Volunteer Tourism

AN EXPLORATORY RESEARCH INTO INTERNATIONAL YOUTH
VOLUNTEERING IN THE GLOBAL NORTH
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Abstract

Despite growing criticism, volunteer tourism continues to be a top travel trend worldwide hence the vast attention from scholars in determining reasons and motivations to engage in the phenomenon. Previous research shows that the direction of movement predominantly is from the Global North to the Global South, where affluent young adults travel to 'do good', explore new cultures and advance professionally. There is a gap in research focusing on the opposite direction i.e. North to South volunteer tourism. This research aims to provide knowledge to partly fill the gap by exploring why international youth engage in volunteer tourism in Denmark through a cultural exchange programme with emphasis on motivation, self-development, and cultural understanding.

To understand why international youth engage in volunteer tourism in a Global North setting, the theoretical chapter explores themes and criticisms in volunteer tourism, travel and volunteer motivations as well as highlighting case studies exploring volunteer tourism motivations in the North to South direction. Moreover, cultural understanding and self-development through participation in volunteer tourism are discussed. The research utilised an exploratory research design where nine qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted for data collection. Respondents were found through the cultural youth exchange organisation, ICYE Denmark that merely provided the framework for the research.

The research found nine themes affecting young internationals' decision to engage in volunteer tourism in Denmark. These were self-development, finding new friends, cultural outcome, altruism, fun, macro social factors and accessibility, international volunteer tourism through an organisation, Denmark as a destination, and past travel and volunteer experience. The nine themes were divided into two categories, being internal and external factors, which related in a dynamic relationship. All respondents were affected by multiple themes, simultaneously arguing their interrelation. Independence and self-confidence rose in international youth during a volunteer tourism programme as well as becoming more aware of cultural differences leading to acceptance of others. The self-development and cultural awareness were argued to be traits included in the concept of the international citizen.

The findings contribute to a raised awareness of volunteer tourism in the Global North by zooming in on the individual's reasoning for participation in volunteer tourism facilitated by a cultural exchange organisation.

Keywords: *volunteer tourism, motivation, self-development, culture, Denmark, global north, cultural exchange programme, exploratory research*

Introduction

Volunteer tourism, as the name indicates, is a phenomenon inclusive of volunteering and tourism. The field is well studied in tourism academia with an extensive number of books, papers and journals written on the topic. Initially it was presented in Wearing's book from 2001 *Volunteer Tourism: Experiences That Make a Difference* as an alternative, altruistic and more sustainable way of travelling to its counterpart of mass tourism. However, Guttentag's (2009) recognised critique of volunteer tourism questioned the all-positive attitude that beforehand had been associated with volunteer tourism. Benson (2015) agreed with the critique by highlighting the shift from 'passive acceptance of international volunteer tourism as a "saving the world" concept… [to a] critical discourses which challenge the "laudable character" and ethical status of international volunteer tourism' (p.101).

The overwhelming critiques of volunteer tourism is predominantly working with North to South travel where "saving the world", "do-good" and "give-back" are motivating factors. This resembles Higgins-Desbiolles' (2010) critique of the imbalance of participants in general tourism activities where 'the privileged … [are] able to fulfil their rights [to travel], while the less privileged work as 'servers' or 'hosts' to the privileged holidaymakers' (p.122). Although critique is present, the volunteer tourism industry is thriving and continues to be a top travel trend (Roy, 2020).

Lately, countries including Brazil, China and India, which previously have been seen as less privileged, have experienced a great increase in wealth for the larger middle-class population (Bremmer, 2017). The increase in wealth has resulted in a huge number of international tourists from the given countries. Statistics show that approximately 162 million Chinese visited other countries in 2018 (Statista, 2019) up from 145 million in 2017, which makes China 'the world's largest outbound travel market' (Medium, 2019). In India the number of outbound travellers in 2017 was 23 million, with UN World Tourism Organisation expecting it to rise to 50 million in 2019 (Lal, 2019). For Brazil the number in 2018 was 1.5 million compared to 1.2 million outbound travellers in 2017 (Xavier, 2019). For comparative reasons, the number of American outbound travellers were in 2019 nearly 83,5 million and 93 million in 2018 (travel.trade.gov, 2020).

In Denmark there are plenty of commercial companies and non-profit organisations working with sending Danish youth abroad to engage in volunteer tourism. However, according to the General Director of ICYE Denmark, only few organisations in Denmark facilitate a programme for international youth coming to Denmark (in conversation with researcher, 2019). ICYE Denmark is one of those organisations and will contribute to the framework around the present research in which respondents are found.

ICYE Denmark is a non-profit and non-governmental organisation (NGO) working with cultural exchange utilising volunteer work as a method to foster inter-cultural understanding (icye.dk, 2020). Annually, ICYE Denmark sends approximately 150 Danish volunteers abroad and receives 60 internationals to Denmark (icye.dk, 2020). Culture is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as 'the

way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time' (2020). So, when the research refers to cultural understanding, cultural awareness or cultural outcome, culture is understood as the way of life as described in the Cambridge Dictionary.

With the increase in travellers from countries including China, India and Brazil this project explores the reasons and motivations of international youth to volunteer in North- and Western countries like Denmark. In Higgins-Desbiolles' terminology, Denmark is a privileged country questioning if motivations of "saving the world" or "do-good" similarly apply to this type of volunteer tourism as noted above. This research has not been able to find any academic literature on reasons and motivations to engage in volunteer tourism in North- and Western counties and therefore argues, that there is a gap in research. This claim is further backed up by current scholars noticing the majority of volunteer travel in a North to South direction (Benson, 2015; Benson and Wearing, 2012). The present paper will attempt to contribute to the gap by asking the following questions:

Why do international youth volunteer in Denmark through a cultural exchange programme?
- *What motivates international youth to participate in volunteer tourism?*
- *How does the volunteer's experience in Denmark affect their cultural understanding and self-development?*

Theoretical Background and Concepts

The following section will shed a light on existing theory and academic discussions in the field of reasons and motivations to engage in volunteer tourism. The chapter starts by unfolding the phenomenon of volunteer tourism to highlight the framework in which the research lies. The volunteer tourism section takes a close look at the academic discussion of altruistic versus ego-centric motives, the similarities between exchange programmes, gap year tourists and volunteer tourism, explores the white saviour complex, and investigate a conceptual framework for volunteer tourists. After having provided a framework for the research, motives are explored for engaging in tourism and thereafter in volunteering, as motivations are key when trying to answer the 'why' stated in the problem formulation. Having explored current literature in both fields, the theory chapter aims to find empirical studies from a broader field of volunteer tourism motivations, as the research has detected a gap in theory concerning participation in North- and Western counties. Within the volunteer tourism motivation section, two areas have been extracted and will be investigated further due to their importance in relation to the sub-question of the problem formulation. The two concerned areas are cultural outcome and self-development. The explored theory will provide a backdrop for the empirical data, which will be presented and analysed in chapters below.

Volunteer Tourism

Volunteer tourism has seen a large boom in popularity within the past two decades (Brown, 2005) but originates from the missionary movement in the 19ᵗʰ century (Callanan and Thomas, 2005). Mustonen (2006) argued that volunteer tourism is a contemporary form of the traditional pilgrimage. Recently, contemporary volunteer tourism has come to be known by Wearing's (2001) commonly cited definition:

> [T]ourists who volunteer in an organized way to undertake holidays that involve aiding or alleviating the material poverty of some groups in society, the restoration of certain environments, or research into aspects of society or environment (p.1).

Volunteer tourism was first seen as a more sustainable and altruistic counterpart to mass tourism (Butcher, 2003; Benson &Wearing, 2012; Wearing, 2001). However, lately it has received criticism by scholars and public media alike (Guttentag, 2009; Benson 2015) for not being as rewarding as first expected. The criticism noted by Guttentag (2009) in his seminal paper includes a lack of local involvement, unsatisfactory work, disruption of local economies whilst reinforcing others, an instigation of cultural change. Wilson (2015) agrees with the unsatisfactory work performed by volunteers abroad and demand more professionalism to secure a higher standard of care especially when working with vulnerable people. Moreover, Callanan and Thomas (2005) analysed a database with international volunteer programmes finding that many projects demanded extended emotional and physical involvement by unskilled teenager. That lead them to question 'the 'real' value of volunteer work to the host community' (Callanan and Thomas, 2005, p. 194). In line with this, time spend at the projects is also under scrutiny from academics (Benson and Wearing, 2012) as this can

vary greatly depending on the project and sending organisation or company. In certain projects, short duration volunteering can do more harm than good such as working with vulnerable children or at projects that require interpersonal contact. This could potentially create dependency on volunteers, that when taken away would be detrimental (Wilson, 2015).

Volunteer tourism is often thought of as helping or aiding others, which is reflected in the definition by Wearing, hence why it is commonly associated with countries 'of poverty and severe social, political and/or environmental' (Callanan and Thomas, 2005, p. 193) challenges. Callanan and Thomas' (2005) analysis of a database with international volunteer tourism programmes revealed interesting and maybe unexpected results when looking at which countries were the top 10 involved in international volunteer projects. Scoring highest on the number of projects were not surprisingly countries such as India (51), Ecuador (47), Costa Rica (43) and Ghana (37). Interesting however, the list also contained two countries within the Global North: Italy (15) and England (13). No explanation is given as to why these two countries are in the top 10 as the database merely provides 'cold' statistics.

In attempting to conceptualise volunteer tourism, Weaver (2015) argues that there is 'no overall integrated theory of volunteering due to the latter's complexity, diversity and engagement by many different disciplines' (p.687). Instead he draws attention to the academia that discuss the contradictory impulses of altruistic and ego-centric motives that permeates volunteer tourism academia.

Altruistic or Ego-centric?

The question of whether motivation originates from altruistic personalities or an ego-centric mindset is commonly discussed in volunteer tourism academia. Although volunteer tourism is argued to be an altruistic counterpart to mass tourism, Lyons and Wearing (2012) argue 'that these individuals (i.e. volunteer tourists) are also motivated by factors such as the opportunity to travel, to develop social connections, or to develop skills that will help one's career' (p.89). This is further agreed by Benson and Wearing (2012) who note that young people's motivation to volunteer abroad largely stems from their desire to produce content for their CV. This focus on advancing professionally through a volunteer tourism experience is not without reason, as Heath (2007) found that people who have taken a gap year are more 'employable' for companies and educational institutions.

Callanan and Thomas' research fund interesting links between time spend at the projects and personal motivation for participating. They state:

> *It is quite reasonable to expect the frequency of project activities to decline in relation to the duration of the project. This may be partly due to the marketability of the projects; the longer the project time the less likely people will want to participate in the project. Therefore, to sustain a volunteer's motivation to work on a project for more than a year, their intentions are arguably more altruistic in nature* (Callanan and Thomas, 2005, p.190).

In other words, they argue that the longer time spent on a project the more altruistic the motivation is for volunteering abroad, as time is a valuable resource in modern society.

Although Weaver (2015) studied motivations to volunteer in a protected environmental area, his literature review is highly relevant to explore. He highlights that the altruistic motivation is obvious; with volunteer tourists being invested in the social world hoping to make a difference, do useful things and thereby create meaning in their lives. Altruism is commonly found in volunteer tourism motivation, i.e. the definition by Wearing (2001) and specific examples will be presented further below. The ego-centric or self-interest motivations are more diverse and therefore more difficult to determine. Weaver (2015) names these *compelling attractions* which includes having novel experiences, doing something new, cultural immersion and seeking authenticity among others. These factors are all what Wearing calls existential and adds meaning and value to one's life and therefore subjective in nature. Besides the two motivating factors mentioned above, Weaver (2015) adds a hedonistic perspective that in effect is more self-directed that the compelling attractions. These are described to be motivating factors such as relaxation, escaping routine, having fun and a desire to travel. Yet again, these hedonistic motives are difficult to determine due to the subjectivity, which further adds to the argument regarding the complexity of making an integrated theory in the volunteer tourism field.

Another approach is seen by Rehberg (2005) who differentiates between two types of volunteers; a *collective volunteer* and the *reflexive volunteer*. The collective volunteer is motivated by a strong sense of community obligation whereas the reflexive volunteer 'combine self-directed or instrumental motives with a sense of compassion or duty' (Rehberg, 2005, p.119). Beck (in Rehberg, 2005) labels the motivational basis for the reflective volunteer, *altruistic individualism*, which clearly emphasises the pluralisation of motives. This combination of motivations for volunteer tourism is also the conclusion of other empirical researches (Brown, 2005; Hustinx, 2001).

White Saviour Complex

The altruistic versus ego-centric debate can be argued to exist only because there is a shared agreement that someone needs aid, which is at the core of the definition of volunteer tourism by Wearing (2001). Brandyopadhyay (2019) argues that there is a strong dependency of the Global South on the Global North, however not due to the economic superiority 'but rather, in its power to define, represent, and theorize the "Other"' (p.328). The representation of the Global South, Brandyopadhyay (2019, p.332) argues, is 'a place waiting for salvation from the Global North'. This idea has been argued stems from colonial times where 'the white man' became a symbol of salvation and civilisation (Brandyopadhyay, 2019; Everingham and Motta, 2020). The historic origin of the white saviour complex continues to be reproduced through volunteer tourism activities, making academics argue that volunteer tourism is a form of neo-colonialism (ibid). Although the countries in the Global South have been independent for generations, Brandyopadhyay (2019) draws the attention towards what he calls 'colonization of the mind'. The Global North continues, through colonization of the mind as well as controlling the representation of the 'Other', to be powerful and dominating.

Based on the above argument, it is no surprise to find Global North volunteers being treated as 'experts' by the host communities whenever they engage in service in the Global South. Simpson

(2005, p.465) states: 'Volunteer-tourism places travellers in the position of expert or at least as knowledgeable by locating them in placements as teachers, builders, medical workers etc'. As noted earlier by Wilson (2015) and Guttentag (2009), positioning volunteers as experts can be problematic and can cause insufficient work and ultimately do more harm than good. The 'White Saviour' complex might therefore end up contributing to exploitive volunteer tourism programmes despite the intention originally was altruistic.

Exchange Programmes, Gap Years and Volunteer Tourism

The complexity of the volunteer tourism sector touched upon by Weaver (2015) is also noted by other scholars. Benson (2015) argues that volunteer tourism is a layered phenomenon were many suppliers are present, aiming for different target groups with great programme variety. She agrees that the heterogenous nature of the volunteer tourism sector makes it difficult to define hence why an integrated theory becomes challenging.

All the respondents from this current study were found through a cultural exchange organisation, hence why it is relevant to discuss exchange organisations in regard to volunteer tourism.

> *Cultural exchange programs have long been associated with promoting tolerance, goodwill, and understanding of cultural differences and have been identified as a cure-all to a range of deeply ingrained regional conflicts* (Lyons & Wearing, 2012, p.90).

Lyons and Wearing (2012) argue that the connection between volunteer tourism and cultural exchange programmes is their mutual use of host community interaction. For such interaction to happen, it requires one part to move (i.e. travel or tourism) hence an overlap in the two programmes. Moreover, Lyons (2003) points toward the interaction could 'suggest that volunteer tourism may well be viewed as a subset of cultural exchange' (p.6). Another argument by Lyons (2003) is that there has been a shift in exchange programmes from 'primarily education-based… towards more eclectic programmes that incorporate an ever-growing range of occupations and recreational pursuits' (ibid). This finding further emphasises the complexity in the volunteer tourism sector with blurred lines between volunteer tourism programmes and exchange programmes.

Another term associated with volunteer tourism programmes is the idea of a gap year (Lyons et al., 2012; Simpson, 2004). This is especially relevant for youth as 'a gap year has been defined as a nominal period during which a person delays further education or employment in order to travel (Lyons et al., 2012). Simpson (2004) agrees, however acknowledges that gap years can include various activities not limited to travel or volunteering. Volunteer tourism is therefore a possible activity youth can engage in during their gap year but also an activity that has been argued to be a fast-growing phenomenon (Lyons et al., 2012). It is therefore not surprising when the two terms are used interchangeably and combined, as demonstrated in the headline of Lyons et al.'s (2012) paper called: 'Gap Year Volunteer Tourism'. Based on the arguments above, this present research includes exchange programmes as well as gap year tourism as part of the volunteer tourism phenomenon.

Deep, Shallow and Intermediate Volunteer Tourists

The complex and fragmented sector makes it difficult to have an inclusive and integrated theory across volunteer tourism. In order to address the altruistic-egocentric continuum, the duration of stay, level of skills required among other critiques of volunteer tourism, Callanan and Thomas (2005) have attempted to produce a conceptual framework. Their suggested framework utilises three different levels of volunteer tourism; *shallow volunteer tourism*, *intermediate volunteer tourism*, and *deep volunteer tourism* based on performances in six categories; *importance of the destination*, *duration of participation*, *focus of experience: altruistic v. self-interest*, *skills/qualifications of participants*, *active/passive participation*, and *level of contribution to locals* (Callanan and Thomas, 2005). Figure 1 below shows Callanan and Thomas' conceptual framework for volunteer tourists.

