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1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism is arguably the first ‘kind’ of tourism ever to be done, and if not, it is certainly not new. A definition of cultural tourism is *“The movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place of residence, with the intention to gather new information and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs”* (Bonink & Richards, 2005). However, a more technical definition would place the focus on the tourists’ motivation being primarily culture, hence reducing it to *“All movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence”* (ibid.).

Albeit the search for cultural recreation goes back to Classical antiquity, modern tourism roots back to 17th century Western Europe as the result of modern social arrangements like the Grand Tour (Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2014). However, tourism overlaps with other activities, interests, and processes, which gives rise to different categories, such as “educational tourism”.

Education and Cultural Tourism

As a Master student of Tourism and due to the background of my bachelor degree¹, I can easily agree with Richards when he assesses that *“one of the reasons that youth travellers, and particularly students, are important for cultural tourism is because of the strong link between cultural consumption and education”* (Richards, 2004). As he further argues, highly educated people tend to consume more culture – including popular culture. While widely acclaimed cultural attractions may have no problem in attracting visitors, relatively smaller ones often have difficulties in finding a share of touristic interest. Therefore, promotion through education can be the bridge to a successful incoming of tourists. Nowadays, popular culture brings tourists to certain areas, as in cases like Scotland with Disney Pixar’s *Brave*, or Seville’s Reales Alcázares in Spain after being one of the filming sets of famous TV series *Game of Thrones*.

¹ I majored in English Philology and Tourism was my minor. Philology is a conglomerate study of a language made not only looking at its structure and relationships but also at its historical development and literary criticism. This makes Philology a cultural shower of sorts, and which a specific language is its source.

While education is key for people's development, acquired knowledge about the world and its corners can play an important role in triggering future tourists to visit certain place, and not only their personal interests –plus it is through learning that one can acquire interests as well. In this sense, education provides the ground in which tourism seeds may blossom.

Moreover, as an ex-Erasmus student, I can also corroborate, based on personal experience, how strongly linked education and cultural tourism can be. Erasmus is part of the EU's current Lifelong Learning Programme. During the academic year 2011-12, 33 countries took part in the Erasmus Programme: the 27 EU Member States, Croatia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey. In said academic year, more than 250.000 students and 46.000 staff spent a mobility period abroad under the programme (European Commission, 2013).

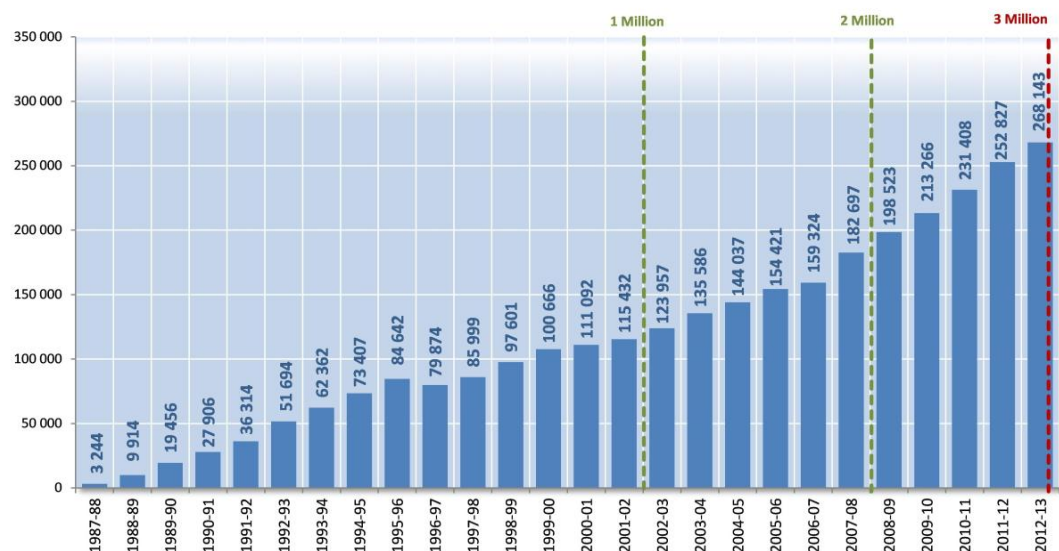


Table 1. Number of Erasmus students per year from 1987-88 to 2012-13 (European Commission, 2014).

Some argue that former Erasmus students will develop or reinforce their European identity or that they will become more pro-European. However, according to Wilson's research (2011), there is

"... no evidence that increased either their diffuse or their specific support for the EU. There were significant differences between Erasmus and non-Erasmus students, and the Erasmus students tended to be more pro-European. However, this was just

as true at the start of the study as at the end, and so these differences cannot be ascribed to the impact of the Erasmus programme.”

Curiously enough, after World War II, governments became interested in tourism as an invisible import and as a tool of diplomacy (Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2014). So, whether education and tourism serve as political tools or not, truth is that through learning come understanding and respect, and even interest.

To make the relationship between education and cultural tourism a bit more obvious and relevant with the discussion on the present work, one can see how appealing a stay abroad is made by Erasmus-related organizations such as ESN², when the first sentence to promote the Erasmus program is *“Have you ever wanted to **live abroad and experience a foreign culture, meet new people, and learn a foreign language?**”*, almost making the *“enriching the period of your studies and having better chances while looking for a job in the future”* a secondary reason. Question is, out of those 250.000 Erasmus students, how many became cultural tourists in their destination during the whole period³? Moreover, were said destinations prepared for such influx?

Youth and Student Travel

Youth and student travel is increasingly being recognized as an important segment of the global travel market (Richards & Wilson, 2004; Richards & Wilson, 2003; Wiza, 2007; Horak & Weber, 2000). As the international student population expands, new markets are opened up; independent youth travellers tend to travel more frequently and for longer periods than many older tourists or those taking package holidays (Wiza, 2007).

Hence, *“the economic impact of youth travel is (...) the combination of longer stays, more extensive travel, a desire to consume local services and the likelihood that young people will attract other travelers and return themselves in future”* (Richards, 2011). Despite the consideration of youth

² The Erasmus Student Network (ESN) is the biggest student association in Europe. It was born for supporting and developing student exchange and taking care of international students by helping in academic, social and practical integration process. <http://www.esn.org/content/erasmus-programme>

³ Stays can last from 3 to 12 months. The average is 6.3 months (European Commission, 2013).

tourism as low level spender, latest research suggest otherwise, hence the increasing researchers interested in this topic.

The Erasmus influx in many 'not-so-touristy' cities has naturally increased their economy. UK international students are estimated to generate around \$15 billion for the UK economy, and support almost 22,000 full time equivalent jobs outside higher education (ibid). The popularity that the programme has reached in the last years –it exceeded 200 000 for the first time in 2009-10, and during 2012-13 the target of supporting three million students will have been achieved– has certainly made a difference on the cities that host the 4400 Higher Education Institutions (European Commission, 2013), with relatively small cities becoming bubbling and busy “student cities.” This trend to broaden the knowledge about particular regions of the world through educational trips and to confront it with own experiences is increased (Wiza, 2007), hence worth the interest of many researchers.

1.1. Problem Formulation

UNWTO and WYSE Travel Confederation (UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011) are convinced that youth travel has moved far beyond its original status as a specialized travel niche to become an important element of the travel mix in any tourism destination, since travel underpins many different aspects of youth lifestyles. For young people:

- Travel is a form of learning
- Travel is a way of meeting other people
- Travel is a way of getting in touch with other cultures
- Travel is a source of career development
- Travel is a means of self development
- Travel is part of their identity – you are where you've been.

Moreover, according to WTO, youth tourism is:

“...all independent trips for periods of less than one year by people aged 16-29 which are motivated, in part or in full, by a desire to experience other cultures, build life experience and/or benefit from formal and informal learning opportunities outside one’s usual environment.”

So, is taking an Erasmus program equal to youth tourism? Are Erasmus students cultural tourists by default? How do people who have been travelling outside of their countries for study purposes view and consume the destination’s culture? Among all the possible questions worth studying, the aim of the present thesis is to explore how present cultural tourism is in Erasmus students’ motivations to take the programme, being a travel experience, and to assess such experience as cultural tourists in their destinations. The exploration of the first matter will serve to either prove or disprove the current theory about youth travel parameters regarding motivation to travel, while the latter will be used to consider and suggest, as a conclusion, a series of improvements that marketers, policymakers and other related delegates in the tourism industry of those areas may benefit from, based on the feedback provided by the data collected.

Accordingly, the research questions pose like follows:

1. What are Erasmus students’ primary motivations to engage in the programme and what is the place of cultural tourism within them?
2. How do Erasmus students evaluate the ‘touristic capability’ of their destinations?

Complementary questions or findings may unfold during the process of the research and hence will be included in the analysis chapter and/or in the conclusion of this thesis.



2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology and the research design selected to address the problem formulation introduced before, as well as my paradigmatic stance in regards to philosophy of science, the method I will use, as well as the data collection methods used. Finally, it describes the limitations of the research.

Methodology is one of the basic parts of the research, as it defines the means of developing and answering the research problem, introduces the researcher's stance on the discussed issue and the method that led them to the answer of the research questions. Moreover, the methodology is constructed by a number of different fragments in order to better give explanation of the connection between the researcher and the research problem and the course used for it to be solved.

As Bryman (2012) affirms, "social research and its associated methods do not take place in a vacuum" (p.5), meaning that theories influence both the researcher and what is under research; in other words, that previous study and literature on the topic affects the research. Furthermore, the researcher's paradigmatic stance regarding the nature of the relationship between these theoretical reflections and research also have implications for research (Bryman, 2012).

Considerations on how the social world should be studied are referred to as epistemological ones, while assumptions about the nature of social phenomena are ontological ones (Bryman, 2012).

2.1. Philosophy of Science

In both academic research and daily life, it is possible to approach a problem in various ways (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). The guiding principles that can lead a research are known as paradigms. Guba & Lincoln (1989) see a paradigm "*as a basic set of beliefs, a set of assumptions we are willing to make, which serve as touchstones in guiding our activities*" (p. 80). Consequently, the

philosophical approach taken by researchers guides their work and allows them to validate the steps taken or discarded during the study.

In this section, I define and explain the paradigm that guides my research, as researchers have to align with a specific paradigm. Thus, I have chosen to align myself with a specific one, which represents a definite set of beliefs by which I understand the world.

I align myself as a constructivist. In contrast to positivism and post-positivism, constructivism is the belief that there is no 'real' version of reality or a 'true' and universal manner of how things are. Therefore, constructivist researchers aim to *"reconstruct the world, not to predict, control or reshape it"* (Guba E. G., 1990, p. 27). Under the constructivist lens, rigorous objectivity is not possible to attain, due to the fact that the results of an investigation are inevitably shaped by the interaction between the researcher and the object of the research. Knowledge is the result of human activity, thus a human construction. Therefore, reality as the knowledge gained as result of personal interaction exists only in our minds, and to access this reality one needs subjective interaction: the 'inquirer' finds the 'knowable' through a *"process of interaction between the two"* (Guba E. G., 1990, p. 27).

2.1.1.1. Ontology

The philosophic discipline of ontology deals with the origin of reality, respectively how the research perceives the nature of the reality as well as whether a unique reality in the most profound sense exists. In other words, ontology defines what reality is from the researcher's point of view. Thus, ontology has consequences on the epistemology and the methodology of a given research (Guba E. G., 1990). When researchers choose a paradigm, the ontological question is "what is the nature of the knowable?" or "what is the nature of reality?"

Consequently, I am –ontologically speaking– a relativist, since I believe that reality can never be fully apprehended unless taken in the form of multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based and dependent for their form and content on the individuals or groups

holding it (Guba & Lincoln, *Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research*, 1994), as it is impossible to humans to truly perceive it due to our own subjective sensory and intellectual nature and mechanisms. In this sense, the researcher has identified a research question concerning the experience of Erasmus students as cultural tourists in their destination and their motivations, which answer can only be subjective. However, this does not mean that the research's result is not more or less "true", in any absolute sense, as constructions are alterable as are their associated "realities" (ibid).

2.1.2. Epistemology

Epistemology, as the theory of knowledge, is concerned with the "*origin, nature, and limits of human knowledge*" (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 83) or, in other words, it concerns the nature of the relationship between the investigator and what is known. Epistemology provides answers to the question: "What is the nature of the relationship between the knower (the inquirer) and the known (or knowable)?" (Guba E. G., 1990). Under the lens of constructivism, the researcher and the object of research are linked, so the findings are literally created as the investigation progresses (Guba & Lincoln, *Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research*, 1994). By that, objectivity can only be achieved on an approximate level, since one cannot conduct inquiry about humanness without interaction with humanity (Guba, 1990).

Accordingly, objectivity never be fully achieved as reality is incommensurable (Ibid), so I decide to take a subjectivist position, as it is inherently forced on me by my human condition. As realities exist only in respondents' minds, subjective interaction is the only way to successfully access them (ibid). In relation to this research, data will be gathered by interaction with Erasmus students in the way specified in the following chapters.

2.2. Methodology and Research Design

This section deals with the choice of methods for the data collection and provides argumentation for such choice, as well as listing positive and negative aspects in using them, and discussing their reliability and validity.

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem; in other words, methodology encompasses the research methods and the logic behind them, and explains why such methods or techniques in particular are used to gain and evaluate research results (Kothari, 2004). This choice of methods shapes the research design, therefore composing the more practical part of the philosophy of science.

Considering the research questions, I opted to use a mixed methods approach, which consists on integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods (Bryman, 2012). This means that both qualitative and quantitative data will be use in order to answer the questions posed in the problem formulation. The qualitative and quantitative data deriving from mixed methods research will be mutually illuminating.

2.2.1. Approach to Mixed Methods

The distinction between qualitative and quantitative research has been employed so far, according to Bryman (2012), for two main reasons:

1. There are differences between quantitative and qualitative research in terms of research strategy, and
2. It is a useful means of organizing research methods and approaches to data analysis.

However, Bryman claims that the connections between epistemological and ontological commitments associated with certain social research methods are not deterministic. In other words, research methods *“are much more free-floating than is sometimes supposed”*, and that *“they are best thought of as tendencies rather than as definitive connections”* (Bryman, 2012, p.

614). For example, participant observation can be employed in a way that it is in tune with constructivism, but it can be used in a manner that reveals an objectivist orientation (ibid).

A mixed methods research is a research that incorporates quantitative and qualitative methods within a single study, not just using them as a tandem but so that they illuminate each other (Bryman, 2012).

Mixed methods in this research: Approach taken

On the one hand, it was previously stated that this research follows the constructivist approach. The basic methodological assumption of constructivism is hermeneutic-dialecticism, and it is silent on the subject of methods and, in particular, on the subject of “quantitative” vs. “qualitative” methods. Both types of methods may be and often are appropriate in all forms of evaluative inquiries (Guba & Lincoln, 2001). Consequently, using mixed methods for this research fits the paradigmatic choice. As to the reasons why mixed methods were chosen for this research, they relate to the nature of the problem formulation and the subject to study.

Since the research aims to reach Erasmus students and their relation to cultural tourism, as well as to explore their motivations and perceptions on the touristic capability, it seemed sensible to use methods considered quantitative (online questionnaire) as well as qualitative ones (online interviews), as both can throw light over the research questions.

The use of solely qualitative methods was discarded from the beginning, as they were thought to be limiting in the sampling –a long interview might be seen as more ‘dry’ to do than simply answering questions on your own– and its results too hard and long to process and analyse. A quantitative method such as the online questionnaire was regarded to be a very effective and convenient taking into consideration the subject of the research and that I wanted to reach a geographically dispersed sample. Moreover, young people’s presence in social media and their use of digital communication is an obvious fact nowadays, so approaching them by using these means

posed as the better option. In addition, qualitative data could also be gathered using this method, as online survey tools are nowadays very versatile.

There are many ways of combining quantitative and qualitative research. One approach is in terms of the roles that the quantitative and qualitative methods play in the research, as in the following criteria (Morgan, 1998b; in Bryman, 2012):

- *The priority decision:* Which method (qualitative or quantitative) is the principal data-gathering tool, or do they have equal weight?
- *The sequence decision:* Which method precedes which, or are they concurrent?

These criteria result in nine possible research method types, as illustrated in the following figure.

