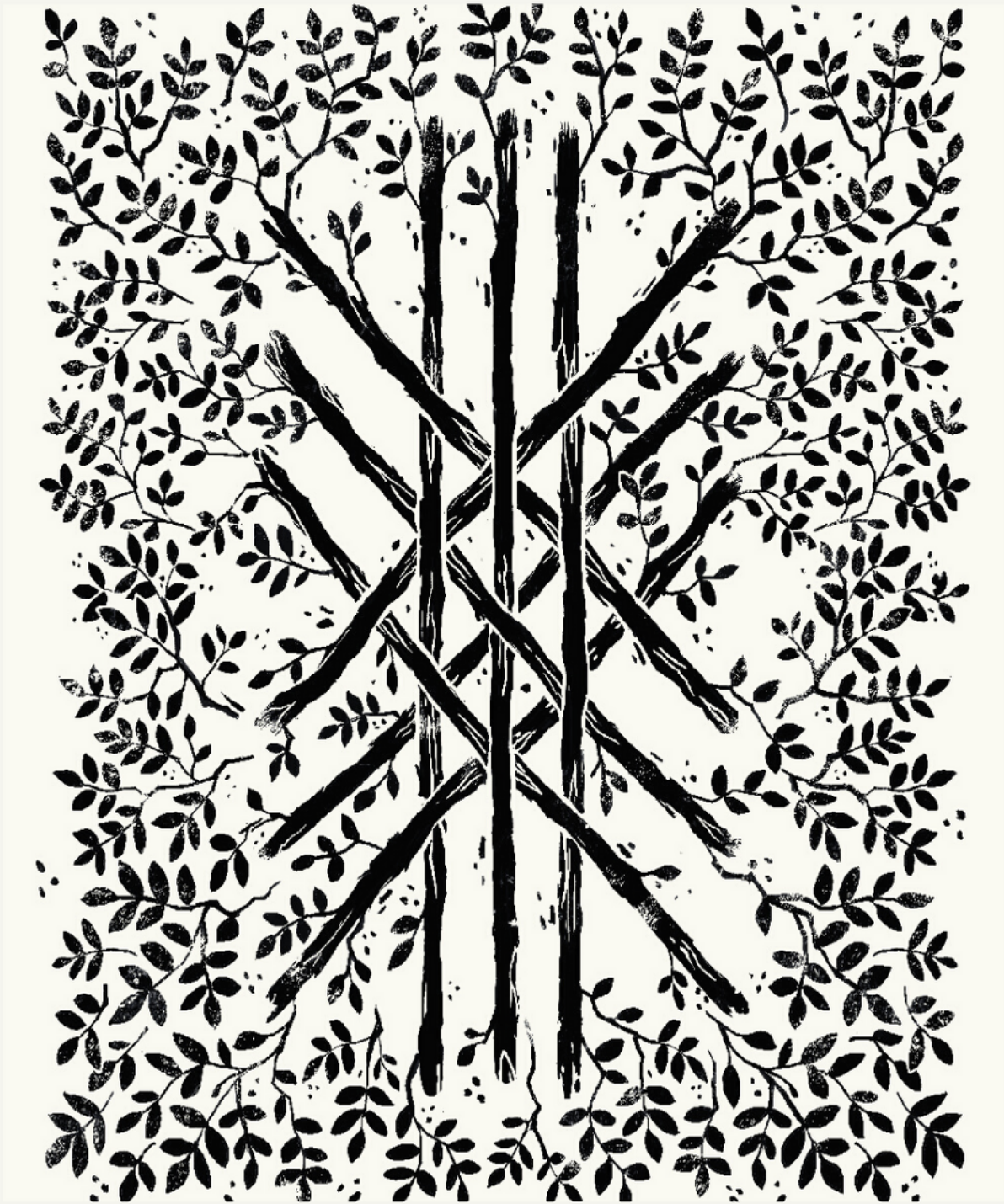


Going Back to our roots: Heritage-Legacy Travel for Danish-American Women Tourists



*“A people without the knowledge of their past
history, origin and culture is like a tree without
roots” –Marcus Garvey*

Study Programme	MA Tourism
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First and last name	Mary Therese Christoffersen
Student number	20191643
Supervisor	Mette Simonsen Abildgaard
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Abstract

The Heritage Tourism Market has captivated considerable attention in the Tourism Industry in modern times. What is more, there is a segment of Heritage Tourism which consists of travel that involves genealogical ancestral expeditions, with the intention of exploring one's specific heritage, one in which participants experience deep connections to their forefathers and ancestral roots. These tourists are classified as Legacy Tourists and are interested in understanding how their past affects their future. Therefore, this study aims to travel back in time, and include the history of the Viking pilgrimages, and then move forward to the modern-day version of pilgrimages, referred to as Heritage-Legacy Tourism. Many tourists who partake in this form of tourism have spent years researching and collecting ancestral data before they actually embark on their journey, and it is a deeply personal and targeted form of tourism. Moreover, the main aim is to identify what motivates these particular tourists, in this particular case, Danish-American Women 50+ to embark on this quest to uncover their ancestral roots. With that being said, tourism researchers have not paid much attention to Denmark as an ancestral destination, even though there are now millions of individuals with Danish roots in countries like the United States. Furthermore, Genealogy research, including the intensive research in the collection of family memoranda, is a deeply personal and comprehensive endeavor and taken very seriously for those who embark on ancestral travels to Denmark. Their engagement in uncovering their sense of belonging and cultural identity and re-connecting with their motherland is like embarking on a life-long mission. Therefore, building a network of partners in Heritage-Legacy genealogical research in Denmark would be highly beneficial, and it is suggested that policy makers and tourism managers respond to this challenge so as to better safeguard this form of travel in the future.

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Introduction

This Master's Thesis aims to explore the meaning of Heritage-Legacy Travel, and uncover what motivates Legacy tourists, in particular, Danish-American Women Tourists to engage in "root finding," as well as understand their deep desire to delve into their ancestral past to uncover their national/cultural identity. The case is seen as an example of an educational and personal travel encounter. The study includes the historical development of Heritage/Legacy Tourism, where travel takes on the element of pilgrimaging, a very specific form of travel, with the potential for transformations and deep cultural understanding throughout this exploration of their ancestral past.

There appears to be a shift taking place in the world, which may account for the increased interest in this form of tourism. It appears that more and more people are asking questions such as, 'who are we?' and 'where do we come from?' These types of questions have sparked an increasing interest for Heritage-Legacy Tourism, as more people search their past roots to feel a stronger connection to their present. An interest in genealogy is growing these days which demonstrates a strong willingness to trace back their ancestry line, (Nash, 2002; Santos & Yan, 2010; Yakel, 2004). An article in National Geographic Traveler reports that spending on heritage-legacy travel by Americans has risen 18% since 1995, fueled by the boom in increased access to genealogy tests and records, (Marjanaa & Quintos, 2001). Sixty per cent of Americans (up from 33% in the past 5 years) say that they are interested in genealogy (Shute, 2002). The practice of genealogy, researching one's ancestors, has exploded lately, and Ancestry.com, the largest genealogy company in the world, has become a huge success, boasting millions of subscribers, (Ancestry.com, 2021). Moreover, The United States is, for example, a nation of immigrants, many of whom seek opportunities to visit the countries from which their ancestors originated. In some ways, we have become a nation of archeologists, excavating the past to better understand ourselves, (Libby, 2020). On top of that, Butler, (1980), founder of the Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC), created a linear graph which demonstrates the various stages of tourism development. The model explains the changes that have taken place in pilgrimage research over the years, and contends that, as part of an ongoing process of change, this phenomenon as a concept, is gradually undergoing the stages of life cycle, from birth, through development and stagnation, to decline or to eventual rejuvenation, (Collins-Kreiner, 2016). Furthermore, Legacy Tourism current life-cycle stage is currently in the rejuvenation stage.

People who engage in Heritage travel have ancestral connections to another country other than their own and embark on this type of travel to learn more about their history and culture. The American National Trust for Historic Preservation (2008), defines Heritage tourism as "traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present, and includes cultural, historic and natural resources. Moreover, while Heritage tourists engage in history and culture, Legacy tourists takes Heritage travel to a deeper level. This form of travel takes people back to their country of origin, normally preceded by intensive research and years of studies in family genealogy before engaging in travel. It includes people who want to more deeply discover their distant family roots, and is an activity anchored in highly personal narratives, which leads to the experience of powerful emotions like nostalgia and belonging (Basu, 2004; 2005; McCain & Ray, 2003; Meethan, 2004).

In order to better understand Heritage/Legacy travel, it is important to go back in history to the time of our Viking ancestors. The word "Viking" was appropriated from the ancient term "víking," words that historically were used to designate individuals undertaking faraway

journeys, (Downham 2012; Hofmann 2016), and then applied as ethnic people living in Scandinavia at the end of the first millennium. Moreover, the history of Heritage-legacy Travel has its original origins from a distant past, where longer journeys, or pilgrimages, or during Vikings times, crusades, were originally journeys of the Nordic Vikings. In addition, Pilgrimage as a research concept, as distinct from a market segment, hardly existed before the 1990s. However, its roots reach back to a number of concepts and theories developed primarily by sociologists and anthropologists and were analyzed in the tourism literature in the 1970s and the 1980s. During this period, which constituted the concept's "introduction stage," (Collins-Kreiner, 2016) the literature focused substantial attention on the "visitor experience" and the psychosocial dynamics that drive different kinds of tourism, including pilgrimages (Cohen, 1979, MacCannell, 1973; Turner & Turner, 1969).

Subsequently, I have employed a social-cultural explorative approach in order to understand how particular social dimensions affect these travelers. Knowledge from numerous theories and relevant articles will be incorporated in order to better appreciate and become more informed of the value of this form of travel. This study is divided into six sections, comprised of an Introduction, including the problem formulation, aim and research questions, the Methodology section, employing a social constructivist and philosophy of science approach, Literature Review Section expanding on theories and concepts in this specific research. The choice of theories includes, Nordic Viking Pilgrimages, pilgrimage travel in its present-day form, Heritage Tourism, Legacy Tourism and its Transformative appeal, and literature in cultural identity and sense of belonging. The Analysis section examines the primary empirical data collection and applicable theory with document arguments and critical use of sources, followed by a Discussion and a Conclusion. Furthermore, documented data was attained through interviews performed with Danish American women, who share their previous travel experience and motivations for embarking on this form of travel, including transformations that took place. For this study, thirteen women interested in Legacy tourism were interviewed. The participants answered a number of open-ended questions in a semi-structured process, led by my methodology. Their responses were coded and methods were guided by selected theory, and from these categories, six themes were derived. The categories are described in more depth in the analysis section, where empirical results are considered and compiled. It is also worth mentioning that I also have a personal interest in this form of travel, having previously engaged in Legacy tourism myself a number of years ago, which I share in the analysis section.

Lastly, (Murdy et al. 2018) claims that many heritage sites fail to understand and foresee the travel motivations and expectations of ancestral tourists, making it difficult for destinations to benefit from this niche market, which is an area for policy and marketing decision makers moving forward. Moreover, as the author of this research, I believe this specific travel is beneficial for a number of reasons. Denmark does not currently have a National Heritage & Legacy Foundation or strategy, and such a development would serve as a great benefit for the industry, as it could provide an important contribution to this transformative travel form. Moreover, further research in this area would serve to enhance knowledge for tourism students and researchers in the future, and bring awareness to policy makers, who bear the responsibility of safeguarding this life enhancing transformative travel in the future.

Aim and Research Questions

The paper aims to examine the complex meanings of Heritage-legacy travel as a cultural form of Transformative travel, specifically aimed at understanding the goals and the drivers of these tourists, who have hopes and dreams of specific outcomes, actions and findings. The research

will include the history and background for this form of travel and include semi-structured in-depth interviews from heritage-legacy experiences, along with recommendations for further development of this form of travel. This research aim is to better understand the motivations as well as the potential that Heritage-legacy travel provides in terms of the transformation for the participants as well as examine if this type of travel provides Danish-American tourists with a sense of cultural identity, sense of belonging as well as transformative experiences. Therefore, this research will be critically investigating this specific travel form. Thus, the research questions are two-fold:

Going back to our roots: What motivates us to learn about our ancestral past? The case of the Danish-American tourist in search of cultural identity and sense of belonging

In what way does Heritage-Legacy Tourism have a transformative effect on the lives of Danish-American Tourists?

Personal motivation and acknowledgement in choosing this topic

I would like to thank my supervisor for helping me to evolve in the choice of a topic during a somewhat frustrating period in time. Her many open-ended questions helped to spark hidden creativity and allowed for new and exciting ideas to emerge. I would also like to acknowledge her support once I finally did uncover my thesis topic, as this helped inspire me to think in a new direction, to a place in time I had forgotten, regarding a personal Legacy Travel I had experienced myself, which in turn made this study a very fulfilling experience. On top of that, the learning curve and confidence I gained during this process has been priceless. The motivation to engage in Heritage-Legacy Tourism was both personal and professional, and evolved from my own experience in a legacy travel experience during an ancestral travel to Ireland many years ago to trace my family roots. My own personal journey took me on an unimaginable adventure, meeting some of the friendliest people whom I have ever come in contact with. It was an amazing experience that I will never forget. On a professional level, having previously worked as a tour guide, I have found Heritage-Legacy research a fascinating topic and form of tourism, and I had no idea the amount of passion and determination these women, whom I interviewed, embodied and it was contagious, and it felt so natural for me to connect with them. Lastly, this topic became even more personal than I had imagined, as it deeply touches our common humanity and form of sisterhood. Moreover, as Denmark currently lacks a Heritage-Legacy Tourism National strategy, the country would do well to examine a marketing and branding strategy, as this form of tourism offers huge potential in the enhancement of the Heritage-Legacy Tourist experience in the future.

Methodology

This study employs a social-cultural and explorative approach to understand how particular social dimensions affect travelers. The study is cross-cultural, as it includes, for the most part, Danish-American women tourists, with the exception of one woman who is Danish-Australian, which provided a more nuanced vision. When asked about the form of travel they engage in, a specific element mentioned was visiting places which includes sites of personal heritage connection, i.e. ancestral sites or places where family is from, which is coherent with this research. This study's main focus is on the legacy travel aspects of heritage tourism and includes the collected and analyzed data of the participants.

I consider this approach to research as descriptive research, as it is a method which focuses on describing the characteristics of a specific demographic segment, with emphasis on the what, the where and the how in a research problem, instead of focusing on the why.

In a way, the process I have undergone is similar to building a house. First, we build a strong foundation, as that foundation becomes the pillar or the starting point of the journey. To uncover the foundation of this study, I searched back in history to one of the oldest and first forms of travel, notably Viking Pilgrimages. This was the first pillar, so to speak, that I would then build on. After researching the history of the Viking era, I was drawn towards a form of travel called Heritage Travel, which is a form of travel Pilgrimage has evolved towards. This eventually led me to the final pillar, to a travel form that goes deeper than Heritage travel, and which much of this research is focused on, and that is Legacy Travel, also called Genealogy Travel. Lastly, this led me to further research pivotal areas that appeared, namely Cultural Identity and Sense of Belonging.

The next chapter aims to draw attention to my methodological approach, which lays the groundwork for the rationale of my research. It will include my philosophical point of view as well as my primary and secondary research, with the overall intention to be recognized as trustworthy for the reader. Moreover, this thesis employs a qualitative and explorative approach, built on a social constructivist epistemological premise. It is my aim to link this philosophy to my research, including my epistemological standpoints, as methodological framework does not exist as a template; it will be developed through the process of reading literature, gathering, and analyzing data (Arbnor & Bjerke, 2009). Furthermore, it includes the limitations which I have encountered throughout. Qualitative research methods are essential to capture in depth perspectives of informants in light of the complexities of a social phenomenon (Flick, 2014). Importantly, qualitative research methods help capture the details of human experiences and interactions within a particular social context (Flick, 2014). This leads me to the next section, Research Design, where I unfold the conceptual framework of this study.

Research Design

A research is valid when a conclusion is accurate or true, and research design is the conceptual framework within which research is conducted (Islamia, 2016; p.p.68). It is within this framework of the research strategy where the researcher determines the direction of the study. Moreover, the case study is concerned with finding the complexities within a particular case, for example, a location, a community or an organization, (Bryman, 2012), which in this case, could be researching socially constructed and theoretical concepts.

Furthermore, this framework guided me towards an “interactive model”, (Maxwell, 2005), and the project was reflective at every stage, requiring an in-depth analysis of various concepts in the creation of a coherent study. After a back- and -forth process and examination, I became inspired by the social phenomena of Heritage-Legacy Tourism and its` origin, which I had engaged in many years ago. This helped me in the formulation one of my research question, which asks, What motivates Heritage/Legacy tourists to go back to their roots and learn about their ancestral past? During this explorative phase, latent memories arose, as I remembered the time, as a young girl embarking on this kind of travel in my own search for my Irish ancestral roots. That was a very exciting recollection which resulted in delving into various theories and literature on the subject, guiding me deeper into this quest, becoming rather engulfed in areas of cultural identity and sense of belonging.

The research guided me to various literature articles on The Nordic Viking pilgrimages, and during that exploration I realized that these pilgrimages had a connection to a form of Heritage-Legacy travel that we know of today, leading me to further research this form of tourism. From that stage, I began the process of constructing a series of questions which would become my qualitative data. I then went on to engage in 11 semi-structured online interviews with the target group, Danish-American women. With this in mind, I was aware of the fact that due to my own personal involvement in this form of travel experience, that there may be ethical considerations that I needed to be aware of, as this could have an influence on my methodology as a researcher, and may result in me becoming biased, with the potential of impacting the research, which I consciously took with me during this process.