	Shallow VT	*Intermediate VT*	*Deep VT*
Importance of the destination	The destination is important in the decision-making	Focuses on both the project and the destination	More attention is given to the project than the destination
Duration of participation	Short-term, typically less than 4 weeks in duration	Medium-term, typically less than 6 months in duration	Medium to long-term, 6 months or intensive shorter term projects
Focus of experience: altruistic v. self-interest	Self-interest motives are more important than altruistic ones	Self-interest motives are of similar importance to altruistic ones	Altruistic motives are more important than self-interest ones
Skills/Qualifications of participants	Offer minimal skills or qualifications	May offer generic skills	May offer some technical/professional skills and experience and/or time
Active/Passive participation	Tends to be more passive in nature	Mixture of passive and active participation	Tends to be more active in nature
Level of contribution to locals	Minimal direct contribution to local area	Moderate direct contribution to local area	High level of direct contribution to local area

Figure 1: A conceptual framework for volunteer tourists (Callanan and Thomas, 2005, p. 197).

The framework attempts to categorise volunteer tourists based on the depth of engagement required for voluntary roles. At one end, the 'shallow' volunteer tourist 'focuses predominantly on their self-development and how their experience can be used for academic credit, enhancing their curriculum vitae and for 'ego-enhancements'' (Callanan and Thomas, 2005, p.196). In between is the intermediate volunteer tourist 'who focuses both on altruistic and self-development motives, stays on the project for a reasonable length of time (2–4 months), directly contributes to the project but still ensures that they have some 'holiday time' for exploring the destination´(ibid). Finally, the deep volunteer tourist is the one 'where self-interest motives are secondary to altruistic ones… [and who] tend to stay for a longer period of time (6 months) and thus there is a clear and direct contribution to the local community/environment' (ibid). Callanan and Thomas (2005) therefore provide a framework to differentiate the different volunteer tourism programmes and participants from one another into the three different categories. These categories might say something about the level of commitment by the volunteer however it is not sufficient to explain all the complexity in the "why" of young people's motivation to volunteer abroad.

The section has now aimed to provide an overview of existing literature and discussions on volunteer tourism and will continue to focus on motivations. Travel motivations will be explored first.

Travel Motivations

> [*Tourism motivation is*] *a meaningful state of mind which adequately disposes an actor or group of actors to travel, and which is subsequently interpretable by others as a valid explanation for such a decision* (Dann, 1981, p. 205).

Travel motivations have been researched extensively in tourism academia as it can be argued to reflect tourism development itself (Pearce and Lee, 2005) and therefore is of interest to many stakeholders. Further, it is argued that tourism motivation 'acts as a trigger that sets off all the events involved in travel' (Brown, 2005, p.483). In travel motivations, the well-cited Crompton (1979) noted the accessibility of explaining the who, when, where and how in tourism but also the difficulty related to the Why? It is this *why* that many academics from psychology, anthropology, and sociology have attempted to answer throughout the existence of the tourism phenomenon. Pearce and Lee (2005) argue that no agreed-on inclusive theory of travel motivation exists although the need is there to develop such theories. Later their contribution will be discussed as a potential theoretical framework for tourism motivation. Although no overarching theory is present according to Pearce and Lee, this research will argue that different concepts and theories are attempting to explain travel motivation.

Brown (2005) argues that attempting to explain travel motivation, scholars have sought inspiration in general motivational theory. Here Maslow's (1987) 'hierarchy of needs' is often mentioned to explain travel behaviour although it was not developed for the purpose of travel. The hierarchy – self-actualisation, esteem needs, love needs, safety needs and physiological needs 'could be related to the travel industry in the sense that unless individuals have their physiological and safety needs met, they are less likely to be interested in travelling the world to make a difference' (Brown, 2005, p.481). This idea coheres with Higgins-Desbiolles' (2010) critique, mentioned in the introduction, that privileged people travel while less privileged people host.

According to many scholars (Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979; Gnoth, 1997; Jamal and Lee, 2003; Pearce and Coghlan, 2008), Maslow's hierarchy is limited in the fact, that it only describes the subjective physiological aspects of travel motivation. Dann (1977) added factors stemming from social-psychological motives as well as internal factors when he suggested a 'push'/ 'pull' motivation scheme. The 'pull' factors are those who attracts the tourist whereas the 'push' factors are internal psychological factors (ibid). In a paper from 1997, Gnoth presented the model 'The Process of Motivational and Expectation Formation' that includes the 'push' / 'pull' idea presented by Dann. Here Gnoth describes the process of motivation and expectation from the initial *urge* to the *event* or *effect* by utilising what he calls *the Objective Situation*, *the Subjective Situation*, *Attitudes* and *Expectations* (Gnoth, 1997). In an attempt to figure out the process of motivation and expectation formation, it can be argued that this model can work as an explanation to how these motivations occur and thereby to be understood better.

A more recent paper written by Jamal and Lee (2003) has argued the importance of 'an integrated conceptual framework' based on interdisciplinary theory when assessing tourism motivation. They

describe the importance of including both macro-social factors as well as micro-psychological factors in establishing an including theory. Further, such a theory 'should (1) encompass socio-economic, cultural, ecological, and political systems and (2) be able to address the complex global economy of travel and tourism in the new technological era' (ibid, p.55). In the figure below, Jamal and Lee propose a 'micro-macro framework of tourist motivation'.
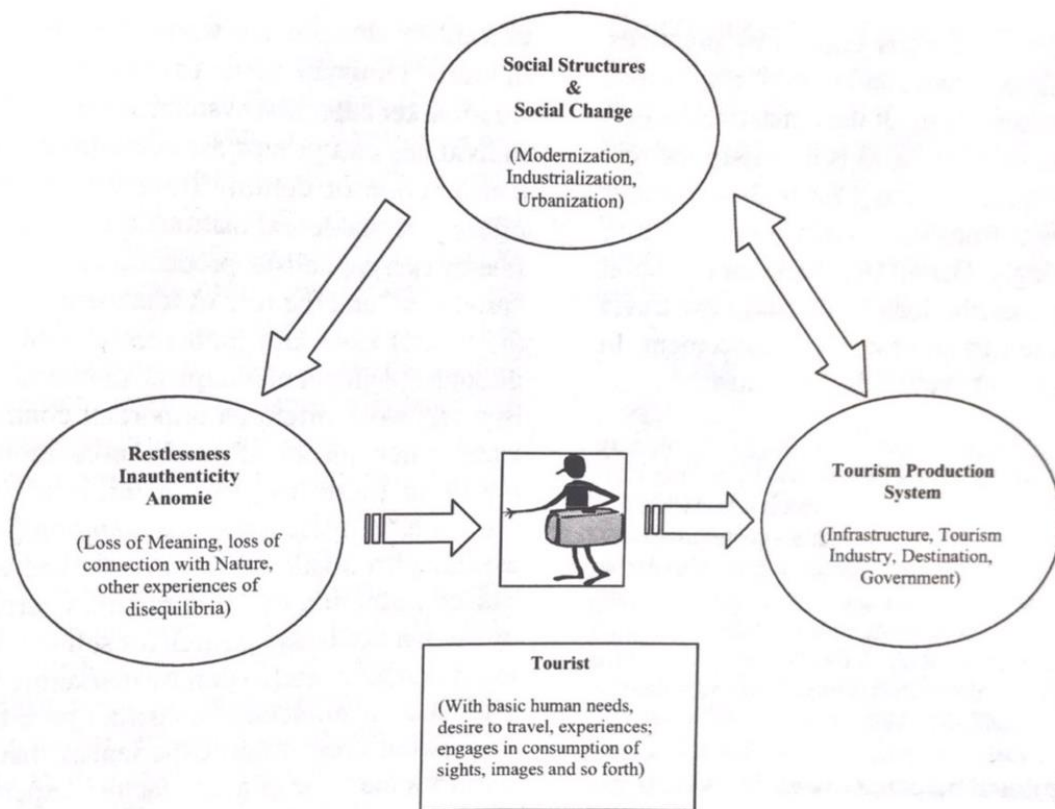
Figure 2: A micro-macro framework of tourist motivation. By Jamal and Lee (2003).

An interesting theory in regard to volunteer tourism is Pearce and Lee's (2005) idea of a 'travel career ladder', which due to critique of misunderstood terminology changed the name to 'travel career pattern' (TCP). They argue, 'that travel motivation could be identified as patterns and combinations of multiple motives that are influenced by previous travel experience and age' (Pearce and Lee, 2005, p. 235). The level of experience is therefore calculated based on past travel experience locally and internally as well as age. Through their case study they demonstrated the accuracy of such patterns by finding similarities in motivation for well-travelled people that differed to those who do not have much travel experience. They found:

> *[P]eople with high-travel-experience levels gave more emphasis to motivations regarding self-development through host-site involvement and nature seeking. Low-travel-experience-level people stressed more on other motivation factors such as stimulation, personal development, self-actualization, security, nostalgia, romance, and recognition* (ibid).

The significance in relation to volunteer tourism is the motivation found for the well-travelled group, which reflects the core of volunteer tourism as volunteer-community interaction. However, it must be noted that Pearce and Lee (2005) did not focus on volunteering but solely tourism, but their findings describe motivations commonly seen for volunteer tourists. Motivations in volunteer tourism will be discussed later in this chapter.

Throughout the academic writing it is commonly argued, that travel motivation is always a combination of different factors (Broad, 2003; Rehberg, 2005; Boluk et al., 2016; Guttentag, 2009; Pearce and Coghlan, 2008). Brown (2005) writes 'that no tourists are likely to be influenced by just one motivator. They are more likely to be affected by a number of them at any one time' (p.483). The present study works with motivations for volunteer tourism hence why the volunteer element must not be neglected. The next section will take a closer look at what makes people volunteer.

What Makes One Volunteer?

The flash Eurobarometer 455 report was published in 2018 focusing on European youth and their social and civic participation, which included volunteer work - nationally and internationally. Many positive findings came from the report about European youth. However, when considering the present research questions, the most relevant findings were in regard to voluntary activities. The report finds that one third of young Europeans participate in voluntary activities, which is an increase compared to the previous report from 2014 (European Union, 2018). Denmark and Ireland are the top two when it comes to voluntary participation among its youth (both with 39%) whereas Finland (17%), Hungary (19%) and Sweden (19%) are the least active in volunteering (ibid). Noticeable, is the difference between the Scandinavian countries who often are comparable but in this instance is located at opposite ends. Most predominantly are volunteer activities that focus on changing something within the local community or country (69%) whereas 10% report to focus on European work and 11% aiming internationally (ibid). Of interest to this research is the 21% of European youth who are participating in changing something outside their own country.

In regard to the abovementioned travel career pattern, an interesting observation was found in the socio-demographic analysis of the report. It shows that 'the older the respondent, the more likely it is their activities were directed at their local community or their country' (European Union, 2018, p.27). Their data showed:

Percentage of voluntary activities directed towards own country:
15-19 year olds   21%
20-24 year olds   27%
25-30 year olds   37%

Here, it therefore seems that the younger age group is more likely to participate in volunteer work abroad, which clashes with the abovementioned hypothesis suggesting that high travel experience (calculated on three factors being age, domestic and international travel) equals motivations ingrained in volunteer tourism. However, a one-to-one comparison cannot be made in this case, as age does not

stand alone in calculating travel experience and further, the travel career pattern does not explicitly look at volunteer tourism.

> *Volunteering means any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group, or organization* (Wilson, 2000, p. 215).

Wilson (2000) argues that two perspectives on volunteering exist on the individual level depending on the approach. He states: 'One assumes a complexity in the constitution of the person while treating the context as background; the other treats the human actor as driven by fairly simple mechanisms while treating the context in which those mechanisms work as complex' (p.218-219). In other words, the first approach is concerned with the internal motives for volunteering whereas the other is focused on rational individuals in a complex external setting. This observation mirrors the idea of 'push' and 'pull' motives presented by Dann (1977) earlier, that tourism motivation stems from internal and external factors as well as those scholars who sought inspiration in Dann's work (Gnoth, 1997; Jamal and Lee, 2003).

In his paper, Wilson (2000) finds that certain factors and demographic conditions make people more or less likely to volunteer. He argues that numerous aspects affect whether people volunteer including family tradition, large social networks, education, income, age, gender, and marital status. This coheres with the argument made earlier, that motivations to travel are multiple; similar to motivations for volunteering.

Stebbins (2001b) has written about the positive impacts of doing what he calls *serious leisure*. He argues that the Information Age has provided more Americans and Canadians with time to engage in leisure activities, which can be argued to apply for all Global North countries. Leisure is commonly thought of in the casual form of sleeping in, 'strolling in the park… and watching television' (Stebbins, 2001b, p.53) where minimal effort is required. However, when limited to casual leisure the risk of psychological dyspepsia is present. Opposite to casual leisure is serious leisure, which 'is the steady pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist, or career volunteer activity that captivates its participants with its complexity and many challenges' (ibid, p.54). Serious leisure is more challenging and requires more time, commitment and persistence however, rewarding in 'fulfilling one's human potential, expressing one's skills and knowledge, having cherished experience, and developing a valued identity' (Stebbins, 2001b, p.54). Thoits and Hewitt (2001) agrees as they found six different aspects that were enhanced when doing volunteer work being happiness, life satisfaction, self- esteem, sense of control over life, physical health, and depression. Their research also shows that people with plenty of resources are more likely to volunteer as well as people with a strong physical and mental health (Thoits and Hewitt, 2001). This result resembles Wilson's (2000) findings mentioned above.

Volunteering can therefore be argued to have a positive impact on a person's health influenced by many different parameters. In the next section, volunteering and tourism will be united as the section will highlight the motivations for engaging in volunteer tourism.

Motivations for Volunteer Tourism Abroad

Earlier in the chapter different approaches to travel motivation and reasons to volunteer were described. As the present research focuses on volunteer tourism, empirical case studies will be highlighted in search for volunteer tourism motivation. No papers were found to focus on international volunteering coming to Denmark or any other Scandinavian countries, hence why the following section will be highlighting the motivations found for volunteering primarily in the Global South. These cases are discussed in hope to find patterns or similarities between motivations to travel abroad to participate in voluntary work.

Walter Rehberg's (2005) paper about young swiss adults' motivation to volunteer abroad through a humanitarian aid organisation found 12 different categories of motives in a qualitative research study interviewing 118 participants. Thereafter, Rehberg (2005) subsumed the 12 motivating factors into three groups that all were mentioned by the research participants with a similar frequency. Below is a table summarising the 12 different motivations categories grouped in three overall themes based on Rehberg's paper (2005).

Group 1: Achieving something positive for others (77%)	Group 2: Quest for the new (75%)	Group 3: Quest for oneself (67%)
'Helping, giving, doing good'	'Becoming acquainted with new cultures, intercultural exchange'	'Gaining experience, advancing oneself'
'Achieving or changing' something	'Doing something different, getting away'	'Professional orientation, clarification, and development'
'Being geared to ethical values'	'Getting deeply acquainted with a new culture and everyday life'	'Discovering or transcending personal limits'
'Feeling useful, doing something useful'	'Meeting new people, making new friends'	
	'Learning or using foreign languages'	

The 12 motivations found by Rehberg resembles Suba's (2017) findings. Suba's (2017) research of Eastern European interns at a student non-profit organisation found five key motivations for volunteering abroad being: 'travelling and leisure, experiencing new culture and people, acquiring advantage at the labour market, gaining experience from abroad, and altruism' (p.1). Common for both Rehberg and Suba are the motivational factors stemming from both internal and external sources when presenting their empirical data about volunteer motivations, which further is agreed by Broad (2003) based a case study from Thailand. Rehberg (2005) concludes that the motivations mentioned by the respondents characterise the abovementioned 'reflexive volunteer', which predicts that 'a

combination of motives was relevant for their interest in international volunteering' (p.119). Therefore, the combination of motivations in volunteer tourism resemble the basis of tourism motivation and motives for volunteering mentioned earlier.

Another case study presented by Brown (2005) sought to find motives as well as benefits of volunteer tourists from America, although not limited to a specific age group. Her research is based on interviews and focus groups seeking to find differences and similarities by comparing volunteer vacationers with those of 'pure' volunteerism and the mainstream tourists. According to Brown (2005), the volunteer vacationers are those who take part in voluntary activities as part of their leisure holiday. Although the terminology is different and written much simpler, this definition sits within the most cited definition of volunteer tourism given earlier by Wearing (2001). Brown (2005) found four motivating factors for engaging in voluntary work while being on vacation; *cultural immersion*, *giving back and making a difference*, *seeking camaraderie*, and *seeking educational and bonding opportunities for children*. These four motivating factors to engage in volunteer tourism are all represented within the 12 categories found by Rehberg (2005) perhaps with the exception of bonding opportunities for children. It should be noted, that this motive is relevant for parents travelling with their children and not mentioned by young individuals hence why it does not appear in Rehberg's findings.

In Brown's (2005) comparison, she found many similar motives in volunteer vacationers to ´pure' volunteerism such as 'personal fulfilment, identity enhancement and self-expression, promoting peace and cultural exchange' (p.492). However, some motives seemed to be specific to volunteer vacationers such as seeking camaraderie, seeking adventure and a desire for exploration and novelty (Brown, 2005). It could be argued that these motivations are more for the benefit of oneself instead of the altruistic backbone associated with volunteer tourism. To use Callanan and Thomas' conceptual framework, they could be seen as shallow volunteer tourists.

To sum up, some of the similarities found in the presented case studies are the plurality of motivators present for volunteer tourists, which is an echo of general travel motivations discussed earlier by e.g. Broad (2003), Boluk et al. (2016), and Pearce and Coghlan (2008). No one volunteer tourist is motivated by a single factor, which further adds to the complexity in understanding the "Why" and further to make inclusive frameworks. On the basis of the case studies, similarities have been detected although terminology is different dependant on case. For all three case studies, altruism in some form was mentioned to be a motivating factor whether it was helping other, doing good or changing something. The self-interest motives or ego-centric motives were also present in the empirical studies with many more themes as its altruistic counterpart such as personal fulfilment, quest for oneself, enhancement of curriculum vitae, experiencing novelty, travel, adventure, and leisure. An important theme in the present research is cultural immersion or what Rehberg (2005) calls 'quest for new'. Experiencing new places, getting new friends and understanding cultures more profoundly is another similarity permeating the case studies, which will be elaborated in the next section.

