ehm... it's not friends I think, it's more people I like to hang out with but it's really hard to make real friendship I think because you don't have really time to share real things, to know the background of the other one, etc. So with few people in my residence yes, because I see them all the time, so we are talking about important matters... yes, otherwise, it's quite easy and at my home people I met are really nice, so every time I saw them, they ask me if I want to have a coffee or talk about if I don't feel good and blah, blah, blah. So yeah but I think it's not true friendship, it's more... it's a light friendship.

Z: Yeah, ok. So... if you think about your stay here as a whole, which part do you think has been the best so far? It doesn't have to be a specific moment it can be just some time...

C: Hmm... I think it was in the middle of the beginning, because I didn't have to work a lot and everything was... everything important was done, so I had a phone number, I had the internet, I had everything, so I didn't have to care about that and I didn't have to stay a lot, so it was great to... just to do stuff... discover Ireland, Irish people, going to pubs, drink a little bit too much, so the middle was really nice and I think it's going to be less nice in the future because I won't have the Erasmus money before a while, so I will less travel, so this is one thing which isn't that nice now, I have to really worry about the

money, so it's going to be quite hard.

Z: Yeah. So you said you enjoy discovering Ireland or Irish culture, so do you think you have discovered? (laugh)

C: Yeah, actually not as much as we wanted, but we plan to visit other places till the end of May but I really wanted to see the countryside, so we went to Glendalough and we went to see the Giant Causeway and some places which are near cliffs and so... it was as Irish as you see the movie with the sea and the wild countryside, and about the Irish people themselves, one thing I noticed - they are really friendly, on the street and in the bar, a guy comes to you and it's not like they're going to be sexually... with sex intensions, more like he was drunk and just want to talk to someone but yeah, they waiting line for the best foreigners' discovery part whereas in France it's never like this, savage people and so... yeah, I think I discovered more about the Irish out of the uni than in the uni because I probably spoke to more Irish out of the university than in the university.

Z: And if you compare your expectations if you had some and what it is really? How does it differ?

C: I'm relieved in some ways I have though I will... like my budget will be a little be more imprudent, so it really differs from my expectations. And I also thought it would be easier to organize, to work, I really have travelled when supposed to do my work actually, so thought I will be a little more serious about my work and with the good sides... I did not expect to make such a good friends with my roommates, so it really went well, so we're really close now, I wasn't expecting that, so it was really nice. And... it's easier to understand also, I had thought that I will be completely lost in my course, I thought that all the Irish teachers will have Irish accent which is not the case, so it's easier, it's easier also to take notes. But... yes, I was quite afraid of being with really young people who really want just parties and not to discover cultural things or just yeah... hook up with whoever they want. So they're really not like this in my residence, so it's really good discovery. But I tried not to have so many expectations because I didn't want to be disappointed, so it's really small stuff but yeah... it's really a lot easier that I was thinking so... yeah... I said I didn't expect a lot so...

Z: Ok. So do you have some particular best and worst moments?

C: Oh... not really. Only one like my mother sent me my cat's pictures and I felt like I wish I could be with my cats but... it's more about the pets than my parents or sisters. Because I know I will see them quite soon so, it's like... It was quite hard to be apart

from my friends, because one of my friends broke up with her boyfriend in a bad way and I was sad I couldn't be there for her... and my (...) worked out with me, so we could go... so that was the moment when I wish I could be with my friends and kick his ass. But otherwise not really, I don't feel homesick or I don't feel there are really bad moments, I really feel good here, I am more worried about enjoying the most I can here and doing the most and having the most time I can, so yeah...

Z: And do you think it works so far, to enjoy the most?

C: Yeah, I don't do as much as I should, I think, I could go outside more, I could discover more the country, read more and study more but yeah... it's also like... I am also like missing friends, so it's... I am more different person here... I like being alone in my room but I think it's quite nice.

Z: So do you really miss something here?

C: I think maybe I miss sometimes how easy it is to speak in your own language, everything is harder when you speak English and that's also why I am a lot with French people, so we speak French a lot among us because we miss how easy it is to express yourself and I also think it's why we don't have a deep friendship, because you can't express your thoughts as you wish you could. So, I need that, just speaking your own language but... so then I of course miss living with my parents because I have to do my laundry, clean the dishes and do all the stuff, and we're so messy but it's not really big miss. I don't think I really miss something. I speak to my parents at least once in a week yeah... we talk on "What's up" and "Skype", stuff like this. Maybe my sister, ok I miss my sister, because she doesn't use "What's up" a lot, so we don't talk a lot but I know it's going well for her, so.

Z: So... Could you just tell me how you feel your life is different here than at home? I mean you kind of mentioned already something of that but...

C: No... how am I different... I am more by myself, so it's yeah... I do a lot more stuff by myself like putting money on my bus card, stuff usually my parents do without my noticing it... I cook, I love cooking, I never had to cook all my meals stuff like this, I am more independent, maybe less shy probably, because you have to talk to people otherwise you would just be alone for a year which is sad so... I think kind of... in class it's quite different from France, you don't have to speak in France, you just have to listen to the teacher and take notes, so it's really different, because I have to think by myself, I have to express own ideas, so I am really not used to that, I think it's excellent because I am really not used to it. It's actually the first thing that strike us when we came here,

when they asked students "what do you think", all the French people are spoke to, think the same whereas in French we don't have to think by ourselves, we are not asked a thing, we just have to learn.

Z: So you don't have seminars?

C: We have but it's just the teacher is speaking for two hours and we have to write down and we have tutorials, it's basically the same, we don't have group talks or things like this. Or not as much as here, so it's basically just the teacher speaking and we just have to listen to him, so it's quite interesting to be here.

Z: And how are you looking forward to go home?

C: Yeah, for Christmas, just between the 20th and the 29th and then I come back with my two best friends.

Z: And how are you feeling about going home?

C: I am not sure how I feel because I know it's going to be after all the essay stuff, so it will be just days to see my family, my sister and the cats. And it's going to be cool to not have to take care about my stuff for ten days because I know my mother will be so happy to see me, that she will just do whatever I want I think. No, it's really cool to... that I stay year here because I would have felt that with... like I think a year is good but three months is too short, so I am glad I can come back and have a long experience here. So it's going to be cool and it's going to be Christmas which is special time which is not as if I will come back during the semester, so I can basically come back because it's Christmas and otherwise my mother would have been really sad not to see me but I wouldn't be thinking of coming back home at the beginning but yeah...

Z: Ok, I think that's it.

Jméno (pseudonym): Julia, dále jako J.

Země původu: Švédsko

Obor studia: sociologie

Datum rozhovoru: 15.12.2015

Z: So I have one bigger question, don't feel worried about it, if you don't know, I can always help and then I have some more questions. Usually, I mostly just ask questions (laugh), so no worries.

J: Ok.

Z: So I am interested in student's personal experiences during their study abroad but I am also interested in the wider context, so basically also in your life, so could you please tell me about your life, like your life story and anything basically that occurs to you now, everyone says something different, so don't worry and then I will ask you some more questions.

J: Do you mean where I come from, where I was born and raised, like my family constellation and stuff?

Z: Yes.

J: Ok. I am from Sweden and I was born... I am 21 years old now, so I was born in 1994, I lived in a small, not village, but like a small town in the middle of Sweden with like 8 thousand people in the central. I've lived there with my mom during my whole life. My mum and dad moved apart when I was 4 years old, so for a short while he stayed in **Ustäl** as the town is called and then he have been moving around a lot in Sweden with his new family and now all of my... like all of my brothers and sisters. I actually have three sisters and one brother.

Z: That's great. Big family.

J: Yes. So it's really fun and we have always had a really good contact and all. Even my mum and my dad's new wife give each other Christmas presents.

Z: That's so nice! Not very usual!

J: Yeah, I think so. I think it was like 2 and a half years ago and now I moved to Umeå, which is up North in Sweden to study at the university and there I live with my two friends from home in an apartment, those 2 guys and I have known each other for like... I don't know 6 or 7 years, so it's like very comfortable to live with people that you really know. Ehm... I don't know like do you want me to... is this enough of the broad picture or do you want me to tell like about specific happenings in my life?

Z: Ehm... more just tell me for example about your life back home, like the general stuff like when you go to university, how is it, what do you do in your free time...

J: In Umea I live really close to the university, so it's like really easy to get there... ehm... god, I don't know... ehm... like the system of studying there is a bit different than here, so you don't read all of the subjects during the same time, you like are focusing on one module at once like for a few weeks, maybe 4 to 6 weeks and then there's exam on that, so you don't have like classes every day of the week, like you have here, since you have so many subjects all the time. So you don't... you aren't really like forced to go to school every day but I often do because I find it really comfortable studying in the library and when you live with other people, it's never really quiet at home, so... ehm... what I do in my spare time, I play a little volleyball actually.

Z: That's great.

J: And (...) which is the... like I don't know if it is the biggest gym of the Northern part where it is... one of Europe's biggest gym places. It's like really close to the University of Umea, so they have a really broad... like you can choose from a lot of things to do there, so they have really nice like volleyball plans there.

Z: So you enjoy sports?

J: Yes.

Z: Have you joined some society here?

J: Yes, I have joined the volleyball society actually (laugh) and food and drink society, I love food and what else have I joined. International students society...

Z: And have you done some sports out of school here?

J: No, not really. I have been mostly focusing on exploring the country while I've been here and... I focus on the studies, so I haven't really been engaging with the gym and that here.

Z: Yeah, ok. And with the volleyball society? Do you go to trainings?

J: I did that in the beginning but then school took over and I became a bit too lazy.

Z: Completely understand (laugh). My friend also went to swing classes the first half every Tuesday and now she doesn't have mention it anymore (laugh). So and also back home like what is your social life like?

J: My social life... since I moved I think it is like 450km from home with 2 of my friends from home, I am very close with them and... I guess we hang out quite much but we don't have like a quite big... not like a... wait what am I saying now? We are like 24 people in the class that I am studying with in Umea, so it's not too big but also not too

small so you have like... you get close to a lot of people and I think we have a lot of events that we created with the class like... movie night and drinking night and like a lot of different stuff. So I am hanging out quite much with them too. Ehm... it's actually quite hard to get to know people outside of the university if you don't know them from before I think. So I would actually say that my social life in Umea includes the one that I knew before I started university, that I moved there with and my classmates... at least at most of the time.

Z: Yeah. So have you travelled during your life?

J: I... a bit. But I haven't been like backpacking and... or something like that. When I was younger I was travelling with my mum and my grandma, we went to Greece and Portugal, just to have sunny vacation. But later years, I've been to South Africa for 3 weeks where I went by myself.

Z: That's awesome.

J: That was high school. Like the last... we have like a big thing during the last year in high school, that is like your own project to make, so it's... I know that some people used to create a small company, they start selling jam or... selling bags or like making hats and like selling them. But I wasn't up for selling hats or jam. I wanted to explore the world and took my way to South Africa and worked with an organization that takes care of kids that don't come from very good backgrounds. Like either they are homeless, or are taken from a really bad area, or just like some people are... some of the kids were actually found in a trash there, so it's those kinds of kids.

Z: So you did that for 3 months?

J: No, just 3 weeks actually. That was a really short time but I am going to go back there, don't exactly know when but it was a too lovely country to not be visiting it again.

Z: Oh really?

J: It was actually the most beautiful country I've ever been to.

Z: Ok. And do you feel like it gave you a lot?

J: Yeah, it did... because I was experiencing a totally new culture... it's like a really big part of South Africa is Christian, and I wouldn't say that Sweden is like... really Christian, yes it's kind of mostly Christian because as soon as you get baptised, you automatically are included in the Swedish church. Like it's... like I have a Swedish word here that I want to say but I don't have it! It's like Sweden is under Christianity one way but not in the way like South Africa because I don't know if it is like 90-something percent of the population that are Christians or something. So it was really an

experience to be living in such a religious country.

Z: Ok. How did it reflect in the life... or how did you see it?

J: The organization that I worked with were basically founded from Christian foundations, so... they have like morning ceremonies and all the children songs, they were not about a teddy bear or doll or something, it was about Jesus and God... ehm... and... when they told the kids not to do things, it was not because "you know it is mean to hit someone, you should stop hitting someone because they might get sad", they didn't say it like that, it was more like "you know God is looking at you, Jesus wouldn't like this". They were referring to religion all the time. I can't like drag everyone under the same argument. I can't say that that is what is like in every part of South Africa but that was like one of the things that I experienced, that lot of people referred to their religion in their daily life, in such a bigger amount than I am used to.

Z: That's very interesting. And also Ireland is actually supposed to be a very Catholic country. Can you see it here somehow?

J: I don't think that I would say that I see it in daily life because a lot of Irish young people that I've gotten to know here say that the younger generation isn't really a believing generation. Especially not compared to their parents and grandparents. And I think that is like really reflecting in the society because yeah... I wouldn't say that I see religious practices so much in daily life here but when I was... I've actually been to Belfast one weekend and we took a cab ride, called like a "black cab ride" or taxi, oh I don't know it's called something like that. And they took us through the Christian areas, like the Protestant areas and the Catholic areas and when you're doing things like that, you really see that, like what religion and Christianity is... like it had such a big impact here and it... the fact that the areas are still separated is showing really much how Christianity is still affecting society. So if you look at those parts, I would say that it shows but not in my daily life that I've experienced.

Z: Interesting. I was in Belfast too actually but we were just with a friend and we never took any tour, so it's like very interesting when people come back and tell me that it's still there separated. Because you are the 2nd person who tells me that but we didn't know, because no one told us, so... it's very interesting. So let's move to Erasmus actually (laugh).

J: Yeah, yeah, sorry I know that I talk so much.

Z: No! No, this was so interesting to me. So...when did you first realize that you want to have this experience... to go.

J: I think I actually decided before I went to college because one of the main things that I remember I was looking at when applying for the university in Sweden was that the sociology programme that I am studying had included semester that you were allowed to go outside of the country and I was like "yeah, of course, I am doing it".

Z: Yeah I understand (laugh).

J: And then I think it was that... we had to fill in our applications a few months before... I think it was like in the middle of the summer before we came here, so it was like a half a year process, so I chose Ireland mainly because I haven't been here and I was up for something new, an adventure.

Z: And do you think... like you always kind of knew you want to do that? Or was there some specific time when you realized that "Erasmus, that's my thing"?

J: No, I don't think that I've always known, I've just took the opportunity I was given and since it was like a really good opportunity, you actually get a scholarship to go outside the country and meet new religions, meet new societies, meet new people, see something else than you're used to, that's like... of course I will take that opportunity.

Z: And... yeah, did you have many other options where you could go?

J: Yeah, actually the sociology programme in Umea has a really good relation with a lot of universities, so I have a few ones, few of my classmates are in Cambridge in England and some are in Newcastle in England, two that went to the States, one that is in Italy, one that is in Spain, I think we had the opportunity to go to Canada too and few other countries, I don't exactly remember but Germany, France and other. So yes, I had some opportunities.

Z: And you chose Ireland...

J: Yeah, just... I don't know... like I think that I've heard that they had good education on English and that... I actually didn't know that it was like... now I know that Trinity is like the top 1 university but I had no idea of that before I came here, so that wasn't like the main thing that made me decide but I've heard from one guy a few years ago went to Germany and he signed up for a few classes for like yeah... half a year and he got the information that all the classes would be in English and of course as he was on Erasmus from Sweden, he said, of course it's going to be in English, and then he came there and all the classes were in German and he had just a basic knowledge of German... he couldn't speak it fluent or something, so... that was a living hell for him. But I guess I wanted to go to an English speaking country because I think that the... like it will be easier for me than going to Spain and I think they have better education here, I don't

know. But that was one of the main things that made me choose Ireland. That I think they have good education and that their English will be good for me.

Z: So when did you find out that you will go actually till the time you leave, how were the preparations, people's reactions, how did you feel, like what was happening before the time you left?

J: Ehm... my parents said actually: "Oh, are you leaving? Well... ok" because I didn't... I gave them heads up in advance, like a few months before and then I forgot to mention it and then I mentioned it like a month before I was going to leave and they were like "Oh, is this for real?" And yeah. Well I... what actually was the question?

Z: It was just kind of what was happening before you left?

J: What was happening... we needed to apply for the modules we were going to read here and that was like a big... it was quite hard because we really don't have that system in Sweden that you... it's like what you apply for a few months before you are going to start studying, is what you are going to read, that's like you will be accepted to the modules, you will read them and you will finish them. But here? You have the opportunity to go and like try out all of the modules during the first week, like to visit all introductions so you could see what you felt about them and we were really not expecting that, so we put a lot of effort, to read through the module outlines and trying to decide our fate here. What other preparations did I do? I panicked in the last minute because I have forgotten to fix a passport (laugh).

Z: Oh really?

J: Yeah.

Z: But you don't need a passport, do you? You can travel with ID.

J: I don't think we can travel with ID.

Z: But I travel with ID, I don't own a passport.

J: But do you have like international ID?

Z: Yes.

J: We don't. You need to apply for either that or... a passport and I think it is... they cost like... it's not like a big difference between the costs of them, so and since the passport is... ehm...

Z: It's more useful?

J: Yeah, it's quite more useful and I think it lasts for 10 years and the international ID lasts for 5 or something so yeah. So I applied for a pass.

Z: Ok. And have you found accommodation before you arrived?

J: No, actually, not. I went here one week before my other 2 friends that are here to study from the same university as me, would arrive, to... I was actually going here to just look around in the city and to try to find accommodation because we had nowhere to live, it was so hard to try to fix some place to live from another country because the only thing that you could reach people through was email or phone and they all preferred e-mail and it's really hard to get a good connection. But I was... one day I was calling on an apartment here and the woman that owns it said "unfortunately, it's already gone but I have another viewing in like 20 minutes, so if you would like to come and just look at the apartment, I will happily let you come." And I was like "Hmm... I don't know, I will call back to you". Because I was thinking like 20 minutes, I don't know where I am, I was here second day in Dublin, I didn't know anything and then I was like thinking that I should at least try to look where it is, so I could see that if it is on walking distance, I could just go there. Then I called her again "ok, I'm coming, give me the address", so I just typed it into a google maps and just ran there and that's where we live now.

Z: Oh, really? So you settled it for girls.

J: Yeah.

Z: That's so nice actually!

J: I just went there, said yes, signed the contract and yeah... we actually end up with a really lovely landlord, they've been so nice to us, help us with everything and stuff. So...

Z: So you're happy.

J: Yeah, I am happy. We are paying like a lot for the apartment, especially compared to the prices we're used to in Sweden, but we knew that it's going to be more expensive to live here and they've been so helpful, so I wouldn't complain on it, I am happy.

Z: That's great. And so how was the Fresher's Week?

J: Fresher's Week... am I allowed to say that it was filled with alcohol?

Z: Of course you are.

J: Ehm... it was a lot of parties, a lot of getting to know new people, that was like the main... during that week I think I've met most of the ones that I still hang out with, so that was the start of everything, like the start of the journey here, trying to get to know the university, get to know people, try to manage to do things during the week at the same time as you were trying to manage to settle in a new school. I've joined a lot of societies. I think it is a few more than I mentioned before but I don't remember them all

because I haven't been engaged in them all. But Fresher's Week was useful, it was like... during that week a lot of introductions were and a lot of... like both to societies and to school, so it was like... we were introduced to the whole thing and at the same time we got to know a lot of people from both school and outside. It was nice.

Z: Ok. And then when the school started how things went?

J: How they went... like in the beginning I was actually really struggling with the language, I know that I can make myself understood in English, like I can speak and understand people without a problem but when it comes to academic English, you're not really practicing the academic words when you're just having a normal conversation with someone, so in the beginning, like the readings and to understand the Irish accent of the teachers (laugh).

Z: Yeah (laugh).

J: Ehm... that was a struggle but... and actually that was... no actually I remember that was the time when I was starting to be a bit ill, I had some problems here, like my stomach was angry with me like for one and a half month. So I've been to the doctor here like several times and then I got a weird infection in my wisdom tooth, so I had to go to the emergency and drag it out and then I ate some penicillin like 2 times and... yeah, it was a struggle in combination with school but it worked out.