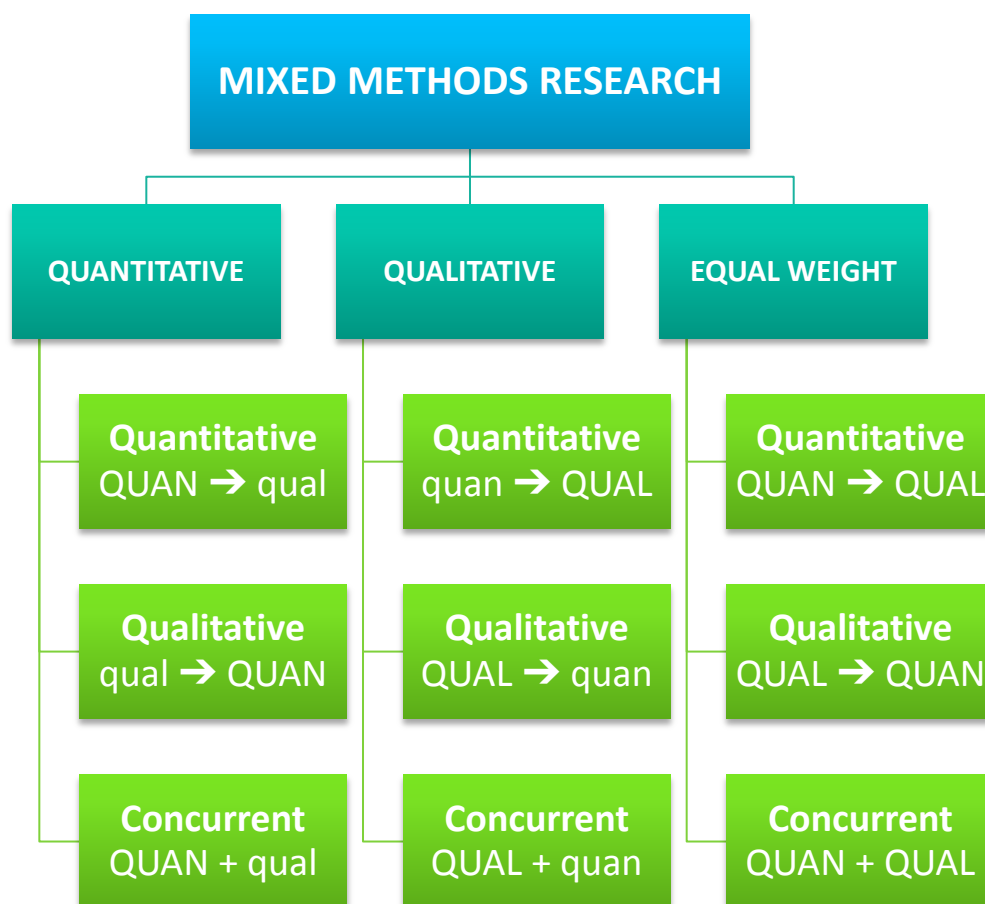


Figure 1. *Classifying mixed methods research in terms of priority and sequence.* Adapted from Bryman (2012).

According to this approach, the present research falls on the third category 'Equal Weight' and the methods used will be Concurrent, having the same importance in the analysis of the data gathered with them.

Furthermore, there are more ways to combine quantitative and qualitative research (Bryman 2006a, as cited in Bryman 2012). These ways of combination are:

- **Triangulation:** Or greater validity, in which quantitative and qualitative data are gathered so that they may be mutually corroborated when combined.
- **Offset:** refers to the idea that the methods associated with both quantitative and qualitative research have their own pros and cons and that by combining them allows compensating their weaknesses and drawing on their strengths.
- **Completeness:** refers to the idea that using both quantitative and qualitative methods to gather data makes a more comprehensive account of the subject studied.
- **Process:** while quantitative research provides an account of structures in social life, qualitative research provides a sense of process.
- **Different research questions:** if authors are doing this, then each kind of research answers a part of the problem formulation.
- **Explanation:** One of the two research methods is used to help explain findings generated by the other.
- **Unexpected results:** when one method generates surprising results, using the other may throw some light over them.
- **Instrument development:** refers to contexts in which qualitative research is employed to develop questionnaire and scale items in order to generate more comprehensive closed answers.
- **Sampling:** refers to situations in which one approach is used to facilitate the sampling of the respondents or cases.
- **Credibility:** suggests that using both approaches enhances the integrity of findings.
- **Context:** the qualitative research provides contextual understanding when coupled with a survey which findings may be either generalizable, externally valid or broad.

- **Illustration:** refers to the use of qualitative data to illustrate quantitative findings, often when the quantitative findings are 'dry'.
- **Utility:** to improve the usefulness of findings.
- **Confirm and discover:** using qualitative data to generate hypotheses and using quantitative research to test them.
- **Diversity of views:** either to reveal meanings among research participants through qualitative research or combining researchers' and participants' perspectives through both methods.
- **Enhancement:** building upon quantitative/qualitative findings by using the other method.

In the beginning, the main rationale that this research followed regarding the use of mixed methods was in terms of **completeness**, as gathering both qualitative and quantitative data was thought to make the research more prone to collect full accounts and data. However, as the research advanced, the mixed methods allowed me to better the **sampling** and to **illustrate** better the results.

2.2.2. Data Collection Methods

After explaining the philosophical and paradigmatic characteristics of this research, it is essential to describe the origin of both primary and secondary data and where, from whom and how was obtained (Bryman 2012).

The Internet can be used in research. In the case of this thesis, the World Wide Web and online communications will be used as a means of collecting data from individuals and organizations. Bryman (2012) makes two crucial distinctions about Internet-based methods:

1. **Web-based vs. Communication-based methods:** The former is a research method whereby data are collected through the web, while a communication-based research method is one where an e-communication medium is the platform from which the data collection instrument is launched.

2. **Synchronous vs. Asynchronous methods:** The former occur in real time, while the other does not. For example, a chat room vs. email correspondence.

The primary data used in this research comes consists of the following:

- Online Survey
- Online Interviews

These data constitute the majority of both the quantitative and qualitative data used in the research. On the other hand, some secondary data come through desk research, mainly data regarding statistics and general information about the Erasmus+ Programme.

Online Survey

An online survey has practically the same traits as the traditional self-completion questionnaire. This method was chosen after taking into account the characteristics of the group targeted by the problem formulation: Erasmus students of all Europe. Consequently, an online survey was thought the most suitable method of research to reach a sample that is geographically dispersed.

Online surveys or web surveys (Bryman, 2012) *“operate by inviting prospective respondents to visit a website at which the questionnaire can be found and completed online”*. The online survey tool used to gather the data of this research was Google Forms[®].

Google Forms[®] provided a free, very accessible and customizable layout for the questionnaire, as well as many response styles. It also offered a summary of the data gathered in the form of graphs, tables and percentages, and created an external excel page that updated automatically whenever a response was received, logging all the answers and making the These characteristics led me to choose the Google Forms[®] platform over others such as Survey Monkey[®], in which the data gathering and extraction is slightly more difficult due to the tool’s differentiation between free users and pay-based users.

As with self-completion questionnaires, in online surveys, respondents answer questions by completing the questionnaire themselves. This method has several advantages (Bryman, 2012):

- **Cheaper to administrate:** an online survey is cheap in many ways (material, time and travel-wise, to name a few) and hence easily accessible to both the sample and the researcher.
- **Quicker to administer:** Since the questionnaire is answered using online media, the data-gathering process is easy and instantaneous, as the survey tool collects and organizes the data gathered.
- **Absence of interviewer effects:** It has been noted by various studies that characteristics such as ethnicity, gender or social background of interviewers may result to a bias in the answers provided by the sample. While this might not be an advantage to constructivist researchers (as the data is created by the interaction of both subjects), it is still important that the data provided by the subject is as natural and sincere as it can be. This survey is also anonymous, and this state helps the subject to feel free to answer in that way.
- **Convenience for respondents:** they can complete the survey at the speed that they want to go, wherever they want, etc.

However, as with other methods, self-completion questionnaires have disadvantages (ibid.). Some of them can be avoided, as the questionnaire takes the form of an online survey. The disadvantages that would apply in this case are listed below, as well as the way they were avoided in some cases:

- **Cannot prompt:** *There is no one present to help respondents if they are having difficulty answering a question.* For this reason, the questions were kept straightforward, and with explanation text below whenever needed. Questions were proofread by other than the researcher to ensure the accessibility of the questions posed.
- **Cannot probe:** *There is no opportunity to probe respondents to elaborate an answer.* Online survey tools have the option to add a writing space to questions that can prompt the respondent into explaining why he chose a specific answer in said question. This gives the opportunity to gather more qualitative data.
- **Cannot ask many questions that are not salient to respondents:** *Respondents are more likely to become tired of answering questions that are not very salient to them, and that are likely to be perceived as boring.* However, the research issue of this thesis is considerably

salient to the respondents, as it refers to an often unforgettable and fairly recent period of their lives. Moreover, the survey was kept as short and relevant as possible.

- **Questionnaire can be read as a whole:** The independency of the questions is not really relevant to the issue investigated. Even if the online survey tools allowed me to paginate the questionnaire, I chose not to do so as having to skip pages might be perceived by participants that it takes long to complete, plus it was an advantage that respondents could see that the survey was rather short in order to improve the response rate.
- **Do not know who answers:** This is a disadvantage that cannot be fully avoided even if you ask age, gender and such sort of questions. Online surveys provide enough anonymity so that the researcher cannot really know the targeted sample did answer it unless an identification process to access the questionnaire is applied. This identification process was able but not used as it could affect the response rate, since the targeted respondent might not have an account with the service that provides the form and creating the verified identity might be considered too much trouble to participate in the research.
- **Lower response rates:** This is probably one of the most damaging limitations of surveys, because the findings related to the sample will be affected and hence have a risk of bias in the findings. Even if “bias” is not a defined problem in constructivism as it is to other paradigms, due to the way the problem formulation is posed, the representativeness of the sample would be even more relevant the more Erasmus students participate in it. Still, the sample may prove and/or point in the direction of the issue researched or to an even bigger issue than the one studied.

The online survey was distributed using social media, as it usually is the preferred communication platform among young people, namely Facebook, Twitter and the micro-blogging site Tumblr. Facebook pages and groups regarding Erasmus and related associations were also contacted to distribute the survey, as their followers are (ex-) Erasmus students.

Taking into account the problem formulation, the purpose of the survey was to gather all the basic data and feedback regarding their Erasmus stay, and the general quality of the tourism organization of their destinations. Erasmus students constitute a really wide sample, so in order to narrow it

down, the only limitation imposed to answer the survey is that of been an Erasmus student during or after de academic year 2009-10. The reason behind choosing this specific date, apart from the one stated before, is that respondents might still be students or conserve their Erasmus contacts. Moreover, it is also a way to prevent respondents above the age of 30, which won't be considered "young" in the tourism terminology.

The quantitative data was obtained through closed-ended questions. Close-ended questions dealt with age, gender, year of Erasmus stay, and basic yes/no questions. Other closed-ended questions had elaborated answers, yet in the form of checkboxes or multiple choices. Close-ended questions facilitate the analysis. However, the research also looks for quantitative data which proves valuable to form the analysis and construct the conclusion of the research. Therefore, as specified before, after every question that could allow a more in-depth explanation, a space for comments was provided in order to trigger them to elaborate and justify their choice of answer.

The online survey consists of twenty questions; this number had to be kept relatively low in order to maximize the response rate, as the highest response rates come when surveys are quick, taking around 5 minutes to complete (Nielsen, 2004; Sacks, 2010). Nevertheless, response rates can be influenced, among other things, by factors such as invitation wording and/or perceived benefit from participating in such survey (Sacks, 2010). In order to influence the participation in the survey, I organized a raffle by which one random participant could win a small prize.

The questions are divided into three sections: Basic Data, Erasmus data and Tourism Data. The number of questions was adjusted as to cover all the topics from the theoretical background, while maintaining within the space and time limitations of this research.

The data from this survey will be added to the data gathered during the online interviews and the results of both will be contrasted.

Online Interviews

The interview is probably the most widely employed method in qualitative research due to its flexibility (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative interviews' approach tends to emphasize on greater generality in the formulation of ideas and on interviewees' own perspectives. Hence, 'rambling' or going off at tangents is often encouraged as it can provide more insight, and interviewers can ask new questions that follow up these replies, vary the order and even the wording of questions (ibid). More often than not, qualitative interviews may adjust the emphases in the research as a result of significant issues that emerge in the course of them, as they allow rich and detailed answers.

Qualitative interviews are divided into two main types (Bryman, 2012):

- **Unstructured Interview:** The researcher uses at most a brief set of prompts to remember the topics to deal with. This kind of interviews tends to be very similar to conversations.
- **Semistructured Interview:** In which the researcher has a list of questions or more specific topics to be covered during the interview –the interview guide–, but their order may not be followed and new topics or questions not included may be asked on the go.

The interview method selected for this thesis is the semi structured one as the research has a clear focus and so the specific issues regarding the Erasmus students' tourism experiences and their views on authenticity and the touristic attractiveness of the destination were successfully addressed. The interviews were conducted online as the sample is geographically dispersed.

As with online surveys, semi structured interviews can be conducted online, but with a distinction:

- **Synchronous online interviews:** the interview is in real time and contributions are made immediately, as interviewees replies as soon as they type their answers, namely in a chatroom.
- **Asynchronous online interviews:** the exchanges do not occur in real time, for example, if email is used to conduct the interview.

The media chosen for the interviews is the social network Facebook and its chat facility, thus the interviews were synchronous. Conferencing tools were discarded for having a more complicated process of data compilation, but more importantly, because when contacting interviewee 3 about the interview, she manifested to not feel comfortable with her oral English skills and preferred to write. Hence, to keep the method consistent, all interviewees were approached by Facebook, as it provides a private chat option and all of the interviewees had access to it.

Online interviews have several advantages over their traditional counterpart, but also some disadvantages. The following list of pros and cons of online interviewing is constructed and provided by Bryman (2012) and sourced in Clapper and Massey (1996), Adriaenssens and Cadman (1999), Tse (1999), Mann & Stewart (2000), Curasi (2001), O'Connor and Madge (2001), Sweet (2001), Davis et al. (2004), Evans et al. (2008), and Hewson and Laurent (2008).

Advantages of online interviews

- They are cheap to conduct compared to face-to-face equivalents. They are likely to take longer though if conducted asynchronously.
- Interviewees who would otherwise normally be inaccessible (e.g. geographically dispersed) or hard to involve in research can more easily be involved.
- Large numbers of possible online participants can be contacted.
- Interviewees are able to read what they have previously written in their replies.
- People participating in the research may be better able to fit the interviews into their own time.
- People participating in the research do not have to make additional allowances for the time spent travelling to the location of the interview.
- The interviews do not have to be audio-recorded, thus eliminating interviewee apprehension about speaking and being recorded.
- There is no need for transcription. This represents an enormous advantage because of time and cost involved in getting recorded interview sessions transcribed.
- As a result of the previous point, the interview transcripts can be more or less immediately entered into a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) program.

- The transcripts of the interviews are more likely to be accurate, if not exact, because the problems that may arise from mishearing or not hearing at all what is said do not arise.
- Interviewees are less likely to be influenced by characteristics like the age, ethnicity or appearance of interviewers respectively, so that bias is less likely.
- When interviewees are online at home, they are essentially being provided with an anonymous, safe and non-threatening environment, which may be especially helpful to vulnerable groups.
- Similarly, researchers are not confronted with the potentially discomfiting experience of having to invade other people's homes or workplaces, which can themselves be unsafe environments sometimes.

Disadvantages of online interviews

- Only people with access to online facilities and/or who find them relatively straightforward are likely to be in a position to participate. However, in the case of this research, all participants had easy access to the platform of the interview so this risk was avoided.
- It can be more difficult for the interviewer to establish rapport and to engage with interviewees. However, when the topic is of interest to participants, this may not be a great problem and even so, writing up an answer is more tedious than simply talking.
- There is less spontaneity of response, since interviewees can reflect on their answers to a much greater extent than is possible in a face-to-face situation. However, depending on the subject of the research, more considered replies can be considered as an advantage.
- There may be a tendency for refusal to participate to be higher in online personal interviews.
- The researcher cannot be certain sometimes that the people who are interviewed are who they say they are.
- Turn-taking conventions between interviewer and interviewee are more likely to be disrupted.

- The interviewer may not be aware that the interviewee is distracted by something and in such circumstances will continue to ask questions as if he or she had the person's full attention.
- Online connections may be lost, hence disrupting the flow of the interview.
- Interviews cannot capitalize on body language or other forms of non-verbal data that might suggest puzzlement or any other emotion that might be relevant for the research.

In order to prepare for the interview, an interview guide was created, which can be seen in page X of the Appendix. The questions aimed to expand on responses provided in the survey and to ask about other aspects related to them that could not be rightfully approached with the questionnaire. The interviews lasted between 45-60 minutes.

Sampling

Conducting sampling in qualitative research usually involves purposive sampling. This sampling places the investigator's research questions at the heart of the sampling considerations (Bryman, 2012). In other words, units (which may be people, organizations, documents, etc.) are selected with direct reference to the research questions, which already give an indication of what units need to be sampled in terms of what categories need to be the focus of attention.

There are two levels of sampling (ibid):

- **Sampling of context:** The researchers sample areas on the basis of statistical data, such as geographical areas, depending on the interest of the research. In the case of this thesis, the sampling of context is the European Union, as it is the frame where the Erasmus+ Programme takes place; more concretely, the sampling took part in the Internet through sharing the online survey to Erasmus-related groups and organizations.

- **Sampling of participants:** Researchers select the participants taking into account the purpose of the study. For this research, students that participated in the Erasmus+ Programme were the target.

There are many different purposive sampling approaches. Some of them are the following (Patton, 1990; Palys, 2008; as cited in *ibid*):

- **Extreme or deviant case:** The sample involves cases that are unusual or that are unusually at the far end(s) of a particular dimension of interest.
- **Typical case sampling:** Sampling a case because it exemplifies a dimension of interest.
- **Critical case sampling:** Sampling a crucial case that permits a logical inference about the phenomenon of interest.
- **Maximum variation sampling:** Sampling to ensure as wide a variation as possible in terms of the dimension of interest.
- **Criterion sampling:** Sampling all units that meet a particular criterion.
- **Theoretical sampling:** The process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyzes his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop the theory as it emerges.
- **Snowball sampling:** The researcher samples initially a small group of people relevant to the research questions, and these sampled participants propose other participants who have had the experience or characteristics relevant to the research.
- **Opportunistic sampling:** Capitalizing on opportunities to collect data from certain individuals, contact with whom is largely unforeseen but who may provide data relevant for the research question.
- **Stratified purposive sampling:** Sampling of usually typical cases or individuals within subgroups of interests.