Cultural Outcome of Volunteer Tourism

As seen in the above papers and academic writing on tourist motivation, cultural understanding is a motivating factor when choosing to engage in voluntary work abroad. As all international volunteers in this research have come to Denmark through the organisation ICYE Denmark, it is relevant to look a little closer at volunteer work that fosters cross cultural understanding – or if it does not. As Dillette et al. (2017, p.1226) notice: 'While cross-cultural interaction is a natural outcome of volunteer tourism, there is debate as to whether or not this leads to understanding or misunderstanding between cultures´.

Raymond and Hall's (2008) paper asks exactly that question by interviewing ten sending organisations about their practice to determine the emphasis on cross-cultural understanding. Their research found 'that volunteer tourism provides an ideal opportunity to increase cultural understanding' (Raymond & Hall, 2008, p.532) but emphases that 'it cannot be assumed that by merely facilitating contact with the 'other', this will lead to long-term international understanding and respect' (ibid, p.533). The sending organisation therefore has a huge responsibility in making cultural understanding an outcome of volunteer tourism or exchange programmes especially if this is a motivating factor for the volunteers.

Although participant and host community interaction is present, it does not automatically lead to cultural understanding. In fact, some poorly managed volunteer tourism programmes can reinforce cultural stereotypes and facilitate a cultural misunderstanding. Raymond and Hall (2008) therefore suggest the following three points for sending organisations to ensure enlarged cultural understanding when participating in volunteer tourism:

1) Develop programmes which will be of genuine value for the local community.
2) Place importance on approaching volunteer tourist programmes as a learning experience by utilising experiential learning techniques.
3) Deliberately facilitate opportunities for interaction with other cultures.

<div align="right">(Raymond and Hall, 2008, p.541).</div>

The first point of suggestion is in line with the abovementioned critique of volunteer tourism activities and is overall to ensure better quality in programmes beneficial to the local community. Secondly, cultural understanding is not an automated by-product of volunteer tourism activities and education and reflection must be prioritised. Lastly, although this can seem obvious, it is important that participants actually interact with other cultures when being abroad. The risk is that bringing large groups of internationals overseas creates same-culture bubbles which therefore prevents the essential interaction between different cultures.

Asking the residents in the local communities about their perception on cross cultural understanding in volunteer tourism, Dillette et al. (2017) similarly found that 'achieving cross-cultural understandings in any volunteer tourism activity is largely attributed to the level of communication between tourists and residents (p.1236). It can therefore be argued, that the interaction between two

cultures is key in establishing profound cultural awareness. Another interesting finding in Dillette et al.'s (2017) research based on the Bahamian Family Island, is the empowerment felt by local residents when interacting with volunteer tourists. They found that 'residents felt that if there was community involvement in volunteer tourism, local community members could become empowered by the skills they learned through interacting and working with volunteer tourists from another culture (Dillette et al., 2017, p.1235). In this particular case, it can therefore be argued that volunteer tourism is mutually beneficial to the host community and the participants and thereby comply to the first suggestion by Raymond and Hall (2008).

Taking a look back at the database analysed by Callanan and Thomas (2005) cultural development activities mainly occur in programmes lasting less than four weeks (44 cases) and only a single case lasts more than one year. Callanan and Thomas (2005) found that 'cultural development activities are focused more on the volunteer's experience, often linked to the improvement of linguistic skills and social understanding of a geographical region' (p.190). This finding is challenging in the sense that both Raymond and Hall (2008) and Dillette et al. (2017) found it important to make beneficial programmes that involved good communication with the local community. It therefore seems questionable why the majority of programmes working with cultural development last no longer than four weeks, which further challenges the 'real' impact that can be done in that limited time.

Cultural immersion has been argued to be a motivating factor for participating in volunteer tourism, however sending organisations play a vital role in ensuring such outcome is achieved through their programme planning. ICYE Denmark is a cultural exchange organisation with programmes often lasting more than six months, hence why it will be interesting to investigate whether that is reflected in the motivation by internationals volunteering in Denmark.

Self-Development Through Volunteer Tourism

Another commonality found in the empirical case studies of volunteer tourism motivation was the concept of self-development, with themes including 'quest for self', advancing professionally, and the desire to travel. The social interaction between host community and the participants is important for the cultural outcome as argued above but moreover, as argued by Wearing (2001, p.124), has the potential to 'effect a change in self and identity' for the participant.

Wearing's (2001) book on volunteer tourism is commonly cited, especially for the definition and further works as a foundation for understanding the phenomenon of volunteer tourism. In the book, Wearing (2001) allocates a chapter to 'developing the self through the volunteer tourism experience', which emphasises the area of self-development as an outcome of volunteer tourism. Wearing (2001, p. 126) states that self-development includes 'terms such as developing self-identity, self-esteem and self-actualization, raising awareness and changing behaviour' and should be seen as a learning process rather than a fixed entity. Moreover, Wearing (2001) argues that seeing self-development as a learning process is compatible with the concept of experiential learning. The process 'relates to an individual's attitude to move forward and continually challenge, take risks or strive to better themselves' (ibid). This idea is echoed in motivations to volunteer when Wilson (2000) argues that

volunteers want to be challenged in their work as 'many people think of themselves as the kind of person who helps others regardless of whether their actions receive praise' (p.223). The call for demanding and challenging voluntary tasks highlight the volunteer's desire to engage with what Stebbins (2001b) called serious leisure.

The beforementioned book chapter categorises self-development into four clusters being, personal awareness and learning, interpersonal awareness and learning, confidence, and self-contentment (Wearing, 2001, p.126). The first cluster of personal awareness and learning relates to the notion of self with 'beliefs, values, abilities and limitations' (ibid, p.127) including advancing professionally. Secondly, as the name suggests, the interpersonal cluster relates to greater awareness and appreciation of others when engaging in volunteer tourism. Moreover, such an awareness was found to result in changes of behaviour including becoming more open and thoughtful and less self-centred. Another cluster of self-development is confidence. Wearing (2001) mentions an increased confidence among participants in their own ability and determination. Finally, the last cluster relates to self-contentment, which is described as confidence manifested in a stronger sense of self. It is further described as the perception of the self as well as 'the way they perceive how other people view them' (Wearing, 2001, p.131). These clusters are argued by Wearing (2001) to be contained within the self-development process when engaging in volunteer tourism.

> [G]ap year tourism can be transformative and participants can benefit from the wider learning associated with cross-cultural experience gaining skills which develop them as a global citizen with an embedded cosmopolitan identity.
>
> (Lyons et al, 2012, p.366-367)

In trying to summarise the cultural outcome with the concept of self-development, Lyons et al. (2012) label participants of volunteer tourism "global citizens". They argue that 'global citizenship is regarded as a 'product' of globalisation' (ibid, p.363). This idea that volunteer tourism makes participants global citizens are further shared by Simpson (2005) who argues that governments try to promote volunteering and citizenship education through the emphasis placed on gap years. In other words, volunteer tourism facilitates the enlarged cultural awareness as well as self-development, inclusive of all four clusters mentioned above, which promotes the participants as culturally enlightened and socially superior global citizens. Drawing a direct parallel between participation in volunteer tourism and global citizenship is criticised by Butcher (2017). Butcher argues global citizenship has lost its political foundation to a more lifestyle- and consumption-based citizenship, when leisure, including travelling, can be seen as engaged behaviour. He concludes that 'care and the desire to 'make a difference' are laudable human qualities. Through the narrative of global citizenship, they are substituted for reflection upon, and political contestation of, the reasons for the poverty volunteer tourists are often reacting to' (Butcher, 2017, p. 136-137).

The discussion regarding global citizenship will be the finishing comment in the theoretical chapter. In the next chapter of the research, the methodological considerations will be explored.

Methodology

The present research has now discussed the theory and concepts relevant to illuminate the setting in which this research is situated. This chapter will describe and reflect upon the methodological considerations regarding the accomplishment of the current research from research design to data collection and processing to end on ethical considerations and limitations.

The project has been conducted in line with an internship done by the researcher at ICYE Denmark hence why the researcher had extended access to respondents and further information known internally within the organisation none of which has intentionally been left out.

Philosophy of Science

To begin with, an essential factor to understand the approach taken in research is to acknowledge the researcher's philosophical belief of reality and the social world in which reality exists (Mason, 2014). The philosophy of science is the theory of knowledge production hence why it is important to discuss in any given research.

Guba and Lincoln's seminal paper from 1994 categorised these different 'belief systems' by dividing them into four paradigms based on three factors; the ontological, the epistemological and the methodological assumption. The four paradigms are placed on a spectrum from *positivism* and *post-positivism* to *critical theory* and *constructivism*. This current research is placed somewhere in-between the critical theory paradigm and the constructivist paradigm due to its interpretivist and constructivist nature which will be explored below. Common for both these paradigms are the absence of a traditional division between ontology and epistemology as the researcher is an integrated part of the investigation. In other words, the phenomenon of enquiry is not a separate entity which can be studied but merely a blend wherein the researcher and participant engage in the production of knowledge.

Instead of dwelling on division by paradigms the founding father of cultural psychology Jaan Valsiner (2014) presents *The Methodology Cycle*, which is included in figure 3 below. Although this thinking stems from psychology it is very relevant to draw upon in this given case due to the interdisciplinary nature of volunteer tourism as argued by Brown (2005). Valsiner (2017) argues that 'psychological phenomena are contextual – as open systems they depend on relations with other phenomena' (p.1), which is evident in the circular depiction of methodology where all factors are interconnected and influenced by one another.

Firstly, the basic assumptions for the present research include the understanding that subjects, in this case the respondents, are the inquiry, which constantly is in motion in the social world (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2008). The research works to explore the reasons, opinions and motivations of the respondent to engage in volunteer tourism hence the inquiry into the respondent's experience. Bryman phrase it as 'social phenomena and their meanings are continually being accomplished by

social actors' (2012, p. 33). The basic assumption is therefore that knowledge is produced, relational, conversation based, contextual, verbal, narrative and pragmatic (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2008). In other words, the ontological assumption is that knowledge is constructed between social actors, being the researcher and the respondents in this given case.
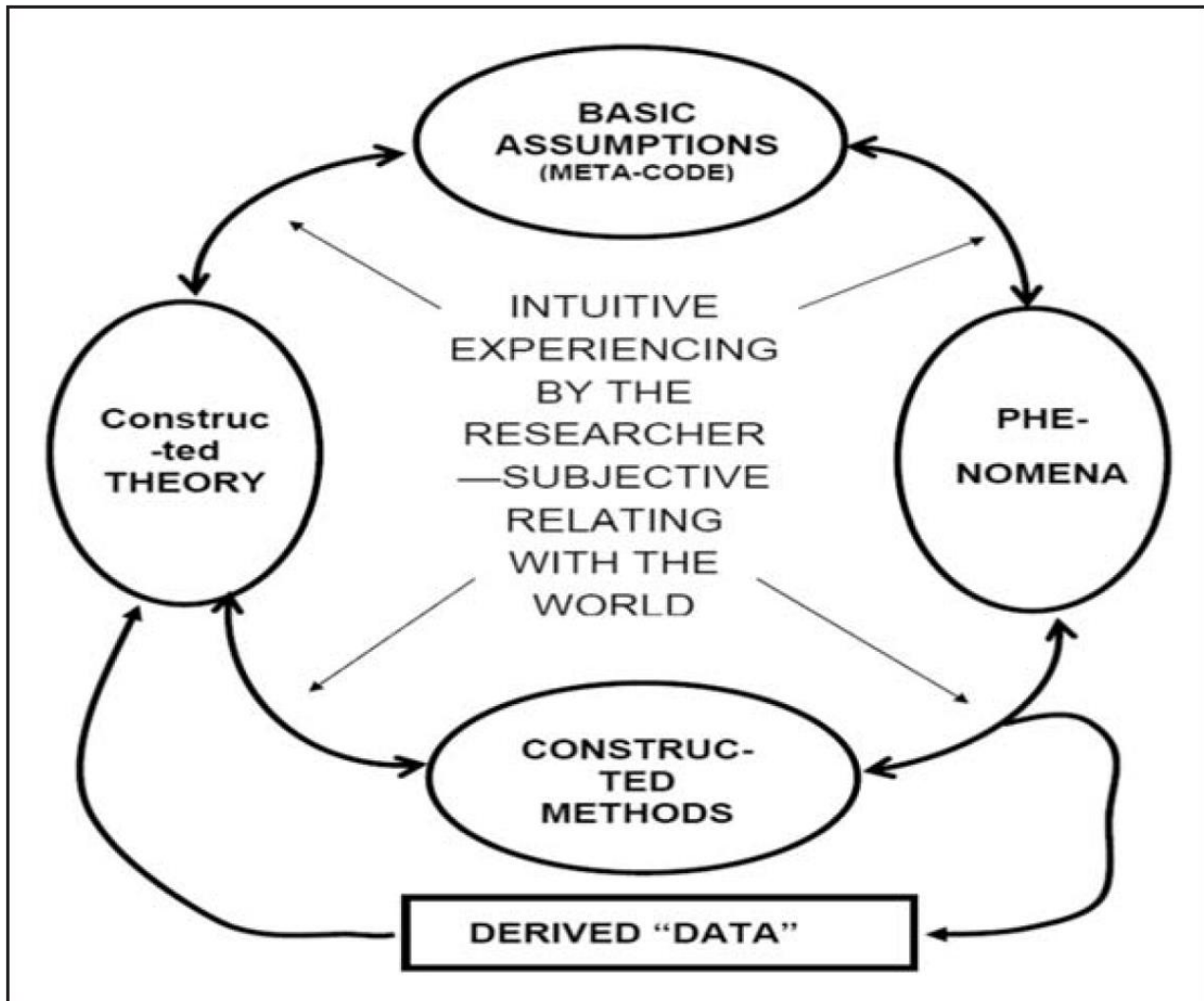
Figure 3: The Methodology Cycle by Valsiner (2014)

The phenomenon of inquiry emanates from the research question and works with personal motivation to engage in volunteer tourism through a cultural exchange organisation in Denmark. The phenomenon decides the method (Bryman, 2012) to obtain the sought knowledge. In order to get access to the phenomenon this research relies on phenomenology – a theory to use Valsiner's terminology. Phenomenology originates from philosophy and aims, as the name suggests, to understand a social phenomenon from the subject's own perspective and describe the lifeworld as it is experienced by the person assuming that the important reality is the one perceived by individuals (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2008, p. 44). According to phenomenologists the notion of lifeworld is the zone where individuals lead or conduct their life (Brinkmann, 2012, p. 16). To gain access to these perceived realities or constructions of the lifeworld 'it is the job of the social scientist to gain access to people's 'common-sense thinking' and hence to interpret their actions and their social world from

their point of view' (Bryman, 2012, p. 30). Bryman (2012) therefore calls this epistemological consideration interpretivism, which acknowledges the differences between people and aims to understand the subjective meaning of social action.

Throughout the basic assumptions, the phenomena and the theory of phenomenology is the 'intuitive experiencing by the researcher' (Valsiner, 2014) who also subjectively relates with the lifeworld. The researcher therefore influences the methodology with his/her experiences, hypotheses and general interests. In the present research, the interest in the phenomenon arises from the researcher's personal experiences with volunteer tourism as well as an internship with the organisation used to find respondents. This sparked curiosity in trying to change the point of view from a white Western woman going abroad to volunteer to search for motivations for internationals to volunteer in Denmark.

To sum up, interviewee's motivations are subjectively real in the given time and place of the interview however is in constant revision or construction affected by social actors. The only way to reach the knowledge for the researcher is to interact within what becomes a shared reality, in this case in the form of interviews, in which the researcher must interpret the meanings. The attentive reader will notice that the method has not yet been described in the methodology circle however the method of semi-structured interviews will be elaborated at length below.

Research Design

The problem formulation above sets the framework for the research design as advocated by Bryman (2012) with an abductive approach to theory. Brinkmann (2012, p.44) argues that '[a]bduction is a form of reasoning that we employ in situations of uncertainty; when we need an understanding or explanation of some effect'. This present research sets out to understand the motivations to volunteer in Denmark by international youth hence why it can be argued to search for explanation to why the internationals volunteer. Further, the abductive reasoning 'moves back and forth between induction and deduction—first converting observations into theories and then assessing those theories through action' (Morgan, 2007, p.71). The researcher has been an intern with ICYE Denmark prior to starting this research, which gives her extended knowledge about the organisation and the possibility to asses daily routines to thereafter question them.

Volunteer tourism is often thought of as Westerners going East or South to aid and help less fortunate communities, which has been of great interest to the researcher who herself has participated in such activities numerous times. During a trip to South Africa to visit friends, the researcher spoke to many people involved in the community in search for the best way to facilitate programmes that would not exploit local communities and harm unintentionally as found in the critique of volunteer tourism mentioned in the theory chapter. Several answers were in line with the recommendations found in the theory section such as local involvement and good communications however one answer stood out. Taken from memory, this man said: 'I think you have to think in alternative ways and to really make an impact for the local community, you need to bring them [charity workers etc.] to you and educate them or just give them the experience of being abroad'. This conversation started a new line of

thought for the researcher, sparking curiosity as to why internationals volunteer in Denmark and whether the 'do-good' still exist in range of motivations to volunteer when the table has been turned? This experience emphasises the intuitive experience by the researcher that influences the methodology as mentioned in Valsiner's (2014) model above (figure 3).