Z: And have you met many people at school?

J: Yeah, I've met a lot of people and I am actually sort of sad that I'm going to leave in a week because like... now we have passed the period when we have gotten to know a lot of people, and it's like... if we would stay for the whole year, the next semester would be the time when you get to know them deeply, now you just know them really light and you don't know if you're ever going to see them again. So that feels quite said separation, anxiety (laugh). Because I met a lot of nice people that I really don't want to leave but I guess that's a part of life to just see what happens.

Z: Yeah, I guess so. And... so... just if you should describe your time at Trinity from the beginning till now... how has that been?

J: Just at Trinity and not in general?

Z: No, in general actually.

J: Ok.

Z: It's just so tied to the school that I always say Trinity but I mean Ireland (laugh).

J: Ehm... I guess since I was... like I've spent 2 months of my time here being sick, so it have been really nice here but with... with that including... like being sick and

struggling with the school, I'd say that it have been a really stressful time here... ehm... like even though I am really happy that I went because I've met a lot of nice people and I've learnt a lot of stuff and I've experienced a lot of new interesting stuff that I will never regret... like going here and experience all this... but I would actually say that this school system here... I think like that it's so stressful that I think I would have learnt more if I would have been studying in Sweden. Ehm... maybe that's a really harsh thing to say and I guess that is really individual, I can't speak for the whole system, like of course but... reading everything at the same time and I don't know... it have been such an adjustment so it have been really hard to keep up with it and at the same time, you're not used to reading everything in English... ehm... I would say that the experience has been really great and I've learnt a lot but I don't know if I would do it again actually...

Z: Really?

J: Yeah.

Z: So... what's the main thing... the main reasons you wouldn't do it again? Is it the school you now said that was so stressful?

J: Yeah, actually. I don't know what I would say if I didn't have dysfunctional body for 2 months but now it's the only thing I can refer to so... I don't know I think I just realized that I really appreciate the school system that I am used to and I think it is more like... efficient way of teaching.

Z: It sounds very nice, yeah.

J: Yeah, to examine one module at a time which means that you can get really deep in that instead of learning lightly on two things during a long time because that... because I don't... I think that's more useful. And... if I am up for just having nice experience and to explore country than I think I would rather go out travelling with nothing on my shoulders... like no demands from a school, or a work or something like... either just save money and go out backpacking or travelling or something. But I think I will finish my school in Sweden.

Z: And apart from the school, was there something... or do you feel there's something that would discourage you to do it again...? For example?

J: You mean studying abroad or going abroad just?

Z: Ehm... yeah like Erasmus, so studying abroad.

J: No, like apparent... except from the school system, I don't think it is anything else that is affecting me negatively in that view. Because I am really happy with Ireland. It is the first time I live in a really big city, so it has been an experience.

Z: Yeah, so if you compare your life... like kind of the everyday stuff at home and here, do you see a big difference?

J: Yeah, I've been so stressed out here, that I haven't like... I haven't been to the gym lately, or I don't really have the... fun everyday routines here that I have home, because here it seems like I really have to do so much... because it's so high demands here and it is high demands back home too back in a... I don't know they put the demands in a different way and it's like...

Z: I think I understand. Is it more like... it's not like you don't have to do anything and then you have to do everything at one time, so...

J: Yeah, yeah, but at the same time here I had some modules that put demands from week to week and having those small demands at the same time as the big demands of essays at the end, that is like... making my head explode.

Z: Yeah, I believe you.

J: Because 24 hours isn't enough for a day.

Z: Yeah... ehm... so do you see any other things except for the routine?

J: That is different?

Z: Yeah, in your life.

J: Ehm... if I am going to focus on that positive differences than I guess the language practicing is a big difference and it has been really good to improve my English because I don't know if my vocabulary has been better or not but I guess I've... I'm more confident when I'm speaking English now, so it's... it has been really useful in that way. And then... I don't know the pattern of meeting people, like new people is of course really different. Because back home, it is more like since you're reading with a same group of people for 3 years, it is mostly those you hang out with and if you're going to meet new people, you have to really take the initiative yourself, either you join I don't know, football group or you start working at some place or something, but you don't meet so many new people automatically as you do here especially since we don't have the thing with the societies back home and that's been really nice thing here. It will be so empty not to be like offered to do things that you have signed up for... like signing up for... yeah you signed up for those subject, like for those parts you are really interested in and then you get offer to do things with them and that's like... perfect! So that's a pattern I will really miss back home. So I actually joined the so-called buddy programme in Umea, so I'm going to be a part of that... like to hang out with international students back home the next... the upcoming term.

Z: That's great. I've been doing that at home too for a few years now, it's fun... Ok, so could you tell me maybe a little bit more about the people you met here or friends, if you can call it that way? Like what kind of people is that?

J: Mostly students I would say, I met... I've actually just met two girls that aren't studying but that is... one is from a beauty salon and one is actually from Sweden that was here for short period of work that randomly wrote to one of my two friends in the "Swedish people in Dublin" group on Facebook, so we got to know her from that. But except those two, I've only met people that are studying here at Trinity. And... it's actually 2 that is... oh no I haven't. Our French neighbours that we met, they are studying at Dublin business school but it's mostly students.

Z: And are they mostly Swedish or international generally?

J: I didn't expect to meet a lot of Swedes here but I've gotten to know a few Swedish people here but... yeah maybe it is actually most Swedes that I've been getting to know. Like gotten to know here. But it is also people from Finland, Czech Republic, France, Italy, Scotland, England... ehm, the States and Ireland of course.

Z: Yeah, have you befriend some Irish people?

J: Yeah.

Z: How, where, when? In school?

J: Yeah, in school and actually I've met some people from Trinity in Sweden before... like the semester before I came here because they were doing their Erasmus at our university, so they were welcoming us here in the beginning before school started and I was all alone in the city before the girls came, I was writing to one of those persons that I've met in Sweden and he was... yeah, taking me to his friends, bringing me for a night out and it was...

Z: That's very helpful.

J: Yeah, that was really helpful and really nice to have someone that you could call. Not because I knew him good because I didn't. It was just like I met him for a few times, had a few classes with him but I don't know, if you go abroad it seems like the limits of the people you hang out with are quite... you don't put so much demands. Like if I would call someone back at home and go for a coffee, it would be someone I know, but here, it's like... it's someone I want to get to know because you don't have that main group of people that you're being growing up with or hanging out with for a long time.

Z: Yeah.

J: But I guess it's true then that I've gotten to know a few other Irish people here too and

also through the societies because it's mostly... as I have experienced it's mostly Irish people that is like the head of the societies, so... yeah, that's how I got to know them. Long answer to a short question.

Z: No, good! And what have you been doing here in your free time maybe? If you have free time of course...

J: I've been to a few trips... and I'm as I earlier mentioned, I've been to Belfast, I have been to Galway and the Aran Islands and I've actually been to Belfast 2 times (laugh).

Z: Oh wow.

J: And Cliffs of Moher, Giants Causeway like I've been around the country a bit and I've actually went to kayak trip with the kayak society.

Z: Really?

J: Yeah, really randomly.

Z: That sounds very random (laugh).

J: Yeah (laugh) but that was also fun! And also there now I realized that there I gotten to know few Irish people because we were living at a hostel in Bundoran for a whole weekend, so we were like paired up randomly and like living with a few people in the same room and I went there by myself because I didn't know anyone that would go.

Z: That's brave. Do you do these things that you go by yourself somewhere?

J: Yeah, I like that.

Z: That's great.

J: If I am honest, I actually... I wanted to go here by myself. I can't say that I wasn't disappointed when I heard that my 2 friends from Sweden were going to go here too because we're living together and it's so much easier to share an apartment, like share it to rent to survive here economically if you live together but that also reduces the experience of going to a new country and it also reduces the amount of English that I speak hear because whenever I am home, it's no reason for us to speak English with each other and we spend a lot of time together, so. And... every morning, every night... and I don't know, it's more of an adventure to do things by yourself and you come in contact with so many new people that you wouldn't... I don't think that I would have come in contact with those people that I have if I would have travelled with people I know all the time because then you have a security, you have like a secure point to go to and if you don't then you just try to find one.

Z: So... if you should choose some kind of time when you enjoyed it the most here, what would it be? It doesn't have to be a specific event it can just be some kind of time.

J: I would say even though I had some being sick problems I would say the first month, yeah, the first one because that was when we were introduced to all the new stuff, after a month you get quite used to it, to the school as well as the culture as well as how people speak, how people act and where to go and it is always nice when things are new whether you like the things or not it's... like if it is a culture clash, then you realize it and it's fun to realize such things because then you think about the differences and fine there are differences and how you prefer things to be and why you prefer things to be in a certain way. Yeah, I would say that the beginning period.

Z: And do you think there was a culture clash in something?

J: I think they eat later than we do (laugh). So I was starving every time they said: "We're going to have lunch at 1:30". And I was like: "Huh? 1:30? How am I supposed to survive that?" I don't know culture clashes... I don't think I've experienced so much culture clashes with the Irish part but we have some Chinese neighbours that... it's like when we made like some Swedish Christmas buns the other week, we just knocked on their door and gave them some because it's just... nice gest and we have been speaking to them... yeah sometimes in the... just in the hallway or in the elevator, they have a small cute kid. Of course, they can have some of our buns but they were like... they were so uncomfortable when they got the buns, so they were thanking us so much, then closing the door and they were... going inside and fixing stuff for us so that they... like within 10 minutes they were knocking on our door, like cam over with a lot of stuff for us because they explained that they felt like obligated to do that since we gave them something so if we would start giving them anything more, they would always come back to us because they don't.. apparently they don't do that. So that was kind of culture clash, yeah, but no not a lot of culture clashes in the whole picture I think.

Z: And also you said that one of the things why you wanted to do Erasmus was because it's great to get to know society and that? So do you feel you got to know the new society? Or what does it actually mean for you to get to know new society?

J: Ehm...

Z: It's a hard question.

J: Yeah it's a hard question but I actually don't know if I really gotten to know the society or if I just gotten to know a big city because I haven't... maybe I haven't... I've done both. I don't know because I've never been living in such a big city before, like I am from a small place and Umea, the student town, is not really... like, it is a bit less than one hundred thousand people and here it's like half a million people in the main

part of Dublin and it's like a million in total, so it's like so much bigger, so much more people and it's been like experience to be like... everything so close, you don't even have to take bus to find things, everything is so close and it's people everywhere but... or actually yeah, I think I haven't just gotten to know big city, I also got to know the society too because I think there are quite few differences to live here and in Stockholm. I haven't lived in Stockholm but I have visited Stockholm and this is a really weird answer.

Z: No, it's very good answer.

J: I don't know, I would say I have gotten to know society and I haven't just been doing that by going around in stores and eating at different places at the centre of Dublin. Getting to know society, for me at least it has been like going outside of Dublin, like visiting the countryside, seeing... I've been at a dinner, like a real Irish Sunday roast at my friend's parent's house and doing that kind of things, like visiting Irish families in their homes, going to the country side, seeing as well the city as... like the tourist attractions as everyday life it's like giving you a good heads up of what Irish society is I guess.

Z: And so do you feel like you miss here something?

J: Like from home... just things that you have been living with your whole life, you're spoiled to have and of course you miss them when you go beyond. But it's certain things to eat, to have hot water all the time. Like here we have to heat up the water and it's really, really expensive to have hot water during the whole day, so we only heat it up during the night and have hot water on the morning, so like having... put the elements on, that's also really expensive because you have to pay all the time you have electricity on and you don't really have that in Sweden, you always feel warm and you always have hot water.

Z: In Czech too, I miss it very much!

J: I am going to have bath like forever, I am going to bath so much at home and I guess... but that is like the biggest things, I don't really miss like... the people you're close to, it's fun back home to go over to lunch or just to have coffee with the people you know but the people that you really want to keep in touch with, you just keep in touch with, it's like you don't need to miss them because you will... you can just phone them if you want to. So I don't think I miss that much from home.

Z: Ehm... do you have like, maybe you already mentioned it but do you have some moment when you felt like it was really hard to be here?

J: Yes, during when we started having our... exams. Like after the reading week I'd say and until now, I don't think I've been crying that much ever over essays, like I've been panicking so much because I've... I think it's going to be fine now, but it was like in the beginning, it was so much to do during so little time and in my head I couldn't really structure how to handle everything, like how to make everything done and yeah... so that was actually really hard.

Z: So are you finished with most of them?

J: Ehm... with a few. I still have some left but... I am going to move into the library after today, so...

Z: Yeah, ok, I guess that's pretty much it. I hope I haven't missed something. Yeah, so how do you feel about going home? You said like you were... you feel sorry because you don't get to know people more but also the university doesn't really fit you, so how do you feel?

J: Before I came here, I've always thought of myself as a person who never would like look forward to go home to Sweden, but I actually do. I have always seen myself as quite adventurous, that would appreciate being abroad during really long times but I guess this is the longest period I've been from home and this is the first time I've gotten to know how it feels to not have all the things that I'm used to have, like school system and routines and... I don't know everything that is around you back home, I wouldn't say that I miss a lot of things but I would say that I look forward to going home now, but this isn't a... this absolutely isn't the last time I'm coming here because I'm already decided to come back for Trinity Ball, so the 15th of April I'll be here.

Z: That's great. You have a lot to look forward to and you don't say goodbye to Ireland for a long time. And also one last question that I thought of, sorry.

J: Yeah.

Z: Do you feel some change of yourself by your stay here?

J: Ehm... changes as... mentally or...

Z: It can be like however you define it yourself. Just basically is coming home a different person than was leaving?

J: I think I really appreciate more things in Sweden now that I've been taking for granted but of course I know that not every part of the world has hot water all the time it's like every part of the world doesn't even have water at all. It's a really egoistic thing to think that I want my hot water, so it feels kind of bad to know that having water is the biggest thing I miss because it's so much people that never will have the opportunity to

like... just have their water but yeah I think I will appreciate certain things a bit more now and especially the school system, I will never complain about the school system again (laugh). But like... change. I don't think I am that changed in my mind except that, I think that the trip to South Africa affected me more... ehm...

Z: And why do you think is that?

J: Because it is like the welfare in Sweden and Ireland compared to a country as South Africa is quite different and we don't have anything in history that is close to the... what's the system called?

Z: Apartheid?

J: Apartheid, yeah. I know South Africa has gone from... it's gone such a long way from what it has been to what it is and to see that reflect in the society I don't know it's such a big culture difference from Sweden and that was my first experience alone in a country so I guess that has quite a big impact too.

Z: Ok, that's it I guess.

Jméno (pseudonym): Ines, dále jako I.

Země původu: Švédsko

Obor studia: Právo

Datum rozhovoru: 25.11.2015

Z: I am interested in student's personal experiences during their study abroad, as I told you, and it is not just like I want to hear only about your stay here, I am also interested in the context, in your life story, basically. So could you please tell me your life story? Anything that occurs to you, until now, like with the stay included.

I: Basically give you the story of my life?

Z: Yeah, you can do it whatever way you want and you have as much time as you like and I will just make some notes and ask you something later. Is it ok?

I: Yeah, sure. Well my birth, so that is the place I start I guess, I was born in southern part of Sweden, after a few months we moved to the capital really. Went to school there, everything was happy. Two brothers, well until I moved here I lived with my parents and brothers. Bunch of sheep, dogs. Then when I was about 16, I started thinking about doing an Erasmus year, go abroad for a while. And then going to university and two years ago, I started to do some research about different countries to go to and started to think why I want to go. And my dad spent few years studying abroad, so he told me about his experiences and he thought it was good and what I should think about and at that point, I was 19 or 20, at least I really knew I want to go abroad for a year. And if you gonna do that when you study in Sweden, you have to do it now, basically. Otherwise, you won't do it. Because when I come back next year, I will have to write the graduation piece. And then why Ireland... well my favorite band, they are from here. When I realized that, I felt like "Ireland is a good country" and I started to read about Ireland, and I really loved it and I also wanted to speak English, to improve my English. And Ireland seems... a bit more different than England. You know I love England, London, but I've been there few times, never been to Ireland. So it is sort of familiar, but still something new. We could choose between two different universities, and honestly I googled them and I thought that Trinity looked better and that is why I chose Trinity and then I realized it is classified as number one university in Ireland, so that was a bonus...

Z: Yeah, good choice.

I: So that is basically my life until this period. So... that's it... A lot of things happened in

my life but I guess these are the relevant. First, my dad told me that he went to study abroad and that made me thinking about it and a I realized I want to do the same thing. And the most convenient way of doing it was with Erasmus programme.

Z: So, could you just tell me something more general about your family?

I: We are close family, very close family, my brothers, my parents and I. Before I moved here, we all lived in the same house and my brothers still do... I don't know, both of my parents went to law school but I wanted to become a doctor until I was 16 and then I changed my mind and wanted to go to law school instead. But they were always very supportive and they are my best friends. And that was maybe the most difficult thing about going here, that I wouldn't be able to see my family as much. Yeah, so we are very close family, we have always been encouraging each other and my brothers have been very happy that I am going here, to share my experiences and coming over to see me.

Z: Are they younger?

I: They are fifteen mothes younger.

Z: So you will maybe make them go...

I: Yeah, definitely.

Z: And could you also tell me... you said your father was a big influence to go here, so what was his experience like, I mean how does he talk about it?

I: He loved it, he absolutely loved it, the whole thing that you have to stand on your own feet, you have to talk English, you don't really have a choice and if you don't have that choice you have to improve. But it is the combination of... you will learn how to take care about yourself, you have to make mistakes and fix them and learn from them and also this is the best way of improving your English. So I guess that are the two reasons why he thought I should go. Although he misses me, still he encourages me to go.

Z: And he was on something like Erasmus?

I: No, not really. He went to high-school in America when he was 18 and when he came back, he went to law school in Sweden and then he worked a few years in America as well in the same area where he studied.

Z: Wow, experienced.

I: Yeah.

Z: Ok, so could you also tell me more about your own travelling experiences before you came here? Were you travelling with your parents or no? How was it? And so on.

I: I think we travelled more when we were younger, me and my brothers were younger. Now we live in a countryside, have the animals, two huge dogs, so that makes it difficult to travel because we want to bring our dogs. So we travelled a bit together when we were younger. And usually now, we bring the dogs to either the southern part Sweden or to Denmark during the summers. We always try to do at least one journey together each year.

Z: And by yourself?

I: Not that much. I mean when I got here... and the last two years maybe. But not that much.

Z: And where have you been? Europe?

I: I have been in few places in Europe and the travelling around Sweden a bit. Until now I just never basically haven't wanted travel.

Z: Ok, like no desire to?

I: No, I have been happy at home.

Z: Ok. So could you tell me more about the time when you were preparing to go? Or when you found out you will go and then when you where preparing? Just how was that time?

I: I think I thought I was doing everything in advance. That I was really preparing myself when I was supposed to prepare myself, I felt I had a lot of time which turned out I didn't, so I had to take care of a lot of things last minute but my parents helped me, really much. Things like where I will stay and my mother went with me to Ireland before term started to find the flat and get to know the city a bit, so my parents helped me a lot. But I really thought I had everything under control and it was so obvious that I didn't. You know... you make this list and you think I need to do this, do this and this. And then you talk to someone and you realize that you have missed 10 really important things to remember. So I managed to take care of everything in time but a lot of things were done in the last minute.

Z: So it was stressful?

I: Yes.

Z: So you forgot, or didn't realize you need to make some things?

I: Yeah, it was more that I didn't realize.

Z: And when you were leaving? Was it hard?...

I: Yes.

Z: ...Were you also looking forward?

I: That was first time I would be without my parent a longer time and like I said we are very close family.

Z: We too, I understand completely.

I: So, I was looking forward to it and I really felt like this will be an adventure. But still it was very difficult to leave them.

Z: So, now let's move to Ireland... so tell me about your first days, any practical things or anything that occurs to you again.