All of the above-mentioned concepts in this framework act as an integrated and interactive whole, with each component closely tied to the others, rather than being linked in a linear sequence. Moreover, the aim is to design a qualitative study that arrives at valid conclusions and successfully and efficiently achieve the aforementioned goals (Maxwell, 2005). Furthermore, attention to ethical issues in qualitative research is being increasingly recognized as essential (Christians, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Fine, Weis, Weseen, & Wong, 2000), and is therefore part of the above components. However, they must not be limited to contemplation, but rather need to be implemented in research design, which is done through triangulation, (Decrop 1999), which will be discussed further in the Data Collection Methods section.

Philosophy of Science

Put at its most basic, philosophy has developed in such a way that two fundamental questions lie at its heart: the first, “What is the nature of whatever it is that exists?” and secondly, “How, if at all, can we know?” (Magee 1998:7). As the first question addresses what exists and the nature of existence constitutes the branch of philosophy known as ontology, and is based on a positivist approach, this is not applicable in this study. However, addressing the second abovementioned question, “How, if at all, can we know what we know,” led me to the approach I would then employ, social constructivism. As this project is constructed through language and identity formulation, and addresses how we interact as human beings, including our background and life experiences, a social constructivist approach supports this study. Furthermore, as this study is explorative, it is my aim to remain open by asking myself questions like, “why do I see what I see,” if I am to uncover the motivations and understand the experience of these ancestral tourists. Therefore, my choice of a qualitative research design is essential.

Furthermore, this led me to conduct 11 semi-structured interviews with Danish-American women tourists, who have previously traveled to Denmark, in search of their ancestral roots. Moreover, I also took the initiative to also interview a Danish guide who has her own Danish ancestral tour business, as well as a Genealogical Museum Director in the U.S., as it was important to obtain expertise from women who have been out in the field with these women. With that being said, qualitative research methods are essential to capture in depth perspectives of informants in light of the details of human experiences and interactions within a particular field. (Flick, 2014). As mentioned above, the catalyst for this research evolves from my own experiences as a Heritage-Legacy tourist many years ago, when I traced my own family roots in Ireland with the intention of uncovering the history of my Irish grandmother, who immigrated to the United States as a young girl. As this trip was transformative for me, I felt more of a personal connection to this form of tourism, and I will be sharing more of my own journey in the analysis section. I now move onto the Epistemology section, in order to better explain and understand my role as a social constructivist in this research.

Epistemology

According to Crotty (1998), “epistemology is a way of looking at the world and making sense of it.” Moreover, epistemology concerns with what can be considered acceptable knowledge and the relation between the researcher and this knowledge (Guba, 1990: 18). In addition, it is about how the creation of knowledge affects the world around us. Moreover, as a social constructivist who is interested in understanding knowledge in a particular field of tourism known as Heritage-Legacy Tourism, I wish to understand why these women chose to engage in this form of tourism, and uncover, what motivates this group of Danish American Women to seek knowledge about their own ancestral roots? As a social constructivist, I aim to acquire a deeper understanding of language and identity-based knowledge by engaging in the chosen literature and through qualitative semi-structured interviews. Bearing this in mind, I am still in wonder whether it is at possible that the social world can, or rather, should be interpreted or understood in the same manner and principles as natural Science? Moreover, as the positivistic paradigm is based on complete objectivity, and an interpretive paradigm perceives objectivity as unattainable, this demands that the researcher recognizes this, and thus strives to be as neutral as possible, knowing that one can never truly be objective. (Guba, 1990; 21).

According to (Cohen & Manion & Morrison 2007: p.7), epistemology is about the assumptions one makes about “the very base of knowledge, its` nature and form, and how it can be acquired and how it can be communicated to other human beings.” Moreover, the authors state that the epistemological assumptions which we make or hold about knowledge profoundly affect how we go about uncovering knowledge of social behavior. (ibid). Furthermore, “the social world can be understood only from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the ongoing action being investigated,” (ibid), which in this particular case, they are. Objectivism, in contrast, states that there is no shared reality and meanings amongst people; what exists is only a series of different individual constructions of these reality and meanings, for all meanings are a product of time and place... the researcher cannot capture the social world of another or give an authoritative account of their findings because there are no fixed meanings to be captured (Ormston et al, 2014, pp.15-16). Furthermore, as a researcher, this knowledge was derived by asking questions and interacting with people, and my job is to sustain a self-critical stance. Moreover, as part of this process entails recordings and texts, as a means to derive knowledge of real-life encounters, the aim is not to be objective, but rather to be reflective and acknowledge that these interactions are knowledge generating, which is the actual aim. In the

next section, Hermeneutics Reflection, I will address in more depth my reflections of my own personal involvement as a Legacy tourist.

Hermeneutic Reflection

A hermeneutic approach touches on the philosophy of science, which helps us to better understand, what Plato calls, “interpret and understand.” (Gadamer, 1960/2017). This approach closely connects interpretative experience with education (ibid). Bearing this in mind, our understanding is not the result of an ongoing scientific experiment, or securely founded beliefs, but rather an expansion of our consciousness and views. Indeed, a new understanding is achieved through renewed and interpretative attention to further meanings of pre-suppositions which inform the understandings that we already have, (Bambach, 1995). Subsequently, education refers not only to knowledge, but also to what we learn about the world around us, challenging our own prejudices, and in doing so, allows us to become more informed researchers, whilst engaging in a qualitative research approach in a more nuanced manner, embracing the authors point of view in the process. This takes the form of a circle of new knowledge, which is ongoing and never ends, one that is in constant interaction between the parts and the whole, a concept developed by Heidegger, (1927).

However, this self-interpretation of existence is fraught with difficulties, (ibid). What is more, in the averageness of everyday existence, our access to this structure is granted not through reflection on it, but instead, through our ordinary affairs, as we cognize the structure indirectly through the things that we employ to carry out our projects. (ibid). Subsequently, I am aware of how my own personal involvement in legacy travel has influenced my approach to this topic, coloring both the questions I formulated in my data collection as well as my excitement about the topic due to my own positive experiences. Therefore, as my own experience had been positive and powerful, this had an effect on how I approached this topic, which I became more aware of during this process and while engaging in my analysis.

A specific example of how my choices affected this study, I’ve engaged in Heritage/ Legacy travel myself. This has impacted my choice of my interviewees, as well as the research I chose and the interview guide I formed, as well as the choice of theories. A concrete example that may have affected me is my own engagement in Heritage-Legacy travel, where I explored my own ancestral roots in Ireland, which served as inspiration for this topic. Moreover, I felt that it provided me a special “window” into the minds and hearts of the Danish American women whom I interviewed. In this way I was building a relationship with them because we were connected to each other. It made them feel comfortable which allowed them to feel more relaxed and open up and this created a smooth flow. With that being said, there are multiple ways in which to express travel encounters. I recognized that some of the participants passionately engaged in expressing their travel experiences, which made the interviews making a positive and lively encounter. On the other hand, there were a couple of women who were extremely focused on specific dates and of sharing of their family tree, mainly diving deep into specific dates and details, sharing little passion about their actual travel encounters. These women seemed to go on and on. This stood in stark contrast to most of the other participants, as well as my own way of looking at this form of travel as a very powerful experience and I became aware that their interpretation, in a way, had limited my own. So, as I had more stake in some than others, I became aware that not everybody gets as excited about this travel as I do. On the other hand, acquiring this awareness turned out to be a great learning experience for me, as it turned my own lens around allowed me to better understand, that interpretation and situations are different from person to person, and they can be nuanced, and there is nothing wrong with that at all.

With the realization that there were different conversations going on caused me to wonder how do we do this form of tourism? This awareness allowed me to appreciate that there are different ways of expressing how “to do” your tourism experience. This contrast helped me to become aware that if everyone interprets the experience in the same way, then the learning potential would be minimal. That was a turning point, but also an example of the process of the hermeneutic circle, and how it is profoundly influenced by our pre-knowledge, which is further developed through this kind of spiraling process (Gadmer, 1976:56). Moreover, I was excited to engage with these women in this topic and explore new avenues, but also made me more aware that as a social constructivist, there is an ongoing interaction between myself and my interviewees, and that we are social actors engaging in this process together. Moreover, it is not my intention to uncover a solution, but instead, to unfold new perspectives. It was this constant back-and-forth process that ultimately assisted me in the approach and direction of this particular research. In the next section, I speak about reflexivity, and how my own personal experience and reflections was pivotal in my ability to delve deep and put myself in these women’s shoes.

Reflexivity: Interpretation and Reflection in Qualitative Research

This research project is a qualitative study, and “research design should be a reflexive process operating through every stage of a project” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995, p. 24). This particular group of Heritage-Legacy tourists is specific, as it addresses, for the most part, women over 50, who have a lot of life experience, and have been extremely engaged in uncovering their family legacy. Although their visits did include some cultural attractions, their main focus has been to visit the birthplaces and the churches connected to their ancestors. It was clear to me that their experience was about the interaction but also about documenting this knowledge before they left this world. With that being said, they are, for the most part, a group of women, myself included, who were extremely enthusiastic and almost stood in a cue to volunteer to be interviewed. Their travel has been a major highlight and a very personal life experience for them. They are a group of very focused women, whose main goal in engaging in this journey was to have the experience of “walking in the footsteps of their ancestors,” with the intention of accumulating as much knowledge as possible in their search for cultural-national identity and sense of belonging. This puts this group of tourists in a separate category than sheer cultural or heritage tourists, who are looking to experience sites of interest and be entertained but have not been super focused on diving into their own personal family legacy.

As I mentioned earlier, I made the decision to engage in this research after previously engaging as a tourist in Heritage-Legacy travel myself. Having had a personal experience served as an inspiration to delve deeper into this exploratory and qualitative research. However, some researchers are sometimes reluctant to express their own vulnerabilities within research, while at the same time asking their participants to explore inner selves and express their emotions, and this is seemingly a paradox (Pocock, 2015). Genealogists as well as scholars would do well to take their own lived experiences into account. Theorizing of personal experience allows researchers to investigate their own stories, (Bochner & Ellis, 2006). As for my own experience, reflecting and sharing my own story during interviews helped me to better appreciate my participants stories and added a richness and openness that otherwise may not have occurred.

Nevertheless, this process could very likely expose my vulnerabilities. However, I felt it was important to engage in this manner as a researcher, as it allowed me to better self-examine and explore my own assumptions and cultural positions, as well as to be more critical of the decisions I made during the various stages of my research. Although this process has made me

more vulnerable, on the other hand, it opened up a path that resulted in more honesty and transparency, not only with my participants, but in my methodology, my theoretical framework and my data collection process, but also with myself.

Subsequently, this project has, without a doubt, been influenced by my own experience as a Heritage-Legacy tourist and has most certainly had an impact on the selection of the interview guide, as well as my secondary data collection. In spite of opening up for the potential for a biased interpretation, I am still very much conscious of the potential ethical considerations. But all in all, the choice of this topic felt very authentic to me. In this way, the reflexive researcher makes no pretense of detachment; she does not claim to objectively and unobtrusively observe the situation from a distance and collect 'pure' uncontaminated data. Rather, she recognizes that she is an integral part of the research situation in which she is participating. (Gorelick, 1991). In that sense, the researcher is transformed in the process of research, influenced and taught by her respondents or participants, as she influences them. (ibid).

Reflexivity has also been argued to be a methodological tool to account for the situated and embodied nature of knowledge production, and how reflexivity between interviewer and interviewee can be used for the construction of new knowledge (Etherington, 2004; Le Grand, 2014; Pillow, 2003; Ben-Ari and Enosh, 2011). Some scholars question whether reflexivity produces better research. For instance, Pillow, (2003) has cautioned against assuming that, just because we are reflexive, that our work is truer, better, or more valuable. Reflexivity is not, a cure for the problem of representing someone else's reality (ibid). Finlay, (2002a) made a similar point, that a researcher's apparent openness does not guarantee that the voices of participants have been faithfully represented, and I am hereby conscious of this very valid point.

Subsequently, issues relating to how authors represent themselves in text are becoming more important and more frequently discussed as a way of increasing the quality and trustworthiness of qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998). Effective reflexivity means the ability to treat oneself as the object of inquiry within the world (Schon, 1987). This has most definitely been the case in this research. The notion of reflexivity implies a shift in people's understanding of the data and its collection towards something that is accomplished through internal dialogue and a constant scrutiny of 'what I know' and 'how I know it' (Hertz, 1997). Reflexivity, in its basic form, is simply the process of turning something back on itself (Freshwater & Rolfe, 2001).

However, as a researcher, there have been moments when I have been forced to ask myself if have I been reflexive enough, which is clearly worth examining. On the one hand, reflexivity is cited as an important tool for enhancing the rigor and trustworthiness of a qualitative study, (Gilgun, 2010; Gringeri et al., 2013; Longhofer & Floersch, 2012). Consequently, reflexivity requires an ongoing scrutiny of ourselves to 'come clean' so that we are less likely to unwittingly impose our perspectives on research participants, and more likely to provide an open venue for the perspectives of informants to blossom (Gilgun, 2005). Indeed, through engagement in such processes, the dependability and authenticity of findings will be greatly enhanced, (ibid). "Thinking in this context acts as an orienting tool, allowing us to be mindful of our own role throughout the research process, and therefore, becoming aware of all we take into the research process and how our history, perspectives, etc., influences what we ask, how we hear the answers, and what we choose to report in the findings" (Probst, 2015; p.p.37). Moreover, returning reflexively to the literature "can affirm or challenge our material and make us examine it more critically." Pondering what has already been written helped to position the

researcher, identify limits to his or her understanding, and situate findings in existing knowledge (ibid).

Moreover, my own background, along with my previous experience as a Heritage-Legacy Tourist, allowed me to reflect and draw on some of my own experiences. Subsequently, throughout the interviewing process, I reflected on my personal background and previous experience, and how this helped me during the interviews, and affected the methodology and theoretical direction. With that being said, I was aware of the importance of maintaining a critical perspective, asking myself how much to share of my own stories and experiences so as to still remain unbiased. This determine what lens the researcher takes on, how the information the researcher gets are filtered and what meaning the researcher makes of it (Bryman, 2012, p. 394). Moreover, to construct arguments and be methodologically self-conscious is about taking account ones' relationship with those with whom one studies, (ibid). As a qualitative researcher, moments of self-reflection occurred throughout this journey. This provided surprising moments of self-awareness, instilling the importance of ethics and transparency, whilst engaging with my participants. Unexpected memories of my own travel experience as a young girl showed up during my first interview quite surprisingly, which in turn, has influenced the nature of my interview guide, as well as the refinement of the questions. Having this quite amazing realization that my participants and I shared a common story and bond as ancestral immigrants made this connection, as an interviewer, one in which I could never have planned. The experience was very powerful, and resulted in a more open and intimate experience, shortening the gap between us. I will be sharing this story in more detail as we move into the analysis section.

Moving forward, I ended up capturing some these golden nuggets in a small journal, making small notes after each interview. This helped me to be more reflexive. Engaging in this simple activity paved the way for a more intimate flow and transparency, which was my hope. I came to realize how small things mean so much, which opened up for more trust in my upcoming interviews, which will be unfolded more in the analysis section. It seemed to have a ripple effect as I moved forward, as I felt we had formed a kind of sisterhood experience, and it again reminded me that we were co-creators in a common mission, with powerful stories to share, and this in turn helped remove any perceived distance between me and my interviewees. The next section is the interview type.

Lastly, Reflexivity is an important tool that enables the researcher to stay engaged in critical self-awareness throughout the research process. It is the embodiment of an epistemology in which the knower is always present, “a *way of looking*” that gazes outward at what is taking place, while sustaining an inward gaze at the looker. More than just a vehicle for honesty or management of the research experience, reflexivity offers a means for using self-knowledge to inform and enhance the research endeavor (Probst, 2015). In conclusion, I am certain that my own experiences undoubtedly have impacted my thesis, but I feel that this has only added to the authenticity and validity of the project.

Interview Type: Qualitative Approach Employing Semi-Structured Interviews

Within qualitative research, two main strategies promote the rigor and quality of the research: ensuring the quality or “authenticity” of the data and the quality or “trustworthiness” of the analysis (Kuper et al, 2008; Patton, 2002). Furthermore, in his book, *Interviewing Users*, (Portugal, 2013, p.p. 5) states, “beyond simply gathering data, I believe that interviewing

customers is tremendous for driving reframes, which are crucial shifts in perspective that flips and initial problem on its' head. These new frameworks, which come from rigorous analysis and synthesis of data, are critical. They can point the way to significant, previously unrealized possibilities." Moreover, a semi-structured interview has a simple, open and flexible structure, where the researcher can ask additional questions, which can potentially result in unconsidered questions (Bernard 2011:157-158; Bryman 2008:201; Kvale 2007:51), and the informants can express their own individual perspective less influenced by the subjective view of the researcher (Montello et al. 2013).

Furthermore, as a social constructivist, this research project uses a qualitative approach. The aim of this project is to explore authentic experiences by individual people and not to pursue empirical approach which claims to have generalizable findings (Kallio et al., 2016) The main reason I chose this approach is, as a social constructivist, my main focus is in trying to uncover in what manner Heritage/Legacy Travel has impacted the lives of these ancestral tourists, both before, during and after their return home. Moreover, I found that this kind of knowledge, which is language and identity based, is best obtained through rigorous in-depth data, as we researchers need to go deep, which can sometimes be challenging. Moreover, it requires coding and then translating these codes into themes, which is not characteristic, for example, in quantitative forms of data collection (ibid). Equally, there is no intention to engage with what Hammersley (1995) describes, as a challenge to paradigmatic assumptions. Moreover, Cho and Trent (2006), argue that it is widely accepted that knowledge is a human construct and, as such, testimonial accounts and personal narratives (Reiman, 1979) can inform our thinking, and have what would term interpretive validity through constructing meaning from an emic world view (Maxwell 1992). Subsequently, knowledge is constructed or reconstructed through this interaction (Delmont & Mason, 1997), which aligns with the epistemological stance of this thesis.