It was noted in the theory chapter, that no empirical case studies could be found by the researcher of international volunteering in Scandinavian countries. Similar case studies working with the most common North to South movement were discussed hence why it could be argued that the current research sits within case study boundaries. 'In case studies the researcher aims to gain deeper insight into defined individual cases or areas' (Harboe, 2013, p. 65), which is consistent with the investigation in the individual's motives to volunteer in Denmark through ICYE. The case study aims to provide the individual's motives within a similar framework of ICYE Denmark.

Although, when working within a new niche of volunteer tourism, it can be argued that there is a level of exploratory research. In the introduction to his book on exploratory research Stebbins (2001a, p. viii) argues that 'exploration is portrayed as something larger than a special scientific process and methodological approach', which further is in line with the circular interconnected approach to the present research depicted in Valsiner's model. In the book Stebbins (2001a) finds four different types of exploratory methods being *investigative exploration*, *innovative exploration*, *exploration for discovery*, and *limited exploration*. The current research identifies with the exploration for discovery where the research is as broad, inclusive and thorough as possible (Stebbins, 2001a). The aim of the research is to find all relevant answers to *why* international youth volunteer in Denmark hence the type of exploratory research is deemed appropriate.

The research design has been under construction for a long period of time, influenced mainly by observations by the researcher, curiosity to discover the unknown as well as being verified in academic journals focused on North to South volunteer tourism. There is no set structure with the abductive approach, which by Long (2007) and Brinkmann (2012) is argued to be common for social science. The research design can therefore be described as an exploratory case study with an abductive approach.

Research Method

This present research utilises a single method approach to its data collection in form of qualitative interviews based on the phenomenon of inquiry. Interviewing 'is a professional interaction, which goes beyond the spontaneous exchange of views as in everyday conversation and becomes a careful questioning and listening approach with the purpose of obtaining thoroughly tested knowledge' (Kvale, 2007, p.7).

As argued above and agreed by Brown (2005) in her section on method, 'there are no proven measurements or theories for researching this particular phenomenon' (p.486). Merely, the research

tries to understand subjective motivations rather than measuring them hence why a qualitative approach is most beneficial in the given case.

Interviews

There are several different forms of interviews, however this research utilises a semi-structed life-world approach described by Kvale (2007), of which its purpose is to obtain 'descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena' (p.8). Moreover, from her empirical research Brown (2005) argues that the goal of personal interviews 'is also to gain access to more inclusive sets of feelings and emotions that a structed instrument could not capture' (p.486). The decision to use interviews in the given research is therefore crucial in obtaining the personal reasons, motivations and feelings by the respondents. Further, semi-structured life-word interview is in line with the ontological stance and epistemological considerations discussed above as Kvale (2007, p. 8) defines as:

> *A planned and flexible interview with the purpose of obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena.*

All interviews in this research have been conducted during March 2020 using the real-time audio/video communication tool Skype. Originally, five interviews were planned to happen in a face to face scenario in either Aalborg or Aarhus, both cities were easily accessible for the researcher and the last three respondents living further away had been planned to happen over Skype. Due to a global pandemic outbreak with rules of social distancing during the research period, it was chosen to conduct all interviews using the VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) tool Skype. A face-to-face interview would have allowed the researcher to physically interact with the respondents, which can be argued to add extended knowledge of the respondents, especially in cases where the interview was set within the respondents own daily life i.e. accommodation or work. Moreover, advantages of doing face-to-face interviews, compared to online interviews, are the receival of emotions and feelings expressed non-verbally as well as noticing behaviour happing outside the camera frame i.e. leg movement or finger clicking. Although face-to-face interviews have advantages, so does using Skype. These will be explained in the following section.

Skype Interviews

The advantages of using Skype have been explained by Lo Iacono et al. (2016) to include the possibility of international sampling, equal opportunities and democratic research processes, and recording non-verbal cues through web software. As already mentioned, Skype conversations were planned to feature in the data collection due to the geographical distance to some volunteers based on the Danish islands of Sjælland and Fyn. Although the sample is not international as for Lo Iacono et al. (2016), the VoIP tool has been very useful in allowing respondents from a distance to participate in the research without financial expenses for the interviewer or respondents. Moreover, rule of social distancing caused all interviews to be conducted in a similar way limiting possible differences that might have been between the face-to-face interviews and the VoIP interviews.

One could question the level of trust established though an Internet connection however Deakin and Wakefield (2013, p.8) found that 'Skype interviewees were more responsive, and rapport was built quicker than in a number of face-to-face interviews. Online rapport is… only an issue when interviewing an individual who is more reserved or less responsive'. This finding coheres with the researcher's own experience conducting interviews over Skype, finding that reserved respondents needed more questions as the commonly answered in short. Thus, effort was put into small taking prior to the recorder was turned on as well as explanatory email correspondence leading up to the interview, which further is argued to help establishing rapport (Lo Iacono et al., 2016).

In comparison to interviews done previously face to face, the Skype interviews caused no obvious limits. In fact, all the respondents seemed satisfied with the use of Skype and the comfort of their own home. It is acknowledged that all respondents belong to generation Z, who have been brought up with social media and digital technology, which can be argued raised their confidence in using technologies such as Skype making the scenario familiar to the respondents. One interview was abrupted towards the end due to power failure on the phone of the respondent. However, after five minutes the connection was re-established, and the interview continued without any noticeable disturbances. As noted above, a face-to-face interview has the physical presence of respondent and interviewer in the same room, hence why such abruption could have been avoided.

Respondent and Interviewer Relation

> *Interviews can only be understood in relation to the specifics of the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee, and that these accounts cannot therefore be treated as an unproblematic window onto the social world.*
>
> (Elliott, 2005, p. 20-21)

The quote above highlights the essence of the interpretivist paradigm and further emphasise the importance to discuss the interaction between the respondent and the interviewer. In the present research all respondents were of similar age to the researcher, which helps establishing a connection and comparability between the two parts. However, the similarity in age also pose certain disadvantages, such as implied context and limitation to viewing the phenomenon in a different context than the one shared by the respondents and the researcher. The researcher found that being a student helped in balancing the relation, as the respondents could identify with a student. The fact that the researcher also works part time for the organisation did not seem to be an obstacle when discussion their experience or motivations to join a volunteer tourism programme through ICYE Denmark.

Although it was aimed to balance the relationship out between interviewer and respondents, Kvale and Brinkmann (2008) draws attention to the always existing imbalance between the two parts as one is asking the question and controlling the conversation whereas the other answers to the questions.

Trust between respondent and interviewer is crucial both in the interview setting but also when the researcher is to interpret the text post interview (Kvale, 2007). As argued, the knowledge can only be obtained through is interaction as is equally 'real' for the respondents and the researcher. Elsrud (2001, p. 599) explains: 'No matter how much academic knowledge is extracted from the [respondents'] testimonies, their experiences are as valid and real to them as the construction is to the researcher'. More ethical considerations will be presented below.

Interview Guide

Before conducting the interviews, an interview guide or framework was made for the purpose. The interview guide is influenced by the abductive approach visible in the influence of a plurality of factors with themes found in the literature review as well as the researcher's own experience with similar activities and curiosity. All questions have been categorised into six categories being: travel career, motivations, experiences as a volunteer, NGO, personal benefits and future plans. The purpose of the interview framework was not to follow the questions from top to bottom rigidly but instead use the framework as starting points for conversations. Moreover, it merely functioned as a limit to ensure conversations topics stayed within the boundaries of the research. Lastly, the researcher's task was to listen carefully during the interview to ask appropriate follow-up questions that could help clarify key points, which also is a feature in life world semi-structed interviews (Kvale, 2007).

Introduction	- Thank you for participating Age Country of origin Length of stay in Denmark Project
Travel career	• How often have you travelled in the past? • Can you describe you past travels? - Domestic or international - Length of past travel
Motivations	• Can you talk me through your thoughts about coming to Denmark? • Why Denmark and not somewhere else? • What was your expectations before beginning the project? • Have your expectations been met? • Tell me about your project? • Why did you choose that project? • What do you do at the project? • Has the project been important in choosing Denmark as a destination?
Experiences as a volunteer	• What's your overall experience in Denmark? • What does it mean to you to work as a volunteer? • What is different in working without a salary? • What's your best experience/episode? – or maybe you have several? • What's most challenging about the experience?

	• Has some of the motivations changed since coming to Denmark? • Does expectation meet reality?
NGO	• Why did you choose an organisation to volunteer through? • Have you thought about other alternatives? • Why ICYE? • How did you come to know about the programme? • Is this your first time volunteering?
Personal benefits	• What do you get out of being a volunteer? • Have you experienced a change in personality during your project? • Do you feel like you made a difference – if yes, how?
Future plans	• What will this experience mean to you? • What are you taking home as your most important lesson? • How can you make use of this experience in the future?

Respondents

All respondents in this research have come to Denmark to volunteer through the cultural exchange organisation, ICYE Denmark. A stratified sampling method was utilised based on country of origin to get representation from diverse nationalities, as it is believed to pose the greatest variety in answers. Thereafter, emails where sent out to 16 selected youth of different nationality, continent, age and gender whereof 9 agreed to be interviewed.

The age span of the respondents is 19-28 years old and represent several different countries and continents. The majority of respondents are female which is further representative of the division in sex among all international volunteers coming through ICYE Denmark. According to a shared volunteer list for ICYE colleagues 54 internationals are, in this moment of writing, in Denmark whereof 41 are female and 13 males. Below is a table inspired by Suba's (2017) research giving an overview of the respondents. Country of origin has been chosen to be included in the table to document the variety although it poses a risk of potential biases towards nationalities.

Respondent	Sex	Age	Country of origin	Duration of programme in Denmark	Previous volunteer experience
R1	Female	22	Bolivia	11 months	Yes, for local bands and elderly homes.
R2	Female	19	Germany	10 months	Yes, with friends and family throughout her life
R3	Female	26	Russia	11 months	Yes, for various thing incl. student festivals, intellectual games etc.
R4	Female	21	Japan	12 months	Not committed for more than a day.
R5	Female	22	Kenya	12 months	Yes. Often and for longer periods of time.
R6	Female	24	Portugal	10 months	Yes, in an environmental NGO.
R7	Male	27	Argentina	12 months	Yes, in a local community for sports events etc.
R8	Male	20	Austria	9 months	No
R9	Female	28	Spain	11 months	Yes, for the local community giving a few hours mainly in the weekends.

Recording and Transcribing

In the present research it was decided to record all interviews using an audio recorder on a phone for the purpose of memory. Moreover, the recording allowed the researcher to focus more on the respondent's answer and think of potential follow-up questions as argued by Long (2007). The audio recording also made it possible for the researcher and respondent to establish more eye contact, which is beneficial in establishing rapport and to get a feeling of conversation. Before the recorder was turned on, all respondents were asked for their permission.

Later on, all recordings were transcribed for the purpose of greater access to the knowledge and information received through the interviews as well as enhanced opportunities to interpret and analyse the data. The interview transcribes in length are included in the appendix.

Method of Analysis

With all the transcribed interviews similar themes occurred across various respondents. A thematic coding approach has therefore been applied to the processing of the collected interview data. The themes have been found through the abductive process and therefore in line with the interview guide mentioned earlier.

Thematic coding of data can be challenging in the blurred edges between different categories as noted by Long (2007). Motivations are often multiple in volunteer tourism as noted in the theory chapter and do not always comply with a single category. The purpose of using thematic coding is therefore not to place all motivations in the 'right' category but instead to discuss similarities, differences, interactions between motivations, etc.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting the interviews all respondents were informed via an email that their names were not to appear throughout the project. It was decided to anonymise all respondents due to the irrelevance for the reader to know the name of the respondents and further out of ethical considerations for the subjects involved. Further, anonymisation of respondents could have a positive impact in making the respondents talk more feely without worrying that they would be judged by the answers given. Volunteer motivation is not a particular sensitive subject and as the research is looking for personal accounts and experiences, it might be argued that such an anonymisation is irrelevant. However, as knowing their names would bring no extra to the findings, anonymisation was chosen to protect the respondents.

Informed consent was given by all respondents however with the social distancing using Skype such consent was given verbally before the recorder was started as noted by Lo Iacano et al. (2016). No signed document was made, and the consent is therefore a trust matter between respondent and interviewer. All respondents were free to withdraw at any given time before, during or after the interview and their data would be left out of the research although this has not been the case in the present research.

Recordings were done to allow the researcher to have full attention on the spoken words and formulate possible follow-up questions. Further, such recording made sure that the researcher remembered all answers word for word, made possible after transcribing the audio material. In the data analysis, the quotes from the empirical findings are written out in length to avoid taking answers out of context. However, the interpretivist paradigm in which this research is situated, understands that knowledge will only be obtained through subject and observer interaction and the finding are therefore left to the integrity of the researcher, her sensitivity and commitment to moral issues (Kvale, 2007).

Limitations

As the sample for this research was chosen based on country of origin and further left to be representative of who responded to the initial email, findings are based on the exact respondents. Findings would most likely have varied if another group within ICYE Denmark would have been interviewed. This is of course something to notice however this research does not set out to find the truth among all volunteers coming to Denmark but is instead involved with individual's motivation. It can therefore be argued not to be of relevance in the particular case. The respondents are

representing different geographical areas however it should be noted that some are unintentionally left out including Oceania, Middle East, Eastern Europe, and North America. These exclusions result in some limitations to the findings as one can only guess that including respondents from these nationalities would provide different findings as they represent different cultural backgrounds.

All respondents were found through the same cultural exchange organisation and it is therefore limiting the project to this specific organisation. This might result in a similarity in reasons why the international youth volunteer as the respondents all have chosen ICYE Denmark who brand themselves a particular way, which might be the reason for choosing this exact organisation. As argued in the introduction, there are many volunteer tourism suppliers with different focus hence it could be influential to limit the research to one supplier, who in this case focus on cultural exchange The choice to work within the same organisation allows the research to provide more in-depth knowledge of ICYE's volunteers however is limited to other volunteer tourism- or cultural exchange programme suppliers.

Analytical Framework

This research has now shed a light on existing theoretical literature in which the current data sits. The phenomenon of volunteer tourism has been explained through existing literature followed by travel motivations and motivations to volunteer. Lastly in the theory chapter, empirical studies shed a light on motivations to engage with volunteer tourism singling out cultural outcome and self-development.

The methodology chapter describes the explorative approach the research takes to investigate the problem formulation mentioned in the introduction. Before embarking on the analysis of the collected data, this chapter will provide an analytical framework of information about the organisation of interest, ICYE Denmark and the respondents, who all have come to Denmark on a cultural exchange programme facilitated by the organisation.

ICYE Denmark

ICYE (International Cultural Youth Exchange) Denmark is part of the international ICYE Federation, who have active partners in more than 40 countries located on five different continents. The ICYE Federation was set up after the Second World War to enable trust between North American and German youth. Later, the federation grew bigger to include more countries in the exchange.

For almost 50 years, ICYE Denmark has helped facilitate international cultural youth exchange between Denmark and other countries. ICYE Denmark is an independent partner with a Board of Directors who, by being in the federation, have signed to work according to the article of association set by the international Board of Directors.

ICYE Denmark is an organisation located in Aarhus with two focal points - international cultural exchange and a Danish youth organisation. The youth organisation has around 200 active members in Denmark who organises different events as well as planning the quarterly camps for volunteers who are about to embark on their travel, volunteers who have recently returned from a project abroad and the international volunteers currently working and living in Denmark. This present research mainly works with the other aspect, namely the international cultural exchange aspect of the organisation.

There is a clear vision for ICYE Denmark and how to achieve that. The vision and mission for the organisation, translated by the researcher, reads:

> *Our vision is to create understanding of human values across cultures. We work on tearing down cultural barriers between people and thus helping to create world peace. In ICYE Denmark we think that exchange is a way to achieve that. Therefore, our mission is to facilitate exchange between Danish youth and other cultures, and international youth and the Danish culture.*
> (Icye.dk, 2020)

ICYE Denmark offers three different programmes for Danes volunteering abroad and two programmes for internationals wishing to volunteer in Denmark. Relevant for this research are the two programmes offered in Denmark, which is the ICYE programme and the ESC programme (European Solidarity Corps).

The ICYE programme, which is commonly is referred to as the long programme last either six or 12 months. The programme is run and administrated by the ICYE Federation and can only be offered to volunteers through this organisation. Volunteers pay to participate on the programme. Solidarity methods are in place to ensure a vast majority of people get the chance to engage in volunteer services abroad.

The ESC programme is an EU run and funded programme offered via ICYE Denmark for people between the age of 18-30 years old with European nationalities. The programme varies in length between 2-12 months dependent on the project. Projects are advertised and candidates apply, go to interviews and are selected, similar to paid jobs. As the programme is funded by the European Union, it is free for the participants.

ICYE Denmark has around 60 international volunteers in Denmark on a yearly basis where around 15 come through the ICYE programme and 35 from the ESC programme. The volunteers are placed all around the country with a majority around the city of Aarhus. The international volunteers engage in different projects including teaching, childcare, administrative work among others. ICYE Denmark finds accommodation in form of host families, shared volunteer flats or lodging at projects where it is possible. The secretary at the organisation is therefore an administrative tool in accomplishing to facilitate international cultural youth exchange. Besides being the administrative help for volunteers going in and out of Denmark, the secretary also supports the local associations of the youth organisation in planning activities and engaging in civil society.