The method used in this research is mainly the criterion sampling, as the subjects I was interested on had to meet specific requirements in order to be qualified useful for the investigation. These characteristics were to have participated in the Erasmus Programme between the years 2009 and 2014. There was a little snowballing as well, as participants for the interview were randomly selected from among the respondents of the online survey.



3. FRAMEWORK

THEORETICAL

In order to explore the Erasmus phenomenon and its relation and impact in both youth and cultural tourism, it is important to collect a basic understanding of the relevant theory and research existing on the subject.

This section places the research within the perspective of the field's theoretical context, which helps prove the research question and also helps decide the research design (University of California, 2001). Theory is introduced in order to present the theoretical background for the research and the basis for the analysis. The theoretical framework is gathered from several sources selected as the fittest for the purpose of the research.

The theory selected for this thesis covers some areas considered relevant to answer the problem formulation, which are:

- Youth tourism, particularly student travellers, to evaluate the profile of the respondents and to establish a relationship between the subject researched and this tourism sector;
- Cultural Tourism and authenticity, to investigate their implications in the students' experiences and motivations.

Regarding youth tourism, the research relies mainly on the extensive work by Greg Richards et. al (2003, 2004, 2011, 2013) and Karolina Buczkowska's (2013). Support literature on this topic includes Farahani & Sukmajati's essay on youth travellers (2011), Neil Carr's chapter on university and college students' tourism in *Managing Educational Tourism* (2003), Agata Wiza's *Youth Travel and Intercultural Communication* (2007), as well as some others cited through the research.

For the topic of tourists' motivations, theory concerning cultural tourism and authenticity was chosen in order to answer the problem formulation and to guide the online survey and online interviews' questions regarding the Erasmus students' motivations to engage in cultural tourism. This research investigates if these two subjects (which are widely present in current discussions

about cultural tourism) have influence on them, mostly authenticity. Consequently, the works by MacCannell (1973), Wang (1999), McIntosh & Prentice (1999), (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006), Cohen (2008) and Moscardo (1996) among many others, are cited in the following sections.

Other theories and works about the mentioned topics were dismissed mainly due to their date of publication, with very few honourable exceptions. Even if the desk research included old theory, for example, MacCannell's (1978) first introduction of authenticity in tourism theory, I choose to rely on the most modern theory, also taking into consideration that the 'boom' of the Erasmus Programme occurred relatively recently. Other reasons to discard works are their lesser relevance with the problem formulation or because they dealt with the topic from a broader perspective than required.

3.1. The Importance of Youth Tourism

Despite youth tourism's importance as a field of international interest for researchers and policymakers being first emphasized in 1991 by the WTO, it has not been given due consideration until relatively recently (Richards & Wilson, 2003). Current research shows that the social, cultural and economic value of youth, student and educational travel is increasingly recognised by employers, educational institutions, official tourism organisations and governments worldwide (UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011).

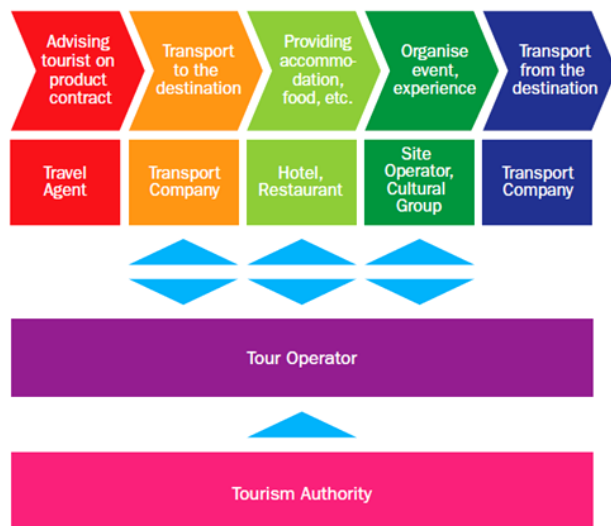
Quoting Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General of the UNWTO (ibid.):

"Youth travel is one of the fastest growing and most dynamic markets of the global tourism sector. UNWTO estimates that around 20% of the 940 million international tourists travelling the world in 2010 were young people."

This might have to do with the fact that the tourism industry is undergoing rapid change as well in the last years (Richards & Wilson, 2003; UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011; Thompson, 2014), with factors such as the rise and expansion of low cost airlines and the growth of Internet culture, which opened up new destinations and created independent travel suppliers (e.g. travel

and flight search engines). Young people are pioneering the use of social networking sites and mobile media in searching for travel information and purchasing products (UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011; Dionysopoulou & Mylonakis, 2013). These factors seem to have added

TRADITIONAL TOURISM VALUE CHAIN



NEW VALUE WEB



impulse to youth and student travel worldwide (Richards & Wilson, 2003).

Accordingly, research (UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011) suggests that value is created by linking actors inside and outside the tourism sector in different combinations to create and exploit new opportunities, with young people at the forefront of such innovation, since they are early-adopting, heavy users of new technology.

Research on youth tourism market, performed by ATLAS and WYSE, showed that the single most important motivation for young travellers was 'discovering other cultures' (83%), which simultaneously constitutes one of the main motivations of cultural tourism (Buczkwoska, 2013). This also relates to the fact that Erasmus students might have the very same motivations to pursue the exchange program, hence exposing the motif of this research.

Richards (2011) states that young people can be of particular value to destinations around the

Figure 2. Traditional Tourism Value Chain vs. New value web (UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011)

world since they are often driven to travel more, for longer periods of time and they often visit areas not frequented by traditional tourists. He also points out five key points about youth travel:

1. Youth travel is high value

Against the popular belief that young people are a low spending sector, youth travel is in fact high value: Young people themselves are often money poor but time rich, which means they spend longer in the destination than other tourists. Research by UNWTO and WYSE Travel Confederation indicates that the international youth travel market generated US\$ 165 billion in 2010. Moreover, the 'money poor' factor gets overruled by the fact that young travellers get monetary help from their parents and/or they are willing to earn money for the sole purpose of travel (Richards & Wilson, 2004; UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011). Similarly, such is the case with Erasmus students.

Erasmus+, the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport launched in January 2014, had a total budget of nearly €15 billion for 2014-2020, a 40% increase compared with the previous period (European Commission, 2014). An important part of this budget is destined as a grant to students in order to cover basic expenditures so they can easily move out to their destination. In 2014, the average monthly EU grant was €272 – a 9% increase on the previous year (€250). In the 2007-2013 period, the Commission set a ceiling for the monthly student grant for each receiving country, with the precise level in each case set by the national agencies and higher education institutions which manage the programme (ibid.). This means that students can receive more money on top of that for their studies. Parents are usually involved in their economic effort of their study exchange, seeing it as an investment on their children's future.

2. Youth markets are resilient

Young people and students have a propensity to travel to destinations that other tourists tend to avoid because of their difficult accessibility or their political issues (Richards & Wilson, 2003). The recent economic crisis has emphasized that young travellers, unlike the tourism market as a

whole, are relatively intrepid and less volatile, making them unlikely to be phased by economic problems, political unrest or epidemics (WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011). Even if the sector was affected by the economic crisis, it generally declined less and recovered faster than mainstream tourism (UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011).

3. Youth travel affects locally

When young people travel for long periods, they also tend to spend a greater proportion of their total budget in the destination (Richards, 2011). This proportion (around 60%) leaks mainly in the local economy (UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011; Blanco & Jordan, 2011).

As Erasmus students spend from 3 to 12 months in the destination, the leakage can become important to local commerce situated around student hubs and residences, and in the city in general. *“Tourism is not just another sector of the economy. It is a human phenomenon that has social implications”* (Blanco & Jordan, 2011).

4. Youth travel contributes to other industries

Young people often travel to study and/or work in the places they visit. Student travel is now being recognised as an increasingly important economic driver and the mobile and flexible workforce supplied by young travellers is becoming almost irreplaceable in some parts of the world (UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011).

Some examples of this contribution are given by organizations such as Australian Education International (AEI), which counts the overseas student industry in the country as \$15.5 billion in export income to the Australian economy (ibid). The 623,805 international students visiting the US in 2007/2008 spent US\$15.54 billion to support their education and stay. Around \$4.5 billion is spent directly with universities in UK (ibid).

5. Young people often attract others to the destination

Last but not least, young people create atmosphere to destinations, which is a magnet for more visitors and even businesses. According to Richards (2011), *“This effect has now been recognised in many cities across the world, and there are growing numbers of projects to relocate university facilities in city centres to act as hubs for cultural and creative activities. The provision of student accommodation is often also an important feature of such schemes.”* In Australia again, it was estimated that each young visitor taking a course in higher education was visited by an average of 1.3 people during their stay, which generated an additional AU\$1.2 billion (ibid). This fact is also applicable to the Erasmus students, as many of them receive visits of family and/or friends during their stay, which creates the extra benefit.

In summary, and as commented in the Introduction, *“young people see travel as an essential part of their everyday lives, rather than just a brief escape from reality”* (UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011). Because of this way of travelling, the social and cultural consequences of youth tourism are becoming as –if not more- important as the economic effects (ibid). This has to be acknowledged by the tourism industry receiving Erasmus students as an advantage.

3.2. Cultural Tourism: Authenticity as Motivation

Cultural tourism is probably the widest sector within the tourism industry and the most practise. The importance of the role of cultural tourism in the global tourism market is obvious if we take into account the wide range of attention dedicated to it, from institutions such as the ICOMOS to the UNESCO and its World Heritage Sites programme, which organizes cultural thematic routes created around these sites for example. Almost 360 million international tourism trips were generated by cultural tourism in 2007, accounting to around 40% of all global tourism (OECD, 2009, as cited in Csapó, 2012).

As the World Tourism Organisation said in 2004 (Richards, 2004):

“The definition of culture is almost as broad as that of tourism itself. In addition to the obvious built heritage and the arts, some countries include in their definition for example sport, gastronomy, education, pilgrimages, handicraft, storytelling and village life.”

A couple of technical definitions of cultural tourism are given by the UNWTO (2008, as cited in Csapó, 2012):

“All movements of persons might be included in the definition because they satisfy the human need for diversity, tending to raise the cultural level of the individual and giving rise to new knowledge, experience and encounters” (broad definition)

“Movements of persons for essentially cultural motivations such as study tours, performing arts and cultural tours, travel to festivals and other cultural events, visits to sites and monuments” (narrow definition)

Briefly, cultural tourism is such, in which the motivation of the tourist is based on the search for and participation in new and deep cultural experiences, whether related to heritage artefacts of the past, cultural production (such as the performing and visual, architecture, literature, etc.) or lifestyle (beliefs, cuisine, traditions, folklore, etc.) (European Travel Commission, 2005, and Michalkó & Rátz, 2011, as cited in Csapó, 2012).

Moreover, cultural tourism is introduced by many scholars as having features of sustainable/alternative tourism, distancing it from mass tourism and the 3S package –sun, sand and sea- (Buczkwoska, 2013; Richards, 2011; Ritchie, Carr, & Cooper, 2003). This has to do with concepts such as authenticity and globalization in the tourism industry, which will be further developed.

Authenticity vs. Globalization

The previous section already showed what theories say about youth travel motivation in general, so this one will introduce and evaluate how the aspect of authenticity was involved in the Erasmus students' experience in their destinations and if this helped them to consider these places worth to come back or recommendable touristic-wise.

The subject of authenticity is brought to this work due to its relevance within the theory of cultural tourism, since the purpose of this thesis is to identify the role of cultural tourism within the motivations of Erasmus and to investigate them as part of youth travel and the repercussions or advantages they pose to their destinations' OTOs, DMTs, etc. With an increased interest in cultural tourism, many people seem to be going out of their way to look for an "authentic experience".

This interest in finding authenticity when doing tourism arguably has to do with the fact that the present-day tourism industry is transforming under the pressure of global socioeconomic forces and, in particular, thanks to the spread of economic and cultural globalization (Cohen, 2008). The perception that the cultural (and natural) diversity of the world is decreasing due to the impact of mass tourism and globalization is widespread (ibid). Cultures are indeed being transformed by globalisation, but not in any simple or predictable causal fashion (Urry, 2002b, 2003, as cited in Meethan, 2003). Still, the 'static or transforming?' nature of culture has been debated. Undeniably, mobility and change flows are motivated by globalization, and even if global tourist floods move temporary, it is still a mass movement of people. Hosts and tourists evidently influence each other culturally, not in a static or even a direct way but gradually by means of interaction and exchange (ibid).

In simple terms, authenticity can be defined as the characteristic of something that is real or genuine. The problem with having an authentic experience when travelling is that everyone probably has a different opinion of what authentic is, which makes it hard to create cultural tourism that will please everyone in that aspect.

Authenticity was first brought to attention in the field of tourism in the 1960s and 1970s by sociologists like MacCannell. Later additions like Cohen (1972, 1979, and 2002), Turner and Turner

(1978), later scholars such as Wang (2000), Urry (2002 and 2003), Rojek (1995 and 2000), Rojek and Urry (1997), Ritzer (1993 and 1998), and Reisinger and Steiner (2006) have also made a great contribution to opening the theoretical debates over types of tourist and authenticity in tourism literature (as cited in Kim, Chang, & Huh, 2011).

Three simple reasons as to why cultural tourists would want to seek for authenticity and authentic goods and experiences are:

1. They are concerned with the shallowness of their everyday lives, so tourism becomes a quest for authenticity to be found in other societies (MacCannell, 1973). Hence, having an authentic experience appears to be something real.
2. Authenticity has this image of something being “unspoiled”, either culturally, spiritually or naturally, and tourists want to find it (McIntosh & Prentice, 1999, as cited in Bougot, 2011).
3. People think that if they have an authentic experience, they have gained a complete understanding of the world (ibid).

However, the binary relationship between the tourist gaze (Urry, 1990) and the local gaze (Maoz, 2006) has been largely discussed. To quote Olsen (2002):

“The tourist has for a long time been associated with an assumed drive in Western culture for authenticity. This authenticity has been regarded as located in the past, in objects, in the divine inspiration of the artist, and among those whom the West has situated outside modernity. Authenticity is then seen as a counter concept to features ascribed to modernity. In this way the tourist has become a part of the same binary that also is the grounding of the idea of authenticity. The metonymic relationship between modernity, the copy and the tourist has become an opposition to the traditional, the original and the other.”

Bruner (1994) and Cohen (1988) tried to transcend this binary in Western thinking about authenticity (Olsen, 2002). As early as their work, they both had a constructivist approach that argued in favour of a conception of culture as something that is not static but always transforming. They complained that the tourist’s role seems to be ‘infected’ with transactional- and economic relationships, is regarded as impersonal and superficial, and situated in a fixed power relationship

(ibid). This way of thinking puts the tourist in a position of modernity where proximity and intimacy, or rather authenticity, is not supposed to be found (Boulding, 1970, as cited in Olsen, 2002). Such a view makes the search for authenticity into a doomed quest in which the tourist becomes an incarnation of modernity that profanes and destroys the authentic when trying to penetrate it (ibid).

Still, authenticity as the 'real thing' is a concept that remains imprint in many tourists, even young ones, mainly thanks to the proliferation of extensive travel marketing campaigns and general mass tourism. It is in this context that we find the backpackers' way of travelling the hidden paths and the proliferation of 'alternative' guides such as Lonely Planet (Richards & Wilson, 2003).

To see if authenticity has a role to play in Erasmus students' experience in their destinations, whether prior, during and/or after their stay, questions about it will be included in both the online questionnaire and the online interviews.



5. ANALYSIS

This chapter will develop the results found during the data collection into a discussion in order to answer the problem formulation established at the beginning of this thesis.

Taking into account the data collection methods, the analysis will be divided into two parts. First, an account of the quantitative data gathered in the online survey, and secondly, a further analysis of the online interview responses. These sections will answer the research questions taking into account the theory provided in the previous chapter. At the end of the chapter, a summary of the points made during the analysis will be provided in order to further clarify the results of the research.

4.1. Online Survey

The survey registered 51 responses. However, when revising them, a couple of respondents had submitted it twice, which makes a total of 49 genuine responses. In both cases, the latest response submitted was the one kept for the study, because answers were not changed but only corrected (spelling, specifying, etc.). The survey questions and the link to the survey can be found in the Appendix chapter, page 61. The survey aimed to get a higher amount of responses, taking into account the numerous groups that were approached about it and the survey was shared with, but the timing of the process (Christmas month and exams period) might have been the cause. Even so, the responses were overall quite satisfying.

Profile & Erasmus Exchange Info

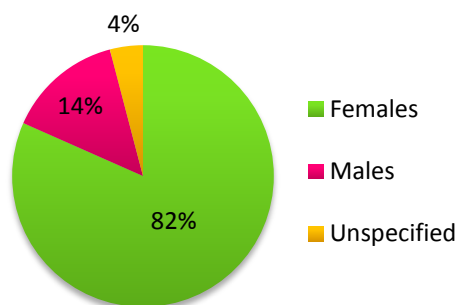
The survey was answered by a total of 40 females, 7 males and 2 did not specify their gender. This result sort of exaggerates the trend present in the data gathered by the European Commission on

the Erasmus+ Programme in the year 2011-12, in which women accounted for the 61% of Erasmus students (European Commission, 2013).