I: It was really difficult to wake up the next morning in another family. And... that was brutal. Everything was new and the whole thing that I had to speak English to make it possible for myself to communicate with people, that was... and I knew that ok Ireland, you speak English, but still to actually have to come here and actually have to speak English, that was a challenge. And that was the most practical thing. I realized that I had to speak English and there is no way around it. And then you know, just getting to know your ways around, the new city and new university, which was so much bigger, then the one I used to study at. Those basic practical things with living in a new place, meeting new people, new city, new school. And it was more brutal because everything was in English.

Z: So when did you come to Ireland actually? Did you come in advance before the school started?

I: No, I came here the day before the school started.

Z: Oh, okay, so it started for you with the school basically. So how was your orientation week?

I: It was quite good I guess, I went to the lectures they advised me to go to. I wasn't one of them who enjoy the freshers week. I didn't do all that, I just wanted to familiarize myself with everything and everyone, so, it was a pretty calm week for me.

Z: So you didn't take part in the activities?

I: No.

Z: Any particular reason for it?

I: First of all, I don't think I realized what was going on, I just didn't bother to get that information. And then I was so exhausted with all the impressions. You know, since I arrived the day before the school started. It was that everything was new and I thought that it might be better to take it easy and just focus on... you know familiarizing myself with the school first, then Dublin and then all the activities.

Z: So, the first week before the proper learning started, so you were going around

Dublin?

I: Yes, I was and I went to a few activities, but not as many as other people.

Z: Have you joined some societies?

I: Yes. International Society, Music Society and the LawSoc.

Z: You go to some activities with them? Or is it more like official... ?

I: No, I go to activities.

Z: So what does the music society do?

I: They arrange this OpenMic thing, like tonight.

Z: Oh, is it the alternative music?

I: Yes.

Z: I was to one OpenMic, it was quite nice, have you been?

I: No, I would like to go tonight. But I need to finish my essay. But next time, I'll be singing.

Z: You will? I have to go! You need to tell me.

I: I will.

Z: Ok, so tell me please more about the place where you live now and about the people you live with?

I: I live in Irish family in Sandymount, it is Dublin 4. And you know obviously I really have to speak English all the time. It is not like I speak English in school and come back home where I live with my Swedish friends and then I switch to Swedish. So I speak English all the time and that's been really helpful. Three children in the family which makes life interesting. Yeah, I don't like silence too much, well in the library, when I am studying I guess it should be silent but when we are talking about a house or home, I like it really alive, so with three children it is absolutely alive. The four year old came into my room yesterday, looked at me and said "You should be studying" (laugh).

Z: What?! But he got it right...

I: Yeah. So that is a great family to live in and I think if you find a good family to live in, a host family is a really good alternative. Ehm... and I pay the rent and the rent includes everything, so it is very easy for me. I give just one payment a month and that's it. So that's easier to do, you don't need to open Irish account or anything.

Z: And are you quite close with them?

I: Yeah, I am.

Z: How about the parents? You never talk about the parents.

I: Well they, I think they are traditional Irish couple. The mother is housewife basically

and the houseman works a lot. So she takes care of everything else and she is lovely. And we talk quite a lot actually. About everything. So, yeah, Irish people are very social and she is definitely typical Irish in that perspective. Very open and very sociable.

Z: Ok, so have you met many Irish people? Like made friends or... started to talk?

I: Yeah, I think so.

Z: So you have a feeling that they are usually sociable?

I: Yes.

Z: Could you tell me a little more about your experiences at Trinity? Since the year started until now basically?

I: It's been good. Well I expected it to be good. But I think that the lectures are good. It is a different system than in Sweden, so it took a few weeks to get used to. But I like it. I like that we are encouraged to use our own opinions and that we should think and criticise more, more than I do in Sweden. I don't know what to say. It's been good good.

Z: Well more like how you like get accustomed to it, if you met some people, how are they, how are you managing and anything?

I: Well I think I tend to do if I see Irish people do something in a certain situation, then I try to do the same thing, absolutely. I mean if you wait for the bus and someone starts to talk to you, than it is rude not to talk back and that sort of things. I am really trying to pay attention to what's happening around me and this whole thing... monday morning I came to the college and I was about to enter the Art block and there were two guys in front of me, they both opened the door, so they took one door each and opened it for me. So that wouldn't happen in Sweden. That sort of thing. I am trying to pay attention how people behave or...

Z: Okay.

I: It is fun actually.

Z: Yeah. Ok, we talked about classes, so tell me more about the people you met in school?

I: They are nice, usually younger than me.

Z: Who are they?

I: Mostly people I attend lectures with.

Z: Are they Irish or Erasmus?

I: Usually Irish, but then I take this module called Legal English and that's only Erasmus students. But mostly Irish students, and like I said mostly younger than me... you just happen to sit next to someone you don't know, you introduce yourself and start

talking and maybe you will never see each other again but at least... yeah, you introduce yourself and just. I think it's quite easy to meet people.

Z: So, could you tell me the differences between your university life here and back home? Well like you know the everyday thing.

I: Yeah. I think that the whole education system is different in Sweden compared to Ireland. The university I study at. First of all, we don't have campus in the middle of the town, it's more spread out across the town really, and lawyers or law students, they don't meet people who aren't studying law.

Z: Oh really?

I: Yeah. Its really sort of divided. Medical students, economic students, law students, you spend time with your own group. Our lectures are longer, not as many and you don't study this many subjects at the same time as you do in Ireland. And in Ireland you are also encouraged to criticize more than you are in Sweden. I mean when we write essay in Sweden, we get the subject, we read the law and then we read a lot of opinions about the law and sort of conclude based on that. And here, you actually "this is a law, what you think of it", and that suits me better, because I always have opinions. So this is very different but it works for me.

Z: And when you don't think about the institutional stuff and school stuff? Like more the social thing? Like how is it different home and here?

I: I think socially there are more things to do here than it is in Sweden and more things to do during the week. In Sweden you usually go out friday, saturday, or when is special occasion like Christmas or something. But apart from that you don't really do anything during the weeks. Ehm, but I like it the way too, you have different sports and you have different music activities, all of that, it's more things to do here than we have in Sweden.

Z: So you like it when you have more to do here?

I: Yeah, it is not that I do everything but I like to have the possibility.

Z: Now I have some question really about Erasmus... so what moments do you consider the hardest and the best?

I: The hardest part was the first time I came here, when I left my family on the airport, that was brutal, and then the morning after when I woke up and I didn't know anything. You know, new people, new country, new city, new school, everything. That moment when you actually realize... okay, I know, where I live, I know where I am going (...) the first days you have to adapt and adjust to the whole new life about the (...)? That was really the hardest things, yeah.

Z: And the best one?

I: Oh, wow, I think it's... probably now, I can enjoy everything now more. I know the basic stuff, I know how to study, I know how to get to school and I... you know the family I live in, I can see in them more my friends than my hosts.

Z: Did it take time before you started to feel this way?

I: Yes, it did. It did. But now it feels, you know, I am comfortable with everything. Now it's... I've been comfortable with my English again. So now it's... yeah, I am enjoying it now.

Z: Ok, that's great. What is erasmus giving you and what is it taking from you?

I: Oh. Well it's taking my family from me...

Z: That's crucial.

I: Yeah. But otherwise it's giving me, you know, everything, opportunity to see another country, beautiful country, meeting new people, improve my English and studying in a very big university which I've heard is a good thing when you want to get job later. So yeah, It's given me many things and I am sure it will give me more things.

Z: Could you tell me about your friends here?

I: I think they are different. I mean I met them in a lot of different places at different times and they are from all around the world, which is funny when you think about it. Some of them are more acquaintances that you meet, you say hi, you recognize their faces and some of them I am close to and it's really many different personalities. Many different languages and cultures and... yeah.

Z: And do you feel so even that is more diverse group of people than you have home?

I: Yeah.

Z: Not only ethnically and culturally but personally.

I: Yes, I think it is.

Z: Do you think you will still be friends when you go home?

I: Oh yes. Yeah.

Z: So you already said you miss your family, so is there anything else you feel like you miss?

I: Ehm... well if I would be in Sweden, I would be studying interesting things I think, but... so yes, that's something I miss but I don't regret coming here. I know I miss the things from studying, things I find very interesting, but I don't think that would be as fun as it is to be here.

Z: Okay. I think that's pretty much all that I had prepared. Oh yeah and I want to also

ask how you feel about going home?

I: For Christmas or when the year is over?

Z: Both.

I: I think going home for Christmas, I am really looking forward to. I am enjoying it here but it is always nice to come back home, see everyone again, share my new experiences and ehm, meet the animals again... but coming back when the Erasmus year is over, I haven't actually thought about that at all. I know I will be working during the summer afterwards. I will also have to write my thesis. But I know it's going to be different. It's going to be hard to adapt to the Swedish life again and just to know that I've done all this in Ireland but I'm not coming back. Not as a student. I will come back to Ireland during my life but I think it will feel a bit like in a dream. You wake up and remember but it is sort of distant in a way too. But it's going to be a really different to do everything in Sweden again with the new experiences I have. It will be interesting to see. But I know it's going to be different.

Z: So do you think there will be something you will find really hard to adapt back?

I: Yes, I met a Swedish girl here and I sort of got English-Swedish confused. That will probably be a challenge. And then Irish people are more social than Swedish people. So I think... I am trying to do as many Irish things I can and really sort of embrace the Irish culture. I think I might be a bit more sociable than a traditional Swede I meet in Sweden.

Z: That's a good thing.

I: Yeah, I think so.

Z: So what "Irish" things are you trying to do?

I: Oh everything. There's the whole, you don't talk to someone, just to be polite, you are interested, you really discuss something, you don't ignore that someone is going behind you, you make sure the door's open if you can. This sort of polite things and Irish music. Love that one.

Z: Are you listening to it in (...)

I: Oh yeah.

Z: Otherwise, how you try to embrace Irish culture?

I: Anyway I can. To see as much around Ireland as I can. Do these typical Irish things like... you know start with places you should see, so I'm trying to see those. And if you live in Irish family, they sort of bring you along to the things they do. The four year old he wants me to go to his school Christmas play.

Z: Is it before you leave?

I: Yes.

Z: You have to go.

I: Yes, I would love to.

Z: You will tell me about it then.

I: Yes, I will.

Z: So I think we can finish that.

Jméno (pseudonym): Kiara, dále jako K.

Země původu: Finsko

**Obor studia na domácí univerzitě/na Trinity College: politologie,
sociologie/psychologie**

Datum rozhovoru: 30.11.2015

Z: I have one question that is very broad, main, and then I have some other questions. The main question is - I am interested in student's person experiences during their study abroad but it's not just like I am interested only in that I am also interested in your life story basically, like the context. So could you please tell me your life story? Basically anything that occurs to you until now, there is no right way how to do it, you know. You have as much time as you like of course and I have some questions then.

K: Oh my god. That's so broad. Difficult to answer.

Z: Yeah, I know.

K: Ok... yeah... so I was born in 1992, in Finland, so it was really bad financial time and... although my parents are middle class, maybe upper middle class, so that's my... it doesn't really affect my life so that... I just I don't know that it has. I don't... like I could (...) lost their job, so I'd say that it might affect their lives but it really didn't affect my childhood and my... I only lived in a one place until I moved away from my parent's house... so there was... it was a really nice suburb, it's close to Helsinki, our capital and my school was really nice, it was like... my primary school... oh it's going to be difficult because school system is a little different in Finland. We start school when we are 7 years old, so it is separate for primary and primary upper school. And it was nice primary school and I don't know... It seems that I could say that I've always been a good student, like I have always quite good grades... no not excellent but good and... yeah. My... upper secondary.... upper lower school, it's kind of, we have two levels in primary school and those are obligatory for everyone to take and (...) between those, and it's like classes from 1 to 6 and then from 7 to 9, 7 to 9 are usually in a different school and... I think it wasn't that... its reputation... used to be not bad but it didn't have as good reputation as my primary school but it was... it was quite a... I can say that it was kind of tough time for me... like I am a little bit nerd and those things... but I survived and I got good grades and I got to good high school and yeah... it was... at the high school that was kind of a great time because I had lot of friends like during my lower secondary school, it's the second part of the primary school, I actually had kind of like only one

good friend, in the 9th class I got to know some other people too... In new school I had only one good friend but then there was wonderful person from my hobbies, so I wasn't totally (...) in the end but in the high school it was good. My class was kind of nice I don't know, it was an all right time... and there were some friends I made there but I still didn't have... it's too broad, I don't know what to say!

Z: It's just you're doing great.

K: And it's kind of easy to think about my education because it's...

Z: It's structured.

K: Yeah. Ehm...

Z: So tell me for example about your life home.

K: Home as being in a suburb with my parents or after I moved from my parents?

Z: Both.

K: Ok. My parents are... yeah they are still married, so they hadn't divorced and I think that it's kind of... you could say that it's kind of happy marriage. And I have one little brother, so one sibling and... he's... very important to me, we've always been close except when I was in puberty and couple of years till it leave us... so that was kind of difficult to communicate with each other but before that and later on we had been very close and it's... I like... when I am going to bar, I ask my brother to come and pick me up with my friends and he always comes and nowadays he usually brings his girlfriend with us and... (laugh) actually last summer I was in a festivals with my brother's girlfriend and it was kind of funny, she's like 4 years younger than I am and... really lovely couple, so yeah... but... sorry they just are so cute! Yeah... ehm... my grandparents I should maybe include in my family life, they... I have never met my grandfathers because they died before I was born but my... I mean my grannies... I have never used that word before when I was talking about them. Actually both of them died during the same summer and it was kind of disastrous summer as you can imagine.

Z: I'm sorry.

K: I was in 5th grade or something, so I didn't really... so I couldn't really handle that when I was 10... I was so young that I am used to be without them, so it's not like I am stuck with that. But yeah... One of them lived kind of close and another lived like... it was an hour of travel there, in a little city in a middle of Finland and... the other one was... she had Alzheimer's and Parkinson's and both are kind of terrible diseases and she was kind of in that condition, so I never wanted to care really because I was a child and I was scared of her... and it's terrible but yeah. Another one was in better condition

and I was kind of her favourite because she had only sons and my cousins from dad's side of the family are male, so I was the only female and I was kind of her favourite, it was amazing. Yeah...

Z: And then when did you move away from your parents?

K: Yeah I moved away when I was 19 or 20 years old, I think 19. I live kind of close by... there is this shared apartment it's a (attached?) house and one of my... it's actually owned by one of my friends' parents and they decided to rent it away for students as a shared apartment and one of my best friends Victor was (...) to the full of her people and of course tenants change during the time but it was really like a... it was really like a community for us and... at the best, it was very amazing because we all were such a good friends and of course it was... trouble times when we were arguing about dishes or something like that but usually it was nice and I think that it was really important for me to... like it was important part of my life because I lived in... with persons that could accept as I am and I could share everything because they were open minded, they were liberal and we could go to... like mostly tenants always be some of those youth minorities or... some of the minorities, so it was kind of amazing. Yeah and my friends... like one of my best friends who used to live there, they are kind of artists, so it is kind of... it has artist in it and university students, one person who is right now studying something to do with... like metals I don't know but it's... and it also was... in the end it was kind of stressing, we didn't agree on cleaning up, like there was a person who didn't clean up as much as he was supposed to and there were two cats and one dog, so you should have clean at least once a week but it only happens once a month and it was so terrible and I'm glad I that I'm not... I (...) for anything but yeah. But it was kind of... like the year was in rush and it was so annoying, there was always pile of issues laying on you, but yeah... that was one of the reasons I moved away and now I want to try what it's to live on my own... like completely alone. I kind of miss some parts of the shared apartment and then it's like... people like know each other and like each other.

Z: And you want to go back to live with them when you go back?

K: Maybe not with them but in similar accommodation would be nice but... and live with one or two of them could be just ok but not with all of them because... also it brought out (...) is some sort of personalities and I just can't stand the dirt of it... like it was so dirty, like the dishes and everything, so I just couldn't stand it. I mean if your house is always dirty, it also stress you out.

Z: Ok. And could you tell me a little bit more about your university life? Like social life how you have home and also the school life?

K: Yeah. In university I have couple of different groups I kind of belong to because I have two majors, I study two different subjects and first I started studying sociology, it was 2012 I think and most of those guys I met there, that was like 25 to 30 people who started studying sociology, I still... I know and I keep contact with couple of them, most of them I might meet at parties and I of course say hello to them but I am not close to them except one, one became my best friend. Ehm... usually at my university it's... subject organizations that organize happenings and in our faculty of Social Sciences those friend organizations usually work together kind of much, so I have attended to different parties from different organizations of... like philosophy and political sciences and... it kind of makes sense because so long because we are usually... they ask as to come, everyone here studies in Faculty of Social Sciences and usually also I went to some happenings for... it's our class... it's student organization of social sciences so... I know kind of many people from there but I haven only couple of persons I consider as my close friends. I think it is kind of usual but then... political science is in different faculty, it is the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences or something like that. I started study that at 2014 and I... I've been studying those at the same time but... and then I... but I haven't spent my free time outside of the hobbies so outside of the university or student organization events because I'm just not that good friend with anybody, and it also needs your time to get involved and before I came here, so it's a bit of surprise. I'm... it takes me some time to make good friends.

Z: And when did you first started to think that you will come... go to Erasmus?

K: I... kind of always knew I wanted to do an exchange, it was more about when and what I would study and if I have enough courage to do it. I have always wanted to do it.

Z: And... why did you choose Ireland?

K: Oh... I'm... it was because I wanted to go to country where they speak English because I don't really know other languages, I have studied German and Swedish but I don't really speak it and I rather use my English and I think that it might be easier when I come to EU and then I... because my studies in sociology are kind of... I should be doing my bachelor's right now or I should be doing if I was in Finland, so they wouldn't let me to go before I got my bachelor's, so... but I have picked my political science as Erasmus and actually now they offer same education places for students who study psychology and political science, so there was two places in English speaking countries,

in Europe in Erasmus and actually the second was some smaller place in the UK, in the middle of UK and then there was Dublin, so I was like... Dublin, yeah, that's my place (laugh). I never thought I would go to Ireland but then I saw it there and I was like yeah, that's good, I want to go there.

Z: Ok. And how about your parents? How they reacted to it? Were they supportive?

K: Yeah, they were very supportive, they have known it, I don't know how long but I told them that I was going to do it and actually then I had to write one letter that was... something like application letter or something, I showed it to them and they read through, corrected something and gave it back, so they were really supportive and... yeah.

Z: Ok. Now could you tell me more about the time you were preparing to go here, to come here? How was the time generally, what was happening?

K: You mean... when I applied or when I already knew that I was coming here?

Z: Since you already knew you will be coming here.

K: Ok. Ehm... I... actually I didn't prepare much, of course I had to... I informed... I... my friends already knew that I had applied, of course I had to inform them that I am going. So they knew they won't see me in a half year and then again a half a year and then... ehm... I needed to inform my job because I have a job besides my studies, I did 10 hours per week cashiering and I had to apply for student... it's sometime... I have trouble finding the term in English... It's kind of that they can... I'm still in there like an employee but I don't need to work there for this period of time, like I'm... it's kind of like free time they give me.

Z: Ok.

K: It's some kind of a student league I am in and it's kind of easy, you just apply for it and our... like my... (...), they are really nice, give it to everyone, you're going to take a lots of, lots of students from (...), so doing an exchange really feels normal and it's easy if you're working with them and it's actually I think it's... even in our law if you apply... like... in time they have to give it to you, if you are not... you're not the key element for their success, they have to give it to you, if you have enough good reason and doing exchange seems like enough good reason.

Z: Ok.

K: And of course I had to deal with my bank and I took my... also I'm renting my apartment and someone stays in there for me, so I kind of didn't have apartment during the summer and I moved back to my parents at that time because it was... it was the

easiest option. Try to find an apartment for three months in Helsinki... something that doesn't cost too much but... it's really difficult, kind of similar as it's here. Then of course I had to buy my tickets and try to find apartment here, I tried to check on this websites and check what products I could take and something like that but I really didn't prepare as I could have, actually I don't know... I tried to read more about Ireland and its history and its culture but I tried to do more of those things but really... it would have been so much easier if I have known (...) they are offering before I came here but it was really confusing to (...) so like it was there but it wasn't in the place it was supposed to be, so I couldn't find it.