Moreover, conducting semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to ask additional questions if an interesting or new line of inquiry develops during the interview process (Young et al., 2018). Another reason for choosing this type of approach was due to the fact that I had some topics that I was hoping to get answers to, but even more so, to receive additional answers above and beyond my formatted questionnaire. The interviews took on certain themes, but the questions I asked were open-ended, encouraging my participants to engage in an interactive dialogue, as I considered this approach the most appropriate to explore their experiences. I was interested to uncover how their engagement in this form of travel affected them and if, and how, it had transformed their lives. My empirical data consisted of 11 explorative semi-structured interviews lasting from 35-45 minutes, with one lasting one hour and 20 minutes. There were 2 groups of women, one larger group of 11, and then a smaller group of 2, one a Heritage Travel Business owner, and the other a director of a Genealogical Museum in the U.S. Moreover, the interview took on the form of a "META" analysis. Moreover, the questions I created came from thoughts and ideas from the overarching literature and research in this field. The next section I move onto the interview process and limitations that incurred.

Interview Process and limitations

The focus of this particular project is about the Danish-American woman tourist motivation to learn from and about her ancestral past. The reason this research is focused on women is, quite frankly, that when I reached out to participants for an interview for this project, the only responses I received were from women. This, in turn, solidified my target group. I always prefer

face to face interviewing, as it provides for most authentic encounters. However, due to the limitations the pandemic imposed, face to face interviewing was not possible. Another limitation was working on this project alone, as it takes away some of the dynamics and supportive interaction. With that being said, it was my own choice, and I am very happy to have had the support of a supervisor, who listened intently to my ideas during the beginning stages, when I was insecure of which direction to take. It was great to be able to bounce ideas and play ping pong in the beginning stages of my decision making, as well as receive constructive criticism as I moved forward in my research. Another point to mention was, when I decided the direction my research would take, and that my research group would include Danish-American women who reside in the United States, making face to face interviews not feasible. Therefore, I conducted the interviews, each lasting about 45 minutes, although one was so informative that it lasted one hour and 20 minutes. The interviews were conducted either on facetime or messenger, using audio version for the most part. I chose this form of interviewing was for two reasons. The reception was better and I found that many of these women felt comfortable talking on the phone instead of engaging in zoom. Although using audio limits the inability to read body language and pick up non-verbal clues, I did not sense that the women felt uncomfortable at any time. Needless to say, there were still some brief disruptions that took place, but they did not affect the value and intimacy.

Furthermore, after the initial interviewing, and with their permission beforehand, I reached out to gain additional insights to their answers, and all women were eager to contribute. This provided me with additional clarity and depth, which became helpful in uncovering key words and identifying patterns, which I needed in order to map out themes for my analysis. The next section I delve into the process of selecting my informants and my chosen target.

The Selection of Informants

Furthermore, in his book, “Qualitative Interviewing, the Art of Hearing Data”, Rubin(2012 p.p. xvii) states, “qualitative listening is about much more than collecting data, it is a way of seeing the world and learning from it.” I had engaged in a Genealogy Facebook forum, a support group of people with Danish descent who help each other trace their ancestor’s history. This platform was useful when I was considering the selection of my informants, as I was important for my research to recruit women who had previous knowledge, experiences and had traveled to Denmark on such a trip. The second source came from a Heritage Travel Business owner who has her own company, and she sent me some referrals from tourists whom she had previously guided. I went on to perform a short pre-screening to qualify the interviewees. Upon selection, I received permission from the informants that they would be willing to engage in the actual interview process and I thereafter scheduled appointments. During the actual interviews, I listened carefully to their stories, and asked additional questions when appropriate.

My target group were Danish-American women, all living in various states in the U.S, aged 51 to 83, with the exception of one Danish-Australian woman. However, one participant was aged 25, who asked if it would be okay if she joined, as she absolutely loves Denmark, and has engaged in Heritage-Legacy travel from a very young age. Therefore, even though she was not in the age group, she was a very eager participant, and provided me the opportunity to compare and contrast viewpoints. Unfortunately, one of the 11 interviews, P11 did not record properly, but I did manage to take some notes which I have included in the data. The interviews with stakeholders consisted of the Director of the Danish Museum in Iowa, U.S. which has the largest population of Danish rural citizens in the U.S. The second was a Danish Business owner of a Heritage-Legacy Travel Company, who has operated in this field for 8 years. In addition,

I engaged with participants via email as well as face-book groups, which quickly attracted many enthusiastic women interested in taking part in this project. I discovered that participants were very interested in this topic and enthusiastic to share information and the interviews had a lively, informal flow, (Etikan, 2016). The following section involves the transcription process.

Transcription is at the “heart” of the Qualitative Research Process

Transcriptions are at the heart of the research process, because a “verbatim transcript captures participants own words, language, and expressions, and allows the researchers to “decode behavior, processes, and cultural meanings attached to people’s perspectives,” (Hennink, 2013, p.700.) The most commonly used textual data in qualitative studies are transcripts of recorded interviews. With that being said, I received permission to record their interviews and proceeded to transcribe them after the interview. The interviews with the business owner and museum director was very informative, and added a different perspective than the tourists, and provided an opportunity to gain expert knowledge from people who were out in the field, which helped insured that I was on the right track. One of these women’s business is assisting ancestral tourists on their visits to Denmark in real life experiences with these women. This proved to be extremely valuable expertise to obtain. The other is a Danish Museum Director in the U.S. who offers workshops and access to ancestral documents. Moreover, all of the recorded interviewees were in English, but a few were a bit incoherent, as the speech recognition in the medium I used was not perfectly capable of detecting some accents. Nevertheless, being able to have both the audible and the transcribed versions was perfect, as I was able to re-listen to hear the emotions expressed in the audio while also having a copy of the written transcripts. Although I did take some notes throughout the interviews, having access to both forms of data collection allowed me to focus my complete attention to my participants, adding to their credibility, and could re-listen to hear if there were any information gaps. The next section addresses the data collection methods I employed and why I chose these methods.

Data Collection Method – Instruments for primary and secondary data- collection

One of the first steps I engaged in this case study was to search numerous articles on this topic. This literature became a guide and helped me to get clear on my research design as well as acquire information on the background and history of this form of travel, which dates as far back as the Viking Pilgrimages. This form of travel helped pave the foundation for the modern version of Heritage-Legacy Travel that we know of today. People who engage in this form of travel have ancestral connections to another country other than their own and embark on this type of travel to learn more about their history and culture. In addition, Legacy Travel takes Heritage travel to a whole new level, as it is a form of travel back to peoples’ country of origin and is preceded by deep research into their personal family history and genealogy beforehand. Their primary intention for their visit is to be able to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors, and they are not considered cultural tourists, even though they may combine their travel with visits to historical sites alongside their travel.

I employed two forms of data in this research, qualitative and quantitative. The qualitative empirical data comprised of semi-structured qualitative interviews, and the secondary data, comprised of articles and literature on Viking History, Pilgrimages, Heritage-Legacy Tourism, cultural identity, along with various literature and books about Interviewing participants. Furthermore, I understand, as a researcher, the importance of connecting the literature with my interviews so that it makes a coherent study. The research entailed reviewing more than 40 articles, and I incorporated the most relevant ones into this research, coupled with the

interviews of the participants. This provided a structural format and created a sense of cohesion between the two data sets. Additionally, I researched genealogical organizations in the U.S, and managed to get an appointment to speak with the director of the Danish Museum in Iowa, as well as contact with a Danish Heritage travel company based in Copenhagen who assists Danish-American tourists while visiting their ancestral homeland. This provided me with a more in-depth and nuanced perspective of the interests of these participants. They are briefly mentioned in the methodology section but included in more depth in the analysis section and appendix.

Moving forward, I chose an approach called triangulation, “which means looking at the same phenomena or research question from more than one source of data.” (Decrop, 1999, p. 158), which I explain in further detail in the following section, “validity and reliability”. The reason this is important is that it appears to limit personal or methodological biases and enhances a study’s generalizability, (Denzin, 1978), aiming to further enhance the validity of the results. As mentioned above, the secondary data is a literature review of Heritage/Legacy Tourism and includes various form of literature, both quantitative and qualitative research. On top of that, I found it relevant, not only to examine this particular topic deeper, but also explore the motivation of these tourists, all with the intention of acquiring a more nuanced understanding of the benefits these ancestral tourists receive in their search for cultural identity and sense of belonging.

Simultaneously, the data and knowledge production is manifold, and includes targeted theories and interviews from 11 Danish American women, plus 2 experts, as well as my own personal experiences as an ancestral tourist, alongside knowledge from my 7th, 8th semester, and 9th semester incubator experience, as well as previous work experiences, like being a teacher, a tour guide and workshop facilitator. All of these experiences have influenced the choice of topic for this project, as well as the choice of literature. On top of that, being a woman over 50 myself, I have worked with women’s empowerment and well-being as a consultant. Subsequently, the chosen data collection in hermeneutics is a reflective process which aims to access the insights of participants as they make sense of their lived experiences and situation (Van Manen, 1990). Furthermore, the majority of my research articles were sourced from either google scholar or the AAU Library. Furthermore, I would mention that a critical choice in the selection and compilation of my empirical data is based on qualitative data, which focuses on the knowledge and understanding of the interviews, hereby making a quantitative approach, which is based on generalizability, inappropriate. The next section is the final section of Methodology, where I discuss important aspects of validity and reliability in the research process.

Validity and Reliability in qualitative research

The discussion of quality in qualitative research initiated from the concerns about validity and reliability in quantitative tradition “involved substituting new term for words such as validity and reliability to reflect interpretivist (qualitative) conceptions” (Seale, 1999, p. 465). However, ‘How do you test or maximize the validity, and as a result, the reliability of a qualitative study?’ (Golafshani, 2003). Triangulation is typically a strategy (test) for improving the validity and reliability of research or evaluation of findings, (Mathison, 1988). Furthermore, triangulation has risen as an important methodological issue in naturalistic and qualitative approaches in evaluation in order to control bias and establish valid propositions, because traditional scientific techniques are incompatible with this alternate epistemology. (ibid.). Moreover, Patton (2001) advocates the use of triangulation, by stating “triangulation strengthens a study by combining

methods. This can mean using several kinds of methods or data, using both quantitative and qualitative approaches” (ibid). However, the idea of combining methods has been challenged by Barbour (1998). She argues while mixing paradigms can be possible, but mixing methods within one paradigm, such as qualitative research, is problematic since each method within the qualitative paradigm has its own assumption in “terms of theoretical frameworks we bring to bear on our research” (ibid).

Another paradigm in qualitative research is constructivism, which views knowledge as socially constructed and may change depending on the circumstances. Crotty (1998), defined constructivism from the social perspectives as "the view that all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and is developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (ibid). In any qualitative research, the aim is to "engage in research that probes for deeper understanding rather than examining surface features" (Johnson, 1995, p. 4) and constructivism may facilitate toward that aim. Researching this constructed reality depends on interactions between interviewer and respondent, that is, the researcher has to be a “passionate participant” during their field work (Guba and Lincoln 1994, p. 112). Moreover, the constructivist notion that reality is changing whether the observer wishes it or not, (Hippis, 1993), is an indication of multiple or possibly diverse constructions of reality. Constructivism values multiple realities that people have in their minds, and therefore is parallel to positivism. (ibid).

Therefore, to acquire valid and reliable multiple and diverse realities, multiple methods of searching or gathering data are in order. If this calls for the use of triangulation in the constructivism paradigm, then the use of investigators, method and data triangulations to record the construction of reality is appropriate (Johnson, 1997). In a related way, a qualitative researcher can “use investigator triangulation and consider the ideas and explanations generated by additional researchers studying the research participants” (Johnson, 1997, p. 284). Furthermore, reliability and validity are conceptualized as trustworthiness, rigor and quality in qualitative paradigm. It is also through this association that the way to achieve validity and reliability of a research get affected from the qualitative researchers’ perspectives which are to eliminate bias and increase the researcher’s truthfulness of a proposition about some social phenomenon (Denzin, 1978) by using triangulation. Then triangulation is defined to be “a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 126). Therefore, as reliability, validity and triangulation are rooted in positivist perspective, they should be re-defined for their use in a naturalistic approach (Golafshani, 2003). Moreover, construct validity parallels positivist measurement validity as an indicator for the degree to which the measurement reflects the measured concept (Healy and Perry 2000). Finally, I would contest, that the data I collected during this project, through the employment of a social constructivist approach, was aligned with my research questions, and can be conceptualized as valid and reliable data (ibid). We now move onto the next section, The Literature Review.

Literature Review

A review of current literature gives background information which is required to establish the extent and significance of a study's research problem. It also contextualizes the study and its discussion (Gruba & Zobel, 2017). Therefore, one of the first steps I undertook was to review numerous research articles which focused on the history as well as the origins of this form of tourism, including articles dating back to the Nordic Viking pilgrimage. I came to realize that this form of tourism paved the foundation for what is known as modern day Heritage/Legacy Tourism. The research is divided into two main themes, Heritage Tourism and Legacy Tourism, also called Genealogical Tourism. It includes literature on the motivations of these specific types of travelers, who search for their roots, as well as theories and articles exploring the transformative influence this form of travel has for these travelers. With that being said, Palmer, (1999), observes how questions such as 'who are we?' and 'where do we fit in?' are becoming increasingly common in today's world with regards to cultural identity, and sense of belonging and cultural transformation for these types of tourists. The literature became a guide and informed me throughout the thesis as I moved into the methodology and analysis section.

Nordic Viking Pilgrimages: Paving the foundation for Heritage/Legacy travel

In order to fully comprehend what Heritage/legacy tourism is, it is important to go back in time, to a form of Tourism called "Pilgrimage Tourism." Although Heritage-Legacy tourism is regarded as one of the newer phenomena in the modern world, when we consider its origins, we see that it is rooted in pilgrimaging, with our Viking ancestor's, and in many ways, paves the way. There is a kind of reframing of pilgrimages taking place around the world, and some trends seem to be leaning towards heritage combined with legacy tourism, as together they allow for an unfolding of cultural transformation to take place.

The word "Viking" was appropriated from the ancient terms "víkinger" and "víking"— words that historically were used to designate individuals undertaking faraway journeys, (Downham 2012; Hofmann 2016)—and then applied as an ethnic denominator of people living in Scandinavia at the end of the first millennium. Moreover, it is fascinating to imagine, when we travel back in time, that the history of Heritage-legacy travel has its origins from a distant past, as throughout history, these longer journeys, pilgrimages, or as in the time of the Vikings, called crusades, were originally journeys of the Nordic Vikings. "Pilgrims are people who take leave of their everyday surroundings in order to make a journey to a sacred place". The word stems from Latin (*peregrinus*), meaning a stranger or foreigner, (Visit-Denmark, 2019). Consequently, it is not surprising, that the descendants of the Vikings, as many of Danish-American woman are, have a deep yearning to go back to their roots and discover their place of origin. It is simply part of their DNA.

Furthermore, as it has been argued pilgrimage travel originated during the Viking period, and Pilgrimages, where these forms of transformative tourism had their origins, and people have performed this type of travel throughout history. In fact, the first Europeans to set forth in North American were Vikings and were actually the first northern tourists. (Visit-Denmark, 2019). "The Viking pilgrimages"—although this phrase almost seems like a contradiction, lasted for three centuries, from circa A.D. 750-1050, and the political and economic life of the Northern world was dominated by Scandinavian military activity and trade.

However, it was as Vikings that the Norsemen became known to the peoples of the Christian world, (Browner, 1992), as the piratical phase of Viking activity was relatively short-lived and was followed by a more restrained colonization phase. When the Scandinavians first began to settle in the West, in the latter part of the ninth century, they came into sustained contact with Christianity and its clergy, and it became inevitable that the barbarian Northmen, with their primitive beliefs in outmoded gods and with their lack of writing and literacy, would be greatly influenced by the higher Christian civilization which they now encountered at such close quarters, (ibid)

Not surprisingly, though, the conversion of the Viking peoples and their integration into the Western European Christian community has influenced decisively the history and geography of the Northern world. Previously defined in terms of what they were, Scandinavians of the eleventh and twelfth centuries were implicitly defined in terms of what they were not, sea-borne adventurers and predatory warriors of the type familiar in old heroic tradition. The creation of such a marked a dichotomy between "Christian" and "Viking," however, has tended to place undue emphasis on the forces of change, often at the expense of native cultural traditions, which persisted through the Viking age and well into the Christian era. (ibid)

Indeed, it was the pagan traditions of the Northmen which ensured that the transition to Christianity would be a relatively simple and painless process. After all, the new religion was a royal one, and its literature, notably the Old Testament, described a world very much like their own in as the success of kings as they led their armies in search of glory and gain depended upon their obedience to the will of God, (Browner, 1992). In fact, by 1016, the Scandinavian empire of Denmark, Norway, and England was ruled by Knut, a Dane and a Christian: and by his death in 1035, Scandinavia and her Viking provinces had been almost completely integrated into the world of Western Christendom. While adopting the forms and practices of their new religion, however, these ex-barbarians did not entirely abandon the elements and practices of their new religion and earlier culture. The persistence of cultural continuity through the conversion process and beyond can be demonstrated in several areas, but nowhere as clearly and yet as unexpectedly as in the institution which epitomized the Christian experience, that of Holy Land Pilgrimage (ibid). Moreover, the Viking predilection for travel and adventure made it easy for Christianized Scandinavians to adopt the idea of pilgrimage. One of the earliest northern pilgrims to visit Jerusalem and the holy places, circa 990, was Iclander Thorvald, the far travelled, a distinguished Viking before his conversion by a Saxon bishop, Frederick. (ibid).