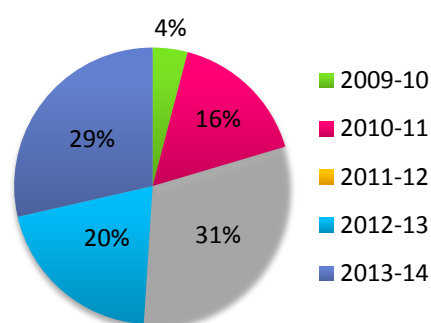
The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 29 years old, with a repetition of respondents in their mid-twenties and, curiously, a 44 year old respondent.

The academic years in which the respondents took the exchange program are evenly spread, with 2011-12 being slightly more abundant. This is probably caused by sharing the survey in some Erasmus-related Facebook groups I was member of, namely the one of my own Erasmus exchange course and which took place in 2011-12. Only 7 respondents did not get to study in their preferred destination of choice⁴.

Gender of respondents



Academic Year of the Erasmus

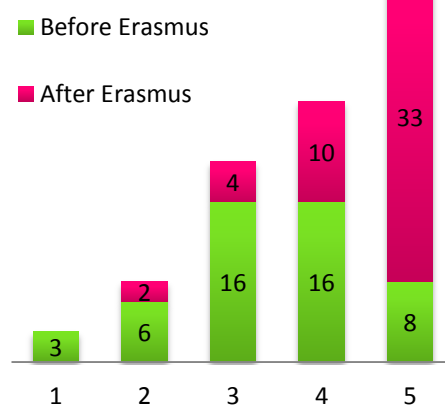


Motivations for the programme

Some of the most interesting questions to analyse for their importance in answering the problem formulation were questions 5, 6 and 7.

As illustrated in the graph to the right, respondents' interest in their destinations' culture increased heavily after the exchange, when it was a mild interest before their stay. The scale went from 1 (not interested) to 5 (significantly interested). This fact speaks volumes when taking into account both research questions, as the respondents show they already had a mild interest in the culture and that interest increased after

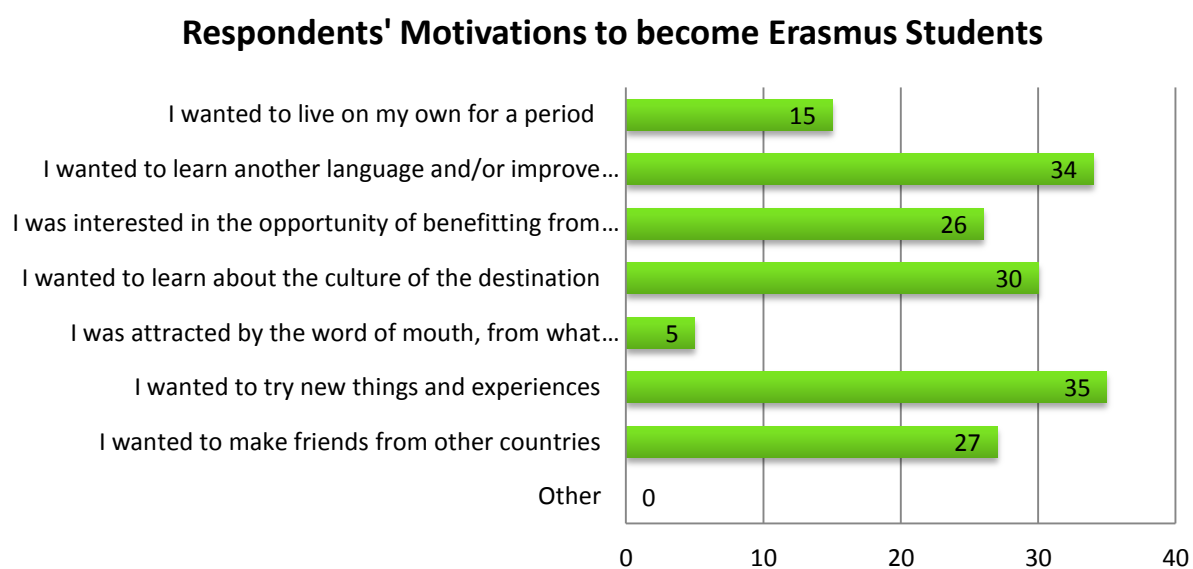
Interest in Destination's Culture



⁴When applying for the programme, students must select (an average of) 3 different destinations in order of preference.

their Erasmus experience, which potentially implies a high chance to develop nostalgia and thus a touristic *fidelity* with the place.

Furthermore, question 5 asked directly about their motivations to travel. The question asked the respondent to chose their main reason/s (maximum of three) to participate in the Erasmus program. The maximum was established in order to administer the data better and increase the chance to explore the most common motivation among the respondents. The following graph illustrates the question and its results:



Based on what the theory suggested on youth travel and Buczkowska's work (2013), the options given were "*I wanted to live on my own for a period*", "*I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills*", "*I was interested in the opportunity of benefitting from an interesting academic curriculum*", "*I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination*", "*I was attracted by the word of mouth, from what people said about it*", "*I wanted to try new things and experiences*", "*I wanted to make friends from other countries*" and "*Other*", in which the respondents' could specify a reason not listed.

As the graph shows, respondents' interest in the destination's culture occupies a close third position behind trying new things and experiences and learning/improving language skills. The latter can be considered as educational tourism, which is within cultural tourism. The conclusion that can be drawn from this question alone is that culture and previous knowledge and/or interest

on it are strong motivations currently pushing young people abroad. This result alone can reply the first research question while making a point on how tourism organizations in the destination should pay attention to youth and student travel. The natural response to this question if one bears in mind that the Erasmus+ Programme encourages learning abroad would be the one that came fifth, *"I was interested in the opportunity of benefitting from an interesting academic curriculum"*. However, the Erasmus exchange's dimensions seem to transcend mere academic learning, turning it a life experience for many students. Accordingly, the results of this question favor youth tourism motivations' characteristics with *"I wanted to try new things and experiences"* as the most voted reason to participate in the programme, with the learning of foreign language coming closely in second place. However, even if the interest in the culture came the third in the motivations, we should take into account the previous graph and stress that interest in the culture increased after their stay in the end.

Erasmus students' tourism experiences

The next and last set of questions dealt with the respondents' experiences as tourists in the destination, in order to gain knowledge about the degree of tourism development in the destinations as well as feedback that can be translated into useful suggestions for tourism organizations interested in attracting youth travel.

When rating the destination in terms of touristic attractiveness in a scale from (not attractive) 1 to 5 (very attractive), 22 respondents rated with a 5 and 19 with a 4. Moreover, 73% (36) of the respondents replied in question 9 that their destination was situated in a touristic area.

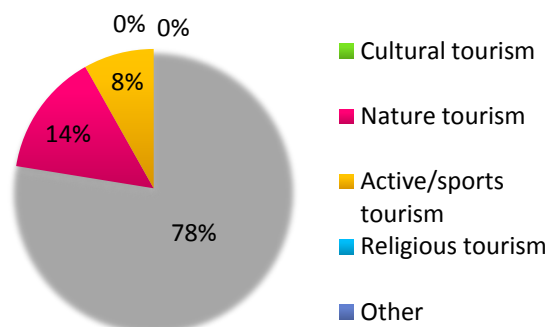
To the question *"Did you engage in tourism activities during your Erasmus stay?"* only one respondent said 'No'. However, this same respondent declared to have practiced 'Active/Sports tourism' later in the survey, thus it is safe to say that 100% of respondents did some kind of tourism in their destination.

Question 10 illustrates the popularity of cultural tourism over other segments of the industry, with 78% of the respondents engaging in it.

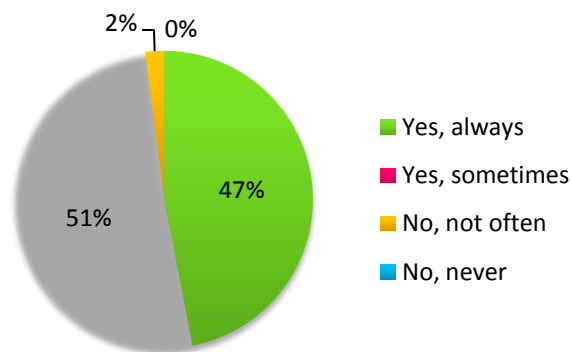
Question 11 reassures the previous result with 47% of the respondents identifying as “always” being cultural tourists and a 51% “sometimes” being a cultural tourist. As for the frequency that respondents did cultural tourism, 18 respondents engaged in cultural activities more than once a month, 13 did it around once a month and 11 more than once a week. These results are slightly surprising, taking into account the predominance of cultural tourism and the degree of interest showed by previous questions, for which was reasonable to have expected a “once a week” majority.

A multiple-choice question regarding who had the initiative to organize a cultural trip, “me and my friends” was chosen by a total of 42 respondents, 24 chose “a student organization” and 15 marked “the university/academic institution”. Only 5 respondents said to have delegated the planning to “other students” and only 3 marked the option “other”. This question is important as it shows the independence of young people regarding the organization of trips, but also stresses the role of student organizations like the ESN in familiarizing the new students with the destination by organizing activities and trips for them.

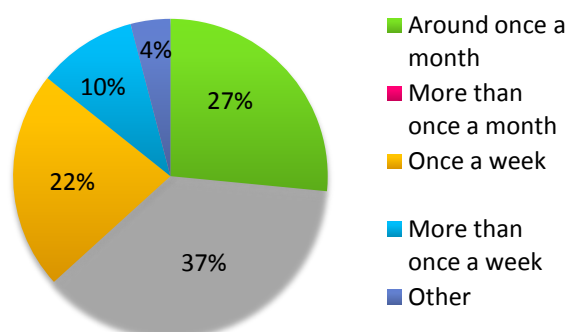
Which kind of tourism did you do the most?



Do you consider yourself a cultural tourist?



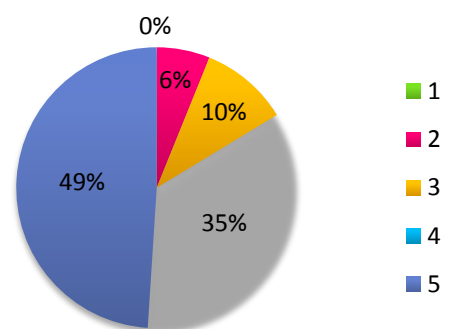
How often did you do cultural tourism?



Question 16 reveals how far respondents travelled during their Erasmus stay. While 17 respondents kept their visits within the country, 16 got to visit bordering countries and 10 said to have travelled to countries further from the vicinity. Only 6 respondents remained just within the region. This result proves that, as the Erasmus students have a considerable amount of time to travel, their impact does not stay within the city they are destined, but it extends to the country and even other countries. The Erasmus+ Programme is a net of students constantly travelling around, “*discovering new things and experiences*”.

Another key question was the one asking about how important authenticity was when doing cultural tourism. Most of the respondents stressed its high value in a scale from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). A space to elaborate was provided and respondents were prompted to explain why. The responses were so ‘in synch’ with the theory of the concept that is surprising in young people not familiar with it. These are some of the replies that evaluated the concept:

**Importance of authenticity
in cultural tourism**



“For me, authenticity is very important. I do not like touristic offers that are tailored to touristic needs. When I visit a foreign country I want to get to know the culture very well and not go back with a wrong image of the country.”

“Because if you have the feeling of the culture being real, the overall experience is better and longer lasting.”

“There are certain experiences you can not enjoy unless everyone involved is relaxed and comfortable and also people tend to put on a different attitude towards tourists that are only passing by than to foreign people that become regulars of a place.”

“Because tourism should be about understanding how people in other countries live in order to understand the people themselves better. It should be about learning and integrating yourself rather than setting yourself apart in a typical tourist group.”

“Authenticity is the key of every cultural trip. I like looking at the past and the roots of every place in order to understand the current state.”

“Authenticity is important in order to really get to know local culture and people. If it's staged you never discover the real nature of the place.”

“Through using stereotypes for advertisement, the authenticity of the destination decreases. Of course, in some regions like Austria, it is necessary to work in Dirndl⁵, because this is what the tourists expect, but the destinations should not “overdue” it.”

What transcends from these quotes is the strong dichotomy between what the respondents consider authentic and what is not. The first quote highlights that ‘typical’ touristic offers may be based in stereotypes that might not reflect the essence of the culture faithfully, hence the *“I want to get to know the culture very well and not go back with a wrong image of the country”*.

The second quote reveals another important point made in the theory about how authenticity is what makes a tourism experience long-lasting, hence leading to nostalgia. However, it is curious that the respondent refers to the “feel of authenticity” instead of a categorical authenticity. Again, as mentioned in the theory chapter, authenticity might be perceived differently depending on the background the tourists.

The third quote offered makes another great point regarding the attitude of the local community to the tourist. The respondent seems to reflect a judgment in those words that the local community’s culture is something to be shared among its members and that it is not only something not tailored to tourists but also sort of ‘forbidden’ for them.

The quote following the previous one also comments on the idea of the tourist as a separate being and contrasting its perceived role with one that is inclusive. This is much in the line of thoughts manifested by Cohen (1988) and Bruner (1991).

⁵ Name of the traditional female dress worn in Germany – especially Bavaria –, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria and South Tyrol, based on the historical costume of Alpine peasants.

The fifth quote resembles the primitive idea that authenticity is linked to objects and the past (MacCannell, 1973). Likewise, the two last quotes dismiss 'staged' touristic attractions as useless if one wants to learn the 'true' nature of culture.

By contrast, a few respondents had different opinions regarding authenticity and 'staged' cultural attractions:

"I like when my experience is as most authentic as possible, but sometimes it cannot be avoided to be for touristic purpose - how else should we show development and past habits etc."

"Important to me is to know other places, people and cultures. I don't mind very much if it is totally authentic or if it is commercial."

"I love seeing other cultures, as they are but I do not want to get involved in dangerous situations."

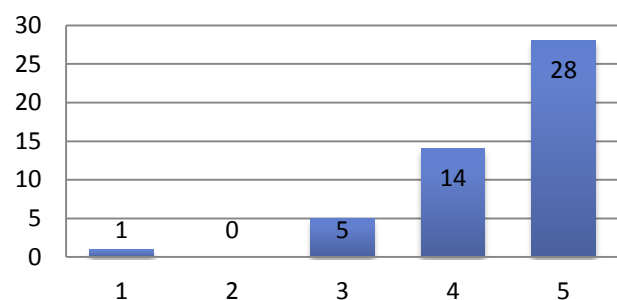
The first quote makes a valid and important point. The commoditization of culture is not such a bad issue when it helps said culture to survive. For example, certain monuments accessible by paying a fee are preserved thanks to the funding obtained through these paid visits.

The second quote is very interesting, as it shows how the focus is in the experience and the feeling that it conveys rather than its actual authenticity, which links with what was said before about the sentimental value of memories and nostalgia.

Finally, the last quoted respondent makes allusion to the fact that in some cultures, getting too involved in certain cultural activities may suppose danger to the tourist (sanitary, physical, etc.)

Questions 18a and 18b aimed to explore tourism pros and cons of the respondents' destinations. While the response was overall positive, some rather important flaws were pointed out, which ranged from not having a

Would you recommend your Erasmus destination as a tourist destination to other people?



tourist information office to problems getting information if not familiar with the language. Despite these, most of the respondents would recommend visiting their destination to others.

More remarkably, the majority of respondents have coming back in mind, while some already visited the place at least once after their exchange was over.

This has probably to do with the fact that their status as Erasmus students was an advantage (see Question 14) to 'savour' the visited place at a leisurely pace and peacefully 'absorb' them (Buczkwoska, 2013). Time does give insight about the culture and makes them able to perceive cultural nuances and details that would be overlooked otherwise.

To quote some of them about this matter:

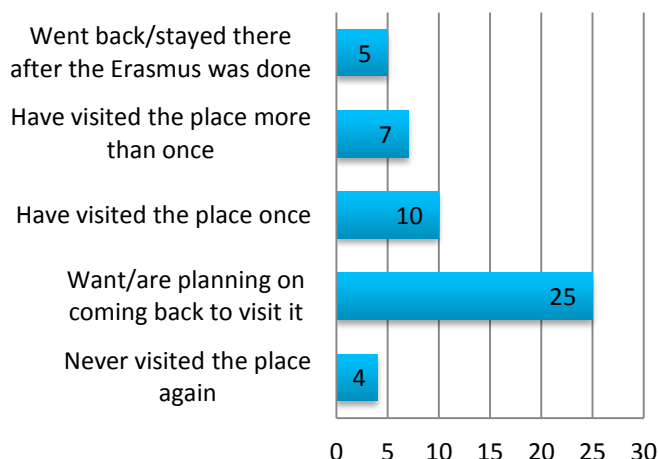
"When you live in the place for some time, you are able to reach the true essence and catch the feelings of the inhabitants. You can tell the difference between authentic and fabricated things."

"I think it did in regards to the lenght of my stay there. I mean, I had the time to explore around and not having to rush to visit different places. I knew I would be there for a long period of time and that's why I could plan many different places worth visiting."

"Oh , It for sure did. Experiencing another culture with other foreigners and discussing how we view it and how things are in our countries was one fo the clue and most amazing things about Erasmus."

"Yes, and I know I'm very lucky cause I was able to stay for a very extended period of time. It gave me the chance to create bonds with all kinds of people and it also gave

After your Erasmus stay, you...



me a better sense of understanding of what the daily life of an English person looks like.”