Z: So confusion.

K: Yeah, yeah and I was so nervous when I came here.

Z: Yeah? So could you tell me about the first days here?

K: First days... yeah, I was kind of like... it arrived a half a week before our orientation week and I knew that S. was here, she arrived couple of days ago and I used to go to the same place with her, she was in the same job, in the place that I used to work and I had known this on Facebook, that she was coming to Dublin and I have contacted her that I was going to study there. So we thought we could do something together as we both didn't know the city and didn't know anyone and so on. So on the second day... I think it was on the second day that we met, I think we just walked around and go through shops and we... we visited Trinity, we wanted to see what it's like... ehm... I really don't remember. The first days I was kind of only hanging out with S. and trying to get to know the city and we also... there was also this festival, I think it was culture night, it was one happening, it was Friday and we went there, it was Friday or Saturday, I can't remember and it was really nice, there were events happening all over the Dublin and I didn't even know about it if S. didn't told me about, it was something like... like I don't know, how long I would have been out alone because walking around city that you don't know well and trying to find some (...), it could be a little bit frustrating and kind of scary I would say but because I had her, it was easier. There was street fest on Sunday I think and it was also nice, it was very nice, so I kind of did anything (...) but I quite thought about my studies of course.

Z: And how did you find a place to live?

K: Oh, after I arrived in Dublin, like during all those days I was looking for apartments and I actually found in... it was through daft.ie and there was this add and it was from this guy offering an apartment for international people, so it would be no one who

speaks English as their first language and they didn't want to have generally people who speak same language, so no more than 2 persons who speak the same language as their first language and also... they did want to have equal... because some of girls and guys, so 3 and 3 in our case and actually they rent couple of apartments and... the one I was first interested in, it had already been rented but then I wrote them again "Hi, I'm here and I would be interested in looking at the apartment if you have some", and he was like "yeah I can show you", and I went to see it and it was ok, it wasn't that nice because it was (...), now I know that it's not that horrible as at first and it was... it was dirty and poor but like... If you rent an apartment in Finland and you pay that much, you get a good apartment. Then I tried to contact other people I had already been in contact with if I could see the apartment they are renting but the guy wasn't here for a week and I was like yeah, I don't have anything else, I have to take that apartment. It wasn't that expensive compared to prices here, it was kind of expensive for a student but it's... but compared to price everyone else is paying, it's not that expensive, it's 500 euro per month. But I have my own room and it's a... it's a double bed...

Z: Yeah (laugh), that makes it better!

K: (laugh) yeah.

Z: So could you tell me more about the place and about the people you live with?

K: It's 25 minutes from Trinity and it's a house and it's 6 persons, one German girl, one French girl, then it's me and then one Spanish guy, one Italian guy and one guy who is from Morocco but had been many years in France. And... yeah, they're nice but I don't know them that well, some of them are working, like the Spanish guy is teaching Spanish here and Italian guy I don't know but he works something. I think he's like waitress or something. He does these jobs. And then I know that the German girl is doing her internship here but I am... the French girl, we are exchange student, and actually E., who is from France, studies also at Trinity, something more like science-like. But I met her couple of times in Trinity and it's kind of fun like: "Oh, hey, you're here too, how are you".

Z: So do you like it there?

K: Yeah, it's... it's ok. It's kind of nice for the stay here. In Finland if I would share apartment, I would like it to be more like... community. I like to spend more time with my flatmates and be more friends with them. But it's ok for this time.

Z: Yeah, ok. Actually I haven't asked if you travelled with your parents or just generally before Erasmus?

K: Actually I have, I think that I have travelled quite a lot. Like parents used to make trips abroad, like once or twice a year and they usually take us with them and... I have been to Rome and Paris and... with my parent. When I was 18 or 19, I started to travel kind of on my own, like with my friends, without my parents. I spend some time travelling with my parents because it's easier and it's cheaper because they pay for accommodation, so it's so much cheaper, but nowadays I usually take my friends with me because it's a little bit boring to be stuck with your parents all the time and actually this summer I was in Barcelona with my parents and with my brother and with my friends and we got to back after... half week or something, we got to Finland, I went to Paris and we met in Paris and then we continued to Germany, it was amazing and after that where else I have travelled... I travelled to (...) with one of my friends and then we continued to Berlin and before that... before Barcelona, two of my friends met in Berlin and then we continued to... it was... Switzerland and then to Amsterdam. That was the first time I really have travelled with my friends for a long time because it was 2 weeks... actually when I was 19, it was the first time I travelled alone, I travelled to Toronto for three weeks, I was in a language course there, it was English course, it was kind of... when I graduated from high school and I wanted to improve my English and my talking abilities and I was at that course and I travelled there and it was amazing and really scary as well.

Z: Ok.

K: Yeah, I'd say that I travelled a lot but usually only in Europe, I had been like twice or thrice outside of Europe.

Z: And so... now back to the Erasmus. So tell me about your Fresher's Week and about the first week of the college?

K: I think orientation week was a little bit disorganized and there was like 3 events for us or something like that, it's like... it could have been done in less time, in 3 days or something. And I think they should have arranged something for Erasmus students because it was kind of difficult to meet new people because you didn't know if the person was somebody who already studies there, or Erasmus student or some other visiting student and you wanted to make friends, you wanted to meet new people but it was really difficult to get to know someone, so I was really glad that I already knew 2 Finnish girls and I spent... I actually usually asked one of them to come with me when I went to events, I attended some events alone but usually I went with at least one of them. And those university event are organized by different societies and it was kind of

a good way how to meet people and actually I did that most of the first two weeks or three weeks in different kind of societies and their happenings or then... I met some my friends during that introduction, somewhere between some part of the (...) but usually it has been those societies but I... but it's... but I was kind of lost during that week because that was like... it wasn't enough information they gave to us, it was like "yeah, you need to go to him, maybe he'll tell you" and it was... because I felt so lost, like I can't do anything because I don't know what to do and I should decide my modules and I don't know which modules we are offered and which modules are totally different than last year but it was so nice to have also while I am here, to study psychology and... (...) like I don't know what to do!

Z: And how did you deal with that confusion?

K: Yeah, I think it went away because everything got so easier because then they usually they gave us kind of lot of information at lectures... but still we had to go and ask about... some... usually they forgot about visiting students... yeah, you're assignments are this and this and your exams are at May but S. is not here in May, so it was kind of like... ok, we have to go and ask what about visiting students who are here only for one term, so they can't get the exam what we are going to do, but... yeah... usually they remembered us so... but I still don't like their... the way that you have to register for courses like... it's so complicated that you need to get those things signed and everything... why can't you just pick your courses and go there (laugh). Yeah, it's so annoying that you can't... that you have decided your courses and then... the deadline is gone, and you can't change your courses, you can't cross your courses off. Like in my home university I can say that I can't do this course... I have already too much to do or something. Yeah. But here I can't.

Z: So and then after the few first weeks, how was it till now? How was it? Like at the Trinity and also out of the Trinity.

K: Yeah... it... it... yeah... it's kind of just trying to remember my time.

Z: Yeah, sure, remember.

K: Yeah, it was kind of confusing at first, like in psychology, they have only one lecture per week and it was like... really... that's so little and that's why we have so long assignments to write, at least I think that's one of the reasons, yeah, it was kind of confusing during first weeks and I think I was kind of desperate for new friends, to meet new people, I mean it's kind of funny because it's going to... everyone feels that they have to make new friends, but you can't make new friends in few weeks or something,

it usually takes years to make good friends, so it was kind of contradictory – you try to make friends but you don't have time to really make friends but... I tried to actually go to different kind of happenings as much as I could because it was good way to meet new people and I wanted to meet new people... and also, I am introverted and I find... I usually... making new friends might be a little difficult for me, so it was kind of... it was a challenge for me but I've seen that I managed because during the study week it was like, three people... at least three people contacted me and asked how I am and if I wanted to meet... so I was like "you want to meet... ME?", so that was kind of... so I think that I have managed quite well although like I am not this person who can make friends... like making friends, I was like... during the whole time, I've been kind of nervous about my English because I... I know that I am not as good as most of people who are studying here, I keep using words and I can't pronounce things right and my intonation is shit and so on, so it was...

Z: I don't think so but ok (laugh).

K: I think everyone thinks kind of like that because everyone has their accents and...

Z: Yeah, that's true.

K: It was kind of... it's I was a bit anxious about my English and communication problems that have... I know it's difficult to convey your thoughts if you don't know the words and especially if you're talking about something that happens in your country, for example something like... like economic situation, you don't know the words and then you don't know the word and it's so annoying so...

Z: So do you feel like it got better over time?

K: I think that I am more ready to speak English... like I speak more freely, I don't worry that much, but it still stresses me out sometimes but... I think I know more about my skills, I know where my limitations are and what I can do and what I can't, so I think that it... because I am aware of my skills, I think that it has become a little bit easier and it's easier for me to start speaking like... like I hate speaking, like... I don't like speaking in private, like if there is some more than one person, I am usually quite quiet... but it has been easier. Because I have to. And one more reason I wanted to do exchange is because I have (...) of those barriers. But still there are things that I need to improve, I need to work with my vocabulary and I need to work on my intonation and so on. But it's...

Z: So also... do you feel like... you say you are introverted and that it takes so long time for you to make friends, so... how do you like... you said you managed quite well,

so you like... you met many people or do you stay in contact with many people?

K: I have met quite many people but that's maybe not the point but I have made some contacts that seem that they at least right now keep in contact, they seem to miss me... they contact me if I haven't been in contact for couple of weeks, like they want to meet me again, and I think that's been more important for me like... it's more like the quality of the relationship than how many... like quantity, if I would manage to make 2 friendships that last longer than this year... that last... I don't know if they can last lifetime but let's say like 5 years, it's accomplishment. And I... I think that are couple of persons that I have managed to make contact with and it's amazing since it's quite (...). It also seems that everyone who's doing exchange is kind of eager to make new contacts. It might be easier through year... but whole university and everyone already have their friends they go out with, so...

Z: So can you tell me more about the people that... like that you have met here, or your friends basically?

K: So about the friends I have made here or about or my friends who have visited me here?

Z: No, your friends that you made here.

K: Yeah. There is one German girl, who I met... I am taking English classes here and that... and I went there in the first day... actually I went there with S., with whom I am taking the class but we are in a different groups and now, first day we both thought that we could go on Tuesday but we both decided we'll be going on Thursdays because it wasn't set during the lecture but we decided we will not talk to each other because we already know each other and it doesn't improve your skills if you're just stuck with your friend and you're just talking with the person who comes from the same language background as you are because we do similar kind of mistakes and we kind of understand each other easier than someone from different background, so... I met this German girl and actually we ended up in the same group and it can actually... we usually have coffee before our English classes. And she usually asks me to come to her parties and everything, she had her birthday around Halloween, so she had this big Halloween parties and it was nice and... usually, it's easy to keep in contact with her because we see each other at least once a week because we are in the same class but we try to see each other a little bit more but right now we are both kind of busy because of essays and so, and I might go to visit her after Erasmus... ok, she's German and I want to go to Germany but also she's nice and it's kind of easy to connect with her. And

also... our skills, our English skills are kind of at the same level and I think it's easiest to make connection with someone who kind of has the same level. If someone is much worse or much better it's frustrating for some of the parts, somebody is much worse English than you, then you are just frustrated because it's difficult to communicate and also the other way around, it's frustrating. So because we have kind of... we have the same level, so it's easier. Yeah. And another one is G., she's French but she has relatives all over Europe and she's really nice and she's lovely. She has arranged... it's not a party but you get to drink there. And... she usually asks me to come and it's really nice, her friends are also nice and she's going to be here for the whole year, so it's kind of... actually some days I am trying to optimize the... just the people here I am trying to keep really close to me are those that are going to be here for the whole year because, just right now it's... like I would love to get to know new people but if they are here only for like 3 more weeks, it's kind of... it's so... I can't say a waste of time but it's kind of like... "yeah, it's nice to meet you, but I can't really make connection because there is not enough time", so I can make a small talk and all that but I really can't be a friends, like make friends with somebody who isn't going to be here on the spring time, and that's kind of sad but it takes me some time to trust so much that I can make friends. Also there are some French girls, they are in the same mentor group as I am and I have been hanging out with them and then there's Italian guy, who has been (...) and I think he's really nice and actually I was the first Erasmus student he met here because I was also getting my student ID that day and he was in the booth, like I can't remember if he was behind me or in front of me and we just talked to each other and it was kind of nice because we both were really nervous and then we... like actually it is quite funny because we had been in the same mentor group, so we met already met once and he's not... he's not like really close to me but he's nice, and if he organizes something, he usually invites me. And also there are quite many nice people around here usually and actually my flatmate E. is one of those persons he usually invites, but it's kind of funny because I don't know how they have met because E. is in a different mentor group, but yeah.

Z: Ok.

K: And actually it was kind of funny because we had one of those get together last Friday and it was the first time I really like spoke to E., like really speaking is something else than the small talk. It was like: "yeah, I live with you for a couple of months now and now we are talking?". Yeah it's a little bit difficult to meet someone in

our apartment because kitchen... kitchen is the only space we can meet with each other and it's... it's like... it's downstairs and nobody's spends time there if they aren't cooking... yeah.

Z: Ehm and... yeah, so could you tell me how your life is different from... your life here from your life back home? I think it's quite visible already but if there's...

K: Of course I don't have my friends and my family around me. I don't have my safety net here and if I want to talk to my family or friends it must be arranged before that because I can't just call them because it's fucking expensive and then there's the time difference. Like sometimes, when I would have to skype with somebody, it's already so late in Finland that they're like "No, I am going to sleep now". Yeah, so... it's... ehm... there are some friends that I am always connected with because I am just sending messages to them and they're answering. They kind of (...) only I was sending messages here. But I think it's... in a way it's not that different, maybe the only difference is that I don't have those... like my safety net here... like if something happened to me, it would take quite a lot time before someone would realize I disappeared or something but that's maybe the only thing because I'm... I am used to living alone and I also spend quite a much time alone because I am kind of busy with my study and my job so I kind of didn't have time to meet my friends that much. But when I am here, I am kind of anticipating more from different events because it's from (...) situation and because I am here only a year and then when it's over I can't do this next year, like I can't attend to these amazing events made here but in Finland I can like take a year and arrange that next year and go there, so... ehm... I don't know that much people around here... you know if I am going to a student restaurant I usually meet somebody, some friend, I will go just to a table and sit with friends and have a chat, here if I don't arrange it in advance I can't do that because there are so many people I don't know, it's just a coincidence if somebody I know would be eating at the same time. So... in that way, it might be a little bit more alone but I mean it's... and there are not so many familiar faces on lectures. Like in my university I usually know somebody who's in the same lecture and that way it's easier but otherwise, it's not that different. I use the same currency, so I can understand prices and...

Z: Yeah, sure. Ehm... so what moments do you consider the hardest and the best?

K: Ehm... hardest are maybe... if you are disappointed in yourself, when you have done something, like you couldn't manage to come to the (...) there's something, complication (...) and you think that it's your fault because your (...) wasn't well

enough and also if you're going to some party and there's nobody you know and you don't really have energy to make new friends and you're like ok, I want to go home. That doesn't happen often thank god but yeah... Maybe sometimes when I was in some pub, I can't remember which pub was it, there were some people I knew, there was S. and G. and they were talking to somebody and I was kind of... I had nobody to turn around then and it was really difficult to speak because I felt no one could understand what I say, and it was... just to know that I can't do this, I have to go home because I can't make contact... but most... maybe when you... also when you feel like there's nobody you can turn to because you can't find help from your friends because they are from Finland and you're can't call them sometimes because it's here and it's too... in Finland and you don't want to wake them up but it's kind of rare. But I'm.. the best moments... some small moments, meeting people from different cultural background, like those are only students and then you... when you have fun with each other. Also I have one amazing teacher, he is so like... I don't have words to describe, it was more a show than a lecture and his lectures were so amazing, I am going to miss him so much!

Z: Oh really!

K: Yeah. Yeah... but maybe... maybe community contact and seeing new places and seeing this beautiful nature, seeing... and maybe I... get to know new city. Ok... and maybe because I'm going to miss... some way I can consider this as my home now, ok, it's not going to be my home for long but still it's kind of my home now and that's... lovely.

Z: And what do you miss here?

K: From home?

Z: Yes.

K: Some... of course my friends and my family and so on, it's kind of obvious but except for that one food product that you can't get here and I really miss it and it's a (...) product, so nobody can bring it to me, and I am like... I want to eat it! And maybe sometime... the Finland can be so easy to me, like you know the culture, you know the codes, you know how to behave and you're like... you just know how to do things but here are some things, like little, that you need to learn to do, like you need to watch how to do it.

Z: And do you have some example of that? Like you needed to learn?

K: Maybe ehm... ok, it's not the perfect example but... first time I was... it confused me when I was doing my shopping, like groceries and the cashier asked me "how are

you” I was like how do you react? Should I say I am fine or should I ask back? Because it’s just... it doesn’t happen in Finland, like they’re not... or people ask when they really mean, they really want to know if you’re ok, what has happened to you, they’re really... close to you if they ask you. And also couple of basic things, like I was in a local Spar and that cashier tried to small talk with me and I was like... what to do, what to do, because it was... ok, I had seen him to small talk with some of his customers but usually, he chose customers they know already but I haven’t... like I am not so local, and he was like... like “it’s very cold now, isn’t it?” And I was like... “yeah, it is” and it was kind of shocking situation because I’m not used to doing small talk with cashiers and it’s just something that belongs to culture but it doesn’t belong to mine. I was very... usually cashiers call you “love” and I’m like... yeah, that’s little bit too... like I know that it doesn’t mean that but it’s just... I would never use word “love” to describe... maybe no one like I... it’s a word we don’t really use that much in Finland, even when we’re talking about our significant others. So when the cashier tells me “love”, I feel like what’s happening! So some small cultural things I would say.

Z: And if you compare for example the beginning, the middle of the stay and now which part would you say is the best?

K: I would say now except I have to write my essays now, so maybe the middle. Because then I got confident, I wasn’t so... I got more confident and I wasn’t so nervous, I already knew some people, I... I kind of... everything wasn’t so new and scary, so I didn’t have to worry about my assignments. It would be nice to hang out with my people... I have met and friends I have made but... I can’t because assignments and... and I am seeing that the time after Christmas is going to be amazing because I will already have those friends I can ask “hey, you want to go out?” I don’t need to worry about assignments, so... I think that’s going to be the best time.

Z: And are you now looking forward to go home for Christmas?

K: Kind of yeah. Some people I really miss and... but it’s also... I am not in a hurry, I could spend another month here before going home. But... it’s going to be nice to see them and I also need my haircut and one of my friends promised she could cut my hair, so I am looking forward to that.

Z: Yeah, ok, I think that’s it.

Jméno (pseudonym): Majken, dále jako M.

Země původu: Švédsko

Obor studia: Sociologie

Datum rozhovoru: 27.11.2015

Z: Ok, so my question, like the main question, is very broad, so don't be scared.

M: Ok.

Z: So, I am interested in student's personal experiences during their study abroad, but it's just not like I am interested only in that and nothing else. I am also interested in their life stories basically. So could you please tell me your life story? Anything, that occurs to you until now.

M: Okay.

Z: You have as much time as you like and I will just make some notes on things I will ask you later and then I have some questions later.

M: Ok. So, I'm from small town in Northern Sweden called Umea. I've lived there my whole life until this semester. I lived with my parents, with my brother and sister until a year ago when I moved to an apartment and... you want to know about hobbies or.. ?

Z: You can tell me anything, you can go start from childhood or you can generally talk about yourself.

M: Okay. Like how I am as a person?

Z: Can be as well.

M: It's really hard.

Z: I know, sorry. Maybe it would be easier for you to tell it like a story, you know. Like... I went to school there...