It was, after all, not entirely unlike their own secular tradition of going a-Viking. But there were other factors, also, which allowed Holy Land pilgrimage to be quickly assimilated into their own cultural tradition. The Scandinavians had long been familiar with the concept of holy places. Moreover, there is much in the pre-Christian tradition to recommend northern participation in the post-conversion pilgrimage movement. We have already observed how pagan cultural traditions could be easily absorbed into a justification of Holy Land pilgrimage (Browner, 1992). Furthermore, the elements of pagan religious belief, as well as a tradition of travel and adventure and a spirit of competition amongst warriors, whether warriors of Odin or of Christ, allowed the Scandinavians to adopt Christian pilgrimage practices with an enthusiasm unparalleled in Western Europe, (ibid),

Furthermore, and as explained in this section, a pilgrimage is a journey, often into an unknown or foreign place, where a person goes in search of new or expanded meaning about their self, others, nature, or a higher good, through the experience. It can lead to a personal transformation, after which the pilgrim returns to their daily life, (Reader and Walter, 2014) In this connection,

one may say that pilgrimages have been the predecessor of Heritage/legacy travel, as they both embrace a cultural and often times spiritual re-awakening during travel encounters, as well as encourage longer journeys, normally targeted towards reaching a certain outcome. Therefore, this research attempt to examine how pilgrimages have created a form of spiritual pathways in modern day Heritage/legacy tourism, with its connection to national and cultural identity, will be discussed in further detail in the Legacy Travel section of this research. It is worth mentioning, that although pilgrimages were, in many ways, the form of travel our Viking ancestors employed, there appears to be a scarce amount of research available connecting the Viking pilgrimages of the past with Heritage Travel and national identity.

Viking ships- Symbolize the history of immigration from Nordic countries to the U.S.

During the period of 1800's, many Danish Americans sailed from Denmark to the U.S. on big ships on a voyage to their new home, a place of uncharted territory. They were brave pioneers in their own right, sailing from their homeland, in hope of a better life. Although these ships were not Viking ships, in many ways, they both symbolize hope. One of the finest symbols in Danish Lutheran churches is hanging from the ceiling. In Denmark, it is a Viking ship, in America, it is a chariot. For many of these Danish American Legacy Tourists, churches are an important sense of place, as they are the place where many documents of their ancestors are stored. Therefore, these ships, swaying and sailing are a beautiful reminder of their ancestor's journey, and a symbol of how they sail together in unity, in spirit and in hope (Krogh-Nielsen, 2016). The customs of displaying ships in the sanctuary began a long time ago in the Catholic Churches of Europe, and it later became a custom in Denmark after the reformation and is a kind of symbolism. It goes back a long time in our Nordic Religious and Pagan traditions and our Christian Religious traditions. Moreover, another component to the symbolism: these ships are also the bearers of the recent history of immigration from the Nordic countries to the United States. (ibid).

Moreover, the Viking ships, which hang on the ceilings of Lutheran churches in Denmark symbolize the spiritual vehicle of the voyage, that started in the churches, with the baptismal font, the celebration of life, and culminates at the end of life, again in the church, in a pathway to everlasting life. (ibid). Even though the Danes traveling to America did not use this form of travel, in many respects, they symbolize the journey taken by their ancestors, the early pilgrimages of their Viking ancestors, whose voyages took them on the journey to the U.S. Furthermore, the journey these Danish American ancestral tourists embark on, many times starts where it all began, in the churches, to uncover the documents of their ancestors, and to experience the place where their ancestors were baptized or married, and almost always, grants them the peace and closure they are so longing for in their own lives when partaking in this form of travel. In this next section we unfold a form of travel that embraces travel in which the tourist culture is in focus, namely Heritage Travel.

Heritage Tourism

Upon examining pilgrimages and its origins, we now move into Heritage Tourism, a modern form of pilgrimage travel. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the role of Heritage Tourism, introducing a theoretical framework for the development and understanding of the current historical description of heritage travel as a form of tourism. This chapter addresses this particular tourism origin and history, and what drives participants towards it, as well as to whether it provides transformation, in this particular case, for the Danish American women tourist. The American National Trust defines heritage tourism as "traveling to experience the

places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present, and includes cultural, historic and natural resources, American National Trust for Historic Preservation,(2008).

Furthermore, Heritage Tourism aims to connect you with your past by tracing the steps of your ancestors, and aims to build a cultural bridge, in this case, between Danish American Women and their heritage and cultural identity. Moreover, definitions and descriptions of what constitutes heritage culture tourism are far from consistent. (Silberberg 1995, p.361) uses a definition from the Economic Planning Group of Canada for cultural tourism: “visits by persons from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in the historical, artistic, scientific or lifestyle/heritage offerings of a community, region, group or institution.” Another way to interpret ‘heritage tourism’ could mean tourism centered on, in this particular case, what the Danish American tourist, has inherited. Moreover, heritage tourism “is a powerful force in the construction and maintenance of a national identity” Palmer, (1999, p. 313).

Many tourists learn to understand history by searching their own family history. What is remarkable about heritage is its power of working in the present in a way that has recourse to the past, in a way that interprets the past into something that we learn to understand as “history.”(Campeanu, 2003, p.357). (Nicholls et al. 2004) cites the Travel Industry Association of America,(2003) estimates that around 81 percent of U.S. adults taking a trip in 2002 are classifiable as heritage or cultural tourists. This tourist classification represents a 13 percent increase since 1996.

Heritage tourism can include visits to historical sites, including historic monuments, museums, historic homes, castles, living history museums, art, seeking out local food, partaking in festivals, natural sites protected by UNESCO, and what we regard as part of our collective lineage. The overall purpose is to gain an appreciation of the past, and many “look for authentic inauthenticity” (Brown et al., 2000, p. 171), but are sometimes disappointed, not having their expectations met when visiting the “old country.”

Silberberg, (1995) reports increased importance of culture, especially as exhibited in “museums and heritage sites” as a motivation for travel. Certainly, culture has a history as a travel motivator, as the word tourist supposedly was used for the first time in 1670 in conjunction with the “Grand Tour” which was an essential part of the education of European aristocrats and later enjoyed by the American well-to-do (Belk & Costa, 1995).

Furthermore, some cultural critics call the abandonment of the modern idea of fine art, literature, and architecture “post-modernism,” but marketers call it market segmentation, (McCain & Ray, 2003). Heritage/cultural tourism is where marketers see pronounced growth rates in the tourism industry, (Ecotourism, 1998), (Ivanko, (1996), (Silberberg 1995: p.364). Discussions of a tourism shift in the 90s away from “escapism” to “enrichment,” reported that 88% of American travelers said understanding culture (the highest percent) was very important when planning trips (up from 48% in the 80s), and 72% for “gain a new perspective on life,” (up from 40%), (ibid).

Moreover, Pine, (2013) who coined the term, “the experience economy,” states most notably, on the future of the experience economy, that meaningful experiences may yield transformations. While experiences are less transient than services, the individual partaking in

the experience often wants something more lasting than a memory, something beyond what any good, service or experience alone can offer. (ibid).

Nevertheless, a large proportion of Immigrant Americans, in contrast to their European counterparts, have an ancestral home somewhere else, therefore, many Europeans do not have the same reason to uncover their roots, as many of their European descendants never left Europe. In that way, it does not feel as important for them to travel far from their homeland to discover their roots. Moreover, in this section we have uncovered that Heritage Tourism as one that takes the form of a travel experience which includes visits to cultural and historic landmarks and represents a group of people who are interested in visiting authentic places from the past, without the need to search for their roots. In the next section we introduce a more specific transformational travel experience called Legacy Travel, which takes Heritage Tourism to a much deeper level.

Legacy tourism: Taking Heritage Tourism to a deeper level

Ancestral/Legacy tourism implies a special interest in learning about and getting in contact with the heritage of a distant homeland. It is an activity anchored in highly personal narratives, sometimes even resembling myths, which leads to the experience of powerful emotions like nostalgia and belonging (Basu, 2004; 2005; McCain & Ray, 2003; Meethan, 2004). Subsequently, people who engage in this form of tourism choose an explorative and transformative path “to go back to their ancestral roots,” and explore their background and connect this new knowledge into their own life and experience.

Legacy tourism includes marketing of a location to people who want to more deeply discover their distant family roots in order to appreciate and understand places, people and family who come before them. Their motivation for this travel often comes from long- term psychological needs and life plans and, with older age, needs, such as self-actualization, become increasingly important as a travel motivator. (Cohen, 1984). When looking at heritage/legacy tourism and travel motives, there is a proliferation of sub-segments, the very personal nature of one’s own ancestral legacy seems to epitomize the core idea of “heritage.” This exploratory study points out that a substantial proportion (52%) of travelers nominally classified as heritage tourists, do indeed, rate “visiting places where family is from” as an important motive. (McCain & Ray, 2003).

Nevertheless, legacy tourists have a longing to engage in genealogical endeavors and feel connected to their ancestral roots. These tourists feel a personal connection with their heritage further than a general relationship of collective ancestry. In that way, many of legacy tourists get a possibility to honor those who came before them and who made them who they are today, by getting the opportunity to re-connect with their ancestral heritage. Furthermore, to more fully examine the motivations of legacy tourists, and in order to get a clearer picture of heritage tourism segments and their clarifications, there is an increasing need for further research into the heritage sector of tourism (Laws, 1998).

An article in National Geographic Traveler reports that spending on heritage-legacy travel by Americans has risen 18% since 1995, fueled by the boom in increased access to genealogy tests and records (Marjanaa & Quintos, 2001). Sixty percent of Americans (up from 33% in the past 5 years) say that they are interested in genealogy (Shute, 2002). The United States is, for example, a nation of immigrants, many of whom seek opportunities to visit the countries from which their ancestors originated. Some host countries, which have experienced considerable

out-migration during periods of their history, have come to base much of their tourism on inviting such people to return to their “ethnic roots.” (Chambers, 2000 p.103).

Furthermore, Legacy tourists have a desire to be part of something that is life altering and one that leaves them with memories that give them purpose and value and takes an experience to a deep experience of a life- time, and one that may change their life forever. (ibid) A desire to know where your ancestors lived and what they did turns the tourist act into one of self-discovery, where individuals seek to “affirm, negotiate, and maintain their identities” (Santos and Yan, 2010, p.p.57). This interest is supported by increased access to a huge range of historical records, both physical and digital, alongside websites that allow the creation of customized family trees (Kramer, 2011).

Subsequently, legacy travel, in combination with heritage tourism, creates a road map where partakers are able to discover where their ancestors lived. With that being said, many genealogists are skilled at gathering ancestral information, but lack the ability to accurately interpret the information they have obtained. Their resulting genealogical charts and family histories can be so inaccurate they might as well be works of fiction. (Baxter, 2015). Furthermore, as more and more people engage in this field of tourism, authenticity in accessed sources is pivotal. With that being said, some of the most popular sites, (ancestry.com, 2019) will not often tell you is the genealogy that you discover may not be accurate, as family trees go back generations, and there could be entire branches that are based on a lie and you would have no way of ever knowing. Furthermore, before the advent of DNA testing, there was no way to detect misattributed paternity. (Lents, 2018).

Nevertheless, legacy tourists are passionate people who enjoy digging deep to investigate their personal family history, with some even taking DNA tests, which means that trust in sources as well as the ancestral guides are critical and requires scrutiny. Moreover,” history, truly considered, is a verb and not an abstract noun, “We history”, and as legacy tourists, we will certainly pay someone to help us “history.” (Brett, 1993; 186). With that being said, legacy travel provides tourists with an opportunity to immerse themselves into a culture, often times undertaken with personal motives of specific regions with specific goals in mind. It may or may not include some or all of the following, tangible or intangible cultural heritage sites, heritage remains, or cultural landscapes. It has been said that people who travel to the destination of their forefathers do not just travel abroad to discover the destination, but rather to discover themselves (ancestral-findings, 2021) In this case, the aim is to uncover ancestral origins and history, and what drives people to embark on such a travel. While marketing managers almost universally recognize the importance of identifying and providing for the needs of niche customers of travelers, they often overlook opportunities associated with the legacy market segment (McCain & Ray, 2003). Moreover, scholars have generated new knowledge about secular pilgrimage sites and secular aspects of pilgrimage research (Badone & Roseman, 2004; Margry, 2008), In this section, we have concluded that Legacy Travel is a specific form of travel specifically for tourists who are interested in uncovering their ancestral history. In the next section we will be exploring a dimension of Legacy tourism, called pilgrimages, and delve deeper into the transformation it provides.

Legacy travel pilgrimages as transformative: spiritual more than religious

Pilgrimages has become a big business nowadays with at least 240 million people going on a pilgrimage each year, (Belhassen et al, 2018; 7:6), but what is it in pilgrimages that appeals to tourists of today? The answer might be found in Joseph Campbell’s classic,” The Hero with

Thousand Faces,” where he suggests that a pull towards a journey of transformation is the universal motif for all human beings (Campbell, 2003-2008). Indeed, the ‘spiritual but not religious’ is a new emerging category of pilgrims who seek personal fulfilment and connection with “something greater” than themselves (Madigan, 2017).

Although travel originated in Europe in the 17th century as the Grand Tour,” (Gross, 2008), as a ‘quest for the unknown,” (Pico & Iyer, 2017), it was MacCannell, (1973), who first portrayed tourism as a quest for the ‘authentic,’ representing the pilgrimage of modern man. He went further by asserting that contemporary tourism embodies many of the same characteristics as pilgrimage and that, in the current modern secular world, tourists are perceived as pilgrims. Although this approach was later criticized, it nonetheless offers an interesting view of the roots of these kinds of assumptions. Cohen, (1992) for example, proposed distinguishing between two different types of pilgrimage centers: the formal and the popular. The research of the 1990s dealt primarily with the complex relationship between pilgrimage and tourism. From this point onward, analysis of this relationship has focused on the similarities and differences between the tourist and the pilgrim (Collins- Kreiner & Klot, 2000; Digance, 2003; 2006; Ebron, 1999; Fleischer, 2000; Vukonic, 2002) and the relationship among religion, pilgrimage, and tourism (Timothy and Olsen, 2006). Moreover, although modern tourism is often regarded as a newer phenomenon of the modern world, we are reminded that the origins of tourism are rooted in pilgrimages. Indeed, this de-differentiation has been one of the main subjects of current research in the field of religion and tourism (Kreiner & Wall, 2015).

Furthermore, throughout the past decades, the word “pilgrimage” has become widely used in broad and secular contexts, (McCain & Ray, 2003). Indeed, the word "pilgrimage" itself is being used increasingly frequent in broader secular contexts (Alderman, 2002; Reader and Walter, 1993), and is being recognized as part of the growing phenomenon of tourist interest in sites that add meaning to life, (Collins-Kreiner, 2015). Travel to these heritage sites is thus like a pilgrimage, where the objective is the discovery and commemoration of a personal history, such as the place of birth or baptism of an ancestor is established (Feldman, 2001).

Moreover, as more research has shown, there are also large numbers of “tourists” going on “journeys,” some of which could be likened to pilgrimages who are searching for a variety of experiences, including enlightenment, knowledge, improved spiritual and physical well-being and challenge, although, the development strategies in this particular niche segment is often disregarded in tourism development strategies (Basu, 2005). Instead, studies of specifically ancestral types of tourism have mostly focused on exploring the demand-side, such as the travel behaviors and experiences of the ancestral tourist at the destination. However, researchers recognize that facilities, services and products to assist ancestral tourists in their journeys of self-discovery are crucial elements to a positive experience during ancestral tourism (ibid). Nevertheless, Murdy et al. (2018) claims that many heritage sites fail to understand and foresee the travel motivations and expectations of ancestral tourists, making it difficult for destinations to benefit from this niche market.

Moving forward to the present day, embarking on a modern-day pilgrimage or in a Heritage/Legacy travel journey may feel like a “dej- ja -vu” for some tourists, as this type of journey takes the travel experience to another level, and is more like a quest, initiated by the researching of ancestral records, followed by traveling to the ancestral birthplace, thereafter culminating with a follow-up on the return home. Moreover, the actual process of the pilgrim’s journey is a transformative process, as the various stages that a pilgrim goes through on their

journey acts as a microcosm of the greater journey of life and offers a unique channel of transformation that reverberates into the everyday, upon the return.

Garrod and Fyall, (2000) report that Heritage/Legacy tourism is a major growth area and find that typical Heritage tourists are older, with an interest in nostalgia. According to Butler (1980), who created the tourism life cycle model (TALC), which is typically used to refer to the development of a tourism destination, creates a simple linear graph that demonstrates the various stages of tourism development. Moreover, the model explains the changes that have taken place in pilgrimage research over the years and contends that, as part of an ongoing process of change, this phenomenon, as a concept, is gradually undergoing the stages of life-cycle, from birth, through development and stagnation, to decline or eventual rejuvenation (Collins-Kreiner, 2016). Legacy tourism is currently in the rejuvenation stage.