The Respondents

The data collected for this present research stems from interviews done throughout March 2020 with young internationals volunteering in Denmark through ICYE. 17 young adults were contacted and asked to participate in the interview whereof nine agreed. The nine respondents ageing from 18-28 years old, were coming from different countries cf. the list of respondents in the methodology chapter. The length of the interviews ranged between 00:31:43 to 00:47:39 and were all held via the online visual communication tool, Skype.

In the next chapter of this research, the data will be presented and analysed according to the thematic coding mentioned in the methodology chapter. Thereafter, a discussion will follow, which includes thoughts of relevance and implications within a broader context. Finally, the research will end by concluding the findings and suggest further inquiries to be explored within the field of volunteer tourism in the Global North.

Data Analysis

The research finds nine different themes, *self-development*, *Denmark as a destination*, *macro social factors and accessibility*, *cultural outcome*, *altruism*, *past travel and volunteer experience*, *volunteering through an organisation*, *new friends*, and *fun*, which can be categorised under two headlines; internal factors and external factors to volunteer in Denmark through a cultural exchange organisation. The nine themes are described through nil to five sub-themes. The figure below provides an overview of the headlines, themes and sub-themes used to analyse the data.
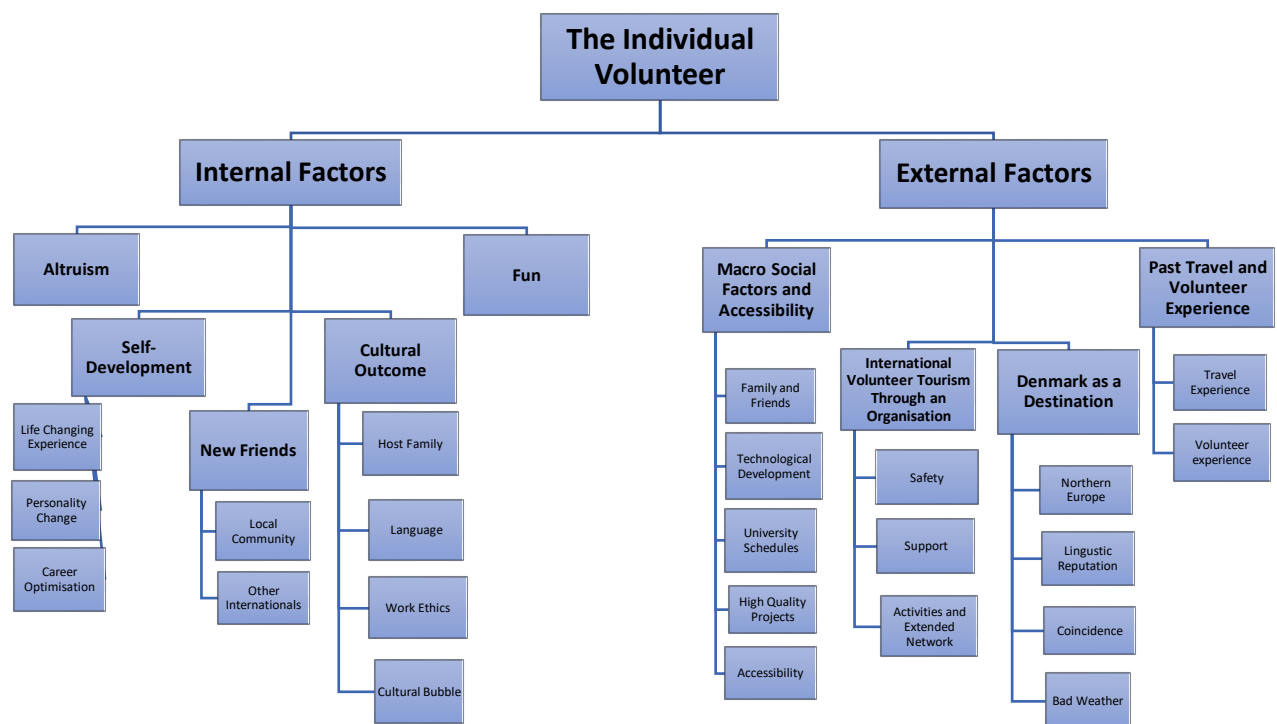

Figure 4: Reasons for young internationals to volunteer in Denmark through a cultural exchange organisation.

This categorisation of internal and external factors replicates the findings of Jamal and Lee's (2003) inclusive theory of travel motivations as well as Wilson's (2000) findings on volunteer motivation mentioned in the theoretical chapter above. The internal/external differentiation can moreover be argued replicates Dann's (1977) 'push'/'pull' approach to motivation hence its relevance in this instance when looking at reasons or motivations to engage in volunteer tourism.

In this chapter of the research, the gathered empirical data will be presented and analysed based on the codes depicted in Figure 4. Further, the analysis will end on attempting to identify some commonalities between all respondents under the label called 'The International Citizen'. Several of the themes overlap, which will be visible in the analysis below. This has to do with the difficulty of isolating reasons and motives from the plurality of interests, as the respondents often are influenced

by multiple factors to participate in volunteer tourism. This finding is consistent with the theory on volunteer tourism motivation abovementioned (Brown, 2005; Hustinx, 2001).

Internal Factors

Inclusive to this headline is the stated personal motivations and reasons for volunteering abroad. These include a quest for self-development, cultural outcome, getting new friends, altruism, and having fun. These themes will be unfolded below.

Self-Development

To follow the terminology from the theory chapter, self-development can be argued to be the ego-centric motives for doing a volunteer tourism project. All respondents in the interviews mentioned some form of development of their persona, whether they came with the expectation to do so or not. The theme is mutually based in theory and in the collected data set, hence its relevance to be included and analysed in this given research. In this research, the theme 'self-development' contains three different subthemes, as the development is experienced in three different ways by the respondents. These subthemes are life changing experiences, personality change and career optimisation, which further are highlighted in the theory chapter to be motives for engaging in volunteer tourism programmes.

Life Changing Experiences

For many of the respondents, this programme is an opportunity to take a gap year, a year out to explore themselves, challenge who they are and time to think about the future. This coheres with Rehberg's findings (2005) who list one motivational category to be a 'quest for one-self'. The young adults from this research are all in a similar stage of life partly due to their joint age group; an age for searching and exploring. They search for themselves as individuals, questioning their future, and challenging and pushing their boundaries to understand themselves better in relation to the world in which they live. This is evident in the respondents wish to try something completely different to their normal routines, hence they participate in volunteer tourism.

All of the respondents have had experiences, that somehow have influenced their life in the short term - and even long term. They explain cases of new work ethics, having met Danish partners, and being introduced to international volunteering. These experiences have all formed the respondent in some way and will be influential for their future life. The volunteer programmes abroad can therefore be argued to facilitate a time to reflect, a search for identity, explore possibilities and ultimately be a life changing experience. R9 and R5 explain the experience as:

> *It's a point of inflection… when the curve change. There's a curve and then it changes or something like that. This point, I think it is at that point for me. Because, the life that I had before was very in line, it was very the same, always the same. Now it changes completely, not only in the normal experience of the work experience or anything like that, but also in myself* (R9)

This experience is so life changing because it actually puts you in the position to see that you can accommodate more than once and that you can choose what you deem positive to your life and adapt to them (R5)

Based on the presented data, it can be argued that the respondents seek time to reflect on future life, challenge their boundaries and search for identity by being immersed in unknown situations such as volunteer tourism programmes. The life-changing experiences can therefore be seen as a motivation and reason for international youth to volunteer abroad. In this given case, however, it should be noted, that the importance of their experience could occur in hindsight and therefore is not yet visible to all the respondents. Further, the outcome of these experiences to be life-changing is moreover not known until one engages in these experiences hence why it cannot be concluded prior to participation, that volunteer tourism can lead to life changing experiences as exhibited in this dataset.

Personality Change

Seven respondents mentioned a change in personality during the experience of volunteering abroad including being more mature, responsible, independent, organised, flexible, and relaxed. This development of personality and experience of succeeding abroad led to a greater self-confidence mentioned by several respondents. Some felt proud of themselves while others felt impowered to face new challenges in the future. This finding supports the work on volunteering by Thoits and Hewitt (2001) arguing that personal factors such as happiness, self-esteem and sense of control over one's life is enhanced through voluntary work.

As all the respondents are young adults, the volunteer tourism experience also seems to be de-attaching themselves from their parents and growing to become more independent and confident. Growing more confident in themselves through a volunteer tourism experience is in line with Wearing's (2001) findings of self-development listed in the theory chapter. For some of the respondents (R2, R5, R8), this experience is the first time they have lived away from their parents, hence why the level of independence might seem to increase more rapidly and include common practical tasks such as washing, cooking and ironing. For others, it is more a matter of not having the usual help of family within reach that made them more independent. In the quote below, R5 explains how she has felt a change in personality with emphasis on being more independent.

In those moments between when I first arrived and now when you are put in a place where you have to figure out things and you have to find solutions on your own, you kind of have to grow up... this has pushed me in a place where I have to be like: oh, I can't just easily pick up the phone and tell my mum 'come pick me up, I'm lost, I missed the train and I do not know how this is working' so you have to research things on your own and you have to be independent. And the person I was coming and the person who I was now are two completely different people (R5).

The tendency in this dataset is, that individuals engaged with volunteer tourism experience a change in personality to become more self-confident and independent. Interestingly, R7 was one of the two who did not feel that this experience has changed his personality and explained that 'maybe because it's not the first time I have an experience kind of similar to this'. Therefore, he indirectly argues, that the experience has the potential to change someone's personality, although most likely during a first-time experience with volunteering or living abroad.

From the above text on personality change, one might understand that these changes have just come to the volunteer, which of course is not the case. It is important to understand what has led this change and for the vast majority that has been challenges or difficulties in living abroad. To use Wearing's (2001) terminology, the personal and interpersonal awareness and learning that has been achieved by participating in volunteer tourism. The challenges include uncertainty in living situation (R2), low and sad days missing home (R5, R6), not having an extended group of friends (R1), depressing weather (R1-9) and not speaking the language leading to exclusion in work tasks (R3, R4, R7). Having faced these challenges and overcome them gives the respondents the feeling that 'everything is possible' (R1) and being proud of themselves (R8). It can therefore be argued that hard times seem to push their change in self-confidence and independence.

> *I'm more secure about myself. I know myself more because I had to learn how to adapt to a completely new situation. I didn't really think I had the ability to do it, but I have it!* (R9)

This section of the research finds that volunteer tourism programmes can lead to increased self-confidence and independence by facing and overcoming a variety of challenges when living abroad and thereby verifies Wearing's (2001) argumentation that self-development happen through volunteer tourism. Based on the respondents' past experience, this development in personality varies in impact, as younger respondents with less travel experience seem to progress more in this field. This might be expected, as any experience of leaving the comfort of home and one's parents leads to some kind of independence regardless of the individual move locally or to the other side of the world. It must be noted, that the research does not claim self-development to be a reason why international youth embark on a volunteer tourism adventure however it should more so be seen as an additional gain experienced by the respondents in the present research. Besides a change in personality, the research suggests that the consideration of future professional career is another influencing factor contributing towards the motivation to volunteer.

Career Optimisation

All the respondents are very reflective about their decision to engage in volunteer tourism and how to use the experience for future benefits. These benefits include career optimisation, which coheres with Benson and Wearing (2012) who notice that motivations for volunteer tourism is to acquire skills to help one's career by enhancing the CV. The serious approach to the programme, in order to benefit professionally from the experience, is reflected in how the respondents view the premises of the programme. Some compare the volunteer tourism experience to an international internship while others mention it to be informal education. Both of these terms are associated with something

beneficial for one's career hence why effort is invested in finding a suitable project that will provide such an advantage. Moreover, this emphasises Stebbins' (2001b) argument to participate in serious leisure, which is benefitting as learning experiences. R4 explains her considerations for doing a gap year and choosing Denmark as a destination for her project.

> *I want to be an English teacher in Japan, so I am now taking English teacher license in Japan University. And then I wanted to take a gap year because I wasn't really ready to go out of education so I wanted to go to like other countries to do something and then I thought it might be good for my future career to like study or something related to education and then Denmark is kind of, is one of the world known for their high quality education system and also they speak really good English generally. So, I thought maybe English education in Denmark is worth spending your one year to study about or learning something about* (R4).

This quote by R4 clearly shows how considerations have gone into doing something with her gap year, which benefitted her career opportunities in the long run. Towards the end of the quote, R4 even express that it is *worth* spending a year on, which further highlights how closely the benefits of volunteer tourism experience is related to enhancement of future career opportunities. Therefore, it can be argued that a motivating factor to participate in a volunteer tourism programme is the career optimisation that it fosters, which also is a finding in existing literature on volunteer tourism motivation (see theoretical chapter).

Although English is not the official language in Denmark, importance on using the English language or teaching English was a motivating factor for just over half of the respondents. Speaking and writing fluent English is deemed very important for the respondents to ensure better jobs or an international career. R8 explains:

> *I am pretty sure that I want to work something with international things. You know, where you can use languages, where you are not only in your home country, where you are internationally positioned* (R8).

Doing a volunteer tourism programme abroad therefore both helps in providing a platform for using the English language as well as being introduced to working within an international setting. The volunteer tourism programme can therefore work to inspire international youth to possible careers as well as enhancing already known career plans. A volunteer tourism programme could further facilitate a change of career. R6, a former commercial marketing manager from Portugal, wanted this experience to cut the ties with the stressful life in marketing. She talks about how her experience in Denmark as a volunteer has brought clearness to her career.

> *I never really considered working in a municipality… [The volunteer experience] has told me that I really like working in public institutions or even governmental institutions but maybe not in Portugal. So, I would like to keep doing this, maybe in other countries or if I go back to Portugal for good, then I would probably be more into the public organisations… So, I*

think it gave me more clearness in the way that I know that I don't want to work in communications so soon again or at least not in the capitalist advertising marketing agency world. Yeah, so, I would say it gave me a little bit more sense of direction (R6).

According to highlighted quotes, it can be argued that all respondents seem to use this experience as a volunteer in Denmark to bring clearness about their career, whether it's to enhance an already known career path, aspire to a future international career, master the English language to a greater extent, or using their experience to test possible new career opportunities. Besides their professional careers, emphasis is placed on the volunteer tourism experience to be life changing and cause personal development, becoming more self-confident and independent. In other words, the volunteer tourism experience is an opportunity to change direction and to explore and develop both personally and professionally, as highlighted by the three branches constituting the theme of self-development.

New Friends

The second theme mentioned by the respondents is the desire to meet new people and form friendships across different cultures. New friends in this regard, are people of a similar age who are not necessarily a colleague but more so friends who they have something in common with. Friends who can share spare-time and enjoy parties, coffee, picnic and other casual leisure activities. This theme coheres with the findings from the theory chapter, where Rehberg (2005) and Brown (2005) both find that establishing new friendships or seeking camaraderie are among motivations to engage in volunteer tourism.

Respondents talk about their efforts in making new friends and how it for some, has been a priority when choosing the location for their project. Some respondents have chosen bigger cities in Denmark to ensure student life to which they can relate and therefore hopefully create a social life similar to the one in their home city. Introverts therefore find smaller social circles to be satisfying while extroverts work harder to establish bigger social networks. Getting a new social circle of friends is among one of the criteria for the respondents when choosing destination for their volunteer tourism project. Some reflect in hindsight and post arrival, that their best experience in Denmark has to do with meeting new people and socialising with a diverse group of people. So, whether social network was important prior to the volunteer experience or something that has come to be an important part of their experience, seven respondents mentioned making connections to others and establishing friendships.

Before taking a closer look at making friends, the theme is split in two subthemes separating the local community of Danes with other internationals who are staying in Denmark for a limited time. The reason for this split has to do with the effort required to establish friendships, which will be unfolded below.

Local Community

> *Finding friends, making relationships, what the fuck. Really, really hard in Denmark, extremely!* (R8)

The research found it important to include this blunt quote from respondent 8, that captures the frustration worded by almost all respondents in making connections to the local community of Danes. Some use other descriptions, including 'distant', 'closed' and 'hard to get under their skin', but ultimately, they all share the same difficulties of getting to know the Danes on a deeper level. Due to the preconceptions that Denmark is an 'amazing' country, some respondents are surprised to find it difficult to establish connections to the Danes. Unlike the bad weather, which for the respondents weas expected, this closed and reserved behaviour comes as a surprise to many.

The theory chapter explores how local participation is vital in ensuring volunteer tourism programmes to be beneficial for the host community and the volunteer simultaneously (Guttentag, 2009). Further, the interaction between the two parties is influential for the cultural understanding, which will be explored in the following theme. The Danes seem more reluctant to engage in new friendships with the international volunteers that exceeds the collegial interaction, leading to great frustration for the respondents. As argued in the theory chapter, there is a lack of papers written on volunteer tourism in Denmark or any other Nordic countries, hence why the focus was always on the fragile host community and how to avoid exploitation. In this present research, as the destination is a developed country, it can be argued that the focus should be on the inclusion of the participant into the host community to ensure a mutually benefitting scenario.

Two respondents seem to be successful in establishing friendships with Danes through their spare time activity playing football. Even here however, they explain great difficulty with constantly having to be the one to initiate the conversation. R7 explains:

> *My experience with Danes is quite distant in the beginning. There's always the need of me being the one to start a dialogue and start a conversation and create a bond. And once you do it, then you see people are kind and social and interested* (R7).