M: Ok. I lived for my whole life with my parents, brother and a sister, but she moved out when I was like eleven or something. They both are elder. I went to smaller school and I went there like for ten years, the same school, I started when I was six years old until like sixteen. And I started to do horse riding when I was nine maybe. So like basically apart from being at school and with friends, I was from nine to fifteen doing horse riding and yeah. Then I went to high school, it's like also kind of... it was the same school as my primary school but high school, so it changed the building and so but it was the same concept. I started social science.

Z: In high school?

M: Yeah, you can choose between business, social science and nature subjects, so yeah.

Because my main interest was in social science, like in history, religion, and sociology, so yeah. I went to the high school during three years and then I started university, the sociology programme at the University of Umea. Yeah, that's basic history maybe.

Z: Ok, so... and how did you decide to go? Or when did the idea just came to your mind to go here?

M: To go here...

Z: Or to basically to go to Erasmus.

M: Ah. Hmm... I think it was in my second year, just that I heard other people were doing it and my teachers told me about it and then I just lived in the same city my whole life, I felt it would be fun to see something new and also I've been travelling to not that many countries but I've been very much to Italy with my family, like during my childhood and I've been to Berlin for some time, so I really enjoy meeting, like experience different cultures, so I think that was also like a reason for me to go and because I just wanted to study sociology in another country to see like what differences there would be and then mainly to meet new people and do something that was totally new and a bit scary. But I... yeah, first, like one year ago I decided like I won't probably go because I have it kind of good at home and I am enjoying my life, living with my boyfriend and having my family close and... I just had a good life. But then I spoke to my teacher and she really encouraged me to go because it's such a good experience. Maybe not like the studies, but more to grow, like as a person. So when... and like that it would be a very good thing to have when you start searching for a job and that was also a big reason for me to go because I wanted to have something, because we're like hearing all the time how hard it is to get a job these days and there is competition and my field is kind of... it's very broad, so it's good to have some kind of special knowledge, so you can like advertise yourself for... I don't know how to...

Z: You just have more than others, and that's important.

M: Yeah, so that is also big reason for me to go. And then I just decided after talking to my teacher.

Z: And the countries? Some particular reason for Ireland?

M: Yeah, I wanted to go to English speaking country and I could have gone to England as well but there were a lot of persons from my class that were going to England, so I wanted to go somewhere not everyone else went, like not go in a big group and then, Ireland... I've met some Irish people back home, we took the same module because they did Erasmus in Umea. And they spoke very good about Trinity and... I don't know, my

idea about Ireland was like that it has to be very beautiful, the nature and... also I really I was like attracted to Trinity because it has such a long history and Dublin and Ireland as well have a lot of history that's really interesting and we just... the catholic church is really big here and this was also aspect that was interesting... like how would that affect sociology? So yeah, these are the main reasons.

Z: And can you see how the catholic affects sociology?

M: No (laugh). Not... it's... no. Just it's interesting to like discuss abortion rights and so, but... it doesn't affect education at all.

Z: I think most people are actually not catholic... officially.

M: Yeah. Like maybe they are like spiritually but... no it doesn't influence education at all. I think that the education is... the views are kind of the same as in Sweden, so...

Z: Yeah, okay. So... could we go a little more back and could you tell me a little bit more about life back home? Just generally a little bit more about your family, relationships, where you live, like you live with your boyfriend, you said, so a little bit more about that and so on.

M: Yeah. As I said I just lived in my home city, nowhere else. Because I... people are like... on young Swedish people there's like a pressure that you should move away and you should travel a lot and see the world. Maybe not a pressure but that's like the ideal picture what you should do. But I think, upper high school, so when I was like eighteen, I didn't feel like ready to leave yet and I am very close with my family and I like to be able to go to them over the weekend and... me and my mother have a horse, so it's like... being able to go to the stable with her and... and also both my siblings, just... my sister and a brother... just moved back to Umea and my sister lived in another city for like eight years, so it was real nice at home because everybody was together again and I... but I wasn't like really satisfied with my life in the view that... it was also a little bit boring and unchallenging because I went to university straight after high school, because to learn, to educate myself has always been the safety zone for me, beside it's just fun and my thing, it wasn't so challenging, so I was a little bit like bored before I went because I wanted to experience something new and I was just meeting... although I met a lot of new people when I started at university, but still I was hanging out mostly with the same persons and was just surrounded by the same environment I have always been, so I was a little bit like... I wanted to see something new and... Do you want to know something more practical about my life?

Z: I think it's actually up to you. What you are saying now is very useful for example.

M: Okay, yeah.

Z: So you can just continue the way you do but you can also add whatever you want, so if some story pops up to your head, tell me as well. It's just very open, really. And don't be stressed, it's great (laugh).

M: (laugh). Ok, also I think what made me not to go away from my home before is that it's a very healthy city. Like it's a smaller city in the Northern Sweden and there're a lot of students, so there's a lot of happenings. And much stuff is happening in the city right now, we were the "culture city" last year, like the "European culture city".

Z: Oh really?

M: Yeah, so there were like a lot of different culture stuff and just a nice atmosphere. Much stuff happens. And this men... ment...

Z: Mentality?

M: This mentality led people... if you compare to Stockholm, people are very nice and like calm and respectful towards each other and it's a nice city, so that's a reason why I stayed to study there.

Z: Ok.

M: But... I think that's really good about the city but it was still like what I talked about... I was a bit bored and although everything was really good, I couldn't really appreciate it because I had nothing else to compare it with.

Z: Oh, the same for me actually (laugh.)

M: (laugh), and I also kind of wanted to live in a bigger city and see how that would be. And... yeah... and back to why I went, since I like have thought about doing research in a future, that means that I will probably have to write in English and like read other authors that write in English, just cause the academic world seems very international. So that's like... lot like the language is so important, it was the main reason for me to go but also to see how other country just... how the university in another country is and like get new perspective on that.

Z: And when you earlier said that you really liked your trips with parents to Italy and to Berlin, that it was great to experience a different culture, so could you tell me what exactly does it mean for you to experience new culture... or what did it mean and does it mean... like... ?

M: Yeah, I think that's... just since I think so much all the time about I want to live my life and how I should be as a person and just about identity and how your environment affects you... oh this is...

Z: Very sociological.

M: (laugh) Yeah, but it's actually a point. And I really like to go to new countries, like in Italy, there's so much more relaxed atmosphere and people are like... they don't care so much about... maybe just for example looks, in Sweden it's very focused on looks, so it's nice to see what different values do people have and like... and just... for me, I grow as a person when I like meet new people and hear how they do and just their normal life...

Z: Well moving to anthropology (laugh).

M: (laugh).

Z: No, I understand.

M: Yeah. Just like see the differences. Maybe that seems so predictable but I think it is the main reasons. And just because when you're in your city, everything you (...) on the way it's always thus. You don't hear so much different opinions or so. And I really think that's so annoying and boring and frustrating to not have different views, so maybe that's like also even a bigger need for Swede, because in Sweden there is like norm, that you should not be different, you should be... and it's kind of... it comes from our history, oh no, feels like I am floating away from the subject.

Z: No, it's interesting, I want to know.

M: Just with the social democratic history, everybody fights with... everybody's like you should just pay taxes, do this and this and you have like your work life, then your spare time and it's... and yeah, if you have different opinions, it's... you will get many people against you, if you take it to the extreme, that's in the public spaces where lot of pressure to be the same. And that's, it's nice to like... for example in Italy, with the just... their structure in the politics also, it's so chaotic, and it's just really interesting to see how it's not like... you can do it in so many different ways, and that I mean for me it is like to travel, find out who I want to be.

Z: Ok. So... could you now tell me about the time when you were preparing to leave? Or from the time you found out that you will go till you left? How was it?

M: Yeah, actually I just tried not to think about it much (laugh). What a boring answer. But I was like feeling "do I really need to go? Do I really want this?" I have a good life back home, so why should I go and there was this practical aspect that I more focused on... like finding accommodation. I feel like that was the main thing I put energy on. I didn't have.... I didn't think about how it would be so much. Maybe a little bit which kind of people I would meet or... I had some views that I thought I would like to

exercise much, study a lot, like a view on what kind of life I would have. But otherwise I tried not to think about it so much, because I didn't want to stress about it and it felt so uncertain, so... I just tried to make it happen and not to be so much expecting. Or the practical stuff like I said.

Z: And then when did you come to Dublin? Did you come some time before the school started or was it very tight?

M: I came the 15th of September. I think it was a week, two weeks before the school started.

Z: So how were those weeks before the school started?

M: It was really... there were so much new places and just see Dublin and this feel... feel this, how people were and all that. I think it was little bit stressful and also before the school started, it was frustrating because I really just wanted to get started and get into the everyday life, to get structure because... yeah, the first week there was a lot of parties and the Fresher's week started and I just... then I didn't feel at home and it was... I just wanted for the weeks to go, because I just wanted to get into my life here. I just wanted to like do the first weeks, because everything they were kind of... just it was fun also, I met new people but... yeah, mainly just wanted them to pass.

Z: And how did you find your accommodation?

M: It was... I like in the beginning...?

Z: Just generally, how it happened that you are now where you live and how was it and how is it.

M: Yeah, before I went... or I have spoken with a girl in my class that's also here but we didn't really know each other, before, we have spoken sometimes but she dropped out from our class this winter, so I hadn't missed her much but we decided... because I preferred to live with someone and just the safety to live with someone and cause I never lived by myself and it seems scary and also just to be able to help each other to find accommodation and don't go like do that whole complex thing by myself. And then I saw another girl that we go to the same university and she talked to me about how I was thinking about accommodation and then we decided that the three of us will be searching together if it was possible, we would search for some apartment for ourselves as well if we wouldn't find. So we just mailed a lot of apartments on daft website...

Z: Been there too (laugh).

M: (laugh). But I wasn't so stressed about accommodation because I've heard... my sister had a friend who lived in Dublin for a year or something and she said that it will

solve itself when we get there and I was not that stressed. But I think that K. was kind of stressed, so she wanted to find something before and then she saw the ad for an apartment and then H. arrived like two weeks before us, so she went to take a look at that apartment and we just got it.

Z: So, you were coming with K.?

M: Yeah, me and K. went with the same plane to Dublin.

Z: Ok, and you already had the apartment?

M: Yeah, when we arrived we had the apartment and H. had moved in some things before.

Z: Very nice. It solved itself really.

M: Yeah, totally did. I feel like I didn't have to do so much, H. fixed all. But I was kind of worried about the accommodation because it looked kind of messy on the pictures and it is, kind of, but it was, I really like it because it's fresh and there's no... what's the word... carpets? Irish have them everywhere and we don't have them, we have really good floor. Main point (laugh). Me and K. are sharing a room and we also pay a little bit less than H., so the price is good and that was also the main thing, that it wouldn't be too pricy. Yeah and it's close to the Trinity and that... I think we were focused on the price, closeness to school and kind of a good standard.

Z: And the floors.

M: Yeah, and the floors (laugh)... important. But the only thing I don't like from the beginning as well is that it's very central, which is good but it's also stressful. It's like... I really appreciate cosy areas somewhere where is nature like a park or something. But I mean I knew I was going to Dublin, so I knew that this wouldn't be nature but at least a park or somewhere to go for a walk because now we are in the middle of all the stress and everything. So that's the thing I don't like. But also a good thing is that it's kind of a big street, so if you are walking by yourself, you are feeling safe which was also a thing I was thinking about before that I don't want to live in a dark area where it is unsafe, so.

Z: Yeah, ok. So, now could you tell me now about your experience with Trinity? From the beginning to now basically?

M: Yeah. I had kind of high expectations on the atmosphere on the school because it looks so nice on all the pictures and it really is. But the first thing that hit me is how unstructured it was, compared to home, just with the practical... like which modules I was supposed to take and all that was very messy and confusing and also the welcoming for Erasmus students or international students, I thought there would be more structure

that we would have more activities from... that it would be like a society that will take care of everything and would be very clear what activities there were but it was more that you had to find it out by yourself and the good was that I knew some Irish people, I knew them but I haven't spoken to them. So I could ask them but I think it was kind of messy and unstructured at the beginning. And then for the Fresher's week mainly it was so. But when the school started, it was also very confusing in all modules you had to get your schedule to fit but education or lectures and teachers... I'm very happy with and I've been pleased during the whole term. From the beginning until now. Although I think it would be good if there maybe wasn't the same demand on Erasmus students to read as much... but that's like maybe... I mean we have to read for our home university as well but to get the most of the experience, I think it would be good with a little bit less studies to do. It takes time just to meet new people which I think is a really important aspect of going on Erasmus. Just not for the studies. But the level of the education I am very pleased with.

Z: Okay. And what's your experience on Trinity more socially?

M: Like to meet people and so on?

Z: Yes.

M: It's very different that everything's placed on societies... which I think is nice but since I am here only for one semester, I think I haven't put really energy to join many but it's like people are very open and want to meet new people, so it's... I got very easily to get to know new people and I guess that since I am living with two Swedes and we mostly... it was very helpful in the beginning because we went to the same parties and we got kind of first like in social network too because... I don't know, people are so... everybody seems to want to meet new people but it wasn't that much what Trinity did. This is more about the people that really want to meet new people. So Trinity... it's not like there was this very good structure at Trinity to help people to get to know each other but more like that everyone wants to get to know new people that was like... why it's maybe easy to be social. So it wasn't because of very good welcoming of Erasmus students. Do you understand?

Z: Yeah I understand. And if you compare your social life here and your social life at home, how is it different?

M: The main difference that hits me at first is that I do so much more stuff here. Or the latest week I am mostly studying but I won't meet that many new people at home at all, I just hang out with people I know, mostly people I knew before to the university, apart

from my boyfriend who I met at the university, so I just do so much more social stuff here than at home. Just different... I travel here, like in Ireland and going to parties, going to dinners and yeah, I am much more social here than I am at home.

Z: Ok, sorry, you need to go, right?

M: No, no, I was just wondering about the time. Take your time.

Z: I am sorry. So are there any other aspects of your life that are very much different? That really strikes you?

M: Compared to home?

Z: Yeah.

M: Yes, it's maybe for people that moved to another city to study university, they wouldn't notice as much differences. Because I haven't been so outgoing home, like at university, if focusing on the university life, my life as a student. So, just that I am much more positive to meet new people and also to meet people that are... like in the beginning, there were some other Swedes and we just tried to avoid them because we wanted to meet like not Swede and not our national, so that was like... back to the hoping to go to Erasmus, you want to meet people from different countries. That's a main difference from home where I meet no people from other countries.

Z: And... yes, so what moments do you consider the hardest and the best?

M: I think the hardest is just like... I miss my persons, like my family, my boyfriend and my closest friends. Just to hang out with them and feel... because when you're going away, you become really as another person, you live as another person, because you don't have your surrounding that kind of make you who you are. That's kind of change. Of course you are who you are but you kind of change and sometimes it's just nice to... If I speak with my closest friend, I feel like I'm home, I feel like this is me and what I recognize, so that's little bit hard. Not as hard as I thought it would be because I really have enjoyed to have new way to live kind of but also it just... it's like a little bit stuff to like share apartments and just a normal life to do your grocery shopping in another store and those practical things are... when you're tired and you have a lot to do, you just want that to... it makes it more hard when it's new and also the studies are tougher that at home and we don't know what is expected from you and that's... it's hard to not know what level you should be at and just to do everything in English also is a big challenge... yeah. That's hard. And best part is to feel like I can manage to do this. I can go to another country, study there although I live with two Swedes and have that kind of safety but I didn't know them before so I think that's the best part, just to feel like I can

do this on my own and I really I can be a very social person and I can just be independent, I can live without my parents and do all the stuff. I think that's the best thing. And the things that I will carry with me from this term.

Z: So when you said that in your home environment, there's a bit of yourself, did you more recognize yourself... Is this like the different-self... like independent, is it also in different aspects?

M: Maybe I exaggerated a little bit because also I have confirmed, 'cause I believe I was independent person and by this experience I confirmed that. So maybe it's more like proving for myself that I am the person I believe I am. Okay, now I kind of change it but...

Z: That's good.

M: Just the... it's really boosting your... what's the word. Believing in yourself, what's the other word?

Z: Yeah. Self... confidence?

M: Yeah. I haven't been... I been kind of introvert at home because, mainly because I just went having too comfortable...and I am inspired... about what... yeah. So yeah, more about confirming that I am the person I am.

Z: Ok, so just three more questions. So what is Erasmus giving you and what is it taking from you?

M: Oh taking. Money maybe. What you mean by taking.

Z: You don't need to answer that, it doesn't matter.

M: The other thing was what it is giving me? Giving me friends all over the world and it's giving me more belief in myself and more yeah, sense that I can do whatever I want and also now I don't know if I will manage my studies but maybe that I can manage to study a lot. That I can study in English, like more adult level and that I can live in another country, although Ireland is kind of similar, it's a Western country but that I can manage to have a life in another country maybe.

Z: And could you tell me about your friends here? Are they mainly Swedes? Are there some Irish people?

M: Yeah, we are... many people from the Sweden... sadly... no. But otherwise there are Finnish, French, some Irish, Czech Republic, it's mostly European countries though. Which is a little bit boring, it would be fun to get more outside the Europe as well. Because I've been travelling around Europe and I am kind of familiar with parts of Europe at least, so...

Z: And do you feel those friendships are going to last? Even after you're away? Or do you think it will just... fall apart?

M: I hope... I haven't been like... I haven't found friends that I feel like I will carry them through my whole life but I hope I can keep in contact if I want to and I really want the people I met if they come to Sweden to come to me and that I can come to them when I travel. So I hope it will last.

Z: Ok, so I think that's pretty much it. Thank you.

Jméno (pseudonym): Elin, dále jako E.

Země původu: Švédsko

Obor studia doma/na Erasmu: Behaviorální analýza/sociologie

Datum rozhovoru: 6.12.2015

Z: So I have one bigger question and then I have couple of other questions, which we will do after that. So my big question is: I am interested in student's experiences during their study abroad but it's not just like I want to hear only about your time here, I also want to know broader context, so I would like you to tell me your life story if you could, you can do it any way you feel like doing it basically and you can... you have as much time as you like and then I will ask you later for some other things.

E: Ok. Wow, that's... is it like life story generally or like things that lead me to the decision of coming here, going abroad and having that experience?

Z: It's both, it's just... start to talk and if I feel like you're getting lost, I will try to help.

E: Yeah, yeah, you can ask me if you want something.

Z: So no worries at all.

E: It's hard.

Z: I know, no stress.

E: Ok. Well, I grew up in a very small village outside of a quite small town in Sweden and I am the third... I have two siblings older than me. My brother is five years older than me, my sister is seven years older than me and we were approximately 15-20 people in my village when I grew up, so there were other children when I grew up but they were mostly older than me. I mean I spent a lot of those earlier days playing with my family, having fun with friends and... you know I really admire my sister so I really try to be like her. I mean, I think I grew up in a family that really likes to spend time outdoors, so that we went berry picking, went on hikes, I have really strong bonds with my relatives, my family in general, so for my father's mother and father, like my paternal grandparents, they live very close to me in the village I grew up, they have a summer cottage in the village where I grew up and we have other two families of relatives living really close to us and we can walk there if we want. And during my childhood and up until how old I am today, which is 22, we used to spend all the holidays together, we used to have dinner... like whenever we felt like it, we used to celebrate all the birthdays together and my grandparents used to stay the summer in the summer cottage, now they are getting too old... so I used to always bike to them and

spent a couple of hours with them each day... and I am the youngest from my cousins, I only have guy cousins, so I was always the one that was... like trying to fit in I guess, but it was really fun. My sister, used to shoot movies of us, so I was always acting out something or just being like... and yeah... I had quite tough time in school, I was bullied for many, many years.

Z: I am sorry about that.