“Yes, I do think so. As an Erasmus student, you have the possibility of living in the same way as local people do. Then, you can do exactly the same activities or going to the same places as locals.”

“Of course that gave me the opportunity to enjoy authentic experience because beeing in contact with different culture with different oppinions helps to open your mind, and more important helps to tollerate and respect each other.”

The beautiful thing of the Erasmus Programme is that it is not merely a learning experience in a strict academic sense, but a tool that has served millions of young students to immerse themselves into different cultures, explore them as visitors, tourists, wanderers and even locals, and go back home with a new idea about themselves and the culture visited, as well as a strong desire to come back and explore some more.

What the Erasmus+ Programme is doing in favor of tourism is to sort of ‘institutionalize’ (educational) tourism and doing so with a considerable number, importance and impact nowadays that should not be overlooked. With the advantages of youth travel listed in the theory chapter, there is no doubt that this sector may prove essential for the future of tourism not only in areas in need of a sustainable source of income but all around the world.

4.2. Online Interviews

This section will analyse the data gathered by the semi-structured online interviews. The interview guide can be found in page , and the content of the interviews in the successive pages.

Once the survey reached the deadline for accepting responses, participants that provided an email address were contacted in order to obtain volunteers for the interviews and further explore the topic of the research; three people agreed to participate. All the respondents were females in their mid-twenties. Two of them spent their Erasmus in England (Newcastle and Leicester) and the third in Germany (Marburg), the duration of their stay being 5, 9 and 10 months respectively.

The analysis of the three interviews will be made collectively, following the interview guide and treating each topic at a time for a more comprehensive study. Each respondent will be referred to as Interviewee A, B and C to simplify and for anonymity. Fortunately for this research, even if only three personal accounts were gathered, the variety of their responses is relatively high and, curiously enough, *progressive* in terms of involvement regarding tourism and other questions asked.

The first topic treated aimed to explore the interviewees' pre-Erasmus travel experience in order to get an idea of their previous involvement in cultural tourism.

Interviewee A had already travelled abroad a few times before her Erasmus and manifests her interest in culture:

"It was not the first time that I travelled abroad, but it was the longer period. Before going to Newcastle (UK), I've already been in Guildford and Brighton but only a month in each place. (...) I visited Italy because it was a School Trip. Regarding to France, I wanted to improve my French, so I decided to go there and put my name down in a French course. Both were good oportunities for me to know these places, the culture and the people there." (p.86)

Interviewee B did not travel abroad before as much as A, but mentions how she was already interested in English culture:

“The first trip we just really wanted to go abroad somewhere because my partner and the other couple had already gone to other countries and I was the only one who had only travelled inside Spain. London happened to be the cheapest airplane ticket we found at the time and I already was a bit of an anglophile then. I loved The busy feel of London and I wouldn't shut up about it so in the end I convinced three of my female friends to go there for a week. It just felt like I had left so many things to see on the first trip.” (p.90)

For Interviewee C, the Erasmus was her very first ‘big trip’, and did not have much travel experience in general:

“Yes, it was. I travelled before with high school or with my dance association. But, not, i didn't travel frequently before.(...) I preferred England or Ireland in order to improve my English, but my degree had not any agreement in these countries, so I decided to go to France. The problem? It was so expensive and I had not a big grant for living there. My coordinator told me that she was the first Erasmus of the University of Extremadura and she went to Marburg. Her sister was a Professor there as well. There were lots of contacts and great experiences there from my professor there, so I decided to choose Marburg.” (p.95)

However, she expressed in the survey to have been interested in the destination’s culture. When asked about it, she said the following:

“I don't really know. I wanted to know a new culture, different from Mediterranean ones (the nearest cultures to me). I was interested in German people's lifestyle, their buildings and monuments and, of course, their language.” (p.95)

It is argued in the theory that cultural tourists are often high educated people. Interviewees’ position as high education students of English & Tourism (A), Fine Arts (B) and Architecture (C) probably helped to develop their interest in the destination’s culture. Their studies also conditioned the type of touristic attractions they wanted to visit:

“we went to the typical museums and sights. I forced my friends to visit every comic book shop I could find on the internet the previous weeks. So forbidden planet, gosh comics and a couple more on the soho. I also dragged them to art stores cause London has a lot of art colleges and the art stores are amazing. Turns out Cass art was on sale and I found things I wouldn't find in the art stores in my city.”
(Interviewee B, p. 90)

“I love tourism. Every time that I travel I go sightseeing. I love preparing trips in advance, so I usually make a list including everything that I would like to visit in those places. Not only monuments, but also museums, restaurants, parks, shops...”
(Interviewee A, p.87)

Interviewee A said she also planned the cultural trips in her Erasmus destination beforehand and, more importantly, word of mouth influenced her decisions in this regard:

“In fact, a friend of mine was Erasmus the previous year, so she informed me about things to do in the area, places to visit...” (p.87)

The fact that a network of Erasmus is created in universities reveals how much power social relationships and word of mouth can do to incentive the ‘spread’ of exchange participants. Personally, I remember bachelor classmates talking about their Erasmus and their accounts on what a great experience it was really sets up an interest to know more about it.

Another thing discussed in the theoretical framework is how young tourists are more prone to travel when other segments probably would not (Richards & Wilson, 2004; UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011), which is clearly an advantage if tourism organizations seek to attract tourists to combat issues like seasonality or economic depression.

Interviewee C talks about her hardships regarding the funding of her Erasmus trip:

“(...) I received only 245€ (105 from European Comission, 30 from Junta de Extremadura and 110 from Spanish Government). It was the first and only year when Extremadura Government didn't pay a special grant for Erasmus...”

So, how did you cover up your expenses?

With my parents and brother's help and with this money.” (p.97)

Following the line of the theory, Richards (2011) states that young travelers are “*able to tap into the resources of their (often time poor but money rich) parents and being able to work to earn additional money during their travels.*” (p. 7). This is also true in the case of Interviewee B, which had to get a job for a couple of weeks so she could pay everything on her last month of stay after she got short of money (p.). Moreover, Richards and Wilson (2003) stated that “*(In the case of students, despite their relatively low incomes) can have proportionally high levels of discretionary income, a great propensity to save money for travel and free time to spend on leisure pursuits, including travel.*” Interviewee B declared to have worked and saved money prior her Erasmus exchange in order to fund the first months:

“I worked on the summer full time and I also got lucky selling t-shirt designs. I earnt aproximately 2700€ between the two. I did this because I knew the money from the money from the erasmus scholarship wouldn't be there until october/november so I would need cash before getting that.” (p.92)

Following up the subject of tourism activities, all interviewees were asked about their travel experience during their Erasmus. Only interviewee A had plans in mind about what to visit or do, while the other two completely improvised once they were there. Still, the pattern of interest was also kept during their stay. While interviewee A kept on sightseeing cities, B would travel moved by her high interest in culture, even to further away destinations. Likewise, interviewee C was triggered by the ‘must-see’ attractions of the country.

“I remember that my first trip was to Edimburgh, I was visiting the castle and the area. It was an organized trip by Northumbria University, so it was only one day by bus. I also went to Harrogate, Saltaire, Durham, Tynemoth, Leeds and Manchester.”
(Interviewee A, p. 88)

“visiting sheffield was specially fun because my friend would take me to these Ceildh dances [...] there were other times that something special was happening in London or somewere else and I would go to that special event” (Interviewee B, p. 92)

"Their history and traditions. We couldn't leave Germany without visiting a camp concentration, for example, or without visiting the Christmas Market of Nürnberg."

(Interviewee C, p. 96)

As the theory predicted, young people might be 'low spenders' but they compensate that with the amount of travel they do (Richards, 2011; UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011; Richards & Wilson, 2003). When asked about their investment in travel, all interviewees responded that their expenditure was low, but later stated that they would travel quite often nonetheless:

"Cheap hotels or sometimes if I have friends in this city I stayed with friends. (...) I used to look for good offers so I can't say it was a lot... A reasonable amount I would say." (Interviewee A, p.88)

"the trip to Ireland was roughly 5 days. But most of my other trips I did on the weekend. I was specially lucky the first semester because I didn't have any lectures on Monday morning and that allowed me to both stay more time and buy cheaper tickets to return home. (...) I would say I would try and travel every two weeks (...) I wanted to see as much as I could of the country because I'm an art and culture obsess. But some weekends I would simply go to visit other friends I had living in other cities." (Interviewee B, p. 91)

"I didn't know what I would have a Semesterticket which allowed me travelling around all my region for free. (...) Usually we travelled in our region, Hesse, and we spent only one day, so we didn't think about accommodation. We ate in fast-food restaurants, in the train stations or we brought our own sandwiches. When we went outside, to Berlin, for example, we spent four or five days there. We stayed in a hostel very cheap (7 euros per night more or less) but very very clean and modern. Sometimes we spent our days travelling in trains. We slept in trains or in train stations... We didn't spend a lot of money in our travel. (...) Almost every week we travelled." (Interviewee C, p. 96)

When talking about their own destination cities tourism-wise, interviewees had different opinions:

"in Newcastle there are lots of thing to do. The most attractive thing are the bridges, they are a real symbol of Newcastle and it's possible to find even pounds with the Milenium bridge represented on them. Moreover, the castle or the Angel of the North are also quite visited and it also worth it to have a walk in order to visit its museums, cathedral or churches." (Interviewee A, pp. 88-89)

"on a scale of 1 to 10 I would give it a 5 or a 6 at most. Sure, the city had some things to see but Leicester has always been an industrial city / the most interesting things were AROUND the city like the castles or the space center so you needed a bus to go there" (Interviewee B, p.92)

They also stressed the importance of the young population in their respective cities and how this was reflected in their tourism offer and other aspects of daily (student) live:

"It is a place with two universities (Northumbria University and Newcastle University), so there are lots of students. Most of people from Northern Ireland dedice to study in these universities because they are quite good, cheaper and Newcastle has an airport, so they can go home easily. (...) Northumbria university counts with the Student's Union and they promote tourism in the city and surrounded areas specially for students. Every week they propose a plan for the weekend." (Interviewee A, p.89)

"Its a city with two unis and a big chunk of its population are students (...) every store has students offers most of the time. Even pubs have their special prices for students. Culturally it meant that there are lots of places to party and a universe of uni societies doing interesting things. the students of the drama faculty would do a play once a month and there was a comedy festival that was aimed primarily at students" (Interviewee B, p.93)

"There is a slogan in the city which says: "Other cities have a university, Marburg is a university." Marburg has 86,000 residents and 21,000 students... (...) I loved it. Everything was thought for doing students life easier. The slogan is real 😊 (...) I had not problems with my accommodation (foreigner students had priority over German

students in the residences, for example). Menus in mensa were very cheap”
(Interviewee C, p.97)

The importance of these statements applied to the problem formulation is that there are places – as tiny like Marburg in Germany, or big like Newcastle in England– already promoting and taking advantage of the young/student population. The explanation on how young travel is an attractive segment to attract gets perfectly summed up within the previous quotes.

Exchange student experiences, concretely the Erasmus+ Programme, leave a positive (economical, cultural...) imprint not only in the destination but also in the students themselves:

“I really love the city and I still have friends there so I try to go and visit at least once every 2 years. Newcastle is a place in which I wouldn't mind to live.” (Interviewee A, p.89)

“I would say that once you try living for so long in a different place you become a bit addicted to finding what different cultures can give you. Not just as a tourist but also if they can change you as a person” (Interviewee B, p.94)

“[After the Erasmus] I am always thinking about travelling abroad. I would like to spend more time in another country, living there and feeling a citizen of the country where I stay. (...) And thanks to the Erasmus I could meet some of my best friends and people around all the world. I could open my mind and know about different cultures. And, of course, thanks to the Erasmus I could know an interesting and amazing country with its culture, food and language.” (Interviewee C, p.98)

The interviewees' conclusions about their stay coincide with the ones provided through the online survey shown in the previous section. Moreover, just like the survey participants, a lot of the satisfaction about their stay comes from the feeling of having enjoyed an authentic –and sort of privileged due to their Erasmus status– experience:

“I tried to enjoy the toon, as Geordies call Newcastle! Most of the friends that I made were from the city, so I tried to live as they did it so that I could learn their

culture. For example, Geordie accent it's a peculiarity from there and I tried to learn the most of it.” (Interviewee A, p.89)

“There were aspects of the English culture I had not payed too much attention to. For example. I didn't realize how much of an in doors culture they had. (...) I also think the have more of a philanthropist culture than we do (...) I found that English culture is much more multicultural that I had expected and much more tolerant (...) you wouldn't be able to learn some of their values unless you lived there, because it shows in the day to day basis, not on tourist trips” (Interviewee B, pp.93-94)

“It was a challenge for me because I went to Marburg and I couldn't talk any German. I knocked over the prejudices I had from German people living there. I love their lifestyle.” (Interviewee C, p.95)

So, what is the final deduction? Let's go back to the research questions:

What are Erasmus students' primary motivations to engage in the programme and what is the place of cultural tourism within them?

The online survey shows that even though cultural tourism is not the primary reason to participate in the programme, it is still present within the three most recurrent motivations. The primary motivation for Erasmus students is not so much the trip itself but what it entails, which are **new experiences and new knowledge** (e.g. another language). Many participants seemed to be keen to experience as much as possible on their trips, and were willing to be sparing with accommodation and transportation costs in order to spend more on 'once in a lifetime' experiences (Binder, 2004, as cited in Richards & Wilson, 2004). Coinciding with the theory provided, the most important motivation that surfaced from this research was a strong desire for experience, since many participants indicated so, and also stressed the importance of friendship and sociability through interaction with the multicultural environment that the host academic institution provided.

Another important result is that for the interviewees, and probably the survey respondents as well, the Erasmus gave them a 'thirst' for more travel. According to Richards & Wilson (2004), this tends to support the idea that travel consumption patterns are strongly influenced by student tourism experiences. This thirst for more travel can benefit both them and their hosts, because students gained high level of knowledge and education that may allow them to appreciate foreign cultures and seek for them in a sustainable way. As the graphs illustrated, many respondents have come back to visit their old destination, want to come back to and even some of them stayed there. Like Buczkowska (2013) states, *"Cultural experiences gained during educational exchanges generate advantages now and will bring further advantages in the future, as they influence the current tourism styles and the future lives of former Erasmus students."*

How do Erasmus students evaluate the 'touristic capability' of their destination?

The reading that can be extracted from the survey and the interviews is that, even if some deficiencies were reported, the destinations were overall well rated tourism-wise. Nevertheless, this positive view might be strongly influenced by the also overall good experience all participants seem to have enjoyed during their Erasmus stay. Even if the host cities were not extremely attractive, the students had time enough to explore other areas –and even different countries– and get immersed in the destination's cultural environment.

Moreover, the respondents' interest in their destinations' culture increased in after the Erasmus comparison with their interest prior the exchange. As stated previously, this implies that there is a high chance the respondents developed nostalgia and thus a touristic *fidelity* with the place. Furthermore, this deep integration process allegedly allowed them 'taste the real culture' that would not be achieved otherwise –that is, as a 'normal tourist'.

Young/student characterized destinations were very positively perceived, as they offered a wide range of student-friendly activities and even advantages in the economic side –like discounts in restaurants and transport, which make the general Erasmus experience even more enjoyable, favouring the easiness to adapt to the new, foreign situation. The role of the academic institutions and local student organizations as hosts is also important, as they help ease the integration of the new students as well as promote and organize tourism activities.

Being exposed to different cultures helped respondents to understand better their own cultural values and biases, which may play a role in shaping new identities. *"In the long run, youth travel becomes powerful as young people feel a sense of self-fulfilment and personal growth and this is undeniably a powerful influence on the creation of future aspirations."* (Matteucci, 2011).

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the Erasmus phenomena, as it has arguably become a 'pseudo-tourist' trend quite extended among students in Europe in the recent years. Due to its close parallelism with youth travel, which has been and is currently researched by organizations such as the UNWTO, WYSE Travel Confederation, the International Student Travel Confederation (ISTC) and the Association of Leisure and Tourism Education (ATLAS), this research aimed to explore the links that may exist between the Erasmus Programme and youth and cultural tourism.

According to Richards & Wilson (2004), students are frequent travel consumers who have relatively extensive travel experience outside of their own world region. The patterns assigned to youth travel and the motivations of cultural tourists that were described in the theoretical framework of this thesis seem to mix up in the entity of the Erasmus student, as the data gathered suggests. This research aimed to analyse how close the relationship between cultural tourism and the Erasmus students was, focusing on the latter's motivations to engage in the program to find the place of cultural tourism among them.

The respondents placed their interest in their destination's culture on a second place after the search for new experiences and knowledge, which coincides with the theory produced to date regarding youth travel. However, this interest in the culture multiplied after their Erasmus exchange, becoming cultural tourists and growing an attachment with the host community which in many cases made them wish to come back, if not visiting them once (or more than once) or even stay. Cultural tourism was the most practised by respondents, who mostly identified as cultural tourists sometimes if not 'always'. They rated their destinations positively regarding touristic attractiveness, which probably stimulated their feeling of nostalgia when added to the long period of immersion and integration.