The other respondent shares the same experience of 'cracking' the Danes in time and comment on the importance to persist on working towards getting Danish friends to establish the contact with the local community. He states: 'I think it is very important, otherwise you wouldn't really have any connections to where I have been… so, you never have an intention to come back and so it's important for me to have a lot of connections to different people' (R8).

It can be argued that interaction between the host community and the participant is important for mutual benefit, however international volunteers unexpectedly find it difficult to connect to the Danes. This finding turns the table in regard to the existing research in the field of volunteer tourism, as the

focus is not to protect the host community and ensure local involvement but instead to make sure the international volunteer actually gets to engage with the host community on a deeper level.

Other Internationals

It seems easier for the respondents to connect with other volunteers, international students or other people in a similar situation. They are more open to engage in new friendships as they are all in a similar situation looking for a social network outside the comfort of home. The interaction between the volunteers is facilitated through social activities and educational camps arranged by ICYE Denmark, which ensures opportunities for building friendships. R6 explains how her group of friends are all internationals.

> *Regarding my group of friends for example. We are all from different nationalities and from different ages. In other circumstances, probably that wouldn't be my groups of friends. So, I think in a way, us being volunteers is kind of a link that unites us and makes us kind of in the same page even though we are all in different stages in life* (R6).

Besides showing an international group of friends, the quote also proves how having international friends, who are in the same situation, is important. Further, one could argue, that the nationality of the friends is less important compared to actually having a social network with whom they can share spare time. Similarly, R7 explains how having international friendships is a priority of his:

> *My best experience is, maybe it's because what I appreciate, is this international network where you get to, it can be in an ICYE event or something you organise yourself, where you are meeting people. Maybe you are 10 people with 10 different nationalities, and we are kind of in the same, you know, environment that you are because they maybe are students or volunteers. And yeah, I enjoy that, just meeting maybe 10 different cultures in one night, in one table and being in the same, you know, vibe* (R7).

Although making friends and connecting with other internationals is a very positive outcome, it questions the cultural importance of Denmark. Could these encounters equally take place in another country with the cultural outcome being similar and, in this case, it just happens to be in Denmark? Raymond and Hall (2008) talk about a 'same culture bubble' which limits the cultural outcome of a volunteer tourism experience. The question of cultural outcome will be unfolded in the theme below.

The research proves that finding new friends is a motivating factor for respondents to participate in volunteer tourism in Denmark. The nationality of the friends is secondary to having someone with whom the respondents can socialise with and relate to. The difficulty in befriending Danes leads to a bigger international circle of friends, as a social network exceeds the wish for friendships with members of the local community. Moreover, the international volunteers seem to have more in common with one another as they are in a similar situation and thus more relatable. A spare time activity like football has in this researched proved to be one way of befriending the reluctant Danes.

Cultural Outcome

The contact with other cultures has already been mentioned above, however this theme will explore the importance of enriched cultural understanding and whether that is an outcome from a volunteer experience abroad with ICYE. As already known, ICYE Denmark is a cultural exchange organisation, hence the importance to analyse the cultural outcome gained by the respondents. As Raymond and Hall (2008) argued in the theory chapter, the sending organisation is hugely responsible for facilitating enriched cultural understanding. However, in this given case, the research does not work with sending organisations but instead look at the host organisation in Denmark, which can be argued not to be influencial for the findings due to the cooperation internally in the ICYE federation.

The enlarged cultural understanding of Denmark as well as other nationalities is mentioned by around half of the respondents as a motivator for volunteering abroad, which resembles Suba (2017) and Rehberg's (2005) findings. Rehberg (2005) explains it as a quest for something new; a new culture, a new language and a new everyday life. The quest for new cultures is agreed by R2 who states that a voluntary service is beneficial in multiply ways:

> *I thought that volunteer service could be nice also because you learn a lot of the culture in the other country and you get really a good inside to work life there and also like the private life because you live in a host family* (R2).

Host Family

Four out of nine respondents live with a Danish host family during their stay, which by ICYE Denmark is believed to foster greater cultural awareness about the Danish culture. In all the cases where it is possible to live with a host family, ICYE Denmark attempts to make it happen through extensive networking and marketing. Living with a host family is expressed by the respondents to be an advantage in getting to know the Danish culture and the language, which further is a way to ensure the host community and volunteer interaction.

> *I think it is much easier for me and the good thing is, that you can learn so much more from the Danish lifestyle, from your Danish host family* (R8).

In this quote, R8 agrees with ICYE Denmark's perception that living with a host family has multiple cultural benefits, which can only be obtained by being fully immersed into a Danish family. Living with a host family can therefore be argued to ensure greater cultural awareness of the country in which the volunteers stay. There are pros and cons to all options of accommodations, however, a potential disadvantage by living with a host family is the lack of connection to other people of a similar age or other volunteers who are living in shared apartments. This is something to keep in mind based on the importance of social networks as explored in the previous theme.

Language

All respondents have had the opportunity to get one module of Danish language lessons as part of the programme with ICYE Denmark, which yet again emphasise the organisations effort in raising cultural awareness through the volunteer tourism experience. Most of the respondents have found it helpful to know a basic level of Danish to easier connect with Danes (R7 and R8) while for others it has helped them engage better in work tasks (R3, R4).

> *[Learning Danish] is crucial, I think. I don't want to think that it is but to be honest, I more and more think that it actually is crucial* (R3).

Some respondents found the Danish language useful however the unnecessity of learning Danish to fulfil duties or make relationships, made them less likely to practice their language skills (R1, R5, and R6). These findings clearly prove, that if learning the Danish language is an indicator for raised cultural awareness, the language should be a necessity for the volunteer regardless of organisations offered language lessons or not. It can be argued that fluent Danish would make the smaller finesses of the Danish culture visible to the respondents however unrealistic for many due to their fairly short stay in Denmark. The research does not aim to prove if extended knowledge of the language would lead to greater cultural understanding but more so to argue that learning a new language is a motivating factor for the respondents, which is made possible by ICYE Denmark.

Work Ethics

A cultural difference commented on by five of the respondents is the work ethics. The respondents are more familiar with a hieratical work environment and therefore find it difficult to manoeuvre in a work situation where the structures and tasks are loosely defined as in Denmark. Further, the collegiate network does not differentiate between junior and senior staff in idea development situations. The difficulty is visible in the quote below:

> *So, here for me it's quite difficult because, it's better this way, the system that Denmark has here is way better for me because, yeah for everybody, the project and the work can be improved but it is difficult because I have that fear of the rejection constantly because in Spain, it is that* (R9).

The lessons learned by working in another cultural setting could be argued to belong in the career optimisation sub-theme above as it includes varied work experience. However, the working culture is a reflection of the overall culture in the country, hence it is important to analyse in this particular setting. Further, the primary interaction with the Danish culture happens through the workplace, especially for respondents who do not live with host families.

Many of the respondents find the Danish working culture beneficial, however R3 views this organisational structure as loose, inefficient and allows a lack of discipline. This clearly proves, that when the respondents are exposed to other cultures, including the Danish, they pick and choose from

cultures known to them to gather, what for them, is the most optimal solution. It can therefore be argued, that being exposed to a variety of cultures helps the respondents to become more aware of themselves and their own culture.

Being immersed in a workplace has the ability to encourage cultural sharing and thereby enlarge the understanding of differences, similar to living with a host family. The workplace or project is therefore essential for the respondents' cultural outcome. The respondents voice gratitude for being exposed to the new working culture, which has taught them professional self-worth and shed a light on existing work routines – regardless of whether they want them to change or not.

Cultural Bubble

The question whether the cultural exchange is an international bubble, presented by Raymond and Hall (2008) in the theory chapter, has an ambiguous answer. Based on the arguments above, one can argue that the exchange is situated within the Danish culture in regard to language, daily life, and work ethics making the Danish culture important for the cultural outcome. However, it is not limited to Danish culture, as all of the respondents have interaction with other international volunteers, from a variety of cultures, either through their projects or through the social events organised by ICYE Denmark. Therefore, the influence of other cultures is based in Denmark but includes a vast variety of cultures. R5 encapsulates this duality in her statement:

> *The main idea coming here was to really learn the Danish culture but as I came here I found out that it is a [folk high school] that hosts students from very many other countries and coming here you get the chance to always sit down at different points of the day with people from those different parts of the world and have conversations with them* (R5).

Cultural outcome is not only a matter of which country one is exposed to. More so, cultural outcome is the understanding that work ethics, daily life and language are different depending on cultural setting. This realisation makes the respondents more equipped to pick and choose elements best suited to their persona and ideology from a variety of cultures exposed to them at any given time. This research would argue, that raising one's awareness of cultural differences provides understanding of people or routines that are unfamiliar to the individual, as well as encouraging a process of reflecting of one's habits and cultural defaults.

To sum up, this theme argues that raised cultural awareness is an outcome of volunteer tourism abroad. The host organisation helps this process by ensuring cultural encounters through host family or workplace interaction as well as providing language classes. Moreover, the quest for new cultures is a motivating factor for international youth to volunteer abroad, which further impacts their self-development. A volunteer tourism programme therefore has the ability to affect the respondents' cultural understanding by engaging in differences across cultures, which directly impacts the respondent's own understanding of the world and themselves. It could be argued that this cultural

awareness leads to greater tolerance and curiosity towards unknown people and norms, by familiarising themselves with the diversity of nationalities with whom they socialise.

Altruism

In the theory section, it was noticed that volunteer tourism literature often discusses ego-centric motive versus altruistic motives. The self-development theme has proven a high degree of ego-centric motivation for the respondents to participate in volunteer activities in Denmark. When faced with the question of the importance of the volunteer duty, answers vary. For some, a volunteer experience was the 'easiest' solution to getting abroad, which will be explored further in the external factors, while for others the voluntary service is key to this experience. R5 explains:

> *I think it is very important to me that it is volunteer work and I wouldn't have had it any other way. I think it's way more fulfilling to do it this way and at the end of the day it get me something to reflect about and say I did this because I loved it and I do it not wanting any sorts of form of returns so it also gives me this sort of peace in my heart that I'm doing something, or I am in a space that I appreciate without necessarily having to get some sort of payment for it* (R5).

The majority of respondents did not mind the lack of payment for their work as they describe the personal and professional benefits to outweigh the need for other forms of financial returns.

> *With host family and everything you get so much back in the other end… I do not really need something. I don't really need money from them. They gave me so much! So, the outcome is much bigger* (R8).

It must be noted, that the quotes above, mention the lack of payment in relation to how much they individually get out of the experience, which challenges the pure altruistic mindset. It can be argued that the theme should include a question mark so it would be: Altruism? In Rehberg's (2005) findings, the altruistic motives for volunteer tourism include a category on 'feeling useful, doing something useful'. It can be argued, that altruism in its purest form is not present in this study, however respondents all have the feeling of contributing and feeling useful in their respective projects. Moreover, this feeling of being useful is vital for the respondents in feeling purposeful, which creates meaning to why they are doing the project in the first place. R9 talks about how it is important to feel like you are contributing something to the project.

> *So, if you are working for nothing, no, but you are working because you really think that you are making something for that project. It doesn't matter the project. It is important that you are working some things, you are not getting paid for, and yeah, that is ok, you are a volunteer, you knew that you are not getting paid, but at least you have the satisfaction that this is, the feeling that you are really improving that project and you are helping that project to make something good. So, of course it is important. It's basic* (R9).

Based on the quote above, it could be argued that the feeling of contribution to the given volunteer project is an important factor, which can be traced to altruism based on Rehberg's (2005) grouping of motives from the theory chapter. This contribution is given freely by the respondents in exchange for the feeling of being useful and actual contribution to the project.

To sum up, the research argues that the respondents' motives are less altruistic as the volunteer experience most often include a personal gain. Yet, the feeling of contribution, giving something back, is valued highly by the respondents. This makes the distinction between ego-centric and altruistic motives difficult, as it is most likely a mixture of both. However, the excessive recognition of personal gains and self-development expressed within this data, overpowers the altruistic motives, without neglecting the existence of both simultaneously.

Fun

It has been surprising to find a minority of respondents who directly mentions fun as part of their reasons to participate in volunteer tourism as other scholars in the theory chapter clearly indicates that to be a motivating factor to engage in volunteer tourism in their empirical research. This is especially pointed out by Weaver (2015) who added a hedonistic element to the altruistic versus ego-centric dichotomy. The hedonistic motives included the desire for fun and travel, which in Stebbins' (2001b) terminology would be called casual leisure. Indirectly, finding new friends could be associated with fun but was not spoken of in motivations for volunteering abroad. R1 and R9 speak of the desire to travel as a motivating factor however without linking it directly to fun. The respondents speak of fun episodes and good times during their experience in Denmark, but it seems to be the lucky coincidence instead of the intention of the volunteer experience. This indicates a seriousness in achieving something rewarding for themselves, their career, or for future life in general by this volunteer tourism experience. Further, the absence of mentioning fun in the interview might suggest that volunteers coming to Denmark are more targeted towards the benefits of a volunteer tourism experience compared to respondents in existing literature on the topic cf. the theory chapter.

Two respondents, however, cherish the opportunity to have a good time, be comfortable and enjoy the experience. These two respondents, yet again happens to be the males, who also were more successful in befriending the local community of Danes. R7 explains:

> *The mindset is somewhere in between the settlement and the tourism because it's not like I'm here taking it as the same as my job in Argentina. Even though, if I take it serious and I have the expectations and all, but also the mindset is also a little bit in the tourism place, where you are like, you don't work that much and you have time to see places you haven't seen and like that… and have fun.*

Similarly, R8's choice of project was hugely influenced by his desire to have a good time and make the experience enjoyable. He explains this indirectly by talking of avoidable senecios:

I want to feel comfortable when I live here… It shouldn't be a time, one year, for example where you just, argh I don't want to get up one day after another, it is just hard for you and this is what I don't wanted.

Although the theme of having fun was only mentioned by two, one could argue only one, it seems unlikely that the huge importance placed on finding new friends and establishing connections would not have something to do with the desire to have fun and make the experience enjoyable. Yet, this is only a hypothesis and an observation done by the researcher and is not reflected in the data. This theme concludes that the majority of respondents in the present research, do not speak of the volunteer tourism experience to be a time of leisure but instead focus on making it as beneficial for their career and personal development as possible. This finding therefore questions if participants in this given research place more emphasis on the 'pure' volunteerism more than the touristic motivations as divided by Brown (2005). However, the statement is conflicting with the emphasis placed on ego-centric motives mentioned above. These conflicting arguments show the difficulty in singling out each theme.

Conclusion of Internal Factors

All the internal factors found for participating in volunteer tourism in Denmark through a cultural exchange organisation have now been listed and explored. The research shows that two prominent internal reasons to do volunteer tourism were self-development and establishing new friendships across cultures. Self-development contains both personal and professional growth of the individual. Closely linked to finding new friends, as many befriended internationals, is the search for cultural awareness and understanding. The theme includes the cultural outcome of extended knowledge of the Danish society, language and work ethics without neglecting the influence by a multitude of cultures in a volunteer tourism setting. The fourth theme determined by the data presented altruistic motivation, finding most altruistic motivation was accepted due to the fact that ego-centric benefits were present questioning the actual altruistic motive. Lastly, the internal factor of fun as a motivator to volunteer abroad was presented, surprisingly only mentioned by two respondents. Up next are the external factors influencing the respondents to do volunteer tourism in Denmark.

External Factors

Relying again on Jamal and Lee's (2003), Wilson's (2000), and Dann's (1977) studies, tourism and volunteer motivation include the physiological internal motives as described above as well as external social factors. In this section, the data analysis will focus on these external factors for internationals to engage in volunteer tourism in Denmark. The external factors include macro social factors and accessibility, international volunteer tourism through an organisation, Denmark as a destination, and past travel and volunteer experience as presented in Figure 4 above.

Macro Social Factors and Accessibility

This theme is intentionally very open and inclusive of a variety of reasons why the respondents are taking part in volunteer tourism in Denmark. The open theme is chosen due to the explorative research for discovery nature mentioned in research design, which seek to explore all aspects of the phenomenon. In this given case, macro social factors and accessibility include influence by friends and family, technological development, university schedules, high quality projects, and cheap flight tickets in comparison to other destinations.

Family and Friends

Many of the respondents spoke of friends, family or relatives having influenced their decision to engage in a project abroad, which is in line with Wilson's (2000) finding as mentioned above. Some knew friends who had volunteered with ICYE in the past and others come from a family where volunteering is strongly ingrained in traditions. By having someone in your close social circle to have participated in similar activities in the past, the action to do so is verified and deemed as acceptable behaviour. The respondents are therefore both influenced and inspired by family and friends as well as being socially accepted within their social network, which resembles Wilson's (2000) finding for volunteering. R2 explains:

> *I think volunteer service is what fits me best and I have also friends who have done it, so I heard from their experiences and that also kind of made me sure that I wanted to do a volunteer service... Through friends and family, I have always been in contact with the concept of volunteering and so I have always liked that* (R2).

For respondent 5 the decision to volunteer abroad through ICYE was strongly influenced by her mother's network:

> *I didn't really have the space to research about more programmes because my mother was a very good friend to the lady who is in charge of the programme in Kenya... So, it wasn't really a just choose anything. She told me, if you want to go abroad, this is the best option, I think is very good for you and then I had to read on it and then I had to decide* (R5).

Based on the quotes above it can be argued that the social network is essential for the respondents' decision to engage in volunteering abroad through ICYE as an organisation. Through these social networks the respondents become aware of opportunities to engage in volunteer tourism as well as getting a sign of approval for their actions by fellow peers.