Furthermore, scholars of pilgrimaging equate its notable transformative capacity to the classic stages of change as “The Hero’s Journey,” (Campbell, 2003), “whose work embodies the journey mission of mythological education and personal transformation, inspires the physical manifestation in the partaking of an actual pilgrimage journey, (Lopez, 2021). The cycle of this journey as nature’s pattern of regeneration, is a journey consisting of departure, arrival, and return, (ibid). It is through the initiation of the journey and the recognition of a desire that cannot be dismissed, that the quest at hand emerges. (Cousineau, 2013) Often times, during the initial phase and the departure, it is filled with “questions of the soul,” where the purpose behind the questions may be to initiate the quest, as journeys are not informed by what we already know, with much of our world dependent on knowledge, but instead based on the value in the things we do not know. (ibid). It may be this spark of desire that inspires Danish American Heritage-Legacy tourists to embark on this type of journey/travel, in the form of a quest, to uncover their ancestral roots.

Moreover, as one of the best known cultural and religious phenomena, pilgrimage, is defined as “a journey resulting from religious causes, externally to a holy site, and internally for spiritual purposes and internal understanding” (Barber, 1993:1) The large number of books and publications dealing with the combination of a spiritual search and a physical journey is just one indication of the popularity and importance of pilgrimages today (Eade & Albera, 2015; Collins-Kreiner 2010; Timothy & Olsen, 2006).

On top of that, the Mormon Church (formerly The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints) maintains the largest collection of genealogical data in the world and supports the Family History Center, a library in Salt Lake City, Utah where visitors may access millions of records and over two billion names of deceased persons. The official internet travel site of the state of Utah reports that “the library has become one of the most popular tourist destinations in Salt Lake City” (Mormon Heritage, 2001). Moreover, searching for one’s family history is relatively easy with the physical preservation and digitalization of a range of records in many countries (Kramer, 2011; Nash, 2002). However, these services are not part of the traditional tourism supply chain, which makes the development and delivery of ancestral tourism at a destination more complex than with other forms of heritage tourism (Bryce et al., 2017). On top of that, genealogical proof statements, summaries, and arguments rely upon written source documents. However, although much has been written about how to use written records and especially original written records, (Mills, 2007, pp .21-23; Osborn, 2012; Jones, 2012: Anderson, 2014: BCG, 2019, pp.23-24), there has been little or no examination by genealogical practitioners of the nature of written sources as such, which can often times make it difficult to authenticate the originality made by genealogy practitioners written sources.

Moreover, Pilgrimage as a research concept, as distinct from a market segment, hardly existed before the 1990s. However, its roots, reach back to a number of concepts and theories developed primarily by sociologists and anthropologists, and were analyzed in the tourism literature in the 1970s and the 1980s. During this period, which constituted the concept's "introduction stage," (Collins-Kreiner, 2016), and this literature focuses substantial attention on the "visitor experience" and the psychosocial dynamics that drive different kinds of tourism, including pilgrimages (Cohen, 1979; 1992a; 1992b; 1998; Mac Cannell, 1973; Turner and Turner, 1969; 1978). In this section, we have learned that people who engage in Pilgrimage/Legacy travel seek a travel where they can gain a sense personal fulfillment and connection with something bigger than themselves. In the next section, we address the search for cultural Identity and sense of belonging that Legacy/Heritage tourists hope to fulfill upon a visit to their motherland.

Cultural Identity and Sense of Belonging

This section examines the connection between heritage/legacy travel, cultural identity and sense of belonging for Danish-American women tourists. The main aim for travelers employing this form of travel, specifically Danish American Women, of which this study unfolds, is their interest in uncovering their cultural heritage and ancestral roots. Traveling to places of personal, religious, cultural and/or vocational interest may, in certain circumstances, stimulate feelings of nostalgia or deep emotion (Timothy & Boyd 2006). This is defined as consisting of "customary practice and of beliefs, values, sanctions, rules, motives and satisfactions associated with it" (Jensen et al, 2011, p. 286). Moreover, there are millions from Denmark who have emigrated to the U.S. throughout history, and an increasing number of people interested in their genealogy nowadays, which demonstrates a strong willingness to trace back their ancestry line, (Nash, 2002; Santos & Yan, 2010; Yakel, 2004). Furthermore, about 15% of the Danish population emigrated to the U.S. between 1870 and 1920, mostly to states with climates that resemble Denmark-Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Oregon and Washington State (Mellish, 2018).

Bearing this in mind, the concept of identity can be seen and understood on numerous levels. Many Danish-Americans feel they have a dual identity. They feel they are both danish, although most of all, they feel American. Moreover, understanding this dynamic is important because ancestral stories and cultural identity create their reality together, through a combination of experiences, stories and artifacts. Furthermore, Marschall, (2016) proposes, that the creation and preservation of a memory of the past, in this case a distant past, is mediated through social relations developed through its` reconstruction during travels to the homeland. With at being said, learning about the struggles and joys of generations past can resonate with all of us, and our experience is more about our culture than our genes. We draw our identity from our experiences and are deeply imprinted by the cultural themes of our society and the parents who raised us, regardless of where we got our chromosomes, (Lents, 2018).

Furthermore, identity can also be a collective identity, as in belonging to a group. Therefore, when discussing identity, it is important to point out that, the concept of identity is based on the person`s own perceptions and feelings, as well as by one`s own individual, depending on the actual situation. It is also interesting to note that one can feel a member of one society and feel an equal sense of belonging and connection to another, as is such for many Danish-

Americans. Such a multiple identity could be made up of, for example, age, gender, household, locality, and ethnicity, etc., (Harke, 2007: p.13).

Furthermore, there are many aspects that contribute to the feelings of common identity, but the foremost “identity markers” are language and religion as well as maintaining traditions and customs from their homeland alive. There are numerous examples where one can recognize signs of Scandinavian emigration to North America when traveling through certain areas of the U.S, as many of the landscapes are geographically similar to Denmark. You can even find a Danish Windmill imported to Elk Horn Iowa. In addition to cultural identity, Sites of interests for these tourists vary greatly, including not only museums and historical landmarks, but also churches, old houses and rural landscapes to which these tourists feel a personal connection, and which are not necessarily conventional heritage tourism attractions (Alexander et al., 2017).

On top of that, Danish American cultural life, while being very rooted in cultural traditions from Denmark, is also shaped by the American context with Danish American cultural patterns, exhibiting a duality drawn from cultural elements of both countries. These examples illustrate that immigrants and their descendants are both active agents in shaping their cultural patterns and ethnic identities (Blank, 2006: p.6). This felt history “is illustrated by the intermingling of phrases and images of home, family, kinship, ancestors and common blood, with expressions of emotion and feeling. It is this intermingling that enables the internal, intimate function of national identity to promote a sense of belonging and a sense of place” (Palmer, 2005, p.p. 7)

In addition, (Marschall, 2017) contends that these later generations of the diaspora can still find a deep sense of identity and rootedness during their journeys back to the ancestral homeland. As (Leite, 2005) and (Basu, 2004) state, the notion of a distant homeland is part of a constructed reality made up of particular imagery about a place of belonging for the members of immigrant societies. On this matter, (Bryce et al. 2017) outline that members of a diaspora can feel close existentially to their ancestral homeland. However, due to their distance to this homeland in time and space, their impression of it can easily be distorted by romantic and nostalgic national imagery diffused in the media and within the diaspora (Bryce et al., 2017). Moreover, after many generations, tourism to the homeland becomes less of a quest to relive personal memories of places and events, but rather becomes a pursuit rooted in nostalgia and longing for a distant past.

Furthermore, there are two different forms of tourism, the first form undertaken by later generations, called roots tourism, (Basu, 2004; Maruyama, 2016; Mensah, 2015) Legacy tourism (McCain & Ray, 2003) implies travel to a heritage destination with a motivation to feel a connection with the past by finding personally relevant information on site. The attraction of these visitors to a distant ancestral homeland demonstrates the powerful connection that members of immigrant societies have with their ancestral heritage (Hughes & Allen, 2010; Leite, 2005). Moreover, the connection that these legacy tourists have towards their ancestral past, in this case to Denmark, is often times due to the amount of their prior research, with their interest continuing even more intensely during their visit.

However, it is worth noting that Denmark, in contrast to many other European countries, does not have national strategy when it comes to attracting heritage/legacy tourists, even due to the fact that there has been a surge of immigrations throughout history, and millions of individuals of Danish origins in the U.S. today. In fact, data shows that from 1841 to 1925 there have been 350,000 Danes who immigrated to the U.S. (Clemenson & Andersson, 2004; Jensen, 1931). The American Community Survey outlines that, in 2017, nearly 1.3 million citizens with

Danish ancestry, US Census Bureau, (2017).). However, there is no national branding strategy in Denmark like the American National Trust for Historic Preservation,(2008).

According to (Alexander et al, 2017) and (Bryce et al, 2017), when ancestral tourists visit their ancestral homeland with limited or distorted information about their family heritage, they are likely to organize the trip inadequately, visiting the wrong sites for instance, and might experience disappointment. Therefore, collecting reliable genealogical information beforehand is extremely important to the success of a positive ancestral experience for the tourist, as it is herein lie the emotional experience of the journey, where the right connection, to the right places, and to the right people takes place, as this is the highlight of their trip.

Subsequently, landscape is of essential importance in creating a “sense of belonging” which can be seen in the landscapes of the Danish immigrants, who settled in the U,S, and which bear a strong resemblance to the rural landscapes of Denmark. Moreover, this feeling of “belonging to something bigger than yourself,” where researchers maintain, that during ancestral tourism, visitors experience very strong emotional and spiritual moments, sometimes some of the strongest in their lives. Alexander et al., 2017 contend that these tourists intentionally look for contact with past memories during their travels to sites of personal heritage (Basu, 2004; Wright, 2009; Leite, 2005). The authentic desire to be involved in instinctive and seemingly real encounters with their ancestors attracts these tourists to the ancestral homeland (Meethan, 2004). Travel to these heritage sites is thus like a pilgrimage, where the objective is the discovery and commemoration of a personal history, such as the place of birth or baptism of an ancestor (Feldman, 2001). Subsequently, many of this form of tourism is a spiritual journey, as these profound and rich moments back in time affects them on a very deep level.

However, the search of one’s family history does not have a clear end-goal, but rather is an ongoing process of building a larger narrative about one-self and the past (Yakel, 2004). Moreover, self-discovery and identification also play into the powerful connection that members of immigrant societies have with their ancestral heritage, as they seek to understand and preserve their family history, as it provides meaning to their existence (Basu, 2004; Nash, 2002; Santos & Yan, 2010). Moreover, Nordqvist, (2017) states that the accumulation of genealogical knowledge is not just a means of extending the reach of the family into the past, but is a means of “doing family” in the present. He also argues that genes do not speak for themselves, but rather rendered and so become meaningful: furthermore “genetic thinking” acts as a proxy for social connectedness and “belonging together” (ibid).

Furthermore, (Basu, 2005) suggests, it is through performances like researching genealogy, visiting relevant sites and learning about traditions that individuals bring into being their ancestral identity. Marschall, (2015a) argues that tourists who visit places where they have personally been involved in their past seek the familiar as they construct their journey through their memories. In that sense, personal relevance may also relate to repeat visitation, with a link between connecting a site with personal heritage, emotional involvement and passing on a legacy (Poria et al. 2006b). In contrast, scholars argue, that ancestral tourists, who only know their homeland through their imagination and from memories of relatives, genealogy research and cultural discussion claim that their ancestral tourism experiences have transformative power due to the strong feelings of attachment it generates amongst the subsequent generations of a “diaspora,” (Bhandari, 2010; 2016; Hughes & Allen, 2010). “Diaspora” refers to members of diasporic communities “who make trips in search of their roots with aims of reaffirming and reinforcing their identities,” (Coles and Timothy, 2004, p.14). In the case of the Danish-

Americans tourists, evidence showed that these experiences resulted in a Nationalism which grew only stronger within them during their visit.

Furthermore, Nuryanti, (1996) suggests that wherein the 19th century is often seen as bearing witness to the destruction of the past, the 20th up to the 21st centuries are associated with an increased awareness of the past and ways in which we communicate with it. Copeland,(2020) states, “we look, because as human beings we are natural born storytellers, and we want to know our “once upon a time” fits into the narrative of our lives.” Moreover, ancestral tourism could be a “reflexive response to a sense of loss that underpins modern society, assisting in reaffirming both a generational sense of the self and a self-recognition that one has one’s own perspective of the world?” (Santos and Yan 2010, 56). With that being said, Palmer,(1999), observes how questions such as ‘who are we? and ‘where do we fit in? are becoming increasingly common in today’s world. I will now move onto the next section, analysis.

Analysis

Table 1. List of interview participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Profession	Number of visits to Denmark	Nationality
P1-Christine	Female	59	DentalHygienist	1	US/Danish
P2-Haley	Female	25	Teacher	7	US/Danish
P3-Roseanne	Female	51	Doctor	1	Australian/Danish
P4-Sue	Female	61	Nurse	1	US/Danish
P5-Lynn	Female	71	Retired	1	US/Danish
P6-Helga	Female	83	Retired	4	USDanish
P7-Nancy	Female	64	Retired	3	US/Danish
P8-Karen	Female	64	Retired	1	US/Danish
P9-Christie	Female	77	Retired	3	US/Danish
P10-Barbara	Female	71	Retired	3	US/Danish
P11-Hazel	Female	71	Retired	1	US/Danish
P12-Henriette	Female	65	Business owner	-	Danish
P13-Tove	Female	55	Museum Direct	-	US/Danish
P14- Author	Female	50+	Student	-	US/Irish

Narrative analysis is useful to understand how individuals perceive themselves within their social world. (Freeman, 2004; Riessman, 2008) In order to uncover themes for the analysis, I used a coding process, which consisted of reading the transcripts, and then assigning codes which related to the overall research aim, echoing the informant's mindset, experiences, values, perspectives, and behaviors. I then examined the codes and created specific and relevant categories made up of patterns to see how they connected to each other and where repetitive codes emerged, eliminating irrelevant ones. This process helped me to make sense and systemize the data. The five themes below reflect these analytical categories. Based on the themes that emerged from the data collection, five headings for sections of the analysis emerged. The five themes are: Motivation to engage in Heritage/Legacy Travel, Danish/Cultural Identity, Connection and Sense of Belonging, Danish Landscapes, Churches as pivotal landmarks and the importance of Trust. Furthermore, all of the transcripts are located in appendix 1.

Thematic Analysis

1. What was the motivation to engage in Legacy travel and “Go back to our roots,” and do you feel your travel was transformative?

As mentioned in the literature review, Heritage tourism is more about culture than Legacy tourism. Another way to interpret ‘heritage tourism’ could mean tourism centered, in this particular case, on what the Danish American tourist has inherited. However, Legacy tourism is a deeply personal type of tourism, with a focus on a personal ancestral lineage. In this first chapter, participants share stories about what motivated them to embark on a legacy travel journey and how it contributed in transforming their lives, (Palmer, 1999, p.313).

Ancestral/Legacy tourism implies a special interest in learning about and getting in contact with the heritage of a distant homeland. It is an activity anchored in highly personal narratives, sometimes even resembling myths, which leads to the experience of powerful emotions like nostalgia and belonging (Basu, 2004; 2005; McCain & Ray, 2003; Meethan, 2004). I begin by sharing a short caption of how a memory of my own ancestral journey came back to me during my first interview and was most certainly an underlying motivation for choosing this particular topic for this case study.

P14, (Researcher)As stated in the above quote, Legacy travel can become highly personal narratives, instilling deep emotions and sense of belonging, and in some even transform our lives. Many years ago, as young girl, I embarked in a Legacy journey travel, traveling to Ireland to uncover my Irish ancestry. Therefore, upon engaging topic was personal to me, as it touched me deeply. Although my journey took me to Ireland, and my participants to Denmark, our sense of longing feel the same. As a matter of fact, a forgotten memory came to me about my own journey during my first interview. My full story is located in appendix 1.

As **P1**, my first participant, shared what fueled her motivation to learn more about her family legacy,

***P1**, My grandmother sparked an interest in genealogy for me ..., I found it fascinating, I loved to learn about this,...the more the better...I always had a great love and respect for these people...I was actually being spoon fed from my grandpa and grandmother for a long time, I was only 25 when I began researching, that is 30 years ago I've worked on my genealogy for over 30 years, and it's been an incredible discovery, I spent many years searching historical records..., I've always been very proud of my Danish Heritage ,learning how my ancestors left their home and travelled across the U.S. in covered wagons, settling in Utah, I have always admired these people that move from their homeland and culture, being so far away from the people you love..... At one point my mother mentioned that she had never been to Denmark and wanted to go before she died.... this inspired me to go with her and to bring my daughters so they could also learn about their culture*

In the above quote, **P1** her motivation to visit their homeland stemmed from engaging in genealogy from a very young age. At one point her mother expressed a desire to travel to Denmark before she was too old. **P1** also had a desire to share the experience together with her young daughters, so they could learn about their Danish culture from a young age. She also said that her visit to Denmark had also inspired her to engage in activities upon her return home, like visiting the Danish Church in Utah which had the same structure and architecture as the one she visited in Copenhagen.

Cohen, (1984), states, Legacy Tourists have a desire to deeply discover their distant family roots in order to appreciate and understand places, people and family who come before them. Their motivation for this travel often comes from long- term psychological needs and life plans and, with older age, needs, such as self-actualization, become increasingly important as a travel motivator. “

As **P1** describes growing with a strong sense of her Danish-American culture, but **P10** had a very different version when asked the same question....