Many respondents share MacCannell's (1973) old view of the tourists as invasive and dangerous agents that taint the local culture by making a binary distinction between what is authentic and what is wrongly tailored to satisfy the superficial needs of casual tourists. However, in contrast to

what MacCannell did, respondents 'changed their roles' during their vacations (Olsen, 2002), from tourists to pseudo-locals, in the sense that they think they are not 'typical tourists' themselves due to their Erasmus status. This status gave them advantage to gain a deep knowledge about the city and region of their studies (and much more in many cases), which is in the end the essence of cultural tourism itself: it aims to explain the chosen culture based on education, entertainment and emotions/excitement, offering to the respondents experiences with diversity, interactivity and context (Buczkowska, 2013).

Why should youth travel be encouraged?

Tourism organizations and governments should be interested in attracting youth travel for several reasons:

- Student travellers' stays are relatively long, which leads to a significant economic impact in the destination.
- Although daily average expenditure is low, many trips are made so students will often spend more in the destination in total than other travellers.
- Since they pay attention to offers, discounts and look for cheap options regarding accommodation, transportation and other travel aspects, young people are more likely to travel during low season and to less frequented areas.
- Student travel impacts other industries, as they become part of the place, which represents an important economic driver while attracting other visitors and businesses.
- It is safe to say that, probably, these same students will repeat visits and that might be enthusiastic and high-spending independent travellers in the future.

How can youth travel be attracted?

Based on the data gathered in this research, I suggest the following measures in order to encourage youth travel:

- Most respondents organized their trips on their own, using the internet as a source of information and planner. Organizations and governments should have presence in the World Wide Web and social media if they to both encourage and succeed guiding and attracting young people to their area, as these platforms are a basic part of the young people's daily life.
- On the other hand, some respondents participated in trips organized by either their academic host institutions or student organizations, so it could be beneficial to establish a closer relationship between tourism organizations and the universities in order to promote tourism in the area. This kind of partnerships is also recommended among tourism organizations and stakeholders, more importantly if any kind of negative impact wants to be avoided.
- As long as the economy and the characteristics of the place allow so, favouring the emergence and proliferation of hostels, events, etc. targeted to young people can easily create awareness and ultimately attract young tourists.
- Communication and marketing is essential as well, as long as it is combined with an equally developed product. Again, effort should be put into innovation and creativity in digital channels.
- Connect youth travel with other industries as well as the cultural and social life of the destination, for example, areas such as education, volunteering, creative industries, urban and rural development and sport (UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011).

As the UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation (2011) say, *“youth travel is an important market for the future, not just because of the economic benefits it can generate, but also because it can make a real difference to the destination in cultural, social and development terms.”* (pp.21-22)



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7. APPENDIX

7.1. Online Survey Data

The online survey can be found by following this link: <http://goo.gl/forms/EjwCfK0s6Z>

7.1.1. Survey Questions

The survey questions are reproduced here for convenience.

You, The Erasmus

1. Please, state your age and gender *

2. In which academic year were you an Erasmus? *

Remember that to answer this survey you **MUST** have been an Erasmus in the following dates

- ☐ 2009-10
- ☐ 2010-11
- ☐ 2011-12
- ☐ 2012-13
- ☐ 2013-14

3. What was your Erasmus destination and how long did you stay? *

University (optional), city and country - Number of months

4. Was your final destination your first choice?

- ☐ Yes

- ☒ No

Your Motivations

This section aims to explore what motivated you to take part on the Erasmus program. Since the survey is anonymous, please feel free to answer honestly!

5. Please, choose the primary reason(s) that led you to participate in the Erasmus programme *

(Only choose a maximum of 3)

- ☐ I wanted to live on my own for a period
- ☐ I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills
- ☐ I was interested in the opportunity of benefitting from an interesting academic curriculum
- ☐ I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination
- ☐ I was attracted by the word of mouth, from what people said about it
- ☐ I wanted to try new things and experiences
- ☐ I wanted to make friends from other countries
- ☐ Other:

6. What was your degree of interest in the culture of your Erasmus destination BEFORE your stay? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
No interest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Significant interest

7. What was your degree of interest in the culture of your Erasmus destination AFTER your stay? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
No interest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Significant interest

You, the Tourist

8. Did you engage in tourism activities during your Erasmus stay? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. Was your destination situated in a touristic area of the country?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

10. Which kind of tourism did you do the most? *

- ☐ Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)
- ☐ Nature tourism
- ☐ Active/sports tourism (e.g. Adventure activities, ecotourism, etc.)
- ☐ Religious tourism
- ☐ Other:

11. Do you consider yourself a cultural tourist? *

A cultural tourist is interested in a country or region's culture, specifically the lifestyle of the people in those geographical areas, the history of those people, their art, architecture, religion(s), and other elements that helped shape their way of life.

- ☐ Yes, always
- ☐ Yes, sometimes
- ☐ No, not often
- ☐ No, never

If you replied "No, never", skip to the end.

12. How often did you do cultural tourism?

- ☐ Around once a month
- ☐ More than once a month
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ More than once a week
- ☐ Other:

13a. In your opinion, how important is authenticity when you do cultural tourism?

Authenticity in cultural tourism means that the cultural expressions are not staged/fabricated for the sole purpose of satisfying a touristic/economic need

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important

13b. Why?



14. Do you think your position as an Erasmus gave you advantage to enjoy authentic cultural experiences? Please, explain.



15. Who organized the cultural trips?

- ☐ The university/academic institution
- ☐ A student organisation (e.g., ESN)
- ☐ Me and my friends
- ☐ Other students
- ☐ Other:

16. How far did you travel during your Erasmus stay?

- ☐ I traveled within the region
- ☐ I traveled within the country
- ☐ I traveled to other countries in the boundaries
- ☐ I traveled other countries outside the boundaries

17. How would you rate your destination in terms of touristic attractiveness?

	1	2	3	4	5	
<hr/>						
(not attractive)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	(very attractive)

18a. How would you rate your destination's capability in terms of tourism?

(e.g., organisation, webpage available, tourism office, information available, languages available, etc.)

	1	2	3	4	5	
<hr/>						
Very unsatisfactory	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very satisfactory

18b. Could you please elaborate?

For example, you can explain what the deficiencies were, what the best touristic attraction was, etc.



19. After your Erasmus stay, you...

- ☐ ☐ Never visited the place again
- ☐ ☐ Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
- ☐ ☐ Have visited the place once
- ☐ ☐ Have visited the place more than once
- ☐ ☐ Went back/stayed there after the Erasmus was done

20. Would you recommend your Erasmus destination as a tourist destination to other people?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Yes, definitely

THE END

Congrats, you're done! Thank you so much for your help, I really appreciate it!

If you want to participate in the prize ruffle, please leave an email address so I can contact you in case you are the winner! :)

Participant no.	1. Please, state your age and gender	2. In which academic year were you an Erasmus?
1	23, female	2012-13
2	28, female	2011-12
3	25, female	2010-11
4	23, Female	2011-12
5	26, female	2012-13
6	Female 20	2013-14
7	28, female	2012-13
8	24, female	2011-12
9	24 female	2009-10
10	23 Male	2011-12
11	24, female	2011-12
12	25 female	2010-11
13	25, female	2010-11
14	23, female	2011-12
15	Male, 21	2013-14
16	23, female	2012-13
17	23, male	2013-14
18	18, female	2013-14
19	24, female	2011-12
20	44, female	2013-14
21	28, female	2009-10
22	22, female	2013-14
23	25, Male	2011-12
24	22, female	2010-11
25	23, F	2012-13
26	21 , X	2011-12
27	23, female	2011-12
28	23, male	2012-13
29	29, female	2013-14
30	Male, 21	2013-14
31	24, female	2012-13
32	23, female	2013-14
33	27, X	2011-12
34	25, female	2010-11
35	23, feminin	2011-12
36	26, female	2011-12
37	23, female	2011-12
38	23, female	2012-13
39	21 , female	2013-14
40	21, female	2013-14
41	23, female	2013-14
42	23, female	2013-14
43	24, female	2012-13
44	27, female	2010-11
45	22, female	2012-13
46	26, female	2010-11
47	25, female	2010-11
48	27, male	2011-12
49	25, female	2013-14

Participant no.	3. What was your Erasmus destination and how long did you stay?
1	Nantes, France - 4 Months Parma, Italy - 4 Months
2	UCN, Aalborg, Denmark, 6 months
3	Faro, Portugal 6 months
4	Justus-Liebig-Universität, Giessen, Germany. 10 months
5	I went to the De Montfort University in Leicester, UK. I stayed for the complete academic year so 9 months.
6	Romania - One semester - 5 months
7	MAMK (Mikkeli University of Applied Sciences), Savonlinna, Finland - 3 months
8	Rey Juan Carlos University, Madrid - 5 months
9	Mirandela, Portugal 5 months
10	Denmark, Copenhagen and for 1 year
11	University of Southern Denmark (SDU) Esbjerg - Denmark 10 months
12	Perpignan, France, 4 months
13	Northumbria University; Newcastle; UK; 5 months.
14	Giessen, Germany - 9 months
15	Universitat de les Illes Balears, Palma de Mallorca, Spain
16	Manchester Metropolitan University, Crewe, UK - 3,5 months
17	split, Croatia, 6 months
18	Roskilde, Denmark, 5 months
19	FH Kufstein, Kufstein, Austria 5 months
20	Cyprus, 7 months
21	Växjö University, Växjö, Sweden, 5 months
22	University of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal. 4,5 month.
23	Koper, Slovenia. 5 months
24	Beech Hill College, Monaghan, Ireland 4 months Twente Carmel College, Oldenzaal, the Netherlands, 6 months
25	Swansea, Wales, UK, 10 months
26	My Erasmus destination was Germany and I stayed there for 8 days. The city is called Mülheim a small country where I interacted with a lot of people. It was an amazing cultural exchange which helps me to broaden my mind. Thanks to this experience I made friendship with a lot of people, extraordinary youth and nowadays we still speak.
27	Phillips-Universität Marburg (Germany). 10 months.
28	Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, Scotland, 6 months.
29	Rovaniemi, 3 months
30	Stockholm, for 5 months
31	Universidad de Sevilla, Seville, Spain - 5 months
32	Granada, Spain, 6
33	Giessen 11 months
34	Northumbria University, Newcastle upon Tyne, England - 8 months
35	Giessen (Germany), Justus Liebig Universität Giessen, 6 months
36	Justus Liebig University Giessen, Germany. 6 months.
37	Justus-Liebig-Universität Giessen Giessen, Germany 5 months
38	Toulouse, France - 5 months Bologna, Italy - 5 months
39	First Erasmus: Istanbul, Turkey, Kadir Has University, 5 months Second Erasmus: Lille, France, Lille 1 University, 4 months
40	The University of Salamanca, Salamanca, Spain, 6 months
41	Lucy - Castellanza, Italy, 4 months
42	Belgium, 5 months
43	Freiburg, Germany - 10 months
44	Antwerpen, 6 months
45	Université Paris-Est Créteil, Paris, France - 5 months
46	Universiteit van Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
47	Praga (República Checa), 10 meses.
48	Czech Technical University, Prague (Czech Republic) for 10 months
49	Derry, Northern Ireland - 3 months

Participant no.	4. Was your final destination your first choice?	5. Please, choose the primary reason(s) that led you to participate in the Erasmus programme
1	Yes	I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I wanted to try new things and experiences
2	No	I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I wanted to try new things and experiences, I wanted to make friends from other countries
3	No	I was interested in the opportunity of benefitting from an interesting academic curriculum, I wanted to try new things and experiences, I wanted to make friends from other countries
4	Yes	I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I was interested in the opportunity of benefitting from an interesting academic curriculum, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I wanted to try new things and experiences, I wanted to make friends from other countries
5	Yes	I wanted to live on my own for a period, I was interested in the opportunity of benefitting from an interesting academic curriculum, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination
6	Yes	I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I wanted to try new things and experiences, I wanted to make friends from other countries
7	Yes	I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I was attracted by the word of mouth, from what people said about it
8	No	I wanted to live on my own for a period, I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I wanted to try new things and experiences
9	Yes	I was attracted by the word of mouth, from what people said about it, I wanted to try new things and experiences
10	Yes	I wanted to try new things and experiences
11	No	I wanted to live on my own for a period, I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I wanted to make friends from other countries
12	Yes	I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I wanted to make friends from other countries
13	Yes	I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I was interested in the opportunity of benefitting from an interesting academic curriculum, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination
14	Yes	I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I was interested in the opportunity of benefitting from an interesting academic curriculum, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I wanted to try new things and experiences
15	Yes	I wanted to live on my own for a period, I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I was interested in the opportunity of benefitting from an interesting academic curriculum, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I wanted to try new things and experiences, I wanted to make friends from other countries
16	Yes	I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I wanted to try new things and experiences, I wanted to make friends from other countries
17	Yes	I wanted to live on my own for a period, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I wanted to try new things and experiences
18	Yes	I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I wanted to try new things and experiences, I wanted to make friends from other countries
19	Yes	I was interested in the opportunity of benefitting from an interesting academic curriculum, I wanted to try new things and experiences, I wanted to make friends from other countries
20	Yes	I was interested in the opportunity of benefitting from an interesting academic curriculum, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I wanted to make friends from other countries
21	Yes	I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I was attracted by the word of mouth, from what people said about it, I wanted to try new things and experiences, I wanted to make friends from other countries
22	No	I wanted to live on my own for a period, I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I wanted to try new things and experiences, I wanted to make friends from other countries
23	Yes	I wanted to live on my own for a period, I was interested in the opportunity of benefitting from an interesting academic curriculum, I wanted to make friends from other countries
24	Yes	I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I wanted to make friends from other countries
25	Yes	I wanted to learn another language and/or improve my language skills, I wanted to learn about the culture of the destination, I wanted to try new things and experiences

[illegible]

Participant no.	6. What was your degree of interest in the culture of your Erasmus destination BEFORE your stay?	7. What was your degree of interest in the culture of your Erasmus destination AFTER your stay?
1	3	5
2	3	5
3	4	5
4	3	5
5	3	5
6	1	4
7	4	5
8	3	5
9	1	4
10	4	5
11	3	2
12	4	4
13	4	5
14	4	5
15	1	3
16	3	3
17	4	4
18	5	5
19	3	3
20	4	5
21	5	5
22	2	5
23	3	4
24	2	4
25	4	5
26	4	4
27	4	5
28	4	5
29	5	5
30	4	5
31	3	2
32	5	5
33	3	5
34	5	5
35	2	5
36	3	5
37	2	5
38	4	5
39	4	5
40	5	5
41	3	5
42	3	5
43	5	5
44	3	4
45	4	4
46	3	4
47	2	5
48	5	5
49	2	3

Participant no. ▼	8. Did you engage in tourism activities during your Erasmus stay? ▼	9. Was your destination situated in a touristic area of the country? ▼
1	Yes	No
2	Yes	No
3	Yes	No
4	Yes	Yes
5	Yes	No
6	Yes	No
7	Yes	Yes
8	Yes	Yes
9	Yes	No
10	Yes	No
11	Yes	Yes
12	Yes	Yes
13	Yes	Yes
14	Yes	Yes
15	Yes	Yes
16	Yes	Yes
17	Yes	Yes
18	Yes	I don't know
19	Yes	Yes
20	Yes	Yes
21	Yes	Yes
22	Yes	Yes
23	Yes	Yes
24	Yes	No
25	Yes	Yes
26	No	Yes
27	Yes	Yes
28	Yes	Yes
29	Yes	Yes
30	Yes	Yes
31	Yes	Yes
32	Yes	Yes
33	Yes	I don't know
34	Yes	Yes
35	Yes	No
36	Yes	Yes
37	Yes	No
38	Yes	Yes
39	Yes	Yes
40	Yes	Yes
41	Yes	No
42	Yes	Yes
43	Yes	Yes
44	Yes	Yes
45	Yes	Yes
46	Yes	Yes
47	Yes	Yes
48	Yes	Yes
49	Yes	Yes

Participant no. ▼	10. Which kind of tourism did you do the most? ▼	11. Do you consider yourself a cultural tourist? ▼
1	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
2	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
3	Active/sports tourism (e.g. Adventure activities, ecotourism, etc.)	Yes, sometimes
4	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
5	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
6	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
7	Nature tourism	Yes, always
8	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
9	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
10	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
11	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
12	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
13	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
14	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
15	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
16	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
17	Active/sports tourism (e.g. Adventure activities, ecotourism, etc.)	Yes, sometimes
18	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
19	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
20	Active/sports tourism (e.g. Adventure activities, ecotourism, etc.)	Yes, always
21	Nature tourism	Yes, sometimes
22	Nature tourism	Yes, always
23	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
24	Nature tourism	Yes, always
25	Nature tourism	Yes, sometimes

26	Active/sports tourism (e.g. Adventure activities, ecotourism, etc.)	Yes, always
27	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
28	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
29	Nature tourism	Yes, always
30	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	No, not often
31	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
32	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
33	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
34	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
35	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
36	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
37	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
38	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
39	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
40	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
41	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
42	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
43	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
44	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
45	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes
46	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
47	Nature tourism	Yes, sometimes
48	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, always
49	Cultural tourism (Museums, monuments, gastronomy, heritage etc.)	Yes, sometimes

Participant no.	12. How often did you do cultural tourism?
1	More than once a month
2	More than once a month
3	More than once a month
4	More than once a month
5	Around once a month
6	Once a week
7	More than once a month
8	More than once a week
9	Around once a month
10	More than once a month
11	More than once a month
12	More than once a month
13	Once a week
14	Once a week
15	More than once a month
16	More than once a month
17	Around once a month
18	Around once a month
19	Around once a month
20	Around once a month
21	Around once a month
22	More than once a month
23	More than once a week
24	Around once a month
25	More than once a month
26	Around once a month
27	Once a week
28	More than once a week
29	
30	Around once a month
31	Around once a month
32	Once a week
33	Around once a month
34	More than once a month
35	once a year
36	More than once a month
37	twice a year
38	More than once a week
39	More than once a month
40	Once a week
41	Once a week
42	More than once a week
43	More than once a month
44	Once a week
45	Around once a month, More than once a month
46	Once a week
47	More than once a month
48	Once a week
49	Once a week

Participant no.	13a. In your opinion, how important is authenticity when you do cultural tourism?	13b. Why?
1	4	It's good to know that things are genuine and that you are taking in facts rather than information that could be false.
2	5	Through using stereotypes for advertisement, the authenticity of the destination decreases. Of course, in some regions like Austria, it is necessary to work in Dirndl, because this is what the tourists expect, but the destinations should not "overdue" it.
3	4	Because if you have the feeling of the culture being real, the overall experience is better and longer lasting
4	4	
5	4	There are certain experiences you can not enjoy unless everyone involved is relaxed and comfortable and also people tend to put on a different attitude towards tourists that are only passing by than to foreign people that become regulars of a place.
6	3	
7	3	I like when my experience is as most authentic as possible, but sometimes it cannot be avoided to be for touristic purpose - how else should we show development and past habits etc.
8	4	I enjoy going to original tapas bars and cafes, rather than experience staged tourists attractions.
9	4	Authenticity is important in order to really get to know local culture and people. If it's staged you never discover the real nature of the place.
10	5	You are searching for a true experience. Not one that can easily be fabricated and copied.
11	4	Because I want to experience the real culture, not something staged that only exist within stereotypes of other cultures or that the real people living there are not considering themselves as their culture.
12	5	For me, authenticity is very important. I do not like touristic offers that are tailored to touristic needs. When I visit a foreign country I want to get to know the culture very well and not go back with a wrong image of the country.
13	4	Authenticity is so important because it's the only way in which culture can be properly reflected and we can learn about the place that we are visiting, its inhabitants, its language... On the other hand, if culture is fabricated, we won't learn any of these things.
14	4	Because I want to know the reality of the country and culture.
15	5	
16	4	-
17	4	
18	5	
19	4	To completely get to know the culture well-real & pure
20	5	When visiting a place I try to meet with everyday people and have a taste of their everyday life.
21	4	
22	5	More easy to be integrated.
23	5	All the nations have to show their pristine characteristics in order to be considered as unique.