E: No, that's ok. But so from the time when I started school up until 9th grade, which is 10 years, I was bullied more or less. It's been tough of course but you also gain a lot of (...), you understand things, and you get really sympathetic and you don't judge people because you know what it feels like to be the underdog. And that's really important thing for me in life that I take with me throughout what I do and for the people that I meet. So I hope I have a really high ceiling of not judging people. Because I used to study... I studied in a really small school in my first 7 years, there were approximately 150 people in the whole school, so 7 grades. And then I had some trouble fitting into my class and I think that other people that were younger than me because we... there was... you know all that age when you're trying to fit in, trying to figure out who you are, people are always going to pick on somebody and I was that person and there were other people picked on as well. So I think we were 10 people in my class, there weren't enough people for everybody to have somebody, it was too small class. And then, when I got older, when I moved into the... or when I started going to school in town, because I used to go to village almost and then I grew out in a bigger school, my secondary school - 3 years from 7th to 9th grade. Things got a little bit worse, but better also. I found a better place in my class but then I lost my friend, we fought. And I didn't find my place in the class anymore because she moved from the class. And there were other people who were really... younger than me and also are really... said things. That was really hard but also during those years I met my best friends, but not through school because since I was 10 I have been in... not anymore... but for 8 years I was doing athletics which meant that I went to practice 3 to 5 times a week and I loved it, it grew to be my family. I also have had some family issues with my family, which meant that I really found a lot of comfort in being with friends and having that support from my group, we grew really close and I met 3 girls that I am still best friends with today and I think that it was really that time when I needed that because a few years before that a lot of other friends have turned their back on me or just changed in a lot of ways. I guess I was a bit immature when I was younger and it took me a while to grow really into being my age

or whatever you say... which some people found... like they grew up faster than I did, so I was really happy when I found people I could really be myself with and be comfortable with and we grew really close, we hang out a lot of times, like all the practices and with that group we went to competitions and we had all those things together, so we grew very, very close. Which has really influenced my life still because all those years I really, really needed the support, I got it from there and it was a great way to release... like you can just run, if you're feeling bad, you can run, you can exercise, you can move your body physically so that you be distracted but you also feel great because you can release all the pressure you have. That is really important, we used to really have fun, there was always some banter, some fun and we did a lot of pranks of each other and it was such an important group. So I always had this kind of counterbalance in my life, that there were really horrible things I was going through, both in my own family and school and bullying and really abusing myself... and been gaining and finding myself through friends and through things I really love doing, so I think that's really changed my life. Yeah, the problems with my family is nothing that I am going to go into specifically but I can tell you that my brother has a mental disorder, so there's been difficulties... ehm... and... other things that's been going on, that's really influenced me but we have a good sense of bonding and my sister and I have grown very, very close, she is my support and I trust her and when I feel bad I know I can call her and she is there for me, so I am very lucky and I always... yeah, but when I finished, I stopped being bullied because I started upper secondary school, actually I was really insecure, really didn't know who I was... so people go through that anyway when you're 15, 16 but my... I found close friends in my class for the first time, there was other and I found myself with a group of friends and I started really liking them and with some of them I am really close to even to this day. However, I should say that when I was in a lower secondary school, I found some people in another class of mine, so I did have people in the school, so I had to... pass on with my life, I'd say, trying to find people to be with, trying to... because it was a lot about being lonely. A lot of trying to (...) things to can we eat lunch with you that day and we arrange it, so we find a way for half an hour so that we can eat lunch together and... because the people in my class tended to really rush away from me, and going to have lunch together and they had secure place within that group, so I could never count on the people to stay, so I did find people there, so I had support but then I started to find people in my class, I was very shy and very insecure, because I haven't really... I guess socialized that much with people to the

extent where I felt comfortable about being around too many people because I didn't know, I was only expecting them to laugh at me, to disappoint me, to start going away from me and you don't always know how to behave in that kind of situation, especially I guess with guys that I wasn't feeling... I didn't know how to... because that was usually guys who laughed at me, pointed at me and told me things, that was primarily guys and girls would go away, they would isolate you, they would just turn back and go away. That was what it was. And then that were 3 good years, I did very, very well in school, which I haven't been doing before because there had been so many things that happened that I didn't really... I thought it was fun to be in school, I was ok, but I wasn't really good. But when I went in upper secondary, I did very well, it was fairly easy because there was a lot... there was a teacher who was really good... and I got a lot of... yeah, I had friends in my class, which meant that eating lunch and stuff wasn't such an hassle and I had someone I knew I could count on, whatever I did I knew I had friends there. It was a great experience for me, I learnt really to trust people and I didn't lose faith in trusting people because I always had at least some friend that I could count on and when I was younger, one of the people turned their back on me and went away, I had knew he would come again, so it wasn't a huge gap of years, it was usually in school. So that was really good but I was really... it took me about 4 or 5 years after I stopped being bullied until I felt really secure and it's just in recent years that I started really... I guess feeling very comfortable in myself and liking myself which I didn't before because after upper secondary some of my friends were heading to university, I didn't quite know what to do, because I didn't want to start working, I wasn't feeling so secure in my thought at the time, I didn't know if I... what I wanted to do. I have always been very emotional person but if I don't do anything I like to do, I feel bad, especially when it comes to work, then I tend to feel really bad about it, which means that I really need to do something I love doing, so I was thinking a lot about it... it took half a year for me until I started university and within the half a year I did my driving license, I also studied some... not for university, it was because I wanted to study to be a nutritionist, so I took an extra... I studied business and administration in upper secondary school which meant that I didn't read that much into science which meant that if I wanted to be a nutritionist, I needed to add some science courses, so I read a course that takes a year normally in two months which was fine but I didn't get in because they only let 2 people in because you become... when you hadn't added something when you finished, you getting to a group of people that added something which means that there's less people

getting through because I think they accepted 10 or 20 people in another group that's when they have done it through the gymnasium instead of adding something after. But I decided to read English, so I moved out to Umea in 2013 on the winter to start my first half a year in the university, I was really nervous, I stayed at my friend's house with the girl that I primarily had been with during the upper secondary school, so we really had a good relationship, we really felt comfortable with each other, so it was ok to live with each other, I had a couch in the living room and I moved simply there because also during the first half a year, I think... many people have said that I've grown a lot in recent years and I guess that's true, I guess I always grown but I've been... even though I've been immature in some ways I was always quite mature, I sometimes tell my friends that I feel like I am 40. You feel like so mature, you kind of know what you want to do and you get the stand when you have... been feeling really bad in your life, you know what it feels to be good, and you appreciate it so much, to have the people, to have the support, to know what to do, to be able to go through other experiences like coming here for example. But after my first half a year in a university, which I really enjoyed, it was a lot of work but it was interesting and then I started reading behavioural analysis which is what I do now, I wasn't sure if that was what I wanted to do, I stressed a lot when I was deciding, I knew I wanted to stay in Umea, because I love the city, I gotten to know friends there, I had life, I wanted to continue that, I didn't want to move suddenly away and start somewhere else because I really enjoyed the people I met there, so I found this, I got in and I was really proud and I was really nervous and I also felt like... in some ways, it was really a new start for me when I was going through that because when I was younger I really didn't like myself, I guess most people go through periods of not liking themselves, so I don't think that's something that's primarily me doing that but it was really something that influenced my life in a lot of ways, I didn't like to look at myself in a mirror, I didn't like to be who I was because life was such a struggle especially in school, you never knew how the day was going to go, you didn't know where you could go you didn't know who you're going to meet and it was always a hassle and... but when I was... I got braces, so I got a good teeth and I cut of my hair which was really horrible because it's... I had coloured it and re-coloured it and had different shapes during the years, so it was really dry, so I cut it off and I just waited for it to grow out again and I started finding what clothes I want to wear, I found what I felt comfortable in and I started really settling down in a way to be secure and happy within myself and really finding that peace that I've been looking for for a long time. When I

settled I knew I did something I really enjoyed, I got a lot of friends in school, in my class as well, I have four friends that I am really close with that know who I am and know my history and other people in the town... I got an apartment that I really enjoy, I really enjoy finding my own sense of style and having my own things and knowing that if I go home during the day if I am tired, if I have something that's happening, I can go home and be with myself or I just hang out with a close friend of mine and... so I think even through recent years always, life is life. It's going to happen, things are going to happen, not always feeling like Cinderella everyday, nobody does that but it's been in comparison it's been great which means that in the recent year I started to work on some issues that I had before but I am starting to really deal with certain emotions, certain things that happened to me earlier, I went to see shrink this year and that really helped me and when I told him that I was moving to Ireland, he was so happy and he said: "it's going to be great because I think Elin that you will... because when you grow up, being bullied, feeling really bad and things happen to you, adopt a certain identity, you start to think you're the things that you hear about yourself", at least I did, so he said: "I think that maybe you're going really see yourself in a new light and lose that identity completely", because I started losing it more and more and more over the last years, and I think that's quite true, that I have to deal with loneliness, to deal not having your friends around yourself, you deal with being in an extreme situation, you deal with a lot of new people coming in and you deal with finding things on your own and you deal with growing up which I think is really important. Although I am very happy to go home, to kind of be with the people I love the most and to have that security again... but I've always been a person who wants adventure, that kind of person in a sense... I want to grow, I want to be the most amazing version of myself that I can be if it's possible, that doesn't mean that I have to go and venture to go or whatever, I am venture... I have a venturist relatives, so I got on that side. And I feel that this is a really important stuff, something I really wanted to do because it's something I would be proud of myself for doing and for me it's always a way to show myself that regardless of what happened and not to say that all those years where all bad, because of course there were of course some really nice things... people came in, I had my sport, but there were some bad things as well, especially since it's coming out inside of me as I am dealing with it, so that means I am looking primarily for bad things, it doesn't mean that they were all bad things, it just means I am working to deal with it, it's alright, I don't want to deal with it when I am 40, I don't want to be that kind of person who feels she lost her life or you

feel something happen to make me shut down and not to involve and not... because even though things happen I wouldn't like to be a victim of it, you know, you can shape your life in a way, that you become a victim or not, circumstances happen because everybody goes through their stuff, I don't know anybody who has a perfect and nice life and I wouldn't want to meet that person anyway, so... I think that coming here is definitely making something... there's been a lot of reason to... I think one of the problems with me coming on Erasmus is an unresolved... not drama, not to say drama, but unresolved issue with a guy back at home which has influenced me being here little bit because I couldn't solve it, it's obviously a situation that I need to move on from and that has been a bit from time to time a struggle... it's been hard to mend something or solve something when you're miles and miles away, so coming here and doing that... when you came here, you thought of home, then you had a time you didn't think about home that much but you miss it and now that there's so little time left, you start to think about it again, you think I need to do that, I need to make a list of... that kind of mind set of actually being home, working on issues and things that you have to deal with... but I think that the (...) of me personally will be... I will see that when I am home, I think it's hard to see what changed when you're here, I think some of it you will realize when you're home and I am not sure if that many things have changed about me, some but not that many because I think over the recent years I have changed a lot, or grew more into myself, which I guess is what all people do at this age because people... it's said that your brain isn't fully developed until you're 25 or at least I've heard. So yeah, I think I am excited for what's going to happen a bit terrified of ending university and doing something else or work.

Z: And you're ending next semester?

E: Yeah, I have a half year, but then I will probably study for another year but not in that university, in another kind of school and then... I think of it then. But that's because I like to stay in a place that I have been (...) for the reason to (...), so there's not such a chaotic settings where you can actually develop and you can be in peace. So in a sense being here, coming here has brought a lot of the "ah, what's happening", chaotic setting and a lot of stuff happened that I think it will be so nice to lie down in my bed and let... breathing out, this is home, this is security, I know how things work here, I know how it is here and you just have that peace again which I've been missing a little bit when I am here. But if you don't get away from peace, you don't know what peace is, you don't know what it feels like to be secure, to know things, to feel like you're good, because

you have to see the bad things to see the good things.

Z: So here, you feel insecure? Like not it peace basically?

E: Ehm... maybe I hadn't call it that. I know I can talk about it a lot. It's more of a deep sense of security that I have when I am home, so I feel like when I am here, I am secure with myself but maybe the circumstances here are a little bit more insecure because I don't always know the language, there's a lot of new system in school, trying to figure out who you are going to be friends with, not having to count on your really best friends to be there for you and that's absolutely great because you get to experience new things, but that's my challenge here... finding where to live when I came here, how does the system work in Ireland, how am I supposed to go about things, how do I do that, that's kind of security, all those things that you don't have to think about when you're home that you know so that you can deal with issues that are maybe more central in your life instead of those little things that's happening but after a while, you get more grips to things and you don't feel bad. In the beginning I was really a bit insecure, I would say, I was kind of scared, trying to figure out who to hang with, what to do and you know trying to live with people I don't know, I have never met before. All those things.

Z: So have you ever travelled in your previous life?

E: Yes.

Z: Where, how, with whom?

E: I have a pretty travelling family. My maternal grandparents have travelled twice a year... my mother travels a lot, they take us on trips sometimes. When I was 7 I went to Egypt with my grandparents and with my family. That was my first trip and since then, my family... my sister and I have been to Barcelona, I've been to Tenerife with my grandparents. No, that was when I was 7. Egypt when I was 12. I've been going with bus through France and Germany and all of those countries and going through England and Scotland and then back again with my grandmother and my mother. I've been with school in Italy and in England. I lived in England for 6 weeks totally, one time 3 weeks and one time 3 weeks. First, I was there when I was 17 I think, 16 maybe on a language school where I went on my own, I didn't know anybody in my group which was really scary but I had fun and then I went there with some friends to do a work experience which is a part of my gymnasium experience because we have a lot of work experience during that year, so we had 15 weeks in total, so one time we went... we could go to Poland or England, so I did that when I was like 17 or something. And then I am here and I've been.... hmm... I've been to you know Norway you know and those places. So

I have travelled quite a lot and since I've also lived especially... because both times I was in England I lived in a host family, so I knew what it was like to live in another family abroad, but that was quite a (...) state like... I shared it with a friend or person that I can kind of... that was the same situation as I was.

Z: And you mentioned that Erasmus... it's like an important personal experience for you. That you kind of pushed yourself to do that, so do you have other things that you feel like pushed you to do it? What motivated you?

E: I think... I was kind of wanting to do it. I love English, the language, I love listening to it, especially British and Irish. And I think I was... when I was younger I wanted to live in England, I don't know why I just really... it was one of the ideas what I really wanted. I loved watching British TV shows and I just thought it was the most beautiful place on the Earth. So I just think that this is the experience that makes me feel like I've done that. I mean not really, it's not England but I've lived in another country for like... so I kind of done my childhood dream in a way that I really wanted. So that was one of the reasons. And I think academically as well it's a really good thing to have and I know, I talked with a student counsellor about it and she said that if I go abroad, I've read English, I've been living on an international dorm with a lot of international people, I've been involved in buddy programme where you are involved with international students which is that you can basically say that you have had an international kind of notion in your studies so that I can... it's always good to have, to be good in that language to kind of experience that because it brings you up a notch. Another thing was that a lot of my friends were going, three of my best friends in school are abroad right now, so I kind of didn't want to be... there was two more of my friends going but now he stayed, actually two of my friends stayed in Umea or people I used to hang out in the school. So you know that... yeah, I could stay home but I kind of really wanted this experience especially since I feel like they're maturing and doing this cool stuff, I kind of want to do it too, it's fair that we all do it. Then we can come back and share all the things, it's such a fun to talk about the new, get to know new people and you will always have that common experience. I thought why not.

Z: Yeah. And why did you choose Ireland.

E: Ehm... actually Ireland more or less chose me more. I was looking at... I wanted to do sociology, because psychology is such a... I don't know. I did apply for a psychology as well, I got to a university there as well in Nottingham but I read a lot about the city and it had a really bad reputation and then I started reading about Ireland and thinking about

it, I wasn't sure if I want to do it. But I wasn't sure if I could get into here. And the funny thing was that you were numbering one, two, three of the places you wanted to go to and I had England the first one and then Trinity the second one and then another university the third one, so I got a call from the woman who deals with our application and she called: "Hi, Elin, I know that you got into psychology... do you want to take that one or have you thought about it?" And I said: "I kind of want to go to Ireland if there is a place for me." And she said: "Yes, there's a good chance that you will get it". It was the second one but it was the one I really wanted to do because it gotten to be like "oh it would be so cool to go to Ireland". Kind of another country, I didn't know much about it, I knew about the beautiful landscape, really nice people, it would be like a new country, cool country... and then I basically found out that I got the place and I was really proud and happy about that. So I think that more or less Ireland picked me because that was kind of an interesting thing to happen there.

Z: Like a fate.

E: Yeah, I think so, I believe in it, so I think that I was definitely meant to come here.

Z: And then since the time you found out that you will come here till the time you left, what was happening during that time and how was it?

E: Well I found out summer, before summer when I was in the school that I was in. I found out that I was accepted from the university as a candidate, I got all the papers then they sent me and it was a bit scary because it was like ok, what am I going to do, how am I to do these... all the things you needed to get signed from everybody and just trying to get your head into it... so that was a bit of struggle but it went ok, I did it, you know you are always afraid when you're send it away if it's going to be approved, is this going to happen, like what is this... but then I think I had it in my mind, I knew that I was getting over the summer, I did arrangement to rent out my apartment which was like I had... three people and the fourth one could do it which was a little bit of struggle as well. The summer was... I worked, so I was kind of busy, I had a month off from the work before I was going here, so I had a time to go and meet my friends. It was difficult summer in the in many aspects, not necessarily because of Erasmus but more personal issues and stuff that happened with persons in my life. So I had many things to be nervous about but the weeks before, I actually got the papers that said that I got in... like from Trinity, that was nervous, I was really nervous because I got it on 9th of August or something, so there wasn't so much time and I didn't exactly know and I didn't know how to pack and I was really nervous. I remember I was walking and doing stuff with

my mother at the time and I was really... just being like really, really nervous about it. I went to Umea... maybe I got it earlier actually, I knew I got to Umea to check on my apartment one day like a weekend or something because I have to take the trains, like a couple of hours from where I live, so. And then I know... I think I got it or something when I was there. I wasn't home when I got it, I remember my mother was calling me and telling me I got in and was actually really happy. And that was really nervous, you feel like you can't do anything, you feel like your life is in home, you are waiting for it to happen, you know you have this things to do but you can't do it because you are not sure if you're going, you kind of make plans, make arrangements but you can't completely say if you're going. And that was the thing, I couldn't completely tell the girl who was renting my apartment you got it, because I didn't know, I wasn't sure and I was feeling that I was putting her on strain as well and all those things kind of mess with your head as well, you get really anxious and nervous. But once you got it, you feel like I got in, I got in. And then you need to do all the arrangements, applying for student grants and applying for other things and it was... all the papers... but I think that you can be really nervous about things I tend to be, like I always am but it isn't as hard as you think it is, sometimes it's fairly easy, like yeah, there's a lot of people signing, yeah, there's a lot of things to do but you know how to do it after a while and I don't think it was that hard or as nervous as it was when I was coming, I was thinking of all the things that could not go wrong but ok, I need to have a security plan, I wrote down a lot of numbers for people that I knew, just in case that something happened with my phone I took an extra phone... because I 'm a person that really does things, it's like I make things happen, I'd say, like if I am nervous about something... I was really "ok, I'm going to go with my phone", I tend to wear a (...) and then I guess going through it and it's fine, nothing happens but that's my personality, I'm really... I plan for things (laugh).

Z: Oh me too (laugh).

E: So I think... yeah, I planned how would I go about different stuff here, what I should do, how I should do it and everything worked out fine I think because I can count on myself to plan for things and working it out and then I tend to second-guess myself in a process for living in Ireland, that I actually do it and then it go fine but I learnt to appreciate that about myself, I'd say.

Z: Yeah, I mean I think it's great. And so then when you arrived the first days? How did it go?

E: Hmm...

Z: When have you arrived actually?