P10, shared that she likes to entertain, I make sure my house appears cozy, there is an aesthetic ambiance about my home, I am very house proud, and I am very interested in food and am grounded in things that mean something, I feel I am kind of an earth mother....

P1 states, *she was “being spoon fed,”* which eventually led to a trip to Denmark with her family to uncover her Danish roots, When I dug deeper, **P4** stated that her initial interest stemmed from reading a lot of Danish books and articles, which seemed to plant seeds about what “being Danish” looked like. This stemmed from the fact that she first discovered that her father was Danish late in life. He had been adopted as a child, and thought he was German until he took a DNA test and found out that he was Danish! But I find it quite fascinating that she was always keen on learning about Denmark. (DNA?)

P7 shares, I had done our family tree dating back to 1700, and like history, and used to think, what if I were a person living during that time? I grew up knowing my grandfather, he grew up on the island of Arø, and even though he died when I was only a child, he was a joy in my life. I also corresponded with his sister, and my great aunt was a teacher in Denmark, so I ended up getting a pen-pal from her classroom, I also thought I might not live forever, So I should travel and take advantage and visit while I still can.....

For P10, motivations to embark on this journey differed from P1, and stemmed more from her love of history, but also shared, *“she might not live forever, so I should travel and take advantage and visit while I still can,”* so age was also a motivator for her, as well as a loving grandfather who planted seeds as a young child which sparked her curiosity and now weave her family tree and history together on her visit.

P2, was my youngest participant, and her upbringing by her Danish Grandmother involved exposing her to everything Danish, and this inspired her from a very young age, shares, *“her danish heritage is at the level that I have kind of incorporated it into my daily life...I have actually created this whole separate life in Denmark, where she has what she calls a replacement family, whom she lived with as an exchange student, and travelled there seven times. Growing up very close to her grandmother as a young girl inspired her travel to Denmark, and I begged my parents to let me go there, I became obsessed with the idea, and they allowed me travel at age 17 as an exchange student...which she said showed how little Danish parents were paranoid compared to American parents who would never allow that happen, I also ended up getting to the point where I incorporated everything Danish in my life, cooking danish foods..... I have since been to Denmark 7 or 8 times to visit my host family, whom I lived with for 5 months, I actually competed on the danish figure skating team in Copenhagen during those five months, I have kind of created this whole separate Danish Life....and I have learned to speak Danish and worked in a Danish Nursing home in Manhattan”*

Engaging with **P2** helped me to better understand how enacting this form of travel is like a life mission and has been a dream and since she was very young inspired by her upbringing, it is simply part of her core, and incorporate “Danish” things into her life on a regular basis.

As shared by **P2 and P8**, the search of one’s family history does not have a clear end-goal, but rather is an ongoing process of building a larger narrative about one-self and the past (Yakel, 2004). Moreover, self-discovery and identification also play into the powerful connection that members of immigrant societies have with their ancestral heritage, as they seek to understand and preserve their family history, as it provides meaning to their existence (Basu, 2004; Nash, 2002; Santos & Yan, 2010).

P8 shared that her close connection with her grandmother as a motivating factor to travel there, and the fact she had a great aunt still living in Denmark, so had laid a strong foundation which in turn created a longing to visit her Danish culture, she had learned some memorable things she engages in today, in a way, honoring what she learned from her grandmother, like learning some Danish, how to make danish food, and various handicrafts that she still practices today, states, *“and therefore, when the opportunity showed up, she took advantage of it”*

P8, shares, *“My mother`s parents immigrated to the U.S., they lived in South Dakota, and worked as farm labors, they eventually moved to New York, and I always visited my grandparents, I was very close to my grandmother, she taught me how to cut woven hearts and embroider, and to make danish food.... her sister had come a couple of times from Denmark to visit us, so I had relatives in Denmark....and so about five years ago I got really involved, and joined ancestry.com and began searching my family records, spending hours down the rabbit hole, I spent a week in Denmark and went to the church my grandmother was baptized in....it was so wonderful”*

P8, shares, *“when I was in Copenhagen, I feel like I am home, I can feel my grandmother`s presence as part of me”*and on her return home, she says she became motivated to dive even deeper into her family heritage and has been inspired by some danish needlework she saw at the Design Museum and she bought a book teaching her some tips

In contrast to P2 & P8, P4`s decision to visit Denmark was inspired by her brother (from another mother,) during a time when he and his family were planning a trip to Norway, (where he had worked as a sports coach for a number of years), he eventually convinced her to join them on this visit to Norway and Denmark, but it took some time to convince her.....

P4, shares, *“ my mother had bought my brother and I each a DNA kit from ancestry.com.... her initial reaction was, I do not want to go down that rabbit hole.....She went on to explain, saying at first, I was not interested because I am a nurse, and I did not want to sign my propriety rights over my DNA....I? But, then my real gut reaction was I found this brother, from another mother, a, but I just don`t want to complicate my life at that point, because that`s a big deal when you discover these siblings, right? It`s a big deal emotionally. But going through all of this was a fascinating wonderful journey, but it took a lot of energy, and some background on me personally....at the same time this was going on, my son was diagnosed with heart disease, and I said, no, I`ve got enough going on in my world, However I discovered that my fathers` mother had died in childbirth and that he had been adopted by his cousin, this made me want to know more about her family DNA, and uncover this mystery in which I had no information about, so this was the inspirator to dive into what I call that “soulful” part of me and take the plunge on a genealogical tour to Denmark, where P10 says was like embarking on a pilgrimage....with many twists and turns...but life changing”*

P4, felt that there were so many open- ended questions and “mysteries” to be solved, and felt compelled by this “soulful” part of her to dive into her heritage, and said, she ended up meeting the right people at the right time, which in turn, helped her uncover a mystery that she had never really had an intention to solve in the first place, but which became a life-changer for her, and she talked about writing a sequel, a kind of book about her family history.....

When asking, **P3**, What motivated you to embark on a Danish heritage/legacy journey?

P7, shares, " as a child growing up, I was not really aware of it, but as I have grown older, I wanted to learn more about my family history, and after having my family history and memory explained by our ancestral guide (P12) her guide, helped a lot. She was able to show us where my great grandmother went to school in Copenhagen, where she had lived, she showed us the blacksmith shop of my great- grandfather, and the building is still there where my great grandfather worked, there is still a little shed attached to the house, and we were able to stand there and look, and take that all into our minds. This is where the journey all started for them... in the 1800's, quite amazing. We just felt so incredibly blessed that we found someone like our guide, who was able to put it into context and explain the cultural perspective. it was very wonderful",

Moreover, (Marschall, 2016) proposes, that the creation and preservation of a memory of the past, in this case a distant past, is mediated through social relations developed through its` reconstruction during travels to the homeland. A desire to know where your ancestors lived and what they did turns the tourist act into one of self-discovery, where individuals seek to "affirm, negotiate, and maintain their identities" (Santos and Yan 2010, p. 57).

2. Cultural identity & sense of belonging: "Being able to walk in their shoes"

Self-discovery and identification also play into the powerful connection that members of immigrant societies have with their ancestral heritage, as they seek to understand and preserve their family history, as it provides meaning to their existence, (Basu, 2004; Nash, 2002; Santos & Yan, 2010). A sense of belonging can show up in many ways, as customs, language, religious customs, and as things that create a feeling of belonging and social connectedness. Moreover, the depth that their National and Cultural Identity is embedded in the mindsets and in their very being. It is as if they feel they embody a dual identity. It is also interesting to note that one can feel a member of one society and feel an equal sense of belonging and connection to another, (Harke, 2007: p.13).

An example can be found in the words of P1, when she was asked what her cultural connection and how it made her feel when she thinks of herself as a Danish American?

For P1,, shares, "It was a really important moment in time for me, and I feel extremely grateful to be able to travel with my mother an daughters to explore our Danish history. I have had a strong sense of my Danish Cultural identity from a young age. It`s simply become a part of my very being, I have 2 daughters who are 6 feet tall, and they both said that when they were in Denmark they felt that they were among their people, although the population is mixed, there were so many tall blond people, they felt like they fit in.... We were just curious about everything they are doing there.....I felt very close to them...we were really excited to try out the cultural activities and the food that I had known about....just disappointed when I kept trying to order æble-skiver in the restaurants, but came to realize our visit was during summer and in the Danish culture, which is different than in the U.S., there are certain foods that are only available during particular times of the year"

I asked P1 if there was a point during her trip when she felt a special sense of belonging? And if so, how did that show up for her? She replied,

P1. States, " There was this feeling, a sense of belonging at the harbor, by the Christina Statue. The artist who made it is from the city that I live in, Alpine, Utah, he made this statue of his grandmother who left Denmark, she`s right on the harbor. There was this really great

connection that my people were here and I was honoring them, I was just coming back to see where they stood and walked”,

It was clear to me that **P1** felt a strong connection to her ancestors while she was physically standing by this statue. Coupled with the fact that the artist who made sculpted it was from her hometown, it provided a sense of social connectedness with her people, which feelings of belonging together became very real. She mentioned that she had this sense that she was part of her ancestor’s energy, in a sense, “being able to walk in their shoes” and honor them in a way.

When I asked **P1** if she felt that this was a soul changing kind of experience and if so, how did it affect you and make your life different?

P1,states, “I already had a great love and respect for these people, but actually seeing where they lived, how they lived, it just made them even more dear to me, now I felt like I knew them on a deeper level...and when I came home, I felt motivated to visit a Danish church in Utah with my mother that I have been wanting to visit for a while, it has the same architecture as in Denmark”

When I asked **P8**, how does it make her feel when she thinks of herself as a Danish-American?

P.8, states, “When I am in Copenhagen, I feel like I am at home, my grandmother’s family built their home here, I had a second cousin, who drove us around the area, the area where my grandparents grew up, we saw the actual building,,it was so great to see where she had grown up as a young girl, I just loved it, it feels like it’s part of me. I’ve all these good memories, I feel that she’s still a part of me, it connects me to something bigger than myself. She taught me how to bake danish rolls, my kids ask me for them every Christmas, She also taught me to drive a car and embroider and other danish handicrafts, I do danish embroidery and I still do this craft and collect books from the Danish handicraft guild”

P8 the quote exemplifies a number of things, one being very emotional when talking about physically being in the area and walking where they walked.....it is like a kind of transcendental feeling, that still exists even upon her return home, the physical activities like embroidery that she still engages in that her grandmother taught her and she still loves this craft, that it is still a part of her, it is this feeling of “belonging to something bigger than yourself,”some researchers maintain can happen during moments of ancestral tourism,” visitors experience very strong emotional and spiritual moments, sometimes some of the strongest in their lives.” (Alexander et al., 2017; Basu, 2004; Wright, 2009). (Leite, 2005)

When I asked **P6** how important her Danish cultural connection is to her, and does she feel a strong sense of belonging, and have you still has kept those connections even after coming home?

P6,,she says, “ I grew up in a small community in Minnesota, where my great-grandparents immigrated in 1895, it was a very Danish community, we celebrated all the Danish customs, and when I was growing up, I learned to speak Danish before I spoke English, so it was my first language... I think the most important thing is the relationships you make, and that I had the opportunity to meet these people on my trip is the most special thing.... I also have a lot of danish things in my home, and spend a lot of time teaching my grandchildren about danish things, they know æbleskiver, as food will always get them interested....., I am very proud to

be a Danish American, I think that the blood is thick, I have also visited the farm where my grandfather was born in Denmark, it is renovated now but there are still cows there, I gives me a wonderful feeling, and I am in awe of all the things I saw and was able to see in this little country, I am in contact with my cousin I saw in Denmark, and we have become great friends”

P6, when asked about the importance of her danish connection and cultural heritage, she was very lively and spoke about how she learned Danish before she learned English, and still has a very supportive connection with her cousin in Denmark, she talked about the foods she learned to make from her danish grandparents, so, it some ways it is similar to **P8**, but, with that being said, connection and sense of belonging show up in different ways depending on the people who were present in your life growing up...

“it is not just about extending the reach of the family into the past but is a means of “doing family” in the present.” Nordqvist, (2017). **P6** states, this is one of the ways that she is able to keep her “danish connection and sense of belonging” alive in her life in the U.S. It is that “dual identity”, that special sense of that connection that gives meaning in her life, and provides her with that “sense of belonging” she keeps in her heart.....

Upon asking **P9**, in what way does her sense of belonging and connection to Denmark show up in her life, and if she had a very a powerful impact to share about her experience....

P9,, states, *“what impacted me the most was 9/11, I was a tourist in Copenhagen, I had decided to stay a couple of days in Copenhagen while visiting Denmark in September 2001, the Twin Towers in New York city were attacked, and I was checking into a hotel, the receptionist, said something about “it’s terrible what’s happening in the United States, I said, well I haven’t been there for 3 weeks, I really don’t know, and she said it’s happening now. “I went upstairs in time to see the second plane fly into the Pentagon, but here is the emotional part..., I had a couple of friends in Denmark calling me, and I was staying across the street from Tivoli of which there are 1000 flags,, so I said I need to get out, and I saw that every flag was down to half- mast....everybody I met treated me like I was extra special, so we became very close at this time, and I would have to say just the fact that they cared so much....That was big...Isn’t that beautiful”*

This moment stands in great contrast to the meaning of connection that the other participants experienced. **P9** her interpretation of “being able to walk in their shoes” took her sense of connection to a different level. During this very difficult time during 9/11, where she was away from her own homeland, she had the empathy to understand and actually take on a Danish perspective, interpreting the 9/11 attack in a totally unexpected way, **more like a self-discovery**, and in her discovering her own identity had a contrasting interpretation of identity than the other participants. It was not just about her finding her identity but finding her belonging. This was a big surprise for me, as she had turned this situation around, and her focus was more about what we have in common than what separates us, and that the connection between Denmark and America is actually really strong. This was a totally empathetic way of looking at the situation. This revelation is a powerful Cadeau for Legacy travel, displaying it as a more multi-faceted way of travelling than we originally had thought it was, where it can be more about uncovering the connections that bring us together, including all the identities, which represents a different interpretation than has previously been expressed.

3. Danish Cultural Landscapes: Authentic sense of place creates transformation

When I went on to ask **P1**, if there was a point during her trip that was especially impactful? She replied,

P1 shares,. "when I arrived at the site it was an emotional moment for me, when I saw the home that my great-grandfather grew up, as he described in his journal, that really warmed my heart and brought tears to my eyes, and it helped me realize how he loved his country and the farm he grew up on, and that it was a sacrifice to leave his home and family and go to the U.S. My great-grandfather described his home saying he had the sweetest memories in that house. There was a brook that ran right across the property. And there was a mill that his father built, his most fond memories were of growing up in that house. He said you can never express the beauty of being raised by a strong man who is working hard to provide for his family, and the nurturing hand of your mother. It was very beautiful"

P1 had shared that she had read the journals of her great grand-parents and had seen pictures of where they had grown up, so this moment in time, visiting the actual homestead was very personal to her. At this moment, it was as if **P1** had experienced a transformative moment, visiting the countryside home and farmland of her ancestors, describing that, it was so powerful that it brought tears to her eyes. In many ways, her description illustrates the process in the pilgrim's journey, as a transformative process," in that the various stages a pilgrim goes through on their journey acts as a microcosm of the greater journey of life and offers a unique channel of transformation that reverberates into the everyday, upon the return" (Garrod and Fyall, 2000) **P1**, states after she returned home, she shared how she had taken her feelings of this experience back with her to the U.S. and longed to continue her danish exploration. Shares, "it was a really important moment in time for me, and I feel extremely grateful to be able to travel with my mother and my daughters to explore our history. My mother had never been to Denmark, and she wanted to go before she died, but I needed my daughters. After working on my genealogy for 30 years, I now know my story, also, after being inspired by the Danish churches, she found out that they have something in Utah, where she lives, called "Danish Days" and she has visited a Danish church that has the same architecture as in Denmark with her mother"

When I asked **P3** if there was something that stood out as very authentic during her visit?

P7, states, "I think it was just being there, thinking and looking around, that, Oh My God, this country is so very different from Austraila, the courage it must have taken of these people to travel to the other side of the world, that they knew so little about, these young people, they were pioneers.....I would say how 'old' Copenhagen felt and how young my country feels. I felt this when I stood on the cobblestones of the Copenhagen streets and I was struck, again, by the journey my ancestors took nearly 150 years prior."

I was curious to know if she felt, after visiting family landmarks and other authentic spaces, a if it had provided her with a stronger feeling of cultural identity after her return home, which she shared in the excerpt below.....

P3, states, "I have a greater appreciation for all things Danish now, and it's interesting that within the family, the theme of "construction" has carried through the years. The men in the family were builders, and over the years, that still rings true within the family. My brother, before knowing the full history of our family, travelled to Copenhagen for work (he works in

development and construction/civil engineering and design) He was working with some of Denmark's top architects on an amazing design project in Sydney (AMP Quay Quarter Tower), the tender which the Danish architects (3XN) subsequently won. My nephew is studying architecture. One wonders where the building/construction/architecture interest comes from – is it genetic?"

It appears that her trip inspired many insight moments and questions upon her return home, as she had this awareness, after visiting the blacksmith shop of her great-great grandfather and began to wonder about a possible connection between her family, even having moved so far away from Denmark that family members are still working in this trade, and thoughts on whether it could be genes, or culture, or both?

When I asked if **P3** had any transformational moments, and if she had felt closure upon her return home or if she planned to come back at some point, *says, "she said that it felt in a way like it felt like an out of body experience, and that she also hopes to come back and combine a trip with her cousins who live in England at some point"*

When I asked **P11**, if there was something that stood out as very authentic during her visit, she had a very different interpretation of what authenticity meant to her and related it to her ancestral tree...