Technological Development

The next macro social sub-theme is the technological development, especially in the form of online communication and the World Wide Web. Several of the respondents mention their search for opportunities to do a volunteer tourism programme and in today's technological landscape, this means online. The technological development of online services to retrieve information about opportunities

to go abroad for their gap year is therefore influential when it comes to their decision. When asked how R9 come to know of the programme, she answered:

> *Google! I just literally, I put on google, in a google tab, charity-ships. And there are many websites that says the different ways to travel for charity-ships and they volunteer in Europe and the ESC programme is one of them.*

The technology of searching for information online was therefore influential in getting R9 to know the programme. Further, this emphasises the importance for organisations and other volunteer tourism suppliers to pay attention to their online presence and optimise their visibility to be 'found' by the potential future volunteers.

Besides the online technology, the broadcast media has also been influential for a respondent. R5 talk about a childhood memory:

> *As I was growing up this one time there was a climate change form on the television, and it was in Copenhagen. And the name Copenhagen stuck with me and as I grow up, I realise that Copenhagen is in Denmark and then it became a dream of me to go to Denmark.*

The extended international coverage and distribution of news through technological changes have therefore been contributing to R5's knowledge of Denmark and her wish to visit the destination. This extended influx of international information cause internationals to know about the volunteer tourism programme as well as Denmark as a country. Denmark as a destination will be explored more thoroughly below. To summarise, it can be argued that the technological development of online services and communication has been influential for the respondents to participate in volunteer tourism through a cultural exchange programme offered by ICYE.

University Schedules

Although the research has already presented and analysed a wish for a meaningful gap year under the internal factors, it is important to mention, that the gap year in some cases are led by the curriculum and university schedule. These intended gap years for the students contribute to the desire to make use of them, for example by advancing professionally through a volunteer tourism experience. R4 and R5 mention their opportunity to do a gap year before graduating, indicating that their gap year is an integrated part of their university degree. Further, this could explain the extended effort in making the year meaningful in regard to future career opportunities. It can be argued, that if universities and other educational institutions include an opportunity for an optional gap year, it is more likely that the student will make use of such an offer. University schedules and curriculums are therefore externally impacting the individuals by facilitating a gap year that has the potential to be used to participate in volunteer tourism.

High Quality Projects

The search for meaningful experiences is moreover reflected in the importance placed on finding the 'right' project, which is a duplicate from internal factors. The search for good projects will always involve comparison to other destinations offering a different portfolio of projects. However, some of the respondents mentioned Denmark to have the most suited project compatible to them. This might be logical as they are currently in Denmark doing their project. High quality volunteer tourism projects are merely deemed important by Wilson (2015) to avoid unsatisfactory work and other critiques as listed by Guttentag (2009) such as host exploitation mentioned in the theory chapter.

An example from the present data set is R6 who intensively looked at Italian projects as she loves the country, however, after numerous rejections decided to change her search to focus on projects better suited for her professional career instead of destinations and ended up with a choice between Denmark and Croatia. This example outlines the importance of the project when internationals choose the destination emphasising both the internal choice of project as well as the destination's portfolio of choices. This research does not attempt to generalise which projects are 'better', as that also has a subjective interpretation, however, argues that high quality projects are important for volunteers and host communities alike. Based on the above, it can be argued that the project quality and content is impacting the respondents' choice of destination and ultimately their engagement in volunteer tourism.

Accessibility

Lastly, in terms of accessibility, it is important for the respondents to be able to reach Denmark. Infrastructure and affordability therefore become important when international youth are deciding on a destination. R1 explains how choosing a destination was influenced by several parameters, which also involved the affordability of getting there:

> So first I thought it was a good idea to go to England or New Zealand but the work there as a voluntary was not the best. For example, in England, and the flight ticket there was very expensive, so I was like considering to do other things and not to do volunteer (R1).

The quote is a prime example of someone, in this case R1, looking for an experience to learn English, (as highlighted in internal factors), which naturally led to looking for opportunities in English speaking countries. She then came to find the project 'was not the best' and the flight tickets are expensive and therefore adapt her search, to finally end on a project in Denmark. Yet again, this emphasises the importance of the project as well as the accessibility of the destination in the respondents' choice to engage in volunteer tourism.

In this theme it has been argued that macro social factors and accessibility are important for internationals when choosing to take part in a volunteer tourism experience in Denmark. These factors include considerable influence from family and friends and the technological development of the World Wide Web and internationally broadcasted news media. Moreover, factors such as university

schedules including gap years, quality of projects and cheap flight tickets also affect the respondents' decision.

International Volunteer Tourism Through an Organisation

The next theme to be explored and analysed under the external factor category is why the respondents choose to engage in volunteer tourism through an organisation like ICYE Denmark. As argued in the theory chapter, the volunteer tourism sector is complex, diverse and influenced by different disciplines (Weaver, 2015) resulting in multiply ways to volunteer abroad; including opportunities to 'work-away'[1], do 'wwoofing'[2], work for charities or to be an au-pair. The question is therefore why the respondents volunteer through a cultural exchange organisation instead of choosing other suppliers. The data finds three different answers, which includes safety, support, activities and extended network.

Safety

Some respondents voice that going abroad, some for the very first time independently, feel safer when doing it through an organisation. ICYE Denmark has existed nearly 50 years (icye.dk, 2020) facilitating international exchange as well as hosting the ESC programme sponsored by the European Union, which can be argued to function as a form of verification of the programme and organisation. Choosing ICYE as an organisation is therefore deemed safer due to its long history of existence and competencies as well as the cooperation with the European Union, which is known by many regardless of nationality. R9 explains:

> *It's a project that have the support of the European Commission, so it's something safe…*
> *So, I prefer it this way, because it is the safest way. I thought it was the safest way. I don't know, I don't have experience with work away or au pair, I only have this experience but from my point of view, this is more safer* (R9).

The quote above clearly shows how R9 connects the European Union with something safe, hence the programme and organisation also must be safe. In other words, R9 perceives the EU as a safe institution in which she trusts and when the EU and ICYE Denmark connect through an exchange programme, ICYE Denmark can therefore be trusted. However, R9 challenges her own perception by questioning what she holds this safety up against, as she has tried no other form of volunteering or living abroad and come to the conclusion that she feels this to be safer from her point of view. This association between ICYE Denmark and safety is essential for the respondents' choice to engage in volunteer tourism abroad through an organisation.

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[1] https://www.workaway.info/
[2] https://wwoof.org.uk/?https://wwoof.org.uk/how-it-works/be-wwoofer&gclid=Cj0KCQjwn7j2BRDrARIsAHJkxmw--bUPaebglms-dQmmDKc_TFNcXGPd-MV-65GIxCsRC5aqEQqClm4aAtIiEALw_wcB

Based on the presented information, it can be argued that one of the reasons why international youth choose to volunteer through an organisation is due to the level of safety perceived by being involved with a trusted and 'believed' safe organisation.

Support

Another aspect in choosing a programme through an organisation, mentioned by many of the respondents, is the level of support they get for administrative work, visa applications and other issues they face during their stay in Denmark. ICYE Denmark's secretary in Aarhus is helpful throughout the process of coming to Denmark with visa application, insurance and transportation to personal pick-up upon arrival at airports or train stations. Further, when the volunteer has arrived, the organisation helps with getting a social security number, bank account, a host family or an apartment, and health certificates. In other words, there are not many aspects of the respondents' volunteer experience in Denmark where they cannot seek help and guidance at the ICYE secretary. R1 says:

> *I thought that go by one organisation is more safe for you if you are in another country and you don't receive money and you will live with a host family and it is better to have someone that support you if you have a problem… It's better and also because we have like a helped secure if something happen and they make it more easy to go inside of the country, like for example here to have the ticket number, the reference card, the doctor everything is more easy if you are with an organisation* (R1).

As well as mentioning the safety of volunteering though an organisation, R1 also point towards the support she has received when applying and further post arrival in Denmark. The respondents voice gratitude for the help they receive and acknowledge how the support has made the experience of going to another country much easier.

It can be discussed if the respondents need the support or simply wish for support to make the experience easier. Regardless the support of being connected to an organisation has been an important consideration when respondents choose supplier of volunteer tourism programmes. One could question whether the importance placed on support is linked to the respondents age and lack of prior experience with volunteer tourism. For many of the respondents, this programme is their first experience of living independently from their parents and then further doing it in another country. Moreover, the extended support can also be a wish from the parents sending their children far away for the first time, as with R5's mother giving her only this one option to go abroad.

To sum up, it can be argued that the support offered by organisations like ICYE Denmark is crucial for the individuals or their parents to feel safe and thereby choose to engage in the volunteer tourism experiences through an exchange programme.

Activities and Extended Network

The organisation has more to offer than merely safety and security and the third reason why volunteers choose to travel through an organisation is the social activities and extended network provided. Every year, ICYE Denmark has approximately 60 volunteers in Denmark from different countries worldwide. The organisation arranges social activities for the volunteer to socialise among them as well as with local Danish volunteers. In the internal factors, we saw that creating international friendships was a motivating factor to volunteering abroad, hence it comes as no surprise that the respondents appreciate the social network provided by ICYE Denmark. By volunteering through an organisation, you are most likely guaranteed to have others in a similar situation as you, maybe even participating in the same project. However, the social network seemed to be a beneficial by-product of how the organisation could help volunteers. Many respondents spoke of the support and safety as something they expected were available to them, however the extended social network and activities was more a bonus received upon arrival. When asked whether he expected the level of social activities and involvement by ICYE Denmark, R7 answered:

> *No, I wasn't expecting, I didn't have many expectations regarding that. Regarding the social part of ICYE for example. I didn't know that they would be interested in you know, helping to create this social life. But it was very nice, when I saw it was like that* (R7).

As argued here and in the 'New Friends' theme under internal factors, a social network is hugely important for the respondents. Having an organisation which can help you in facilitating that interaction is positive in establishing these wanted friendships. Although the support in facilitating the extended social networks and activities might be viewed as an unexpected bonus, it can be argued that it is benefitting the respondents socially when being engaged in volunteer tourism through an organisation. In other words, when the organisation hosts 60 international volunteers and plan social activities for them, they are more likely to meet others with whom they can create the much-wanted bonds of friendship. Thus, the respondents might not expect this social level of involvement by the organisation prior to arrival however with the motivator of getting new friends, it can be argued that the effort by the organisation to facilitate social activities is hugely appreciated by the volunteers, which adds another benefit to volunteering abroad through an organisation.

In this theme, the research has argued that there are three important factors when choosing to volunteer abroad through an organisation. Most obvious to the respondents were the feeling of safety and the support they got from the organisation before arrival, upon arrival and after arrival to Denmark. This could be everything from administrative work such as visa application and social security number to more personal questions of lodging and having someone to call in case of an emergency. Besides the two mentioned factors, the research found that the organisation's involvement in establishing a social network by creating activities were hugely apricated by the respondents, which therefore can function as an extra benefit to engage with volunteer tourism through an organisation like ICYE Denmark.

Denmark as a Destination

The reason for the respondents to decide on Denmark as a destination for their volunteer tourism adventure varies. For some, Denmark was their first choice while others 'accidently' happened to end in the small Scandinavian country. This theme explores if the country of Denmark has had an influence on the respondent's choice to engage in volunteer tourism. Denmark as a destination will be analysed based on four sub-themes. These subthemes include Denmark as a Northern European country and the linguistic reputation, which both are perceived positive traits about Denmark by the respondents, the possibility of coincidence and end on less attractive aspect of Denmark; the bad weather.

Northern Europe

Denmark is a part of the Scandinavian countries located in Northern Europe. It's a country of wealth, a socialist ideology and strong public institutions with a high level of trust. For some of the respondents, it was important to visit a developed country, as they associated that with safety, a good system and well-functioning infrastructure. As already discussed within the reasons to volunteer through an organisation, the feeling of safety is important for the respondents when they are to embark on a volunteer experience abroad. R8 explains his considerations regarding choice of destination:

> *I wasn't only Denmark I applied for. But I applied general for countries which are from Scandinavia, from Netherlands, England and Ireland. And my motivation was basically where they speak a good English. It was one big point. Then it shouldn't be a country, you know, who is a little bit less, you know what I mean, in Austria, it should be equal or better* (R8).

In this quote, it appears as if R8 is shy or embarrassed that he wanted the country he travelled to be in the developed part of the world when he says 'you know what I mean', he appears apprehensive to conclude his sentence. One can only guess what would come after 'a little bit less' – maybe developed? Or wealthy? Safe? R8 comes from Austria and compares his choice of destination to his home country by searching for the same living standards. In doing so, R8 ensures the development of the destination is known to him and similar to Austrian standards, which makes it easier to manoeuvre in. Further, it might even make him feel safer due to the familiarity. One could argue that this again is a perception, a feeling, but regardless of whether it is one or the other, it was influential in R8's decision to go to Denmark for his volunteer tourism experience.

Other nationalities within this study shared the idea of Denmark as a safe country, with a trusted system in place, hence the respondents do not hesitate when choosing Denmark as a country for their volunteer tourism experience. Based on the points above, it can be argued that the trust in the Danish society, as well as its international reputation increases the possibility of volunteers choosing the country as destination for volunteering abroad.

Linguistic Reputation

Denmark is not only known to be a trusted and safe Northern European country but is also known by the respondents to be a place where English is spoken on a very high level as a second language. Many of the respondents wanted to improve their English as part of their international volunteer experience, also highlighted in the theme 'Career Optimisation'. Denmark is therefore deemed a country where the English language could be explored without choosing an English-speaking country, which for some reason might not have fitted the respondent's interests (i.e. project quality and compatibility). For others, the importance was understanding how the Danes have become so articulated in English by zooming in on the educational systems. R4 explains:

> *Here in Denmark like nobody is, like nobody's mother tongue is English but they still speak like really good English in Denmark. So I thought like maybe seeing education it would help me like understand why they speak that good English and that is so in Japan we don't really speak that good English but we still have good education in school so I thought maybe it would be a solution for me to improve Japanese English education system* (R4).

R4 has an interest in the educational system as she is training to become an English teacher is Japan and therefore has come to Denmark to explore how English is taught in schools. Thus, it can be argued that the well-spoken English as a second language is relevant for volunteers when choosing Denmark as a destination. This is regardless of the improvement is in personal linguistic skills or to understand how English is taught as a second language in other countries.

Coincidence

The first two sub-themes have presented Denmark to be the destination of choice however the data also proves, that sometimes respondents end in Denmark by coincidence. Some simply are not concerned about the country but more so influenced by the content of the project while others have sought projects elsewhere to find all volunteer positions had already occupied. The quote below shows how R9 was more concerned with the project and finding someplace that matched her competencies instead of aiming for Denmark as her destination of choice.

> *I really didn't pay attention to the country and I just really wanted to go outside of Spain and when I saw the description of the project and I saw it was in Denmark, I was like, what, it's a good thing because it's completely different from Spain or Colombia. So, it's a new culture and a new language, a new everything. So, it's like a very good new start so, it was very good, I really like it* (R9).

Agreed it is difficult to control coincidence, however it is important that the sub-theme is explored and mentioned to emphasise that choice of destination might be less important than the project, or vice versa for that matter.

Bad Weather

On a more negative note, is the Danish weather, which undoubtedly has challenged the respondents. Although all respondents were told to expect cold, grey and wet weather in Denmark, it came as a surprise to most of them how difficult it would be living under such conditions. Many felt their mood dropped, they became more depressed or found themselves more tired than usual due to the lack of exposure to the sun (although, keeping in mind the interviews were held in March immediately after the winter months). Denmark as a destination includes positive aspects as explored here to include safety, trust and good English language skills however on the flip side also comes with a 'price' in bad weather conditions. Especially for the respondents coming from warmer climate countries, which can be argued is most others.

Again, the weather cannot be controlled or changed to better suit the internationals coming to Denmark however matching expectations by emphasising the weather conditions could prepare them on what is coming. The most common answer to what had been the most difficult during their time, was the bad weather. As this is a frequently mentioned difficulty, organisations must be aware of the theme to ensure a detailed explanation on the matter to ensure higher satisfaction level.

In this external theme it has been argued that Denmark as a country could be a key element in the decision process by the respondents however equally the destination choice could also be a matter of coincidence due to accessibility or project matching. Denmark is perceived to have a high level of safety, trust and English language skills making it attractive to internationals, yet conditions such as bad weather impacts the destination in a negative direction.

Past Travel and Volunteer Experience

This final theme in external factors will analyse if there is a connection between previous travel and volunteer experiences and the engagement with volunteer tourism abroad. The idea was presented by Pearce and Lee (2005) in what they called a Travel Career Pattern, finding that the more travel experience one had, motivations to travel would be influenced by self-development through host-cite interaction and nature seeking. In the theory chapter, the research argued that those motivations were consistent with the core of volunteer tourism questioning whether a high level of travelling would result in participation in volunteer tourism projects. This section will aim to answer that question through firstly looking at past travel experience and end questioning whether the same is applicable for past volunteer experience.

Travel Experience

The level of travel experience from Pearce and Lee's (2005) study consisted of three different parameters being age, international travel and domestic travel. Most of the respondents are of an age were past travelling mainly included family holidays. For the majority of respondents (6) most of their travel was locally in neighbouring countries and doing a volunteer tourism project were their first time living abroad. The final three respondents had all previous lived abroad in other continents and travelled to a variety of countries worldwide. One could therefore argue, that the TCP did not

prove the pattern as the majority of the respondents engaging in volunteer tourism did not have extended travel experience. However, an interesting observation is, that two out of the three respondents with a high level of travel experience also were in the top three age-wise.