E: I arrived on 10th of the September. I lost my apartment that I was going to have here, a week before I came here which was... really horrible but ok... that's another story. No, I was going to live in an apartment, share room with another girl, I was talking to this woman online for a few weeks back, I started to second-guess her and started to be quite anxious about it a while before I came here because I thought she wrote... she wasn't that good speller, she spelled weird, I had to second-guess what did she mean and I am not perfect in English but she was writing... she was... I felt a little bit insecure, I talked to my friend about it and I was like: "This woman... I don't feel good about this, but I don't know what to do, I am happy that I got some place", but then a week before I came here, she said that there's a girl who moved out of the apartment who's place I was going to take, who was just being mean and kind of disrespectful and she basically told me about the persons who lived in the apartment, she didn't live there, so the persons who lived in the apartment didn't want anybody else to come, so she listened to them and she said no to me despite the fact that she told me that it was ok for me to move in and I thought that it was her place to take that position, not them, they shouldn't be involved in it, so I was really angry and really upset and I was so... I was like "shit, this is shit, I don't even want to do this", but then I said fuck it, I 'm giving it a try and then I wrote a lot of messages and then I came here I booked a hostel, I was really nervous, I wanted to throw up... then I came here, it was a nice hostel, I don't like to live in a hostel normally, when you're living in it to find another place, it's quite a... I came to see a house during the first day, I was so exhausted that day and there were some personal things going on as well, so I had quite a tough time, crying a lot but then also feeling like it was really nice to be here, like a cool experience, really nice to see the Trinity for the first time, you know, there were things happening in the hostel, I met some friends, started talking to the people like... and then I didn't get that first house but I was like second candidate or something, so I thought like that's ok, I went... I found by accident a friend of mine who said that there was a thing that you can apply, like you make your own profile, so I did that on the site, like easy roommate or something like that it's called, so I applied to that, I made my profile and then I started talking to this lady and then I went to see the apartment, I liked her, she liked me so now I live there and I got it after 4 days of being here... so I moved out of the hostel... it was nervous before I knew but in a sense I guess that I... when I was here I thought like... the worst thing that can happen is that it's not

going to work out and I have to go home, that's the worst thing and that's not going to happen, so how would I go about this without getting my head in the oven, like getting too nervous, like can I do stuff that's fine, can I do stuff to meet people, can I go around this city, just getting to know the city, can I go visit things, like that, you need to mix applying for an apartment and looking every add on this sites to doing funny active stuff and I think like that's the thing you can't be too stuck in it I guess, because the weeks before I came in here, I was... a lot of like primarily searching for an apartment, like a lot, two hours a day or something for a lot of places and I was writing this kind of "hi, my name is...", it is funny that it was kind of hard to sound myself, because I knew that people need to meet me, they can't say if I am a good resident or not before they meet me, they need to meet me, see my face, that's all... that's... but you know you have to have that... see the person, like if you work together as people, because I wouldn't like to move to somebody that I've never met, so that was the thing, I knew that coming here would be my best bet... but I was a but angry, disappointed I guess that Trinity doesn't offer accommodation to people who come for the exchange because it's a hard, hard situation you don't know the market, you don't know the language always, you can't be here and say hi, this is me blah, blah, blah, because in Umea in every... they got apartment at least they have something and a lot of my friends were like: "oh,yeah, I found this place and blah, blah, blah" and I was like I don't know... how do I know if I'm going to get in, what I was going to do and that was really nerve wrecking, so you get really exhausted by that in the beginning but when you've done it, you are really proud of yourself, like "Oh I found it, yeah!". But yeah... but it's... for me living outside of the city is ok, I love it there, it's beautiful there, I love to go on walks there and I like where I live but not being able to go and to take the train always, especially when you're out, because in Umea I live so close to everything and as I grow up, I mean I love the forest, it was in a tiny village and I couldn't go into town, I had to take the bus or go by car, so I can't walk in there and I am walker, I love walking and it was like going back to that because the dart stops at the night by 11:30, so I can't take... and I have to take the taxi and that's really expensive, so you can't always hang out with people, you can't always do things and you don't want to be intruding somebody, so you don't want to stay... you know things like that. I think that was something that had been a little bit difficult, because I would love to live in a city and it's also quite expensive but yeah...

Z: And so... the... how do you just feel in the apartment? Is it good there? And with whom do you live and how does it work?

E: Well I live with a woman, she's 50, she's really... actually she's really nice, I get along with her, we talk a lot but the apartment is really... it can be hard to live with somebody who's apartment you're in, you feel like you're always intruder in some part, you always the person who... you don't feel fully comfortable, you feel like, should I do that, that... in a sense you're trying to ask and that's fine and I share room with another girl. With German girl and we get along but we're really... both of us are quite quiet and we like to stay at home, but I mean we talk, we do and we're working, we have schedule, you know, if she's putting on make-up she leaves the bathroom doors open, so I can go in and get something, so stuff like this. But that's the kind of thing because it's quite a tiny room for two people and then I have the kitchen to be in, so I am going to be happy when I'm going to have several rooms to go. Then there's another guy living there as well and he's from England, we get along really good, like we talk almost every day, like especially us three who are about the same age, we talk a lot and we get along well, there's not any argument. I know about people that have many arguments but I am going home so soon, so I really want things to stay good you know, but people are stressed out, things happened, just life getting in the way, so that's when you become a little bit tense but that's not something that happens every day or something, we just need to (...) complication and we just talk to each other, like and I guess that... just "how's it going, how are you today" because everybody is so stressed now, I had study weeks, he has exams soon and she's going to go home soon and the woman, she's... you know, life. But it's been a new experience but I can't say that I am not really happy to go home because sometimes you just... need to have a good cry or something and you feel like life is just... you just want to be by yourself and that can be hard when you live with somebody but I think she got used to it, you know. That's just I don't know... life.

Z: So... could you now tell me about your experience at Trinity, like since the school started, how is it, what's been happening?

E: Ehm... I think that it's been good, I mean it's different than what I am used to... English is different of course, I studied some English before, because I've read English and I also have had this course in English when I was in England, I did English essays but nothing as structural as this one, this is like for real, for real but you know... I think that I was nervous that they were going to be really strict, because I know that some people are like... "Can I go to bathroom, mr..." and that's not like that which I am really happy about. The teachers are really good, really good quality, some of them I feel like with more personal, some are more strict and you don't really feel the attachment, some

of the feel like really they're (...) I like that, I like that. They have really good quality, it's really hard to kind of know what they expect because I am so used to... you know, you do stuff and you kind of get it back, for the teachers at home, they might do a tiny exam in the middle, they will maybe hand it back to you, so that you know during the period you're studying what level you're at, kind of like that. But in some sense I feel like... even though it's really stressful right now I also feel like sometimes it's just a little... like not so much... like in Sweden we would maybe have two assignments during a period, like during a semester, but now we just have one, and it's just... is it much, is it good in comparison? It's really stressful now, I wouldn't like to have more assignments, of course not but you know... because we study in another kind of pace, another kind of thing. So... but it's really interesting to see them both, I find it a very good quality but I also know it's hard because Trinity here is like a really formal school perhaps, not really formal in that sense but that people know about it, really famous you know, tourist groups come a lot and you feel like you're something like wow. Is that supposed to mean that I am really good at studying because I don't feel like that because Umea is not like the highest rank although I study something that isn't found anywhere else in Sweden but I don't know, I feel like level isn't... because people are like: "Oh, you study in Trinity, you must be really smart" but I don't know! In some sense I guess, if they picked you that must mean something, they don't think you're going to fail at least. I think that's been good, I mean, I find sometimes at Trinity, as in the school itself can be a little not so personal, it's not really... of course it's not a modern school, it can't be because it's an old school, it can be but I don't feel like it is. I feel like Umea university is more modern which I kind of like, in a sense, the classes here tend to be a little boring maybe and it's quite dark and you feel like... yeah, it's really dark and I like the settings because in Sweden it's really bright. In Sweden, we have like a table instead of something you put on your chair to write on, you know. You have more space and I like that. Because the settings of the room are not really my... but I like it in the sense that I know that, you know, like I made that comparison, so I am aware of what I like in Sweden and what I like in here but I do find the quality good and I don't find... you are scared in the beginning, you think "Oh my god, what am I supposed to do", you have really interesting talk with people and they do tend to help you a lot like... because I have spent a lot of time on how to write an essay and lot talks about that, in my classes especially since I am reading a second module and they talk a lot about how to write an essay and what to do with the references and stuff... and a lot of tutorials and stuff,

which I think is good... because... not so much for me, I write essays, I am in my third year, so... ehm... but I think... it feels like they really want the students to do well. And I like that and they are really friendly and not at all that kind of ... that I was afraid of - too formal, like Mrs. Blah, blah, blah... it's not like that. When I started writing an email, it is more formal here than it is in Sweden because we write "hi" to everybody. But then..., when I started writing email, when I was at home, and you know you have to write like that, I was really scared, I was like: "Oh my god, is it going to be like that?". But this place is cool to be (...) because I haven't really gone to university that's really old and that's famous in any kind of way.

Z: And socially how has been the stay going? Like have you made some friends? What are they like?

E: Yeah, I mean, like in the first few days when I came here I met a friend but it was like my first friends, we hanged out for a while and then I met the people I live with and then of course I have the Swedish girls but since I wasn't so close to them when I came here, we are studying in the same school and we didn't really got into the same kind of group, so I don't know them that well. So it feels like I don't want to intrude and I don't think that's my personality either. But I have met you know... and since I hang out with people I live with, we go out sometimes to have drinks, we go to the city, we hang out but we're time... yeah I have found other people, like you guys that I hang with in school and then I was on a Kerry trip and I found some international, other from other studies, so I am like... once a week I ate lunch with people from that trip, so I have been with them a lot, especially one girl, L., she and I got very close. And I really like to do that, like of course when you look back, you will think that you would do things differently but for me it takes a while to open up to people and to be... I don't know, sometimes I like to be on my own, like I am quite a loner, so I like to study alone which is basically what I like to do, I do that in Umea - sit at home and study - I like that. But then I... in Umea, you know, since I have my best friends, that I can go, I can walk to and I like... that's the thing I've been missing here, to not be able to call somebody and have a dinner or something... if you feel like to. That's the thing. I think that has a lot to do with my own personality which means that it takes time for me to open up and kind of ask for (...) to have that, lot of people, since they have that, you know, they're different, and I think that's great and when you aren't like that too, then you feel like ok... because you don't want to intrude like you never... I don't want to do that. But I met some girls from Holland as well, I take (...) and everything sometimes and they are really nice, so I have

absolutely made friends but I guess I miss the... the close friends. But that doesn't mean that it's not great, I mean that I don't have friends here, of course I do but you know... I think that also sometimes you don't have time or something happens, you're just not in the mood, you don't always hang out you know... but I tend to have at least some so... but I guess it is easier for the persons who are really sociable, they're like: "Oh, let's get together and have a party!", you know, for those people and especially if they're like the centre. Sometimes I wish that I was more like that but then... I know what I am like and I like to have parties and I love to meet people, but mostly with people that I know... because I feel more comfortable with them, so that I can just be myself regardless this is an emotional (...) I tend to pick out of what people are thinking and doing sometimes which means that they find a lot of new people and I figured I tend to distance myself a little bit... ehm... which can be a disadvantage for making friends. But yeah, I think I don't... like I made some good friends which is sometimes that I primarily miss to have someone to dinner with.

Z: And have you met some Irish people? Have you made friends with Irish people?

E: Ehm... primarily my friends are international students and international people I would say. I mean I talk to Irish people in school, that's what I do but really... because I guess that it's easier to talk to internationals because you are in the same situation because I've been involved mostly in the international society and there are mostly international. I know one Irish guy from there but otherwise they are international. And I do stuff with them, so that means that I don't really meet that many Irish, I mean in school it's hard when you are in classes because you are really focusing on what you're doing and maybe... because you are so in the study mind that it's hard to be social because it's not what you're allowed to do anyway and then it's easier I guess to talk to Irish people but you don't really go like: "Oh, should we hang out, should we dinner, should we do that.."

Z: Ok. And how have you been spending your free time here?

E: Ehm... what do you mean?

Z: Well when you are not in school and you don't have to study.

E: Yeah. I tend to be quite... to be alone I guess, so I kind of stay in the apartment, with the people there, we talk, we make dinner, we go out.... I go out for a walk usually, I tend to be in my own mind, I talk a lot with my friends, spent a lot of time talking with my friends at home, texting and stuff... I hang out with people sometimes but it's usually when you are scared of things, like "are we going to hang out on Tuesday.... yeah let's

do that, blah, blah, blah". And I tend to be really tired when I get home from school, you know, because you're carrying an almost... big bag all day and you are tired and hungry want to rest so it isn't the really the area for "Oh, let's do this and something" I don't know, sometimes when you're living... like for people when they live together, and it's then so much easier for them to... god I feel like I am bashing, that's not what I mean, like I feel it's great it's just that I know that I was like... but I you know live in the same apartment with my friend, when we do something it's so easy for us, like: "Let's do that and then we head home" you know because I guess it's kind of nice to distance yourself... but I guess it's easier for them. I don't know. But I do... like sometimes I feel like I need to do more social things, and then I do and I get tired, and then I feel like I want to have some neat time and just do that. So I guess I've been pretty unsociable sometimes.

Z: Ok. And if you should... if you just reflect and think about which kind of period was best for you, like you enjoyed the most, not a moment but more like a time.

E: Ehm... But I mean I don't know if it's something that has anything to do with school because a lot of time being here is for me especially the reasons been a lot of personal things that happening especially with a guy some stuff that I've been trying to deal with. So I think that that's being primarily causing either distress or good feelings, so when I thought I could period of time mean that - when something has been resolved, something has happened, feel like I had something under control, then I know... then I've been feeling the best and when I feel like I have a accomplished something in school, like I know that I got in under control, because I am kind of a control freak I guess. You have to be when you have grown up the way I have. But anyway yeah, yeah.

Z: Ok.

E: So I kind of like weeks ago I did have really good... because I feel like everything is going to work out and I need to think that a lot, because everything is I know that but sometimes I can second-guess it anyway. Like everything is going to be fine, I will do this, that will be absolutely fine, I will work with whatever I want to work with... which is I guess writing stuff, but you know, just like different stuff. And I felt really good, you know, not careless but really good when I felt like something was... everything was kind of working for me and I was really happy just being here, just walking around and being happy that I was here, feeling like yes, I (...), school hasn't stated to get as demanding as it is right now, and I was really enjoying that and I didn't had to worry about the things at home and I didn't have to worry about things that happen, and I was

just in that kind of space and that's when I felt the most... because this is such an amazing experience to be in another country, because you learn a lot, you get to meet people and... that's... you grow as a person, sometimes that can be quite challenging, because (...) how do I deal with this situation, what's happening here and some situations at home asking me... demanding my attention I think. That's been one of the things that's... I've been struggling with... so like I said, when that's been good I think.

Z: Yeah, ok. And so you said that you learn a lot when you live in another country, so what do you feel you learnt?

E: Ehm...

Z: Or are learning...

E: I think that learning how to or... trusting yourself as you can take care of yourself, as in finding an apartment of your own, I mean you don't know you can do that before you do that. Trusting that you got everything under control which you do. And for me eating on my own was something that I was afraid of my whole life, since I was really bullied. But it's ok now. People feel like it can be really scary sometimes. The first time I came here on my own, I had to eat at the canteen, yeah and I was so tired and sad and I was feeling that (...) but once I gotten over that, everything was easier in a sense because that was like... I was really tired you know, and when I get tired I get emotional... but you know once you done it once... because now, usually in school, I eat on my own a lot because I like to eat when I'm studying like if I sit alone and study I like to grab a lunch... it's not something that I feel bad about, it's something I like to do, but when I got over the stress and I got people looking at me, I think is this weird, do people think I am loner and so on but then other people do it as well and you don't think anything bad about them, they socialize with other people, like people are different. Because I found a place recently that I've been eating food, I sit upstairs and I like that because there's a lot of people who like to be alone or who are studying on their own like that and there aren't too many people, so you feel like you are among people even when you're alone and I like that. So eating on my own. Then just dealing with all the things like, oh my god can I do this, am I learning English, understand some new from things that's been going on at home and just ok, I'm here like... it's just like all the things make you appreciate your experience here because you brought your attention somewhere else you know, which is like... you can reflect on things that are going on at home because you are somewhere else and there tend to be really good outcomes of that, when you get more objective about something, when you aren't with it and see it from distance. So I

think yeah... I think you carry yourself a little more self-respect and you grow and you become more adult because you know that you can do this, like this is such a cool thing, you can't actually underestimate that, so when you're feeling bad when you're at home, you can think oh I lived somewhere else 3 months in an apartment that I found, I feel great I did that, you are going to draw from the experience that you have whenever you go through something in your life, make yourself feel better when you have a bad time, when you have the place, you can draw from it as well, yeah, I feel good about that. So... I think it would... but you know I don't know if you're going to know how you have grown until you go home and back into the life at home.

Z: And sorry... we will finish just in a second. Just I wanted to ask if you have experienced some troubles? Like something... it can be practical or it can be like from anything... but you felt like: "Oh, this is shit, I want to go home!"

E: Ehm... I think... I know two (...) but you know in certain periods of my... who I am, I am getting more emotional and sometimes I am more stable it depends, that's just who I am, but even if I am getting more and more stable it's easier for me to get... affected by things. But I remember when I started, I thought I will do 5 modules, I was really stressed out, I felt like: "Shit, how am I going to do this, how can I manage, should I just get 3 of them? What can I do?" You know, I just doubted myself, because when I... sometimes when... I am such a practical person, I tend to deal with things, I feel like: "Oh, what am I going to do with this?" and I tend to like write a list and I am like: "Why should I do this?" and then I change my mind sometimes, and I was really not... but I guess also in the beginning, one of the first weeks, I had such a bad day, I was like... because I just had an emotional bad day anyways you know and then I realized that I was going to eat on my own and that I just got really affected by that because I just had the feelings I used to have when I was younger, you know that was just one of those days, the things I don't care about anymore... but then day it just got to me and I was crying and crying and going home... On that day I really wanted to go home because I felt like "what is this!" you know. Otherwise it's just sometimes when there's so much in school but it isn't really, I mean only when I was trying to find an apartment or those things but it's nothing that has been like...

Z: And if you compare your life here and your life at home, what are the main differences you can see?

E: Oh wow... when I'm home I can make decisions that last for a long time, I can make those here but it's so much easier when I'm home because then I am in that environment

that's going to be played out in. Some of the very real issues in your life you don't focus on when you're here... ehm, which is good because then you can distance yourself from them... not that I have a terrible life but some things have of course going on but nothing terrible. Because sometimes if you are like... when you are here you have kind of space, that's like a little bit selfish but it's not really going on which is good but then can many times be very real life things, you have to do the washing, you have to do the cleaning, you're silly yourself like whatever thing that bad, it goes... but I think that when I'm at home I have less structured day because I don't study in it, like I can go home if I feel or if you feel like I want to talk to people or do that and that, which is not as I can't walk and do all of those things instantly like make plans... and that's different, and here I have so much more to do in a way because there's a lot of bigger city and that's the difference... ehm... I mean I don't know, in a sense of course it's the same but... I don't know, yeah, I think the main thing is like that I can make other, like I come from (...) but of course it's hard to explain. When you know that you're going to be in a place for three months it's different than if you know you're going to be somewhere for years because then can make decision, you can make your home the way you want it, you can buy furniture, you can make decisions, you can invest in things. Here not so much. I mean I am a really homey person, I'm not having my (...), so it's been a challenge, I have like some of my things, like most important things but I miss my sofa, my tea mugs and all of those little things that make your apartment who you are and that's really different here because you know when you come home that it's a temporary place, I still have my things in my suitcase, not all the things but some things because I don't have any place to put them, so I have them there. Like I made an arrangement how long I am here but... Yeah I mean it's like I guess yeah... just (...) by bigger things that I can do yeah...

Z: Ok, I think that's it.

Jméno (pseudonym): Sanni, dále jako S

Země původu: Finsko

Obor studia na domácí univerzitě/na Trinity College: sociální vědy/sociologie

Datum rozhovoru: 14.12.2015

Z: So... just basically I am interested in experience in Erasmus but I am also interested in a broader context, so I have one big question, and then I have couple more later or during that. So I am interested in student's personal experiences during their study abroad but it's not just that, I am also interested in their life stories basically... so could you please tell me your life story, anything that occurs to you... anything that you think of about your life. And then I will ask you some more questions. Don't be worried about anything because people usually get very scared of the question...

S: Yeah!

Z: No worries, I can help you or something and it's just not a big deal.

S: So just like briefly... about myself?

Z: Yeah.