P11, *shares, "The branches on my family tree are not just leaves, they are personal connections and stories, that is what makes the tree meaningful and authentic. I longed for these leaves, these stories to come to life, the place and the farm of my great-grandparents, before it was just a picture in my memory, but actually standing there at the exact spot, it felt so deep,"*

Family trees can also be quite transformative, **P11**, describes the leaves as stories, connecting them as a memory of her grandparents coming to life when she stood at the spot where they had lived

P6, had an interesting twist on authenticity in connection with cultural sites like graveyards and cemeteries in Denmark, *shares, "I found it really funny that people use graveyards in Denmark for socializing and having picnics, this would never happen in America, graveyards are where you go to pay respect and put flowers on the gravestones, but in Denmark people experience this space in a different kind of way"*

This was a very insightful observation from **P6**, and I clearly remember feeling the same way when I moved to Denmark many years ago. But today, I look at these spaces differently, they are sort of demystified in a sense, I see them also as social spaces where we can celebrate and embrace the memories of those who have passed on instead of feeling sad

P12, is a Business owner of a Heritage Travel Company, and I asked her how authenticity shows up for her with her clients, **P12** *states, "my concept is 100% tailored to the individual customers ,I have received inquiries from Danish incoming agencies & American Travel agencies as to whether I offer group travel, but my concept is so personal and authentic that it is difficult to adapt to large groups"*

P12 she described years of experience in the field of Legacy Tourism, specializing in authenticity and personalization, includes visiting sites of family heritage and authentic landscapes with small family groups inspire deep personal experiences, which she says, can

lead to transformative moments for her clients, (Timothy & Boyd, 2006) states, Traveling to places of personal, religious, cultural and/or vocational interest may, in certain circumstances, stimulate feelings of nostalgia or deep emotion.

When I asked her if she then combines her tours with site-seeing, she added,

P12, shares, *“My clients are not particularly interested in seeing sights during our tours unless they have specific relevance to the topic....however, almost all my clients combine their trip with sightseeing which they can do by themselves, and I always offer suggestions, as it is a long flight and an expensive tour, so they might as well get the most out of it”*

4.Churches instill emotion: Connect to their spirituality more than to their religion

When I speak that the participants connect more to spirituality, my aim is to emphasize that the vast majority of these specific tourists visit churches for the spiritual connection they feel is more about the experience of being in the actual place of the baptism or marriage of an ancestor, has nothing to do with religion. Nevertheless, during the interview process, I gained an awareness that visiting the churches was a kind of transformative moment for them, a spiritual moment in their journey.”

For example, when I asked **P4** if this journey was a soul changing quest, and if she had a unique memory that stands out from her visit, she replied,

P4, shares, *“It was this moment of such gratitude...We go to the church...and we stand next to the baptismal, then later on, I hear their stories, that the baptismal font is always with the light from the east shining on it....so when the sun comes up in the east, the first thing it shines on is this baptismal font, which means the beginning of the journey”*

It appears that **P4** was on a mission and visiting the church of her ancestors was deeply important to her, there was this exchange of energy, the place where it all began, I could feel it was a pivotal moment for her, and she felt a deep connection

Indeed, (Campbell, 2003-2008) suggests that a pull towards a journey of transformation is the universal motif for all human beings, and that the ‘spiritual but not religious’ is an emerging category of pilgrims who seek personal fulfilment and connection with “something greater” than themselves, (Madigan, 2017). The ancestral journey, often called pilgrimaging, is undertaking a journey to a place of particular interest, but with little or no connection to religion, but more of a spiritual moment in time for them. Although visits to church are pivotal for these ancestral tourists, it is mainly due to the transformation that occurs whilst there, as well as to access important family documents and for the most, it does not matter whether the church is Lutheran or Roman catholic, or some other religion.

P4, states, *“the church was built in like 1200, during roman catholic times, then in the 1500’s, it became Lutheran, on the ceiling are models of Viking ships...In America, it is the chariot that takes you through your spiritual journey to heaven, in the Lutheran churches it’s the Viking ship, from now on until eternity, where you meet everlasting life, this is your vehicle... she honored this moment, talking about the baptism of her ancestors, it was so poignant, my great-great grandmother was baptized here, she had an unfortunate disease and death, she never could have imagined that her daughter would have gotten on a steamer and moved to the America’s, that whole transition, the bravery and courage, remembering the history of her*

forefathers, it all started here in this church, .I can't imagine what it was like, that whole story, the symbology of that spiritual journey, it was perfect"

Travel to these heritage sites is thus like a pilgrimage, where the objective is the discovery and commemoration of a personal history, such as the place of birth or baptism of an ancestor is established. (Feldman, 2001)

Although, what is poignant here is how **P4** adds that Viking ships as a symbol of the steamer that brought many Danish Americans to the U.S. on a voyage to their new home, including her own great grandmother, whom she said was a brave pioneer in her own right, sailing from their homeland, in hope of a better life. Viking ships are in a manner, a symbol of hope for these ancestral tourists, as these ships are used to symbolize the memory of the actual physical voyage their ancestors embarked on, but also journey her great grandmother was on, and for **P4** they appear to blend together in one powerful memory....and she goes on to share emotional moments in the church, something she had spent time preparing for, studying, like when she describes the history of the roman catholic church and its' role in the 1200's, followed by its conversion to Lutheran in the 1500's, she says that the experience influenced her and her brother that they talked about wanting to repeat it or write a sequel, like a book, as it impacted her so much

Moreover, the customs of displaying ships in the sanctuary began a long time ago in the Catholic Churches of Europe, and it later became a custom in Denmark after the reformation, a kind of symbolism. It goes back a long time in our Nordic Religious and Pagan traditions and Christian Religious traditions. Moreover, another component to the symbolism: these ships were also the bearers of the history of immigration from the Nordic countries to the United States. (Krogh-Nielsen, 2016).

***P.8**, shares, "I remember standing outside the church where my grandmother was baptized, and then we went inside this very old church. The whole Rosencrantz family owns this area, and I just remember standing in there, and just thinking that my grandmother was there, I was so overwhelmed, I couldn't take any pictures, I got so emotional. It was almost like my DNA was connected, like the cord is like, cut with a knife, I can't believe that my grandmother went to this church...., I kept thinking, my grandmother was here the whole time...like an invisible buddy beside me, sitting with me, it was very authentic, ...it was just kind of amazing"*

The above quote is an example of the profound spiritual journey **P8** is experiencing. It is as if she is re-living her grand-mothers story, which has a deep impact on her. She expressed her grandmother as her "physical buddy "standing beside her, a transformative moment, like a sense of awe overcame her in the church. "The authentic desire to be involved in instinctive and seemingly real encounters with their ancestors attracts these tourists to the ancestral homeland (Meethan, 2004).

When I interviewed **P3**, who is the only Danish-Australian participant, if there was a soul changing memory that stands out for her?

***P3**, states, "for my mom, visiting the church in the village, where both my great-great grandparents were baptized and married, in the university quarter, a beautiful cathedral, before they hopped on the ship to Australia, thinking that they were here, at the baptismal font, the entries in the church bible that echoes the above, it actually surpassed our expectations, it was so wonderful.....Thinking back on our trip – December 2019 – even now, the feeling I have*

is of just feeling “overwhelmed”. Being able to stand at the baptismal fonts of my great- great grandparents, and then in the Cathedral where they were married, words can’t describe”.

P3, experience also portrays the overwhelming feelings that participants feel in the churches, as it connects them to this deep longing, to understand and to feel and honor their memory, and how it surpassed her expectations, the feeling of being overwhelmed, she says that words can’t describe....

When I interviewed **P1**, who is a practicing Mormon, her association with the churches seems more about what they represent as spiritual monuments, but ceremonies like baptism did not occur in the church in their religion, but rather through immersion, by the riverbed by her ancestor’s home.

***P1**, shares, “went on to explain how the farm, and the green willow-brook that went right by the house his father built, yes, it was so beautiful, and in the journal, her great-grandfather talked about where he got baptized there, by immersion, he said you have be completely under water, and we drove up to the riverbank, but we didn’t know if that was where he was baptized, at the riverbank, we got out and took pictures of it, it was a really meaningful spot for us,”*

For **P1**, the churches were important, but a bit different than for those of Christian faith. Her great-great grandfather was baptized in the riverbed by his home, and her utmost desire was to visit this sacred place where he was baptized, in the river by his home. The Mormon faith is based on the premise that when you leave this life, you meet your ancestors. So, her religious dimensions are guided by her deep faith and visits the churches stand as beautiful monuments, but not as a place of baptism ceremonies like in the Christian faith, where baptisms occur in churches at the baptismal font. With that being said, the sense of spirituality is present in both cases, but the religious ceremonial practices differ....

I asked, **P3**, if she felt a sense of spiritual connection at some point and if so, how did it show up for her?

***P3**, shares, “ Definitely. More so when we reached Copenhagen, when I had learned the story of my grandparents. At the cathedral where they married – it felt like that was the start of our family’s story.”*

5.Trust can inspire Transformative Experiences:

As I mentioned earlier, one of the interviewees **P12**, is Business owner who has a Heritage Tour company. I interviewed her in order to gain an insider’s perspective, and hear of her own experience guiding ancestral tourists, and to hear if trust was important if transformation is to occur? She shares her years of expertise and experience as an ancestral guide and historian below

***P1**, shares about hiring **P12**, as her guide, “Even though I have been working on this for over 30 years, it has still been an incredible discovery, but as I didn’t have any of the original works, and looking at the names and place, it was confusing to me, and with the language barrier.... I was really thankful to have **P12** bring her expertise so we knew we were at the right place at the right time, I think I would not have gotten this knowledge or I would have doubted it. It was very comfortable to travel with her, she is very generous with her knowledge of Denmark and wants to share her culture with us. She also shared some history back in the time about the*

*Mormon religion, (which **P1** is a member of), adding one of the jokes at that time, you can always tell they are Mormons living in the house if they had broken windows, explaining that these people were no liked, so some threw rocks through their windows.....so these tidbits really helped to paint the picture of what our ancestors were living through...,” the bond you create with people is quite amazing. The **trust** was such an important thing, you are emailing back and forth, it is so clarifying, and after a while you feel like you know each other”*

P1 shares the importance in hiring a guide, **P12**, states, “the value that she provided, insuring they were at the right place, and how the stories provide authenticity and clarification added to the whole experience for her family”

P1 and P3, who employed **P12** as their guide, both expressed complications that can arise when studying genealogy charts and records

***P7**, “shared how **P12**, guided them on their tour, We’d been researching the family tree on Ancestry.com for three years, so we had some information, but wanted to touch base with someone who had access to more accurate records than our limited knowledge, so I contacted a guide with expert local knowledge and experience in this area who was able to provide us with further knowledge about our family history, and who gifted us the most amazing experience, showing us where our family came from”,*

Many who study genealogy are skilled at gathering ancestral information but lack the ability to accurately interpret the information they have obtained. Their resulting genealogical charts and family histories can be so inaccurate they might as well be works of fiction. When these are readily accessible, particularly via the internet, they can spawn more error ridden family histories, until the avalanche of inaccuracies overwhelms the truth and is almost impossible to irradicate. (Baxter, 2015). **P3** expressed, “finding the right person to guide them on their ancestral journey was key... with limited knowledge of local sites as well as how sorting through history records can be difficult to know what is true or not, with so many variables needed to be taken into account, hiring a physical expert guide to sort through messy data is key, and by hiring a trusted guide helped so much”

P3 “we had the most amazing experience, her showing us where our family comes from.... “

*During my interview, **P12** shares below,” some of her own experience as a guide, and the impact it has had for her clients.... “There are many special moments during my tour. When we stand in an 850year-old village church and I show my clients the alter-piece or baptismal font from the 17th century is the same that their great grandparents were married in front of or was baptized in, I am always moved by the tears, that without doubt, will be on my client’s cheeks. This is something very special for me, as I then know that I truly do something for them that makes a difference and that they will treasure always. I feel that it is similar to a pilgrimage for my clients. It is usually something that they have wanted to do for many years, and often my clients are elderly people, and they say, it has to be now when they are still well and capable to do the travel. It is like the total experience fills a mental hole in their heart”.*

P12, shares how precious these moments are, not only for her participants, but also for her, knowing that she is able to make a difference in their lives, they have traveled far and wide to participate in these life changing experiences and when these moments occur, they provide a transformation that is hard to imagine,

P12, states, " another type of special moment is when we meet relatives. When we arrive at an old house where my client's ancestors once lived, I always ring the bell to ask if we may take some photos and let the owner of the house know about why we are there. Last summer for instance, one of my clients in this way met a grand cousin, as the owner of the house was a descender of the same ancestor, and all of a sudden there are hugs, old pictures to see and stories to be told."

The above quotes illustrates the value of trust when choosing a guide for their journey, one who knows the local history, and exemplifies trust and inclusivity in her approach. She states that her clients have come far and wide for this life changing experience, and they want a guide "who has skin in the game" so to speak, and is able to assist and engage with them, in what for many, is a transformative experience of a lifetime.

Short summary thematic analysis

In order to answer the research questions, a summary of the thematic analysis findings show that there are different motivations for this travel but all these themes connect together: Theme 1: focuses on: what motivated the women in this study to engage in this form of travel? Findings uncovered that growing up with Danish grandparents and in Danish-American communities across the U.S. influenced them in a positive way and created a curiosity to learn more. Another factor was the majority of the women in the study are aged 50+ created more of a sense of urgency, as they wanted to travel while they were still able to do it. Theme 2: addresses their sense of cultural identity and belonging and being able to walk in their ancestor's shoes. The Findings show that after years of searching their family history and doing family trees instilled a longing "to be able walk in their ancestor's shoes" and embark of an adventure to uncover their National/Cultural identity and belonging to this culture in the act of traveling to the actual genealogical sites of their ancestors. Theme 3: discusses how Danish Landscapes are important cultural cites for tourists and are authentic elements in the Legacy traveler experience. The cultural buildings and countryside prove to be important landmarks which evoked memories of a time gone by and instill transformative moments. The findings also uncovered that many of these cites bear strong resemblance and association to the rural landscapes in the U.S. where many of these tourists come from. Theme 4: findings show the impact of churches, and how they are pivotal and emotional moments for many ancestral tourists during their visit, as it is here where a concrete connection to their ancestry occurred in a baptism or a wedding of an ancestor. Churches instill deep emotional encounters, and findings show they are crucial in that documents are stored here, a very important element in the authentication of their journey. Theme 5: Trust inspires transformation: findings show that translations can take a lot of time with no certainty of accurate documents and I discovered that for many participants, they felt elements of insecurity in their attempts to understand and validate the ancestral documents they had acquired as well as lacked expertise in local knowledge, and expressed how grateful they were having a trusted local expert to guide them during their journey. Lastly, an interview with the director of the Danish Museum and Genealogical Center uncovered the value of having local organizations for Danish-Americans. Findings show that participants sought out danish foods as well as had a greater awareness of danish architecture they had learned about during various weekend workshops offered at the Museum. The interview with the museum director's interview is included in the appendix.

Discussion

Does Heritage Legacy Tourism have a Transformative affect in the lives of Danish-American Tourists?

Findings from the analysis and data collection indicate that this form of tourism does have the potential to create transformation in Danish-American tourists, both during and after their travel. On the other hand, transformation has many faces, and is very nuanced depending on the expectations of the particular tourist. As mentioned earlier there are five themes that were uncovered, and the conclusion will be discussed in the following section. With that being said, as mentioned in the methodology and analysis section, I have personally engaged in Heritage-Legacy travel myself which can have its' pro's and con's. After having a positive experience myself meant that I was "all in" and fully engaged the interview process. Subsequently, this has undoubtedly colored my judgement and impacted my choice of interviewees and interview guide, as well as my choice of theories. The interview guide can be found in appendix 2. Needless to say, there were a couple of women who were extremely focused on specific dates and in sharing their family trees, showing little passion in sharing their actual travel experiences. This stood in stark contrast to most of the other participants, and also in my own way of looking at this form of travel as a very powerful experience. Subsequently, this forced me to look inward, as I became aware of the fact that I had more stake in some participants than in others. This helped me to realize that not everybody gets as excited about this travel as I do. Consequently, this awareness was a great learning experience for me. It helped me to turn my own lens around and allowed me to understand, that interpretation and situations are different from person to person, and they can be nuanced, and there is nothing wrong with that at all. For the most part, however I feel that having embodied this experience myself and being able to reflect on my own role as a Heritage/Legacy Tourist has strengthened more than hindered this study, and created an open and relaxed environment, encouraging women to openly express their experiences.

What Motivates Heritage/Legacy tourists to embark on a "root finding" journey?

For the majority of the participants, their interest to embark on such a quest begins long before their actual journey. A number of the participants stated that their motivation stemmed from growing up with Danish grandparents or relatives and in Danish communities. In addition, most were involved, in some way, with genealogy research, making amateur genealogy a significant aspect surrounding the ancestral journey to Denmark. (Alexander et al., 2017; Nash, 2002; Santos & Yan, 2010). Moreover, self-discovery and identification also play into the powerful connection that members of immigrant societies have with their ancestral heritage, as they seek to understand and preserve their family history, as it provides meaning to their existence (Basu, 2004; Nash, 2002; Santos & Yan, 2010).