This finding could suggest that the majority of respondents simply were not of an age yet were international travel was an opportunity due to educational duties or funds. Further, this international experience as a volunteer could be argued to be their first step on the travel career ladder, to use the original terminology by Pearce and Lee (2005). The respondents' current volunteer tourism experience being their first step towards more travel experience coheres with the level of safety and support they seek by volunteering through an organisation.

The data from this research cannot verify the travel career pattern as this theme is placed outside travel motivations as it further includes volunteering. However, the pattern found through this research was that the elder the respondent, the more likely they were to have engaged in international travels that included longer period of time living abroad. This finding partly coheres with the TCP as age is important when analysing someone's travel experience. As mentioned, the TCP was made for travel motivation, which only covers half of the volunteer tourism phenomenon. The influence of past volunteer experience will be analysed below.

Volunteer Experience

Wilson (2000) introduces motives to volunteer and find that previous volunteer service and engagement through family and friends, as argued earlier, will be influential for whether someone participates in this form of serious leisure (Stebbins, 2001b). As already seen in the table of respondents presented in the methodology chapter, the majority of respondents' (7) voice previous voluntary activities (although locally), which is no surprise based on the information retrieved in the past section on travel experience.

Similar to previous travel experience, the level of volunteering is connected to age as the two respondents with no previous volunteer experience were found within the three youngest respondents. The current data therefore proves that Wilson's (2000) finding that past volunteering sparks more volunteering as seven out of nine respondents previously have engaged with volunteering within their local communities. Further, the younger they are, the more likely it is that they have not yet taken part in voluntary services.

The idea of the travel career pattern was explored in relation to volunteer tourism finding that age mattered in how experienced the individual was both in term of travelling but also as a volunteer. One could argue this theme to belong to internal factors, however this research argues that past travel and volunteer experience are not solely influenced by the respondents' internal factors but merely has to do with their upbringing and friends and family who influence their engagement in volunteer tourism.

Conclusion of External Factors

The second part of the data analysis focusing on external factors influencing the respondents' decision to participate in volunteer tourism has now been unfolded. Similar to the internal factors, the research has shown a great variety in external factors influencing why international youth volunteer through a cultural exchange programme. These include macro social factors such as the influence of friends and family, the technological development of online services on the World Wide Web, university schedules and the supply of high-quality projects. Moreover, accessibility and affordability are crucial as getting to the place for voluntary service is obviously needed to engage in such activities. The second theme explores how volunteering through an organisation is essential for the respondents' engagement. Here, the research found that the respondents felt safer due to the high level of support offered by the organisation hence why the respondents were more likely to jump into the new situation of living abroad for a longer period of time. Further, as an unexpected bonus to volunteering through an organisation, respondents felt grateful for the social activities and networking facilitated by ICYE Denmark. Denmark as a destination was analysed as an external factor to why internationals volunteer through a cultural exchange programme, finding a split between respondents choosing Denmark as their priority and others ending in Denmark by coincidence. Lastly, the research explored whether past travel and volunteer experience were influential in the respondents' participation finding that age was conclusive for previous involvement in travel and volunteering. However, the research did not find a direct connection between past travel and volunteering when engaging in a volunteer tourism setting as the majority of respondents had not been involved in much previous travel activity.

As promised in the introduction to this chapter, the next section will attempt to identify some commonalities between all the respondents, without ignoring the differences and unique nature of the individual.

The International Citizen

As already argued, the volunteer tourism experience is a journey of self-development on multiple levels. This section sets out to explore if certain commonalities can be identified in the self-development process by questioning if engaging in a cultural exchange programme makes one an international citizen? The idea of the international citizen stems from exiting literature mentioned above where Lyons et al. (2012) name participants of volunteer tourism *global citizens*. The terminology is not important as 'international' and 'global' are synonyms however the international citizen was chosen best suited to this project according to the questions in the problem formulation.

Common for all the nine respondents in the present research is the fact, that they, for a limited time, are living and working in another country as part of their volunteer tourism experience. Further, different cultures, not limited to the Danish, are influencing the respondents as they are involved in an international network of friends, acquaintances and colleagues. The influx of a wide variety of cultural norms and traditions allows the respondents to familiarise themselves with unknown cultures and thereafter pick and choose opinions, norms and patterns of action that they see most fitted to match their personality. Ultimately, the respondents end up with a patchwork of different cultures

affecting them, which thereby shapes their personalities. R3 takes the listener through her considerations of being a cultural representative of Russia.

> *I don't feel like I belong anywhere anymore. I've become a global citizen. My English is not the Russian English anymore. My mindset is like a bunch of puzzles put together. I'm not a typical Russian. I can't be typical Russian. I have changed so I don't really think. I'm trying to represent my country, but I can say like, there is an average Russian who's never been aboard, most of us, and then there is me* (R3).

The quote clearly proves that the mixture of influences R3 has had throughout her life after having travelled and lived in various countries, have affected her perception of herself and to which nationality she relates. Further, R3 clearly differentiate herself from the average Russian by referring to most Russians as people who have not been abroad (opposite to her), who has travelled the world. The feeling of not being an average citizen of their country of origin is shared by almost all respondents in the present research. This further indicates that the respondents who have taken part in volunteer tourism have something extraordinary – something that makes them different from their local community and peers. This research argues that the extraordinary is the enlarged understanding of different cultures and the reflection to make the cultural influx have a positive influence on one's life.

> *Well first of all I love travelling and I think it's very, very important to travel and meet people from other cultures because - yeah I think it's just very beneficial for everybody if you get, if you know people from other cultures on a personal level because then that reduces stereotypes cause if you know a lot of people from a certain culture, you will not as likely generalise and say things – yeah like in general which are, might be not true – because you have a personal connection and yeah I just think that's very important to kind of stay connected with yeah the people around you from other cultures* (R2).

In the quote above, R2 argues that knowing people from other cultures prevents the formation of stereotypes. Further, one is more likely to think something positive of a culture when knowing someone they like with that cultural background. It is possible to intellectually learn about different cultures in books however the interaction with cultures makes the learning process more bodily felt, as emotions, such as love and compassion for friends, are involved. The abstract culture therefore becomes more relatable and personified when mediated through people with whom one can interact and thereby learn on the experiential level. Learning on the experiential level is argued by Wearing (2001) to be a process rather than a fixed entity emphasising the continues knowledge gained when interacting with different cultures - endlessly.

Rehberg (2005) identifies commonalities between his respondents with the label of the 'reflexive volunteer tourist'. Here, internationals are motivated by a multitude of factors to engage in volunteer tourism not limited to one belief system. Further, this is also the finding of the present study as

respondents pick and choose culture deemed positive to them. It can therefore be argued, that reflexive volunteer tourism is an element within the notion of the international citizen.

Another approach to identify commonalities, based in theory, could be by applying the data to the conceptual framework presented by Callanan and Thomas (2005). Based on the knowledge retrieved above, it can be argued that the level of commitment regarding length of stay, emphasis on project more than destination, connections to study or future career and the feeling of contribution to the project make the respondents in the present research 'deep volunteer tourists'. One of the points that characterise the deep volunteer tourist is however a higher level of autistic motive, which is not the finding in the present research. Instead the research proves a shallower volunteer tourism in regard to being engaged with advancing professionally. Based on the findings of this study, one could argue that such a differentiation as presented by Callanan and Thomas (2005) can be difficult due to the various factors, and often multiple factors, impacting why participants engage in volunteer tourism. Although the respondents placed more emphasis on ego-centric motives to volunteer abroad, it can still be argued that they are very committed and serious about their volunteer service due to the importance in gaining professional knowledge.

Moving on from an approach anchored in theory to an observation made by the researcher. During the interviews it was noted that all respondents were excited to contribute to the research and sharing their reasons to engage in volunteer tourism. The respondents were very talkative, outgoing with bubbly personalities. They seemed to the researcher to be very independent and self-confident people with an opinion on the topic, which they were willing to share, even in a foreign language. This observation correlates with the mentioned concept of self-development and Wearing's (2001) findings. Most of the respondents thanked the researcher for the opportunity, as the interview in many cases ended up bringing further reflection to them, with regards to their personality and participation in volunteer tourism in Denmark.

The section on the international citizen has argued, that the multiple cultural influx affects the respondents' sense of belonging solely to one nationality. Instead, it seems as if the respondents use snippets of different cultures simultaneously making them international citizens. The respondents engage in projects from 9 to 12 months, which show a high degree of commitment and seriousness towards their volunteer tourism programme. Lastly, confidence and independence shined through the respondents during the interview, suggestive of how comfortable they were participating in an unknown situation, in a foreign language, engaging with a person from a different cultural background. The research finds these factors to be included in the concept of the international citizen, arguing that individuals taking part in volunteer tourism have a bigger chance of developing these personality traits and ultimately approach being an international citizen.

Discussion

The data has been presented and analysed and the findings will now be discussed within a broader setting to include its relevance, limitations and implications. Firstly, the opposing direction of travel discussed in existing literature will be explored, by finding commonalities and differences between the two directions, without attempting to provide a full comparative analysis. Thereafter, the relationship between the internal and external factors will be discussed. Thirdly, the discussion will explore how interviewing the respondents several months into their stay in Denmark has affected the findings and finally, suggestions of how to utilise this study's findings will be made and thereby argue its relevance.

In the introduction, it is noted that critiques of volunteer tourism predominantly are in relation to North to South travel and the theory chapter further sheds a light on the topic, by finding all empirical research to focus on this direction of travel. The intension of the present research study is to provide an alternative angle on volunteer tourism by investigating the phenomenon in a South to North direction, hence the explorative research design. The research is not limited to this direction of travel, as respondents from other equally developed countries are included in this cohort. Instead, the research focuses on a diverse group of internationals coming to a wealthy and developed country like Denmark and their reasons and motivations for engaging in volunteer tourism. The research finds some commonalities between reasons and motivations to volunteer in Denmark and the existing academic literature on the topic – as well as differences.

The most obvious difference is the destination to which the volunteers travel. In existing literature, the destination is the Global South, which is probably a reflection of the fact that the majority of travel does go in that direction. Altruistic motives are therefore very present for the affluent youths from the Global North, wishing to aid and help the 'less-privileged', (to use Higgins-Desbiolles' (2010) terminology), reflected in the findings of the existing empirical research. The present research finds that altruism is not a key motivator for internationals participating in volunteer tourism in Denmark due to the perceived notion that Danes do not need to be financially aided. Therefore, it is not surprising to find, that in this research the respondents are more motivated by ego-centric factors such as self-development.

The ego-centric versus altruistic motives are often a combination of both when individuals engage in volunteer tourism. North to South volunteer travellers are therefore also driven by advancing professionally, however do still mention hedonistic motives such as fun and a quest to travel. The respondents in the present research clearly indicate that the volunteer tourism experience is closely connected to personal development and optimising their career, as many treat the experience as an internship or some form of informal education. Moreover, the absence of mentioning fun as reason to engage in volunteer tourism in Denmark emphasises that point. It is tempting to explain it as volunteer tourists coming to Denmark place more emphasis on the volunteering rather than tourism, whereas North to South travellers have a more balanced approach, or maybe slightly more towards

the tourism aspect. Both directions of travel are still volunteer tourism however the focus is slightly different.

Although this difference might be seen as minor, the researcher questions whether it enforces the differences between the Global North and the Global South. Here is why. In the theory chapter is was noted that volunteer tourism from North to South often resulted in unsatisfactory work as unskilled young adults engaged in physical and emotional tasks as 'experts' (Guttentag, 2009; Wilson, 2015; Callanan and Thomas, 2005). When internationals come to Denmark to engage in volunteer tourism mainly to learn and advance professionally, it reinforces the positioning of Denmark (or any other Global North country) as a country from which one can learn. Further, if this notion is believed, youths from the Global North will continue to be treated as the experts when doing volunteer tourism abroad. So, what seems as a minor difference in focus can quickly reinforce existing understandings of who is aiding and who needs to be aided.

Common for volunteer tourists regardless of destination is the search for camaraderie and establishing new and close friendships to others. It seems universal for the individuals to be accepted by fellow peers by creating social circles. Further, this extends to the curiosity towards new cultures, countries and people, which are also a commonality between the young volunteer tourists. This coheres with the finding that multiple cultural influences affect the volunteer tourists regardless of the destination, as the setting becomes international due to the diversity of nationality within the group of volunteers.

The analysis is divided into two categories, internal and external factors, based on existing literature that have found the inclusion of both factors to be crucial in obtaining the whole picture of why people travel and volunteer (Jamal and Lee, 2003; Wilson 2000; Dann, 1977). Although the division has been made in this research, it should be noted that the two cluster of factors are linked and exist in a dynamic relationship, which cannot be separated from one another. The dynamic relationship is best described by social theorist Randall Collins as he states: 'A micro theory of motivation must enter into any comprehensive macro theory, both to provide the energies for change as well as the glue that holds things together when they do not change' (in Jamal and Lee, 2003, p.53). In the present research the interrelated nature is visible, to provide an example, in the relationship between career optimisation of learning English with Denmark as a destination due to Danes' reputation of mastering the English language to a high level. Another example is the close link between the emphasis on getting new friends during a volunteer tourism experience and volunteering through an organisation that facilitate activities where one can meet these new friends. The division between internal and external factors is therefore relevant to ensure both sides of the spectrum are represented however they exist in a dynamic relationship interlinked with one another.

This research investigates why internationals engage in volunteer tourism in Denmark. The data is collected through nine interviews held with respondents during their experience. The respondents are therefore already in Denmark experiencing and living the situation that they are asked to reflect upon, which challenges the findings. The data will undoubtedly be influenced, as it is difficult to single out motivations to engage in volunteer tourism prior to arrival. At the time of interview, the respondents

were affected by their already had experiences with volunteer tourism making it difficult to distinguish between good/bad experiences, expectations, reasons, influences and motivations. On the positive side, interviewing the respondents during their voluntary service, will provide a more holistic picture of experiences, motivations and why internationals volunteer through a cultural exchange programme. For future research on the topic, it could be interesting to pursue motivations prior to arrival to investigate expectations and motivations more in-depth not inflicted with experiences.

Limitations, differences and commonalities to existing literature have now been discussed. However why is it important to investigate this 'new' group of volunteer tourists? The global travel market is expanding to include middle-class travellers from Asia, Africa and South America including the travel trend of volunteer tourism. There is a gap in the academic literature focusing on internationals participation in volunteer tourism in the Global North. This research attempts to contribute to the absence of specific research done on this topic, which sits within a volunteer tourism framework, that on the other hand show no signs of being neglected by the academics.

Besides filling a gap in academic literature, the research contributes to suppliers' knowledge of why internationals choose to engage in volunteer tourism in Denmark. This information is beneficial for suppliers for marketing reasons as well as for ensuring experiences that meet expectation; resulting in smooth running programmes and satisfied volunteers. It must be noted, that ensuring positive experiences is not limited to the international volunteers as host communities likewise should be included in the consideration. However, by knowing motives and expectations, suppliers can more easily facilitate a dialog that ensures the inclusion of all parties and match expectations. Suppliers' interest in international volunteer tourists' motivation further argues the relevance of the present project to the wider population and is not limited to academics' quest for new knowledge.

The research will end by concluding the findings and suggest further research to be done in the field of international volunteer tourism in the Global North.

Conclusion

This research set out to answer the following questions:

Why do international youth volunteer in Denmark through a cultural exchange programme?
- *What motivates international youth to participate in volunteer tourism?*
- *How does the volunteer's experience in Denmark affect their cultural understanding and self-development?*

As has been argued, the reasons why international youth volunteer in Denmark through a cultural exchange programme can be divided into two categories, internal and external factors, inclusive of nine different themes. The internal factors include a desire for self-development, establishing new friendships, experiencing new cultures, altruism and having fun. However, internal factors seldom stand alone when volunteer tourists decide to participate in volunteer tourism. Macro social factors and accessibility, the importance of participating through an organisation, the destination of Denmark and past volunteer and travel experience are all external factors influencing the young internationals. The two clusters of factors exist in a dynamic relationship, which cannot be separated.

The research finds that international youth are influenced and motivated by multiple of the above-mentioned factors, contributing to the notion of reflexive volunteer tourism presented by Rehberg (2005). Most predominantly of the factors, is 'self-development', with an emphasis on advancing professionally through the experience of volunteer tourism. Some commonalities are identified among the respondents to include advanced cultural awareness, independence internationally and social confidence all argued to be personality traits found in the international citizen.

When engaging in volunteer tourism, the research proves that individuals become more aware of cultural difference and therefore more accepting. Further, the diverse cultural influx appears to give the youth the possibility to stitch together cultural influences deemed most positive to them, which develops the personality of the international citizen. The volunteer tourism experience also affected the self-development both on a personal and on a professional level. The research finds that young internationals taking part in volunteer tourism become more independent and self-confident. On the professional level, the experience is a chance to get international work experience and practice language skills.

The findings of this research contribute to the wider academic work on volunteer tourism motivation by introducing an alternative angle to which this phenomenon can be studied. With this exploratory research, it is hoped that more research in the future will be conducted on the topic to provide a greater understanding of internationals engaging in volunteer tourism in the Global North. Moreover, the sampling should be expanded to include volunteers from different suppliers in order to get a wider representation of internationals within volunteer tourism. Lastly, to nuance the findings of mutual benefits for host communities and individuals, the voice of host communities should be included in future research.

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