S: Ok. So... (laugh) My name is Sanni, that you know (laugh).

Z: Yes! (laugh)

S: I am 24 years old and I am Finnish, from Finland and originally I am from the Northern part of Finland where I lived like 19 years and then I moved... yeah, then I moved to Helsinki, the capital on the South, and... then... ehm... then I've lived also in Africa, in Zambia like half a year. So I think like I think... I've lived in many different places, so when I look at the difference, the change or the life change when I came here, it wasn't so big anymore maybe, I think, Because I had... used to get to... ehm... to... stay... to go to new place and...

Z: Like get used to it?

S: Yeah, yeah. I cannot find the word. Well I... yeah... it's my third year in university of Helsinki, I study social sciences there and... but before that, I started my university, my studies, I worked many years and also studied like... journalism.

Z: And you don't study it anymore?

S: It was just like one year school, practical school. Then I worked 2 years and then I started university. The university is like higher education than that journalism school. But I've done those... that work... like work as a journalist... like past 4 summers, so it's become to have a big role in my life like... ehm... what else... I live with my boyfriend

and I have lived for a long time with him, 4 years in Helsinki and... well my siblings come from the North of Finland, so I kind of have roots there. And what else... now I am in Dublin (laugh).

Z: (laugh) So could you maybe tell me more about the other places you lived? You said you lived in Zambia, so could you tell me more about that?

S: Ehm... yeah, I went there after high school, I was 19 years when I went there and lived 6 months in a family that was half Finnish, half German. So they moved there and I moved with them to take care of their children.

Z: Like au-pair?

S: Yes, it was an au-pair. And... it was one of the biggest changes in my life since far. But it was really, really... ehm... life-changing experience but also like teaching me a lot of myself and what you kind of... different cultures.

Z: So was there something for example that was really hard for you during the stay in Zambia? Was there something like very challenging for you?

S: Ehm... I think the most challenging was to... integrate... to feel like you have... to get to know people was really hard there and that was like the... ehm...

Z: Do you mean local people or.. ?

S: Like anyone because I was au-pair, so and there were not so many people from other parts... but like locals... of my own age either left the country if they went to study somewhere or it was just like really hard to find where they were... so it was like... I remember that those 2 first months were really difficult and I made a lot of effort to find people to meet but yeah... in the end it got really great.

Z: Yeah?

S: To meet friends. Yeah.

Z: Like Zambians?

S: Not so many locals but few.

Z: So other au-pairs?

S: They were not au-pairs except one, but like... some students who were doing their internship and so on.

Z: Cool. And... how about the culture, do you think there was something that was really... I don't know... weird for you? From the cultural kind of sight?

S: Yeah, there were lots of but I think I kind of got used to it quite fast... I guess I went there with that wave... with... at the beginning I already had that mind-set that I need to get used to new kinds of things and culture, so I think it was easier maybe for me than

for someone else, like I was already having that mind-set like... it's so different. But sure, there were lots of things like... starting about accommodation level like you couldn't get warm water when you wanted and... even though we lived with really nice (...), but still, you have power cuts all the time, you couldn't know how the buses work because they were so crazy (laugh), you just needed to have fingers crossed and... yeah maybe the main difference was that people were talking to you all the time which never happens in Finland, but I really liked that... I like to talk to people all the time.

Z: And apart from this experience, have you travelled a lot?

S: Ehm... quite a lot. Actually that was like the first bigger or like... yeah... well... before that I had been only like Estonia, Sweden and like neighbouring countries, in Paris once but like... just more trips... after that I've been in... like once I was 2 weeks in Italy and once like... actually 4 weeks in total in Europe... first 2 weeks in Switzerland and then travelling back and I went to Czech also!

Z: Really?

S: On the way, yeah, to Prague. And... yeah, I've visited in quite many countries but just like short vacations.

Z: Yeah. And did you travel with your boyfriend, parents, friends, yourself... ?

S: In Switzerland, the 4 weeks travelling was I made my... alone because I went to work-camp where we had like voluntary work 2 weeks and then I travelled alone back by couchsurfing, that was experience, a great one. But yes... few trips I've made with my boyfriend and... we never travelled with my family, so no I haven't travelled with them, except to Sweden. But that's just like... everybody goes to Sweden from Finland, so it's not like so... different you know. You just drive a car there (laugh).

Z: Ok (laugh). So... now, could you maybe tell me a little bit more about like the everyday life you have back in Finland?

S: Everyday life...

Z: Just some basic things.

S: Yeah. I... well I study for the time and... dadada (laugh).

Z: (laugh).

S: Well, it varies a lot if I work or not, usually I work like only occasionally, like few weeks there and there, but I've done a lot of like... regular... part time work at side of school but not right now... and... then I just... in my spare time I go to do sport usually, to dance classes or gym.

Z: Have you tried it here? Some dance classes?

S: Yeah, yeah, I signed to the dance society... but I haven't been in their classes so much, just like in some maybe... 4 or 5 classes.

Z: Yeah, that's good.

S: But like... yeah, I really liked it.

Z: And... yeah, so let's move more to the Erasmus thing. So... how was... when did you first think about going to Erasmus?

S: When I was... in Finland we need to do exams to get to university, so it's like really hard, 4 months reading to pass the test, so when I was doing that, it was just so, so heavy and rough, so then I decided... actually I motivated myself through it, I was like ok, this way, I can like move to abroad easily. And that was the first time I was thinking... it was just clear in my head that I would do it anyway. But actually, last year, I started to think like maybe I will not do this, and like actually my first vote was that I should go to travel, just take free year from college and go to travel but then I was like, I cannot do that, I must go do this exchange because it was my dream so long time, so I didn't want to push it aside.

Z: And why did you choose Ireland actually?

S: I wanted to go to country that is English speaking. That was the main reason. And I was so fascinated about UK but islands are more interesting with its culture. So I think those were just reasons, I didn't know about Trinity College, I didn't know anything about that, I was just... we had a contract with... like there is a contract between Helsinki university and Trinity College, so it was like automatically.

Z: So did you have a lot to choose from?

S: Well in Ireland not, there were only like... two places, because I decided that I wanted to go to English speaking country, so in Ireland there were only Maynooth and Trinity College and I thought the courses in Trinity were way much better, so that's why I decided to apply here.

Z: And then the preparation process... when you found out that you will go, how was it like till the time you left? You know, the whole time.

S: What I needed to do?

Z: Like basically... what was happening during that time in any sense you can think of? Like how did you feel, what did you do...

S: Actually I found out really late, I found out that I was accepted in summer or something. But I think it was like... I think that my university said that it will be automatic, that you will be accepted because my university accepted me before but the

answer from Trinity came so late.

Z: Yeah, to me too actually. But it was only official thing.

S: Yeah, I think it was only like that. Yeah, when I got to know from my home university that I was accepted, I was kind of... I cannot remember the day actually... but I think I was really happy I guess. You never know like... it changes every year, like how many applicants are there and... ehm... I think at first it was just the thing about accommodation and that I found really hard, but I got some tips from the... from my co-student. Yeah, one student from Helsinki was studying here last spring, so she gave me a lot of tips of where to try to find accommodation and... well I actually just... well I started think of it more in the summer, like I was... starting to get excited. But yeah, it was quite smooth, there were not so big, like big, big problems, I think everything went really well. Maybe mainly because I got the accommodation so easily.

Z: So you found accommodation before you arrived?

S: Yes, so I really got luck. I think it was on the Facebook page where people were renting apartment.

Z: Oh I think I found accommodation through the same thing (laugh).

S: Yeah, so my landlord was just... wrote a short message that she had a spare room, that she is renting and I sent a message for her and she answered right away, so it was just like that and... so...

Z: So could you tell me more about the place you live, with whom and how is it?

S: Yeah, it is a house that Irish woman owns and she has one extra room, she lives there alone and it's like... it's in Pittsboro, so it's like, 25/30 minutes by walk to Trinity, so not so far. Quite a good location. And... ehm... it's... actually it feels like I am living alone most of the time, because she works so much, so we don't see each other so much, but I think it was really good... like for half a year. I was planning all my... like my dream was to find a place where they would... like community place where there are lots of people living in the same house because I thought it could be a really great way to get to know new people, but because of Dublin situation I thought that it's not possible to find exactly the accommodation you want...

Z: Take what's available and be happy (laugh).

S: Yeah (laugh), so I haven't been thinking about that after that because it was only like... three months, four months, so I thought it was perfect, although it's expensive but still.

Z: Yeah but what is not here. So it's ok... like you like the place?

S: It's a... yeah, yeah I do. Like... I do... yeah, I was thinking like... yeah, because I wanted at first to have place where there are lots of people but yeah, you cannot get there, so I am happy. Good place, good place to stay.

Z: So when did you arrive to Dublin? Was it a long time before the school?

S: I arrived on 15th of September and the orientation week started on 21st, so about a week before. I think it was a maybe too early because I didn't have anything to do exactly, like I didn't have things I needed to make in order, so I was just exploring the city, so... it was ok, but I could have arrived just few days before.

Z: And how was the Fresher's Week?

S: It was great, there were lots of events and I really thought that the society thing was great, like we don't have exactly that kind of system, like in Helsinki. We have like the organization for... every subject, so they are more like people get... ehm... along some studying but not like... we don't have so much like sport society and so on, leisure societies.

Z: So have you joined many?

S: Yeah, quite many... I've joined hiking society, but I haven't been hiking (laugh) because of the timetable... clashing the times so... I just realized that ok, terrible Finnish (laugh). Yeah, and then some dancing classes I've been, well to international society events I've been some and what else.... I think I've joined something else but I cannot remember now... oh, the soccer, I also signed up and I went to see the practices but I...

Z: Really? How was it?

S: It was great, it was fun...

Z: Was it outside?

S: Yes, it was outside.

Z: And everyone was dressed in shorts and like that?

S: Well I had long sleeves. I thought it was cold.

Z: Yeah, I always see them there.

S: Then other things were clashing with that, so I didn't go too many weeks but at the beginning I tried. But yeah...

Z: And otherwise during the Orientation Week? How did you orientate yourself here on the Trinity? Like how did you find yourself here? There were also some things that we need to... do... like sign up for classes and all that. Did you like... did it all went smoothly?

S: Oh, that wasn't very easy. Yeah, that was hard because I... I went so many times to

the... there is this office where you need to return your paper... I found it really hard at first that you have to go to different places to get signature, then you need to return the paper, then you had some clashes, which I didn't have but they said I had, and it was complicated. But in the end I... managed. But it took actually like the first 2 weeks before I got everything settled and I've missed many classes at the beginning of the term because of that... because I needed to change my schedule. So I found that wasn't really the... easiest way to... like... do that.

Z: Oh I completely understand. Ehm... and, socially have you met some new friends or new people during the Fresher's Week?

S: In Fresher's Week... yeah, few.

Z: And have you already... like did you come here by yourself or did you already have some friends here?

S: I knew one girl, K., who I knew that she is coming also and we used to work at the same place with... like we knew each other because we were Facebook friends, we realized we were coming to the same place. And that's why we... we started to... that was really helpful because we could speak before we came here... like "how is your accommodation and how is that and that"... you know, like share the tips so it was really nice but I didn't know anyone else and I don't think... like... I don't think I would have needed even to know anyone... like... ehm... it wasn't like mystery.

Z: So are you with K. still a lot together? Or are you more like...

S: Yeah, we see each other. At the beginning maybe a bit more, but still sometimes.

Z: So it's still kind of helpful?

S: Yeah, we live really nearby. So it's... nice to for example if we are in the same place in the evening, it's nice to walk together home and not to walk alone. So that's kind of thing that's really... it's really great when you know someone. Yeah.

Z: So... could you now tell me about... since the classes started and generally Trinity, how's that been going? How's your time here?

S: What? Sorry? Sorry.... classes?

Z: Not just the classes, just basically since the school started, how's your life here... ?

S: Oh yeah. Ehm... (laugh). I am thinking how it has been because time flies.

Z: I know!

S: It's hard to understand that I am already leaving. Actually tomorrow because I am going to travel and then go straight to airport, so...

Z: Oh! Last day in Trinity!

S: Yeah (laugh).

Z: That's a psycho.

S: It is! But I knew already when... before I came here that it's going to be short time because 3 months doesn't sound like much but still, I was surprised how fast everything went. But yeah... it's been really, really... it has been maybe I don't know how to put it... bitter (better?)... not bitter but like... I was more surprised how well things went, and I... I haven't been too much like homesickness or anything like that, maybe it's because the short time, so I have been thinking already that it's already finishing, so there's not much time to be too homesick because... it will get like over quite fast and yes, because I... met new great people, so I was really happy. Because you never know...

Z: So tell me more about the people you made friends here with, who you are close with.

S: Sorry?

Z: If you could tell me more about the people that you have met here and you have made friends with?

S: Yeah. Well the new people I know are maybe studying the same subjects but also like... randomly all over and... maybe I have like... ehm... about... I don't know (...)... like some people I meet regularly and that I am really happy about. That's just not... they are not just like... ehm... some good days friends only, like lots of those but also like... ehm... people I have met many times and... been in touch with them. That's just really... I was happy. Because that helps to get settled. And they are from all over... the people, so.

Z: And have you managed also to be friends with Irish people?

S: I haven't met too many... like I... no, not too many Irish. That's... I think it's... it is hard.

Z: It is, yeah, I agree.

S: And it's like... I don't know, maybe in some societies it could have been possible to meet them... like outside of the classes but... ehm, I don't know but I didn't take too much pressure from all that. It could have been really great but then again... but my landlord is Irish, so it is actually really great because I can listen to her accent and learn new Irish words from her and... so... in that way I've... yeah, I don't know what to say.

Z: Yeah, I get the message (laugh).

S: (laugh) yeah.

Z: So...

S: If I continue like... in parties, I usually go to international parties and there are not so many Irish are they?

Z: No, only few of the organizers.

S: Yeah, yeah.

Z: But the organizers are also international students.

S: Yeah.

Z: Some of them.

S: That's true.

Z: So... if you compare your life at home and here, do you see some kind of really changes? Like differences?

S: Yeah, maybe, maybe here I've done more travelling and more like... going out. I think I go out here more than back home. Which is like... I don't know if it's a good thing or bad thing...

Z: I think it's good (laugh).

S: Yeah (laugh). Like here, you push yourself all the time, ok, because here it's just social time, you want to get to know people, so it's like... even though you are tired on Friday after the week, you just like... ok, I can go for a while at least, meet people... back at home I think it's too easy to stay at home so... That's kind of... maybe that's kind of difference but... what else. Ehm... ehm... well... the food is a little bit different (laugh), so in that I've made some compromises and try new recipes. It's not possible to get everything I usually eat home, so that's... small things but you know... I am a little bit like... tss... complicated life! What do I eat if I cannot find this thing? Ehm... what is different... well yeah, it is also different that I live in someone's apartment, like I'm the renter in that house because I've actually only lived... or in Helsinki, I've lived only with my boyfriend and together... like we have own... like not own but we're renting but we live together. Maybe that kind of difference is that... living with someone I don't know so well so... but I think it has been really good experience also... like... get along with foreigner.

Z: And if you should choose some time, not just a moment but time when you felt the best here? When would it be?

S: The best?

Z: When you just felt like really good.

S: I think it has been some of the trips I have made. The first comes to mind was like... in Galway and in Aran Islands. We went there with few people and it was really great

trip because those were people that I have met here and... I felt like... I was like... having a trip with new friends and that was really nice, even the Aran Islands... it was... stormy and raining but still it was fun... experiencing Ireland. But also like... I think the trips have been like... "now it's so great"... like... I wouldn't want to go back home. And also uhm... the Giant's Causeway was really quite awesome. That was like... yeah.

Z: And was there some time when you really wanted to go home?

S: Yeah, I think there were some. I went to... for a week to Finland because I needed to and after I came back, I was like... it was really hard to come back, so... because maybe... it would have been better not to go at all because it was like obligatory but if it wouldn't have been I shouldn't have done that because it was really hard to get back to the... the routine feel.

Z: Yeah, it like tears you from the experience...

S: Hmm?

Z: It completely takes the experience... now you are in Finland and you... do everything like you know and then back and completely different world...

S: Yeah, that's what I thought and... but... yeah I think at the time I had a lot of like exams... not exams but the essays were starting to be quite heavy on my shoulders so... so yeah.

Z: And when you compare the first for example... month and now the last month how... what are the differences in your life here and in your feeling here?

S: The first month I think it... went really fast... new things to get used to... ehm... but first month I was really maybe in a stress that I meet people and like... really I need to go all the time and meet people but now I am maybe... like last month I am more lazy and just like... I don't need to (laugh). It's nice to be here on the couch (laugh). Ehm... but what else. Maybe now I've been stressing more about school, yes. There are quite a lot of to do in Trinity. So...

Z: And the middle part before the essays started? Was it also different in... what you did and... how was it?

S: I think the middle part was like... everything started to... like the weeks became more... routine kind of... I went like... ehm... like all the time... like how do you say... like every week I went to the same things you know.

Z: Stereotype?

S: Well that's like the schedule was quite the same in the middle, I went to all the lectures, now I've been like... not going everywhere, I've been writing essays, so I've

been like... what is more useful? Should I go to the lecture or just write my essay? Because there have been so much to do, so I needed to prioritize. And.... but then I went to all the lectures and I went to hobbies and... yeah, so it was more like, the weeks went really fast, yeah, I don't know how else to describe that.

Z: Yeah. And now how do you feel about going home?

S: I am really happy.

Z: Yeah?

S: Yeah. I think I could have... I could imagine myself living here the next term also but I am really happy to go back home because I think... yeah well because Christmas is coming also and I think I really miss my... family but also living with my boyfriend... because maybe we have lived for so long time, so it's so normal thing to me, so being separated is so normal, so... but I think it could have been more useful to stay here full year because of the... improving the language would have been a thing like... like... or maybe, yeah, the first months were again the moment when I needed to get along with in English and like, get used to the foreign language and then when you have like used to, then you need already to leave. So I'm not... I think like full year would have been ehm... yeah... good thing to... like for improving language. And that's maybe the only thing because I don't mind to go back home.

Z: Yeah, so is something that you really miss here?

S: Ehm... well maybe that atmosphere... like get to know so many new people easily. Maybe because everybody is like... in international groups... because people are here just for a while, so everybody is motivated to meet new people and I really like that. Because back home, you won't get to know so easily so many new people because everybody has their own schedule, busy and they are working and so on. So it's not the same kind of... and that's especially like you won't get to know so many people from all around different countries which has been so great. Like get to know different cultures.

Z: So do you think you have gotten to know different culture?

S: Ehm... well it's been... yeah because like... every time... like... the people even though the cultures wouldn't be so different because people come from Europe, so there are lots of similarities but still like... great to be... some small things like cuisine, the school system and so on so... it's really teaching all the time to understand... policies I talk a lot with new people here, different cultures politics, it's interesting to compare to your own background. Yeah.

Z: Ok and last question... you also said before that one of the reasons you came here

was that Ireland kind of... that you were interested in getting to know the culture and all that. So do you... do you see... I don't know how to ask the question. Like do you basically thing that you gotten to know it and if so, in what things do you see it?

S: Yeah.

Z: If it makes sense?

S: I understand but I.. hm... maybe not so deeply. I haven't got in the culture so deeply. Ehm... but I think it's about atmosphere here.

Z: Ok.

S: Like how people are quite relaxed and... I found that way... and also the music and social, cultural. Like people gather to pubs it's like... it plays quite important role as well in this culture. And... about the respect to the nature. And... yes, so maybe a little bit, not too much. I went once to Irish dance class but that was unfortunately just one time but that could have been really great also, to get to know one aspect of the culture that is really traditional. But... yeah... I don't know... I don't know like, if I would speak with Irish, I don't know if the person would think that I got to know to Irish culture. Because culture is so complicated thing... like what is culture and... ? How to define it? So complex. Ehm... but yeah maybe I... that's to know about like art culture quite a lot. But not that I've learnt any language or anything.

Z: It's too short time.

S: Yeah. I also don't have motivation for that.

Z: Ok, so I guess that's it.