For the majority of women, a contributing factor was age. Cohen, (1984) states, Legacy Tourists have a desire to deeply discover their distant family roots in order to appreciate and understand places, people and family who come before them. Their motivation for this travel often comes from long- term psychological needs and life plans and, with older age, needs, such as self-actualization, become increasingly important as a travel motivator. they long to understand, and sustain their ancestral memories for future generations, as it provides meaning for their very existence P1 shares, "*At one point my mother mentioned that she had never been to Denmark and wanted to go before she died, this inspired me to go,*"

P1 stats, "My grandmother sparked an interest in genealogy for me ..., I found it fascinating, I loved to learn about this, the more the better...I always had a great love and respect for these people...I was actually being spoon fed from my grandpa and grandmother for a long time, I was only 25 when I began researching, that is 30 years ago I've worked on my genealogy for over 30 years",

P1 has been involved in Genealogy research for years, and thereby clearly expressed a deep love for her Danish ancestors and coupled with a desire to live this experience while her mother was still strong enough to participate was her main driver. (Basu, 2004) states, the notion of a distant homeland is part of a constructed reality made up of particular imagery about a place of belonging.

P2 shares, " Growing up very close to her grandmother as a young girl inspired her travel to Denmark, and I begged my parents to let me go there, and I became obsessed with everything Danish, I also ended up getting to the point where I incorporated everything Danish in my life, cooking danish foods, I have since been to Denmark 7 times "

Another type of motivation to engage in ancestral tourism may also be a "reflexive response to a sense of loss that underpins modern society, assisting in reaffirming both a generational sense of the self and a self-recognition that one has one's own perspective of the world." For others, motivation can be like a homecoming, as expressed by P12. *It is like the total experience fills a mental hole in the heart.*" It has been said that people who travel to the destination of their forefathers do not just travel abroad to discover the destination, but rather to discover themselves (ancestral-findings, 2021). P12, shares how P12 was able to fill "a mental hole in her heart", which could be interpreted as a yearning that she hoped would fill this void by engaging in this type of travel.

Cultural identity and sense of belonging, being able to "walk in their ancestor's shoes"

For many of the participants I interviewed, the depth that their National and Cultural Identity is embedded in the mindsets and in their very being. It is as if they feel they embody a dual identity. It is also interesting to note that one can feel a member of one society and feel an equal sense of belonging and connection to another, (Harke, 2007: p.13).

P2 shares:" my Danish heritage is at the level that I have kind of incorporated it into my daily life...I have actually created this whole separate Danish life..., I feel extremely grateful to be able to travel with my mother and daughters to explore our Danish ancestry. I have 2 daughters who are 6 feet tall, and they both said that when they were in Denmark, they felt that they were among their people, although the population is mixed, there were so many tall blond people, they felt like they fit in".

Simultaneously, reflecting on this passage, one may ask, it is our looks that define how close we feel with other people? If P1 daughters were not tall and blond, would that mean that they would not feel that they fit it? Although many Danes may be tall and blond, this passage may be a form of stereotyping certain nationalities?

P3 posed questions about culture and genealogy after her visit to the blacksmith shop which she reflected once she returned home again, *shares, "it's interesting that within the family, the*

theme of “construction” has carried through the years. The men in the family were builders, and over the years, that still rings true within the family. My brother, before knowing the full history of our family, travelled to Copenhagen for work (he works in development and construction/civil engineering and design) He was working with some of Denmark’s top architects on an amazing design project in Sydney (AMP Quay Quarter Tower), the tender which the Danish architects (3XN) subsequently won. My nephew is studying architecture. One wonders where the building/construction/architecture interest comes from – is it genetic”?

The picture that emerges from this particular caption poses the question, is it culture and family history that connects us with our past, or is it our genealogy? As we draw our experience from the cultural themes of our family and society, as social context forms our identity, how much emphasis should we place on our genetics? Reflecting on these questions could be that the connection to our ancestry encourages us to study our genealogy, which can many times makes for a really good story and it may be the stories that enchant us. It appears to be one cannot exist without the other.

One of the participants, **P9**, had a very powerful experience as an ancestral tourist in Copenhagen, where her sense of cultural identity and belonging were revealed in an unanticipated manner. Shares,” *It was September 2001, the Twin Towers in New York city had just been attacked, and I was checking into a hotel, the receptionist, said something about “it’s terrible what’s happening in the United States, I said, well I haven’t been there for 3 weeks, I really don’t know, and she said it’s happening now. “I went upstairs in time to see the second plane fly into the Pentagon, but here is the emotional part..... I am staying across the street from Tivoli of which there are 1000 flags, so I said I need to get out, as I saw that every flag was down to half- mast, Everybody I met treated me like I was extra special, so we became very close at this time, and I would have to say just the fact that they cared so much....That was big...Isn’t that beautiful”* A sense of belonging can show up in many ways, as customs, language, religious customs, and as things that create a feeling of belonging and social connectedness. Moreover, the depth that their National and Cultural Identity is embedded in the mindsets and in their very being. It is as if they feel they embody a dual identity. It is also interesting to note that one can feel a member of one society and feel an equal sense of belonging and connection to another, (Harke, 2007: p.13).

What I found striking was even though **P9** was far away from her homeland during this tragedy, she was able to find empathy and take on the perspective of a Dane. She interpreted the 9/11 attack in a totally unexpected way, it was like a self-discovery. There can be different interpretations of what identity means, as there was during the interviews with women, but what I found remarkable with **P9** interpretation, was that it was not about finding her identity that mattered but finding her belonging. This was a big surprise for me, as she managed to turn this situation around, making her focus more about what we all have in common than what separates us. Her experiences illustrated that the connection between Denmark and the US is very strong.

The picture that emerges from this particular interview in the analysis is significant for Heritage/Legacy Tourism, as it highlights its potential for healing through our common connection and illustrates that there is more that connects us than separates us. This presents a contrasting interpretation than expressed in other interviews and highlights the unexpected gifts and benefits that Heritage/Travel Tourism offers.

Can Danish authentic Landscapes create transformation for Legacy tourists?

(Palmer, 2005) & (Park, 2010) established that visits to sites of national symbolic meaning promote a sense of collective belonging for its visitors. **P1** had shared that she had read the journals of her great grand-parents and had seen pictures of where they had grown up, so this moment in time, so visiting the actual homestead was very personal to her. At this moment, I felt as if **P1** had experienced a transformative moment, visiting the countryside home and farmland of her ancestors, describing that, it was so powerful that it brought tears to her eyes, shares, *“My great-grandfather described his home saying he had the sweetest memories in that house. There was a brook that ran right across the property. And there was a mill that his father built, his most fond memories were of growing up in that house. He said you can never express the beauty of being raised by a strong man who is working hard to provide for his family, and the nurturing hand of your mother. It was very beautiful...”*

In many ways, her description illustrates the process in the pilgrim's journey, as a transformative process,” in that the various stages a pilgrim goes through on their journey acts as a microcosm of the greater journey of life and offers a unique channel of transformation that reverberates into the everyday, upon the return” (Garrod and Fyall, 2000).

P6 had an interesting twist on authenticity in connection with cultural sites and cemeteries in Denmark, *“I found it really funny that people use graveyards in Denmark for socializing and having picnics, this would never happen in America, graveyards are where you go to pay respect and put flowers on the gravestones but in Denmark people experience this space in a different kind of way”*

This was a very insightful observation from **P6**, and I can clearly remember feeling the same way when I came to Denmark many years ago. But after years of living here, it seems like positive thing, as it kind of demystifies graveyards as spaces to celebrate together with our ancestors, and why not celebrate and embrace the memories instead of feeling sad?

Churches are pivotal spaces that instill feelings of spirituality and deep emotion

Travel to these heritage sites is thus like a pilgrimage, where the objective is the discovery and commemoration of a personal history, such as the place of birth or baptism of an ancestor is established (Feldman, 2001).

P4., shares *“It was this moment of such gratitude... We go to the church... and we stand next to the baptismal, then later on, I hear their stories, that the baptismal font is always with the light from the east, which means the beginning of the journey, on the ceiling are models of Viking ship, where you meet everlasting life, it is your vehicle..., my great-great grandmother was baptized here, she had an unfortunate disease and death, and she never could have imagined that her daughter would have gotten on a steamer and moved to the America's, that whole transition, the bravery and courage it took...”*

What is striking here is the symbolism: Steamers were the ships that were the bearers of the history of immigration from the Nordic countries to the United States (Krogh-Nielsen, 2016). The description is poignant and very telling. To hear the symbolism of the Viking ships, being compared to the steamer that brought her great-great grandmother to America. Moreover, the customs of displaying Viking Ships in the sanctuary began a long time ago in the Catholic

Churches of Europe, and it later became a custom in Denmark after the reformation, a kind of symbolism, she describes her experience as a kind of personal pilgrimage.

Can hiring a guide promote trust and create transformative experiences?

Trust creates connection which in turn can open the door to trust. Bearing this in mind, How important is trust if true transformation is to occur? One of the interviewees, **P12**, has a Heritage/Legacy tourism company, and brings an insider's perspective of her own experiences in guiding ancestral tourists.

P1, described her experience in hiring **P12**, as her guide, *“Even though I have been working on this for over 30 years, it has still been an incredible discovery, but as I didn't have any of the original works, and looking at the names and places, it was confusing to me, and with the language barrier, I was really thankful to have her bring her expertise so we knew we were at the right place and right time, I would not have gotten this knowledge or I would doubt it”*

Many who study genealogy are skilled at gathering ancestral information but lack the ability to accurately interpret the information they have obtained. Their resulting genealogical charts and family histories can be so inaccurate they might as well be works of fiction. When these are readily accessible, particularly via the internet, they can spawn more error-ridden family histories, until the avalanche of inaccuracies overwhelms the truth and is almost impossible to irradicate (Baxter, 2015).

P3, shares, *“finding the right person to guide them on their ancestral journey was key, we just felt incredibly blessed that we found someone like Henrietta who was able to show us so much. And she was so patient and she was really fine. And she was, she was wonderful. She is such a lovely person. Yeah. She was, she was great. She was fantastic. And we were appreciative of the time that she spent with us. And it was just it was it was great. We had a lovely day there. And we love Copenhagen and, and I definitely will go back. There's no doubt about that. Yeah, I think for your mom, exactly. To be able to do that now together when she still has her health and everything to do that to have that experience. Yeah, that's so special.”*

The above participants experience clearly express how hiring a local expert to story through all the messy data and guide them to the right places makes all the difference. The link between the tourists and the guide is an short by intense period in time, beginning long before their actual journey. **P1** and **P3** both illuminate the challenges they had when sorting through confusing data, uncertain if the names and dates were accurate. Although the actual word trust was not mentioned, it is clear from their response how important hiring guide was for them, it made the difference in creating an amazing experience. We now move on to the final section, a conclusion of the findings.

Conclusion

This study objective was to explore the case of Heritage-Legacy Tourism and uncover what motivates Legacy tourists, in particular, Danish-American Women Tourists 50+, to engage in “ancestral root finding,” as well as to unfold if this form of tourism spurs transformation. The study delves into the historical development, where travel took on the form of pilgrimaging, a

very specific form of travel, with the potential for transformations and deep cultural understanding, and transitions on to study Pilgrimage's equivalent today, Heritage-Legacy Tourism. Therefore, this study aimed to examine is to gain a deeper understanding on what motivates tourists to engage in Heritage/Legacy tourism and examine whether it provides transformation, and if so, how it is being lived out in their journey and beyond. Furthermore, it aims to examine concepts like pilgrimage, cultural identity, sense of belonging as value sets to see how they have been impacted throughout their travel experience, and in what way? Thereby, the aim is to critically address these two research questions:

Going back to our roots: What motivates us to learn about our ancestral past? The case of the Danish-American tourist 50+ in search of cultural identity and sense of belonging?

In what way does Heritage-Legacy Tourism have a transformative effect on the lives of Danish-American Tourists?

This study is comprised of an Introduction, where the problem formulation and aim and research questions introduced. The research took an epistemological viewpoint, employing interviews to allow for meaningful knowledge to come forth, using this social constructivist and hermeneutic approach. The Literature Review Section expanded on theories and various concepts. The Analytical approach was thematic analysis, and the qualitative data collected for the study was transcribed and then coded and divided into five themes, where specific categories were created. They are unfolded in depth in the analysis. This was followed by a discussion and ended with a Conclusion. The research took on a qualitative approach employing semi-structured, open ended interviews, with thirteen women, all with previous experience in Legacy tourism. This approach was used to allow participants to share their tourism experiences and determine if they themselves felt transformation occurred during their tourism experience, as well as to examine if the theories aligned with theory. Their narratives were analyzed as described above. The women were Danish-American women tourists, with one exception, a Danish-Australian woman tourist, who contributed her perspective to the study. In addition, a Danish Heritage Travel Business owner was included in order to contribute knowledge and experience in guiding Danish-American women Legacy tourists. Lastly, the director of the Danish Genealogical Museum in the U.S. They added a valuable contribution and shined a light on Danish American women priorities. It is also worth mentioning that I have previously engaged in Legacy tourism myself and have a personal story with which I share in the appendix.

Simultaneously, this research did also point to evidence establishing that the search for records is very time consuming and genealogy research can be overwhelming and emotional for amateur genealogists. Coupled with the uncertainty of accessing authentic data, it can be an issue. The positive side of these findings show that the searches can also empower women with new energy in their present life. Coupled with joining communities with other like-minded women who help each other out has made it a very enjoyable. One of the participants stated, embarking on this mission, expressed "it filled a mental hole in her heart." Moreover, a main motivator for the majority of these women is age, stating that they needed to engage in this travel while they still had the chance and strength to do it. (Cohen, 1984). Their motivation for this travel often comes from long-term psychological needs and life plans and, with older age, needs, such as self-actualization, become increasingly important as a travel motivator.

Moreover, it was concluded that all women expressed that engaging in a Heritage-Legacy Travel experienced transformation during their travels. Each one of the participants have

expressed how it has impacted their life in one way or another, both during their visit and on their return home. A number of participants expressed a feeling of peace and sense of closure both during and after their return home, as expressed by **P3** *it actually surpassed our expectations, it was so wonderful.....Thinking back on our trip – December 2019 – even now, the feeling I have is of just feeling “overwhelmed”. Being able to stand at the baptismal fonts of my great- great grandparents, and then in the Cathedral where they were married, words can’t describe.* In addition, one of the most dynamic transformations came from a participant who had traveled to Copenhagen on the day of the 9/11 attack in the U.S. Moreover, it was concluded that all women engaging in a Heritage-Legacy Travel did experience transformation during their travel. Each one of the participants have expressed how this travel has impacted their life in one way or another, both during their visit and on their return home. Many have expressed a feeling of peace and sense of closure both during and after their return home. It can be concluded that going back to your roots through this form of Travel can be a Transformative experience. Moreover, one of the most dynamic transformations came from a participant who had traveled to Copenhagen on the day of the 9/11 attack in the U.S, unfolded here, **P9**, was a legacy tourist in Copenhagen during the 9/11 bombing and expresses how this transformed her, *I saw that every flag was down to half- mast....everybody I met treated me like I was extra special, so we became very close at this time, and I would have to say just the fact that they cared so much....That was big...Isn’t that beautiful.* In the midst of her disbelief of what had happened in her own country, found the empathy to take on the perspective of a Dane, and managed to turn the situation around, and connected to the feelings of the Danes instead of herself. She made her focus more about what we all have in common than what separates us, and hereby unfolded the strong connection there is between these two countries. This highlights the potential benefits that Legacy Tourism offers.

Likewise, it was concluded that hiring a local ancestral guide was a life changer for many of the participants. Accessing correct documents and locating exact sites can be a difficult puzzle to solve. Therefore, it was found that many hired a local guide to help, highlighting how forming a trusted co-operation with a local expert can make all the difference in how transformative the experience becomes.

Additionally, I asked informants on how they felt about their Danish lineage, as there have been some form of “trendy” connotations in society lately, with identifications with the “Viking” race, holding a belief that it is a superior race, but there were no women who appeared to relate to this concept and I therefore decided not to investigate this phenomena further. Furthermore, I found is that there appears to be little research connecting Viking pilgrimages of the past with Heritage/Legacy Travel and National identity, and therefore research addressing this area is recommended. As the author of this research, findings show that this specific travel could benefit with further development in a number of areas. For example, the fact that this form of tourism is in, what Butler (1980) calls a rejuvenation stage, demonstrating it is growing in popularity, with more and more travelers expressing a desire to discover their ancestral roots. Consequently, the question remains why tourism researchers and marketers have not paid much attention to Denmark as an ancestral destination, even though there are now millions of individuals with Danish roots in countries like the United States. Simultaneously, (Murdy et al, 2018) claim that many heritage sites fail to understand and foresee the travel motivations and expectations of ancestral tourists, making it difficult for destinations to benefit from this niche market, which can be an area for policy and marketing decision makers moving forward. What also stands as a source of wonderment, as to why Denmark currently does not have a National Heritage & Legacy Foundation or strategy, in spite of the fact that such a development would greatly serve to benefit the industry and could provide an important contribution to this

transformative travel form, which enhances life quality travel as well as contributes to trust in the industry. Subsequently, further research in this area could serve to enhance knowledge for tourism students and researchers in the future, to recognize and respond to this segment with an intention of creating more awareness to policy makers to take on the responsibility of safeguarding this travel form. This could ensure that Legacy Travel will continue to be a platform for mutual understanding, one that connects tourists in a transformative and life-enhancing travel mission. Additionally, I can conclude, that after engaging in this research, findings illustrate that Heritage/Legacy Tourism is even more valuable than I had even imagined. Lastly, it is worth mentioning, that based on the results of this qualitative study, that further research is needed before any conclusions can be made about this form of tourism.

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