24	5	Because it has no sense if it is all organized only in a touristic optic.
25	5	
26	4	Authenticity it's very important because you can create an imagine that helps the other people to understand things about you. Creativity it's also important
27	5	
28	4	I just like the experience to be untampered with, it is difficult to explain.
29	5	Because I like it. I also study this topic in my Master programme
30	5	It needs to be authentic, not false. Otherwise If it's staged, people are just "victim" of the marketing done by the city. Visiting what's authentic, you can feel what's surrounding you and that's the best thing ever.
31	5	Because it only feels real when it is in fact authentic
32	5	
33	3	
34	5	I think it is a great opportunity to learn a different culture and the history behind it. It needs to be authentic otherwise it is something artificial that can be created somewhere else and it doesn't belong to the given country itself.
35	2	Important to me is to know other places, people and cultures. I don't mind very much if it is totally authentic or if it is commercial
36	5	
37	4	i love seeing other cultures, as they are but i do not want to get involved in dangerous situations
38	5	Because tourism should be about understanding how people in other countries live in order to understand the people themselves better. It should be about learning and integrating yourself rather than setting yourself apart in a typical tourist group.
39	3	It is very important to engage yourself in foreign culture; try to do things as locals do in order to feel the real cultural spirit and avoid places which are designed specially for tourists and do not create the authentic cultural atmosphere you want to feel
40	5	I think it is simply easier to actually learn about the culture if it is not fabricated. You actually see the real culture, not a product.
41	5	To experience the way of life and the culture of the hosting country
42	5	They show the real self of the inhabitants and therefore are more interesting rather than some tips that have no longer use in practice.
43	5	In this way, you can actually see how people are reacting, which objects they use, what are their feelings.
44	4	
45	4	
46	5	
47	2	
48	5	Authenticity is the key of every cultural trip. I like looking at the past and the roots of every place in order to understand the current state.
49	2	

Participant no.	14. Do you think your position as an Erasmus gave you advantage to enjoy authentic cultural experiences? Please, explain.
1	Yes thanks to making friends with some native people.
2	Since I was located in a city that was not necessarily known as a tourist destination, i could experience the real culture.
3	yes,because you get to know local people and do more activities that go beyond activities which Are staged for tourists. You get experiences which you only get when you are involved in the culture.
4	Yes, because I had the opportunity to get to know people from many different cultures and to learn something from each of them.
5	Yes, and I know I'm very lucky cause I was able to stay for a very extended period of time. It gave me the chance to create bonds with all kinds of people and it also gave me a better sense of understanding of what the daily life of an English person looks like.
6	Lot of things were organised for Erasmus people to meet Romanian people, to experience new things, to visit stuffs...
7	At the beginning of my stay I firstly decided to use couchsurfing and I stayed few days at Finnish family and I got lots of information from them. Also tutor system worked well - we were part of normal life, not common tourists.
8	Simetimes yes, because I was leaving in a destination for 5 months, but since I was not fluent with spanish sometimes I was also perceived as a tourist.
9	Yes . because I became friend with my classmates and other local students who showed me the real authentic life.
10	Of course just in the people you meet where you are living and in an when you try and intergrate yourself into their society.
11	Yes, to a degree. I met some Danes while living abroad who told me and show me the real lifestyle and gave me advices on the places to see and visit.
12	Yes, because as an Erasmus you have the opportunity to get easily in contact with locals. They can show you interesting sights and give you insider tips where to go.
13	Yes, I do think so. As an Erasmus student, you have the possibility of living in the same way as local people do. Then, you can do exactly the same activities or going to the same places as locals.
14	Yes, since I was able to know students from the country and enjoy their perspective on their culture.
15	
16	Perhaps, yes!
17	
18	
19	I think i had the same chance as everyone else
20	Eventhough the period of this specific course was limited, I had the chance to meet with a lot of local people, with whom I exchanged e-mails, in order to keep in contact, exchange visits and maybe cooperate in future projects.
21	No. We too often stayed in the international Erasmus group.
22	Yes.
23	I had the opportunities to visit many cultural places because I stayed long enough, as well as almost all other Erasmus students were interested in doing so. Hence, it was easy to organize trips 3-4 times in a month.
24	Yes, because being an Erasmus made me have an authentic mind, enjoying the real experiences.
25	

26	Of course that gave me the opportunity to enjoy authentic experience because being in contact with different culture with different opinions helps to open your mind, and more important helps to tolerate and respect each other.
27	Yes, it does. I could meet people from another countries and I become interested in their cultures.
28	I think it was more generally my position as a student at a foreign university that gave me the advantage, less so being an actual Erasmus student. I met a lot of local residents who studied at the university, and it was through these students that I had most of my cultural experiences.
29	yes. I like to experience my own way
30	Yes, because otherwise I would not have visited so much. I always wanted to go to Sweden because I have been there once already, but staying 5 months you can enjoy and live it as a real citizen for example. You have more time than if you decide to go for Holidays.
31	Yes, because it gives you a better experience when you actually live there
32	Yes because you have much more time to get to know a culture in detail, and you can meet people easier than on vacation
33	
34	I think it did in regards to the length of my stay there. I mean, I had the time to explore around and not having to rush to visit different places. I knew I would be there for a long period of time and that's why I could plan many different places worth visiting.
35	I don't know
36	Yes, I believe so. When you live and study in a foreign country, it's inevitable that at least for some time you mingle with native people and get acquainted with authentic natural experiences. I think that without getting this experience, you can't truly get the taste of another culture.
37	yes, i got to know other culture, and i was so impressed that my interest for other cultures increased.
38	Yes - extended period in the country, opportunity to experience things such as local markets and festivals with local people.
39	Yes I do believe so, because when you are erasmus student, you become a habitant in that country and obviously can discover more in local culture than tourists do. For example, when I was Erasmus student in Istanbul there was a special trip organised for international students, which helped to embrace turkish culture even more, or when I was in France, also as Erasmus student, there were several welcoming events to help students during their first days of Erasmus journey
40	Yes, it did. It encouraged me to travel and explore my Erasmus country more. Also, I was influenced by many offers from the host university, friends, student organizations.
41	yes. When you live for a longer period of time in a country household really experience the culture
42	Oh, it for sure did. Experiencing another culture with other foreigners and discussing how we view it and how things are in our countries was one of the coolest and most amazing things about Erasmus.
43	We had some financial facilities and people were more interested in explaining us how their country is going
44	No, because I was surrounded with foreign students.
45	
46	Yes, as an erasmus student is was very interested in getting in touch with different people and cultures
47	Si
48	Yes, I do. When you live in the place for some time, you are able to reach the true essence and catch the feelings of the inhabitants. You can tell the difference between authentic and fabricated things.
49	

Participant no. ▼	15. Who organized the cultural trips? ▼
1	The university/academic institution, Me and my friends
2	Me and my friends
3	The university/academic institution, A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
4	Me and my friends
5	The university/academic institution, Me and my friends
6	A student organisation (e.g., ESN)
7	The university/academic institution, A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends, Other students
8	A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
9	A student organisation (e.g., ESN)
10	Me and my friends
11	Me and my friends
12	Me and my friends, Other students
13	Me and my friends
14	The university/academic institution, Me and my friends
15	A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
16	The university/academic institution, Me and my friends, Other students
17	A student organisation (e.g., ESN)
18	Me and my friends
19	Me and my friends
20	YEU Cyprus
21	A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
22	A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
23	The university/academic institution, A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
24	Me and my friends, My host family
25	The university/academic institution, Me and my friends
26	The university/academic institution
27	The university/academic institution, Me and my friends, Other students
28	A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends, Other students
29	Me and my friends
30	The university/academic institution, A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
31	A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
32	A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
33	Me and my friends
34	A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
35	Me and my friends
36	A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
37	The university/academic institution
38	A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
39	The university/academic institution, A student organisation (e.g., ESN), City Council
40	A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
41	A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
42	The university/academic institution, A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
43	The university/academic institution, A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
44	Me and my friends
45	A student organisation (e.g., ESN), Me and my friends
46	Me and my friends
47	Me and my friends
48	Me and my friends
49	A student organisation (e.g., ESN)

Participant no.	16. How far did you travel during your Erasmus stay?	17. How would you rate your destination in terms of touristic attractiveness?
1	I traveled within the country	2
2	I traveled other countries outside the boundaries	3
3	I traveled other countries outside the boundaries	3
4	I traveled other countries outside the boundaries	3
5	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	3
6	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	3
7	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	3
8	I traveled within the country	4
9	I traveled within the country	4
10	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	4
11	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	4
12	I traveled within the region	4
13	I traveled within the country	4
14	I traveled within the country	4
15	I traveled within the region	4
16	I traveled within the country	4
17	I traveled other countries outside the boundaries	4
18	I traveled within the region	4
19	I traveled within the country	4
20	I traveled within the region	4
21	I traveled other countries outside the boundaries	4
22	I traveled within the region	4
23	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	4
24	I traveled within the country	4
25	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	4
26	I traveled within the country	4
27	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	5
28	I traveled within the country	5
29	I traveled within the country	5
30	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	5
31	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	5
32	I traveled within the country	5
33	I traveled within the country	5
34	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	5
35	I traveled other countries outside the boundaries	5
36	I traveled within the country	5
37	I traveled within the region	5
38	I traveled within the country	5
39	I traveled other countries outside the boundaries	5
40	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	5
41	I traveled within the country	5
42	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	5
43	I traveled other countries outside the boundaries	5
44	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	5
45	I traveled other countries outside the boundaries	5
46	I traveled other countries outside the boundaries	5
47	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	5
48	I traveled to other countries in the boundaries	5
49	I traveled within the country	

Participant no.	18a. How would you rate your destination's capability in terms of tourism?	18b. Could you please elaborate?
1	3	
2	3	
3	3	
4	3	Although Giessen wasn't very attractive for tourists (since it was actually bombed in the Second WW and fully destroyed) it was well connected by train to many other beautiful cities that are highly recommended to be visited. For example, it will take you only 15 minutes to get to Marburg and 40 minutes to Frankfurt.
5	4	<p>Leicester is not a big city but culturally speaking it certainly had very interesting things to offer. It has a couple of art museums and galleries and a history museum with a good archive on the undustrial era and world war II mostly, roman ruins, old castles and some funny legends and a space center nearby. The touristic information was provided to me by the Uni but the tourism info office is right in the middle of town and I went in a couple of times to ask for directions.</p> <p>The most interesting thing to me though was the fact Leicester is one of the cities with the most mixed up population in the UK so I was able to meet a lot of people with very different backgrounds. The city celebrates some middle eastern festivities due to this and it was a very enjoyable experience to watch the parades.</p>
6	2	Transylvania was quite touristic but it was the only part of Romania which was touristic with Bucarest a little bit.
7	5	In general, Finland is mostly beautiful and unspoilt nature, which means tourists who are more for cities and historical monuments can be dissapointed. Also stereotypes about weather don't help. Best touristic attractions are national parks and rent a hut near lake with sauna. However, Finland is well prepared for tourists, especially in national parks.
8	4	<p>The whole Madrid is very attractive destination. Main attractions are Royal Palace, Prado Museum, Puerta del Sol square, plenty of tapas bars, cafes and Retiro Park.</p> <p>The only disadvantage in my point of view ist that, Madrid is really big city, a bit too big for an erasmus destination.</p>
9	4	Portugal has really good tourism potential however it does not promote it's country enough. Portugal is not very well known as a tourism destination from other European countries. Because it's far from everywhere and the promotion of the country doesn't reach all markets. People still think it's part of Spain or things like this.
10	2	Its not advertised to the tourist. The richest part about the destination is the culture yet Denmark insists on advertising a little murmade and heritage whereas I am under the belief they should be promoting their culture now as the go to reason to go to Denmark.
11	4	I mean Denmark is overall an interesting country, which has a lot to offer in terms of nature and coast line. But on the other side, it is a rather boring country on the long run for me and also there is not that big of a different culture for me since I am from Germany, and the cultures are not too different.
12	3	For me, it was not a problem to get information about touristic attractions because I spoke the native language. But when my parents came to visit me it was quite difficult for them because they did not speak French. In restaurants e.g. they only had menus in French, so I had to translate everything. Without me they probably would not have got along.
13	4	I missed to have a information office. It's true that in the main street there was a machine which could help you with your questions about tourism in the city, but I prefer to deal with people. When you speak face to face, more information can be provided.
14	4	About the defficiencies, I would say it would have been necessary someone who could guide us from the firts day of our stay.
15	4	
16	5	
17	3	
18	5	
19	4	
20	4	The timetable of the course was very strict and long during the day, so only one day was free.

21	3	
22	3	
23	5	Since in the past Slovenia and Macedonia were together in the federation of Yugoslavia, there aren't so much cultural differences. But, the best attraction in my opinion is Postojna Cave, Predjama Castle, Metelkova Street in Ljubljana, the town of Izola etc.
24	3	
25	3	
26	4	
27	5	
28	5	I wouldn't be able to pinpoint any deficiencies, as I didn't feel there were any, everything was easy to find information about, and most was in several different languages, not that I personally needed it in Scotland. The big lochs in Scotland were some of the best tourist attractions that I went to, Loch Lomond was beautiful, and Loch Ness was/is storied - and a must see in Scotland. Edinburgh is also a sight, a city with so much history in it.
29	4	Could always be better. Always strive for your customers to get more than expected
30	5	Everything was done to please tourists, like languages for destinations, guides for example. Even if we almost never took guides, for my parents when they visited me it was really convenient.
31	5	Sevilla and Andalusia in general has so much to offer and it would takes ages to write about it. It is absolutely stunning.
32	5	
33	5	
34	5	I lived in Newcastle for almost a year and I can honestly say it is a great place for history. You can find Hadrian's Wall right there, the castle of Newcastle, the Quayside - where you can see the different bridges-, there's a big monument in the city centre which was erected to Grey - an important politician - and many other historical places that could completely change your view of the North East of England.
35	5	
36	3	In Germany language is a usual barrier but if you know some of it, you can overcome many difficulties. The best touristic attraction for me was Kassel, its natural park and the beautiful castle.
37	5	best: semesterticket, and train bonus so we could travel cheaper
38	4	Bologna has a big central tourism office with lots of information about traditional tourism activities as well as things like local festivals and gastronomy.
39	5	Istanbul is the city which is famous for having many attractions and which is attracting tourists from all over the world. Both Lille and Erasmus are student friendly as they are offering discounts and also can provide vast quantity of attractions starting from museums, famous churches, restaurants, open-air sights.
40	5	Salamanca is a small, but very touristic city. Its whole oldtown belongs to the UNESCO world heritage. It has great architecture, museums, churches, cathedral, the university is one of the oldest universities in Spain.
41	4	Ski trip to the Italian alps, just a visit to Milan and the Tuscany trip
42	5	The country of Belgium has a wonderful architecture and landmarks, however it somewhat feels an inbetween country for France and Holland blending both cultures together, but not quite. It doesn't have its own very set cuisine or super traditional habits, but for any kind of tourist either cultural, sports activists it is sure a grand place, nature lovers could also find sth more to the south or by the sea, im not so convinced about religious aspect as belgians are rather atheistic, but all the other can find something for themselves within that small country.
43	5	Freiburg is situated at the border with France and Switzerland, so there are many possibilities to travel in Central Europe.
44	4	The town itself was the best touristic attraction.
45	5	
46	5	Amsterdam is full of tourist attractions, museums, etc.
47	5	
48	3	Prague is a really well conditioned city to tourism. But I missed some info in spanish for visitors at some interesting (but not so well-known) places. I missed also more accurate info about how public transport work.
49		

Participant no	19. After your Erasmus stay, you...
1	Have visited the place once
2	Went back/stayed there after the Erasmus was done
3	Have visited the place more than once
4	Have visited the place once
5	Have visited the place more than once
6	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
7	Have visited the place more than once
8	Have visited the place once, Went back/stayed there after the Erasmus was done
9	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
10	Went back/stayed there after the Erasmus was done
11	Went back/stayed there after the Erasmus was done
12	Have visited the place once
13	Have visited the place more than once
14	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
15	Never visited the place again
16	Never visited the place again
17	Have visited the place once
18	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
19	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
20	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
21	Went back/stayed there after the Erasmus was done
22	Have visited the place more than once
23	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
24	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
25	Have visited the place once
26	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
27	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
28	Have visited the place more than once
29	Never visited the place again
30	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
31	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
32	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
33	Never visited the place again, Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
34	Have visited the place more than once
35	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
36	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
37	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
38	Have visited the place once
39	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
40	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
41	Have visited the place once
42	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
43	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
44	Have visited the place once
45	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
46	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
47	Never visited the place again, but you want/are planning on coming back to visit it
48	Have visited the place once

Participant no.	20. Would you recommend your Erasmus destination as a tourist destination to other people?
1	3
2	3
3	4
4	4
5	4
6	5
7	5
8	4
9	5
10	5
11	3
12	4
13	5
14	3
15	5
16	3
17	5
18	4
19	4
20	5
21	4
22	5
23	5
24	4
25	3
26	4
27	5
28	5
29	5
30	5
31	5
32	5
33	4
34	5
35	5
36	5
37	4
38	5
39	5
40	5
41	4
42	5
43	5
44	5
45	4
46	5
47	5
48	5
49	1

7.2. Online Interviews Data

7.21. Interview Guide

→ Pre-Erasmus travel experience

→ Current motivations to travel

- Different after Erasmus? Erasmus as trigger for more travel?
- Kind of tourism engaged

→ Elaborate on choice of Erasmus destinations

- First choice? Why?

→ Regarding Erasmus stay motivations

- Previous Knowledge of culture / destination
- To-do List planned before hand?

→ How much did you travel?

Expenditure, Duration, type of accomodation, means of transport, origin of info for travel?

→ Origin of the money destined to tourism (parents? Grants? Work? Savings?)

→ Rate destination in terms of “touristic capability”

- Accessibility, attraction-veness, interest (culturally, etc.)

→ Destination: was it an Erasmus/student/young city? Opinion on that, and kind of cities that are considered young/student ones

7.2.2. Interviews

INTERVIEWEE A

F, 25, NEWCASTLE (UK), 5 months

Interviewer / Respondent

Let's start talking about your travel experience before your Erasmus exchange. For example, was it your first 'grand' trip?

Yes and no. It was not the first time that I travelled abroad, but it was the longer period. Before going to Newcastle (UK), I've already been in Guildford and Brighton but only a month in each place.

Did you visit other places than England beforehand?

Yes, Italy and France.

Great. Can you elaborate on the motivations for those trips? The ones made before your Erasmus.

I visited Italy because it was a School Trip. Regarding to France, I wanted to improve my French, so I decided to go there and put my name down in a French course.

Both were good opportunities for me to know these places, the culture and the people there.

A month is enough time to see the place. Since you mention culture and people, did you engage in cultural tourism there?

yes! I love tourism. Every time that I travel I go sightseeing. I love preparing trips in advance, so I usually make a list including everything that I would like to visit in those places. Not only monuments, but also museums, restaurants, parks, shops...

Did you plan the trip likewise with your Erasmus?

Yes. In fact, a friend of mine was Erasmus the previous year, so she informed me about things to do in the area, places to visit...

Great! Last thing about the previous trips, did you visit the area around, or even other cities nearby?

yes. I always try to visit surrounded area to get the most of the trip.

Nice. Since the Erasmus was the longest you stayed abroad before, would you say it prompted you to travel even more?

Definitely, it did. It makes my motivation increase, and I learnt more about planning trips, looking for accommodation and deciding which things to visit / see in a certain place.

Now, about your Erasmus. From the survey, Newcastle was your first option. Why?

I studied English Language and Tourism, so I wanted to live for a certain time in UK. The only option that my home university gave me was Newcastle. I didn't think a lot about it. In fact, my second option was Newcastle for a year. The 3rd one was France (Metz I think...) because in the degree we also learn French.

Once there, how much did you travel? Could you elaborate on the expenditure, the duration of the trips, etc.?

I tried to travel specially during the weekends, since on week days I was quite busy. I remember that my first trip was to Edimburgh, I was visiting the castle and the area. It was an organized trip by Northumbria University, so it was only one day by bus.

I also went to Harrogate, Saltaire, Durham, Tynemouth, Leeds and Manchester. Sometimes by bus and sometimes by train, depending on distances and prices.

If you ever had to stay overnight, which kind of accommodation did you choose?

Cheap hotels or sometimes if I have friends in this city I stayed with friends.

Nice. How much money would you dedicate to tourism during your Erasmus? (No need to specify an amount, but maybe a percentage or "a lot/a little" etc.)

I used to look for good offers so I can't say it was a lot... A reasonable amount I would say.

So, about the money. It is said that some people work during their long travels in order to fund them. I'd like to know what was your source of income (to fund your tourism activities during your Erasmus exchange). Was it all from the grant?

well, not only the grant, but also my parents. When I went on Erasmus I was said that I would receive 400 € per month. Obviously with this amount of money I couldn't afford to pay accommodation in a residence, so I decided to share a flat which was much cheaper. Finally during my stay (at the end of the first month), I was informed that I would receive 900 € per month, so I had more than enough, because I went there thinking that I'd have to survive with 400 € or 600 € per month (200 extra from my parents).

I see. Now, about your destination. How was Newcastle, tourism-wise?

yeah! in Newcastle there are lots of things to do. The most attractive things are the bridges, they are a real symbol of Newcastle and it's possible to find even pounds with the Millennium bridge represented on them.

Moreover, the castle or the Angel of the North are also quite visited and it also worth it to have a walk in order to visit its museums, cathedral or churches.

So, I guess the city is quite developed regarding tourism. Could you perceive a 'student/young atmosphere' in there?

Yes. It is a place with two universities (Northumbria University and Newcastle University), so there are lots of students. Most of people from Northern Ireland dedice to study in these universities because they are quite good, cheaper and Newcastle has an airport, so they can go home easily.

Were cultural activities promoted in the city? Did the university (or any other?) guide foreign students to certain touristic attractions?

Yeah! Northumbria university counts with the Student's Union and they promote tourism in the city and surrounded areas specially for students. Every week they propose a plan for the weekend.

Great! To end now... Overall, would you say you had an 'authentic' experience during your Erasmus? (culturally)

I'd say so! I tried to enjoy the toon, as Geordies call Newcastle! Most of the friends that I made were from the city, so I tried to live as they did it so that I could learn their culture. For example, Geordie accent it's a peculiarity from there and I tried to learn the most of it.

I saw that you came back to the city after your Erasmus stay, so complementary to that question, what is that made you come back?

I really love the city and I still have friends there so I try to go and visit at least once every 2 years. Newcastle is a place in which I wouldn't mind to live.

INTERVIEWEE B

F, 26, Leicester (UK) , 9 months

Interviewer / Respondent

I would like to start with your travel experience before the Erasmus exchange. Could you elaborate on that? (e.g., was it your first trip abroad, places visited, what kind of tourism did you do, etc.)

The first trip we just really wanted to go abroad somewhere because my partner and the other couple had already gone to other countries and I was the only one who had only travelled inside Spain. London happened to be the cheapest airplane ticket we found at the time and I already was a bit of an anglophile then. I loved The busy feel of London and I wouldn't shut up about it so in the end I convinced three of my female friends to go there for a week.

It just felt like I had left so many things to see on the first trip.

What did you do in London?

we went to the typical museums and sights. I forced my friends to visit every comic book shop I could find on the internet the previous weeks. So forbidden planet, gosh comics and a couple more on the soho. I also dragged them to art stores cause London has a lot of art colleges and the art stores are amazing. Turns out Cass art was on sale and I found things I wouldn't find in the art stores in my city.

I also bought tickets to go to the theatre to see The Woman in Black but my partner got sick that day and I gave the tickets to the other couple. We also made one of those route tours. The Jack the Ripper one on White Chappel

Cultural tourist to the core I see here 😊

yes, basically. How not to be with a city that has so much history and art!

Sure! So, your Erasmus destination was your first choice. Why did you choose it?

well, after those trips to London I did some research on art colleges there and what courses they offered. I got more and more curious about their higher education and I saw that there were two english institutions I could do an erasmus exchange with in my faculty. So the idea started simmering in my head.

At the time I was having a generally shitty situation at home. I wasn't getting along with my parents at all. So the prospect of going to live abroad for 9 month all by myself seemed like paradise.

I see. So in the end, you already had knowledge about the culture prior to your Erasmus stay. When the position was finally assigned to you, did you do any tourism-related plans before going there?

not really. I did some general research on the city I would stay but I waited til I got there to make plans for touristic trips

Once there, how much did you travel? Could you elaborate on the expediture, the duration of the trips, and means of transportation and acommodation if applies? By travel, I mean also tourism in general. (like, even if the 'travels' were within the city area)

Sure! Except for a trip to Ireland that I did by plane all my trips were either by train or bus. In fact I looked at the railcard for students and when I saw that It took away a third part of the usual fee I went to get one straight ahead.

So, you did travel a lot? ☺

the trip to ireland was roughly 5 days. But most of my other trips I did on the weekend. I was specially lucky the first semester because I didn't have any lectures on monday morning and that allowed me to both stay more time and buy cheaper tickets to return home.

yeah. I would say I would try and travel every two weeks

What triggered you to travel?

I wanted to see as much as I could of the country because I'm an art and culture obsess. But some weekends I would simply go to visit other friends I had living in other cities. For example Sheffield

visiting sheffield was specially fun because my friend would take me to these Ceildh dances

there were other times that something special was happening in London or somewhere else and I would go to that special event

for exmple MCM comicon

or a concert

or maybe a thatre play I really wanted to see

I'm guessing an important part of your budget went to cultural tourism activities.

Yes

May I ask how did you fund your stay?

I worked on the summer full time and I also got lucky selling t-shirt designs. I earnt aproximately 2700€ between the two. I did this because I knew the money from the erasmus scholarship wouldn't be there until october/november so I would need cash before getting that.

I ended up being a bit short on money the last month of my stay but I got a job for a couple of weeks and could pay everything.

In the survey, you stated that your destination was not placed in a touristc area. How would you rate it tourism-wise anyway?

on a scale of 1 to 10 I would give it a 5 or a 6 at most

Sure, the city had some things to see but Leicester has always been an industrial city

the most interesting things were AROUND the city

like the castles or the space center

so you needed a bus to go there

How important/present was the young/student population there?

very important. Its a city with two unis and a big chunk of its population are students

Did this aspect make it better?

yeah. because every store has students offers most of the time. Even pubs have their special prices for students. Culturally it meant that there are lots of places to party and a universe of uni societies doing interesting things.

the students of the drama faculty would do a play once a month and there was a comedy festival that was aimed primarily at students

So, one could say that the city relied heavily on the youth population

Yes

In the survey, you responded that you visited the city again after your stay. Why?

because on the year there I started a relationship with an English boy and I missed my friends and the people there.

9 months is a long period, you probably integrated a lot. You said before you were a bit of an 'anglophile'. Did the Erasmus allow you to enjoy better of the English culture?

There were aspects of the English culture I had not payed too much attention to. For example. I didn't realize how much of an in doors culture they had. pubs and student pubs are always as cozy and homely as you can imagine because people spend whole evenings there.

for example my game society held the weekly meets in a pub

and we wouldn't leave until midnight

I also think the have more of a philanthropist culture than we do

Volunteering at your local charity is almost a must-do for a student

and most of the uni societies end up doing some charity work at any point.

I baked cupcakes to raise money for LGBT homeless teens with LGBT society

And in my particular case

I found that English culture is much more multicultural than I had expected and much more tolerant

I found out because only half the city is white

The rest of the population is mixed.

Leicester is one of the most racially diverse cities of England

So, I can guess that the new culture made you aware of your own. Did you feel any sort of authenticity related to your cultural experiences in England?

yes, you wouldn't be able to learn some of their values unless you lived there, because it shows in the day to day basis, not on tourist trips

Did your Erasmus experience make you more prone to travel?

yes. Although it also left me almost bankrupt :P

Haha. Could you elaborate?

yes, I would say that once you try living for so long in a different place you become a bit addicted to finding what different cultures can give you. Not just as a tourist but also if they can change you as a person

INTERVIEWEE C

F, 26, Marburg (Germany) , 10 months

Interviewer / Respondent

So, let's start with your travel experience before your Erasmus. For example, was it your first 'big trip'? Did you travel frequently before?

Yes, it was. I travelled before with high school or with my dance association. But, not, i didn't travel frequently before.

I see. From the survey, I gathered that Marburg was your first destination of choice. Why?

I preferred England or Ireland in order to improve my English, but my degree had not any agreement in these countries, so I decided to go to France. The problem? It was so expensive and I had not a big grant for living there. My coordinator told me that she was the first Erasmus of the University of Extremadura and she went to Marburg. Her sister was a Professor there as well. There were lots of contacts and great experiences there from my professor there, so I decided to choose Marburg.

Wow, that's some curious story!

;)

So, one may ask now, how come you still had interest in the culture of the country? I mean Germany of course, your destination.

I don't really know. I wanted to know a new culture, different from Mediterranean ones (the nearest cultures to me). I was interested in German people's lifestyle, their buildings and monuments and, of course, their language. It was a challenge for me because I went to Marburg and I couldn't talk any German. I knocked over the prejudices I had from German people living there. I love their lifestyle.

May I assume that you didn't really know much about the destination before travelling then?

No, I didn't.

Did you plan a sort of "tourism to-do list" before going there? Or did you just simply improvise once you arrived?

I improvised everything once I arrived. I didn't know what I would have a Semesterticket which allowed me travelling around all my region for free.

Travelling with more people was very cheap. We improvised always.

Nice! Can you elaborate on the duration of the travels? Accommodation (if applies), expenditure...

Usually we travelled in our region, Hesse, and we spent only one day, so we didn't think about accommodation. We ate in fast-food restaurants, in the train stations or we brought our own sandwiches. When we went outside, to Berlin, for example, we spent four or five days there. We stayed in a hostel very cheap (7 euros per night more or less) but very very clean and modern. Sometimes we spent our days travelling in traing. We slept in trains or in train stations...

We didn't spend a lot of money in our travels.

Where would you get the info to travel (and where to travel)?

When we travelled around our region, we paid attetion to the cities in our Semesterticket and then we looked for information in the Internet.

Then, we knew about traditional cities in Germany and we organised a trip there.

How frequent were those trips?

Very often... Almost every week we travelled.

What attracted you to visit those places?

Their history and traditions. We couldn't leave Germany without visiting a camp concentration, for example, or without visiting the Christmas Market of Nürnberg.

Sure!

The area was attractive and accessible then. Was it easy to go around without any knowledge of German at first?

Yes, I could speak English with almost everybody. Then I learnt a lot living there, going to the shopping, etc.

You mentioned before the topic of money and how the grant was low in your case. May I ask how you funded your stay?

Yes, of course. I received only 245€ (105 from European Commission, 30 from Junta de Extremadura and 110 from Spanish Government). It was the first and only year when Extremadura Government didn't pay a special grant for Erasmus...

So, how did you cover up your expenses?

With my parents and brother's help and with this money.

I see.

On another subject now, would you say Marburg was a student/young city?

Absolutely. There is a slogan in the city which says: "Other cities have a university, Marburg is a university."

Marburg has 86,000 residents and 21,000 students...

Really? Wow, haha. What do you think of that?

I loved it. Everything was thought for doing students life easier.

The slogan is real 😊

That sounds great. I guess the atmosphere was really good?

Very good. I had not problems with my accommodation (foreigner students had priority over German students in the residences, for example).

Menus in mensa were very cheap

So even if little, Marburg was basically a touristic spot? And do you think that the student/young atmosphere attracted people to it?

Yes, it was.

I think so!

Do you think that the Erasmus exchange made you more prone to travel afterwards?

Of course. I am always thinking about travelling abroad. I would like to spend more time in another country, living there and feeling a citizen of the country where I stay.

Sounds great! Do you feel it is necessary for you now to go into that level of involvement with the country's culture?

Like, thanks to the Erasmus... haha.

Yes, totally! And thanks to the Erasmus I could meet some of my best friends and people around all the world. I could open my mind and know about different cultures. And, of course, thanks to the Erasmus I could know an interesting and amazing country with its culture, food and language.